Major Employment Center Land Use Study
Demographic and Economic Profile
and
Policy Review

Sarasota County, Florida

DRAFT

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Introduction

The primary objective of this study is to assess assigned land uses in the existing MECs to determine whether they are aligned with Sarasota County's economic development goals, employment forecasts, and economic trends, and to provide appropriate implementation strategies for this future land use designation. Further, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) seeks to understand the following key issues:

- Future demand for MEC land uses;
- Acreage necessary to accommodate future employment growth;
- How well existing MECs are functioning; and
- An appropriate employment and housing balance.

The study will also provide a framework to promote and guide desired patterns of development and a plan of action to identify how existing MEC designated areas can be improved to meet future employment and housing demand in Sarasota County.

This first report represents work during the Inventory phase (Phase 1.0) of the planning process for the Major Employment Center (MEC) Land Use Study. The report consists of a series of documents – a County Profile and a Policy Review – that are intended to gather background information and explore policy issues relating to the MECs. The County Profile reviews a wide variety of demographic and economic data, looking at history and trends, and making comparisons to other localities as well as larger entities such as Florida as a whole. The Policy Review takes a broad look at current land use and economic development policy to examine if the county's policy machinery is functioning as intended. Together, this series of documents creates the foundation for more in-depth analysis and the development of recommendations that will occur during later phases of the study. These documents help us see where the county is today, so we can better direct where it needs to aim tomorrow to meet its land use and economic development goals.

General & Limiting Conditions

Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the data contained in this study reflect the most accurate and timely information possible. These data are believed to be reliable. This study is based on estimates, assumptions and other information developed by Economics Research Associates from its independent research effort, general knowledge of the market and the industry, and consultations with the client and its representatives. No responsibility is assumed for inaccuracies in reporting by the client, its agent and representatives or any other data source used in preparing or presenting this study.

No warranty or representation is made by Economics Research Associates that any of the projected values or results contained in this study will actually be achieved.

Possession of this study does not carry with it the right of publication thereof or to use the name of "Economics Research Associates" in any manner without first obtaining the prior written consent of Economics Research Associates. No abstracting, excerpting or summarizing of this study may be made without first obtaining the prior written consent of Economics Research Associates. This report is not to be used in conjunction with any public or private offering of securities or other similar purpose where it may be relied upon to any degree by any person, other than the client, without first obtaining the prior written consent of Economics Research Associates. This study may not be used for purposes other than that for which it is prepared or for which prior written consent has first been obtained from Economics Research Associates.

This study is qualified in its entirety by, and should be considered in light of, these limitations, conditions and considerations.

Policy Review

Policy Analysis

The thoroughness of Sarasota County's Economic Development Planning efforts is noteworthy. The county has recently developed economic development and workforce development plans that have a solid basis in empirical analysis and current national and global trends. Clear strategies and target industries have been identified for business recruitment and existing business development. The county's economic development policies are set in a context of the county's overall vision, so that they promote the community's quality of life, environmental, and community goals.

Economic diversification is a logical goal for the county. Diversification of the county's economic base can provide improved employment opportunities for county residents and strengthen the diversity of the county's tax base. It makes sense for the county to pursue high-wage, high-skill, year-round, export-oriented business and employment growth.

Some of the target industries identified in the Economic Development Planning efforts may be difficult for the county to grow and recruit. Namely, current trends seem to work against the growth or expansion of specialty manufacturing in the county. It may be appropriate to re-evaluate some of the target industries or to refine the businesses recruitment and local business growth strategy to make sure scarce economic development resources are being allocated efficiently.

Land use policy for MECs may present unintended consequences. At first, the Comprehensive Plan states clearly that MECs are for employment-based land uses, and that other uses should be accessory. But later in the elaboration of other MEC policies, encouragement for developing affordable housing and mixed-use development is also mentioned. While these policies do not directly conflict, there is some tension since all land developed into other land uses may be lost to employment-based uses. The nuances incorporated into the county's land use policy with regard to MECs may be indirectly undermining and/or obscuring the primary goals of the MEC future land use designation. The Sarasota 2050 Plan further obscures the economic function of MECs, as the smart growth PED zoning district is promoted in the 2050 Plan, whereas the IR zoning district is preferred in the Future Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan. The wide difference in development regulations between the various implementing zoning districts presents the opportunity for mixed interpretation of the intended purpose and function of the MEC future land use designation.

Current MECs are designated in appropriate locations from a regional standpoint. Many MECs are located along the I-75 corridor, which is slated for significant employment growth throughout the region. Also, MECs are generally located at the intersections of regional multi-modal transportation corridors, which are the most appropriate locations to maximize multi-modal accessibility for future MECs.

Economic Development Policy

Sarasota County Economic Development Strategic Plan

The central policy document for Sarasota's economic development policy is the 2004 Sarasota County Economic Development Strategic Plan, hereafter referred to as the Economic Development Plan. The Economic Development Plan reviews the strengths and weaknesses of the county, lays out a series of economic development goals, and puts forth recommendations for achieving those goals. The Economic Development Plan is set within the context of a globalizing economy that places a premium on entrepreneurship and demands ever-higher amounts of competition from a global marketplace. Within this context, the Economic Development Plan emphasizes the continued focus of Sarasota County on its quality of life, and particularly greater opportunity and livability for young professionals. Also the plan highlights the need for public-private partnership to realize economic development goals.

The vision put forth in the Economic Development Plan is that of a diversified economy for Sarasota County which exhibits growth in both jobs and number of businesses. Four goals are articulated to support this vision:

- Establish Sarasota County as a place to grow high-value businesses
- Develop a more stable tax base that minimizes the long-term tax burden on residents and businesses
- Create economic development opportunities for all parts of the county
- Promote an array of job choices and career paths for the young people of the county

The plan details the strengths and weaknesses of the county. Strengths include a high quality of life, which is essential in attracting highly educated workers. Weaknesses include a lower than average wage rate, and a low level of goods and services produced for export markets outside of the county.

The Economic Development Plan puts forth a strategy for achieving the above goals. The key elements of the strategy include:

- Developing clusters of value-added, export-oriented companies in areas where the county already has a high concentration of employment
- A focus on increasing entrepreneurship and innovation
- Creating and maintaining a positive business climate with collaboration between the private and public sectors
- Strong coordination of economic development activities with other initiatives in the community, other counties, and the Tampa region

Next, the Economic Development Plan identifies target cluster industries and specific strategies for recruiting each industry.

Specialty manufacturing is the first of the identified clusters. Better public sector understanding and support for the specialty manufacturing sector is one of the strategies to support this sector. Mobilizing political representation for the manufacturing center is also important.

Developing better connections between young job seekers and employment opportunities in the county is another strategy for promoting this industry.

Creative services is the second of the identified clusters. It is recommended that a creative services district be developed within Sarasota County. Organization of creative industries into a unified voice for collaborative marketing is another strategy for promoting creative services.

Life and environmental services is the third of the identified clusters. It is recommended that the county initiate a Clinical Research Organization in collaboration with a nearby educational institution to promote life and environmental sciences. Also, a life sciences incubator is recommended as a strategy for promoting this industry.

High tech and entrepreneurship is the fourth and last of the identified clusters. Greater marketing efforts for promoting the county's current and emerging technology firms by establishing a technology district is one strategy for promoting this cluster. Enhancing the entrepreneurial climate to improve access to capital, build strong executive teams, and foster new start ups is a second related strategy for promoting high-tech in Sarasota County.

Economic Profile 2006

Sarasota County's Economic Profile provides detailed information on the performance of the county's economy. This creates an opportunity to evaluate the success of the county's economic development efforts to date.

Overall, Sarasota County has faster job growth than many high-growth competitor regions. Also, even though Sarasota County's average wages are below average for Florida, the wage growth rate is higher than average, indicating gradual improvement. Job growth in recent times has been in professional services, creative services, financial services, construction and real estate. One particular strength for the county has been small businesses, as the county has 32,000 self-employed workers and a high number of firms with less than 20 employees.

The Economic Profile reviews each of the target clusters identified in the Economic Development Plan. Most of the clusters have seen strong growth, including professional and technical services, biological and life sciences, and creative services. Specialty manufacture has seen more fluctuating job growth. Productivity gains have also been strong in most of these industries, with productivity growth in line with state-wide productivity growth for most industries. Creative services is one of the few areas where the county has seen faster than average productivity growth.

The Economic Profile also reviews other factors affecting business climate. One of the factors that makes Sarasota County unique is a high proportion of personal income coming from interest and dividend income instead of wages. Unemployment in Sarasota County is historically low and significantly below the US average. Education attainment in the county is above average. One of the greatest challenges to the county's economy is the lack of affordable housing. Sarasota County's housing is much less affordable than most other places in the US, partially because of the high number of wealthy retirees. The University of South Florida is identified as an important economic development resource that plays a leading role in promoting research and developing new technologies for the region.

Comprehensive Plan – Economic Development Chapter

The Comprehensive Plan includes a chapter on economic development that reviews the history and context for the county's economic development, describes how land use policy is intended to coordinate with economic development policy, and articulates economic development goals for the county.

The Comprehensive Plan starts with the history of Sarasota County as a tourist destination, with an early influence of the arts. To this day, the county maintains a large retirement population, with the over-65 population composing a higher proportion of the county's population than the proportion found in Florida as a whole. On the other hand, the young adult population is a small component of the county's population. A labor market survey was conducted in 1995 found that there was significant under-employment in the county, as well as a lack of qualified employees for lower paying jobs.

The Comprehensive Plan reviews current economic development activities for the county. Current economic development activities are funded through the occupational license fee, per capita contributions by local governments, and private sector contributions. Economic development incentives include regulatory incentives such as the SMART permitting process and fiscal incentives such as mitigation of road impact fees for targeted businesses.

Elements of business climate are reviewed, including impact fees, Ad Valorem taxes, and the development review process. The county claims that the burden created by its impact fees are balanced by its lower property taxes. Also, the county provides an Impact Fee Mitigation Program for qualifying businesses. The county endeavors to have a predictable review process through its Development Review Committee and well-defined development review procedures.

A high quality of life is one of the prime economic drivers for the county. Aspects of quality of life that are reviewed in this element of the Comprehensive Plan include the natural environment; arts, culture, and recreation; educational excellence; social, health and safety issues; and affordable housing.

The Comprehensive Plan includes a first-level analysis of the adequacy of commercial, office, and industrial land use supply. This analysis concludes that there are numerically enough vacant or unoccupied lands for non-residential land use through 2030. However one of the major purposes of this current MEC land use study is to evaluate the supply of land for these uses (office and industrial) in greater depth.

Workforce development is also mentioned in the economic development chapter. Reference is made to the 21st Century Workforce Study conducted in 2003 in coordination with the county's Economic Development Strategic Plan. Out of the Workforce Study, a series of eight key workforce development challenges were identified for the county. The main thrust of these challenges is to expand educational and training opportunities and to align these opportunities with the economic development efforts of the county. The workforce development section also addresses the relatively low wages in Sarasota County and the county's difficulties with workforce housing supply.

The economic development chapter concludes with a series of economic development goals for the county. Three main goals and supporting objectives are outlined in this part of the chapter. The economic development goals are:

- Developing the county's economic infrastructure, including human capital
- Increasing coordination with other government and regional economic development agencies, and
- Diversifying the county's economic base.

Within economic infrastructure, economic development objectives are laid out for human capital, financing, budgetary support, incentives, business climate and regulation, and quality of life.

Finally, the economic development chapter ends with a description of the types of businesses that are compatible with Sarasota County's overall Comprehensive Planning goals. These goals emphasize full community participation and support by businesses and sustainable environmental practices. A specific list of potential compatible industries and businesses is included.

Land Use Policy

Comprehensive Plan – Land Use

The land use chapter of the Comprehensive Plan was most recently updated as part of the EAR process in May of 2006. The Land Use chapter reviews an inventory of existing land use, reviews current growth trends, and discusses policy objectives with regard to different land use categories. The chapter concludes with an extensive list of goals, objectives, and policies to guide the county's land use.

A new focus of the county's land use plan is redevelopment and smart growth. Redevelopment is consistent with the county's goals of promoting smart growth, maintaining fiscal sustainability, and reversing blighted areas. A number of policies are explored in the Comprehensive Plan for promoting redevelopment, including special area studies to promote redevelopment, a brownfield program, and encouraging mixed-use development in potential redevelopment areas.

According to the Comprehensive Plan, the function of MEC lands is to provide locations for employment and economic development opportunities. Locations for MEC lands should have access to major transportation and transit routes, be served by adequate levels of infrastructure, consist of parcels that are adequately sized to coordinate development and buffer adjoining land uses, and should be proximate to the labor pool. Specific land uses that are appropriate for MEC designated lands include light industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, and office uses. Commercial uses are supposed to be limited to accessory uses, and residential development within MECs is also supposed to be limited. On the other hand, affordable housing development within MECs is encouraged. The former Interstate Regional Office Park sub-designation within the MEC future land use category has been dropped for lack of use and because other land use policy alternatives are now available.

The land use chapter also includes a general analysis of adequate capacity for MEC land uses. The chapter notes that the new PED zoning category is able to incorporate some employment areas through mixed-use development and that less acreage per employee is likely needed in the future because of increasing numbers of telecommuters. Also the plan notes that Commercial Centers and Corridors may be compatible with certain types of MEC land uses in certain locations. On the other hand, the chapter states that economic development entities are requesting that the county increase the amount of MEC land.

The land use chapter sets out five major goals for the county with regard to land use. The goal which most directly applies to MECs is the following:

> "Promote the orderly development and redevelopment of the land uses needed to accommodate the projected population growth to the extent such growth is financially feasible and consistent with the other goals of the Comprehensive Plan and the quality of life of the people of Sarasota County."

Future land use Objective 3.4 pertains to MEC land uses. The policies under this objective encourage the development of industrial and office land uses within MECs. Office parks and research parks are encouraged adjacent to I-75 and at major crossroads. Mixed-used development is also encouraged within MECs and affordable housing residential development is encouraged within MECs areas. Accessory uses within an MEC are required to conform to Critical Area Planning regulations or an adopted DRI plan. This part of the Comprehensive Plan also states that "IR" should be the preferred rezoning category for MEC land uses.

Sarasota 2050 Plan

Although the Sarasota 2050 Plan is focused on a series of Resource Management Areas outside of the Urban Service Area, it is important in relation to MEC management because the 2050 Plan governs most of the greenfield growth opportunities in Sarasota County. The Sarasota 2050 Plan divides the entire county into different Resource Management Areas (RMA), and articulates policies and development options suitable for each RMA. Resource Management Areas include the Urban RMA, Economic Development RMAs (which are the same as the MECs), Rural Heritage/Estate RMAs, Village/Open Space RMAs, Greenway RMAs, and Agricultural RMAs. The 2050 Plan also sets up a framework for the future use of Transfer of Development Rights in the county.

The Sarasota 2050 Plan has a slightly different slant than the Comprehensive Plan on MECs. The focus of the 2050 Plan is on the new PED or Planned Economic Development zoning category, which promotes mixed use developments and a connected street grid. The 2050 Plan also places more emphasis on the potential for employment uses to be placed as redevelopment and infill in redevelopment corridors and multi-modal corridors. The 2050 Plan embraces the concept that new approaches may be necessary to analyze Level of Service for roadways to promote redevelopment along corridors.

The 2050 Plan also calls for the development of limited employment land uses within the new Village RMAs, specifically at Village Centers. The primary goal of the Village/Open Space RMAs are to prevent urban sprawl, to limit infrastructure extensions outside the Urban Service Areas, and to promote compact, mixed-use villages and hamlets. Each village requires the approval of a Master Development Plan. Villages can have centers with office, retail, civic, and government uses, however, the maximum amount of retail and office space is limited to 300,000 square feet.

