

# Live, Work and Play: How Economic Development Can Reduce Manatee County's Traffic Crisis And Preserve Rural Areas

Mark Stanoch

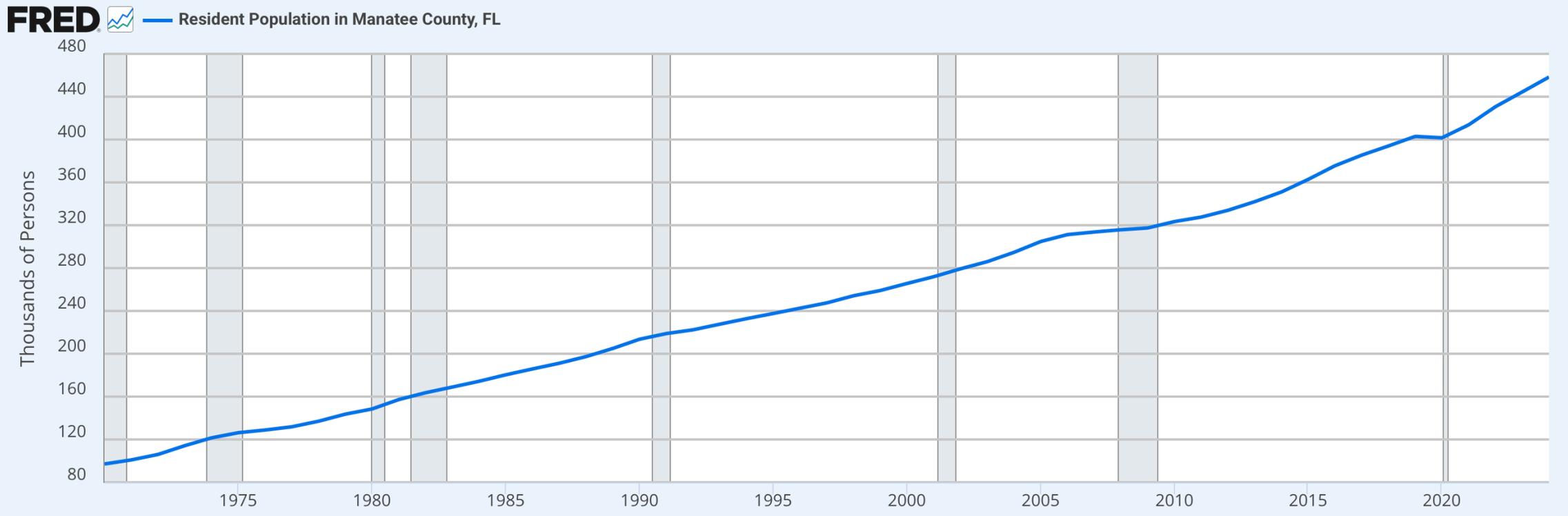
Candidate

Manatee County Commission District 1



“Growth is inevitable. The challenge is how we manage it.”

- Mark Stanoch



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis via FRED®

In December 2025, the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) published the first ever Strategic Plan for the county.

Services and Amenities +

Government and Agencies +



Community +

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## *Vision*

*“Manatee County is a thriving community where beaches, cities, and rural areas come together. Our vision is to continue to make Manatee County the premier place to live, work and play.”*

But is Manatee County a “...premier place to work”? Markets are best served when Business Demand, Labor Markets and Housing Development are locally aligned.



