ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Commissioner ..... Kelli Glass Leighton
Commissioner ..... Merritt Matheson

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The City of Stuart's Comprehensive Plan serves as a blueprint for future development and guides growth within the community.

The City of Stuart adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 1989. Since then, the City has evaluated its blueprint for the future twice, in 1996 and 2009. In 2019, the City once again initiated an evaluation of its Comprehensive Plan. The City completed this Evaluation and Appraisal Report as a tool to review changes the City has experienced since its 2009 Evaluation Appraisal Report, to assess the direction the community wants to grow in, and address mandatory changes due to Florida Statue changes. This document provides recommend considerations and changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan to assist Stuart in achieving its desired future vision. Recommendations were based on community and staff input and reviewing the current Comprehensive Plan holistically. Additionally, Exhibit 1 of this document provides text amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to primarily address changes in state requirements.

The next step will be for the City to utilize the recomendations of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report to update the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the City's vision and to adapt to changing needs of the community.

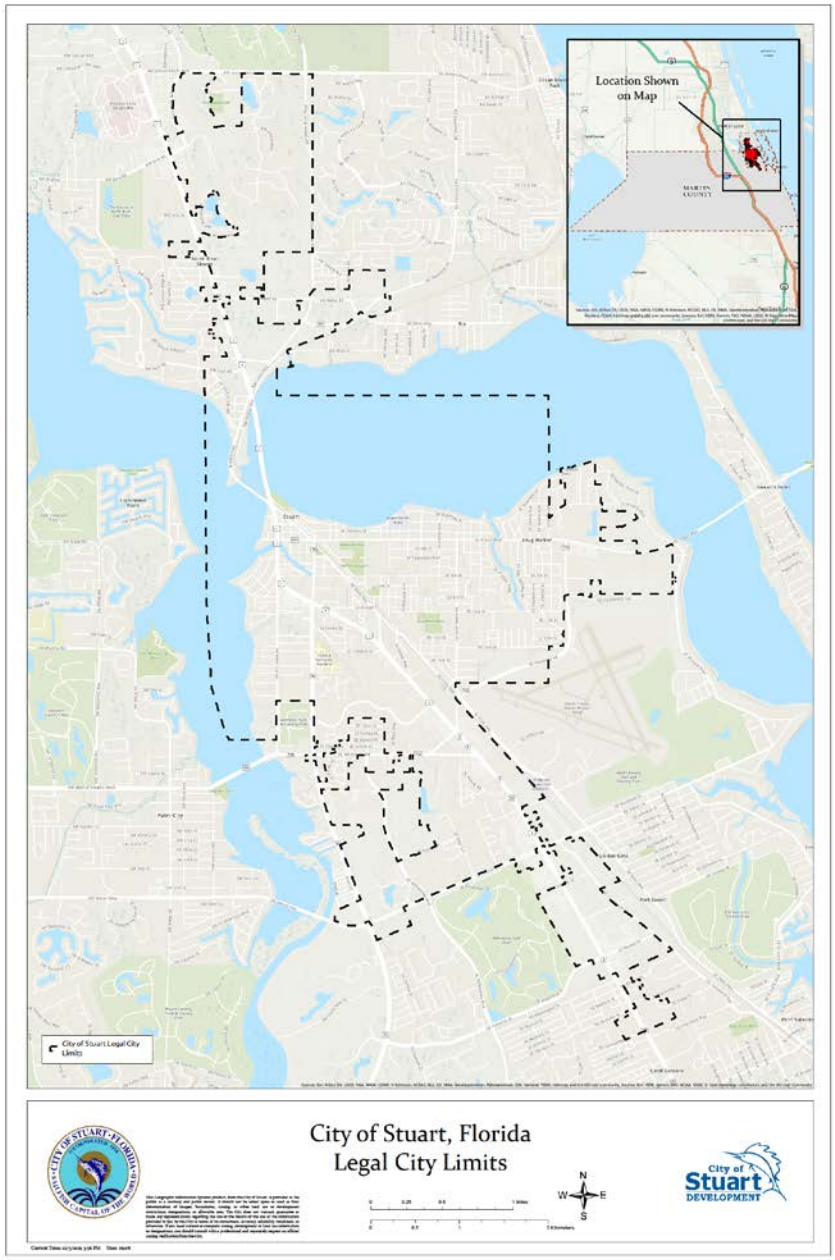
1.2 Profile of the City