Other requirements for Villages include the requirement for fiscal neutrality, adequate public facilities, and greenbelts for each Village.

One special town center is identified in the Sarasota 2050 Plan for the area around I-75 and Central Sarasota Parkway. Up to 3,000 acres is set aside in this area for up to 435,000 square feet of office and light industrial development. In terms of land use, this special town center will function much like an MEC.

Zoning

The zoning categories which implement the MEC future land use designation include IR (Industrial and Research), ILW (Industrial, Light Manufactruing, and Warehousing), PED (Planned Economic Development District) and PCD (Planned Commerce Development). The IR and ILW zoning categories are quite similar in terms of regulation. PCD and PED share many characteristics as planned districts, but the design requirements for the PED district are much more extensive and the land use is more flexible for the PED district. Overall, there is a great deal of difference between these zoning categories in terms of regulatory implications. For example, the PCD has a 40% open space requirement, while IR and ILW have no minimum open space requirement. In terms of land use, up to 25 dwelling units per acre are permitted in the PED district, while only accessory residential is permitted in IR and ILW districts. Other significant differences include the allowance of outdoor storage in the IR and ILW districts. The ILW district permits a number of highway-oriented commercial uses that are not permitted in the IR district. The great differences between these zoning districts could be either a strength or a weakness. The strength of this diversity of zoning districts is that it conceivably allows for flexibility in the development of MECs and so greater responsiveness to market demands. The potential weakness of this diversity of zoning districts is that important regulations and/or objectives could be undermined by developers who seek the "easiest" zoning category rather than the most appropriate one.

Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan 2030 Update

The 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a lengthy policy document addressing the transportation needs and plans of the region including Sarasota and Manatee Counties. The central function of the LRTP is to identify the transportation needs for the Sarasota/Manatee region and then to program transportation projects to meet those needs according to available funding. However there are a number of analyses and discussions in the LRTP that are relevant to the MEC land use policy of Sarasota County.

One of the most useful parts of the LRTP for MEC planning is the series of population and employment projections provided in the plan. Although the LRTP cannot say exactly where new population and employment will go, it can give useful information and projections about likely trends for regional growth patterns. Also, the LRTP provides a useful overview of existing patterns of population and employment distribution. Current centers of employment in Sarasota County identified in the LRTP include the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport area, downtown Sarasota, the intersection of University and I-75, the Cattleman Road area near Palmer Boulevard, the intersection of Clark Road and McIntosh Road, the Laurel Road exit area off of I-75, and the area around Center Road and the US 41 Bypass. Substantial industrial employment is also located just north of Sarasota County in Manatee County along the US 301 corridor. Most of the employment growth is forecast for existing employment centers, such as downtown Sarasota, the City of Venice, and the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport, and for a series of newly developing areas along the I-75 corridor. Also the area around the intersection of River Road and Tamiami Trail in the City of Northport is forecast for significant employment growth. Population growth is forecast primarily for north Manatee County and south Sarasota County, as well as east of I-75 in both counties.

The LRTP also discusses the relationship between development patterns in Sarasota/Manatee and the demand for transportation infrastructure. North-south transportation infrastructure is increasingly strained, as many people live far from employment centers in more affordable areas to the north and south. Also, continued development in the vicinity of I-75 will increase the volume of traffic using I-75 for local trips. The number of north-south roads in the region is limited but the transportation demand placed upon these roads is expected to continue to increase. Development in the region is tending towards outward dispersal, which makes it difficult to meet the transportation needs of new development efficiently. It is increasingly difficult to finance meeting the transportation needs of the Sarasota-Manatee region because construction and right-of-way costs are rising while sources of transportation funding are not rising as quickly. Rapid population growth combined with inadequate transportation funding suggests that not all of the region's needed transportation improvements will be financially feasible.

Demographic and Economic Development Profile

Overview

As part of Task 1.0 in the Work Plan, Economic Research Associates (ERA) has prepared a demographic and economic profile of Sarasota County. This "snapshot" illustrates trends and forecasts in fundamental demographic and economic indices such as population, households, and household incomes as well as employment and housing. For several of these characteristics, ERA has compared Sarasota County to five other adjacent or nearby counties, including: Charlotte, DeSoto, Hillsborough, Manatee and Pinellas. In addition, ERA also compared demographic characteristics for specific municipalities in Sarasota County, including the cities of Sarasota, North Port and Venice as well as the Town of Longboat Key.

The demographic and economic profile is intended as a departure point for more detailed analysis of these indices as well as conditions in various sectors of the real estate market and preparation of a comprehensive inventory of existing MECs that will be completed as part of Task 3.0. The findings from the demographic and economic profile will be presented in the first public workshop in December 2006.

ERA utilized a number of public and private data sources for this profile, including the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; the State of Florida; University of Florida Bureau of Business and Economic Research; Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation; Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.; ESRI Business Analyst; and others.

Key Findings

The following summarizes key findings on demographic characteristics, housing trends, and employment trends and forecasts for Sarasota County based on ERA's research to-date. This information is illustrated in the accompanying tables (Tables 1—22) and charts.

Demographic Characteristics

Population & Households

- Like many jurisdictions across Florida, Sarasota County's population has increased substantially since 1970. The period of greatest growth occurred between 1970 and 1990. Since then, however, growth has slowed to a more moderate pace, with annual increases ranging from one to two percent per year since 1990. The pace of growth is forecast to continue in this range through 2030 as the amount of developable land within the existing Urban Services Boundary diminishes.

- As illustrated in Table 1, Sarasota County's population jumped from 122,000 in 1970 to 327,000 in 2000—an increase of 205,000 residents over the past 30 years and a *sustained* annual growth rate of more than five percent per year. The County's current population is estimated at **380,200**—reflecting the addition of 53,000 new residents over the past six years—and an annual growth rate of 2.7 percent.

- According to population forecasts prepared by Woods & Poole, a demographic forecasting service based in Washington, D.C., the population of Sarasota County is expected to increase by **68,800 new residents by 2010**. Much of this growth is focused in the southern parts of the County in such places as North Port and Venice, where the amount of new housing construction is greatest.

- By comparison, population growth in Charlotte County has *outpaced* the region as a whole—with sustained annual growth of more than 13 percent per year between 1970 and 2000. Over the next 30 years, Charlotte County is expected to continue to grow, although at a relatively more moderate pace on the order of four percent per year, thus reinforcing the County's attractiveness as a retirement destination. Otherwise, regional population growth is expected to remain steady in the range of one to two percent per year through 2030; Pinellas County (St. Petersburg) is expected to account for the region's slowest pace of growth, indicative of its (almost) fully built out status.

Table 1: Population Trends & Projections, 1970-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Sarasota County	122,700	204,600	279,700	327,000	395,800	469,100	547,600
Desoto County	13,300	19,200	24,100	32,300	37,900	44,100	50,800
Charlotte County	28,100	59,500	112,800	142,300	190,500	245,100	302,400
Hillsborough County	494,800	652,000	837,000	1,003,100	1,196,100	1,381,200	1,580,800
Manatee County	97,900	150,300	213,600	265,700	340,600	420,300	504,700
Pinellas County	529,500	733,100	856,200	922,200	991,800	1,093,800	1,206,900

	1970-1980 CAGR	1980-1990 CAGR	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2010 CAGR	2010-2020 CAGR	2020-2030 CAGR
Sarasota County	5.2%	3.2%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%	1.6%
Desoto County	3.7%	2.3%	3.0%	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%
Charlotte County	7.8%	6.6%	2.4%	3.0%	2.6%	2.1%
Hillsborough County	2.8%	2.5%	1.8%	1.8%	1.4%	1.4%
Manatee County	4.4%	3.6%	2.2%	2.5%	2.1%	1.8%
Pinellas County	3.3%	1.6%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

As a means of further understanding growth and development trends in specific locations in Sarasota County,

Table 2 depicts population growth for selected municipalities in Sarasota County between 1990 and 2011.

- Not surprisingly, the City of Sarasota, which is almost fully developed, is growing much more slowly than both the County and its faster-paced counterparts, North Port and Venice. In fact, the City added only 4,200 new residents since 1990, for a current population of 55,300. This reflects a growth rate of about 0.5 percent per year.

- As a result, as a proportion of the County's total population, the City of Sarasota has declined from 18 percent in 1990 to less than 15 percent in 2006. ERA believes that the degree to which this proportional change continues will be largely determined by opportunities for higher-density, infill redevelopment in various locations in the City over the next five to 10 years.

- By comparison, North Port is the fastest growing municipality in the County, with annual growth rates more than four times that of the County since 1990. In the past six years alone, North Port added almost 30,000 new residents for a sustained annual growth rate of almost 11 percent. Annexation opportunities (such as Thomas Ranch) are expected to enhance near-term growth. As a result, as a proportion of the County total, North Port is increasing rapidly—from about four percent in 1990 to an expected 12 percent by 2011.

Table 2: Population Trends & Projections for Selected Municipalities, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1990	2000	2006	2011	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2006 CAGR	2006-2011 CAGR
Sarasota County	**277,776**	**325,957**	**380,199**	**433,128**	**1.6%**	**2.6%**	**2.6%**
Sarasota City	51,121	52,715	55,277	60,781	0.3%	0.8%	1.9%
Longboat Key	5,937	7,603	8,006	8,873	2.5%	0.9%	2.1%
North Port	12,055	22,797	41,681	51,652	6.6%	10.6%	4.4%
Venice	17,693	17,764	20,031	22,564	0.0%	2.0%	2.4%
As % of Sarasota County							
Sarasota City	18.4%	16.2%	14.5%	14.0%			
Longboat Key	2.1%	2.3%	2.1%	2.0%			
North Port	4.3%	7.0%	11.0%	11.9%			
Venice	6.4%	5.4%	5.3%	5.2%			

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 1: Sarasota County Population, 1990
Sarasota County MEC Study

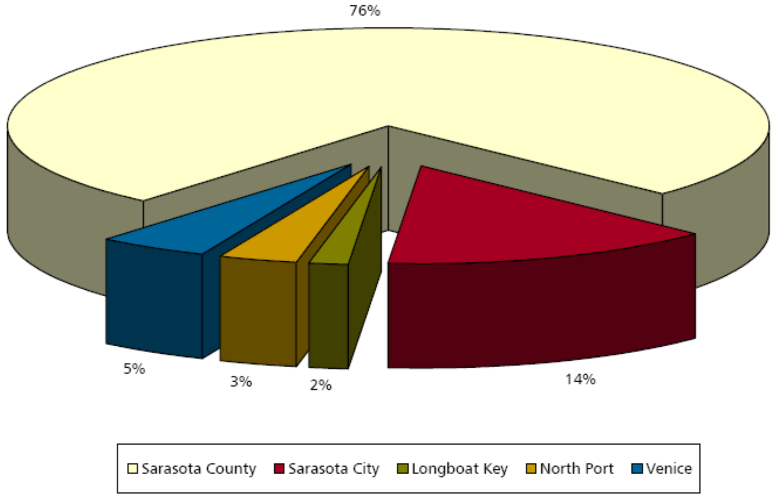


Figure 2: Sarasota County Population, 2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

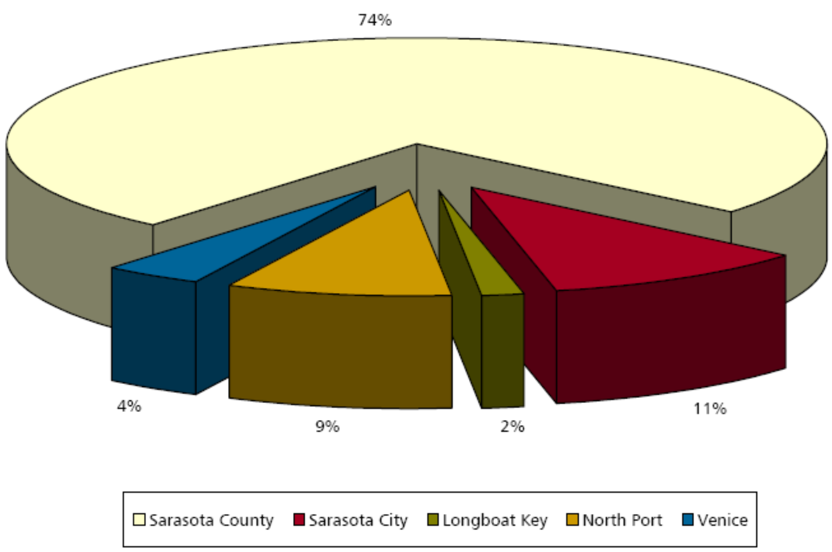


Figure 3: Sarasota County Population by Age, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

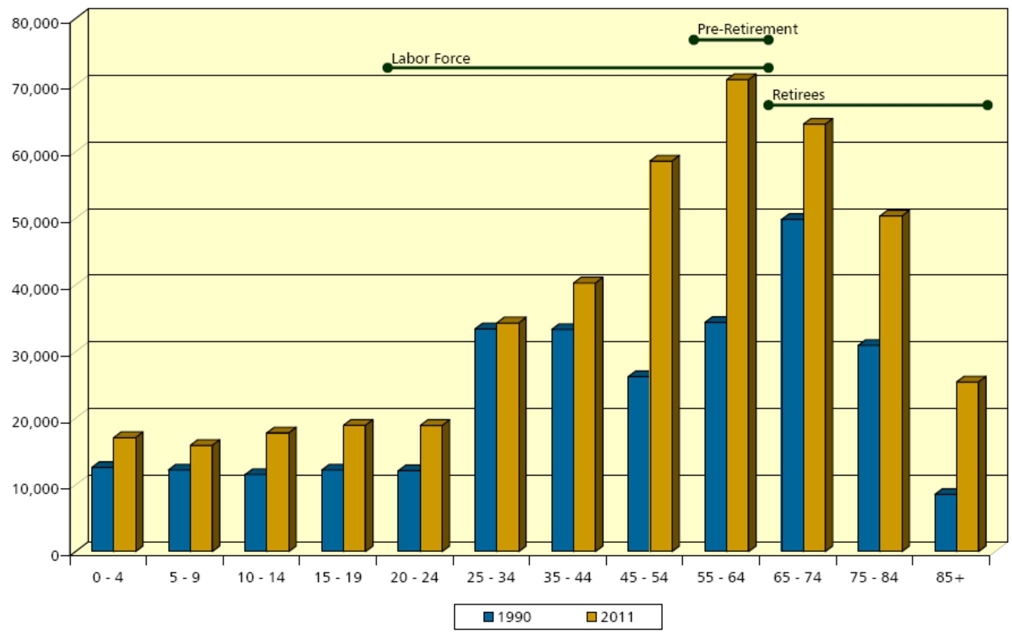


Figure 4: Sarasota Population Density, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

