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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. Geography of the East Central Florida Economic Development District

The East Central Florida Regional Economic Development District coincides with the planning area of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. It includes six counties: Brevard, Volusia, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, and Lake.

These six counties are physically and socially diverse, but are broadly joined by their shared transportation systems and intertwining economies.

Figure 1 East Central Florida Region



Brevard County

Brevard County is known for its seventy-two miles of Atlantic Ocean beaches, and significant amounts of sensitive environmental lands, critical ecosystems and strategic habitat. The county has the largest collection of endangered wildlife and plants in the continental United States. The beaches of the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge are the most important sea turtle nesting beaches in the western hemisphere, and the Indian River Lagoon is the most biologically diverse estuary in North America.

NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC), is the United States' gateway to space exploration. KSC is the world's premier spaceport and is the current launch site of the nation's Space Shuttle program. NASA and Kennedy Space Center's next challenge is the Constellation Program which calls for the return of human explorers to the moon and beyond. KSC will be the assembly, test and launch site for the next generation of crew and cargo vehicles.



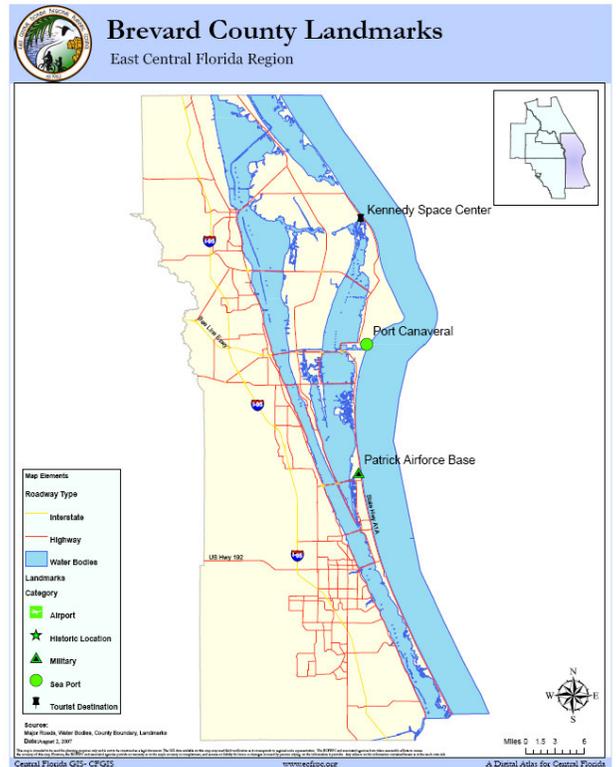
The economic impact on Florida of all NASA/KSC activities in fiscal year 2006 has been estimated at \$3.6 billion in output, \$1.8 billion in household income and over 34,000 jobs.

The Constellation program is expected to start in 2013, three years after the end of the Shuttle program. This three year gap between programs represents a major economic threat to the regional economy.

The 45th Space Wing includes Patrick Air Force Base (PAFB), Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (CCAFS), Florida instrumentation stations and the island stations of the Eastern Range, which is the busiest launch range in the world and the nation's primary launch site for commercial space programs. In 2006, the 45th Space Wing exerted a total economic impact on Brevard County of close to \$1.1 billion.

The **Naval Ordnance Test Unit (NOTU)**, an Echelon III Department of the United States Navy located in Cape Canaveral, supports the mission capability and readiness of the United States Navy's Trident Submarines by testing sea-based weapons. NOTU also operates the Navy Port at Port Canaveral, supporting submarines and surface ships of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and foreign navies.

Brevard County is home to such high tech companies as Harris Corporation, Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin. Melbourne-based Harris Corporation represents one of the biggest IT and



communication high-tech companies in Brevard County with almost 7,000 local employees and 16,000 employees worldwide and annual revenues of \$4.2 billion.

Assisting such employers in their growth are the heavily workforce-oriented **Brevard Community College** and **Florida Institute of Technology**.

The **Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC)** in Cocoa is *the* renewable energy and energy efficiency research institute of the State of Florida. Florida's **Technological Research and Development Authority (TRDA)** operates the Florida/NASA Business Incubation Center (FNBIC) which is a 31,000 square-foot incubator.

Port Canaveral is the world's second-busiest cruise port, with 4.3 million annual cruise passengers and 4.5 million short tons of cargo. It generates 50,000 jobs in central Florida, with a \$2.3 billion annual economic impact.



There is a growing cluster of ocean and coastal research and technology facilities in Brevard County including Dynamac Corp., Florida Institute of Technology (FIT), Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and others.

Port Canaveral, Melbourne International Airport and Space Coast Regional Airport all lie within Foreign Trade Zone 136, enabling qualified businesses to defer or eliminate U.S. Customs' duties on imported goods. Operated by Canaveral Port Authority, Foreign Trade Zone 136 has now been expanded to a total of 4,160 acres, making it one of the largest (in area) general-purpose public foreign trade zones in the country.

Volusia County

Volusia County is also a coastal community, consisting of 1,207 square miles with elevations from sea level to a high elevation of 110 feet. Volusia is renowned for its 47 miles of world-class Atlantic Ocean beaches. These include Daytona Beach, Ormond Beach, and New Smyrna beach. The county's easily accessed beaches are supported by their close proximity to all East Central Florida tourism activities and venues including the preserved natural environment of the St Johns River.

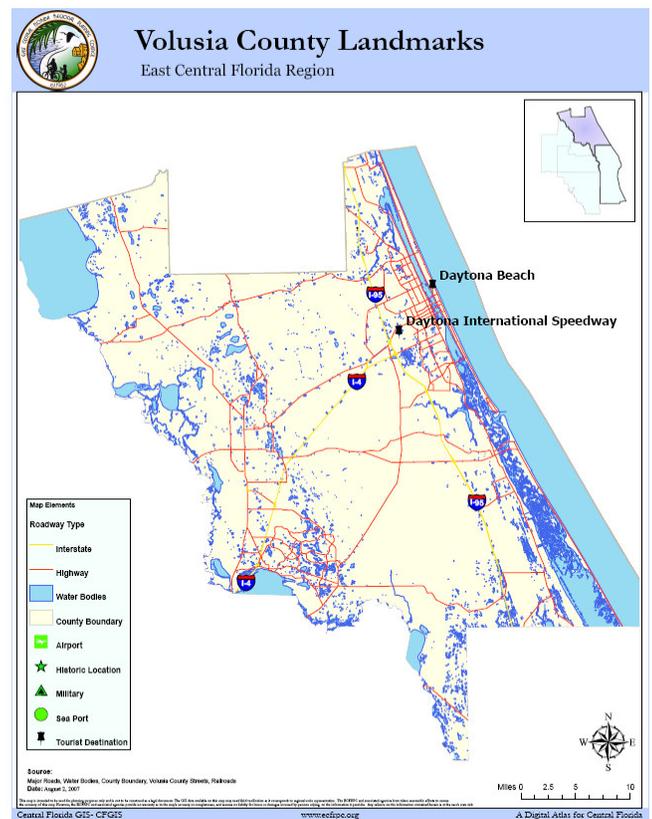


Daytona Beach



Volusia County is the headquarters of NASCAR, the Ladies Professional Golf Association, the bi-annual summer home of the London Symphony Orchestra and host to hundreds of cultural and musical entertainment venues year-round.

The city of Daytona Beach is home to the world famous Daytona International Speedway and the “Daytona 500” as well as host to hundreds of thousands of visitors for other special event venues such as Bike Week and Bike-toberfest.



Volusia County's Central Florida location, at the confluence of I-95 and I-4, enhances the ability for distribution centers to serve the Miami, Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville metropolitan markets.

The county's diversified economy is supported by a successful ongoing economic development strategic planning process. This process continues to guide the development of projects like DeLand Crossings Industrial Park, Tomoka Farms Industrial Park, and the Daytona Beach International Airport Corporate Center. The planning and development of hundreds of acres of available shovel-ready industrial property in the Volusia County market supports future job creation and sites for technology based employers seeking a location within East Central Florida.