The City of Stuart is located along east coast Florida's Treasure Coast and lies along the broad St. Lucie River, as shown on Map 1. Stuart's location on the St. Lucie River and close proximity to the Atlantic Ocean is an asset to the community and has a strong influence on the City known as the "Sailfish Capital of the World." Public access to the waterfront and protection of the waterways and associated natural resources are important concerns that inform the City's Comprehensive Plan. Throughout its history, the City has maintained its character as a moderately developed waterfront community with a small-town feel.

Stuart is the county seat of Martin County. The City currently encompasses 6.12 square miles of land with an estimated permanent resident population of 16,504 people, which is estimated to increase each winter with nearly 4,000 seasonal residents.

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Map 1: Legal City Limits

1.3 Change in Population

Table 1-1 presents historical population growth in the City of Stuart based on US Census and University of Florida BEBR data. The City's population increased by 911 residents, an increase of 5.52% population during the 2010 – 2019 period. This equates to an approximate growth of 101 residents per year or 0.61%, which is consistent with the United States' growth rate in 2018 of 0.67% (census.gov). However, this growth rate is lower than Florida's 2020 estimated growth rate of 1.8%. Additionally, approximately 50.71% of the population growth is attributed to land annexations. Table 1-2 provides estimated population projections. It is estimated the City's population will increase to 19,064 residents by the year 2035, an increase of 2,560 residents between 2019 and 2035.

Table 1-1 Historical Population Growth (Residents)

Year	Resident Population
1990*	11,936
2000*	14,725
2010*	15,593
2015*	15,984
2016*	16,197
2017*	16,250
2018*	16,293 / 16,425**
2019**	16,504

Sources: * U.S. Bureau of the Census
** University of Florida BEBR estimate

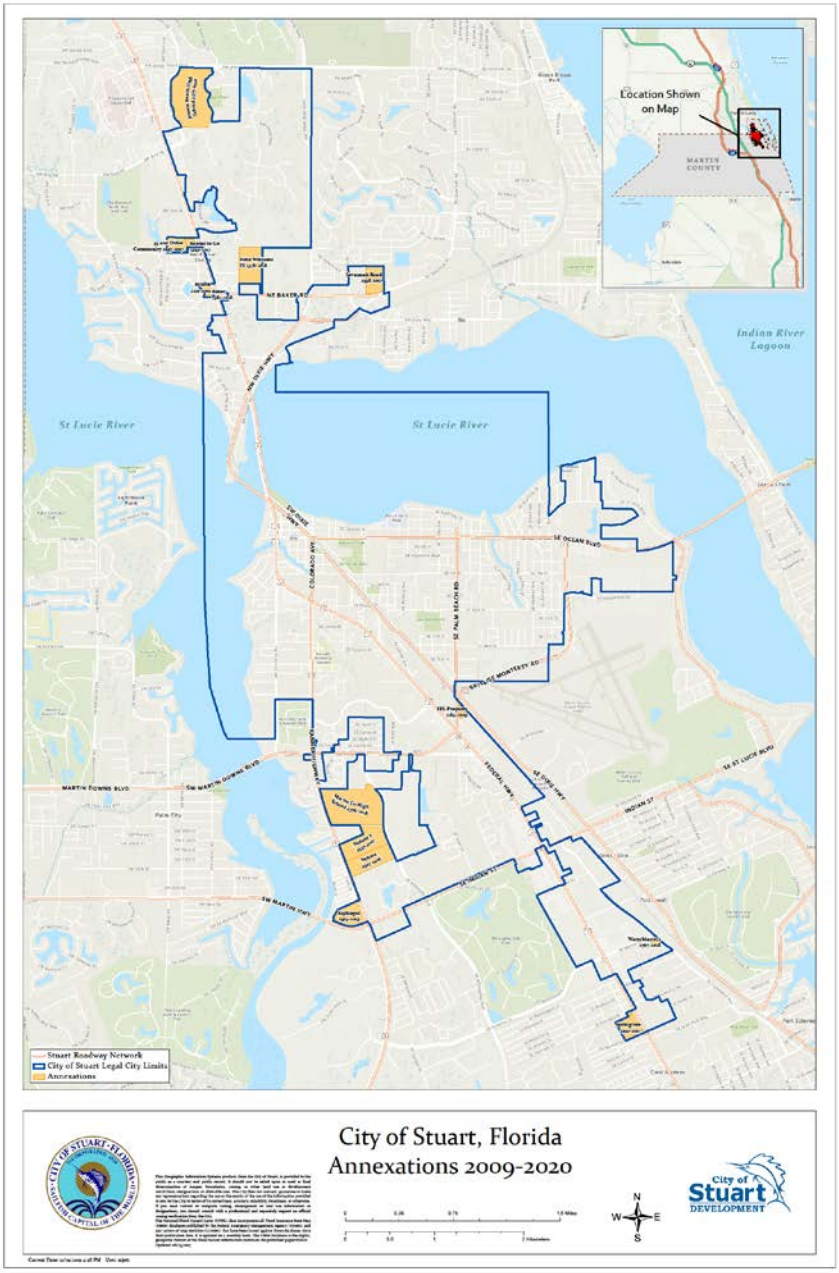
Table 1-2 Population Projections (Resident Population)