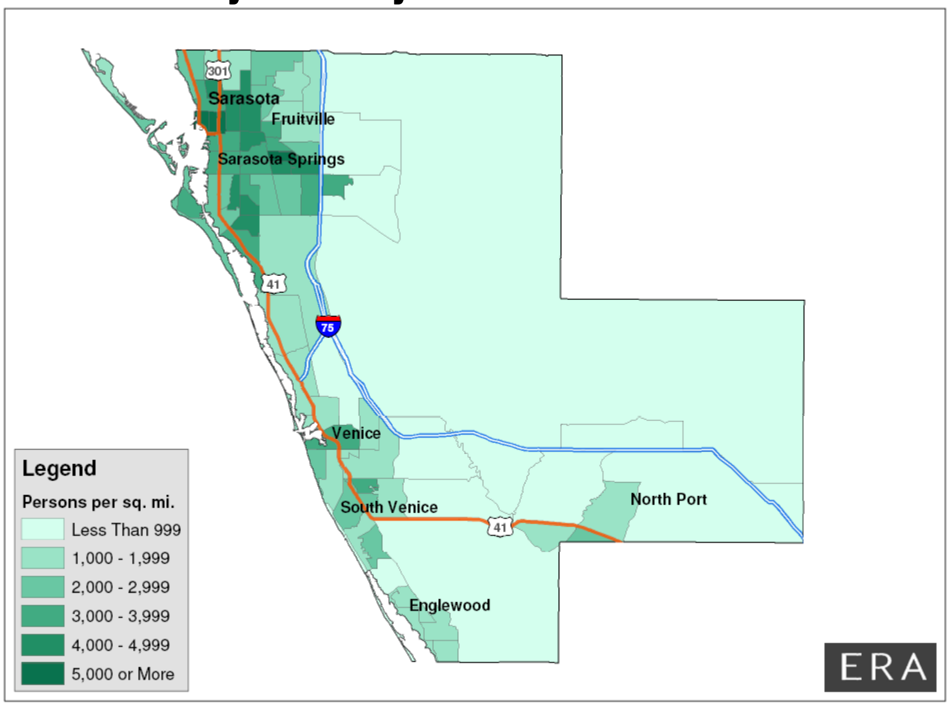


Figure 5: Regional Percent Change in Population, 1970-1990
Sarasota County MEC Study

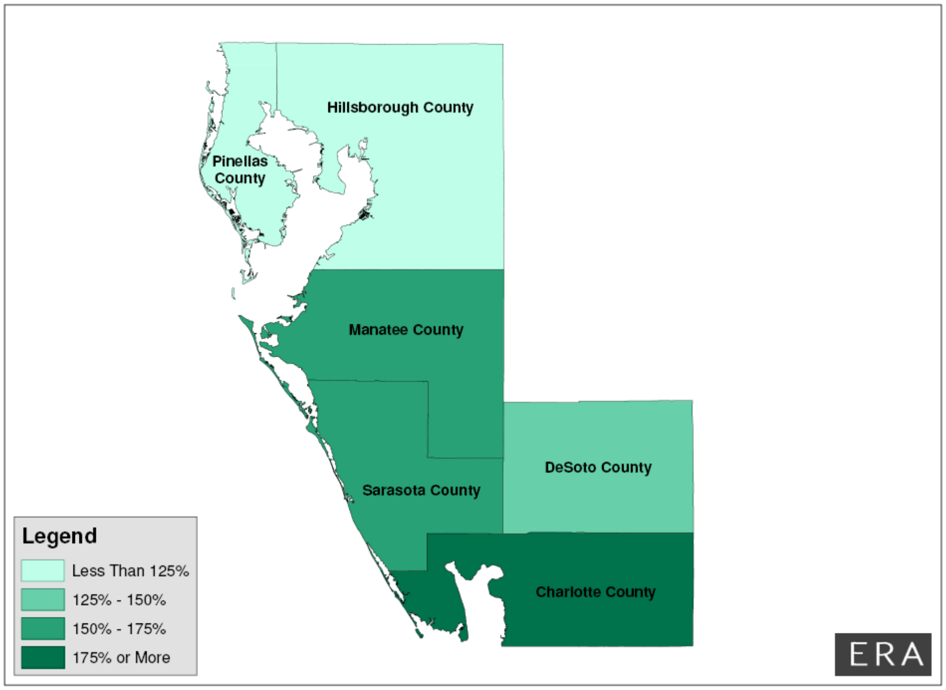


Figure 6: Forecasted Regional Percent Change in Population, 2000-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

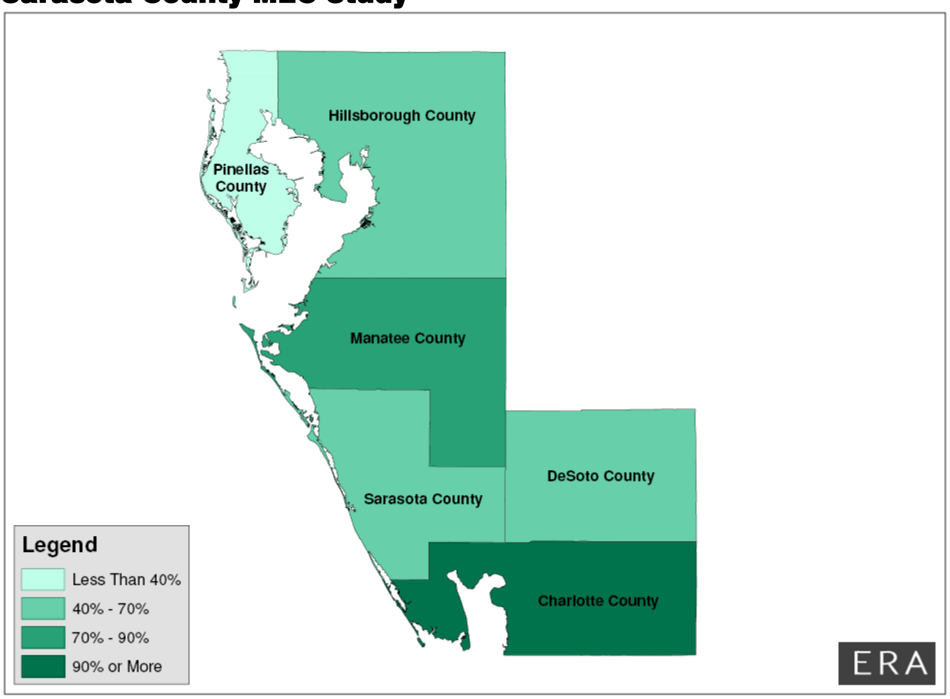


Figure 7: Regional *Annual* Percent Change in Population, 1970-2000
Sarasota County MEC Study

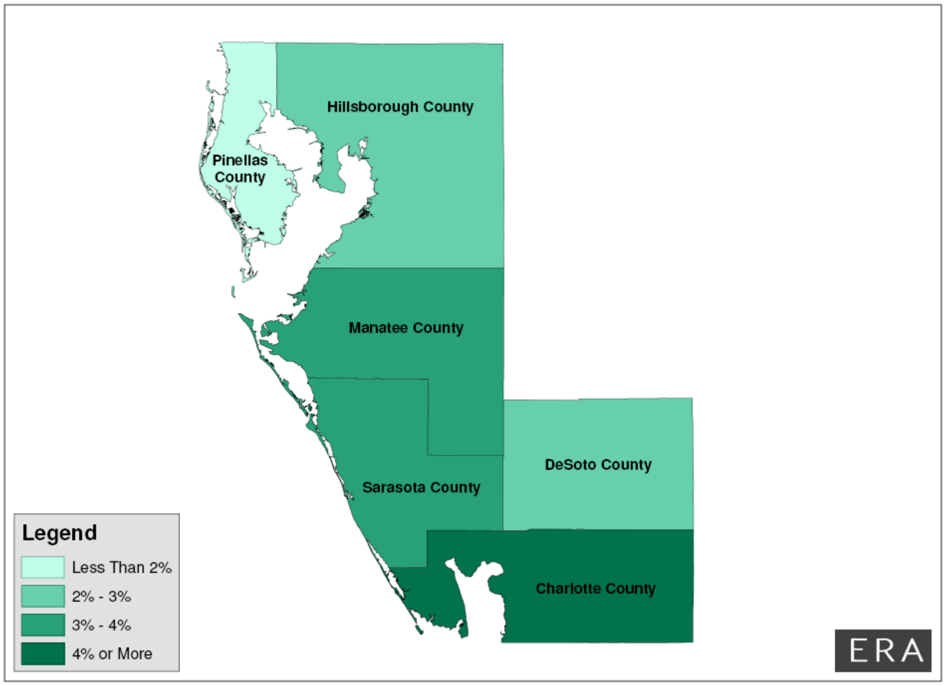
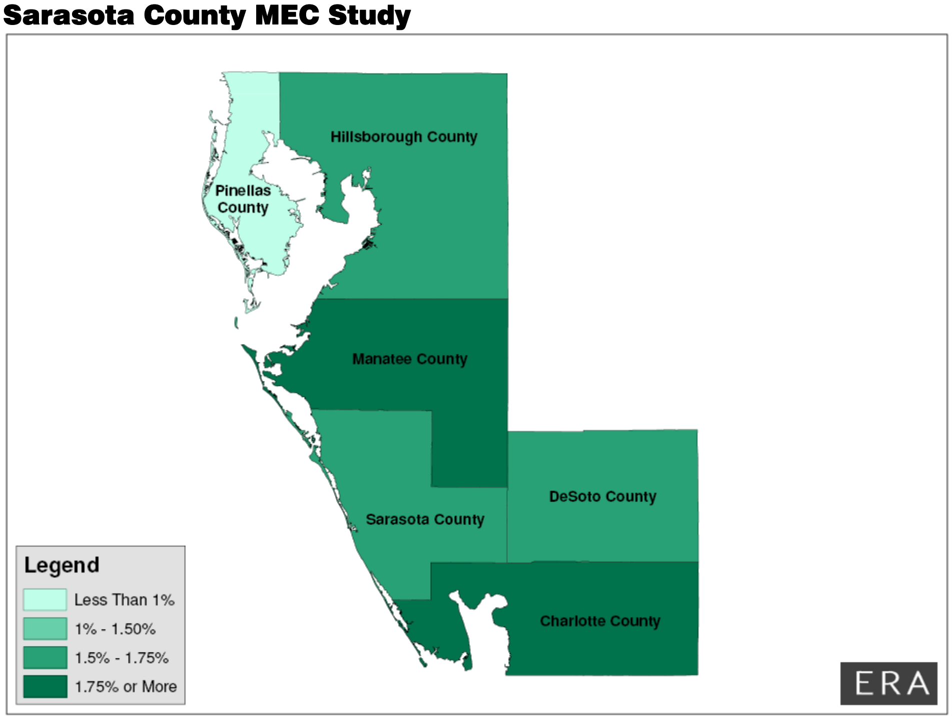


Figure 8: *Forecasted* Regional *Annual* Percent Change in Population, 2000-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study



ERA also examined trends in household size and formation, which is a better predictor of demand for housing units. These findings are highlighted below.

- Consistent with national trends, average household size in Sarasota County has decreased steadily since 1970—from 2.44 persons per household in 1970 to 2.08 persons per household in 2006. This trend reflects an increasingly larger share of single-headed households, due in part to the County's large number of retired residents.

- Table 3 illustrates household trends and projections for Sarasota County as well as nearby jurisdictions in the region from 1970 to 2030. Consistent with strong rates of population growth during the 1970s, the number of households in Sarasota County increased at a compound annual growth rate of 6.2 percent during the 1970s. The pace of household growth slowed during the 1980s and 1990s. By 2000, Sarasota County contained 150,500 households.

- According to ESRI Business Analyst, the County is expected to add more than **38,000 new households by 2010**—for a total of 198,700 households.

- By comparison, Manatee County to the north has exhibited consistent and similar growth rates as that of Sarasota since 1970, while Charlotte County to the south experienced the region's fastest household growth, consistent with its sizable increases in population.

Table 3: Household Trends & Projections, 1970-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Sarasota County	49,400	89,900	126,300	150,500	188,900	227,400	263,000
Desoto County	3,800	6,300	8,300	10,800	13,000	15,000	16,500
Charlotte County	11,800	26,300	48,700	64,200	90,100	118,900	147,100
Hillsborough County	159,700	241,200	326,900	393,000	483,000	561,700	632,200
Manatee County	38,700	62,800	91,700	113,200	148,500	183,500	214,900
Pinellas County	213,600	323,900	383,000	415,400	460,300	511,400	554,300

	1970-1980 CAGR	1980-1990 CAGR	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2010 CAGR	2010-2020 CAGR	2020-2030 CAGR
Sarasota County	6.2%	3.5%	1.8%	2.3%	1.9%	1.5%
Desoto County	5.2%	2.8%	2.7%	1.9%	1.4%	1.0%
Charlotte County	8.3%	6.4%	2.8%	3.4%	2.8%	2.2%
Hillsborough County	4.2%	3.1%	1.9%	2.1%	1.5%	1.2%
Manatee County	5.0%	3.9%	2.1%	2.8%	2.1%	1.6%
Pinellas County	4.3%	1.7%	0.8%	1.0%	1.1%	0.8%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

As illustrated in Table 4 the City experienced the lowest annual growth in households (consistent with its slight gains in population), with growth ranging from 0.3 percent (1990-2000) and one percent (2000-2006). However, recent new residential development—particularly in and around downtown Sarasota—contributed to the increase of **more than 1,400 new households in the City** over the past six years.

- By comparison, significant population growth contributed to an increase of almost 7,000 new households in North Port since 2000. Over the next five years, ESRI forecasts suggest that North Port will add another 3,800 new households.

Table 4: Household Trends & Projections for Selected Municipalities, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1990	2000	2006	2011	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2006 CAGR	2006-2011 CAGR
Sarasota County	**125,493**	**149,937**	**174,040**	**198,674**	**1.8%**	**2.5%**	**2.7%**
Sarasota City	22,829	23,427	24,830	27,568	0.3%	1.0%	2.1%
Longboat Key	3,244	4,280	4,573	5,096	2.8%	1.1%	2.2%
North Port	5,094	9,111	16,040	19,875	6.0%	9.9%	4.4%
Venice	9,429	9,680	11,040	12,534	0.3%	2.2%	2.6%
As % of Sarasota County							
Sarasota City	18.2%	15.6%	14.3%	13.9%			
Longboat Key	2.6%	2.9%	2.6%	2.6%			
North Port	4.1%	6.1%	9.2%	10.0%			
Venice	7.5%	6.5%	6.3%	6.3%			

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 9: Sarasota County Households, 1990
Sarasota County MEC Study

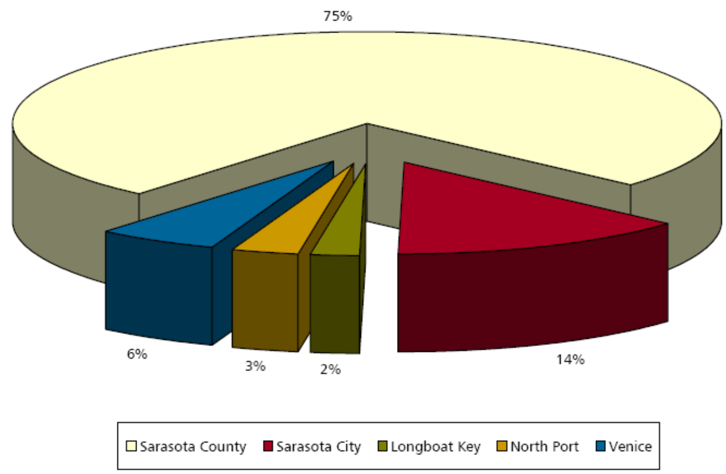


Figure 10: Sarasota County Households, 2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