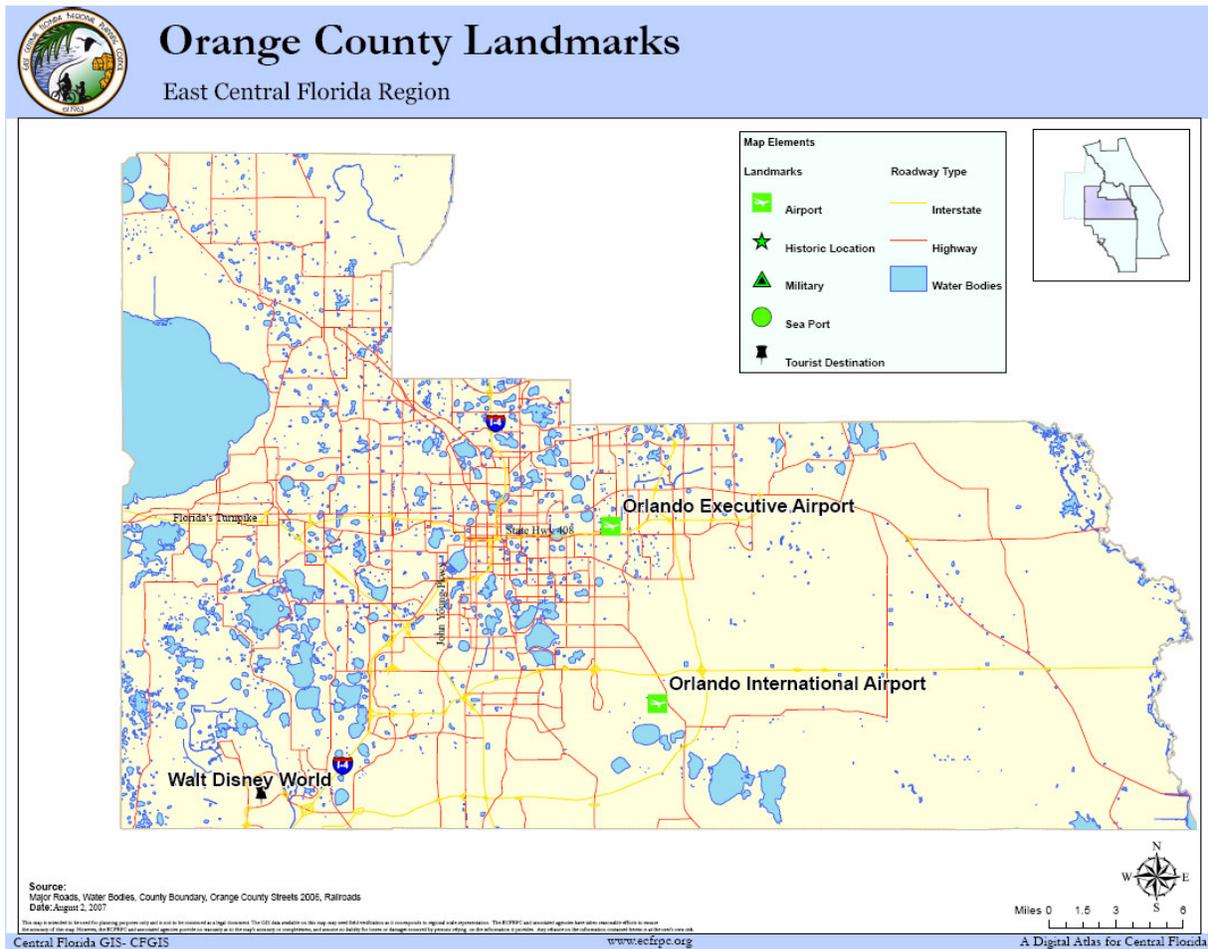
Volusia is home to a growing manufacturing workforce supporting more than 430 manufacturing companies with strong production clusters focusing on medical related products, automotive components, aviation and marine recreational. Among the leading manufacturers are Covidien (formerly Tyco Kendal Healthcare), Florida Manufacturing, Ocean Design/Teledyne, Boston Whaler, Brunswick Corporation's Government and Commercial Division, Sparton Electronics Corporation, Gambro Renal Products, Hawaiian Tropic and Raydon Corporation.

The corporate offices of industry leaders such as Brown and Brown Insurance, NASCAR, and the nation's 7th largest telecommunications company, Frontier Communications are also located in Volusia County communities.

Volusia County is also home to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Stetson University, Bethune-Cookman University, Daytona Beach Community College, University of Phoenix, Webster College and the University of Central Florida Daytona Campus.

Volusia County is a leader in conservation through its Volusia Forever program, which acquires and improves environmentally sensitive, water resource protection, and outdoor recreation lands. Each property/project accepted under Volusia Forever must achieve a public purpose for the conservation, restoration, or preservation of environmentally sensitive lands and water areas and for providing public use opportunities. It is estimated that \$191 Million will be raised over the life of the program. To maximize the amount of money to achieve this goal, the program attempts to leverage every county dollar with a dollar from other land acquisition programs.

Orange County



Orange County is the geographic, transportation, and economic center of the region. It is a geographically diverse county ranging from the low coastal plain and the Econlockhatchee River on its eastern boundary to the hills rising into Lake County on its west, from the Kissimmee Plain on its south along the Osceola County line to the pristine Wekiva National Scenic River on its northern edge.

Tourism is one of the largest sectors of the central Florida economy. Interstate 4 and the Florida Turnpike intersect at the world famous attractions of Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World, which collectively attract 50 million tourists annually, making Orlando a premier world tourist destination.



Disney World

Ninety five thousand passengers arrive daily at the Orlando International Airport (OIA), which equates to 35,000,000 visitors annually- carried by 49 different airlines. OIA also handles 202,000 short tons of cargo annually.

Orange County is home to thirteen colleges and universities, the largest being the University of Central Florida, the sixth largest university in the USA, with a 2007 enrollment of over 50,000. UCF is renowned for its advanced research, which topped \$100 million for the third year in a row in 2007.



Orlando International Airport

Rollins College, Seminole and Valencia Community Colleges have a unique partnership that helps prepare hi tech student to transfer to UCF. The Chelonian Institute in Oviedo is one of the top three turtle research centers in the world.

Orlando is an international center for simulation modeling and animation technology. The Metro Orlando area boasts a \$13.4 billion technology industry that employs close to 53,000 people. Top sectors include digital media; modeling, simulation and training; optics and photonics; aviation/aerospace; homeland security/defense; financial services technology (fi-tech); information technology; agri-technology; energy and alternative fuels; and life science/biotechnology.

Companies enjoy an environment of technological innovation and infrastructure supporting the region's established technology sectors. The University of Central Florida's business incubator has created 700 jobs in 7 years, with an average wage of \$60,000. bioOrlando, the brand name for an emerging medical city at Lake Nona, will include a new University of Central Florida medical college and research center, a Veterans Hospital, the Burnham Institute for bio-medical research and the Nemours Children's Hospital.

Three new venues, a new Orlando Magic arena, a performing arts center and a refurbishment of the Citrus Bowl football stadium-all in downtown Orlando-have recently been approved. Their estimated economic impact to the region is \$620 million a year.

Orlando is the social, cultural (museums and arts), legal, medical and banking center of the region. It is a city of 225,000 that expects to double in size by 2050. It is ethnically diverse, with between 5 and 10 percent of its population being Hispanic. Births outpace deaths by almost three to one- it is the youngest county and the most dynamic in terms of its population growth. A recent study by the United Arts Council shows that the arts contribute \$160 million annual to the regional environment.

Major retail space exists downtown, but also along International Drive, the Millenia Mall, the Florida Mall, and Fashion Square Mall.

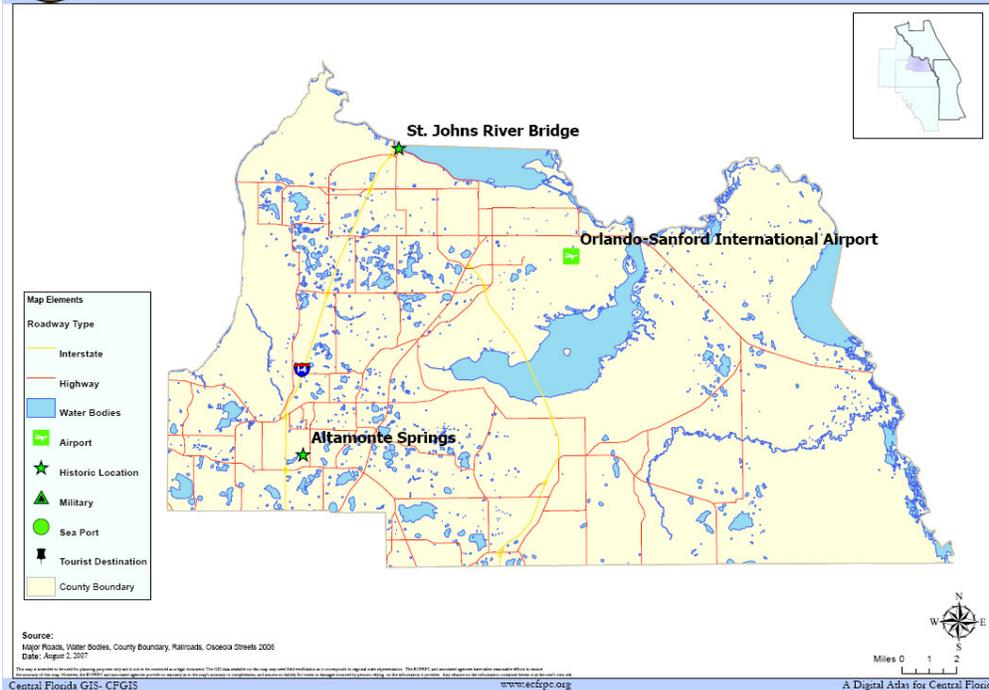


Seminole County



Seminole County Landmarks

East Central Florida Region



Seminole County is home to seven suburban cities, making it a desirable bedroom community for job centers in Seminole and to the north in Volusia and to the south in Orange Counties. Valencia and Seminole Community Colleges are the backbone of providing skilled labor to the emerging hi tech industry at Lake Mary on the I-4 corridor.

The county has been a leader in land conservation and trails building. Many upscale neighborhoods lie near the Wekiva River, which is both a national and state scenic river. The proposed Wekiva Parkway will complete the outer beltway around Orlando, and do it in a world-class, environmentally sensitive manner that protects the sensitive ecosystems it crosses.

The surrounding Wekiva ecosystem is Florida Black Bear habitat. The Wekiva River Protection Act established a set of strict environmental guidelines and



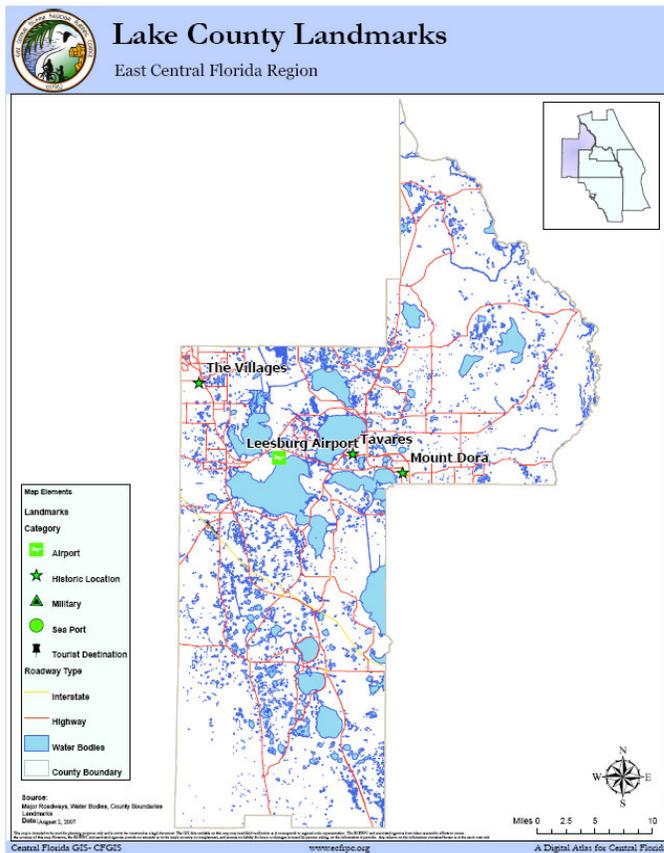
process for evaluating new development that has become a national model. This protection area extends from Seminole into Lake County.

