

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

Mark Stanoch

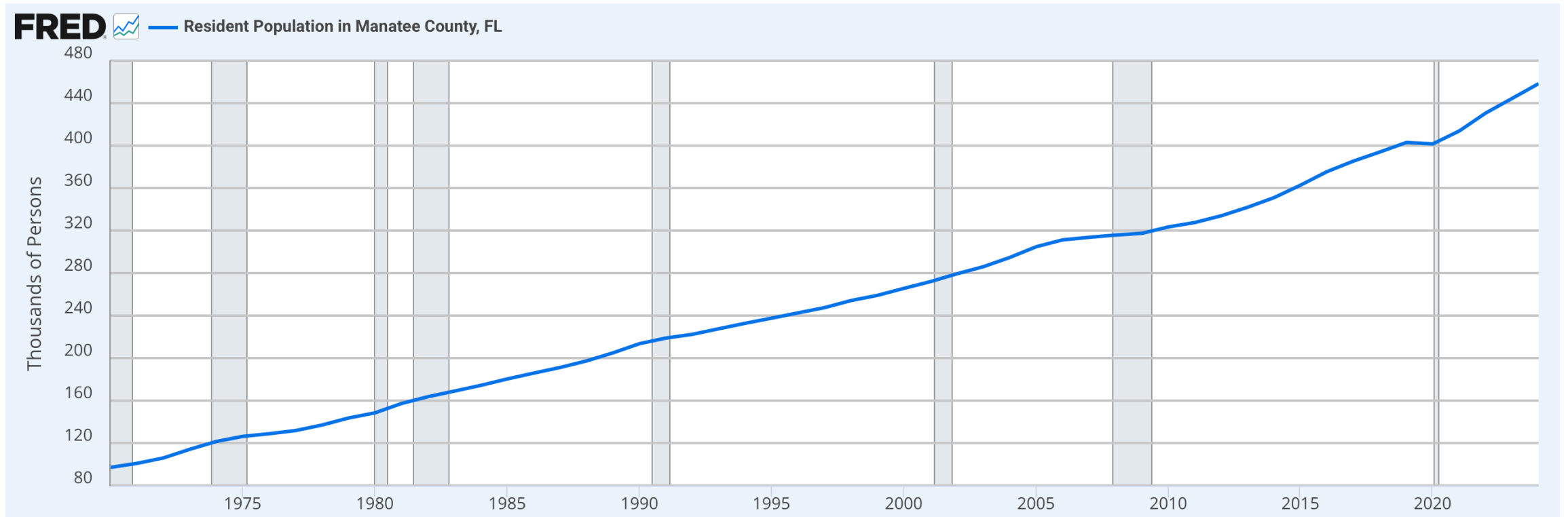
Candidate

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



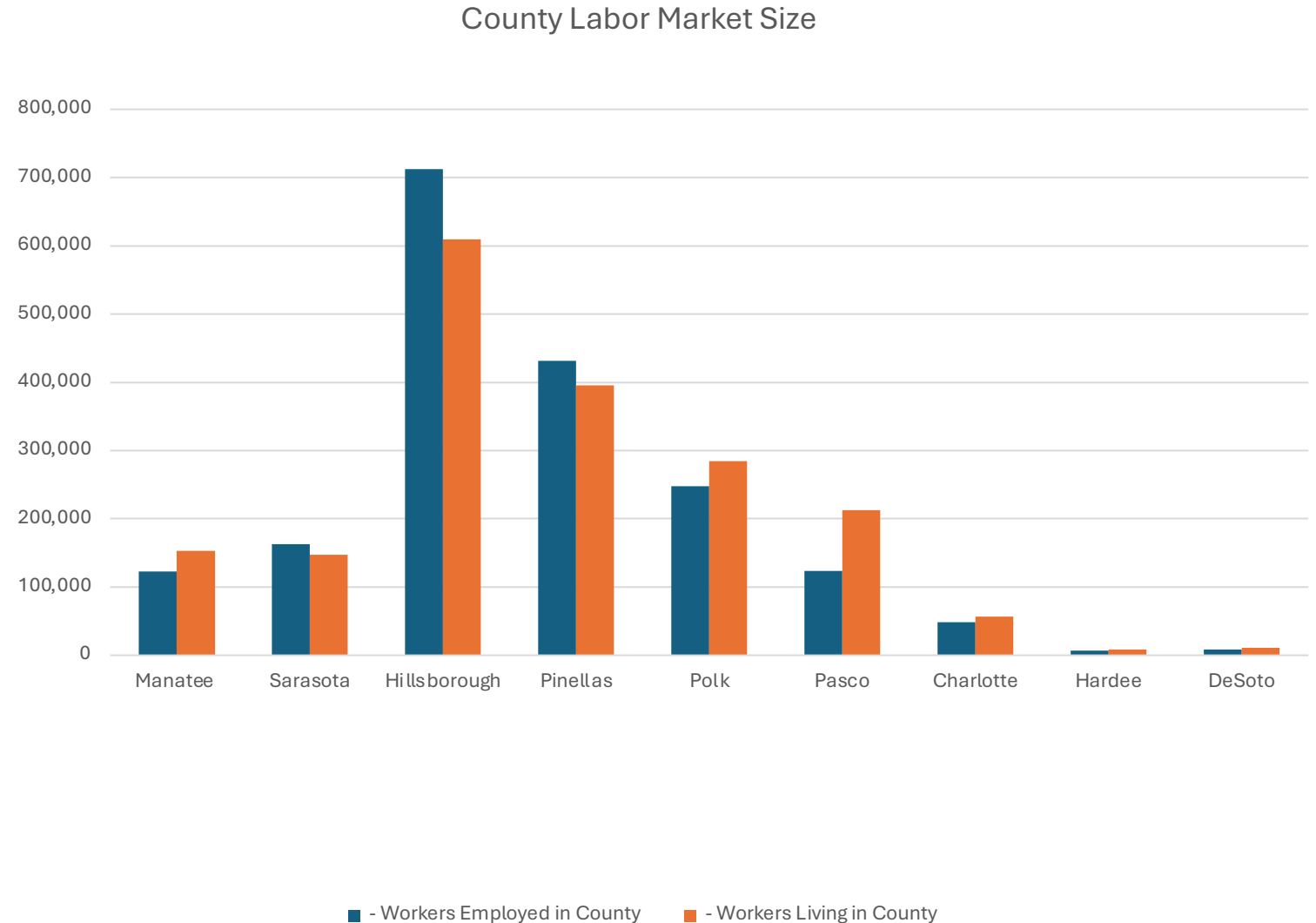
LABOR MARKET



HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT

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

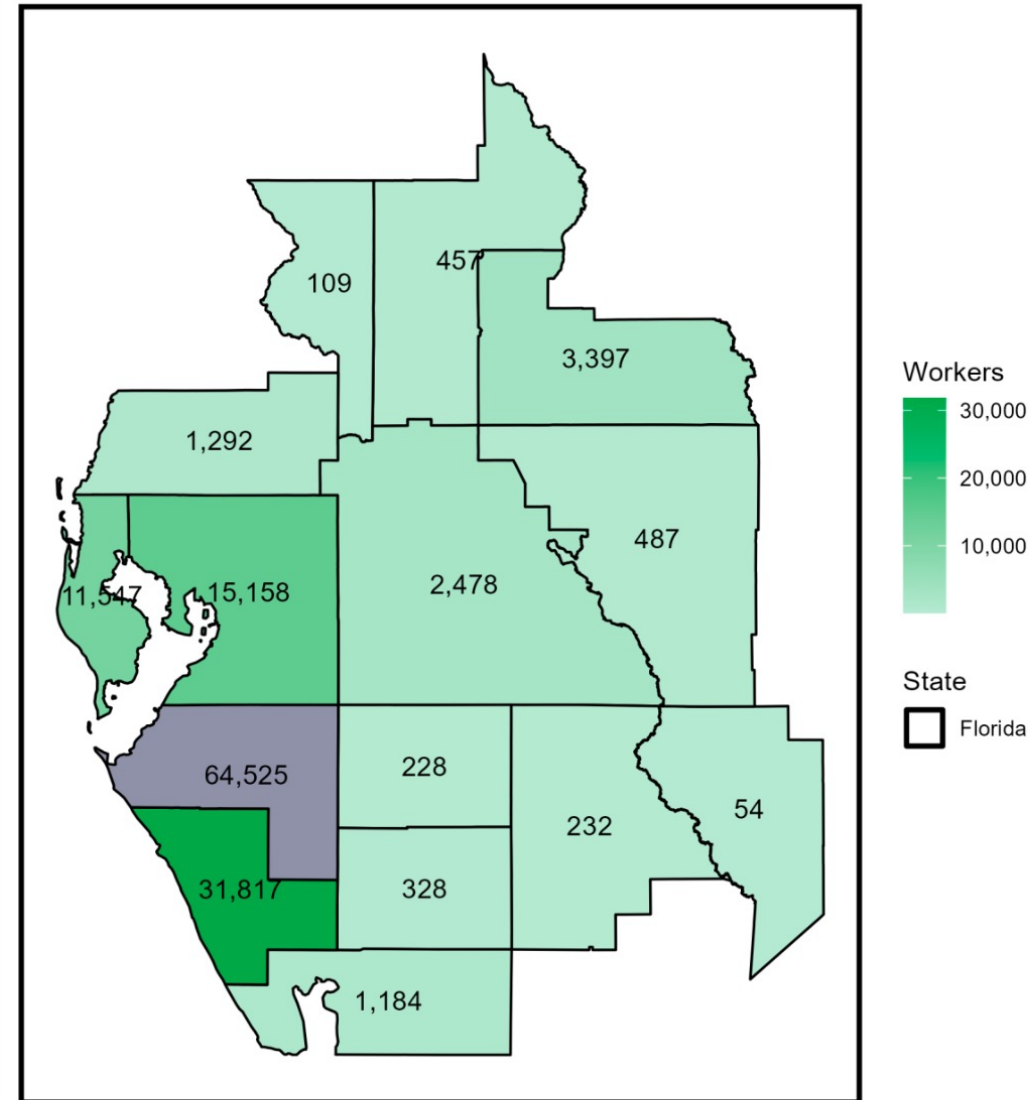
Source: Bureau of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research (WSER) July 2024



