

**Urban & Metro Economic Development – URP 5649**  
**University of South Florida – City of Palmetto, FL**  
**Community Sustainability Partnership Program, Fall 2016**

## **Economic Development in Palmetto:**

### **Current Conditions and Future Recommendations**



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## Executive Summary

Palmetto, Florida is a diverse city with ample opportunities for economic development. Successful economic development relies on an understanding of the area's current social, economic, and environmental conditions, supported by facts, observations, and real examples. Analysis of current conditions allows for better goal-setting and more control over the future. Further, an economic development plan should be sensitive to the needs of business as well as the characteristics of its workforce and the physical character of the community. This paper aims to capture the depth and breadth of these factors in five parts: demographics, business, incentives, 10th Avenue redevelopment, and the trail system.

### Key Findings

The report bases its recommendations on several key findings from each area.

- Regarding demographics, Palmetto has a significantly larger youth population and fewer elderly residents than neighboring cities, as well as greater racial and ethnic diversity.
- Business attraction shows that Sutton Park is an asset that can be better utilized, and that marketing and business-government relationships have room to grow in Palmetto.
- 10th Avenue offers opportunities for temporary and permanent development activities, and is a good candidate for pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development.
- Downtown Design Guidelines should be streamlined to promote smarter growth with more character.
- A citywide trail system should be implemented, which would increase property values, improve health and economic participation, and save money by creating a sustainable green infrastructure for Palmetto.

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Palmetto maintains an enviable position: it is a city with many resources and the desire to use them effectively, along with plenty of room to grow. To ensure that this growth can take place in a thoughtful, directed way, this partnership has provided the City with both information and ideas. Effective growth will require the coordination of many fields of expertise, including business, architecture, engineering, and resource management. For all of these elements to come together in a fruitful way, they should be integrated under a strategic plan, with economic development as its overarching theme. That is the function of this report, to describe the linkages between physical and social improvements in Palmetto and the city's economic growth.

The report is organized into five main sections, covering demographics, business attraction, incentives, main street redevelopment, and the trail system. The foundation of each of these is research, both primary and secondary, presented along with relevant analysis. Within each section are also several recommendations for Palmetto and examples from real towns and real economic development strategies. These are intended not to be a stepwise plan, but to provide enough background, inspiration, and guidance for the City to capitalize on the development opportunities in Palmetto.

### Section Overviews

The demographics section covers a variety of factors, including age, race, health, education, housing, and transportation. Palmetto shows a lower rate of health insurance coverage and bachelor's degrees than neighboring cities; combined with age and race statistics, these data indicate areas of the city that could be better served. The business attraction section of this paper focuses on signage and marketing, as well as increasing engagement between owners and City officials. Three case studies follow, presenting strategies used by the cities of Gulfport, FL and Dunedin, FL along with a comparison of Sutton Park and the St. Augustine

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Amphitheater. In the incentives section, robust data on labor and industry in Palmetto are analyzed and several recommendations emerge. These include incentives for physical improvements, job creation, land value investment, and several options for downtown development assistance.

10th Avenue will anchor the economic development of Palmetto, so it is the focus of the fourth section of this paper. Recommendations for various types of temporary development -- termed tactical urbanism -- promise to create interest among the public and the City. More permanent ideas proposed include physical improvements and mixed-use development, and especially the simplification of downtown design guidelines. The report concludes with an economic development perspective on the proposed trail system. This trail will be a major contributor to community linkages and economic participation throughout the area. Three important recommendations for the trail include using it to build green infrastructure, creating interest and sustainability through theming, and engaging the community.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The first section of this report discusses the population of Palmetto in terms of race, income, age, and a variety of other important variables. This demographic information reveals unmet public needs and avenues for better planning. Each variable in this section will be presented with comparisons to other cities with similar sizes and locations: namely, the City of Dunedin and the City of Gulfport, Florida. Moreover, the report features demographic maps generated by these authors in order to better visualize spatial differences across the city.

### Methods

Demographic data, including income, poverty, age, housing, and education statistics were pulled from American Fact Finder, by the US Census, as well as the American Community Survey (ACS). Data pieces ranged in date from 2010 to 2014. These sources were used to compare the cities of Palmetto, Dunedin, and Gulfport. Affordability maps and data on percentage of income devoted to housing and transportation were pulled from the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation Index.

The US Census tool OnTheMap uses LEHD (Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data to show where people work in relation to where they live. Transportation Inflow/Outflow maps were generated with this tool, as was more specific data for all three cities for comparison.

### Results

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In discussing relationships to statewide or comparison city data, “significance” here merely refers to a common-sense look at the data; this report recommends a more rigorous methodology to identify various population groups spatially, including areas with environmental vulnerabilities, limited English proficiency residents, disabled persons, and other communities of concern.

The following tables provide population data divided into various categories for analysis.

<b>Geography</b>	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Population per sq. mile	3410.7	2347.5	4361.5
Land area in sq. miles	10.36	5.37	2.76

Table 1. This table shows population in Dunedin, Palmetto, and Gulfport, compared to land area using data from 2010.

<b>Age and Sex (%)</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Persons under 5 years	6.5	5.7	3.7	6.5	3.8
Persons under 18 years	24.0	21.3	14.9	22.5	13.7
Persons 65 years and over	13.0	17.3	27.9	21.9	25.3
Female persons	50.8	51.1	53.6	49.8	52.9

Table 2. This table depicts population in percentages for various groups in the nation, state, and three comparison cities, based on data from April 1, 2010.

<b>Race and Origin (%)</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
White	72.4	75.0	91.6	72.1	86.1
Black or African-American	12.6	16.0	3.3	10.5	9.2

American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4
Asian	4.8	2.4	1.6	0.6	1.2
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.2	0.1	0.1	Z*	0.1
Two or More Races	2.9	2.5	1.8	2.2	1.9
Hispanic or Latino	16.3	22.5	5.9	28.3	4.9
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	63.7	57.9	87.4	59.1	82.5

Table 3. This table shows population data divided by racial categories, based on data from April 1, 2010.

\*Protected for privacy

<b>Housing</b>	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Total housing units	21,113	6,729	7,507
Housing units per sq. mile	2,038	1,174	2,719
Owner-occupied housing unit rate (%)	62.5	67.4	64.7
Median value of owner-occupied housing units (\$)	151,500	106,800	135,000
Median monthly owner costs - with a mortgage (\$)	1,372	1,325	1,238



Median monthly owner costs - without a mortgage (\$)	513	396	450
Median gross rent (\$)	980	775	902

Table 4. This table displays various housing data for the three comparison cities, collected in the period from 2010 to 2014.

<b>Living Arrangements</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Households	116,211,092	7,217,508	16,548	5,092	5,846
Persons per household	2.63	2.62	2.12	2.47	2.04
Living in same house 1 year ago (%)	85.0	83.7	84.0	84.7	83.0
Language other than English spoken at home, age 5+ (%)	20.9	27.8	10.5	21.9	10.0

Table 5. This table portrays family and living arrangements for the nation, state, and comparison cities, using data gathered between 2010 and 2014.

<b>Education (%)</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
High school graduate or higher, age 25+	86.3	86.5	91.4	84.4	90.3
Bachelor's degree or higher, age 25+	29.3	26.8	29.0	20.4	30.3

Table 6. This table represents education data from April 1, 2010, displayed in percentages of graduates.

<b>Health Concerns (%)</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Persons with a disability, under age 65	8.5	8.5	7.9	7.7	14.7
Persons without health insurance, under age 65	10.5	15.7	21.2	30.5	23.6

Table 7. This table displays relevant health data, revealing the percentage of populations in need across national, state, and comparison city data collected between 2010 and 2014.

<b>Economy</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Civilian labor force ,age 16+ (%)	63.5	59.2	57.8	52.4	53.1

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Civilian labor force, female, age 16+ (%)	58.7	55.0	54.3	48.4	52.9
Total accommodation and food service sales, 2012 (\$)	708,138,598	49,817,925	61,997	20,689	11,970
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$)	2,040,441,203	124,061,425	209,521	43,197	D
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$)	5,696,729,632	96,924,106	D	29,259	D
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 (\$)	5,208,023,478	252,626,608	113,977	17,674	11,786
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$)	4,219,821,871	273,867,145	233,198	251,943	14,752
Total retail sales per capita, 2012 (\$)	13,443	14,177	6,579	19,603	1,223

Table 8. This table shows economic data, including labor force as a percentage and sales or revenue in US dollars, for the nation, state, and comparison cities based on data from 2010 to 2014.

Business	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
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All firms	27,626,360	2,100,187	3,462	1,376	1,275
Men-owned firms	14,844,597	1,084,885	1,541	703	517
Women-owned firms	9,878,397	807,817	1,223	518	571
Minority-owned firms	7,952,386	926,112	380	432	144
Non-minority-owned firms	18,987,918	1,121,749	2,920	860	1,089
Veteran-owned firms	2,521,682	185,756	306	139	87
Non-veteran-owned firms	24,070,685	1,846,686	2,903	1,124	1,131

Table 9. This table depicts business ownership in 2012 for the nation, state, and three comparison cities.

<b>Transportation</b>	United States	Florida	Dunedin	Palmetto	Gulfport
Mean travel time to work (mins), workers age 16+	25.7	26.1	26.1	22.7	24.4
Median household income (in 2014 dollars)	53,482	47,212	46,310	37,976	38,315
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2014 dollars)	28,555	26,499	29,891	22,278	29,887
Persons in poverty (%)	13.5	15.7	8.3	19.4	20.1

Table 10. This table shows data relevant to determining the burden of transportation costs on the average income, taken between the years 2010 and 2014.

The maps in Figures 1 through 10 were created using Esri Desktop online. They display the following layers:

- Median Household Income: Measures the median household income in the U.S. based on the 2010 census tract. For the U.S., the median household income in the 2012 projection was \$50,157.

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- Diversity Index: Measures the racial and ethnic diversity (by comparing two persons chosen at random from the same area) in the U.S. in 2012 based on the 2010 census tract. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity). For the U.S., the diversity score in 2012 was 61.
- Median Household Net Worth: Measures the median household net worth (total household wealth minus secured and unsecured debt) in the U.S. based on the 2010 census tract. For the U.S., the median household income in the 2012 projection was \$66,311.
- Median Age: Measures the median age of people in the United States in 2012. For the U.S., the median age was 37.
- Household Size: Measures the average household size (household population/total households) in the U.S. based on the 2010 Census tract. For the U.S., the average household size in the 2012 projection is 2.6 persons.
- Population Density: Measures the population density (total population count of a geographic feature/the area of the feature) in the U.S. based on the 2010 Census Tract.
- Population Change: Measures the projected annual population growth in the U.S. between 2012 and 2017. The total number of residents in an area is the total population.

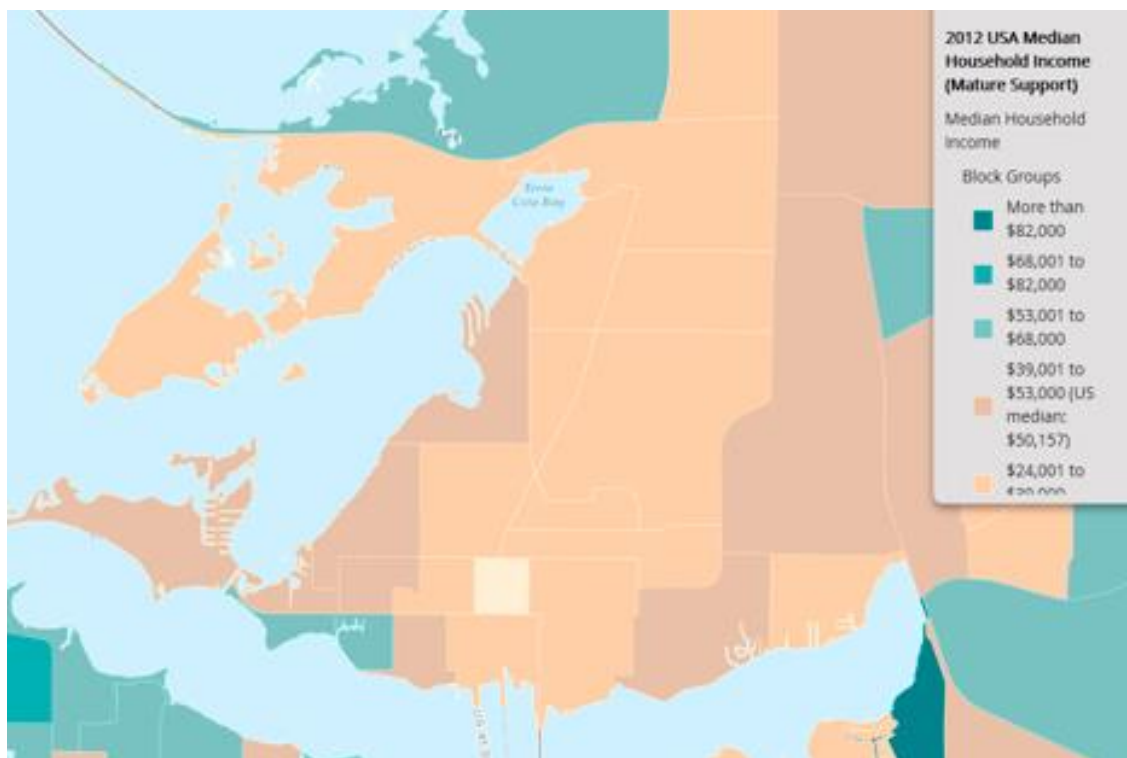


Figure 1. This map shows income data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.

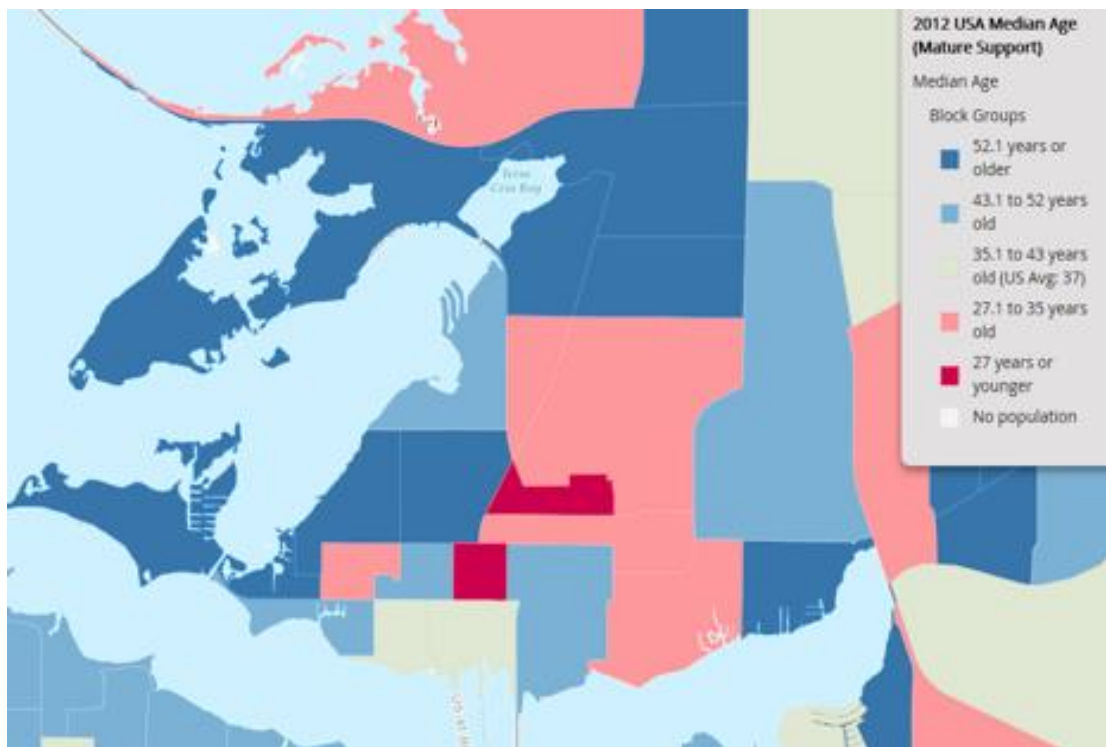


Figure 2. This map shows age data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.