The Orlando Sanford International Airport is the hub for international charter flights. It has grown from 48,000 annual passengers in 1996 to 1.645 million annual passengers in 2006, of which one million were direct international passengers.



The Seminole Mall is one of the largest retail malls in the region. The county also is home to a wide range of sports facilities for everything from high school training to professional competitions, such as: the Merrill Park Softball Complex, a USA Softball National Training Center and home to the U.S. Olympic Gold Women’s Team, Sanlando Park, which has hosted the U.S. Tennis Association Championships, and the Lake Brantley Aquatic Center for Olympic-caliber athletes.

Lake County



Lake County is an “L” shaped 1,156-square-mile County that lies in the northwest corner of the region. It is geographically different from the other counties because of its 1,400 named lakes and its rolling topography, with elevations exceeding 300 feet in some areas.

The County was second in the world for citrus production in the 1960s. A series of freezes in the 1980s killed many orchards, and many of the growers moved south.

As a result of the loss of much of its citrus industry, the county purchased land for the Christopher C. Ford Commerce Park industrial park in the 1980s on U.S. Highway 27 at the crossroads of State Road 19 and the Florida Turnpike. The intent was to develop an industrial park which would enable Lake County to diversify the economy and create quality jobs. More than 700 acres have been sold

in the park. Companies such as Circuit City Stores Inc., Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., Carroll Fulmer Trucking, Domino’s Pizza, Maritec Industries, and Metals, USA have realized the benefits of the strategic location of the Park.

Osceola County

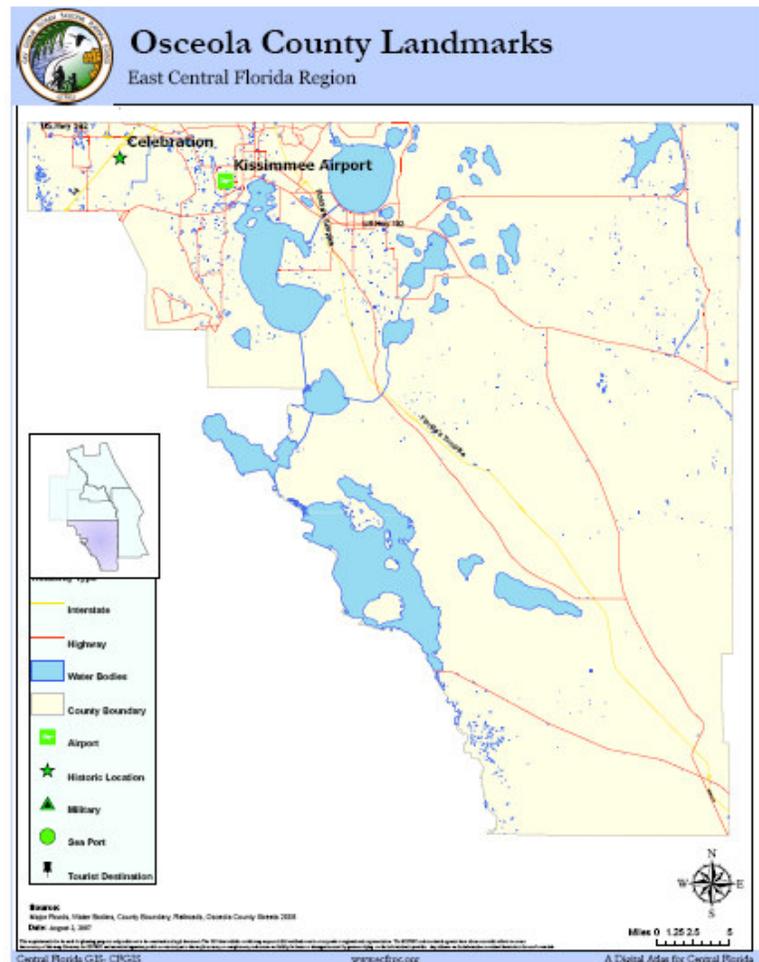
Osceola County lies to the south of Orlando. Although it has the smallest population of the six counties in the region, it is also the center of the latest explosion of growth. There are 19 Developments of Regional Impact (7 approved, 12 in the process), which, if fully developed as proposed, would make Osceola County home to many new “cities”. Most of these developments consist of low density residential with a small commercial core. These bedroom and retirement/resort communities are connected to the region only by a system of improved farm to market roads that will be inadequate to support the new traffic that will be generated.

Commuter rail will serve Kissimmee, the county seat and connect it to Orlando in the next ten years, but many of the proposed DRIs have no connection to the future commuter rail.

Agriculture and ranching are still

important industries, but are under pressure to sell for development.

There also is a significant amount of ecologically sensitive lands in the county. The Kissimmee River forms the headwaters of Lake Okeechobee.



Growth must accommodate ecosystems like the largest concentration of bald eagles in the lower 48 United States at Lake Toho.

For Osceola County, one of its greatest strengths is the diversity of its population. Osceola County has a large percentage of Hispanics.

The county’s economic development office has begun a program called Real Economic Development (RED) which means that it matches industries to its community.

The “Attractions” (Disney, etc.) extend into Osceola County, making tourism a significant portion of its economy. Celebration, a “New Town” developed by Disney, represents a traditional neighborhood with a small compact downtown and walk-able neighborhoods.

II. Population

Florida is one of the fastest growing states in the nation with a tremendous population growth of approximately 37.5 % between 1990 and 2005. East Central Florida is one of the fastest growing areas of the state. See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Florida Population

	1990	2000	2005
Population	12,937,926	15,982,378	17,789,864

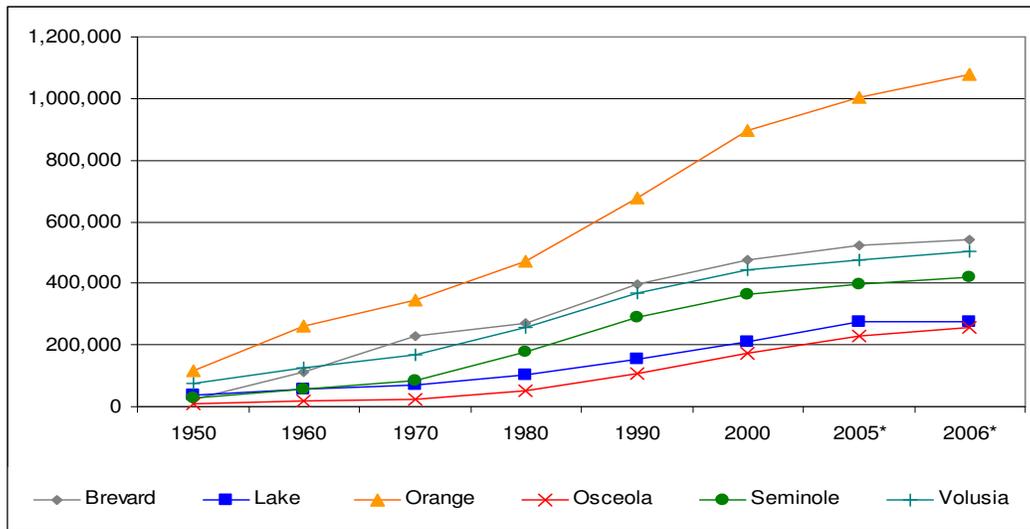
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Population Estimates, Census 2000, 1990 Census

The changes in population, composition of workers, and services needed has made the region what it is today: a booming region full of jobs, opportunities, and growing needs. Table and Figure 2 Historic Population Growth by County display the historical growth pattern in East Central Florida from 1950 to the population estimates of 2005 and 2006.

Table 4: Historic Population Growth by County

County	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005*	2006*
Brevard	23,653	111,435	230,006	272,959	398,978	476,230	521,226	543,050
Lake	36,340	54,383	69,305	104,870	152,104	210,528	273,277	276,783
Orange	114,950	263,540	344,311	471,016	677,491	896,344	1,002,849	1,079,524
Osceola	11,406	19,029	25,267	49,287	107,728	172,493	229,134	255,903
Seminole	26,883	54,947	83,692	179,752	287,529	365,196	398,013	420,667
Volusia	74,229	125,319	169,487	258,762	370,712	443,343	475,189	503,844
Source: US Decennial Census, 1950-2000, American Community Survey 2005 estimate, and the University of Florida's Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Population Studies 2007								
*Estimates								

Figure 2 Historic Population Growth by County



Source: US Decennial Census, 1950-2000, American Community Survey 2005 estimate, and the University of Florida's Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Population Studies 2007

Florida Trend Magazine (February 2007, Incoming) reported 1,000 people move to Florida daily. The American Community Survey reported that in 2005, 14 percent of East Central Florida residents had just moved into the region that year and they came from all parts of the world. In 2005 East Central Florida gained 155,386 new residents from outside the state and outside the country, which accounted for 22.7 percent of Florida's immigration. Another 128,946 people moved from other regions within Florida to East Central Florida (See Table and Table).