Year	City of Stuart Estimate Population
2020	16,769
2025	17,490
2030	18,212
2035	19,064

Source: Stuart Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan; January-2019

1.4 Changes in Land Area

Map 2 shows City annexations between 2009 and 2019. A total of 276.79 acres were annexed during this period. An inventory of annexed properties, including the assigned City land-use designation for each, and estimated added population from the annexation is presented in Table 1-3. Six commercial, four residential, three institutional, and one industrial properties were annexed. The residential properties are projected to add an estimated 972 persons to the City's population. Two of the annexed parcel developments have been completed, adding approximately 462 residents to the City. This accounts for approximately 50.71% of the City's population growth over the last decade. Table 1-4 provides the acreage of annexations by land use type. Three schools were annexed into the City, accounting for 56.96% of the annexed acres, along with 61.80 and 53.91 acres of commercial and residential properties, respectively. The local power provider, Florida Power and Light, annexed 3.27 acres of industrial property in 2009.



Map 2: Annexations 2009-2020

Table 1-3 Annexation Activity: 2009 to 2019

Year	Parcel Name	Acreage	Potential Population	Land Use Designation
2009	FPL	3.27	0	Industrial
2015	Wynne/Hotel	2.96	0	Commercial
2016	Nehme/Rice	24.29	0	Commercial
2017	Nehme Holdings	29.22	0	Commercial
2017	Anchor Bank	9.6	182	Residential
2017	Werner Bols	15.2	280	Residential
2017	Kornbluh/Rooms to Go	2.57	0	Commercial
2017	Stuart 13/Springtree	13.58	280*	Residential
2018	Crocker Group/ Waterblasters	1.96	0	Commercial
2018	Martin High School	65.18	0	Institutional
2018	Jensen Beach High School	65.80	0	Institutional
2018	Felix Williams	26.53	0	Institutional
2018	Baker Rd LLC	0.80	0	Commercial
2019	Kiplinger	15.53	230**	Residential
Total		**276.49**	**972**	

*Project Approval **Project Potential

Table 1-4 Annexation Area by Future Land Use Category: 2009-2019

Future Land Use Category	Acres	Percentage of Total 2009-2019 Annexations
Industrial	3.27	1.18%
Commercial	61.80	22.35%
Residential	53.91	19.49%
Institutional	157.51	56.96%
Total Acres	276.54	100%