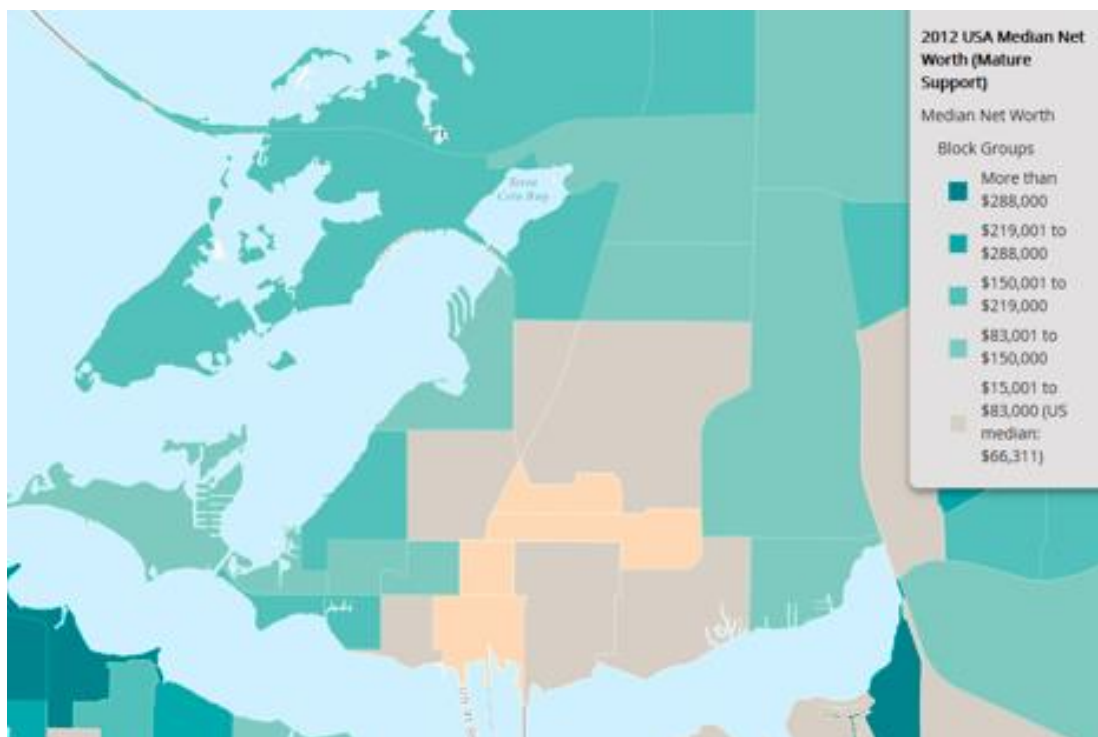


Figure 3. This map shows net worth data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.

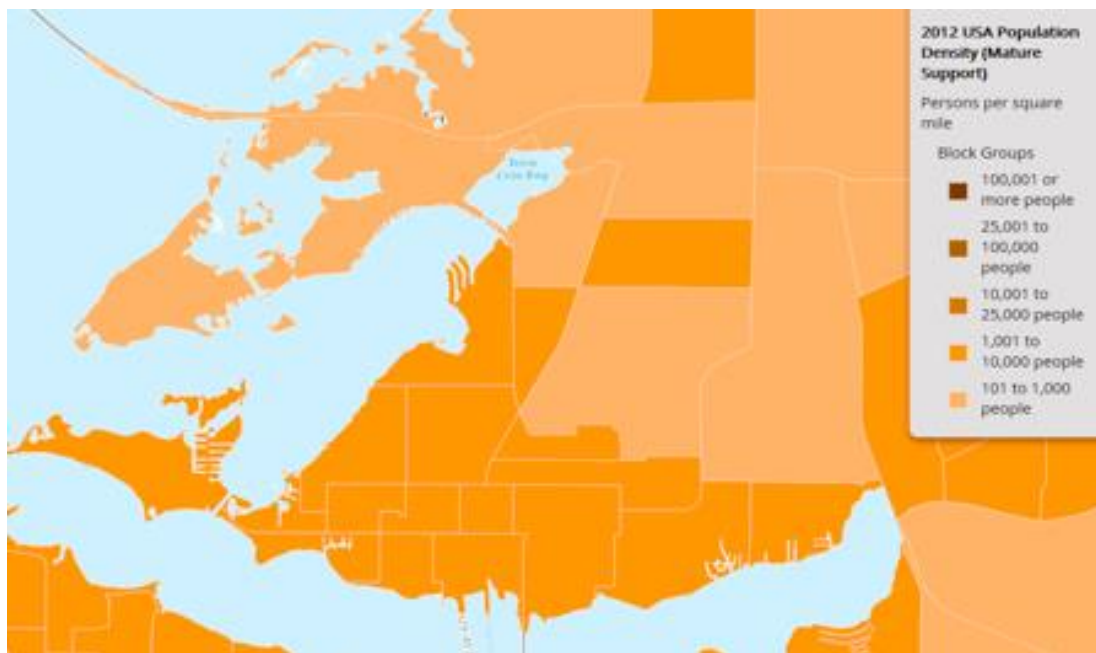


Figure 4. This map shows population density data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.

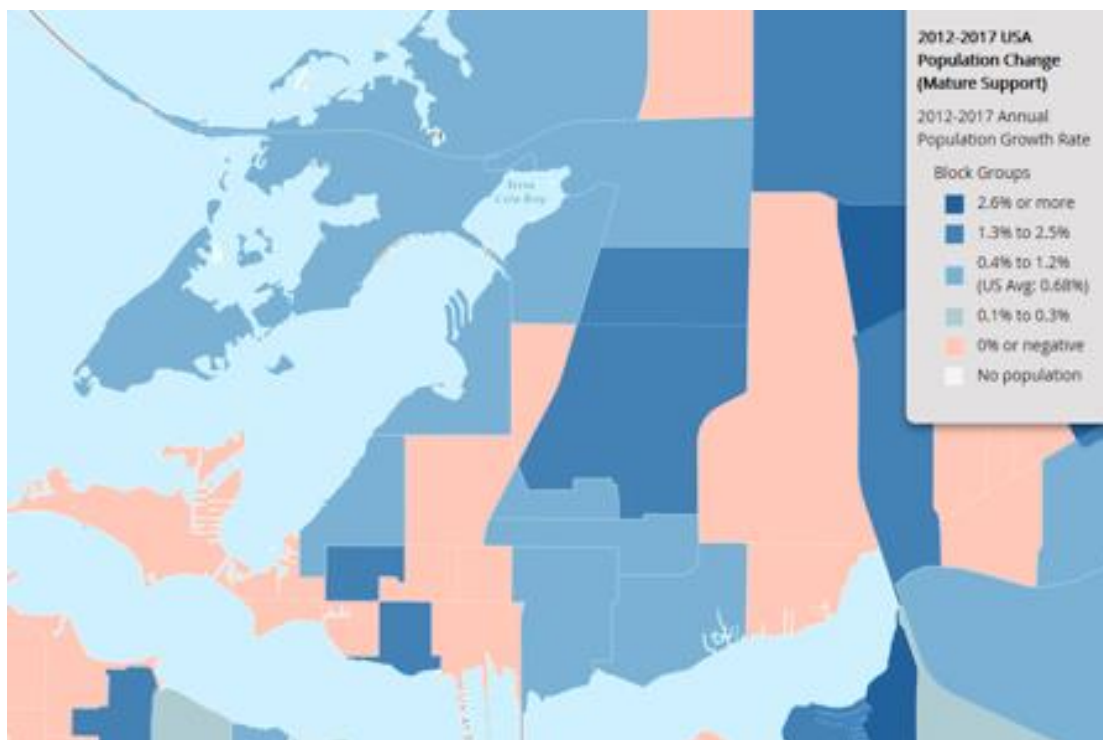


Figure 5. This map shows population change data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.



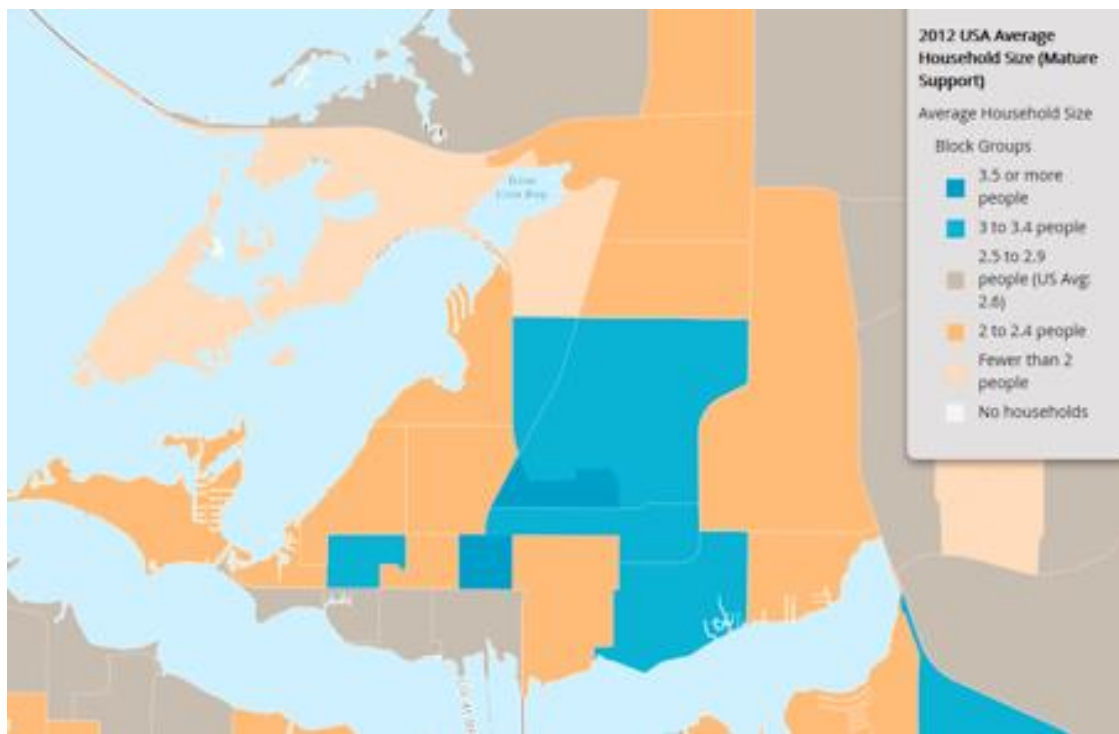


Figure 6. This map shows household size data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.

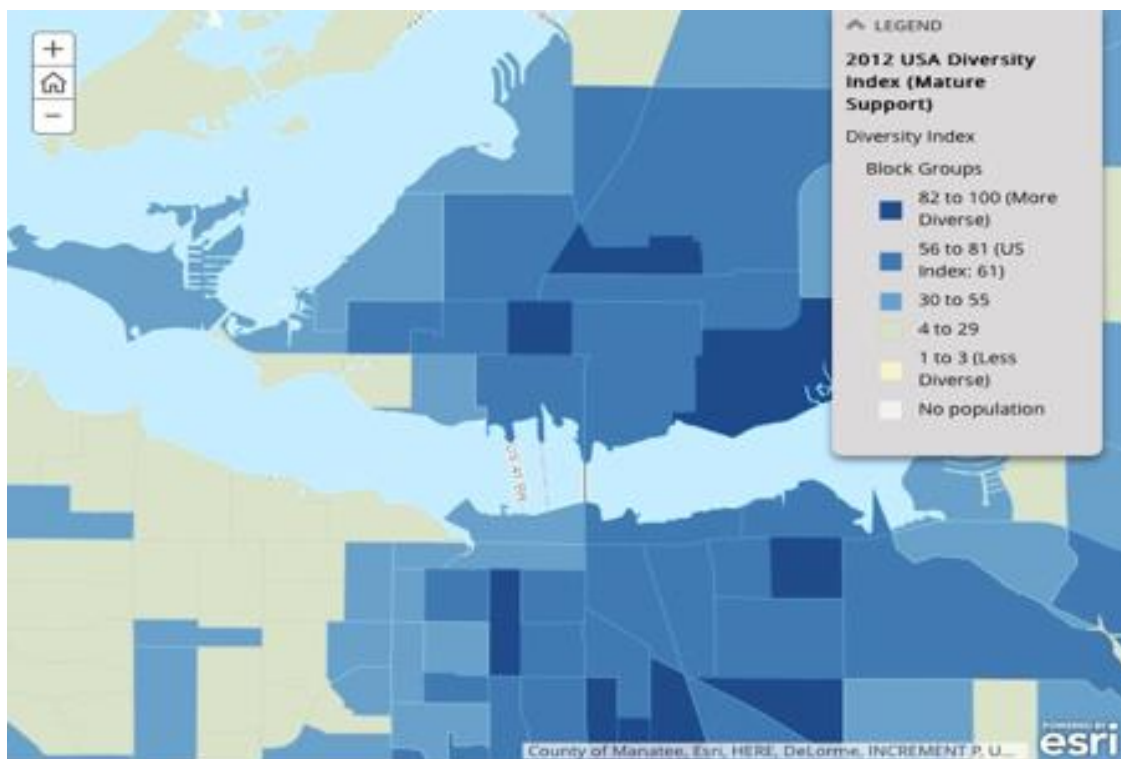


Figure 7. This map shows the diversity index data from the 2010 U.S. Census, block level.



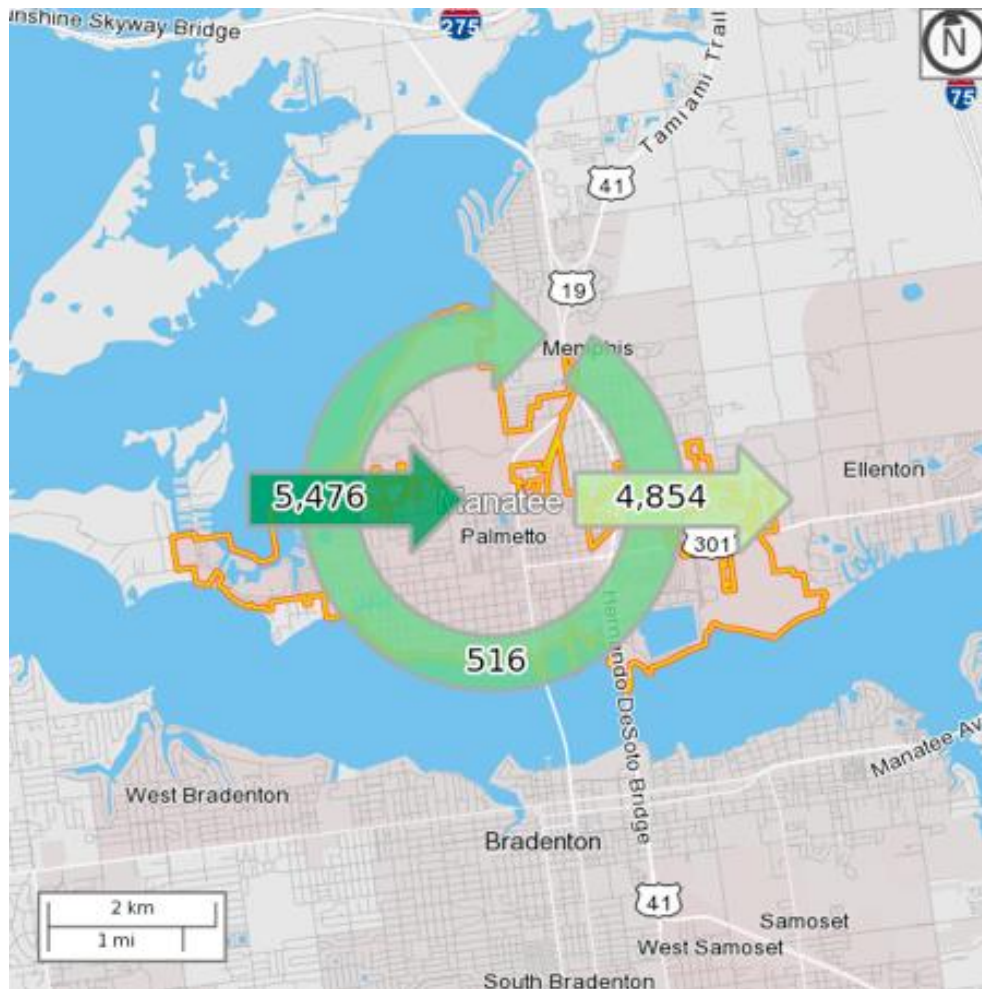


Figure 8. This figure shows an employee inflow/outflow map for Palmetto, taken from U.S. Census OnTheMap data.