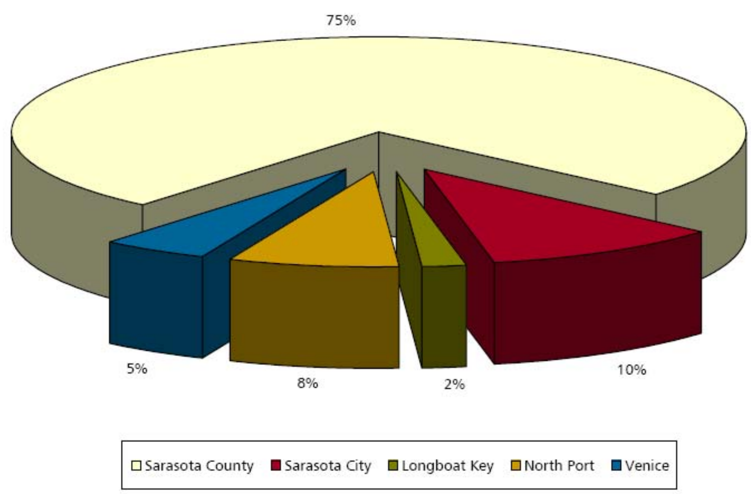


Figure 11: Regional Percent Change in Household, 1970-1990
Sarasota County MEC Study

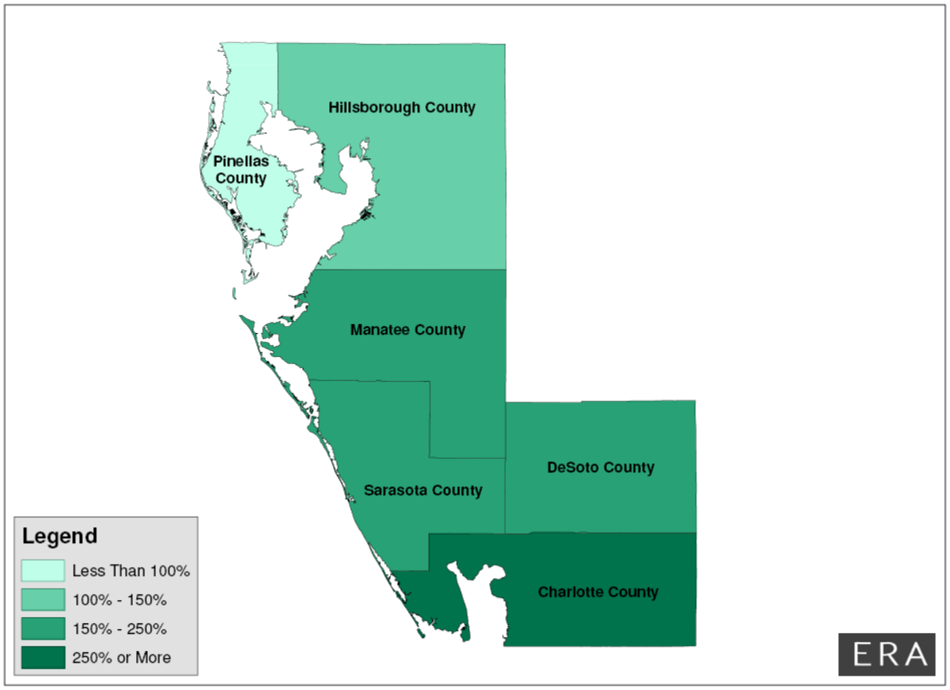


Figure 12: Forecasted Regional Percent Change in Households, 2000-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

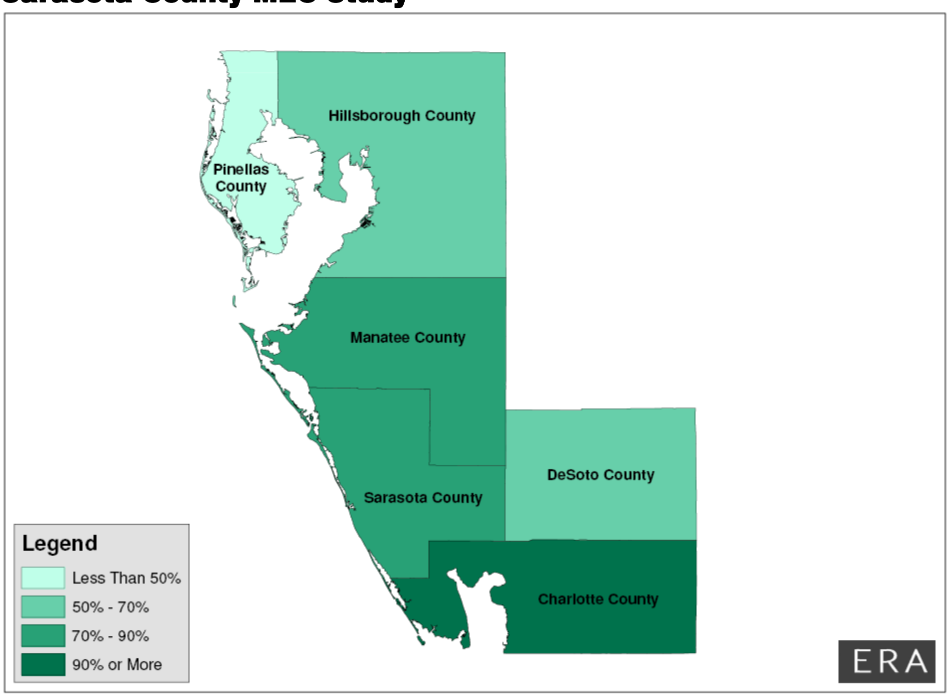


Figure 13: Regional Annual Percent Change in Households, 1970-2000
Sarasota County MEC Study

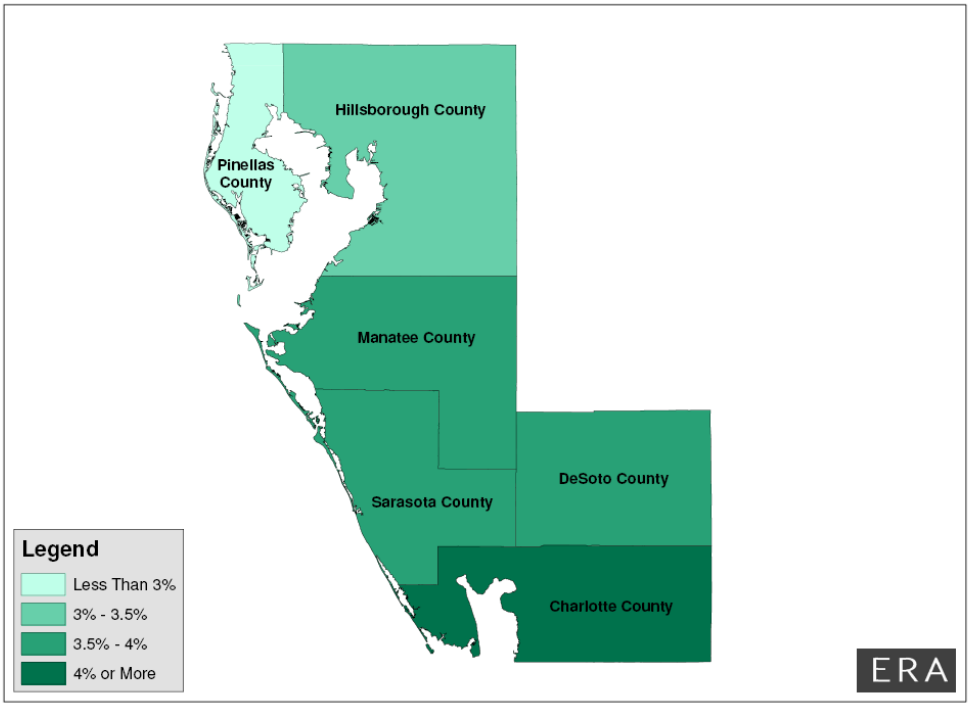
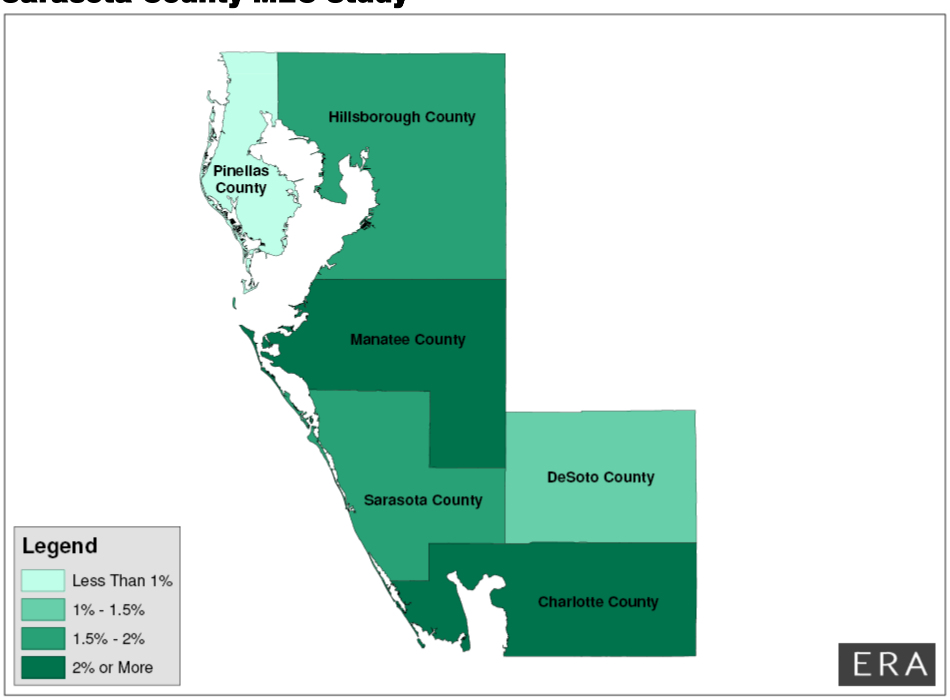


Figure 14: *Forecasted* Regional *Annual* Percent Change in Households, 1970-2000
Sarasota County MEC Study



Age Cohorts

ERA examined trends in age distribution, which will inform our analysis of market potentials for new jobs and housing under various growth scenarios in subsequent tasks of the MEC study. Key findings are summarized below.

- In this initial analysis, 2006 data indicates that Sarasota County's largest age bracket is the 55-64 year-old cohort, which includes "active adults" and pre-retirement "empty nesters" nearing the end of their careers. In fact, **41 percent of the County's residents are over the age of 55.**
- Based on forecasts prepared by ESRI Business Analyst, no significant changes in the distribution of age brackets are expected by 2011. Notably (as illustrated in Table 5), the number of residents ages 35-44 is expected to decline by almost two percent, reinforcing the *anecdotal* information that high housing costs as well as the type and number of jobs available in Sarasota County *may* be factors in anticipated changes among this entry-level segment of the housing market.
- At the municipal level, the outlook for age cohorts varies. For example, lower housing costs in the south county areas surrounding North Port are expected to draw an increasing number of 25-34 year olds in search of affordable housing. On the other hand, the draw of retirees to high-rise condominium living on the waterfront is expected to continue in Longboat Key (in fact, less than seven percent of Longboat Key's residents are under the age of 44).

Table 5: Distribution of Population by Age, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

	Sarasota County	Sarasota City	Longboat Key	North Port	Venice
0 - 4	**3.9%**	5.1%	0.5%	6.9%	1.3%
5 - 9	**3.9%**	4.7%	0.7%	6.2%	1.2%
10 - 14	**4.6%**	4.9%	0.7%	7.4%	1.5%
15 - 19	**4.7%**	5.8%	0.4%	6.3%	1.9%
20 - 24	**4.1%**	6.5%	0.7%	4.8%	1.6%
25 - 34	**7.6%**	12.4%	1.1%	10.9%	2.7%
35 - 44	**11.0%**	12.5%	2.6%	15.9%	4.4%
45 - 54	**13.6%**	14.1%	6.5%	12.0%	8.4%
55 - 64	**15.0%**	12.0%	22.8%	10.0%	17.0%
65 - 74	**13.9%**	8.7%	30.1%	8.8%	22.8%
75 - 84	**12.6%**	8.6%	25.9%	8.3%	23.7%
85+	**5.2%**	4.7%	7.9%	2.4%	13.4%
Change by 2011					
0 - 4	**0.1%**	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	-0.1%
5 - 9	**-0.2%**	-0.3%	-0.2%	0.1%	-0.1%
10 - 14	**-0.5%**	-0.4%	0.1%	-1.0%	-0.3%
15 - 19	**-0.3%**	-0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	-0.4%
20 - 24	**0.3%**	0.9%	-0.3%	0.8%	0.2%
25 - 34	**0.3%**	-0.2%	0.3%	0.7%	0.3%
35 - 44	**-1.7%**	-1.3%	-0.9%	-2.5%	-1.3%
45 - 54	**-0.1%**	-0.8%	-0.7%	2.4%	-0.7%
55 - 64	**1.4%**	2.0%	-2.6%	0.1%	1.0%
65 - 74	**0.9%**	1.0%	2.0%	-0.7%	2.3%
75 - 84	**-1.0%**	-0.9%	-0.6%	-1.1%	-1.7%
85+	**0.7%**	0.4%	2.6%	0.8%	1.0%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Household Incomes

Table 6 illustrates median household incomes for Sarasota County for 1990-2011. As is true of most jurisdictions (particularly in waterfront locations such as Florida), median incomes have increased substantially since 1990, with high-income retirees and other residents drawn by the County's high quality-of-life, cultural attractions, and opportunities for waterfront living.

- In fact, Sarasota County experienced its greatest growth in household incomes from 1990 to 2000, with a compound annual growth rate of 3.5 percent. The County's current median household income is more than **$51,300 per year**. Incomes are expected to rise to almost $60,000 per year by 2011—suggesting *real* growth (i.e., above the rate of inflation). This could be expected to benefit retail development in the County.
- By comparison, households in Longboat Key and North Port experienced the highest *rate* of growth in annual incomes between 1990 and 2000, of 4.8 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively. Today, the median income of households in Longboat Key is almost $106,000.
- The cities of Sarasota, North Port, and Venice have median household incomes *below* that of the County.