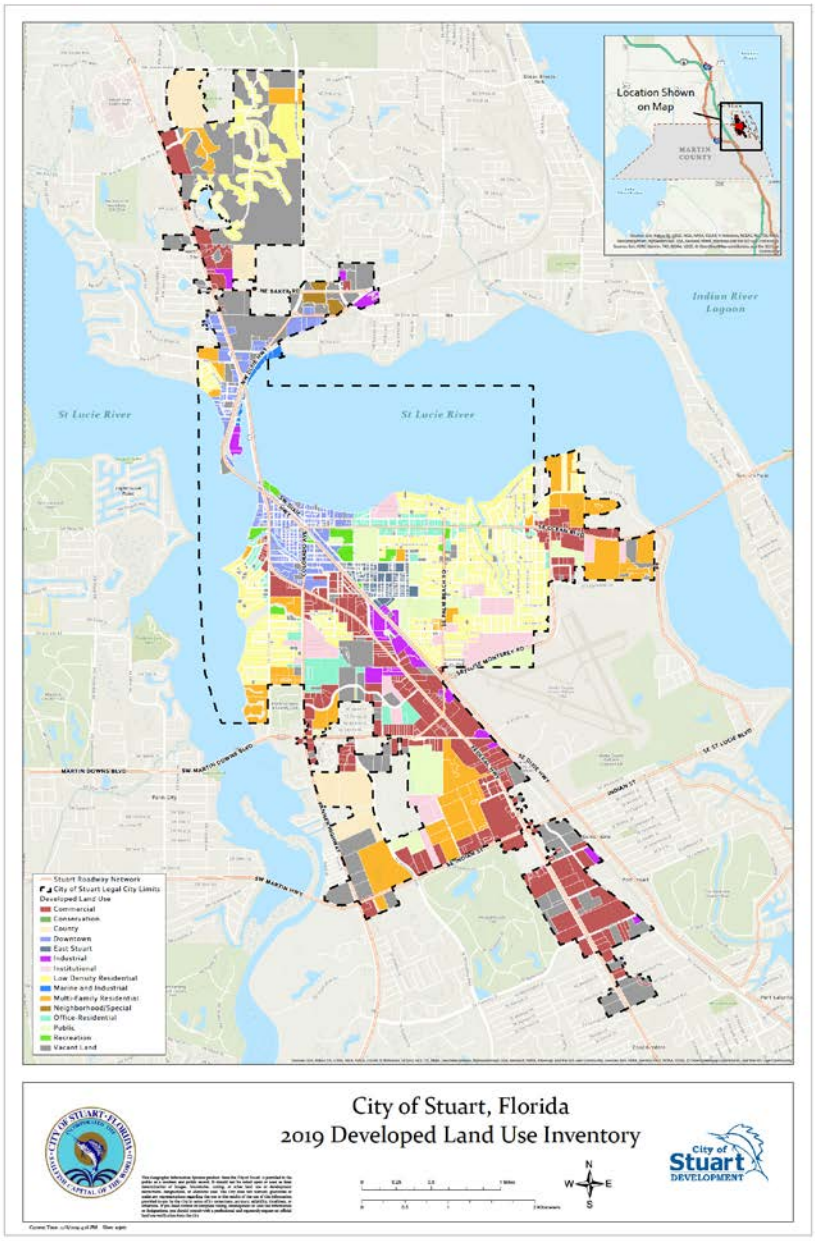
1.5 Vacant Land for Development



An inventory of vacant land, by land-use category, is presented in Table 1-5. In total, the City had 852.96 vacant acres in 2019. Locations of vacant parcels are illustrated on Map 3. The majority of vacant land, 412.35 acres, is conservation land. There are 175.59 acres of vacant commercial property, which accounts for 20.59% of all vacant land in the City. Multi-family residential land use accounts for the third greatest amount of vacant acres, with 66.87 acres. Marine/Industrial is the category with the least available vacant land, having only 0.54 acres, which is 0.06% of the available vacant land. Several land-use categories have less than 25 acres of vacant land, including marine/industrial, East Stuart, industrial, institutional, and office/residential.