Figure 9. This figure shows an employee inflow/outflow map for Gulfport, taken from U.S. Census OnTheMap data.



Figure 10. This figure shows an employee inflow/outflow map for Dunedin, taken from U.S. Census OnTheMap data.

## Conclusions

As seen in Table 2, Palmetto has a higher percentage of people aged 65 and older at 21.9%, in comparison with the United States (13.0%) and Florida (17.3%) demographics. Compared with Dunedin and Gulfport, Palmetto has a significantly lower percentage of residents over 65. However, this age group is likely retired or nearing retirement and may need progressively more supportive services, including geriatric care, and this should be accounted for when planning in Palmetto.

The category with the most notable difference from surrounding areas is persons aged 18 and under. Palmetto shows a population of minors that is slightly lower than the United States's numbers and similar to the percentage in Florida, but much higher than both Dunedin's and Gulfport's under-18 populations. Childcare, preschool, K-12 schools, and recreational services are very important for this age group and should be included in planning across both short-term and long-range horizons. Youth have special needs for planning, and these needs can be major drivers of economic development within a city. The lack of elderly population

against the two comparison cities further supports the strategy of planning for a younger demographic in Palmetto, to ensure future growth and to capture an underserved population in the area.

Table 3 highlights the racial diversity of Palmetto. Compared to Dunedin and Gulfport, Palmetto is much more diverse, with higher percentages of racial and ethnic minorities overall. The most significant difference seen here is in the Hispanic/Latino category. In Palmetto, 28.3% of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, compared with only 5.9% in Dunedin and 4.9% in Gulfport. This diversity is a great strength and allows for greater creativity in marketing. The city should make sure that any marketing strategy they choose reflects the makeup of its population, instilling city pride while attracting young people and tourists. Palmetto's housing statistics reveal that the city is not densely developed, and the median value of all housing stock in the city is relatively low. This deficiency represents a major opportunity. As the economy of Palmetto grows, housing will be needed to match the population, giving the City an opportunity to direct housing development in a way that will suit long-term (and especially mixed-use planning) needs.

Education statistics from Palmetto belie a significantly lower number of educated persons living within the city compared to national statistics, state statistics, and the two comparison cities of Gulfport and Dunedin. While the city does have a large youth population, this may imply youth are not going to college after graduation, or perhaps are going and not returning to Palmetto. This could lead to a significantly less stable future, and the attraction and retention of intellectual talent should be a priority. Palmetto is not the first city to experience "brain drain," or a loss of some of its brightest young people, and should look to examples of how cities developing culture, education, and amenities can help reverse the trend.

Health data reveal a surprising number of people without health insurance. This does coincide with poverty rates, but nonetheless represents a major challenge for the city in moving forward. Possible solutions include implementing plans and projects that promote healthy living and exercise -- this will not pay for citizens' insurance, of course, but it would be beneficial for everyone involved if more individuals could rely less on medical care.

Looking to business, these statistics show that the City of Palmetto has much higher total retail sales per capita than the areas around it, and these sales are still higher than average when compared to statewide and national statistics. It is unclear if this data is an anomaly, or perhaps attributable to misreporting. It could be a result of the yachting businesses in the marina; these large sales are outliers which could be skewing the results. More research is needed regarding retail data, particularly an analysis that does not include the yacht sales. According to business ownership information, though, Palmetto has a large portion of minority-owned business -- in fact, the total is about one-third. This is another revealing statistic for the City, again illustrating its diversity and presenting an opportunity to support these businesses through business-to-business (B2B) collaboration, small business incubators, or entrepreneur training centers.

The Census OnTheMap data shows that, unlike Dunedin and Gulfport, Palmetto has more people coming into the city for work than it has residents commuting elsewhere. More research and study is needed to find out the similarities and differences in the wants and needs of these two groups, but this is a good sign for the city's overall economic health.

Short-term and long-term planning should, of course, be based firstly on what the residents of

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Palmetto want. Recreation and entertainment, dining, and retail are some typical options, but to find out specifics, more direct research is recommended. Options that residents might want to see include bike shops or skate shops; fishing and outdoor supply stores; a general store; cafés, bakeries, or delis; or even a farmers' market or seafood market.

Next, those who do not live in Palmetto but commute in for work should be surveyed. What do they want to see in Palmetto? What would encourage them to spend their lunch hour enjoying all that Palmetto has to offer? And, are they already doing so, or do they get in and out as quickly as possible each day? Field research of this type could uncover ideas that would encourage this group to stay after work, perhaps to do some shopping or enjoy a dinner out with their families. If commuters enjoy working and spending time in Palmetto, then they may bring their families on the weekends for biking, hiking, or boating. If affordable housing options are available, these same commuters might even decide to move to Palmetto. It is important to have appropriate housing and retail options, reflective of the needs and income levels of the people who live (and want to live) in the city.



## BUSINESS ATTRACTION

This section of the report intends to provide Palmetto with information and recommendations regarding business attraction. It is divided into three sections, which include the following: signage, business attraction and marketing case studies, and an amphitheater case study.

Palmetto stands to benefit both economically and aesthetically from enhanced signage efforts in its downtown area. As a template, the city could look first to emulate the business attraction and retention strategies of Gulfport and Dunedin. This will help Palmetto build a solid foundation for its business community, from which the city can then develop a more unique and curated identity. Furthermore, Palmetto may wish to consider the case study of the St. Augustine Amphitheater, Inc. to build upon the groundwork laid by Sutton Park and its associated events. This particular amphitheater has undertaken some initiatives that Palmetto may be interested in adopting and customizing for its own purposes.

### Signage in Palmetto

Signs play four significant roles for brick and mortar businesses. First, signs communicate the location of businesses. This can spur impulse purchasing by pedestrians and encourages foot traffic overall. Second, signs help reinforce advertising. Signs allow a business to display a name or logo with which the business identifies. Third, signs brand a location. By branding a location, a business can build an atmosphere around its products or services. Fourth and finally, signs help enhance a business's image. Many business owners report that they do not feel the experience of ownership is even real until they have a customized sign. It is what communicates information to the public and what attracts their attention (Taylor, et al., 2012). Current signage in the downtown core could be a significant issue for visitors unfamiliar with the downtown area, and even for some residents who might not be aware of a business until it is mentioned in their social circles. Word of mouth alone is not a sustainable marketing strategy, even in a small, close-knit place such as Palmetto.

Research done separately by a restaurant, retail store, and interior design firm showed that proper signage has a positive influence on sales (Taylor, et al., 2012). Research suggests that signs are a more effective form of advertising than television, radio, or print; a study has shown that up to 50% of first-time passerby customers were influenced by signage, indicating a primary method of advertising. Signs also offer a fair chance at market share for everyone on the route (Jourdan, et al., 2013).

Fully appreciating the importance proper signage has for a business can reveal a method to the madness of sign codes. Ensuring proper and safe positioning is the core objective, but excessive codes can deter local businesses (Jourdan, et al., 2013). A balance must be struck so that businesses are encouraged and empowered to market themselves well.



Figure 11. This figure shows the businesses referred to above, highlighting the largest clusters of businesses on 10th Avenue W with pedestrian-oriented appeal. Note the visible signage, or current lack thereof. Photo taken from Google Maps, 2016.



Figure 12. This figure shows a pedestrian viewpoint, standing at the corner of 10th Avenue W and 5th Street W looking south toward the marina. Photo taken by Carl Benge, 2016.

Palmetto Ord. No. 273, § 3(B), 7-21-86 states that projecting signs should be less than thirty square feet, attached to the building support, at least twelve inches from the curb line, and less than thirty feet higher than the building's grade. For example, it states, "(b) Signs hanging under an awning, canopy, or enclosed walkway shall not exceed five (5) square feet and shall not have less than seven (7) feet clearance to the walkway below" (City of Palmetto, 2016). None of these present an issue with small, wall-mounted projecting or hanging signs.



Figure 13. This figure depicts an example street from a similar perspective, showing signs that identify locations. Photo taken from Google Maps, 2016.

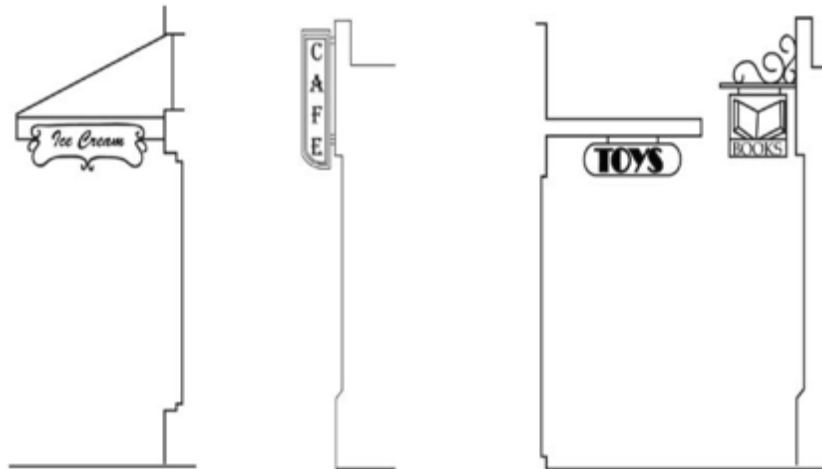


Figure 14. This figure shows four designs for projecting signs. These are not only easy to change, but also have simple designs that allow names or logos to be easily applied. Photo taken from Google Images, 2016.

### Business Attraction Case Studies

Dunedin and Gulfport, Florida were used here as precedent studies, highlighting major goals and themes that the City of Palmetto seeks to accomplish. Key elements were extracted from the comprehensive and economic development plans of both cities. Analyzing these key components may help uncover what the City of Palmetto needs to become a more successful, cohesively planned city.

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### **Case Study: Gulfport**

As part of the future land use element within the Comprehensive Plan for Gulfport, the City has assigned specific commercial classifications and special designation areas. The Commercial Area is broken down into four parts: (1) Commercial Neighborhood (CN), (2) Commercial Limited (CL), (3) Commercial Recreation (CR), and (4) Commercial General (CG).

Commercial neighborhood refers to an area, currently developed or appropriate for future development, that is planned according to a local, neighborhood scale (City of Gulfport, 1989). Primary uses of such an area consist of office space, retail, and commercial activity. Secondary uses are residential and public or semi-public areas. The commercial limited area is designed to allow the flow of commercial goods and services, served by a limited highway (City of Gulfport, 1989). Primary uses are business, retail, and commercial, while residential development is considered a secondary use (City of Gulfport, 1989). The primary use of the commercial recreation area includes the waterfront marina facilities; secondary uses include business, labeled as commercial or retail services (City of Gulfport, 1989).

Palmetto maintains a number of subcategories under commercial uses, indicating business diversity. When discussing mixed-use development and land use planning, however, it is notable that the neighboring cities of Dunedin and Gulfport, FL have considerably lower numbers of dwelling units. This tends to create a large buffer between the commercial and residential areas. These commercial areas are crucial to the city's economic base, and it would be reasonable to aim for a lessening of that buffer, bringing a more interactive and vibrant feeling to the business community of Palmetto. Of course, it is also important to enforce current regulations pertaining to preserving the character of the community, especially in residential areas.

The future land use element also contains a series of goals, objectives, and policies with which the City and those that develop within the city must comply. These policies are created to broaden the economic base by conducting feasibility studies, and to limit development and/or redevelopment in target areas through incentives.

### **Case Study: Dunedin**

The City of Dunedin has created an Economic Development Master Plan, which identifies major components of the city's economic base. The City strongly encourages entrepreneurship and local businesses, especially those businesses with corporate headquarters already located in the city that are looking to expand operations internally (City of Dunedin, 2013a).

The primary goal of the Economic Development Master Plan for the City of Dunedin is to diversify the local economy. Pinellas County Economic Development (PCED) has created a comprehensive program for business professionals in the community who are looking to create start-up companies. PCED offers classes to help newly established businesses design a business plan, assist with accounting and marketing tools, advise on website management, and issue micro loans. Specific guidelines have also been put in place to ensure that these start-up companies do not disrupt the current character of the community (City of Dunedin, 2013b). Encouraging home-based businesses in Palmetto could be a way to extend these programs, with major potential benefits for both the aging population and younger business professionals.

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The City of Dunedin acknowledges that retaining business in the community is just as crucial to economic growth as attracting new businesses can be. They have implemented a system in which City officials must reach out to businesses personally. The aim is to gather primary-source data regarding the current business climate, and to identify any suggestions that owners might have for a more profitable or business-friendly Dunedin. Face-to-face meetings are preferred in this strategy, but if there are logistical concerns a direct mailing or e-mailing system can be employed (City of Dunedin, 2013b). Business visitation programs between city council members and community enterprises are highly encouraged as a retention strategy; these programs provide consistent monitoring and evaluation, a key ingredient to ensuring smart growth. Furthermore, strengthening ties between community businesses and local government is considered an essential component to a strong financial community base (City of Dunedin, 2013b). Below is an example of the type of document that a business may receive during such a "retention visit":

Questions for a Dunedin business retention visit:

- How satisfied are you with Dunedin?
- What problems are you having here?
- How can we serve you?
- What financial and regulatory incentives would make your life here easier?
- What are some creative ways we can make you eager to stay and expand here?
- How can we increase quality of life for your executives and your employees?
- What developments in your industry will dictate how prosperous your company will be in the coming years?

While the loss of a business from time to time will occur, it is important to gain feedback to gauge overall satisfaction regarding doing business in Dunedin.

Figure 16. This figure shows an example of a business retention survey in Dunedin.

The City of Dunedin prioritizes areas that need to be redeveloped based on SWOT analysis -- a graphic analysis organized into these categories: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. From there, plans are created for any corridors that have been identified as a top opportunity. Incentives are provided to businesses looking to develop and/or redevelop in preferred areas, helping entrepreneurs to decide on a location and to conform to the most current code regulations.

<b>GOAL 1: DIVERSIFY LOCAL ECONOMY</b>			
<b>Overall Strategy for the City of Dunedin</b>			
Along with reviewing Dunedin City-wide, the areas which hold the most promise for economic development in the City are the seven (7) commercial corridors. These areas were studied from a SWOT perspective and strategies were developed to achieve Dunedin's overall goals of increasing revenue, creating jobs, diversifying its economic base and boosting tourism.			
Below is a list of areas and the corresponding objectives, strategies, and performance measures that go along with the corridors identified.			
1.	Downtown	5.	Dunedin Causeway
2.	Patricia Avenue	6.	State Road 580
3.	Douglas Avenue	7.	U. S. Alternate 19
4.	MLK Industrial Area		

Figure 17. This figure shows the results of a SWOT analysis done by the City of Dunedin.

Area/Industry	Grant/Incentive	Funding Source	Outcome
Patricia Avenue	\$10,000 Matching Façade \$3,000 Site Plan Assistance \$10,000 Demolition Grant	Economic Development	Private Investment Overall Ambience Retention/Recruitment Tool Encourage Adaptive Reuse Build Tax Base
Life Sciences Company	\$10,000 Matching Façade \$5,000 Site Plan Assistance \$10,000 Demolition Grant	Economic Development	Build Tax Base Recruitment
Information Technology	\$10,000 Matching Façade \$5,000 Site Plan Assistance \$10,000 Demolition Grant	Economic Development	Build Tax Base Recruitment
Alternative Energy	\$10,000 Matching Façade \$5,000 Site Plan Assistance \$10,000 Demolition Grant	Economic Development	Build Tax Base Recruitment
Business & Financial Services	\$10,000 Matching Façade \$5,000 Site Plan Assistance \$10,000 Demolition Grant	Economic Development	Build Tax Base Recruitment
375 Patricia Avenue Former Nielsen Tract	Brownfield Designation QTI	Economic Development	Recruitment Tool
Douglas Avenue	Enhancement Project \$5,000 Matching Façade \$3,000 Site Plan Assistance \$10,000 Demolition Grant	Economic Development	Private Investment Build Tax Base Job Creation Retention/Recruitment

Figure 18. This figure highlights classifications of high-priority corridors in Dunedin.