BUSINESS DEMAND



LABOR MARKET



HOUSING  
DEVELOPMENT

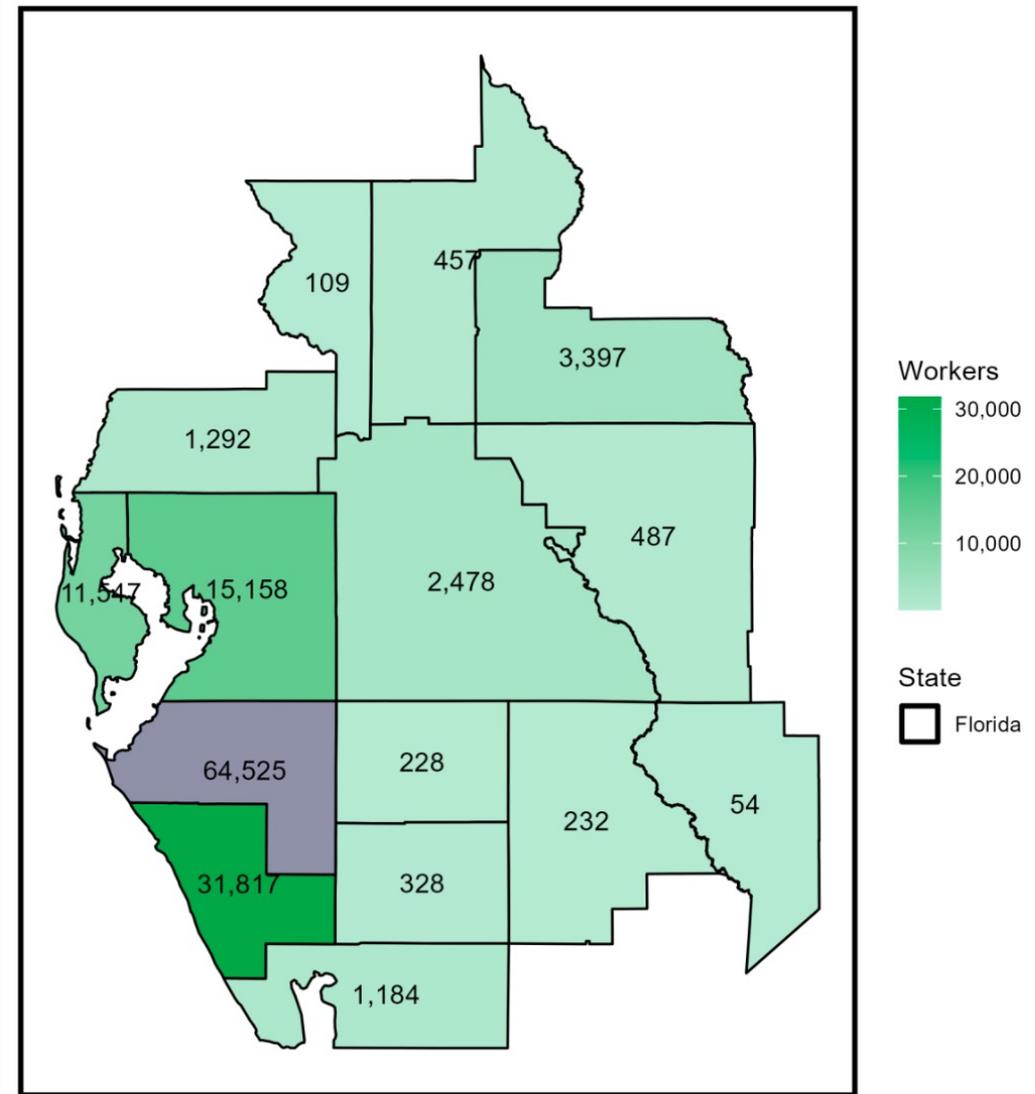
Analyzing the number of workers **employed** within the county against those **living** in the county reveals a significant imbalance.

Source: Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) July 2024



## Work Destination Summary - Neighboring County Map

The map below shows the neighboring counties where workers, who live in Manatee County, are employed.