Table 5 Where East Central Florida Residents Lived One Year Ago, by Percentage

	Same House	Same County	Same State	Different State	Abroad
Brevard County	82.5	9.3	2.6	4.4	0.3
Lake County	79.9	6.2	6.6	5.6	1.1
Orange County	77.4	11.7	4.3	3.4	1.5
Osceola County	74.4	10.0	7.0	6.3	1.2
Seminole County	79.7	8.1	6.5	3.7	0.5
Volusia County	82.0	9.6	2.5	4.4	0.3
East Central Florida region	79.4	9.8	4.4	4.2	0.9
Florida	80.3	10.8	3.1	3.6	0.8
United States	82.7	9.8	3.1	2.4	0.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey: (B007001)

Table 6 Where East Central Florida Residents Lived One Year Ago, by Number

	Same House	Same County	Same State	Different State	Abroad
Brevard County	429,987	48,500	13,638	22,695	1,774
Lake County	218,272	16,868	18,010	15,340	2,931
Orange County	775,795	117,399	43,082	33,702	15,474
Osceola County	170,543	22,818	16,113	14,331	2,666
Seminole County	317,115	32,290	26,042	14,765	2,102
Volusia County	389,550	45,685	12,061	21,096	1,493
East Central Florida region	2,301,262	283,560	128,946	121,929	26,440
Florida	13,963,889	1,879,347	535,903	632,168	147,547
United States	238,488,435	28,195,874	8,868,144	7,052,128	1,762,246

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey: (B007001)

III. Income and Housing Costs

The district's counties are part of three, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) and one Economic Area (EA). Lake, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties belong to the Orlando-Kissimmee MSA while Brevard County is part of the Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, MSA. Volusia County belongs to the Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, MSA.

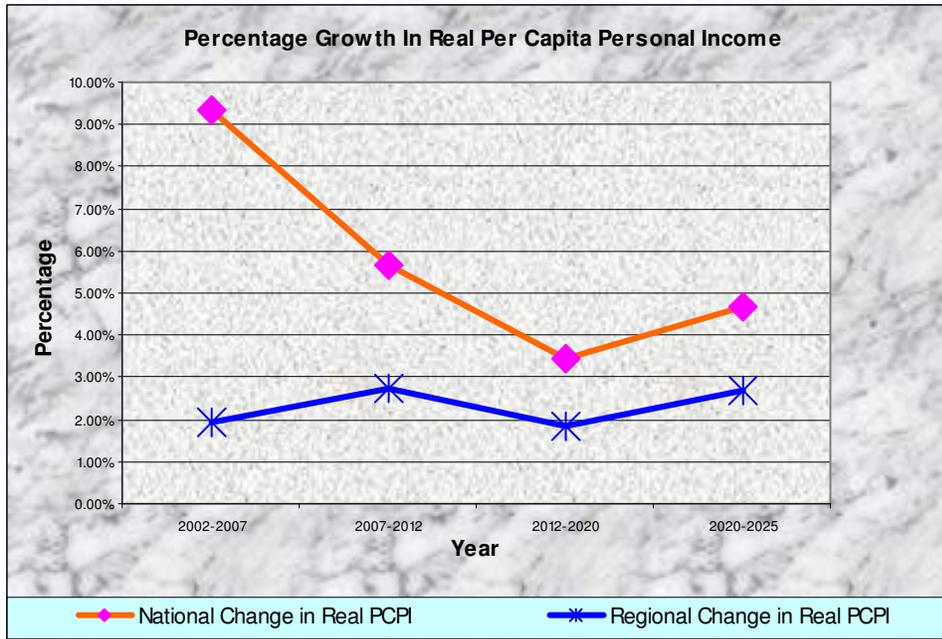
In 2004, median Household Income in the six-county district was \$42,430 compared to \$40,900 in Florida and \$44,334 in the United States. The percentage of people in poverty in the region was 10.53%.

In 2004 the Orlando-Kissimmee MSA had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$29,576. This PCPI ranked 166th in the United States and was 89 percent of the national average, \$33,050. The 1994-2004 average annual growth rate of this PCPI in the Orlando-Kissimmee MSA was 3.9 percent. The average annual growth rate for the nation was 4.1 percent.

The Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville MSA had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$30,142 which ranked 150th in the United States and was 91 percent of the national average. Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach MSA had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$26,118. This PCPI ranked 290th in the United States and was 79 percent of the national average, \$33,050. (Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis).

Compared to the nation, the Regional Real Per Capita Personal Income has been lagging behind, and its yearly change is expected to continue the trend of growing, but at a much lower percentage rate than the nation. Figure 3 Percentage Growth in Real Per Capita Income shows the percentage growth in the national and regional Real PCPI for the coming years.

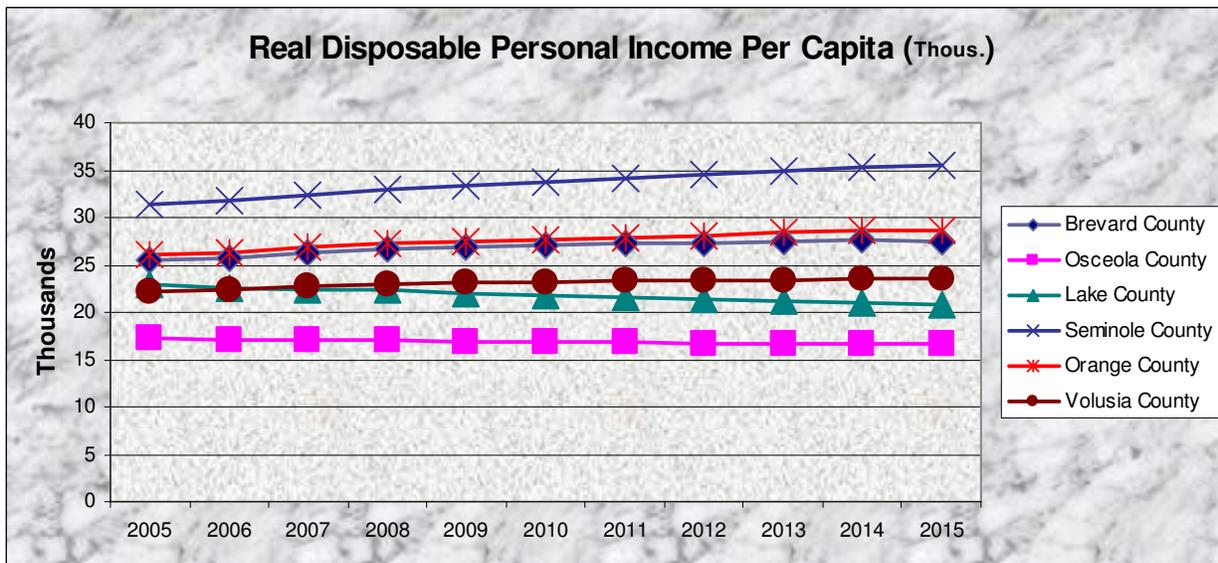
Figure 3 Percentage Growth in Real Per Capita Income



Slow growth in personal income directly affects real disposable personal income, which is the money available for consumption after taxes. As consumer prices go up due to inflation and high demand, consumers lose purchasing power if their income is not keeping up.

Despite low unemployment, compensation and real disposable income remain lower than the national average. Figure 4 Real Disposable Personal Income per Capita shows the projected real disposable income to 2015 (Source: Regional Economic Models Inc).

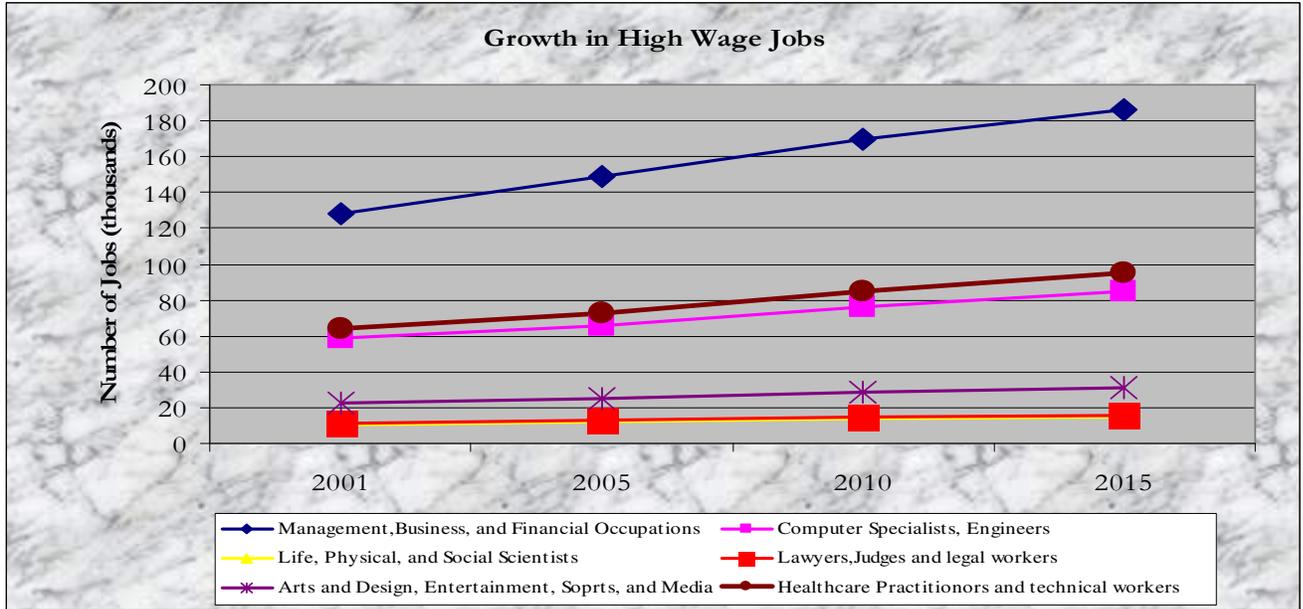
Figure 4 Real Disposable Personal Income per Capita



Source: Regional Economic Models Inc. 2007

Job creation remains one of the primary goals of regional economic development. The region has taken major steps towards diversifying the economy in ways that allow industries with high paying jobs better access to our markets. Figure 5 shows the increase in number of jobs until 2015 for job categories that have higher than average wages in the region.