Figure 18 is an example of how corridors of high priority can be further classified, designating specific areas for specific industries, as well as providing information about the types of grants for which particular businesses may qualify, where the funding should come from, and how the area would positively be impacted by these changes (City of Dunedin, 2013b). This is explained further in the Incentives Overlay section of this proposal.

When considering corridors for SWOT analysis in Palmetto, the first area of interest should be 10th Avenue, as will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter of this document. 10th Avenue is currently the main street in Palmetto, and it is intended to be the heart of the city. Once a thorough analysis of this corridor is completed, it will open up possibilities for a SWOT treatment and further analyses around complementary corridors.

### Case Study: St. Augustine Amphitheater

As Palmetto continues working to attract new businesses and long-term residents, the City should capitalize on one of its greatest strengths: its community parks and other public

facilities. These include Sutton Park, Lamb Park, and Palmetto Historical Park. In particular, Sutton Park offers historic buildings, exhibits, special events, and a large covered amphitheater (City of Palmetto, 2016). Palmetto has hosted increasingly successful events throughout the life of this park. In 2014, the Taste of Manatee and the DeSoto Seafood Festival moved to Sutton Park from Bradenton's Riverwalk -- a victory for economic development. The decision was primarily based on ease of parking, decreased costs, and the amount of space available for each event (Young, 2014). Even more recently, Palmetto succeeded in booking the multi-platinum band SmashMouth for their annual 4th of July bash at Sutton Park. The free concert complimented a range of family friendly activities in the area (Staff Report, 2016).

While Palmetto has some experience with hosting in this capacity, the time is right to study the example of other successful amphitheater projects, particularly those with more consistent bookings and longer running programs. St. Augustine is one Florida town that proactively utilizes its amphitheater, and for this proposal it will serve as a useful point of comparison for Palmetto.

### **History and Unique Initiatives**

The St. Augustine Amphitheater was built in 1965 and covers a 16-acre section of Anastasia State Park. The St. Johns County Cultural Events Division operates the amphitheater. It seats approximately 4100 people, after a refurbishment in 2002 with the help of St. Johns County, and includes a conference room, a merchandise area, a plaza, and four concession stands. The St. Augustine Amphitheater hosts a variety of well-known musicians (e.g., Matchbox Twenty, Silversun Pickups) as well as other events, including outdoor movie screenings, farmers' markets, an annual winter festival, and St. Johns County Fairgrounds events (St. Johns Cultural Events Division, 2016).

### **Friends of the St. Augustine Amphitheater, Inc.**

It is important to consider the types of support that allowed the St. Augustine Amphitheater to rise to its current level of success. One of the key components is involvement with the community and residents in St. Johns County through the Friends of the St. Augustine Amphitheater, Inc. (FOSAA). This nonprofit organization was founded in 2009 and helps to make the venue accessible to residents and other local organizations. FOSAA has an all-volunteer board of directors, separate from St. Johns County and the Cultural Events Division, and gains financial support from corporate sponsors and individual supporters.

Some examples of its initiatives include sponsoring a free, weeklong Children's Music and Arts Camp; hosting a free Children's Art Festival with activities led by local artists and musicians; funding a "Lost Skills Workshop" for a local Girl Scout Troop, allowing them to share their knowledge; and sponsoring a free community performance of the Air Force Band and Singing Sergeants. In turn, these outreach programs help FOSAA to become visible and active in the community, while promoting the amphitheater as a solid foundation for community life (Friends of the St. Augustine Amphitheater, Inc., 2015).



Figure 19. This figure depicts St. Augustine Amphitheater in Anastasia Park. Photo taken from Google Images, 2016

### **“Green Hands” Initiative**

The St. Johns County Cultural Events Division began the “Green Hands” Initiative with the 2016 concert season, working with the community and the concert industry to minimize the depletion of local resources and to reduce unnecessary waste. One program under this umbrella initiative includes the “One Less Plastic Bottle” Program, under which the amphitheater successfully eliminated the use of disposable plastic water bottles. Forgoing bottle sales in favor of boxed water at concessions, the venue also installed filtered water bottle refill stations to encourage visitors to bring their own reusable containers. Another program involves significant recycling and compost efforts: bins containing recycling and refuse materials are hand-sorted by staff at the end of each event. The St. Augustine Amphitheater has also installed a large, three-bin compost station for all clean backstage food waste. The compost from this station is then used to fertilize a seven-bed staff garden, which offers seasonal and organic produce. Finally, Green Hands has also implemented a transition away from LED bulbs. Benefits include reducing carbon emissions and reducing electricity consumption (St. Johns Cultural Events Division, 2016).

These initiatives all work in concert to make this public space a more sustainable, economically viable amenity -- and Palmetto has the capacity to extend these ideas even further as Sutton Park and other outdoor venues grow along with the city. Hodges & Stevens (2013) estimate that the St. Augustine Amphitheater attracted nearly 100,000 attendees who spent an estimated \$12.8 million dollars in St. Johns County, which resulted in millions in revenue for county businesses, particularly restaurants, lodging, shopping, food stores, and gas stations. If Palmetto can continue to be successful in this area, social, environmental, and economic benefits could be considerable.

### **Conclusion**

Palmetto can maximize economic as well as aesthetic impact in its core downtown environment through efforts to improve signage, and it can implement strategies undertaken by

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neighboring, comparable cities like Gulfport and Dunedin. At the same time, Palmetto should build upon its existing base of events in Sutton Park by adapting unique programs from St. Augustine's Amphitheater and by tapping into the community's own entertainment needs. While Palmetto does not need to replicate any other city's model, it can benefit by examining the case studies above and customizing these strategies to work toward its goal of becoming a place with vitality and a high quality of life.



## RETHINKING INCENTIVES

The City of Palmetto and its downtown area have the potential to benefit from a variety of new incentives directed at encouraging the growth of both existing and new businesses, based around the area's current strengths. Palmetto is uniquely positioned in an area of Florida that is projected to grow in population and business in the coming decades. To ensure that the City of Palmetto benefits from regional growth in the coming years, a variety of business and development incentives are proposed that have been vetted for both their applicability to the area as well as their proven results in other parts of the state. These incentives provide grants, tax credits, assistance, and even land to existing and potential businesses that qualify so that they can remain competitive, which in turn helps Palmetto grow. Before diving into how these incentives are structured, their goals, their variations, and their applicability to Palmetto, this report gives an analysis of Palmetto's current industrial base. This will set a baseline understanding of Palmetto's current strengths and weaknesses. With a clear understanding of Palmetto's current industrial base, the City can potentially offer bonus amounts for the same or different incentives to help amplify economic growth. Overall, the following incentive recommendations constitute a fairly complete list of proven, yet fresh and attractive

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development tools designed to help Palmetto prosper.

## Sector Analysis and Target Industries

### Summary of Current Economic Base

Every firm, no matter how big or small, is part of an industrial sector. Understanding the composition as well as relative size of these sectors -- both locally and regionally -- is instrumental in identifying comparative advantages, the existence of certain labor specialties, or even large areas of weakness that may be hampering growth. Development experts consider the industries that produce goods and services sold outside the local economy to be the most crucial to local economic growth since they generate an inflow of income (Leigh & Blakely, 2002). These industries are commonly referred to as an area's "economic base," also known as an "export base." The income generated by these industries sustains the economy that is local-serving. Ideally, economic development will occur as an area attracts or helps to establish these wealth producing industries; however, to understand which industries can be best suited to this area, a brief snapshot of the current industry and occupation landscape is provided in the tables below.

Industry	Receipts (1000s of \$) in 2012
Retail trade*	251,943
Utilities**	0
Information**	0
Finance and Insurance	0

Table 11. This table shows remaining receipts by industry in Palmetto, taken from the 2012 Economic Census.

\* Excluded from table since the outlier skewed the results.

\*\* Data not available.

Industry/Sub Industry	Total Employed
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	33
Construction	447
Manufacturing	479
Wholesale trade	97
Retail trade	912
Transportation and warehousing	146
Utilities	29
Information	66

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Finance and insurance	116
Real estate and rental and leasing	25
Professional, scientific, and technical services	218
Management of companies and enterprises	0
Administrative and support and waste management services	372
Educational services	355
Health care and social assistance	670
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	109
Accommodation and food service	401
Other services, except public administration	316
Public administration	251
Total	5,042

Table 12. This table shows total employment by industry, taken from the 2014 ACS Census.

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Ratio of Receipts to Establishments</b>
Retail trade	\$4199
Transportation and warehousing	\$3341
Wholesale trade	\$1262
Manufacturing	\$1219
Health care and social assistance	\$1167
Administrative and waste management	\$1005
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	\$834
Accommodation and food services	\$828
Other services	\$479

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Professional and technical services	\$414
Real estate and rental and leasing	\$274
Educational services	\$183
Utilities	\$ -
Information	\$ -
Finance and insurance	\$ -

Table 13. This table shows the ratio of receipts to establishments by industry, taken from the 2012 Economic Census and original calculations.

The largest industries in Palmetto include (listed beside their relative rank by number of establishments, annual receipts): retail trade (1, 1), professional services (2, 9), healthcare (4, 2), hospitality (5, 5), manufacturing (6, 4), and transportation (11, 3); high ranking "other services" (3, 6) will not be reviewed due to lack of detailed data (Table 13). While from an initial read, many of these industries sound to be local-serving (e.g. retail trade, hospitality), further analysis should clarify some of the more ambiguous categories (e.g. professional services, manufacturing) and include other industries ranking lower in terms of the number of establishments and employees.

To get a general idea of the size of these establishments, the industries with the highest total receipts to establishments ratios include: retail trade, transportation, wholesale trade, manufacturing, healthcare, and administrative management (Table 13). Retail trade continues to dominate Palmetto's economy, and healthcare remains high in the ranking, but there are a few additional inferences to be made. Wholesale trade and administrative management appear to have high levels of receipts per establishment; moreover, these industries were in neither of the two prior rankings. However, this may simply be due to the nature of these industries, perhaps because there is a larger minimum scale required to be profitable. An analysis to determine the true economic base and individual multipliers of these respective industries is beyond the scope of this report.

<b>Occupation/Sub-Occupation</b>	<b>Total Employed</b>
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	1,373
---Management, business, finance	495
---Computer, engineering, science	129
---Education, legal, community service, arts, media	443
---Healthcare practitioner, technical	306
Service occupations	1,119
--Healthcare support	196
--Protective service	90

--Food preparation and serving	346
---Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	370
---Personal care and service	117
Sales and office occupations	1,375
---Sales and related	785
---Office and administrative support	590
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	530
---Farming, fishing, and forestry	43
---Construction and extraction	315
---Installation, maintenance, and repair	172
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	645
---Production	415
---Transportation	148
---Material moving	82
Total	5,042

Table 14. This table shows employment data for Palmetto, categorized by occupation and drawn from the 2014 ACS Census.

The largest industries by employment in Palmetto include: education and healthcare, retail, professional services, arts and entertainment, manufacturing, and construction. Education and healthcare employ over 1,000 individuals, while retail employs over 900. The next four largest industries all employ between 400 and 600 individuals each (Table 12). A summary by occupation type and details by sub-industry are also included here (Table 14).

A newer trend in economic analysis focuses on occupations as a driver of the economic base, particularly for occupations that are perceived to generate new forms of economic activity or fuel entrepreneurship. Table 14 reflects the information necessary for this analysis, so that when considering the possible target industries or any single instance of a relocation to Palmetto, the number of individuals already working in similar occupations can be determined.

For an example of how to apply this information, consider that when many employees are already in the labor force for a given industry or occupation, then the training and education base of the area may be adequate to support these industries, whereas if the number of employees is low, then new training programs may be required.

### Analysis

An analysis tool called the location quotient is used by experts to identify the concentration of an industry sector in a local economy relative to a larger economy (e.g. Manatee County, or the state of Florida). The measure captures the relative size of industries in an area such as Palmetto. It does not indicate which industries may be growing or declining. Specifically, the ratio is calculated as (employment in local industry X / total local employment) / (employment in reference area industry X / total reference area employment). If the ratio is

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greater than 1, it means that the local area has a higher concentration of an industry than the reference area. Generally, a ratio of 1 would mean that the two areas have the same concentration and each are meeting the industry demand within their areas.

Ratios greater than 1.25 and 0.75 would merit further analysis, because the former implies a relative export base and the latter a relative weakness or a gap that is typically filled by imports. Industry sectors with ratios of greater than 1 have the most potential to stimulate growth in the overall economy. Those with ratios less than 0.75 also deserve attention because they can offer opportunities for import substitution development strategies.

Industry/Sub-Industry	LQ Manatee	LQ Florida
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.487	0.639
Construction	1.328	1.365
Manufacturing	1.235	1.806
Wholesale trade	0.722	0.664
Retail trade	1.265	1.349

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Transportation, warehousing, and utilities:	0.931	0.687
--Transportation and warehousing	0.966	0.680
--Utilities	0.786	0.726
Information	0.896	0.647
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	0.387	0.367
--Finance and insurance	0.529	0.473
--Real estate and rental and leasing	0.172	0.180
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	0.925	0.931
--Professional, scientific, and technical services	0.711	0.660
--Management of companies and enterprises	0.000	0.000
--Administrative and support and waste management services	1.134	1.239
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	0.917	0.952
--Educational services	0.897	0.876
--Health care and social assistance	0.929	0.998
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	0.970	0.842
--Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.958	0.723
--Accommodation and food services	0.974	0.882
Other services, except public administration	1.187	1.152
Public administration	1.168	1.048

Table 15. This table depicts the Location Quotient (LQ) by industry for Manatee County and Florida.

Legend
Greater than 1.25
Greater than 1.00, less than 1.25
Greater than 0.75, less than 1.00
Greater than 0.75, less than 0.50

For the City of Palmetto, location quotients were calculated for the reference areas of Manatee County and the state of Florida; these results are summarized in Table 15. The industries that have location quotients of greater than 1.25 include, in no particular order: construction, manufacturing, and retail trade. Industries with a ratio of greater than 1, but not quite 1.25, include (again in no order): public administration, administrative support, waste management, and "other services." In contrast, there are a handful of industries that come in below 0.75, and even below 0.50. These are also summarized in the table.

### Target Industry Recommendations

Given the current strength of the construction, manufacturing and retail trade industries, the primary recommendation is to direct attraction efforts and incentives to these industries. There can be many benefits to building upon Palmetto's existing strengths. An important example of such benefits is the comparatively lower cost of doing business for new or expanding firms. The existence of a labor pool with the relevant skills, the proven economics of supply networks, as well as benefits from healthy competition can all contribute to a larger bottom line for firms in these target industries. When similar firms can share a location, their ability to share knowledge and technologies improves -- which continues to stimulate the growth of these businesses and industries.

Additionally, given the relative weakness of a handful of industries, further attention and analysis should be directed at making sure that the scarcity of these businesses in Palmetto is not holding the city back from achieving its potential growth. For instance, the industry of agriculture is weaker in Palmetto compared to that of Bradenton and the state of Florida. This calculated weakness may simply be due to the presence of Tropicana in Bradenton and a large agricultural economy statewide; however, it is worthwhile to investigate why there is a weakness here. If it turns out that Palmetto's once-thriving agricultural industry has actually weakened to a large extent, then it may be worthwhile to make minor investments in agriculture that can capitalize on some of the existing infrastructure, skills base, and labor for a fraction of the total cost. In the same example, if Palmetto is able to produce or provide more resources for local consumption, this would be called import substitution and is valuable since the funds presently paying for food or resources are currently paid to other firms outside the city. In addition to keeping business in Palmetto, this import substitution may reduce the cost of the goods, allow Palmetto firms more control and visibility into their supply chains, and give consumers more pride and transparency in the goods they purchase.