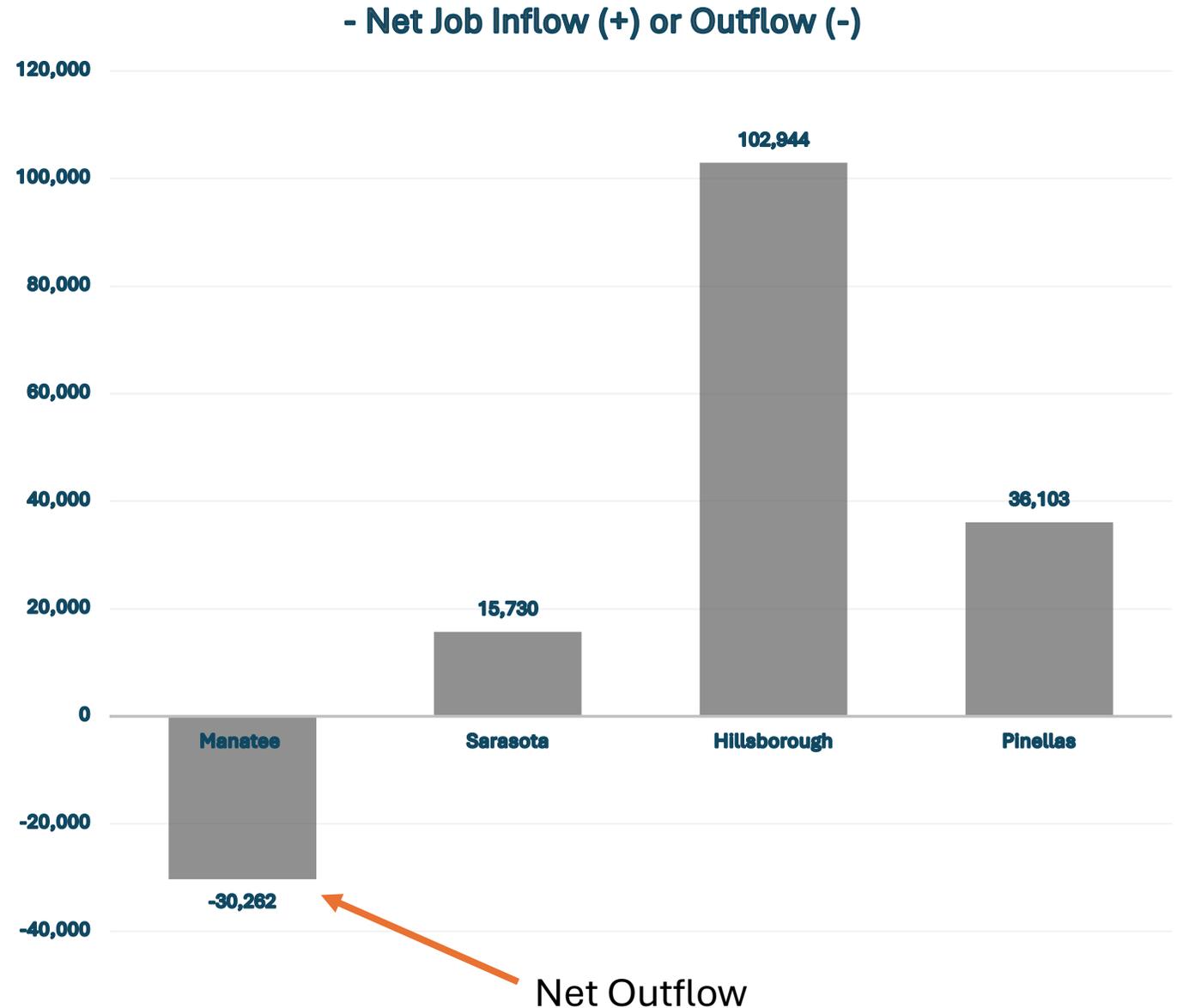
Note: The target county (in grey blue) shows people that live in and work in Manatee County.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program.

There are 88,193 workers who leave Manatee County on their daily commute, making the county a “Bedroom Community” and a “Drive Through” rather than a “Drive To” work destination.

A lack of jobs within Manatee County results in a Net Outflow of 30,262 workers to surrounding counties every day.