Table 6: Median Household Incomes, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1990	2000	2006	2011	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2006 CAGR	2006-2011 CAGR
Sarasota County	**$29,919**	**$42,155**	**$51,346**	**$59,762**	**3.5%**	**3.3%**	**3.1%**
Sarasota City	25,101	34,094	41,017	48,074	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%
Longboat Key	55,609	89,117	105,834	129,106	4.8%	2.9%	4.1%
North Port	23,077	36,465	45,499	52,298	4.7%	3.8%	2.8%
Venice	28,283	37,537	45,331	53,004	2.9%	3.2%	3.2%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Table 7: Mean Household Incomes, 1970-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2006	2010	2020	2030
Sarasota County	$ 12,264	$ 28,176	$ 60,210	$ 84,583	$100,813	$116,683	$181,294	$300,415
Desoto County	8,661	20,519	38,736	45,371	53,983	63,890	104,218	180,104
Charlotte County	8,628	21,388	40,407	55,984	65,380	74,395	110,578	174,861
Hillsborough County	10,377	23,140	44,862	71,871	83,704	96,269	146,637	237,015
Manatee County	9,104	24,146	45,868	70,147	87,074	103,630	169,764	292,967
Pinellas County	10,153	24,536	46,258	69,161	81,207	93,249	141,583	228,513

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 15: Sarasota County Median Household Income, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

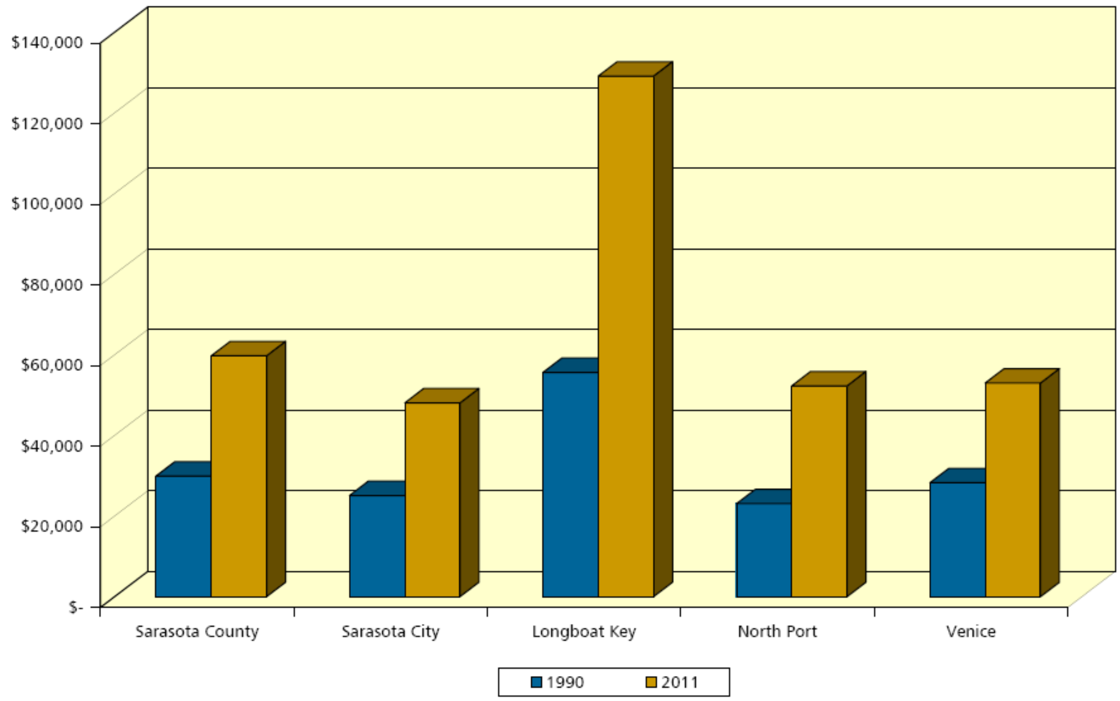


Table 8 summarizes household incomes by age. Notable trends are highlighted as follows:

- Almost half of County residents under the age of 25 have annual incomes of *less than* $35,000 per year;
- Not surprisingly, annual incomes of County residents increases with age, with 25 percent of residents between 25-54 earning between $50,000-$74,999 per year; and
- The County is also fortunate to have a relatively large number of affluent residents. In fact, fully 25 percent of residents between the ages of 55 and 64 earn more than $100,000 per year.

Table 8: Sarasota County Households by Income by Age, 2006-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

2006	< 25	Change by 2011	25-54	Change by 2011	55-64	Change by 2011	64+	Change by 2011
< $15,000	18.6%	-1.6%	6.9%	-1.2%	8.0%	-1.5%	11.7%	-2.1%
$15,000 - $24,999	13.5%	-2.8%	7.7%	-1.7%	7.7%	-1.6%	12.5%	-2.5%
$25,000 - $34,999	14.3%	-1.4%	10.7%	-1.9%	11.6%	-2.0%	13.5%	-2.1%
$35,000 - $49,999	19.0%	-1.2%	17.9%	-2.5%	15.2%	-1.8%	16.8%	-1.8%
$50,000 - $74,999	13.5%	0.8%	24.5%	-1.3%	22.2%	-1.3%	18.2%	0.0%
$75,000 - $99,999	7.8%	1.5%	12.9%	1.0%	11.2%	0.4%	9.2%	1.1%
$100,000 - $149,999	7.6%	2.7%	12.2%	4.3%	13.3%	3.5%	10.0%	3.5%
$150,000 - $199,999	3.1%	2.0%	2.7%	1.9%	3.9%	2.3%	2.7%	2.0%
$200,000 - $249,999	1.7%	0.0%	1.8%	0.2%	2.8%	0.2%	1.4%	0.3%
$250,000 - $499,999	0.7%	0.1%	2.0%	0.7%	3.2%	0.9%	2.8%	0.7%
$500,000 +	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%

2011	< 25	25-54	55-64	64+
< $15,000	17.0%	5.7%	6.5%	9.6%
$15,000 - $24,999	10.7%	6.0%	6.1%	10.0%
$25,000 - $34,999	12.9%	8.8%	9.6%	11.4%
$35,000 - $49,999	17.9%	15.4%	13.4%	15.1%
$50,000 - $74,999	14.2%	23.2%	20.9%	18.2%
$75,000 - $99,999	9.3%	13.9%	11.5%	10.4%
$100,000 - $149,999	10.3%	16.5%	16.8%	13.5%
$150,000 - $199,999	5.1%	4.6%	6.2%	4.8%
$200,000 - $249,999	1.7%	2.0%	3.0%	1.7%
$250,000 - $499,999	0.8%	2.7%	4.1%	3.4%
$500,000 +	0.2%	1.3%	2.1%	1.9%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Education

Educational attainment—a key tenet of the ability of a jurisdiction to promote economic development—is another element of the demographic profile. Table 9 illustrates educational attainment for Sarasota County residents.

- The majority of County residents hold high school diplomas; another 27 percent hold a Bachelor’s Degree or higher;
- Sarasota County outperforms the state and national averages with strong levels of degree attainment at all levels;
- Longboat Key has the highest percentage of residents with a Bachelor’s Degree, although residents of Longboat Key are largely older and are nearing retirement age or already out of the workforce; and
- The City of Sarasota has the highest percentage of residents who have *not* completed high school.

Table 9: Population 25+ by Educational Attainment, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

	Less than 12th Grade, No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's/Prof/Doctorate Degree
Sarasota County	**12.9%**	**30.1%**	**23.3%**	**6.3%**	**17.1%**	**10.3%**
Sarasota City	19.9%	27.5%	21.3%	5.7%	16.5%	9.1%
Longboat Key	5.6%	13.4%	22.4%	5.5%	28.4%	24.7%
North Port	19.7%	40.0%	22.1%	6.8%	7.1%	4.3%
Venice	10.2%	31.8%	24.2%	5.7%	17.8%	10.3%
US Average	19.6%	28.6%	21.0%	6.3%	15.5%	8.9%
State of Florida	20.1%	28.7%	21.8%	7.0%	14.3%	8.1%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Economic & Employment Characteristics

Changes in the labor force are a fundamental index of overall economic development and are a key "driver" of demand for various types of real estate, such as office and manufacturing space. As such, ERA has prepared a profile of occupational and employment characteristics in Sarasota County as a means of understanding how the County's economy has performed in the past, how it performs today, and where it appears to be heading. In subsequent tasks, we will integrate the following into our analysis: 1) key recommendations from the County's Economic Development Strategic Plan; 2) market conditions in specific real estate sectors; and 3) current information such as inventory by land use for each MEC in order to inform preparation of up to three growth scenarios that will identify how much MEC land will be required in the future.

Employment

Employment trends are illustrated in Table 10 and Table 11. Over the past 30 years, the County has added, on average, about 4,600 new jobs each year. However, since 2000, the County's job growth has accelerated—with the addition of almost 7,300 new jobs each year. Today, Sarasota County contains almost 236,000 jobs, an amount larger than Manatee County but significantly smaller than the high-growth economies of Hillsborough and Pinellas in the Tampa Bay region.

- Today, almost half (48 percent) of Sarasota County's employment (112,300 jobs) is in services, a sector that includes a wide-range of occupations ranging from lodging/hospitality to education to medical to professional and business services such as legal and engineering. This is characteristic of an economy that is reliant on tourism and residential growth; the services sector is one of the fastest-growing in almost every jurisdiction across the United States.

- Other notable sectors that will receive close scrutiny in the MEC study include finance/insurance/real estate (FIRE), which is the core sector generating demand for office space, as well as manufacturing and transportation, which fuel demand for MEC-related uses such as light industrial and warehousing and distribution space. On average, over the past 30 years, Sarasota County added approximately **530 and 300 new jobs each year in FIRE and manufacturing/transportation**, respectively. Notably, manufacturing and transportation, which comprised 11 percent of the County's total employment base in 1970, comprises only seven percent today, reflecting an overall economy that is more diverse.

- The next largest sector, retail trade, comprises 16.5 percent of the total with 46,000 jobs.

- ERA utilized employment forecasts prepared by two sources—the state's Agency for Workforce Innovation, which prepares eight-year projections for 2005-2013, and Woods & Poole, Inc., which is the only data service nationwide that forecasts job growth in five-year increments through 2030 for each county in the United States.

- ERA notes that the differences in total jobs between these two sources are due to Woods & Poole's inclusion of both part-time and self-employed positions. By comparison, the state totals include only full-time employment.

Table 10: Total Employment, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

	Sarasota County	Desoto County	Charlotte County	Hillsborough County	Manatee County	Pinellas County
Agriculture	4,300	6,700	2,300	24,800	9,300	6,800
Mining	360	100	100	300	200	300
Construction	16,600	700	5,800	41,600	10,200	30,700
Manufacturing	10,700	200	1,400	38,400	12,100	44,200
Transport, Comm. & Public Util	5,700	200	1,800	43,700	2,900	19,000
Wholesale Trade	7,300	400	1,300	42,900	5,700	29,000
Retail Trade	38,800	1,500	13,600	112,800	26,900	101,700
Finance, Ins., and Real Estate	25,800	600	7,400	78,600	11,900	66,500
Services	112,300	2,600	32,100	358,600	99,000	269,500
Government	14,000	2,500	6,300	86,100	13,700	50,600
Total Employment	**235,860**	**15,500**	**72,100**	**827,800**	**191,900**	**618,300**
As a % of Total						
Agriculture	1.8%	43.2%	3.2%	3.0%	4.8%	1.1%
Mining	0.2%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Construction	7.0%	4.5%	8.0%	5.0%	5.3%	5.0%
Manufacturing	4.5%	1.3%	1.9%	4.6%	6.3%	7.1%
Transport, Comm. & Public Util	2.4%	1.3%	2.5%	5.3%	1.5%	3.1%
Wholesale Trade	3.1%	2.6%	1.8%	5.2%	3.0%	4.7%
Retail Trade	16.5%	9.7%	18.9%	13.6%	14.0%	16.4%
Finance, Ins., and Real Estate	10.9%	3.9%	10.3%	9.5%	6.2%	10.8%
Services	47.6%	16.8%	44.5%	43.3%	51.6%	43.6%
Government	5.9%	16.1%	8.7%	10.4%	7.1%	8.2%

Source: Woods & Poole Economics; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 16: Regional Share of Employment, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

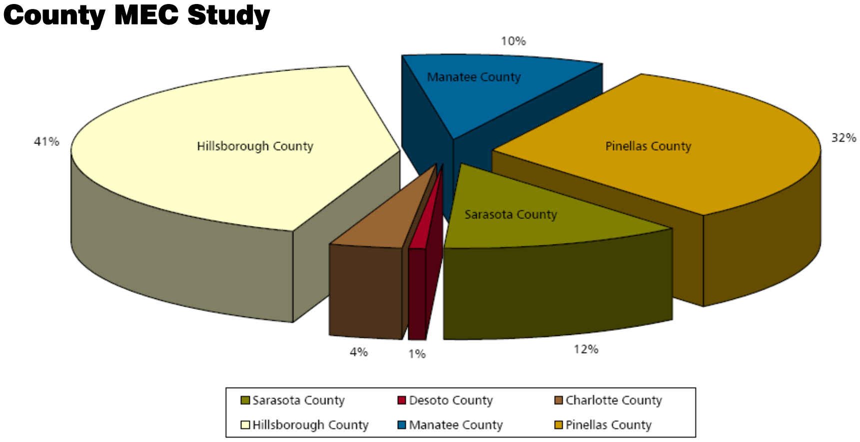


Table 11: Sarasota County Employment Trends & Projections, Woods & Poole, Inc., 1970-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Agriculture	1,386	1,747	2,677	3,998	4,522	5,082	5,727
Mining	28	137	388	321	350	331	310
Construction	6,136	10,139	13,146	14,564	17,142	18,544	19,904
Manufacturing	3,799	6,528	8,686	9,524	10,928	11,407	11,875
Transport, Comm. & Public Util	2,168	3,481	4,412	4,615	5,961	6,540	7,123
Wholesale Trade	1,300	3,225	4,839	5,430	8,056	10,033	11,983
Retail Trade	11,681	21,440	33,988	37,786	40,156	43,670	47,230
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	6,680	14,510	15,807	20,249	27,195	30,673	34,184
Services	15,236	27,508	53,227	82,508	127,929	166,503	204,154
Government	6,053	10,533	14,674	13,114	14,743	16,497	18,215
Total Employment	**54,467**	**99,248**	**151,844**	**192,109**	**256,982**	**309,280**	**360,705**

	1970-1980 CAGR	1980-1990 CAGR	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2010 CAGR	2010-2020 CAGR	2020-2030 CAGR
Agriculture	2.3%	4.4%	4.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Mining	17.2%	11.0%	-1.9%	0.9%	-0.6%	-0.7%
Construction	5.2%	2.6%	1.0%	1.6%	0.8%	0.7%
Manufacturing	5.6%	2.9%	0.9%	1.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Transport, Comm. & Public Util	4.8%	2.4%	0.5%	2.6%	0.9%	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	9.5%	4.1%	1.2%	4.0%	2.2%	1.8%
Retail Trade	6.3%	4.7%	1.1%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%
Finance, Ins. & Real Estate	8.1%	0.9%	2.5%	3.0%	1.2%	1.1%
Services	6.1%	6.8%	4.5%	4.5%	2.7%	2.1%
Government	5.7%	3.4%	-1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%
Total Employment	**6.2%**	**4.3%**	**2.4%**	**3.0%**	**1.9%**	**1.6%**

Source: Woods & Poole Economics; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 16: Sarasota County Employment Mix, 1970
Sarasota County MEC Study

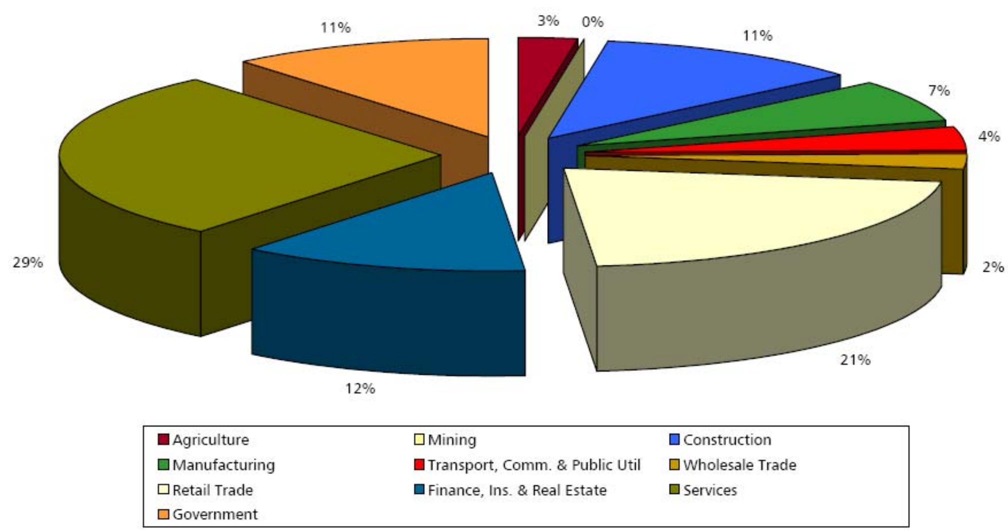


Figure 17: Sarasota County Employment Mix, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