Table 1-5 2019 Vacant Land Inventory by Future Land Use Map Designation

Land Use Designation	Land Use Distribution	
	Acres	Percent
Commercial	175.59	20.59%
Conservation	412.35	48.34%
County Designations	49.48	5.8%
Downtown	28.25	3.31%
East Stuart	12.12	1.42%
Industrial	15.06	1.77%
Institutional	16.31	1.91%
Low Density Residential	37.47	4.39%
Marine/Industrial	.54	.06%
Multi-Family Residential	66.87	7.84%
Neighborhood/Special District	25.51	3.00%
Office/Residential	13.41	1.57%
Total Acres	852.96	100%



Map 3 Developed Land Use Inventory

2.0 Community Engagement

The City recognizes the importance of public workshops and has provided for and encouraged public participation throughout the Evaluation and Appraisal Report planning process.

2.1 Community Engagement Activities

The following activities were completed by City staff in an effort to inform, engage, and solicit input from residents, business owners, stakeholders, and interested parties:

- Created a City of Stuart webpage for Evaluation and Appraisal Report information
- Distributed a survey through the Evaluation and Appraisal Report website and email
- Advertised community engagement meetings
- Developed a flyer encouraging participation in the community engagement meetings
- Advertised community engagement meetings through email, hard copies, word of mouth, and social media
- Promoted attendance at community engagement meetings in the “info bits” on City utility bills
- City staff conducted personal outreach to Martin County schools and the Stuart Community Redevelopment Area
- Held community meetings:
    - October 7, 2019 –Public Workshop #1
    - December 4, 2019 - Focus group discussion with Stuart Main Street
    - December 11, 2019 - Public Workshop #2
    - February 25, March 3, and March 10, 2020 - Joint Local Planning Agency and City Commission meetings





a) October 7, 2019 –Public Workshop #1



At the initial Public Workshop for the Evaluation and Appraisal Report, the City asked for public input on the following issues:

1. Neighborhoods
2. Mobility
3. Environment
4. Public Services
5. Business

Participants placed green, yellow, and red dots stickers on photos of the community to indicate if they believed the City was doing well in that category, could improve, or should reevaluate the direction they are moving. Table 2-1 summarizes the overall findings.

Table 2-1 Public Workshop #1 Public Input Summary

Input Category	Doing Well	Room for Improvement	Need to Reassess Track
Environment	> Natural Resources & Habitat > Open Space & Green Space	> Water Quality > Resiliency & Climate Change > Renewable & Alternative Energy	None
Mobility	> Walkability	> Passenger Train > Alternative Transportation > Parking > Biking	> Traffic & Streetscape
Public Services	> Potable Water & Utilities > Parks & Recreation > Sanitation & Recycling > Beautification > Stormwater > Sewer & Septic	None	None
Neighborhoods	> Architectural Standards & Design > Density	> Historic Preservation > Affordable Housing > Future Land Use > Housing Stock/Type	None
Business	> Community Redevelopment Area > Downtown > Capital Improvements	> Local Economy > Jobs > Commercial & Industrial Land Use	None



b) December 4, 2019 – Stuart Main Street Focus Group

The Stuart Main Street Focus Group was primarily a roundtable discussion, where all attendees were given an opportunity to provide input on issues and ideas for improvement related to the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code. Input gathered informed recommendations in this Evaluation and Appraisal Report.

c) December 11, 2019 - Public Workshop #2

During the second Public Workshop, the City provided a brief overview of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report and Comprehensive Plan update process. Discussion was opened up to the public.



d) Joint Local Planning Agency and City Commission Meetings

Joint Local Planning Agency and City Commission Meetings were held February 25, March 3, and March 10, 2020 to review and revise draft recommendations of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. Representatives asked questions, provided feedback, and gave input on the finding and recommendations outlined in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report.