When it comes to building on current strengths or reducing weaknesses, a key driver of economic growth will be the multiplier effect that results from focusing on these industries. To provide a quick definition, the multiplier effect refers to an economic change that occurs (e.g. in income or employment) as a result of an exogenous act (such as more government spending or a company relocation). Multipliers are typically measured on three levels. The first is the direct effect, or economic growth that is produced as a result of a change. Second is the indirect effect,

which can include jobs and production (within the region) added to produce goods and services that support direct economic growth. Third is the induced effect, which can include jobs and production (within the region) added to meet additional demand generated by the wages of the indirect effect employees, who are in turn supporting the direct growth.

All of this is important for Palmetto because the more an economy sources its supplies and labor from the local economy, the greater the possible multiplier effect. Money goes directly to Palmetto businesses and employees, creating added income for them, which they spend in Palmetto, working through the three layers of the multiplier. Whether this activity is coming from new firms in current sector strengths or weaknesses, the multiplier effects still occur. These recommendations do not lean solely on theoretical economic development, but the basic examples presented above are proven phenomena which Palmetto can capitalize on.

## **Incentive Recommendations**

### **Façade Improvement Program**

Many CRAs and specialized districts have instituted façade improvement programs to help current or future property owners improve the appearance of their residential or commercial establishments. These programs also aim to indirectly stimulate private investment and complement other community redevelopment efforts. Operationally, façade improvement programs typically require the property owner to fund a portion (often half, up to a cap) of the costs of the improvement, and in turn the program's administrator provides a matching grant or loan, a tax incentive, and potentially design assistance. The total value of the matching funds or assistance often have specific limits that vary program to program. For example, the cities of Tallahassee, FL and Melbourne, FL both have façade improvement programs which cap matching funds at \$50,000 and \$20,000, respectively. Most programs require the recipients of matching funds to submit an application of their plans and adhere to a set of codified design standards to ensure compliance with any guidelines already in the area (e.g. historic district or other overlay); this explains why design assistance is often coupled with these programs.

Another key element of successful façade improvement programs is a clear prescription of the eligible area as well as permitted improvement projects. Furthermore, if a specific design code is to be adhered to, for example the City of Palmetto Downtown Redevelopment Code, it should be included in information given to the business. Property owners should be able to easily determine if they are eligible under the program and, if so, what projects can they undertake.

The City of Palmetto, and specifically the greater 10th Avenue area, can benefit from a continued façade improvement program. After delineating specific boundaries, the program should also specify the types of projects and improvements eligible to receive support from the administrator. Typically grant or loan funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and tax incentives are also capped in a handful of ways (e.g. total value of exemptions, total term of benefit). Therefore, in establishing the total funding pool for the program, administrators should consider the total number of eligible properties within the area to ensure there could be funds or incentives available to many participants -- but not so many that financial resources would be spread too thinly.

Depending on the financial means of the eligible businesses, improvement projects may

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take many forms and may be conducted in successive waves on the same property (availability of funds and program rules permitting). Façade improvement programs may restrict businesses to receiving the maximum value of matching funds within a certain time, and this eligibility may reset after a number of years beyond an initial improvement's completion. Projects by businesses with small budgets or as part of a series of improvements may initially focus on signage, painting, awnings, windows, doors, and other basic components. Larger or future investments may include projects such as re-siding, restoration of historical elements, incorporation of historic materials, public art or amenities (e.g. benches, lighting), landscaping, paving, or even full renovations.

Additionally, these projects can help the local economy by hiring Palmetto-sourced contractors or designers, which can be included as part of a program stipulation or even a secondary incentive. Lastly, a façade improvement program may directly contribute to achieving one of the goals set out in the Comprehensive Plan, which states "incentives to invest in the redevelopment area shall be offered to the extent necessary to correct existing blight and increase the tax base."

On the surface, it may seem that grants for aesthetic improvements do not directly address improving business investment. However, looking at the City of Melbourne across the state, in two of their CRAs that also have façade programs, both show the anticipated (or greater) investment from private funds. According their 2015 annual report, one business took part in the program for a matching \$52,000 grant and four grants are planned for 2016, which will leverage \$200,000 in private investment. In another CRA, two businesses took part in the program for a combined matching amount of \$33,000 that leveraged over \$510,000 in private investment. The annual report did not include data on the immediate effects of the renovations. A report in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Dollar & Sense (1995) series found the following impacts:

- Commercial building improvements resulted in an increase in sales in the year after the improvements were made,
- Sales improvements were sustained for several years,
- Sales increases exceeded increases in local taxes,
- The improvements attracted new businesses and shoppers to the target area,
- Participants were often motivated to make additional improvements (such as to interior spaces or product lines), and
- Owners/tenants of properties and businesses in surrounding areas were motivated to make improvements.

### **Job Creation Bonus Program**

Redevelopment areas commonly include some element of a job creation bonus program, especially if there are existing buildings for businesses to rent or buy in the targeted area. The purpose of job creation programs is to assist expanding or new businesses seeking to grow or locate within a targeted area, while supporting higher-than-average wages. Furthermore, when these job creation incentives are limited to specific areas, they can help discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl (a stated goal in the Comprehensive Plan) and development on cheap land at the periphery of cities, while also attracting targeted industries and new jobs. Job

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creation incentives are also typically restricted to commercial (and sometimes industrial) businesses instead of retail, due to generally higher wages. Job creation bonus programs often specify the commercial industries they are targeting, as well. For instance, the Delray Beach CRA lists the following higher-paying industries as targets for job creation: information technology, life sciences, financial services, clean energy, and emerging technologies. Earning these higher wages will help employees to support other local businesses with their patronage, according to the multiplier theory outlined above.

Job creation programs often set a minimum number of positions that have to be created in order to be eligible for the incentive, and they may set requirements for successive years of employment. Additionally, these programs can dictate that the wages paid must meet or exceed some threshold; for example, the Delray Beach's CRA specifies wages must be 115% of the county average, whereas other cities may offer a base incentive and additional funds if wages exceed 150% of the average. Further, programs sometimes specify that the newly created jobs must have employee-provided health coverage and retirement plans, or at least the option to buy into them.

Typically, these bonus programs will pay out over a specified period as a grant. To ensure that businesses have their employees' interests in mind and are not just hoping to reap the benefits of the incentive, the City can make a couple of stipulations. The easiest would mandate that the total number of full-time employees has to remain the same or grow for a certain number of years following the receipt of the grant. Second -- and these can be used together -- is that a specified percentage of wages will be paid out over a period to the business. This percentage can increase if businesses locate within newly developed buildings (perhaps on vacant land), or on specified sites or corridors, since the base percentage would likely apply to the full CRA. In this scenario, it is helpful for program administrators to specify what wage (e.g. starting wage) the percentage is tied to, as well as any maximum benefit the business could be eligible to receive -- either as an aggregate or per new job. Some CRAs tie other stipulations into job creation efforts, as evidenced by the need to satisfy one or more of these additional requirements in the Titusville program: increase the leasable space of the property, reduce vacant land, complete renovations or construction with a positive visual impact, renovate a historic structure, or increase property value or TIF revenues.

Palmetto's current list of incentives places an emphasis on hiring local contractors of various trades during any redevelopment project; however, by instating a program that also incentivizes new hires, the future workforce composition of Palmetto is strengthened alongside current professions. Furthermore, many of the tie-in requirements listed in the Downtown Redevelopment program would contribute to other goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, including the redevelopment of historic properties, as well as the reuse of existing properties through business expansions. Bringing jobs downtown is a key step in the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use downtown area. Job creation programs intend to attract or expand enterprise, as well as retain jobs, population, activity, and community for the long term.

As the City of Palmetto looks to grow into the future, the attraction of high-paying jobs should complement current living-wage retail and contractor jobs. Again, bringing jobs downtown will help support downtown merchants and restaurants year-round and throughout the day. In addition, higher wage positions will strengthen the city's tax base and the economic

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well-being of the local residents. While many job creation programs accompany brownfield redevelopment programs, it is also important to support the expansion of hiring by existing businesses or for new businesses that may not have the capital to invest in a brownfield site. Attracting businesses of varying sizes is a key component of creating a diverse, lively downtown area.

### **Land Value Investment Program**

Encouraging development throughout a specific area helps the City shape the corridor to their preferred look; negative perception of an area is sometimes hard to overcome, but with the persistence of the City and the developers that image can change and attract other businesses. Properties have been abandoned or foreclosed on throughout the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), a trend which stifles development. To reverse this trend, the CRA has the option of acquiring and rehabilitating the properties that are most likely to encourage private investment. This requires setting up a CRA land value investment program. Property values and the marketability of surrounding properties will go up as a result of this program, further shaping this particular corridor. The businesses the CRA seeks to attract should be those that provide services and jobs the area needs, especially providing jobs that match skill levels of the residents. This program is a real estate development incentive for eligible projects within the CRA.

Eligible developers may be public or private, but must meet the requirements the city has for the downtown area, including plans for multi-use buildings. For example, the City of Delray Beach set specific requirements on the percentages of a building that may be commercial and noncommercial in its downtown core. A minimum of 50% of the net floor area must be Class A office space, while a minimum of 75% net floor area must be non-residential space. Developers who take part in the program to receive assistance from the CRA are subject to Delray Beach's regulations and aesthetics.

The program is designed for the CRA to invest its own land under a long-term lease, with the intent to expedite development while transforming the downtown area. High-wage jobs that complement the existing service sector are hard to attract, even though the downtown area is growing and becoming a more attractive option for conducting business. Furthermore, encouraging development of the CRA land is difficult without having office space already built. To correct this, the CRA offers an initial lease of up to forty years for the developer, which can be extended another twenty years, and the developer has the option to buy the land at any time. The first fifteen years are at a discounted market rate; however, the percentage the developer pays of the appraised value of the land increases every five years during this period.

Palmetto's CRA owns land that is currently vacant or not being used to better the downtown area, for example by optimizing parking. Land-lease investment could be a way to encourage businesses and developers to rethink the downtown area, including everything from character to traffic flow. Minimums for office and retail space can be set, requiring developers to employ mixed-use design and create public spaces. Land leasing would also provide the opportunity to encourage development that heightens the small town atmosphere currently existing along 10th Avenue. With these programs, Palmetto would exert greater influence on the types of developments that go in along 10th Avenue to cultivate the area however the City sees

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fit.

## **Downtown Site Development Assistance**

### **Impact Fee Overlay District**

When assessing sites for a new project, land development costs can play a significant role in a developer's decision making process. In order to attract new development, the City must understand the constraints that deter developers from bringing their next project into town. Looking at multi-family residential impact fees (including water, sewer, fire, police and transportation fees), a comparison between the City of Palmetto and the Cities of Clearwater, Dunedin and Bradenton shows that the City of Palmetto, on average, has higher impact fee assessments. To encourage development where desired (particularly on 10th Avenue), an overlay district could be adopted to provide significant reduction or elimination of impact fees within the desired area. At the same time, the impact fees could be marginally increased over the rest of the city to offset potential revenue losses. Specifically, the disincentive created by increased transportation and utility impact fees on the fringes of the city reduces the potential for sprawling developments that would ultimately require utility extensions and increase traffic.

### **Capital Improvement Cost Sharing**

Off-site improvement requirements are another hindrance to new project attraction because they create additional costs, which developers may see as an unjustifiable risk. To avoid this and to encourage redevelopment of the 10th Avenue corridor, the City could incentivize desired developments in two ways: first, by providing upgraded roads, drainage, and utilities where redevelopment is expected or desired. Since it can be difficult to predict exactly how development will unfold, this would limit requirements for the private sector within the downtown area and provide almost all off-site improvements, which would adhere to a logical timetable and construction standards. Second, to ensure timely completion of off-site improvements, the City could also provide reimbursement for construction of off-site requirements if the developer enters an agreement with the City.

### **Development Tax Reduction**

Savvy developers often take advantage of Federal and State tax reduction programs to make developments feasible. However, due to eligibility limits on Federal and State tax reductions, the City of Palmetto may wish to provide a localized property tax reduction for those developments within the 10th Avenue corridor that meet the City's needs (i.e. multi-family mixed use). Although such tax breaks may reduce the City's revenue, the theory behind this incentive is based on the belief that portions of the 10th Avenue corridor are either blighted or vacant. If this is the case, the property values are not nearly as high as they could be. So, by providing tax breaks to new projects that meet the criteria, the parcels are still being improved upon and should ultimately generate more revenue than they currently do. The City could also provide greater property tax reductions for housing developments that provide rent controls or workforce housing. These meet an important need in Palmetto and should be considered a serious investment into the present and future.

### **Solar Energy Program**

Solar energy has become increasingly popular in recent years, even surpassing the cost effectiveness of traditional energy sources in 2016 (Coren, 2016). Alternative energy is sustainable and can reduce energy spending for both residential and commercial uses. To offset initial costs, many manufacturers offer rebates for installing commercial or residential systems, and cities can offer further compensation to private owners as well. Physically, solar panels are angled to receive the maximum amount of sunlight per day, making them effective enough to provide energy for an entire building or household. Many solar panels store enough energy to compensate for blackouts, and the owner of the panels even has the secondary opportunity to sell excess energy for a profit. While the initial outlay for installation may seem daunting, the reduction in monthly energy costs and the long-term affordability make this a profitable venture.

Looking to an example from the state capital, the City of Tallahassee and Tampa Electric offer solar loans for both commercial and residential uses. The City of Tallahassee also offers solar loans for home solar panel systems up to \$20,000, provided that the panels can be certified by Florida Solar Energy Center. Over the lifetime of the system, the homeowner pays back the loan at a 5% interest rate. Tampa Electric has set aside \$1.5 million in its budget to go towards the area investments, paying two dollars per watt for a solar panel system up to \$20,000. Palmetto can design a similar loan structure with local utility companies to incentivize its residents.

As an added consideration, Florida is a net metering state: this means that any unused electricity produced by a homeowner's or business's solar panel system is saved until the owners need it. The owners may also sell the excess energy at its full value, which serves as encouragement for businesses and residents to engage in these more sustainable practices. Many people state they want to drive their cars less to reduce emissions; solar panels produce no emissions. Solar panels can also reduce electric bills, because the cost per unit of energy is lower than what the electric company typically charges. This results in further savings, always a key selling point for business and home owners. Finally, solar panels require minimal to no maintenance, another attractive feature to those who wish to simplify their lives while reducing the negative externalities of business.

Palmetto has demonstrated an active interest in its future and a desire to compete with surrounding cities. Given its location on the sunny Florida coast, the city has great potential to capitalize on an upcoming solar energy boom, and through this program Palmetto would become a local leader in sustainable practices.

### **Conclusion**

The City of Palmetto should enact new incentives, as highlighted in the above recommendations, directed at encouraging the growth of both existing firms as well as new entrants to ensure a balanced redevelopment. Additionally, there is a need to selectively target incentives towards the industries that can generate the most growth. To ensure that the City of Palmetto benefits from regional growth in the coming years, a variety of business and development incentives will be required; this diversity of strategies will allow Palmetto to attract

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its share of the expected growth, and to support businesses of all sizes. These incentives can help businesses remain competitive, which in turn helps them remain in Palmetto. With a clear understanding of the current industrial base, the City has the additional option to offer incentives to specific industries to help amplify this economic growth. This list of incentive recommendations constitute proven, attractive development tools tailored to help Palmetto prosper.

## 10TH AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT

The City of Palmetto has already taken steps to focus development along 10th Avenue and the city's broader downtown core. The results of these steps are documented in the May 2007 report titled "City of Palmetto Downtown Design Guidelines," which is organized around various elements of urban form, including open spaces, landscaping, building placement and block and lot characteristics. The document also discusses design specifics aimed at discouraging crime. Each section is accompanied by a list of what the city considers appropriate and inappropriate design elements for the downtown core, illustrated with several pictures and diagrams (Figure 20). The council may wish to refer to this document alongside the following proposal for 10th Avenue; current guidelines resemble what other cities have accomplished by introducing form-based code.