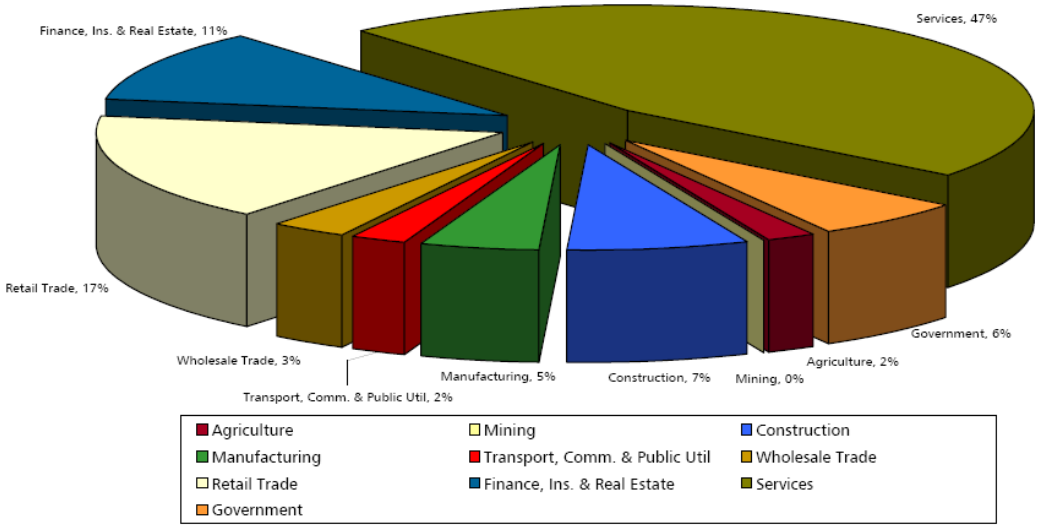


Figure 18: Regional Percent Change in Employment, 1970-1990
Sarasota County MEC Study

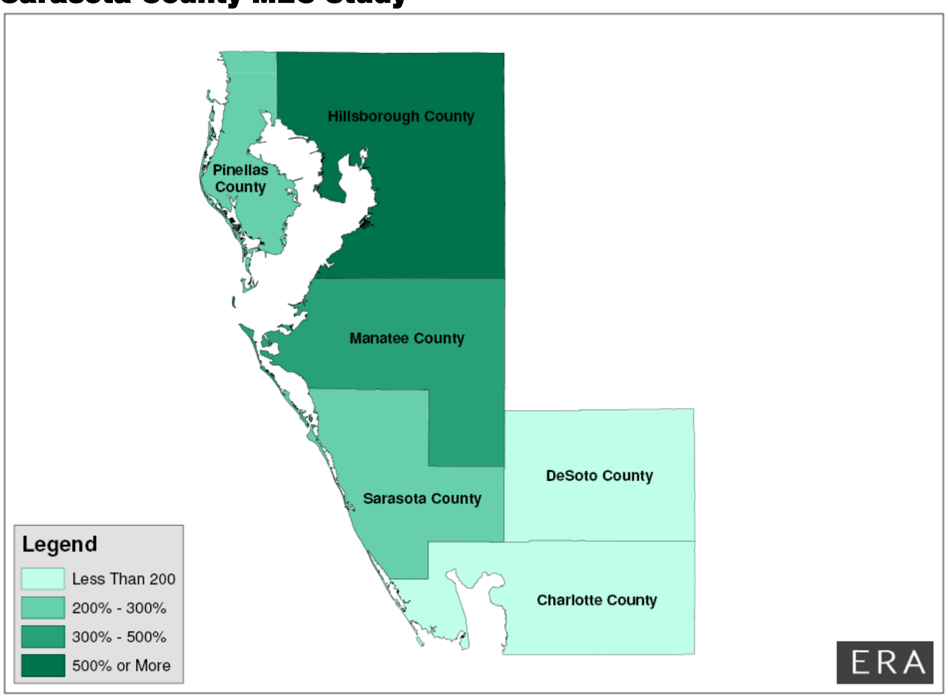


Figure 19: Forecasted Regional Percent Change in Employment, 2000-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

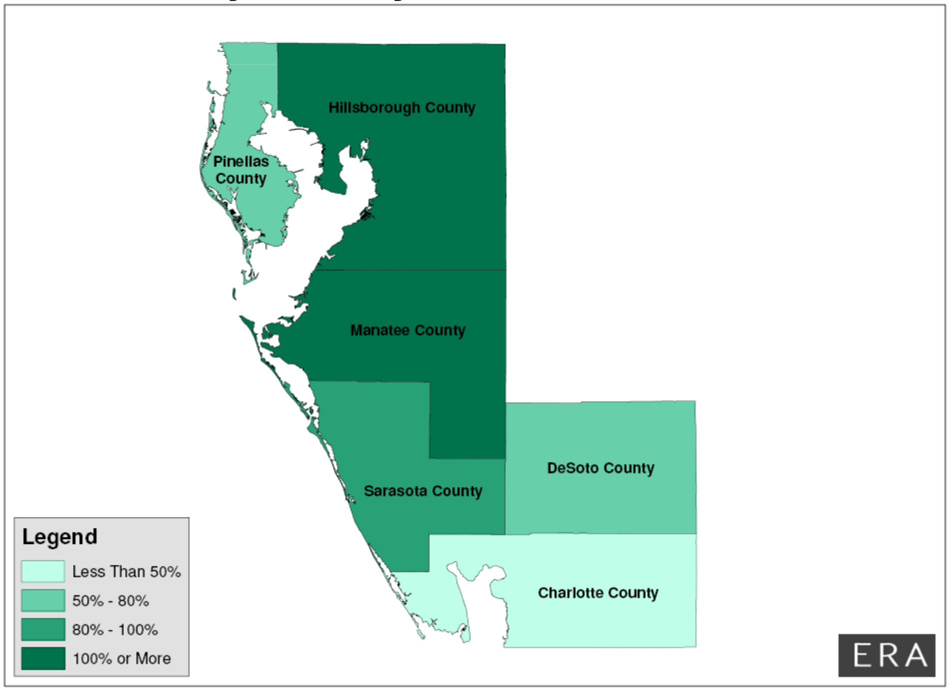


Figure 20: Regional Annual Percent Change in Employment, 1970-2000
Sarasota County MEC Study

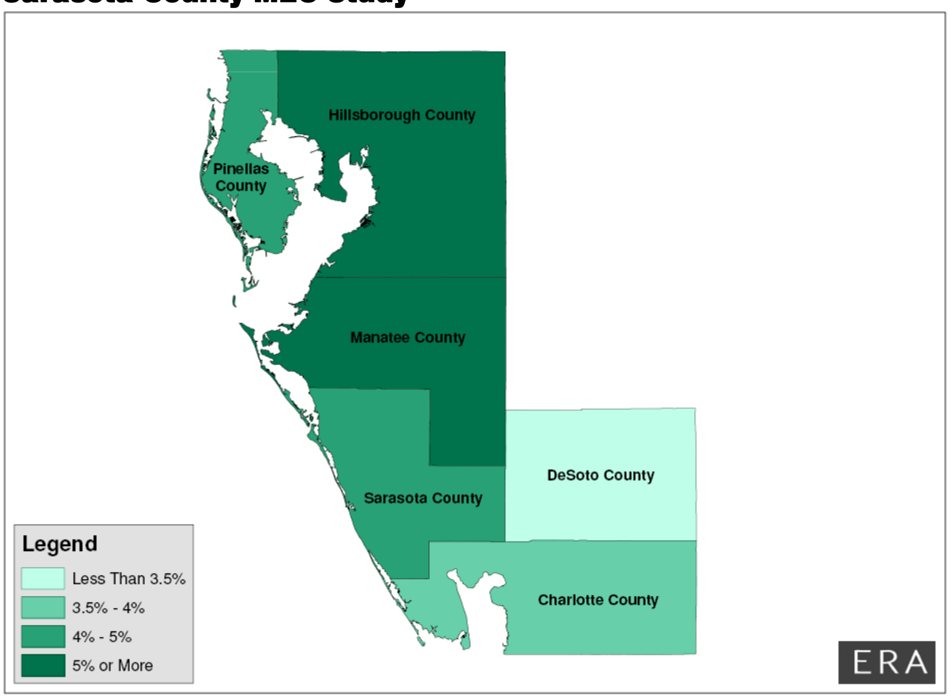


Figure 21: Forecasted Regional Annual Percent Change in Employment, 2000-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

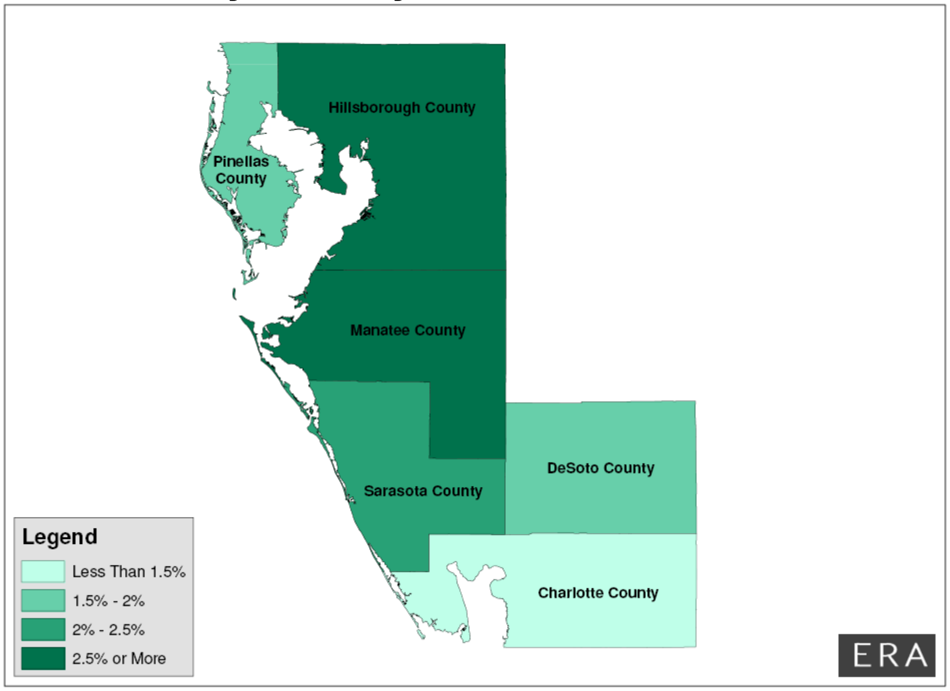


Figure 22: Sarasota County Employment Trends, by Industry, 1970-2030
Sarasota County MEC Study

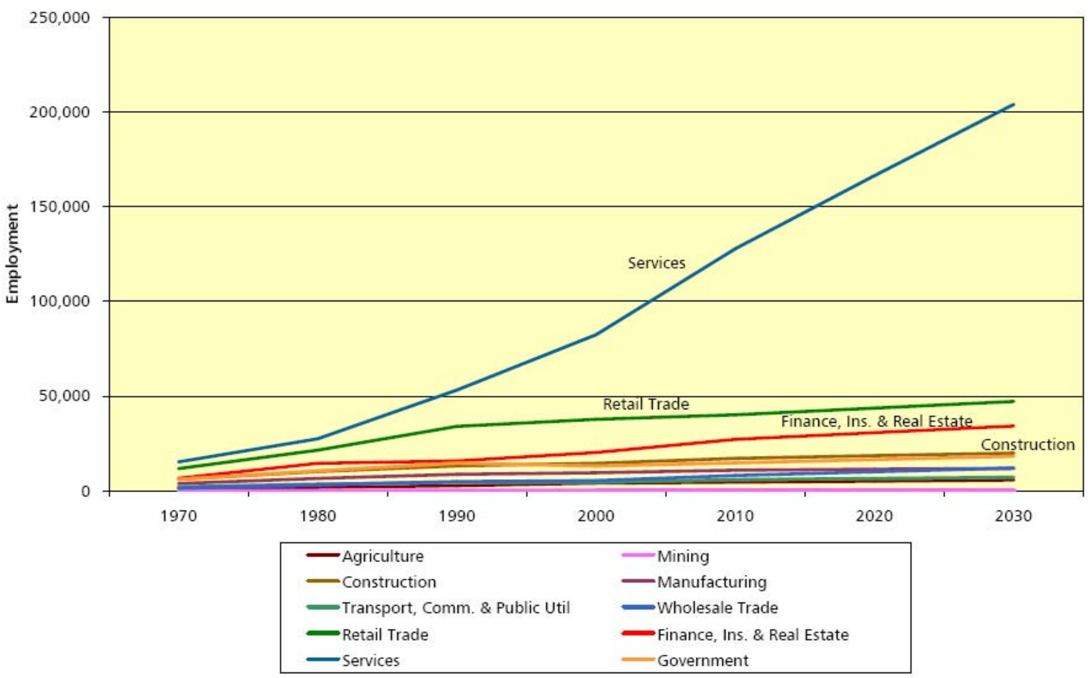


Table 12 contains the state's employment projections for the County for 2005-2013.

- In 2005, full-time employment totaled 185,200. Over the next eight years, the state projects that **the number of jobs in Sarasota County will increase by more than 35,000**—to 220,500, reflecting a healthy annual growth rate of 2.2 percent. This translates into 4,400 new jobs on an annual basis—consistent with historic, 30-year trends.
- When grouped by NAICS code, the greatest number of jobs is in the health care and social assistance sector (13 percent). Administrative, waste management and retail trade also provide large numbers of jobs (12.8 percent and 12.3 percent, respectively).
- Between 2005 and 2013, state forecasts suggest that administrative and waste management jobs will increase at the fastest clip—4.5 percent per year—or more than 1,200 new jobs annually. On the other hand, nominal job losses are predicted in the agriculture, mining, and utilities sectors.
- Job growth among other sectors such as non-durable goods manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and self-employed and unpaid family workers are expected to remain steady between 2005 and 2013.

Table 12: Sarasota County Employment Forecasts,
Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, 2005-2013
Sarasota County MEC Study

		Employment				Change	
Industry Code	Title	2005	% Distribution	2013	% Distribution	Average Annual Change	CAGR
	Total, All Industries	185,235	100.0%	220,549		4,414	2.2%
11	Agriculture	387	0.2%	338	0.2%	-6	-1.7%
21	Mining	58	0.0%	52	0.0%	-1	-1.4%
22	Utilities	656	0.4%	582	0.3%	-9	-1.5%
23	Construction	16,366	8.8%	19,622	8.9%	407	2.3%
31-33	Manufacturing	8,033	4.3%	8,858	4.0%	103	1.2%
	Durable Goods Manufacturing	6,479	3.5%	7,210	3.3%	91	1.3%
	Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	1,554	0.8%	1,648	0.7%	12	0.7%
42	Wholesale Trade	4,696	2.5%	5,490	2.5%	99	2.0%
44	Retail Trade	22,730	12.3%	24,870	11.3%	268	1.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,750	0.9%	1,852	0.8%	13	0.7%
51	Information	3,106	1.7%	3,603	1.6%	62	1.9%
52	Finance and Insurance	7,289	3.9%	8,344	3.8%	132	1.7%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,236	1.7%	3,673	1.7%	55	1.6%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,836	5.3%	12,318	5.6%	310	2.9%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	549	0.3%	750	0.3%	25	4.0%
56	Administrative and Waste Management	23,715	12.8%	33,701	15.3%	1,248	4.5%
61	Educational Services	1,837	1.0%	2,463	1.1%	78	3.7%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	24,095	13.0%	29,632	13.4%	692	2.6%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,428	2.4%	4,892	2.2%	58	1.3%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	15,449	8.3%	17,428	7.9%	247	1.5%
81	Other Services (Except Government)	8,730	4.7%	10,109	4.6%	172	1.9%
92	Government	14,581	7.9%	17,394	7.9%	352	2.2%
	Self-Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	13,708	7.4%	14,578	6.6%	109	0.8%

Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

As a means of understanding the distribution between public and private employment in Sarasota County, ERA gathered information on the largest employers in the County. As illustrated in Table

13, the largest employers range from hospitals to hotels/resort management to grocery stores. Other findings are summarized below:

- The services sector is the predominant category, and includes the largest employer, the Sarasota County School Board, with 4,400 jobs. The second largest, Sarasota Memorial Hospital, employs 3,400. As a result of the County's tourism economy, two large hotel and resort employers provide another 1,700 jobs.
- Services and retail trade comprise a large portion of employment from the top 20, with more than 13,700 jobs. Within this sector, health care provides a large number of jobs with the four hospitals providing 5,600+ jobs.
- Large population gains in the County over the past 20 years have fueled significant retail development, including 'big box' retailers such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Target, which provide almost 5,000 jobs.
- The County is home to three large manufacturers, including its largest—PGT Industries (1,350 jobs). Others include Sun Hydraulics and Forest Products Supply. These three manufacturers provide almost 2,200 jobs.