3.0 General Recommendations

"A blueprint for the future."

The City's Comprehensive Plan serves as a blueprint for future development and guides growth. It guides the City's future actions through goals, objectives, and policies and establishes a framework for prioritizing investments. As the City grows and revisions are made to state laws (Chapter 163, Florida Statutes), the City shall update its Comprehensive Plan so the document grows and adjusts to a changing world and new demands.

3.1 Description of the Issue

As state statutes are updated and revised, it is the City's responsibility to evaluate and amend the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the changes in state requirements. Since adoption of its first Comprehensive Plan in 1989, the City of Stuart has evaluated its blueprint for the future twice, in 1996 and 2009. In 2019, the City once again initiated an evaluation of its Comprehensive Plan; this Evaluation and Appraisal Report is part of that process. In the overall evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan, the following major issues were identified per state requirements and City staff input, and community engagement activities.

a) **Compliance with State Statutes:** The City needs to complete amendments to its Comprehensive Plan to reflect changes in state requirements in Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes.
b) **Readability:** City staff and members of the public indicated that the City's current Comprehensive Plan is cumbersome and difficult to read and use.

3.2 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

a) **Compliance with State Statutes:** In Spring 2019, the City, in conjunction with their consultant, Cardno, Inc., reviewed its Comprehensive Plan and determined that amendments were necessary to reflect 2010 - 2018 changes in state requirements in Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes. During the reviewed timeframe, it was noted that several amendments had been completed, including adopting 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based amendments. Some additional amendments included, but were not limited to the following:
    - Revisions to the Capital Improvements Element
    - Future Land Use Map updates
    - Implementing an Economic Development Element
    - Annexations

    Amendments that need to be completed and that are being incorporated into this Evaluation and Appraisal Report include the following:
    - Deleting references to Rule 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code
    - Changing "Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act" to "Community Planning Act"
    - Correcting "Department of Community Affairs" to "Department of Economic Opportunity"
    - Updating 5 and 10-year planning horizons to 2025 and 2030
    - Add new policy and revise existing policy within the Coastal Management Element to adhere to the requirements under the Peril of Flood Act



b) Readability: During review of the Comprehensive Plan, several factors were noted that contribute to making the Plan difficult to read. These include the use of numerous acronyms, development-related language, lack of graphics, and references to outdated programs and policies. The Comprehensive Plan should be revised to be more graphic and easier to understand through clear, concise, and current language and strategic use of graphics to promote concept understanding and visual appearance of the document. Additionally, reorganizing closely aligned Elements can ease use of the document and assist the City in more effectively monitoring implementation. It was also recommended to reorganize the Elements into "Pillars." A suggested reorganization is provided in Section 3.4

3.3 Recommendations

1. Make Comprehensive Plan more graphic and simplify language to improve readability and ease of understanding. The Plan should use clear, concise language, an active voice, and graphics to break up monotony of narrative, make the Plan more visually interesting, and improve understanding of concepts.
2. Reorganize optional and required Elements into the following "Pillars:" Environment, Neighborhoods, Infrastructure, Community and Economic Development, and Government and Implementation.
3. Revise Comprehensive Plan to have short and midterm planning horizons of 5 (year 2020) and 10 (year 2030) years to encourage quick action by the City.
4. Delete policies that have been implemented or are no longer relevant.
5. Incorporate sustainability and resiliency information/sections into each Element, as-needed.
6. Required per Florida State Statutes: Adopt text amendments in Exhibit 1 of this document to make the following changes:

    a) Removing references to Rule 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code
    b) Changing "Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act" to "Community Planning Act"
    c) Correcting "Department of Community Affairs" to "Department of Economic Opportunity"
    d) Adopt removal of references to Rule 9J-5, which is no longer applicable, in Exhibit 1 of this document.

3.4 Recommended Reorganization of Elements

It is recommended that the Comprehensive Plan Elements be organized into "Pillars." Reorganizing closely aligned Elements can ease use of the document and can assist the City in more effectively monitoring implementation. Further, it is recommended that three new Elements be added: Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Vibrancy, Community

Redevelopment Agency, and Administration and Implementation.