Source: Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) July 2024



# Manatee County Traffic Is Amplified by Other Pass-Through Commuting.

County of Origin	Destination County	Daily Commuters
Sarasota	Hillsborough	6,682
Sarasota	Pinellas	4,247
Sarasota	Pasco	1,786
Charlotte	Hillsborough	1,413
Charlotte	Pinellas	1,000
Charlotte	Pasco	549
Polk	Sarasota	2,487
Hillsborough	Sarasota	8,095
Hillsborough	Lee	7,945
Hillsborough	Collier	2,992
Hillsborough	Charlotte	1,938
Pinellas	Sarasota	5,119
Pinellas	Lee	4,389
Pinellas	Collier	1,522
Pinellas	Charlotte	1,091

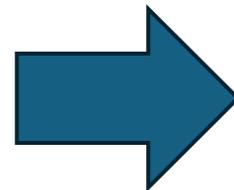
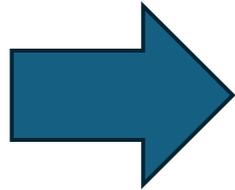
Source: Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) July 2024



## Manatee County is a **net exporter of labor** resulting in economic loss.

- Manatee County exports **30,262 workers daily** because job growth has not kept pace with population growth.
- The county has **more workers than local jobs**, forcing residents to commute to neighboring counties.
- This daily outbound commute **directly increases traffic congestion** and strains regional roadways.
- While Manatee County absorbs housing growth, it **exports wages, spending, and economic activity**.
- Housing development primarily supports **external employment centers**, not the local economy.
- Continued housing growth without job creation **worsens congestion without improving economic strength**.

This was caused by a focus on housing while ignoring job creation within the county.





## Strategic Business Development can correct this imbalance.

- Expanding **in-county employment** aligns job growth with population growth.
- Creating more local jobs **reduces the need for out-of-county commuting.**
- Fewer daily commutes **relieve traffic congestion and reduce infrastructure strain.**
- Keeping jobs local ensures that **wages, spending, and investment stay in Manatee County.**
- Targeted business attraction shifts housing growth into **local economic support.**
- Strategic job creation allows growth to **strengthen the economy without increasing congestion.**

The solution is to find and attract the right kinds of businesses which align with the objectives of the county's Strategic Plan.



Recruiting **high-wage, low-environmental-impact sectors** such as professional services, technology, healthcare, and clean manufacturing drives job creation **without excessive use of natural resources**.



Increasing **employment opportunities within the county** helps decrease daily outbound commuting and keeps earnings circulating locally.



Knowledge-driven and advanced industries produce **greater tax revenue per acre** compared to developments reliant on urban sprawl.



Growth in local employment enhances **quality of life** by reducing commute durations and alleviating traffic congestion.