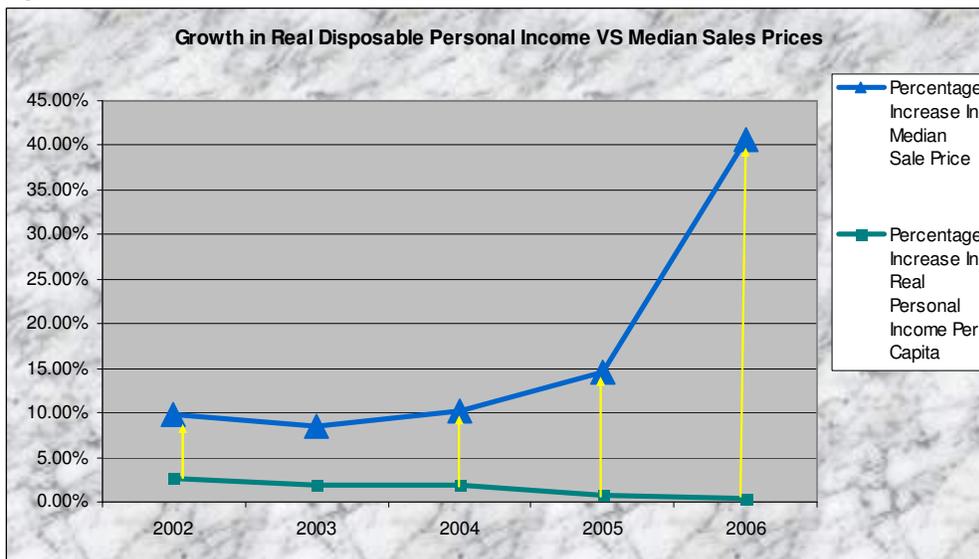
Figure 5 Growth in High Wage Jobs



Source: Regional Economic Models Inc. 2007

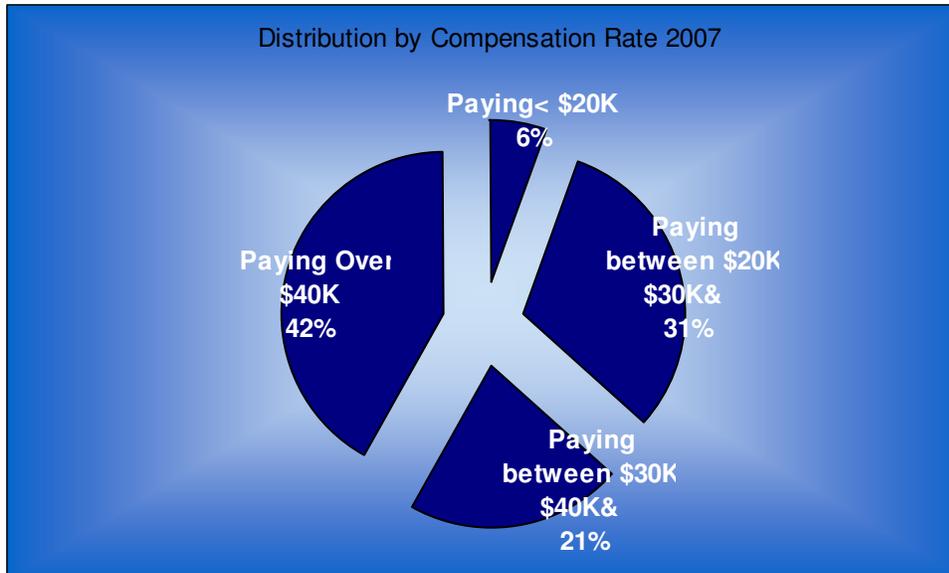
Housing costs doubled from 2000-2005, and property taxes and hurricane insurance also doubled for many people. By contrast, average wages remained relatively flat. Figure 6 shows the percentage changes in median house sales and disposable income in the region in recent years. The combination of these events means that housing, which was once generally affordable and available, is now unaffordable and a growing crisis for business. Workers have sought cheaper housing farther from job centers, which contributes to the long commutes and traffic congestion.

Figure 6 Percent increase in Median Sale Price of Homes and Personal Income, Orlando MSA



Source: Florida Sales Report & Regional Economic Models Inc. 2007

Figure 7 Income Distribution by Compensation, Orlando MSA



Source: Regional Economic Models Inc. 2007

The recent and rapid increase in housing prices in the region (Figure) is proving to be a major negative factor that is adversely affecting economic development. Affordable housing in 2007 is now scarce throughout the region. Although the economy is continuously adding jobs, with many offering higher than the average compensation rates (Figure), the extremely high prices of houses and the lack of diversity of housing stock make it more difficult for the region to compete for and attract the innovative and knowledgeable workforce needed to fill these new jobs.

In 2007 the housing market stalled (evident in the decrease in number of permits issued in Table 7), and prices have begun to fall, but it will take much more price deflation before the market corrects itself and provides significant affordable workforce housing.

Table 7 New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits

	2000	2004	2006
Brevard	3,506	6,667	4,024
Lake	3,832	5,687	5,687
Orange	6,474	11,925	9,817
Osceola	3,215	6,443	5,916
Seminole	2,590	3,898	2,714
Volusia	3,147	4,920	2,961
Region	22,764	39,540	31,119

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 8 below shows the yearly percentage change in realtor sales of single-family existing houses and their median sales price for Florida and two metropolitan areas in the region along with the Tampa metropolitan area. Each year shows the number of units sold and the median sales price. The numbers in the last table show the downward direction that the residential market started to take by the end of 2005 and is very obvious now in 2007.

Table 8 Florida Sales Reports – Single Family Existing Homes, 2000-2005

Year End 2000 Single-Family, Existing Homes

Statewide & MSAs	Realtor Sales			Median Sales Price		
	YTD 2000	YTD 1999	%Change	YTD 2000	YTD 1999	%Change
STATEWIDE	157,312	148,361	6%	\$115,900	\$108,400	7%
Orlando	22,328	20,699	8%	\$109,300	\$102,800	6%
Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay	4,886	4,706	4%	\$92,700	\$87,600	6%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	26,960	24,873	8%	\$100,500	\$94,700	6%

Year End 2002 Single-Family, Existing Homes

Statewide & MSAs	Realtor Sales			Median Sales Price		
	YTD 2002	YTD 2001	%Change	YTD 2002	YTD 2001	%Change
STATEWIDE	154,231	140,364	10%	\$137,800	\$126,600	9%
Orlando	27,548	24,911	11%	\$129,800	\$120,100	8%
Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay	5,796	5,213	11%	\$116,100	\$99,400	17%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	15,813	14,518	9%	\$132,100	\$124,400	6%

December data for Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater MSA was not available.

Orlando area figures do not include Osceola for April or November due to lack of historical data.

Year End 2004 Single-Family, Existing Homes

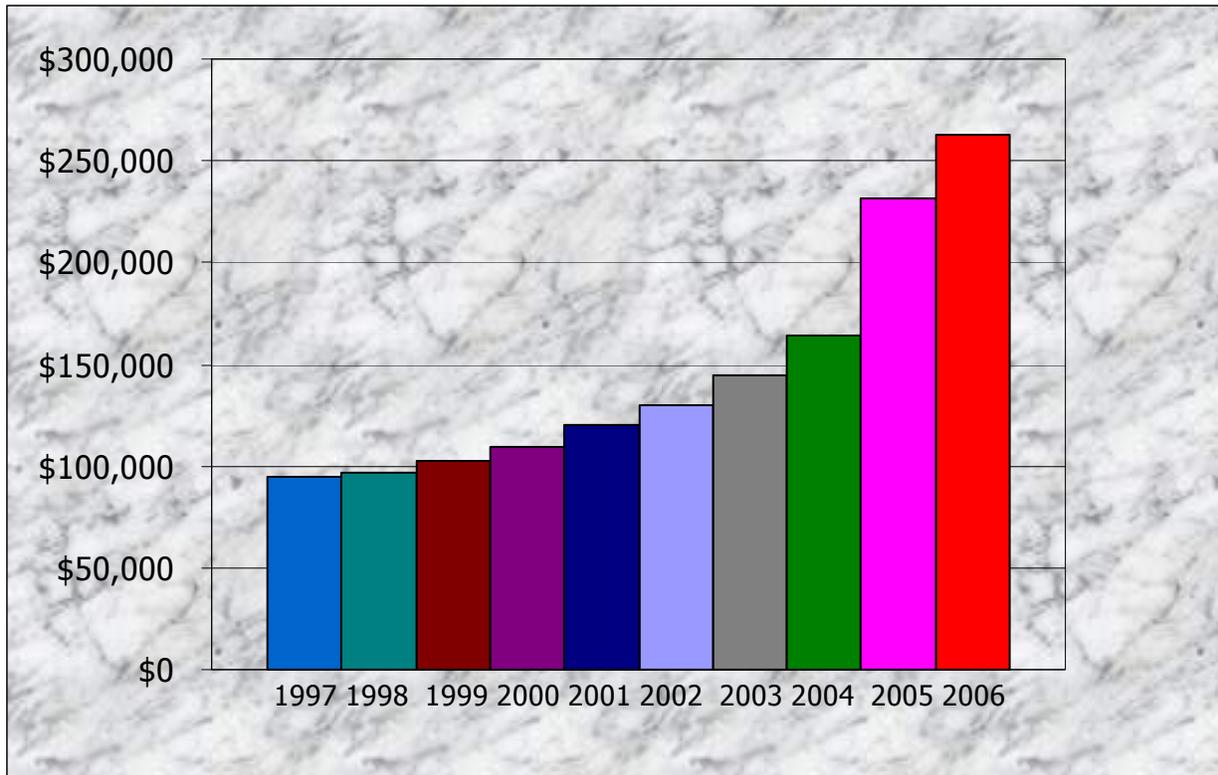
Statewide & MSAs	Realtor Sales			Median Sales Price		
	YTD 2004	YTD 2003	%Change	YTD 2004	YTD 2003	%Change
STATEWIDE	242,234	218,739	11%	\$182,400	\$155,800	17%
Orlando	36,659	32,103	14%	\$164,500	\$143,500	15%
Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay	8,101	7,565	7%	\$166,600	\$133,400	25%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	47,639	40,867	17%	\$159,900	\$139,300	15%