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.

Work Destination Summary - Neighboring County Map

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

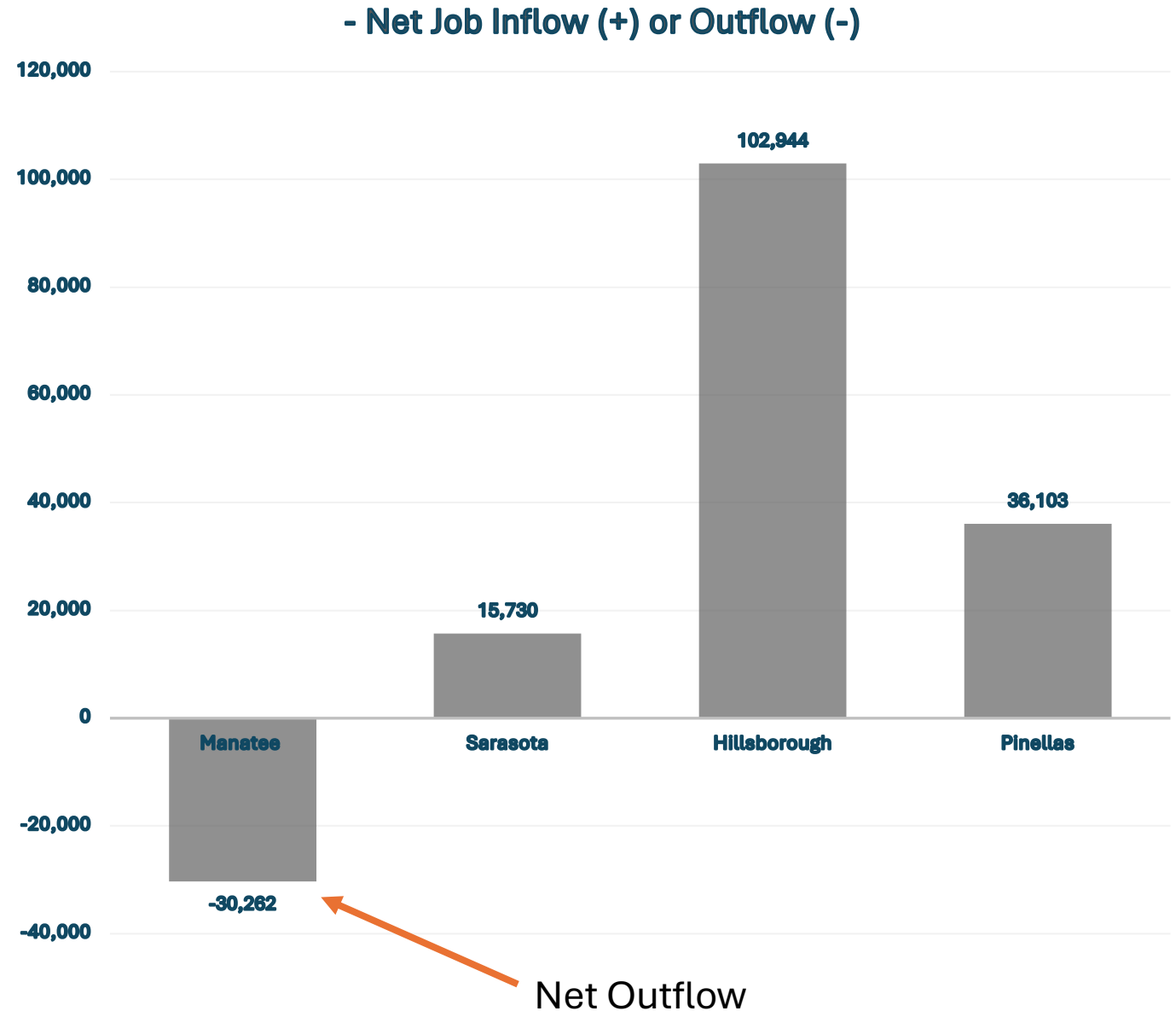


Note: The target county (in grey blue) shows people that live in and work in Manatee County.

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

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

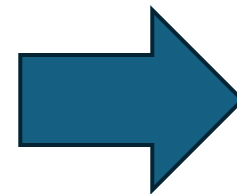
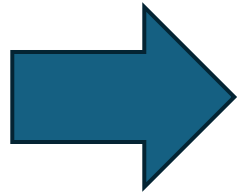
Source: Bureau of Workforce
Statistics and Economic
Research (WSER) July 2024



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

Establishments % of All Industries	Manatee County	Florida