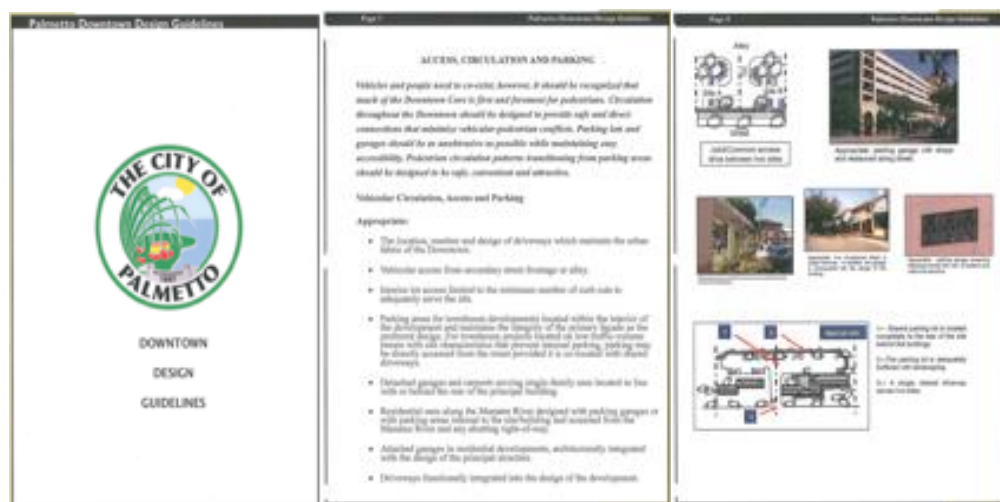


Figure 20. This figure displays the current structure of Palmetto's Design Guidelines, created in 2007.

### Design Code

"Downtown Design Guidelines" (2007) represented a first step toward providing a vision for Palmetto's revitalization. However, its format has proven cumbersome as a regulatory tool, an issue that has likely confused city officials and developers alike. In March 2013, the Planning and Zoning Board proposed an amendment to zoning ordinances aimed at streamlining the process. It changed the name of the guidelines to "Downtown Core Design Code," clarified that

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“appropriate” design features were in fact required and “inappropriate” features were prohibited, and allowed developers to present alternatives to the guidelines that are still subject to review by the city planner and CRA director. This concrete language should improve the decision-making process going forward.

## **Incentives**

In June 2013, the CRA published the related “Downtown Commercial Core Redevelopment Incentives 2.0,” a document that outlines incentives for redevelopment within Palmetto’s downtown core. Incentives are awarded for projects adhering to the downtown design code, as well as those for which the developer employs a Palmetto engineer or architect or a CRA engineer or architect. Included in this document is a list of incentivized land use types, which forms a sort of wish list for the types of commercial development Palmetto envisions for its downtown core.

## **Recommendations**

### **Tactical Urbanism**

Tactical urbanism attempts to implement small-scale measures in the hope of long-term success. These efforts will help the city evaluate whether certain measures are worth pursuing before committing to further investment. To determine where to begin with such tactical changes, the city can look to its demographic information. For example, Palmetto’s population earns less per year than the average national income. This provides a foundation to assess small-scale, potentially highly rewarding measures that can begin to ease financial burdens on the community. This also allows the community some freedom to experiment with what works best for Palmetto without introducing unnecessarily expensive plans, as there is less capital investment by private citizens with which to compete. A few tactical urbanism recommendations to be discussed below include a pop-up town hall, temporary retail, chairbombing, guerrilla gardening, and depaving.

### **Pop-up Town Hall**

A pop-up town hall is an informal venue, open to public discourse, that creates an opportunity for the community to present issues and build a working dialogue regarding town issues. This is a measure found to be critically important within communities where it has been implemented. Organizers of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, as an example, see their pop-up town hall as “part urban think tank, part community center, and part public gathering space” (Lydon, 2012). Such a forum is especially pertinent in light of a major problem observed by the writers of this report; it was nearly impossible to effectively survey public opinion during the development of this proposal. The citizens of Palmetto do, however, know best what their community wants and -- more importantly -- needs. A pop-up town hall has revitalization potential beyond the content of its meetings, as well; using vacant storefronts as meeting places, this recommendation can activate areas which may otherwise be deserted.

### **Temporary Retail**

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Temporary retail, like the proposed pop-up town hall, activates neglected storefronts. Indeed, for this measure it is the primary goal: temporary retail hopes to align community interests with local entrepreneurs, particularly those lacking the start-up capital or training to open a permanent space. Temporary retail along main streets with vacant storefronts creates exposure not only for the company, but also for the downtown area as a unit. As an additional element to this project, the city should provide local artists the use of vacant buildings on the avenue, either as studio space or galleries, ideally at very low cost. This can transform 10th into an engaging main street, creating buzz in the community and adding to the identity Palmetto hopes to create.

### **Chairbombing**

“Chairbombing” is another simple, low-risk idea aimed at quickly developing community engagement along 10th Avenue. The term chairbombing refers to placement of homemade seating in public spaces, creating an intentional area for people to gather, rest, talk, etc. This would be beneficial in multiple ways: to give two examples, it serves to reuse some of the town’s waste, such as wooden pallets or metal scraps, and events like movie night in Sutton Park could be given an opportunity to grow with the provision of free public seating at the park on those nights. That simple movie night could transform into a larger weekly or bi-weekly event, which could engage with some other measures identified here (e.g. temporary retail and food trucks) and perhaps lead to new all-day community events.

### **Guerrilla Gardening**

With the amount of open lots and open space along 10th Avenue, there is ample opportunity for guerrilla gardening (community-driven public planting) to revitalize more desolate areas of the avenue, allowing citizens to create a greener, more inviting aesthetic. This alone would make a significant imprint on the identity of Palmetto’s downtown, in contrast to the amount of open concrete currently on display. This tactic is primarily aimed at a younger demographic, along with the local artists previously mentioned, with the hope that these groups can engage their environment with a fresh and innovative approach.

### **Depaving**

In the same “green” vein as guerrilla gardening, depaving will prove to be a major asset to Palmetto’s downtown revitalization. This process is exactly what it sounds like: removing excess pavement from an area, such as surface parking lots, ultimately ensuring that groundwater can properly recharge during flood situations. Pervious pavement is something Palmetto has already identified as a need, as the City hopes to reduce the intensity of the pollution into the Manatee River using low-impact development. A depaving project will allow those areas needing repaving to be replaced with pervious pavement, and will also uproot pavement from areas where it is no longer needed.

While most of these measures are temporary, it is important to monitor their success carefully and keep a longer time horizon in mind. The success of local food trucks or pop-ups,



for example, point to opportunities for incentivizing some specific (and permanent) business types downtown, such as restaurants, cafés, and boutiques. Dr. Green's trail system also provides a notable avenue for integrating more permanent changes to the downtown; engaging the proposed trail system with businesses and bike parking/sharing encourages use on the trail and will allow for greater economic participation throughout Palmetto. Incentives for parking requirements on new development and simplifying the approval process for re-development are two further efforts that should encourage business relocation. The intent is to create enough development and activity to encourage settlement, as well as to highlight the need for more mixed-used buildings along 10th Avenue.



Figure 21. This figure provides an example of park(ING) and chairbombing in a downtown area. Photo taken from Google Images, 2016.

## Physical Improvements

### Parking

With so many surface lots and vacant land downtown, the City could introduce substantially more green space along 10th Avenue while also taking better advantage of the parking space already available. Palmetto's city-owned parking lot is one area that offers an immediate opportunity for engagement. Again, retaining the focus on expanding green space, the city should look to measures such as a "park(ING)" day as a means to market Palmetto's new initiatives. This is a type of event that has been executed successfully by towns with similar sizes and goals, in which the purpose is to take city-owned surface parking and transform it into a temporary park on days when the lot will be empty. This could work particularly well at times when the proposed hotel near the waterfront is at low occupancy. By adding seating, green space, and above all, a meeting place for friends, this kind of event adds yet another layer of community engagement to the planning of Palmetto. Looking to another example, Times Square has previously executed a similar "Greenlight for Midtown" initiative (Lydon, 2012), again by simply shutting down an area primarily used for automobile traffic, and adding in tables, chairs, and umbrellas as a place for people to relax and reconnect. Palmetto does not have to aspire to become Midtown Manhattan to replicate this successful engagement program;

it is merely a guideline for how to change people's thinking about community and transportation. These events and the interest they generate should clear a path for the city to implement a host of desired economic and identity-based changes to the downtown core.

### **Solar**

Delving further into specific physical changes to the downtown core, this proposal recommends sustainable amenities such as "Solar Power-Dok" picnic-style tables, powered through solar panels on their surface (Leahy, 2011) . USF's Tampa campus is a successful example of their use, providing multiple utilities for the community through one piece of equipment (e.g. charging stations as well as lighting). Thoughtful placement of these tables downtown can deliver evening lighting and act as a tool to nudge people toward getting out and connecting with their neighbors.

### **Proposed Trail**

The CSPP proposed trail system (Figure 22) is another major factor in the development of 10th Avenue. It is no accident that both the economic development and architectural design proposals focus so much on the avenue and on creating more green space; it is imperative that we look to accentuate the trails with proper economic development in the surrounding area. Dr. Green's studio has indicated that the two most important points in their trail system design are the intersection of 10th Avenue and Riverside, just north of the marina, and the intersection at Sutton Park. They also look to engage the old CSX Co. rail lines north of Sutton Park through the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. The intersection at Sutton Park is critical because it serves as a connector between the CSX lines and the 10th and Riverside intersection. Because these trails run parallel with 10th Avenue, one of the more important measures to emphasize along 10th is more bike parking and bike sharing. Introducing more bikes and accommodating more foot traffic would reduce automobile traffic, creating a friendlier environment for pedestrians and business owners downtown. The trail and the role of bicycling will be discussed in detail in a later section of this document.



Figure 22. This figure shows a map of the proposed trail system for Palmetto.

### **Play Streets**

"Play streets" are another recommendation designed to be compatible with the trail system. This measure shuts down a street normally used for auto traffic, like a "pavement to plaza" technique (see Times Square example above), essentially turning it into a temporary playground. Again, this type of event is an opportunity for members of the community to build linkages with their neighbors and build pride in their hometown. The premise is the same as park(ING), but with an emphasis on families and young children -- of which Palmetto has an abundance. Instilling city pride during childhood helps to combat the future loss of motivated, educated young adults.

### **Marina Recreation**

Following the theme of capturing foot traffic and bikers along the trail, Palmetto has a perfect opportunity to attract tourists for water-based recreation. Kayak shares and rentals in Minnesota are an example of a successful, sustainable, low overhead business that can link the trails with the marina and 10th Avenue ("Minneapolis launches public kayak share program," 2016). This increased traffic could also open up ideas for and interest in the open space behind the marina, a woefully underused asset in the city. This space in particular has economic benefits as well as environmental ones; the presence of more Palmetto citizens and tourists in the area will encourage more engagement with the pier, restaurants, and other businesses that occupy the marina.

### **Mixed-Use Development**

10th Avenue is currently slated for residential as well as commercial development,

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encouraging a vibrant way of life where people can live, work, and socialize in the same space. To achieve this goal of mixed-use development, there are three main recommendations running throughout the entirety of this proposal that should be followed: first, emphasize different types of use in the city's incentives; second, introduce daily and weekly activities to engage the community as well as its visitors; and third, develop and improve public amenities, including childcare, postal services, and play areas. Relevant incentives are described in more detail in the next section.

### **Housing**

New and existing housing along 10th Avenue should provide shelter for different income ranges, supporting the current demographics of Palmetto and encouraging mixed-use development. Typically, the ground floor should consist of retail shops or dining, and the higher floors should be mixed-income housing. Mixed-use developments help the community bond and enhance economic growth. This is especially important for a city that wants to build its culture and become strong and resilient.

### **Improving Character Cultural Attraction**

Any developments or redevelopments along 10th Avenue should support the history and the cultural background of Palmetto, creating a sense of place while attracting tourists and patrons. Some proven recommendations about events are given in sections both above and below, but what constitutes local culture should mainly be determined by the citizens of Palmetto. Successful ideas will enhance public enjoyment of landmarks, businesses, museums, parks, and gathering places.

### **Safety**

Safety could be a large factor discouraging residents and tourists from engaging with 10th Avenue ("Downtown Design Guidelines," 2007). To alleviate safety concerns, the city should install proper streetlights, place emergency booths along the route to provide help in dangerous situations, and widen sidewalks and bike lanes to improve traffic safety (along with the other safety considerations put forth in the trail proposal). As an example, the solar tables described above could provide a resourceful means of making Palmetto a walkable, safely lit community. As Professor Joseph Ferrandino of IUN has noted, feeling safe is the first step to going out and enjoying one's surroundings (Renderman, 2013).

### **Economic Development Strategies Key Business Types**

The current list of land use and business types listed in Appendix B of the "Downtown Commercial Core Redevelopment Incentives 2.0" includes twenty-five different possibilities that overlap or are simply outdated (e.g. dairy product store, newsstand). We recommend the City and CRA make decisions about what commercial uses they would most like to see on 10th Avenue, with an eye toward attracting businesses that will increase foot traffic and cross-traffic

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between businesses. A drinking establishment, for instance, can draw foot traffic from a gallery opening or a nearby restaurant. We recommend that Palmetto incentivize four business types along 10th Avenue: restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries and drinking establishments. The City may want to set its sights specifically on luring a brewery, as this will reflect the agricultural strengths of the area and help Palmetto engage with region's beer culture.

### **Simplifying Downtown Design Guidelines**

The bullet-pointed lists of the "Downtown Core Design Guidelines" (2007) may be useful for the broader downtown core, but it is too unwieldy for 10th Avenue's targeted redevelopment. The city should create a simplified version, which would help communicate a vision for the street to developers. For instance, parking guidelines are described in a list of 22 "appropriate" points that cover both residential and commercial development. About 16 of those pertain to commercial uses, and several of them address parking garages. The City should narrow this document to only those parking types appropriate for 10th Avenue. It should mainly include the requirement that parking lots be "located behind the primary façade of the principal building," especially when trying to create that walkable, Main Street culture. The City should also keep the requirement that 75 percent of the ground floor on each side of parking garages be occupied by active uses, including restaurant, retail and other pedestrian-oriented businesses. Rewriting the guidelines into a shorter report (with regulatory weight) gives the city a chance to present a clear vision for 10th Avenue that can be a guiding force for development on streets beyond.

### **Incentives**

The city should create an overlay for 10th Avenue, covering Sutton Park to Riverside Drive, that provides extra incentives for the business types and design features the City identifies while completing the above policy recommendations. Palmetto should also target incentives for specific lots, or possibly purchase such lots with CRA funds. Detailed recommendations for specific sites are given in Appendix B, while a snapshot of these sites is displayed below in Figure 23.



Figure 23. This figure shows 10th Avenue, with parcels of interest to the City highlighted in red.

### **Palmetto Redevelopment Overlay**

Throughout this proposal, the purpose of redeveloping 10th Avenue has been discussed: to encourage community engagement on a street level, and to do so using tools such as tactical urbanism and mixed-use zoning elements. The intent of this overlay is to create the structure for such redevelopment, with incentives and standards to underpin the expected growth increase within this area. The Palmetto Redevelopment Overlay is proposed to extend from the Marina north to 10th Street W, eastward along 11th Avenue W, and from 8th Avenue W to the western edge of the city. When establishing this boundary, the proposed bike trail was regarded as the foundation for encouraging growth within this area; Sutton Park, Riverside Park, the Marina, and the specified incentive lots were also considered when creating this boundary.





Figure 24. This figure shows the 10th Avenue overlay described in this section.

### Overlay Variables

There are a few variables to consider when establishing this overlay: how to encourage growth, design elements, incentives, and current assessments. Once the design code has been reviewed and modified as previously recommended, the newly established guidelines will incentivize developers to bring their business to Palmetto, encouraging growth and economic development. Within this overlay, incentives will define beautification efforts to bring a current building up to standard; encourage new development within blighted areas or on vacant property; designate land to mixed, commercial, residential, and recreational use, establishing a platform to spur community engagement; provide a sign, light, and road design standard to

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unify the area; and establish minimal design guidelines to ensure adherence to a more sustainable coastal growth pattern. The following image depicts the overlay boundary recognized around the proposed bike trail area.

### **Design Requirements**

Within the overlay area, the purpose of this proposal remains promoting the culture of the City of Palmetto. For example, extending the brick façade road from Sutton Park to the marina allows travelers to recognize the significance of 10th Avenue as the “Main Street” of Palmetto, while preserving current building aesthetics. Along this Main Street, a strict design standard should be implemented, consistent with the surrounding environment; Sutton Park serves as an existing template for materials (e.g. brick façade road, and the light fixture at the intersection of 10th Avenue W and 6th Avenue W).