Year End 2005 Single-Family, Existing Homes

Statewide & MSAs	Realtor Sales			Median Sales Price		
	YTD 2005	YTD 2004	%Change	YTD 2005	YTD 2004	%Change
STATEWIDE	248,565	242,597	2%	\$235,100	\$181,900	29%
Orlando	36,727	36,659	0.1%	\$231,400	\$164,500	41%
Melbourne-Titusville-Palm Bay	8,055	8,101	-1%	\$226,100	\$166,600	36%
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	53,183	47,639	12%	\$201,700	\$159,900	26%

Figure 8 shows the increase in the median sales of homes in the Orlando metropolitan area from 1997 until today. Although the region has benefited a lot from the boom in the real estate market, however the sharp increase in the prices of homes in Central Florida is proving to have a negative affect on the market. With high prices of homes and scarce availability of rentals, it is harder to recruit new businesses and professionals into the region.

Figure 8 Increase in Median Sales Price, Orlando MSA



Source: Florida Sales Report

IV. Transportation Access

The EDD is almost totally dependent on motor vehicles for local transportation. Bus service represents less than one percent of daily trips in the region. Because the region is almost completely reliant on automobiles for commuting and personal transportation, the road network is quickly failing. Orlando is turning into Atlanta, but it does not have a mass transit system.

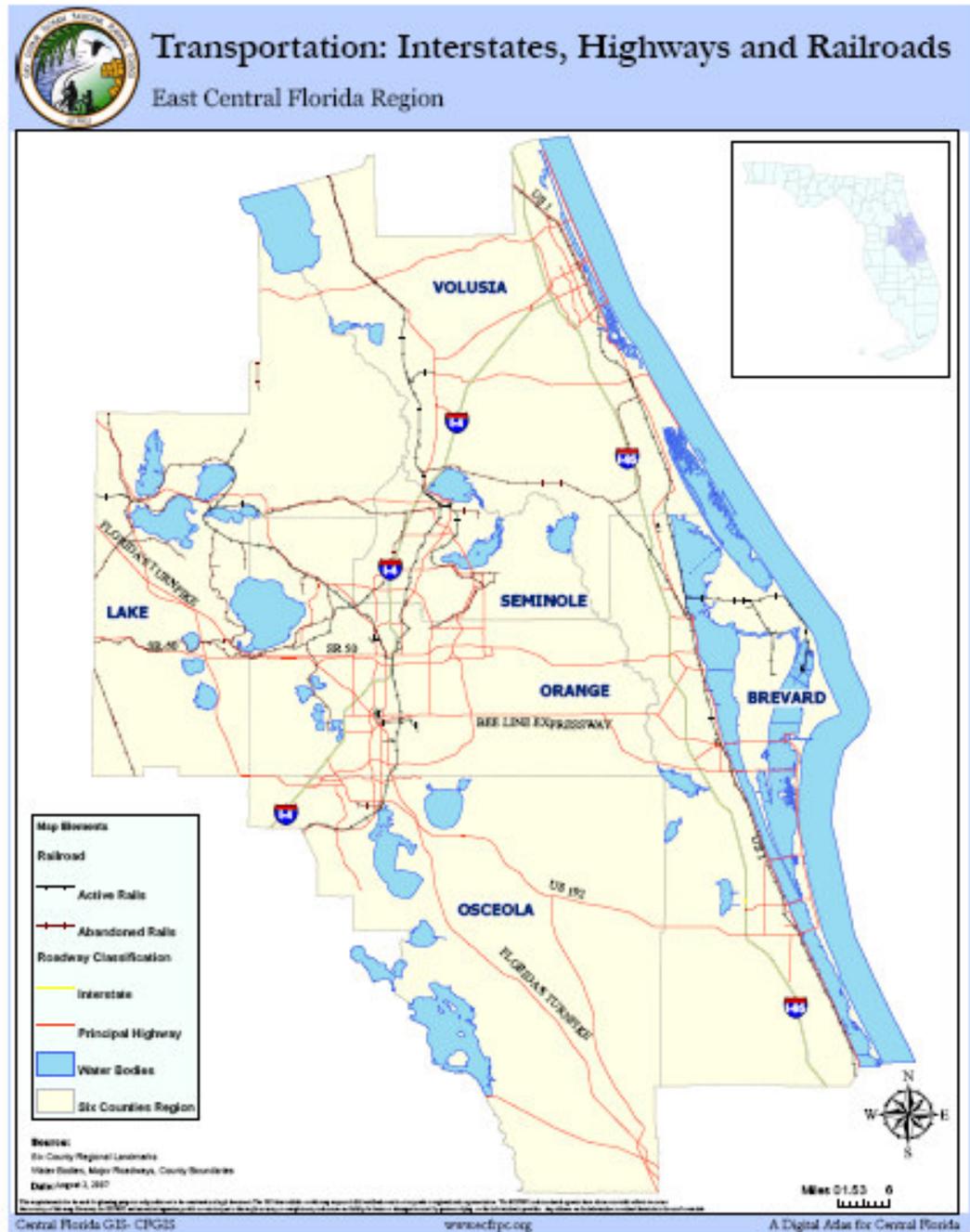
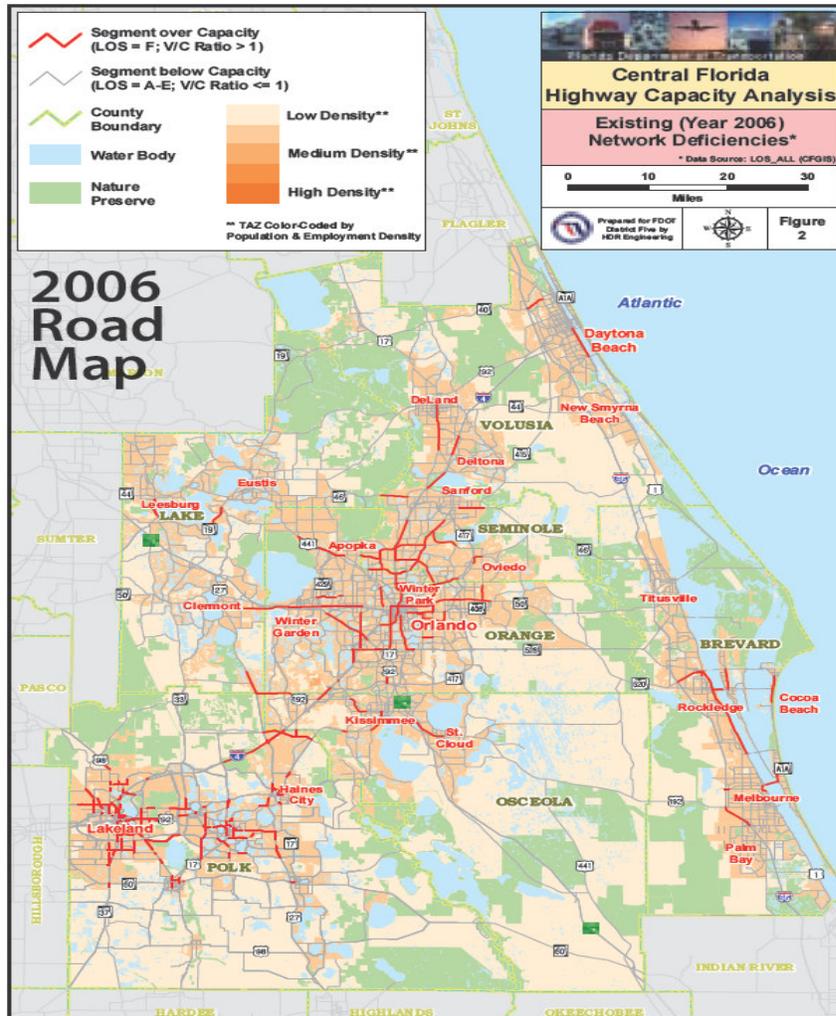


Figure 9 Transportation Level of Service, 2006 shows how roads are failing (level of service F at peak commuting hours) in 2006. Those roads in red are level of service F, for failure. The lack of transportation alternatives, the thousands of lakes, wetlands and sensitive ecosystems make building new road corridors very difficult.

Figure 9: Transportation Level of Service, 2006



The region's development patterns have exacerbated the problem. This is the typical sequence of events: new homes are built in low cost farmland that was once citrus. Soon there are enough rooftops and the commercial developers follow. Local authorities zone strip-commercial parallel to the major arteries serving the subdivisions. Every commercial entity is given one or two driveways. The vehicle turning movements from these driveways choke the flow of traffic. Soon the two-lane roads with excessive commercial curb cuts must be widened to four lanes, then six, and then in many cases the corridor cannot be widened further.