Table 13: Largest Employers in Sarasota County, 2006
Sarasota County MEC Study

Company Name	Industry	Number of Employees
School Board of Sarasota County	Education	4,417
Sarasota Memorial Hospital	Healthcare	3,400
Publix	Grocery Stores	3,300
Sarasota County Government	Governing Entity	2,500
Bon Secours-Venice Hospital	Healthcare	1,428
PGT Industries	Window & Door Manufacturer	1,350
Wal-Mart	Retail Discount Stores	963
Charter One Hotels	Hotel and Resort Management	950
FCCI Insurance Group	Insurance	862
Sarasota Herald-Tribune	Newspaper Publisher	600
Sun Hydraulics	Hydraulic Valve Manufacturer	550
Doctor's Hospital	Healthcare	478
Shannon Hotel Group	Hotel and Resort Management	420
Home Depot	Retail-Home Improvement	410
Comcast Cablevision	Cable Service Provider	374
Burdine's	Retail - Department Store	355
The Colony Beach & Tennis Resort	Hospitality	350
Target	Retail- Department Store	312
Healthsouth Rehabilitation Hospital	Healthcare	306
Forest Products Supply	Wood Products Manufacturer & Supplier	275

Source: The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

As illustrated in Table 14, **median annual wages in the Sarasota MSA tend to be lower than wages in comparable sectors across the state as well as the United States**. Findings from this research indicate the following:

- Median annual wages were 94 percent and 96 percent of state and national wage rates, respectively.
- Median annual wages in sales, food preparation, protective services, healthcare support and community services are higher in the County than state and national wages. Higher concentrations of employment in these sectors in Sarasota may be driving wages higher than national averages due to strong demand for these jobs.
- The largest difference is exhibited in the legal sector, where median annual wages in Sarasota are 82 percent ($10,020) and 72 percent ($17,890) *less than* state and national wages, respectively. This suggests, perhaps, a larger number of public defender jobs and/or a higher number of retired lawyers that have settled in Sarasota with (slightly) lower annual compensation (but high net worth).
- Although arts and recreation (particularly spectator sports) have high concentrations of employment in the County, annual median wages for these categories ($34,130) are below the state and national averages.

Table 14: Median Annual Wages, May 2005
Sarasota County MEC Study

	Sarasota MSA	Florida	US
Management	$74,260	$78,680	$77,630
Business and Financial	47,080	47,090	51,760
Computer and Mathematical	55,110	54,570	63,940
Architecture and Engineering	47,850	52,320	60,200
Life, Physical, and Social Science	42,290	43,890	51,540
Community and Social Services	32,920	32,210	34,360
Legal	45,000	55,020	62,890
Education, Training, and Library	35,100	37,560	39,600
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	34,130	35,280	36,830
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical	48,280	47,110	49,570
Healthcare Support	23,120	21,440	22,140
Protective Service	33,180	30,480	31,200
Food Preparation and Serving Related	16,490	15,600	16,070
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	18,810	18,010	19,760
Personal Care and Service	17,890	17,680	18,490
Sales and Related	24,080	22,860	22,140
Office and Administrative Support	24,700	25,060	27,240
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	14,040	15,910	17,490
Construction and Extraction	29,910	29,050	34,650
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	32,410	32,460	35,870
Production	25,170	23,750	26,850
Transportation and Material Moving	21,720	21,600	24,750
All Occupations	**$26,250**	**$26,520**	**$29,430**

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, www.bls.gov, May 2005; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Location Quotients

A location quotient is an economic indicator that shows the relative concentration, based on employment, of an "industry cluster" in a particular geography. Location quotients greater than one suggest that the industry is more highly concentrated in the area as compared to national averages. Table 15 compares the relative strengths of specific sectors in Sarasota County against the state.

- Notably, **Sarasota County exhibits significant strength in construction and arts, entertainment and recreation, with location quotients of 1.8 in each.**
- However, the County is significantly weaker in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting than in Florida as a whole, with location quotients of 0.2 and 1.3, respectively. This is not necessarily surprising given that these sectors are concentrated in other parts of the state.
- The County is on par (i.e., performing "equally") to Florida as a whole in other industries, including manufacturing, retail trade and finance and insurance. This suggests the importance of differentiation in economic development initiatives.
- Finally, the County is *outperforming* the state in construction (because of high growth), health care and social assistance (because of a large number of retirees), and arts, entertainment and recreation (because of the concentration of this sector in the City of Sarasota).

Table 15: Location Quotients by 2-Digit NAICS, 2005
Sarasota County MEC Study

Industry	Florida Statewide	Sarasota County
NAICS 11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.3	0.2
NAICS 21 Mining	0.2	0.1
NAICS 22 Utilities	0.7	0.8
NAICS 23 Construction	1.3	1.8
NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing	0.5	0.5
NAICS 42 Wholesale trade	1.0	0.6
NAICS 44-45 Retail trade	1.1	1.1
NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing	0.8	0.3
NAICS 51 Information	0.9	0.8
NAICS 52 Finance and insurance	1.0	1.0
NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing	1.3	1.2
NAICS 54 Professional and technical services	1.0	1.1
NAICS 55 Management of companies and enterprises	0.7	0.3
NAICS 56 Administrative and waste services	1.7	1.2
NAICS 61 Educational services	0.7	0.5
NAICS 62 Health care and social assistance	0.9	1.2
NAICS 71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.5	1.8
NAICS 72 Accommodation and food services	1.1	1.1
NAICS 81 Other services, except public administration	0.9	1.2
NAICS 99 Unclassified	0.7	0.8

Source: US Census, www.bls.gov, 2005; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

In order to clearly understand what specific industries are driving Sarasota County's industry clusters, Table 16 examines location quotients of these industries by 3-digit NAICS Codes.

- While the real estate industry in Sarasota is strong because of overall levels of growth and new development, it is performing on par with the industry in Florida as a whole.
- All elements of the construction industry in Sarasota County are outperforming the state, particularly specialty trade contractors. This suggests that the relative affluence of households in Sarasota County is reflected in the high concentration of jobs in this sector.
- While administrative and support services in Sarasota County are strong, this sector is not as concentrated in Sarasota as it is elsewhere in the state. This is not surprising, as larger metropolitan areas such as Tampa Bay and Greater Miami have significantly greater employment in these sectors.
- Notably, the location quotient for performing arts and spectator sports in Sarasota County is almost three times the quotient for Florida as a whole—4.0 versus 1.3. This is a direct result of the concentration of arts and cultural institutions in Sarasota as well as its location of spring training facilities for the Cleveland Indians.

Table 16: Location Quotients by 3-Digit NAICS, 2005
Sarasota County MEC Study

Industry	Florida Statewide	Sarasota County
NAICS 236 Construction of buildings	1.2	1.6
NAICS 237 Heavy and civil engineering construction	1.2	1.3
NAICS 238 Specialty trade contractors	1.4	2.0
NAICS 531 Real estate	1.4	1.4
NAICS 532 Rental and leasing services	1.2	0.9
NAICS 533 Lessors of nonfinancial intangible assets	0.8	0.3
NAICS 561 Administrative and support services	1.7	1.3
NAICS 562 Waste management and remediation services	0.9	1.1
NAICS 621 Ambulatory health care services	1.1	1.4
NAICS 622 Hospitals	0.9	1.2
NAICS 623 Nursing and residential care facilities	0.9	1.4
NAICS 624 Social assistance	0.7	0.6
NAICS 711 Performing arts and spectator sports	1.3	4.0
NAICS 712 Museums, historical sites, zoos, and parks	0.8	1.5
NAICS 713 Amusements, gambling, and recreation	1.6	1.3
NAICS 811 Repair and maintenance	1.0	0.9
NAICS 812 Personal and laundry services	1.0	1.2
NAICS 813 Membership associations and organizations	1.0	1.6
NAICS 814 Private households	0.4	0.6

Source: US Census, www.bls.gov, 2005; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Occupations

Table 17 illustrates occupations as reported in 2005 for the Sarasota Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the Tampa MSA, the State of Florida and the United States. A high proportion of the metropolitan area's labor force is employed in office and administrative support (18.6 percent), sales and related occupations (12.4 percent), and food preparation and serving-related occupations (10.7 percent). These three occupational categories are also the largest in Tampa as well as both the state and the nation.

- Because of the presence of financial institutions, both Sarasota and Tampa employ a larger proportion of the labor force in business and financial operations than in the state and then nation (3.3 and 4.2 percent, respectively).
- Interestingly, Tampa, the state, and the United States employ greater numbers in education, training, and library occupations than the Sarasota metropolitan area.

Table 17: Distribution of Occupations in May 2005
Sarasota County MEC Study

Occupation	Sarasota MSA	Tampa MSA	Florida	US
Management Occupations	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%	4.6%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3.3%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1.4%	2.2%	0.0%	0.7%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1.1%	1.4%	0.1%	0.3%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	0.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.1%
Community and Social Services Occupations	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.3%
Legal Occupations	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	3.7%	4.3%	4.8%	6.2%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1.5%	1.1%	1.2%	1.3%
Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations	5.4%	5.3%	5.2%	5.0%
Healthcare Support Occupations	3.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%
Protective Service Occupations	1.7%	2.3%	2.8%	2.3%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	10.7%	9.1%	9.4%	8.3%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	4.5%	3.7%	4.0%	3.3%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2.4%	2.4%	2.6%	2.4%
Sales and Related Occupations	12.4%	12.0%	NA	10.7%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	18.6%	20.1%	19.5%	17.5%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	0.3%	0.4%	NA	0.3%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	7.6%	6.4%	NA	4.9%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	4.1%	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%
Production Occupations	5.9%	5.3%	4.5%	7.9%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	6.8%	7.9%	7.1%	7.4%

Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, www.bls.gov, May 2005; Economics Research Associates, October 2006
NA: Estimate not released

Based on information prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Retail Trade, as illustrated in Table 18, the number of establishments in several industries in Sarasota County increased dramatically between 1997 and 2002 (this is the latest data available as this census is conducted every five years).

- The largest increase occurred in education services, which jumped from 57 in 1997 to 87 establishments in 2002, reflecting an annual growth rate of 8.8 percent.

- The smallest increase in establishments occurred in accommodations and food services, retail trade, and manufacturing, which exhibited increases of less than one percent each.
- All industries gained at least one establishment between 1997 and 2002.
- The number of establishments in several other categories also expanded during this period, reflecting the ongoing diversification of Sarasota County's economy. For example, administrative and waste services, other services except public administration, and professional and technical services also experienced solid growth ranging from six to eight percent each.

Table 18: Number of Establishments in Sarasota County, 1997-2002
Sarasota County MEC Study

		1997	2002	1997-2002 CAGR
NAICS 31-33	Manufacturing	379	386	0.4%
NAICS 42	Wholesale trade	527	571	1.6%
NAICS 44-45	Retail trade	1,669	1,697	0.3%
NAICS 51	Information	ND	158	ND
NAICS 53	Real estate and rental and leasing	571	705	4.3%
NAICS 54	Professional and technical services	1,070	1464	6.5%
NAICS 56	Administrative and waste services	564	825	7.9%
NAICS 61	Educational services	57	87	8.8%
NAICS 62	Health care and social assistance	1,032	1291	4.6%
NAICS 71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	144	196	6.4%
NAICS 72	Accommodation and food services	687	688	0.0%
NAICS 81	Other services, except public administration	623	901	7.7%

Source: US Census, www.bls.gov, 2002; Economics Research Associates, October 2006
ND: Not Disclosed

Housing Trends

Economics Research Associates has also reviewed housing trends in Sarasota County as part of Task 1.0 as a means of understanding the impacts of the housing market on the County's overall economic development picture. Specific measures of performance, such as building permit activity, housing values, and tenure (occupancy) are highlighted below. Additional information, such as the pace/absorption of housing activity, by location, will be collected and analyzed in Task 3.0.

Housing Starts (Building Permits)

- Over the past 25 years, strong population growth in Sarasota County has fueled significant demand and a subsequent building boom for new housing. On average, **the County issues more than 4,400 residential building permits annually**.

- More recently, a strong economy and continued job growth in Sarasota County have continued to fuel new housing development. In fact, in 2005 alone, more than 8,300 permits were issued. As in
- Table 19, this is a dramatic increase from 2000, when 3,700 or so permits were issued for single- and multi-family units.
- Since 1980, **the number of permits issued for single-family detached units has increased**. For instance, only 64 percent of permits issued in 1980 were for single-family homes; by 2005, fully 83 percent of the County's housing starts were for single-family homes.
- There has been a general decrease in the number of two-unit multi-family structures. In 1985, for example, two-unit structures comprised 23 percent of the multi-family permits issued. By 2000, however, the number of starts for this product had declined dramatically to two percent.
- Initial interviews conducted with the City of North Port suggest that residential building permit activity peaked in 2005 with the issuance of more than 5,000 permits. In 2006, however, illustrative of a slowing housing market, the number of permits issued declined substantially, to approximately 100 permits per month. The City noted that this slower pace also occurred in 2002-2003, as the state and nation emerged from the 2000-01 recession.