Other recommended design elements include palm trees and vegetation along each side of the road; Florida-friendly foliage accenting structures to reduce water consumption; consistent frontage along the entry to each ground-level unit on 10th Avenue; and a public water feature, perhaps a copper seahorse fountain to celebrate the natural history of Palmetto. Furthermore, building requirements and setbacks should be established in the land use element of the comprehensive plan, setting guidelines for construction material, height, square footage, etc. Redevelopment of traffic flow is also recommended to encourage movement through 10th Avenue from Sutton Park to the marina. This route could be redesignated as a one-way, and then traffic would follow the flow to the left or right and back down parallel streets in the opposite direction. This strategy has been implemented successfully in similar U.S. cities working to redevelop Main Streets.

### **Mixed Land Use**

Another key element to the design is establishing a mixed land use plan founded on the design code. Buildings along 10th Avenue should keep the minimal requirement of 75 percent active use (e.g. restaurants, retail, etc.), but expand on this to establish a multi-use structure encouraging residential property above retail and restaurants; this element will follow housing standards coherent with the City’s comprehensive plan. Mixed-use development must involve a range of complimentary land uses that are physically and functionally integrated, providing a balanced mix of residential developments, commercial activity, and cultural and recreational elements, as well as encouraging pedestrian connections within a diversely populated community.

Benefits of mixed land use include but are not limited to: promoting vitality within declining or stagnant areas; increasing revenue through economic investments and enhancing a municipality’s capital improvement; promoting a sense of community and place, while cultivating an area’s unique development potential; and stimulating opportunities for pedestrian-friendly communities by reducing auto dependency, roadway congestion, and air pollution. Creating an overlay for a struggling area provides advantages to benefit the community’s total capital by concretely defining the path from plan to reality. The mixed-use plan overall delivers a sense of place through opportunities for more housing, and pedestrian-friendly activities, making Palmetto a “smart growth” community. Finally, a thorough mixed-use

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development plan conveys the City's effectiveness to both internal and external interests, highlighting provisions that will attract future developers as well as promote civic engagement.

## **Conclusion**

The City of Palmetto boasts enviable assets as a coastal community, but lacks civic engagement among its businesses and residents. The City's greatest areas of opportunity for growth are the twin goals of stimulating capital investment and engaging the community. The series of recommendations detailed in this section propose to achieve these goals while creating a vibrant atmosphere for residents and tourists alike. An overlay area designated along 10th Avenue should adhere to specific bylaws, encouraging "smart growth" development and management.

Through mixed-use planning, tactical urbanism methods, and economic development strategies, the City of Palmetto can begin to establish interconnected development policies aimed at reducing auto dependency, preserving green space, and cultivate a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly community. By implementing the key factors identified throughout this document, a structured development plan can encourage community engagement and smart growth management to stimulate capital investment and preserve a sense of community within the City of Palmetto.

## DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF THE TRAIL SYSTEM

This proposal has focused thus far on strategies for business creation and retention, some of the most critical goals in any strategic development plan. However, left unchecked, these strategies have been found to leave detrimental ecological and social impacts as natural resources and tax dollars flow freely towards the desired businesses. Fortunately, this development paradigm is shifting to one that emphasizes strengthening existing natural and human capital, rather than taking advantage of it. Economic development professionals should still pursue initiatives that attract firms or creative individuals, but these initiatives must provide intrinsic value, and not be pursued at the expense of the environment or the community. Sensitivity to this issue is not merely a social benefit, either; improvement in quality of life is increasingly seen as the ticket to sustainable endogenous growth because it benefits current residents while luring a future workforce (and future employers). Trails, or corridors for non-motorized human use, play an important role in achieving a city's quality of life goals.

One of the most direct benefits of community trails is accessible recreation. These trails also function as non-motorized transportation corridors for pedestrians, cyclists, and skaters, of which Palmetto has been observed to have many. Communities as well as local governments around the world are realizing that exercise is important for maintaining good health in all stages of life, and they have a role to play in improving their citizens' health.

Furthermore, trails protect important habitats and provide corridors for both wildlife and people. These non-motorized pathways assist in providing natural buffer zones from pollution run-off and become important tools for improving water quality. They can also improve air quality by protecting the plants that naturally create oxygen and filter out air pollutants (National Park Service, 2008). Finally, trails and greenways promote safe and livable communities. The health, recreation, environmental, and transportation benefits collectively can contribute to an overall increase of the quality of life in communities.

As the City of Palmetto considers the development of a comprehensive trail system, this proposal offers four recommendations to increase the use of the trail and maximize the returns on this investment. In this section, the first recommendation states that the trail should connect to Emerson Point Preserve. Secondly, there should be three separate -- yet cohesive -- themes for the trail system. Finally, this section includes strategies for community engagement, both in the building process and the user experience, with an intent to increase economic participation as well as social capital. For reference, the proposed trail map can be seen in the preceding section (Figure 22).

### Recommendations

#### Connect Trail to Emerson Point Preserve

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### **Environmental and Economic Benefits**

Emerson Point is a 365-acre nature preserve located in western Palmetto at the intersection of the mouth of the Manatee River and Lower Tampa Bay. It is home to a variety of flora and fauna, and to southwest Florida's largest Native American temple mound. Emerson Point is a site of significant ecological and historical value, and connecting the city's trail to this existing asset will help build the foundation for and identity of Palmetto as a green city.

A green city can look many different ways,, but a defining characteristic is that both natural and engineered green infrastructure play an important role in sustaining it. Natural green infrastructure is defined as an interconnected network of green space that maintains ecosystem function and provides associated benefits to human populations. It is our natural life support system: the wetlands that mitigate flooding, the meadows that support our food crop pollinators (Benedict, M. A., & McMahon, E. T., 2006). Engineered green infrastructure, on the other hand, refers to human-made structures, such as bioswales and solar panels, that minimize our environmental footprint. Trails are interesting because they are a hybrid form of natural and engineered green infrastructure. They are made by humans, but if designed to include trees or vegetation, they can also become small green zones in themselves and serve as biological corridors. Ideally, trails will be used as "links" for natural areas (which themselves are the "hubs"), to create a connected landscape.

Why is it important to have a connected landscape? There are several benefits, including the simple idea that people are attracted to living in connected communities. The most important benefit from a planning and environmental perspective, though, is that creating a framework of natural "hubs" and "links" can guide land development and conservation simultaneously. Whereas green space is often viewed as isolated natural areas that are pleasant to have, linking them together turns them into a single coherent system (Benedict et al, 2006). While loose green chunks of land are seen as just an amenity and are hence more susceptible to development, the linked network, with its ecological and related, life-sustaining functions, is understood as a necessity. Thinking of natural green infrastructure as vital for the city's well being increases its permanence and helps direct smart growth. In turn, preserved open space that is perceived as "permanently undevelopable" is much more likely to have measurable effects on nearby property values (Campbell, H. S., & Munroe, D. K., 2007). A connected landscape can therefore be a tool for sustainable land-use planning and conservation, and for stimulating the economy through increased property values (more on this below).

### **Social Benefits**

Along with the environmental benefits, creating a trail that connects Emerson Point Park with the rest of the community would meet user demands. Although there is not yet an accessible profile of potential trail users for Palmetto, national statistics do reveal what similar populations are looking for in outdoor activities. For example, riding bicycles, jogging and birdwatching are some of the fastest growing trail-based activities in North America (Harrison, 2005). In particular, cycle touring, which entails planned, long-distance trips over varying terrain, is a rapidly growing activity with demand for recreational trails. Hikers also require long distance trails, and 38% of them prefer these over shorter local ones (Harrison, 2005). Similarly, kayaking and paddle boarding are two of the fastest growing sports in the country, with 27 million

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Americans participating in multiple outings every year (Special Report on PaddleSports, 2015). Finally, ecotourism, a travel activity with the purpose of discovering natural areas in a way that creates socioeconomic benefits for locals, is showing an increase between 10% and 30% annually -- compared with overall tourism which is hovering around 4% (Harrison, 2005).

These numbers seem to indicate an important opportunity for Palmetto to extend the trail to its western end. Emerson Point is a solid four miles from downtown and can provide the longer trek many sports enthusiasts are looking for. Also, the park already has canoe/kayak launching facilities, bicycle trails, and archeological relics inside its boundaries to meet popular outdoor interests and draw visitors. The neighboring city of Bradenton's Robinson Preserve is "nationally recognized as the area's number one family activity," according to its website. Extending the Palmetto trail to reach this city's preserve can go a long way to serving the community's families and visitors alike, and to improving the economic climate of the area. Trail users buy equipment, supplies, and services; consume food on site; and spend in the local economy. To illustrate, consider that outdoor recreation in Florida generates \$38.3 billion in consumer spending and directly generates nearly 330,000 jobs (Greenways and Trails, 2016).

### **More Economic Benefits**

Proximity to trails and greenways, like proximity to natural areas, increases the value of adjacent land, as people find it desirable to live within their reach. Indeed, greenway construction and open space preservation are two related planning initiatives that have gained widespread support as a way to stimulate economic growth and capital gains (Campbell et al, 2007). Several studies have supported this claim. For example, in Saco, Maine, proximity to greenways added \$1,000-\$1,500 to home sales prices; in Apex, NC, greenways commanded a premium of \$5,000. Another estimate of premiums due to an open space amenity within 100 feet was calculated at \$3,552 in Portland, Oregon, and a 2011 study by the University of Cincinnati found that homes within 1000 feet of an access point to the Little Miami Scenic Trail increased in value by \$9,000 (Greenways and Trails, 2016). In all cases, the maximum benefit occurs within 1,000 feet of the greenway, but can still be felt even at 5,000 feet from the amenity (Campbell et al, 2007). On a comprehensive trail system like the one proposed here, these property value changes have the potential to reach the entire city of Palmetto.

However, the benefits from proximity to a trail, greenway, or open area will vary. It is worth noting that wealthier neighborhoods will experience more absolute gains. The reason is simple: a 3% premium on a \$300,000 home yields more benefit than the same premium on a \$100,000 home. The small wealth effect appears to be too small to adversely affect vulnerable houses concerned about gentrification, but cities should still bear this in mind. In addition, a significant amount of time may need to elapse before the full premium is realized into the value of land, about four years (Campbell et al 2007). This may be a long time horizon politically, but for substantive environmental and economic change, it is a relatively short latency. Since trails consistently remain the number one community amenity sought by prospective homeowners (Greenways and Trails, 2016), it is worth taking the time to plan for a system that provides financial rewards while increasing social equity, meeting user demands, and creating a connected natural landscape.

### Three Themes, Many Uses

While the goal for this trail system is to connect the entirety of Palmetto, design must be done with various types of users in mind. Some will be on the trail for recreational purposes, including running, biking, and skating, and ideally others would be using it as a transportation route. It is unlikely that most people will want to travel the entire trail at once, and so there is opportunity to divide the system into three trails with distinct but connected themes. It is crucial to provide this variety of experience while linking the open space and natural infrastructure already present in town, including Emerson Point, the waterfront, and Sutton Park. Each of the proposed themes would reflect their surroundings and accentuate the existing features of Palmetto. These three sections are proposed as follows: urban, historical, and natural.

#### Urban

The urban section of the Palmetto trail encompasses the downtown core, proposed around 10th Avenue, and aims to connect several businesses with the trail system. Sutton Park and the marina would also be linked to this section, as linkages to green space are key even in an urban environment. This trail would be especially useful as an alternate means of transportation for those who do not have or wish to use a car. Of course, many people in this group of non-motorized travelers are children and teens, who would also benefit from the urban trail as a way to travel to school, the proposed YMCA, a potential skate park and water playground, and other after-school activities. Lighting and safe crossing should be a priority of this section, partly because it will cross more major roads than the rest of the system, but also so that young people especially will be able to use the trail without issue.

#### Historical

The historical section of the trail system would run from the end of the urban section, around 8th Avenue, to the eastern border of town, featuring signs and art relevant to the history of Palmetto and the surrounding area. Themes may include agriculture, business, the railway, and social histories. There is opportunity for small business development along the trail here as well -- perhaps a disused rail car repurposed as a coffee cart or food truck, serving trail visitors and packing plant employees, for example. This area would also be an ideal place for a bicycle repair shop. These businesses would benefit from foot and biking traffic first, and have potential to gain even more traffic as they become known in the community as informal meeting spaces, which are currently scarce in Palmetto. This phenomenon surrounding trails has been well documented, with the Pere Marquette Trail in Michigan providing a great example of how the linkage can help both new and existing businesses grow, attract better employees, and sustain economic development (Vogt et al., 2001). This side of the trail could also be connected to walking and biking trails in Ellenton during a later stage of the project.

#### Natural

The third section of the trail features natural themes, including ecology and wildlife. The trail will connect to Emerson Point Preserve, which already has its own trail and environmental education initiatives. This connection may increase attendance at the preserve, and will serve as

a longer route for runners, bikers, and others using the trail for exercise. This would be an ideal area for trailside fitness equipment. Today's trail fitness equipment is engaging, dynamic, and even high-tech; companies such as Kompan and GameTime have equipment for all ages and skill levels, which is integrated with their own mobile applications for fitness tracking and trainer support. Even the basic wooden structures have been improved, and there are companies like Fit-Trail offering 10- and 20-station sets with detailed signage at reasonable prices (Lynn, 2011). This equipment is useful in giving trailgoers a purpose for using the system frequently, particularly those who might be motivated to exercise but find gym equipment intimidating or the membership cost-prohibitive. Installation and placing of this equipment provides an opportunity for engagement with the carpentry students at MTC as well as the Scouts.

Potential sponsorship of this project could be provided by Grower's Hardware; the council should seek this kind of support by local business during all phases of the trail system's construction as another crucial means of community engagement. The natural-themed trail will also connect to mobile homes on the western side of Palmetto, where residents may not have reliable transportation or safe routes to travel without a car, and where some tourists are renting vacation homes and will want to travel Palmetto on foot or bicycle. This ensures more opportunity for spending at local establishments as well as an increase in quality of life and perceived value, especially for those who may not currently feel included in the economic activity of the town.

### **Community Engagement in the Building Process**

#### **Bringing the Community to the Trail**

As mentioned briefly above, the most effective way of maximizing use and economic activity surrounding this project is to involve the community in as many aspects of the trail as possible. This ensures that the investment into the project will not be seen as top-down or even intrusive, but will be embraced and therefore maximized in terms of both health and economic development.

A great place to start with this community engagement would be the youth and students of Palmetto. Leaders of Boy Scout troop 72 in Palmetto and Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, for example, may welcome a chance to get their scouts involved in a project that provides such a wide range of community services. Working alongside adult community members, the troops can participate in fitness course assembly, playground installation, public art display, and special event support. These children and teens will be able to develop both building and project planning skills, and they will feel a level of involvement with the trail system that should increase use among the scouts -- and ideally their friends and classmates as well.

The town should also reach out to Manatee Technical College for support in the construction of this trail system. Brick and masonry apprentices, building trades and construction design technicians, electrical apprentices, carpentry students, marketing management students, and more all have potential roles to play in this project. A few of these programs are already set up to provide community service for nominal fees, and perhaps more would be willing to join in the efforts to make Palmetto a more active, vibrant town.

In sum, while this kind of student and youth involvement should prove more economical than hiring a full complement of professionals, the goal is not merely to save money. This trail

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system will only provide benefits if the community feels connected to it, and the youngest residents may well be the ones who get the town moving if they are enthusiastic about what is built. Furthermore, the project will help to instill a sense of civic responsibility in these young people beyond the trail; improving education is paramount to economic development, but it is just as important to retain that local talent after graduation. Community pride can make that happen. Of course, wherever money is saved on this strategy, it can be used to purchase higher quality materials and equipment for the trail's amenities if desired.