Commutes that were 20 minutes 20 years ago are now an hour, and still the region pushes outward. The average commute from place of residence to place of work in 2005 was 27 minutes. In Seminole and Orange Counties forty percent of commuters drive over thirty minutes to work.

The I-4 corridor is the north-south transportation backbone of the region and it is severely congested, as is shown on the map below. The numbers indicate daily vehicle trips, with the percentage of trucks.

Figure 10: I-4 Corridor and Daily Vehicle Trips, with Percentage by Trucks

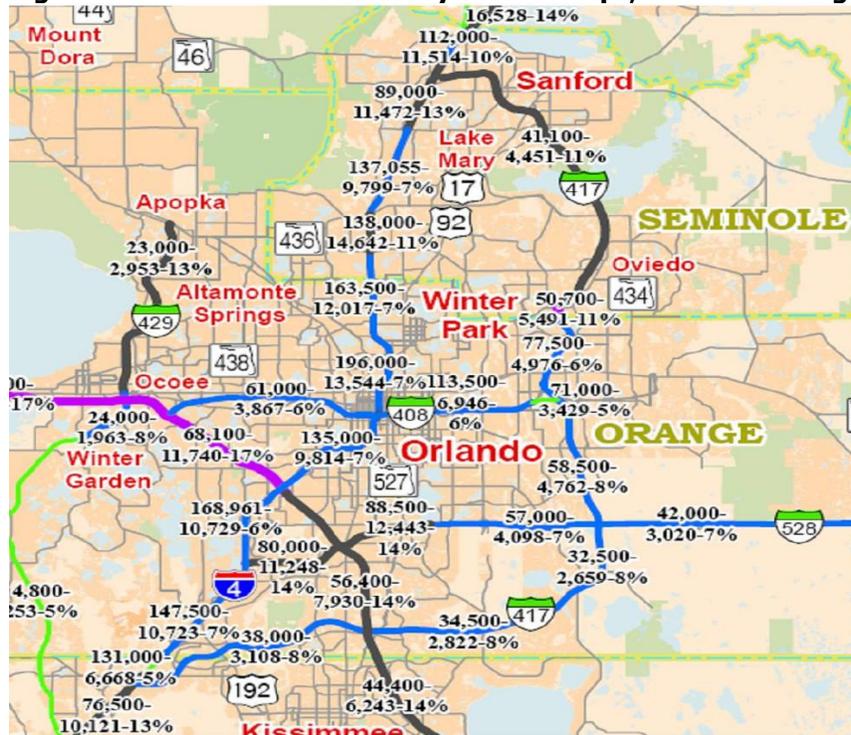
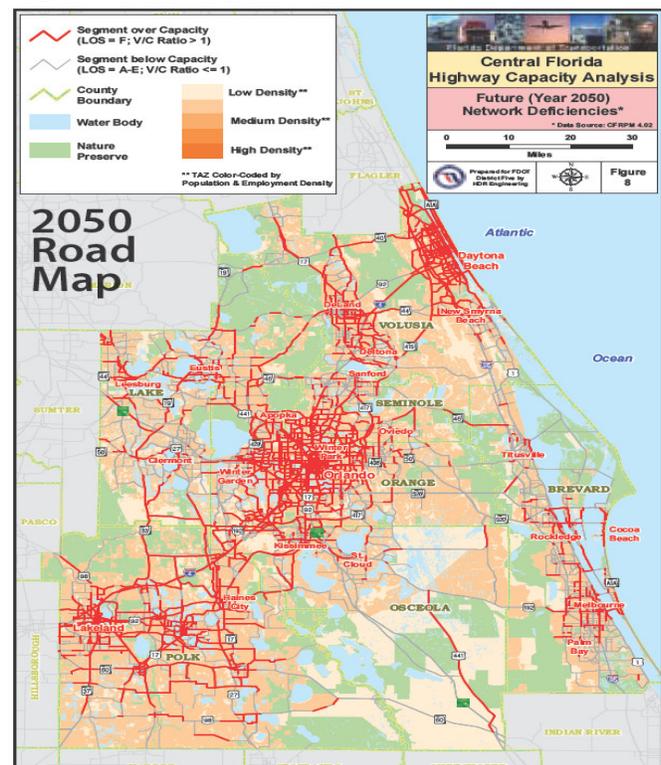


Figure 11 Transportation Level of Service, 2050

Figure 11: Transportation level of Service 2050 shows what the region's roads will look like in 2050 (even with planned road projects) if we continue to sprawl like we have for the last 50 years. Roads in red will be in failure (long backups and congestion at peak commuting hours).

Clearly, there is a need for additional transportation alternatives.



Commuter Rail

Central Florida Commuter Rail is a proposed 61 mile commuter rail system for the Central Florida (Orlando) area. It would help relieve up to 14,000 automobile trips per day on I-4 upon its completion, and would begin to provide mass transit service to the transportation spine, the I-4 corridor of Central Florida. The total cost of the system is \$615 million. See Figure .

Volusia County, Seminole County, Orange County, the City of Orlando and Osceola County are the partners in the project. The local partners will combine to foot 25% of the bill, which the State of Florida will match. The remaining 50% will come from a Federal grant provided for by the 2005 SAFETEA-LU act. The approval in August 2007 of the local funding for the Commuter Rail project was an important milestone in providing rail transit service to the region.

Jacksonville-based CSX operates two major rail lines in peninsular Florida, dubbed the A- and S-lines. The A-line runs through Jacksonville and Orlando, roughly following Interstate 95 and Interstate 4 into Polk County. The S-line runs through Baldwin and Ocala slightly west of the center of the state. A CSX spokesman calls the lines "our I-75 and I-95."

The two lines touch near the Florida-Georgia border, then split and intersect again only in north central Polk County. There they essentially merge in an east-west line between Auburndale and a spot just west of downtown Lakeland.

Commuter Rail would run along the CSX Transportation "A" Line (former Atlantic Coast Line Railroad main line) from Poinciana Boulevard near Kissimmee through downtown Orlando to DeLand. This line is presently used by two daily Amtrak round trips.

Phase I extends 31 miles from the Fort Florida Station in Volusia County to the Sand Lake Road Station in Orange County and is expected to be operational by December 2010.

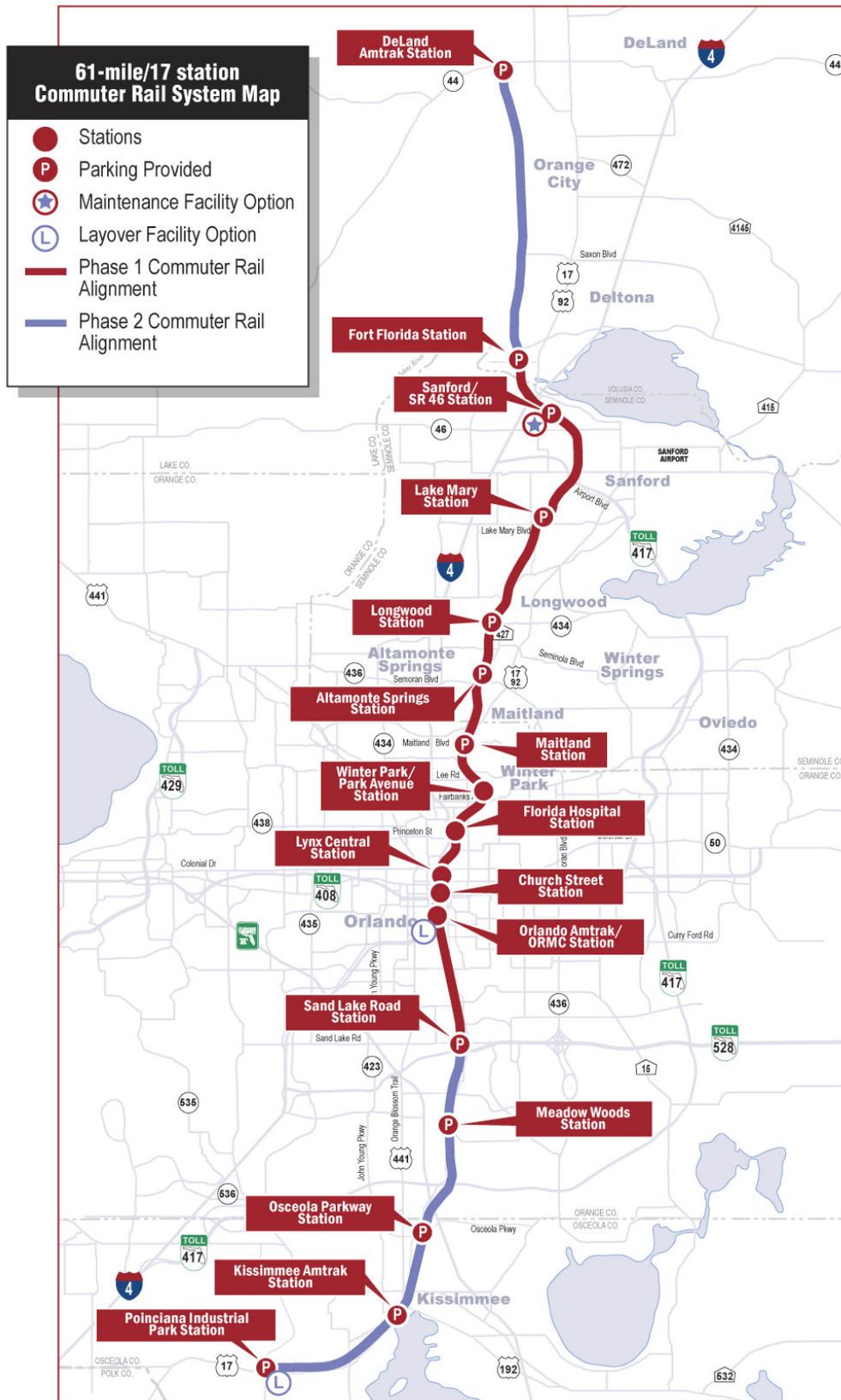
Phase II extends 23 miles south from the Sand Lake Road Station in Orange County to the Poinciana Station in Osceola County and north from the Fort Florida Station to the Deland Station in Volusia County and is expected to be operational in 2013.