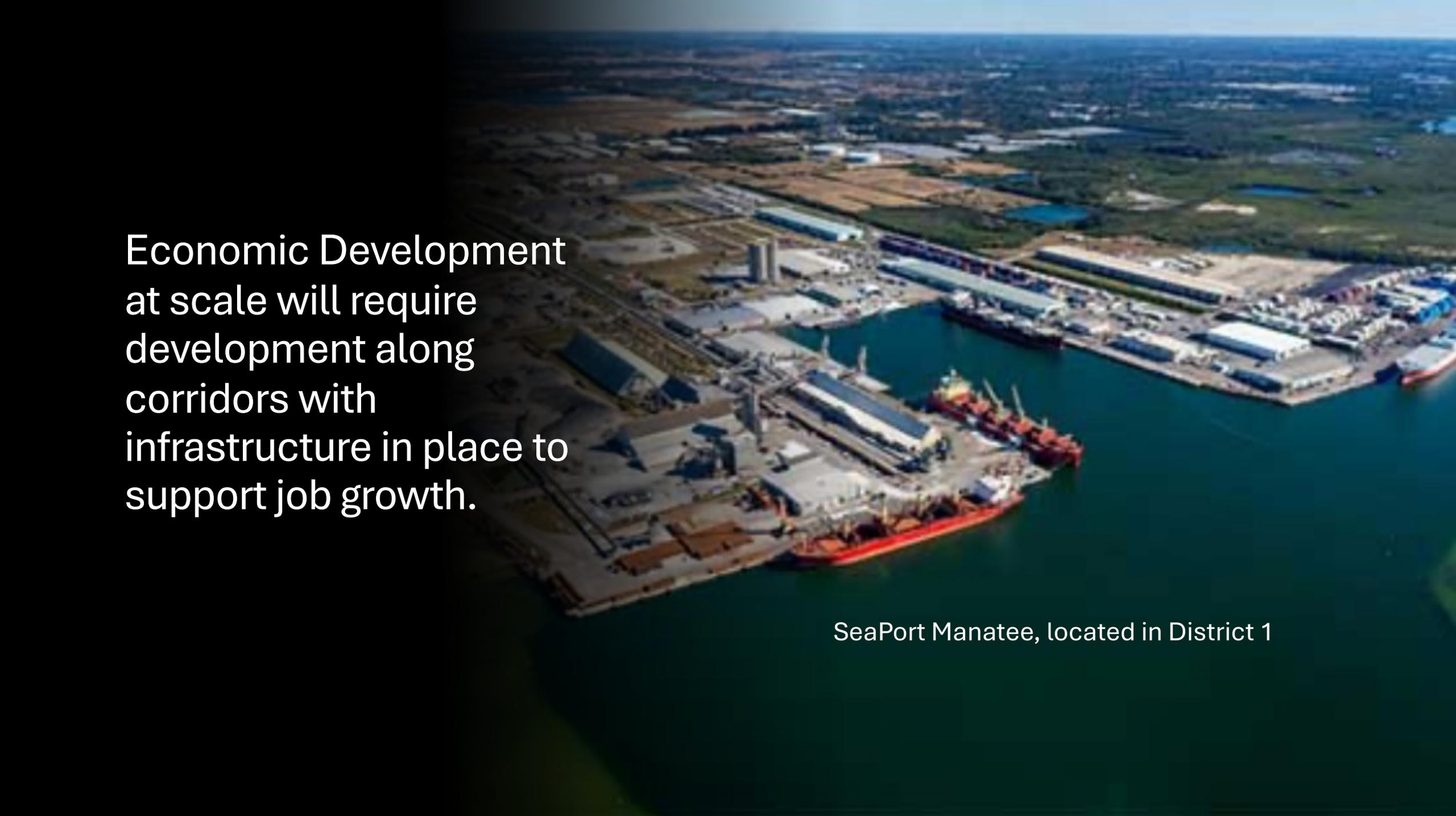
Retaining skilled workers reinforces the **local talent pool**, boosting the county's appeal to prospective employers.

We need to diversify our employment base to reduce reliance on Construction and related industries while expanding into others.

- **Source: Prepared in February 2026 by: Florida Legislature**
- **Office of Economic and Demographic Research**

<b>Establishments % of All Industries</b>	<b>Manatee County</b>	<b>Florida</b>
All industries	14,624	881,780
Natural Resource & Mining	0.7%	0.7%
Construction	13.0%	9.6%
Manufacturing	3.8%	3.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	16.5%	17.2%
Information	2.2%	2.3%
Financial Activities	11.4%	10.8%
Professional & Business Services	23.6%	25.6%
Education & Health Services	10.8%	11.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	7.9%	7.7%
Other Services	7.2%	6.9%
Government	0.7%	0.7%



An aerial photograph of the SeaPort Manatee industrial facility. The image shows a large complex of industrial buildings, including several long, low-profile structures with grey roofs. In the foreground, two large red cargo ships are docked at a pier. The water is a deep blue-green color. The background shows a vast expanse of land with various industrial plots, some with greenery, and a clear blue sky in the distance.

Economic Development  
at scale will require  
development along  
corridors with  
infrastructure in place to  
support job growth.

SeaPort Manatee, located in District 1

This will enable  
job growth while  
preserving our  
rural lands.

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