### **Materials and Design**

Students and professionals alike can collaborate on the design of this project in order to spur creativity and innovation. Plans for the trail system should incorporate principles of sustainable design, particularly regarding materials used and ecosystems that may be interrupted, and this is one area where Palmetto can truly challenge the status quo in development. Since the majority of the trail is proposed to follow existing roadways or railways, issues of water management and erosion should be very manageable with proper planning. Trees or other vegetation planted as a barrier around the trail should be native species, and existing vegetation should remain as undisturbed as possible. This means there is ample opportunity for research and design to optimize the functioning of this new addition to the Palmetto ecosystem. Environmental education is an important factor in limiting impact, as well; visitors should encounter signs on the trail explaining the principles and skills of Leave No Trace, a basic ethic of hikers and bikers everywhere. Again, this is an opportunity to showcase local expertise -- from the design and content of trail signage to the printing and production, there is work to be done by skilled Palmetto residents.

There is also room for innovation when it comes to building materials for trail amenities. For example, trailside and bathroom lighting can be powered by solar energy, taking advantage of the most abundant renewable resource in Palmetto. The Rails-to-Trails Conservancy provides expert advice on how to choose materials for the trail surface based on user activities, cost, accessibility, and local environment ("Trail-Building Toolbox," 2016). This trail system could even use different surfaces for each of the three themes proposed; concrete or asphalt would be appropriate for the portion of trail located in the town center, while crushed stone may work best for the western trail loop and resin-based or recycled materials (such as rubber) can be used for the eastern loop.

### **Maintenance**

Maintenance is another important factor to consider, and there is a chance for the community to participate in this aspect of the trail by caring for it throughout its lifetime. Again, while saving money is important to every city program, volunteer service projects to maintain the trail should be looked at as more of a social capital investment that will ensure continued use. Beyond volunteer work, trail systems across the country raise the funds required for trail construction and maintenance in a variety of ways. Some examples include fees associated with vehicle registration, gas sales tax, and grants, loans, and appropriations from both public and private sources. Advocacy Advance has published a thorough review on this subject, using data

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and field interviews from at least ten different states to illustrate how other communities make trails work financially. Miami Valley Trails in Ohio, for example, have successfully funded construction with federal money while maintenance is handled locally (How Communities are Paying, 2014).

Federal grants often require a project to have its own plan for maintenance, so this should be considered before construction begins. The Advocacy Advance document demonstrates that many towns and cities do not find maintaining their projects to be a drain on the budget, but in fact a source of great value to their areas. The authors of How Communities are Paying have also created a tool to help determine funding eligibility, called "Find it, Fund it!" The full report can be found in the references of this section and will be a valuable tool in the financial planning of this trail.

### **Develop Social Capital Through Trail Use Public Art**

Palmetto currently has a functioning art center, but it is not visible enough in the community and may not be fully utilizing residents' talent and resources. One of the easiest ways to rectify this would be to feature local artists along the trail system. Almost everyone can appreciate the value of a nice, occasional walk, but the visual interest and community pride that come with public art displays make the trail experience much more memorable. Other trails and linear parks in Minnesota, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Colorado, and more have already executed public art projects to much acclaim ("Art for Trails and Greenways"). Even nearby Pinellas County has successfully integrated environmental education and art along its trail system to attract more -- and repeat -- visitors ([www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org), 2008). A particularly beautiful example from Pinellas County features a metal sculpture entitled "Metamorphosis," which encircles a portion of trail and illustrates the life cycles and connections present in the natural environment. Artists in Palmetto could undoubtedly create similar pieces, which the city could feature in rotation or simply spread out across the trail. The old tomato packing plants would provide a perfect canvas for a local mural to capture the spirit of Palmetto. Less advanced or younger artists have a role here as well, as amateur muralists or participants in annual art festivals along the trail route.

### **Bicycling and Local Economic Development**

Narrowing the scope a bit, this trail is first and foremost a transportation route. Bicycling is arguably the healthiest, most environmentally responsible and ecologically sustainable form of transportation available today, and it is likely to be the most used form on the Palmetto trail as well. Bicycling allows mobility, sightseeing potential and freedom that is not made possible by other modes of transit. One potential way to look at the economic development impact of investing in trails is through this lens of bicycle tourism and infrastructure. Several communities have carried out surveys, reports, and summaries of the economic effects of bicycle travel on trails, both in the United States and abroad. In past decades, it has been thought that automobile users and travelers are the greatest contributors to local economic vitality of downtowns and the biggest spenders at the retail establishment and restaurants; however,

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several studies indicate that this assumption is no longer valid because of the increase of bicycling tourism and infrastructures. This section will detail what is meant by bicycling infrastructure and how the city can avail itself of bicycle-driven benefits.

### **Bike Sharing Programs**

Generally, a bike share system is an automated, public bicycle rental program made up of a network of stations housing commuter bikes (Kisner, 2011). The bike share program is not meant to replace all bike sales and rentals in the city, but rather is considered an always-available form of public transit, complementing subway lines and bus routes. For a feasible membership fee, whether charged annually, monthly, weekly, or daily, users can unlock a bike from the rack, embark on a journey and return the bike to any station within the system. These days, some cities even offer users the ability to view station locations and check bicycle availability with smartphone applications. Pricing is designed to keep bikes in circulation and provide maximum utility, so short trips are typically encouraged with a sliding fee system (Kisner, 2011). At the community level, a bike sharing program is the lowest cost-per-mile form of public transit; for example, London's bike share program is the only one of its public transport systems on track to make an operating profit, while bus and rail networks rely heavily on subsidies (Kisner, 2011).

In addition to the low-cost public transit option for users and the cost-effective infrastructure investment for cities, there are even more specific local economic development benefits of bike sharing programs. First, taking into account savings on gas and auto maintenance, more bikers certainly means more dollars to spend in town. According to the same Kisner study cited above and the findings from Michigan's Pere Marquette Trail, bicycling drastically improves exposure to storefronts compared with driving, which leads to more spending in retail areas. This would enhance the results of improved retail signage and marketing already proposed in this document.

Further, investments in this type of infrastructure can directly and indirectly support complementary jobs, like those associated with bike touring and repair shops. As with green space in general, bicycling facilities can also boost home values and consequently add to municipal tax revenues. Finally, the obvious health benefit of getting Palmetto's citizens up and moving is not merely social; a healthier workforce translates into reduced health care costs, increased productivity, and more commitment and creativity at work. These economic benefits can be felt all the way from the federal budget to the smallest local employer.

A perfect example of a successful bike sharing program is the Buffalo Blue Bicycle Program in Buffalo, New York. In 2006, this bike program created the Green Options Buffalo, a nonprofit organization dedicated to healthy, environmentally sustainable and community-friendly transportation. With an annual donation of either \$25 or six hours of volunteer time, members can borrow bicycles equipped with a lock and bell for up to two days, and return the bike to any of the blue bicycle racks that have become a recognizable presence throughout the city (Kisner, 2011). Their online reservation process is similar to checking out a library book, bypassing the need for more expensive "smart station" infrastructure, high-tech systems of the type found in Denver, Minneapolis and D.C. Buffalo's recycled fleet of metallic blue bicycles was accumulated through local donations, leftovers from police auctions and collections from trash

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bins. Their bike share program serves as an excellent example of a small-scale, community-driven, low-tech system that relies on available materials and volunteer time (Kisner, 2011). The result of this program is a sustainable transportation option that is helping to remake a city and Palmetto can adopt a similar program to revitalize the city.

### **Races and Festivals**

Those who already love cycling will likely be some of the first users of the trail and the bike share program itself. There is a huge number of potential bikers in the area too, however, and the City can grow their user base through public events. Bicycle festivals are family friendly events with entertainment, information, activities, and education focused around various aspects of cycling and racing. Palmetto could organize such festivals around citizens' interests while showing off the infrastructure improvements and enthusiasm that the trail brings.

A great example of a bike festival is held annually in Dunn County, Wisconsin, and illustrates the economic benefits at stake. First, a direct impact is caused by expenditures from the spectators at the bike race or festivals, including meals at local restaurants before or after the event and refreshments and/or souvenirs purchased while attending the race. Other direct impacts include exposure for sponsors and opportunities for investment by local employers, which are not mutually exclusive -- especially in a small economy like Palmetto. Of course, if there is not a great deal of support for cycling in Palmetto yet, the City may wish to hold a small bicycle event during a larger "Mobility Week" or other health-themed festival. If possible, the plan should be to hold an annual event rather than a one-time event; this allows for program evaluation and improvement, and organizers of the event will be able to watch participation levels develop over time. This is also a great way to show the community that their city is investing wisely in its health.

Finally, open spaces are a great venue for a bike event, but closing off particular streets such as 10th Avenue to motor vehicle traffic gives people a new perspective on their city. This is a growing trend worldwide, and for good reason. By allowing residents to experience Palmetto from the middle of the street without the noise and danger of speeding cars, they can develop an even deeper connection to their physical environment and to the surrounding economic and social communities.

### **Conclusion**

Over the last few decades, the relationship between intentional green spaces and economic development has been proven on a wide range of scales, and in nearly all climates and demographic conditions. City managers, planners, and community leaders -- buoyed by sophisticated new local economic development studies -- have begun to employ urban parks, greenways, and trails as local economic development engines or mechanisms for community revitalization. Supporting new evidence reveals an almost universal positive connection between well-designed trails and open spaces and important economic development indicators (Rails-to-trails, 2007). Trails are indispensable amenities that attract people and money, including both tourists and homeowners looking to relocate in a healthy city. Finally, for Americans in most cities and small towns, trails and greenways are links to the outdoor activities that have been too absent from our lives in recent years, providing opportunities for recreation,

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transportation, and exercise.

## CONCLUSION

This has been an explanation of the current conditions and future opportunities for economic development in Palmetto, Florida. Across the five dimensions discussed, there are a few major recurring themes: bring the private and public sectors in closer communication, start by developing existing physical and social capital, and look to evidence from similar areas to craft a tailored plan. Incentives and business attraction are particularly technical elements of the economic development plan proposed here, but these will form a foundation for more stable and innovative business growth. Likewise, demographics are presented as straightforward data, but these data reveal many directions for growth, while capturing new spending and serving a wider segment of the population.

The sections regarding 10th Avenue redevelopment and the proposed trail system provide a more visual, cultural element to Palmetto's economic development plans. These should again be underlaid by a foundation of strong economic policy and existing capital of various types. The role of social and physical linkages are especially important here because the success of implementing a development plan -- however well-thought out -- depends on the participation of Palmetto's residents. Progress for the downtown core and recreational areas begins with an understanding of the needs of both producers and consumers in the local economy, and a key intention is to match supply with demand more accurately. This matching applies not only to goods and services, but also to labor; the better prepared the workforce, the more stable the economy overall. Another intention of this focus on optimizing downtown is that a strong commercial and retail core will spur growth throughout Palmetto. This could take some years, but sustainable economic development requires both action in the short term and a vision for long term changes. Once more, this report is intended not as a prescription, but a group of related goals and strategies to guide Palmetto along a path to short- and long-term prosperity.

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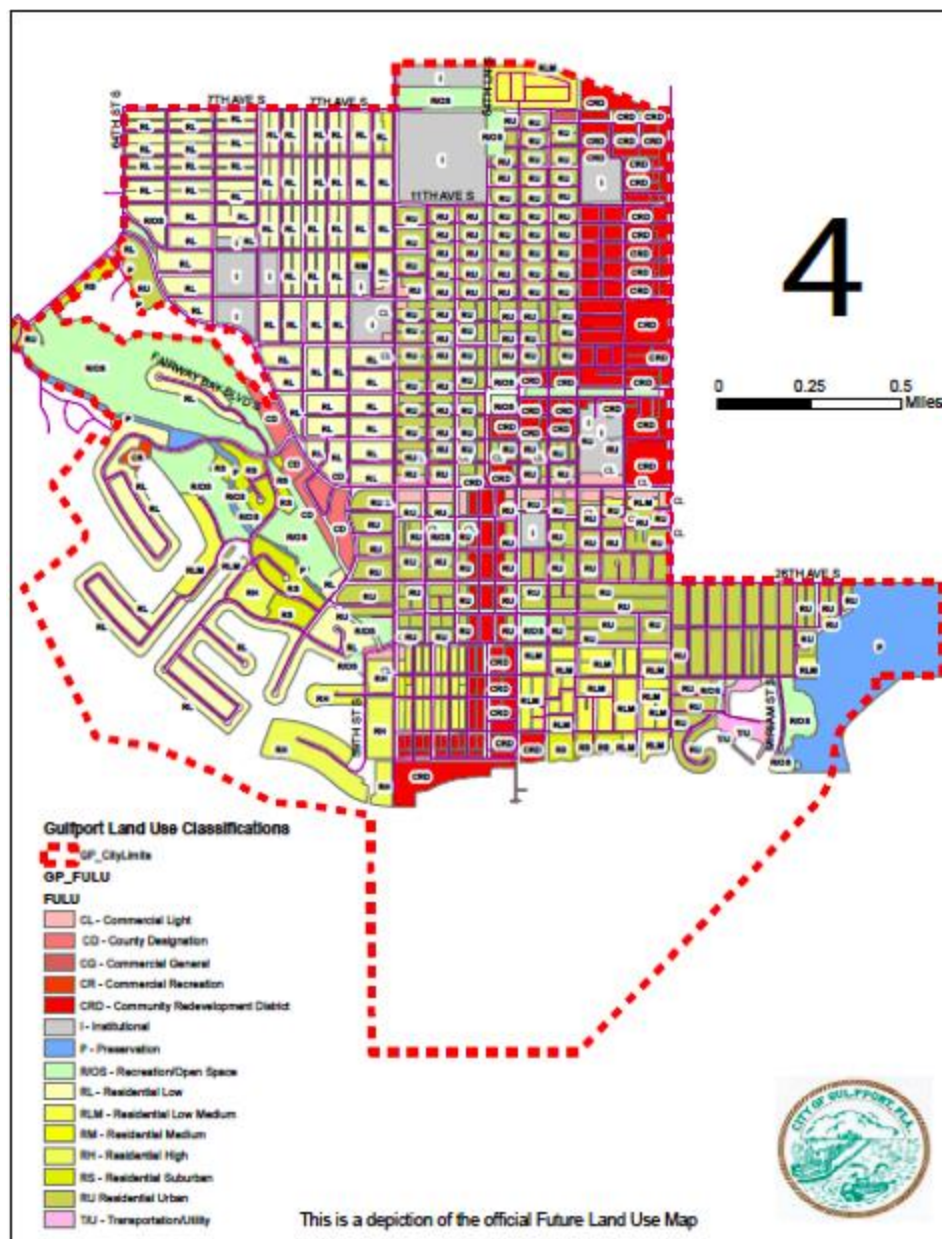
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## Appendix

### Appendix A. Gulfport Land Use Classifications

Economic Development in Palmetto; URP 5649; p. 72



Appendix B. Site recommendations for development

Economic Development in Palmetto; URP 5649; p. 73



Address: 440 10th Ave.

Owner: First Baptist Church of Palmetto

Size: .2342 acres

Current Use: Parking Lot

Notes: n/a



Address: 904 W. 4th St. / 923 5th St. W.

Owner: Sarasota Investment Trust, LLC

Size: 1.93 acres

Current Use: Vacant / Occupied by business

Notes: This parcel has an address on 4th St., but it is large and includes a portion that fronts 10th Avenue. Our recommendation is the CRA purchase the portion that fronts 10th Avenue.

Economic Development in Palmetto; URP 5649; p. 74



Address: 404 10th Ave.

Owner: LA Ventures

Size: .1671 acres

Current Use: Unknown

Notes: This property has a two-story building that appears vacant. There is a sign for a business on the bottom floor, but it is unclear whether this business is currently operating



Address: 337 10th Ave.

Owner: First United Methodist Church of Palmetto

Size: 1 acre

Economic Development in Palmetto; URP 5649; p. 75



Current Use: Parking Lot

Notes: Vacant lot that is currently used for First United Methodist Church parking



Address: 336 10th Ave. / 334 10th Ave. W

Owner: RH Properties, LLC

Size: .5096 acres

Current Use: Vacant

Notes: n/a



Address: 320 10th Ave.

Owner: City of Palmetto

Economic Development in Palmetto; URP 5649; p. 76



Size: 1.1634 acres

Current Use: Parking Lot

Notes: This is a large, city-owned parking lot next to It Works; this could be a possible site for tactical urbanism approaches.

Economic Development in Palmetto; URP 5649; p. 77