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 warehouses and taller structures. A large body of water, likely a canal or harbor, runs alongside the facility, with several large cargo ships docked at piers. The surrounding area includes some greenery and other industrial developments in the distance. The sky is clear and blue.

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

SeaPort Manatee, located in District 1

The area has the infrastructure in place to develop job growth at scale.



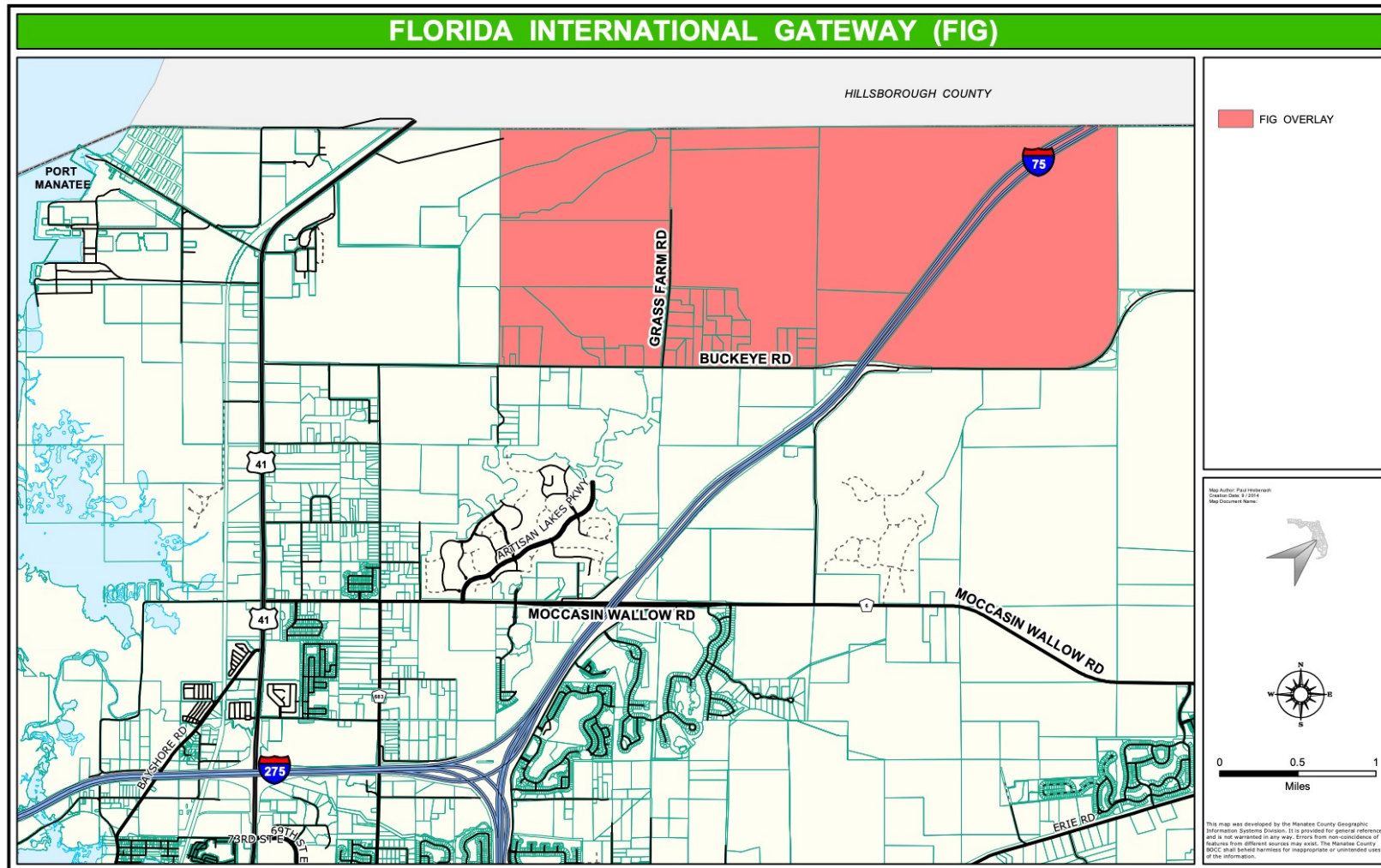
There are already several programs and special zoning districts(PDEZ) that can be used to drive economic growth near the port.