Table 19: Building Permits Issued in Sarasota County, 1980-2005
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	Annual Average
Total Units	5,179	3,359	3,487	2,640	3,658	8,310	4,439
Single-Family Detached	3,330	1,834	2,642	2,083	3,041	6,886	3,303
All Multi-Family	1,849	1,525	845	557	617	1,424	1,136
2-unit Multi-Family	502	364	18	14	8	112	170
3- and 4-unit Multi-Family	228	238	120	7	23	79	116
5+ Unit Multi-Family	1,119	923	707	536	586	1,233	851

Source: SOCDS Building Permit Database, www.hud.gov; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 23: Sarasota County Building Permit History, 1980-2005
Sarasota County MEC Study

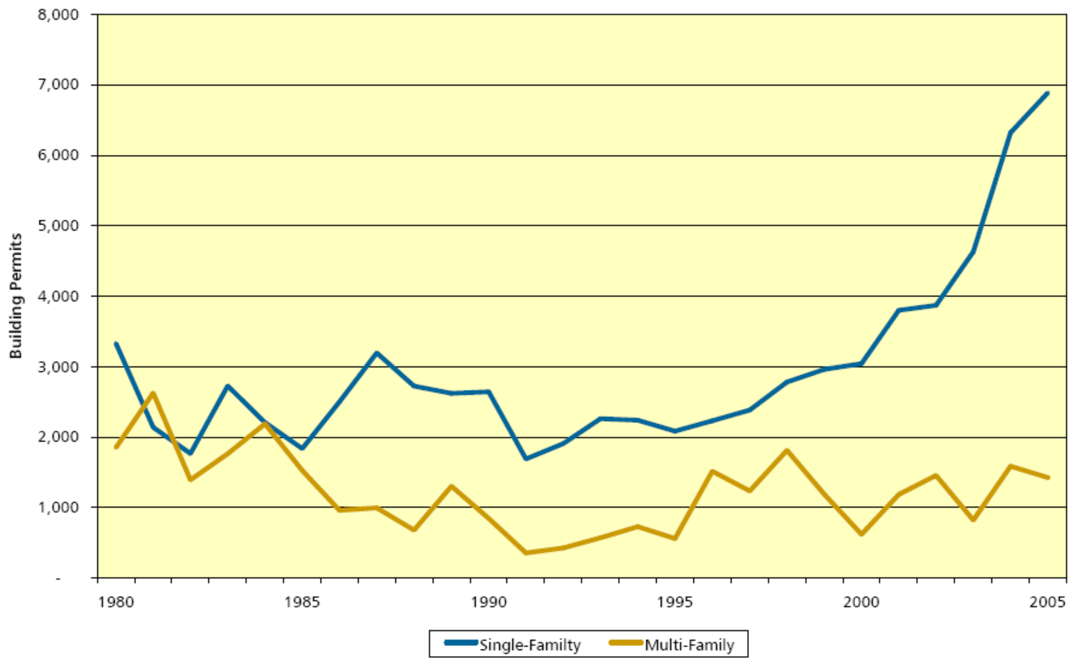
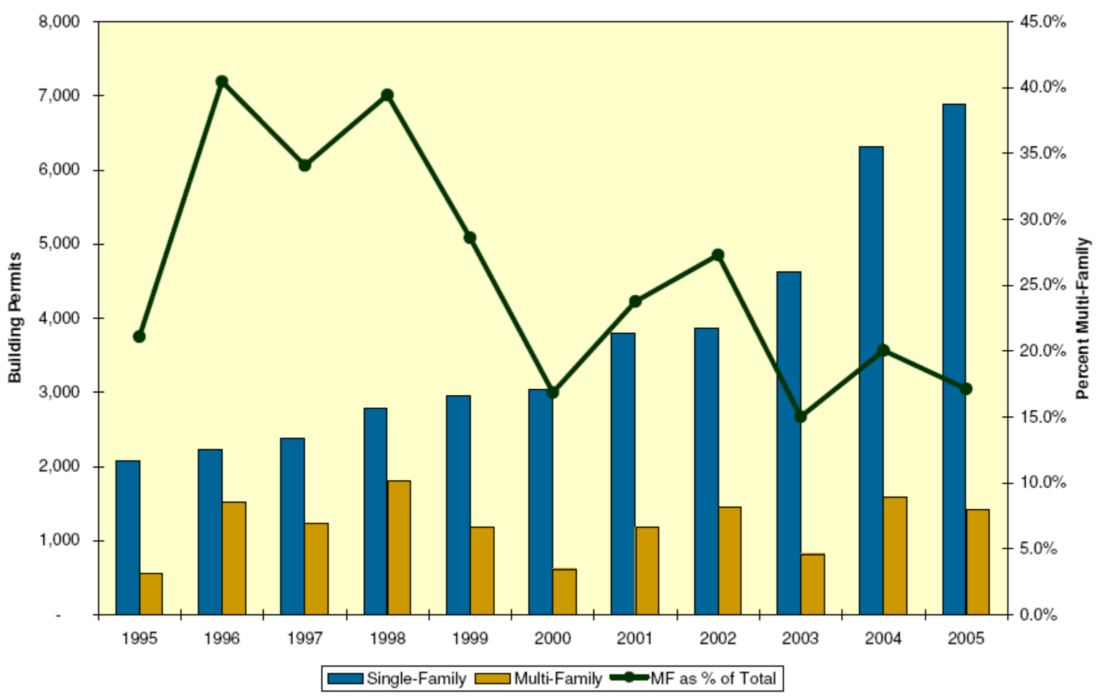


Figure 24: Sarasota County Building Permit Activity, 1995-2005
Sarasota County MEC Study



Housing Values

There is significant concern about the high cost of housing and its impact on overall economic development (such as the ability to retain lower wage jobs) in Sarasota County (as there is in numerous other jurisdictions across the United States). ERA assembled various data to ascertain trends.

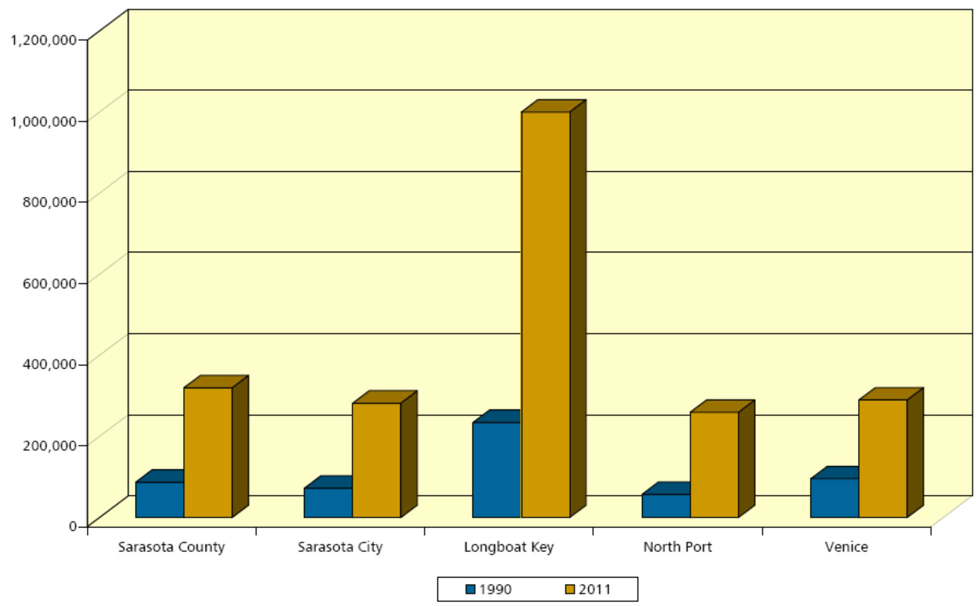
- Median home values have increased in Sarasota County and in each of its municipalities since 1990. As illustrated in
- Table 20, **median housing values in Sarasota County in 2006 were more than $270,600,** reflecting a jump of almost 16 percent per year since 2000, when median values were just shy of $112,000.
- Notably, North Port, which has historically been one of the more moderately-priced markets in the County, experienced the most dramatic annual increases of almost 18 percent per year. Currently, the median housing value in North Port is $259,500. The highest priced housing is in Longboat Key, where median housing values are $896,900.
- According to forecasts prepared by ESRI Business Analyst, housing values are expected to increase at a more moderate pace in the range of three to four percent over the next five years. By 2011, the overall median value in the County is forecast to be more than **$320,000**.

Table 20: Median Housing Values, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1990	2000	2006	2011	1990-2000 CAGR	2000-2006 CAGR	2006-2011 CAGR
Sarasota County	**87,198**	**$111,968**	**$270,672**	**$320,139**	**2.5%**	**15.8%**	**3.4%**
Sarasota City	72,444	95,642	238,391	282,086	2.8%	16.4%	3.4%
Longboat Key	234,888	366,768	896,959	1,000,001	4.6%	16.1%	2.2%
North Port	57,168	81,665	217,465	259,535	3.6%	17.7%	3.6%
Venice	95,735	102,052	247,879	290,010	0.6%	15.9%	3.2%

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Figure 25: Sarasota County Median Home Value, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study



Tenure & Structures

Table 21 illustrates trends and forecasts in housing tenure (i.e., renter versus owner) for the County and key municipalities for the 1990-2011 period. Consistent with increasing homeownership around the United States as a result of historic low interest rates and a strong economy, homeownership in Sarasota County has been increasing since 1990. In fact, owner-occupancy jumped from 61 percent in 1990 to 65 percent in 2000. Over the past six years, the number of owner-occupied units has increased further, albeit at a more moderate pace, to **67 percent.**

- As a result of a more diverse population as well as a greater number of rental units, homeownership rates in the City of Sarasota, Longboat Key, and Venice are lower than they are for the County as a whole—ranging from 46 to 52 percent. On the other hand, more than 81 percent of the households in North Port are owner-occupants, reflecting a preponderance of single-family detached units and fewer multi-family structures.

- Strong demand and continued population growth in the County also produced declining vacancy rates among permanently occupied structures. However, there appears to remain a slug of vacant housing in the County; **17 to 18 percent of the County's housing stock was vacant between 2000 and 2006.**

- Of the vacant housing inventory, the County has a high number of seasonally occupied units in various locations. In fact, of the County's vacant housing stock, about two-thirds are vacant because they are occupied on a seasonal basis. Strikingly, fully all (92 percent) of the vacant housing units in Longboat Key were vacant because of seasonal use in 2000.

Table 21: Housing Tenure, 1990-2011
Sarasota County MEC Study

	1990	2000	2006	2011
Sarasota County				
Owner Occupied	60.9%	65.0%	66.7%	67.7%
Renter Occupied	19.0%	17.2%	17.6%	15.4%
Vacant	20.1%	17.8%	17.6%	16.9%
For Seasonal Use	62.4%	62.9%	NA	NA
Sarasota City				
Owner Occupied	48.3%	50.9%	52.3%	52.3%
Renter Occupied	36.3%	36.2%	34.3%	34.6%
Vacant	15.5%	12.9%	13.4%	13.1%
For Seasonal Use	38.4%	51.1%	NA	NA
Longboat Key				
Owner Occupied	39.9%	44.5%	44.8%	46.5%
Renter Occupied	6.0%	4.0%	3.7%	3.8%
Vacant	54.1%	51.6%	51.5%	49.7%
For Seasonal Use	82.2%	92.2%	NA	NA
North Port				
Owner Occupied	63.0%	77.6%	80.8%	81.4%
Renter Occupied	14.7%	10.8%	8.8%	8.6%
Vacant	22.2%	11.6%	10.3%	10.0%
For Seasonal Use	75.6%	66.0%	NA	NA
Venice				
Owner Occupied	56.4%	55.8%	57.2%	58.7%
Renter Occupied	17.0%	15.9%	14.9%	14.8%
Vacant	26.5%	28.4%	27.9%	26.5%
For Seasonal Use	71.7%	67.0%	NA	NA

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Table 22 exhibits housing units by year built for the County and its municipalities based on the latest available data for this index from the 2000 U.S. Census. Findings are summarized below:

- The majority of County housing units were built prior to 1980; in fact, almost one-third of the County's housing units built were between 1970 and 1979.
- North Port has the newest housing stock; More than 25 percent of the residential dwellings in North Port were built after 1995.
- On the other hand, the City of Sarasota contains the region's oldest housing stock, with more than half (51 percent) of the City's units built before 1969.

Table 22: Housing Units by Year Built
Sarasota County MEC Study

	Sarasota County	Sarasota City	Longboat Key	North Port	Venice
1999 to March 2000	**2.7%**	0.9%	2.4%	7.2%	1.3%
1995 to 1998	**7.7%**	2.9%	6.7%	18.3%	4.6%
1990 to 1994	**9.1%**	4.5%	11.1%	15.5%	8.0%
1980 to 1989	**26.2%**	16.0%	22.8%	21.7%	23.0%
1970 to 1979	**28.7%**	25.2%	40.7%	25.8%	35.3%
1969 and Earlier	**25.5%**	50.6%	16.4%	11.6%	27.8%
Median Year Structure Built	**1979**	1970	1978	1986	1976

Source: US Census Bureau; ESRI Business Analyst; Economics Research Associates, October 2006

Economic Development Strategic Plan

As part of our initial work on the MEC land use study, ERA reviewed the County's 2004 Economic Development Strategic Plan. This preliminary review will be expanded in later stages of the study to understand how specific recommendations or initiatives identified in the plan have been implemented, or should be considered in the outcome of the MEC study. This preliminary review is highlighted below.

In 2004, a five-year update to the County's economic development plan was developed to strengthen the connections between economic development and community efforts such as tourism, the arts, workforce development, and local economic efforts. Through community involvement, the plan identified several areas for specific economic development focus and identified a vision statement to guide economic development efforts.

❖ The principal Economic Development Goal for Sarasota County is to foster the formation, expansion, and retention of quality jobs and competitive businesses that maintain or improve the quality of life and lead to a diversified, year-round, and sustainable economy.

The plan's goal is to diversify the economy through a "bottom-up" approach which attempts to engage the community to take a more active role in economic development. To this end, the plan recommended several key actions to restructure the County's overall economic framework, which include:

- Combining the County's economic development and tourism efforts;
- Increasing private sector involvement in program implementation through a new County-wide private-sector board; and,
- Holding joint planning sessions between the County's new private-sector board and the existing public-sector board.

Industry Cluster Strategy

The report outlines an industry cluster strategy for development and through economic research and resource identification, identifies four broad clusters for focused recruitment efforts. The plan focuses on "value-added" industries that would provide high-wage jobs in the region. While the plan identifies workforce development and enhanced training as affecting all clusters, it outlines specific action steps for each industry cluster to enhance development. These clusters include:

Specialty Manufacturing

This is defined as a broad "cluster" that encompasses any manufacturer that is not competing on cost. It is intended to educate local government officials and residents; provide training for local youth; and, identify business development opportunities with the existing cluster.

Creative Services

This is defined as industries using design and creative services in exporting industries to develop creative services districts; establish a creative services organization; and, develop and launch a campaign to promote the county's creative talent.

Life & Environmental Sciences

This includes industries that focus on information, communications, and other technology-driven industries. Key recommendations include building a Clinical Research Organization (CRO) and evaluating the feasibility of a life science incubator.

High Technology & Technology-Enabled Companies

This is focused on the biological and medical fields, including medical equipment, diagnostics, and specialty health practitioners. Key recommendations include establishing "technology districts" and enhancing both telecommunications infrastructure and access to capital.

Innovation & Entrepreneurial Development

The plan identifies entrepreneurial development as a key focus for the next five years in an attempt to develop homegrown high-tech development and startup businesses. The general plans for enhancing entrepreneurial development are broad and focus on developing industry collaboration and networks within the community to encourage and foster growth. Key recommendations include uniting, supporting, and attracting entrepreneurs and technology companies; promoting community-oriented initiatives and events that promote technology and entrepreneurship; and, facilitating innovation, research, and commercialization through academic, government, and commercial partnerships.

Business Climate & Image

To enhance the business climate and image of the community, the plan outlines a framework to increase marketing efforts. These efforts focus on unifying the County's marketing messages and image among the primary local organizations, focusing on specific business climate issues and challenges that impact growth. Key recommendations include developing a unified marketing message and collaborative marketing efforts; increasing access to capital & improving the regulatory environment that affects value-added industries; and, enhancing workforce development efforts and addressing affordable housing.

Regional Cooperation

The plan identifies regional cooperation as a key component to economic development efforts and encourages regional cooperation between organizations and the region's counties. These efforts are intended to focus on enhanced cooperation with the Tampa Bay Regional Partnership, an organization that represents the economic development interests of the region's seven counties.

In addition to working with the Regional Partnership, the plan suggests increased public and private sector cooperation in Sarasota County and suggests that economic development and tourism efforts be integrated into a more cohesive outreach and marketing organization.