The deal with the state will consolidate most of CSX's existing and future freight traffic onto the S-line. It will shut down CSX's aging Taft rail hub in Orlando and transfer its operations to the Winter Haven center. The ability to move people, goods and services through the region is important to maintain a healthy economy. Commuter rail offers an opportunity to stimulate regional economic development, and reduce automobile trips if:

- Cities allow higher densities and mixed use centers of commerce near the proposed stations.
- CSX builds a proposed 2-mile long freight distribution depot and transfer yard in Winter haven (Polk County) to serve the relocated freight from the A line to the S line. This would also be a major economic stimulation to the transportation and export industries.

Even with commuter rail, there will be a need for other transportation options (bike/scooter lanes, bus, bus rapid transit, light rail, streetcar, etc.) as the region grows. As population doubles by the year 2050, it will simply not be possible to just double the number of lane-miles of roads.

Figure 12 Central Florida Commuter Rail System



V. Workforce- Employment

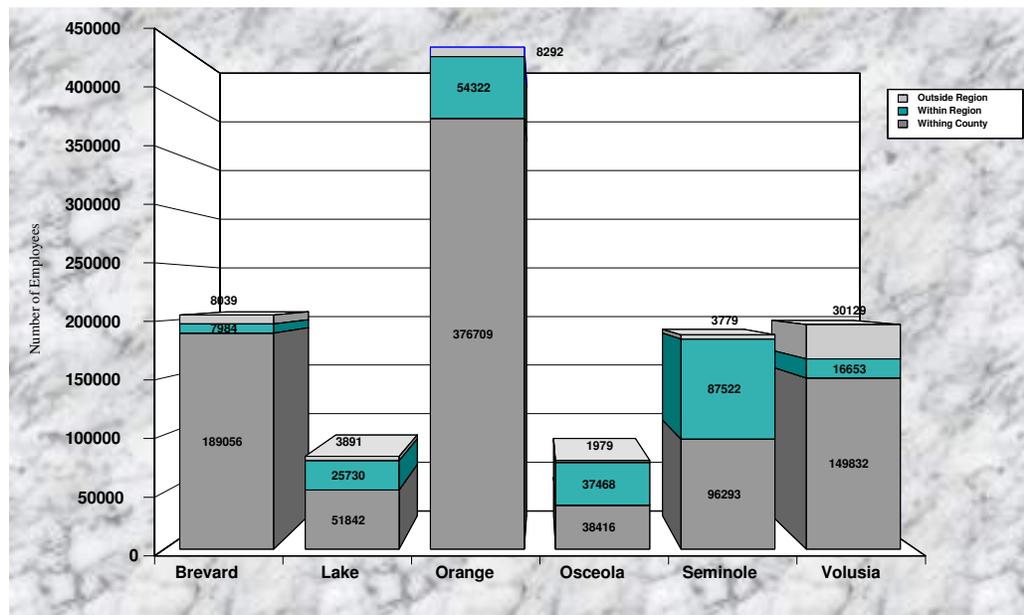
East Central Florida's total employment is approximately 1.65 million. The service sector employs more than 50% of total private employment, including industries such as Professional and Technical Services, Management of Companies, Healthcare, and Arts and Entertainment, etc. A third of these occupations are in innovative, knowledge-based jobs.

The June 2007 unemployment rate was 3.6 percent in nine counties of Central Florida, an increase from May's rate of 3 percent according to Workforce Central Florida. Seminole County had the second lowest rate in June 2007 at 3.4 percent, up from 2.8 percent in May; Orange's rate was 3.5 percent, up from 3 percent in May; Volusia, 3.9 percent, 3.3 percent in May; Osceola, 4 percent, 3.5 percent in May; Lake, 4 percent, 3.3 percent in May; Brevard, 4.1 percent, 3.6 percent in May.

Despite increases, regional unemployment is less than Florida (3.8 %) and USA (4.7%) rates. In 2005 the Milken Institute (a publicly supported independent economic think tank) rated the Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville and the Orlando-Kissimmee metropolitan areas of East Central Florida as the 1st and 6th best places in the nation to create and sustain jobs. The Institute ranked these two metropolitan areas at the 36th and 45th places, respectively out of 315 metropolitan areas in the nation in high-tech capacity.

The figure shows where people work based on their county of residence.

Figure 13 Employment by Place of Work



Source: Regional Economic Models Inc

For example, in Seminole County 96 thousand residents work in Seminole County. Another 87 thousand Seminole County residents work in a different part of the region, and another four thousand residents leave the region to work.

In 2005, total exports from the region were \$43,693 Billion and total imports were \$46,794 Billion. The Gross Regional Product was \$104,819 Billion and Real Disposable Income was \$ 74 Billion.

VI. Natural Resources

Central Florida has diverse land, solar, water, estuarine and ocean resources, but the six county EDD is not a region rich in extractive resources (i.e. metal ore, oil, gas), except for off shore resources. Early economies were based on agriculture and ocean related commerce.

The majority of agriculture land is low intensity cattle grazing. Back to back freezes of the 1980s killed much of the traditional citrus acreage. Current problems with two citrus diseases, canker and greening now threaten the remaining acreage. Citrus farmers are changing to other crops.

East Central Florida has world class beaches and inland lakes for recreation. This is a large part of the local economy. In addition, there is an extensive network of public lands in conservation and recreation that contributes significant current and potential economic value to the region. Included in this natural area inventory are ecosystems, habitats and species of national and international significance, and the Florida Greenway and Trails system.

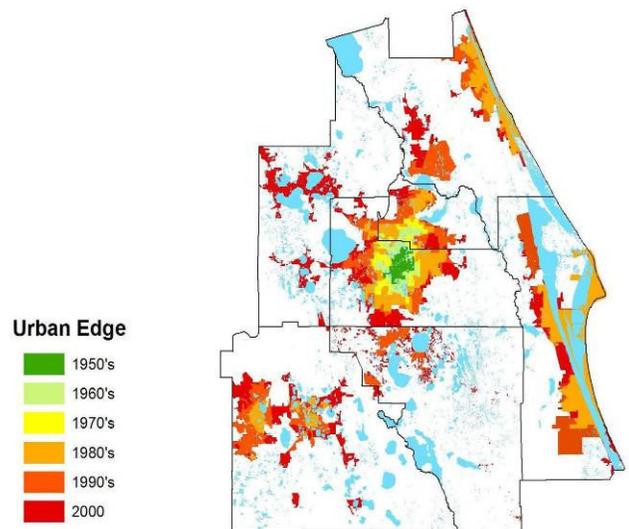
In 2004, Naturally Central Florida (a regional partnership initiative between myregion.org and the University of Central Florida Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies) conducted a regional evaluation of the most significant natural area assets. Naturally Central Florida identified seven regional “jewels” that represented “must save” places that contributed local, regional, statewide and national environmental and economic value.

These systems represent a green infrastructure for regional growth decisions. Conservation land efforts are underway for each of the systems, but current land acquisition funding is insufficient and local growth management policies do not adequately plan for large ecosystem protection in the region.

In addition to these seven “jewels”, the region has a number of other exceptional ecosystems of national and global significance. These other systems were not included with the list of seven because land acquisition is largely completed and conservation measures are underway.

As the region grows, there is an urgent need to expand the conservation areas as development pressure continues to encroach on the most critical natural systems.

The tipping point has been passed on groundwater usage. The two Water Management Districts announced in 2006 that after 2013 there will be no new permits issued for withdrawal from the underground aquifer. This means future water use will come from treated surface waters, or high tech desalination plants, which is significantly more expensive.



Over 2,100 square miles of exceptional conservation land has been preserved in the region (including the EDD and Polk County). The conservation areas are critical for groundwater recharge, sustaining fragile ecosystems, maintaining migratory wildlife corridors and providing recreation.

If the natural systems are allowed to fail, the region's growth will be unsustainable; therefore, preservation of the most critical ecosystems must be the basic building block of future development patterns.

The Important Ecological Resource Map (Figure 13) shows critical ecosystems that have been conserved, and those that still need to be considered for preservation.

The Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge in Brevard and Indian River Counties exemplifies a regional conservation project with global ecological and economic significance. This 20-mile stretch of central east coast barrier island oceanfront represents one of the most important sea turtle nesting areas in the world. This project represents one of the most important coastal conservation initiatives in America. It reshaped coastal development patterns on a Florida east coast barrier island by integrating with coastal settlements in Brevard and Indian River Counties.

Over \$100 million in public funds (federal, state and local) was invested in the conservation initiative, together with significant private conservation land funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation American Land Conservation Program (over \$40 million).

This conservation network:

- protects natural habitats and species;
- creates valuable green space for local communities;
- attracts visiting scientists from around the world;
- is the planned location for construction of a world-class marine and coastal research center;
- secures exceptional beach and water access opportunities for recreation and tourism' and
- decreases development density in a fragile, high-hazard coastal community.

The Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge regional partnership represents a good small area study to demonstrate the potential economic value of an expanded green space network strategically located and designed for the central Florida region.

The combined inventory of natural land and water assets in the region serves as the foundation for many economic opportunities and holds the potential to become a cornerstone economic engine for the region and the entire state. There is growing economic evidence to suggest that central Florida needs to take a much more detailed look at the economic values and growth potentials of the land and water-based economy of Florida.

Figure 14 Important Ecological Resource Areas



Important Ecological Resource Areas

East Central Florida Region - How Shall We Grow Project