Planned Development Encouragement Zone (PDEZ)



The Land Development Code establishes a Planned Development Encouragement Zone (PDEZ) Zoning District. This district encourages port-compatible development on vacant lands in the vicinity of Port Manatee. This could include manufacturing, warehouses, distribution centers and a range of other light and heavy industrial uses. To date, four areas totaling over 1,000 acres have been rezoned to the new PDEZ district. Additional parcels are being considered for PDEZ zoning

The Florida International Gateway (FIG) District is in the Comprehensive Plan. The FIG includes a 2,000+ acre area with a wider range of land uses (including light industrial uses) available to landowners within its boundary.



Innovation Park at SeaPort Manatee



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A straight road runs vertically through the center. To the left of the road is a large field of young trees planted in rows. To the right is a green field with a small pond and a few buildings. The background shows more fields and a distant horizon under a cloudy sky.

These plans will
enable job
growth while
preserving our
rural lands.

And we can grow our considerable base of
Agribusiness. But that is a topic for
another day.

This will also allow us to change our emphasis from **Housing** Development to **Community** Development.



Housing Development

- Live



Community Development

- Live
- Work
- Play

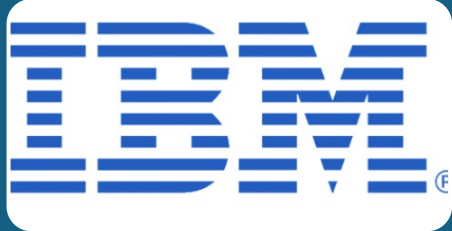
To increase Economic Development in Manatee County we already have the:

- Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Programs
- Financial Incentives

Now all that is required is the:

Political Will

My business experience includes Corporate Managerial Positions and Entrepreneurship.



Principal, IBM Global Services

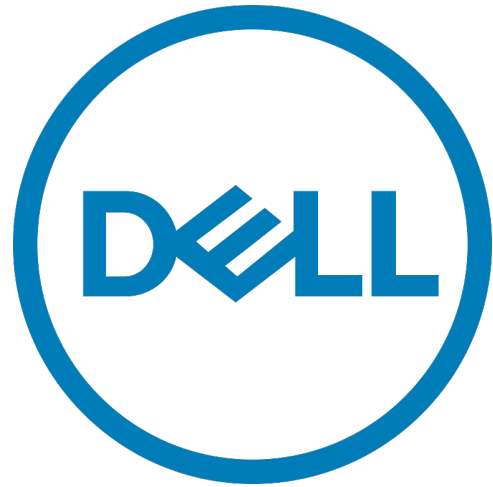


Microsoft Relationship Manager



Led 2 Technology Startups. Sold to publicly traded corporations.

I have the background and skills to tackle these issues.



- **Success in bringing culturally different organizations together to achieve common goals**
- **Career in PRACTICAL application of technology**
- **Experience in transforming business enterprises and government agencies**
- **Analytical and problem-solving skills**

Why am I running? Here are 2 good reasons...



Thank You!

<https://votemarkstanoch.com>