The purpose of adding the Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Vibrancy Element is to have one policy location that helps drive promoting and retaining community character. Part of the City's character is preserving historic buildings and cultural assets. Historic preservation is something the community stated the City can improve upon.

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has some specific goals and objectives that differ from the remainder of the City. Housing these specific goals and objectives under one Element would collocate CRA-specific goals and objectives. This Element would need to reference the CRA's adopted Community Redevelopment Plan. Alternatively, the City can consider adding a CRA section to each Element.

Adding an Administration and Implementation Element can assist the City in implementing the Comprehensive Plan through providing timeline goals, monitoring and evaluation procedures, and guidance to complete monitoring, evaluation, and updating procedures.

It is also recommended to remove Element X - Public Schools Facilities and incorporate relevant goals, objectives, and policies into the existing Element VII - Intergovernmental Coordination Element.

Environment Pillar

1. Coastal Management (currently Element IX)
2. Conservation Element (currently Element V)

Neighborhoods Pillar

1. Future Land Use Element (currently Element I)
2. Housing Element (currently Element III)
3. Recreation and Public Space (currently Element VI)
4. Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Vibrancy (optional Element to be added)

Infrastructure Pillar

1. Mobility (currently Element II - Transportation)
2. Capital Improvements and Concurrency Management System (currently Element VIII)
3. Public Services (currently Element IV – Infrastructure)

Community & Economic Development Pillar

1. Economic Development (currently optional Element XI)
2. Community Redevelopment Agency (optional Element to be added)

Government and Implementation Pillar

1. Intergovernmental Coordination Element (currently Element VII)
2. Administration and Implementation (optional Element to be added)

4.0 Environment

Minimizing the impact of climate change, improving water quality and using renewable energy and resiliency planning for a sustainable future, has emerged as a paramount concern both globally and for the City of Stuart. While global efforts are taking place, ultimately climate adaption and efforts to improve water quality and promote renewable energy use must be planned for and implemented at the local level. The City's Comprehensive Plan has been evaluated in terms of the three primary components: water quality and natural resources, renewable and alternative energy, and resiliency planning.

The City established a multi-departmental committee to identify opportunities for incorporating sustainability and resiliency concepts into decision-making and policy goals for the future, which will evolve into a sustainability and resilience plan.

4.1 Description of Issue

The following major issues have been identified through community engagement activities and interviews with City staff and should be addressed through updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives and policies.



a. **Water Quality and Natural Resources:** According to public input, one of the greatest major issues facing the City is water quality. Comprehensive Plan objectives encourage low impact development (LID) strategies and, since the 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal, wetland policies are better-defined which helps improve the quality of natural resources and minimize environmental impacts. Community Investment Plan (CIP) infrastructure goals such as reverse osmosis plants and non-mandatory septic-to-sewer programs, as well as planning requirements for irrigation strategies and approved landscape materials help promote sustainable water supply. The City and community agree these programs have been successful; however, currently there is no baseline of acceptable water quality, no established system of measurement, nor a water quality action plan in place.

b. **Renewable and Alternative Energy and Resource Use:** The previous objectives to provide sustainable and smart growth principles, green-house gas reduction strategies, increased use of renewable energy alternatives, and to formalize a mandatory Green Development review section, were identified through the community engagement process as the highest ranked issues to address in the Comprehensive Plan update. The City supports the Solar Energy Loan Fund and the Florida Green Energy Works program, continues to implement solar projects, and is considering a required sustainability matrix for development. With both successes and shortcomings in the previous plan, updates must focus on mandatory policy with measurable outcomes.

c. **Resiliency Planning:** The City organized a multi-department sustainable committee

in October 2019 with the goal to create a Sustainability Plan by April 2020. Resiliency will be a key component to the City's sustainability. Resiliency is the ability of the built and natural environment to resist, adjust to and recover from the effects of a hazard. Current goals promote protection of the coastal shoreline from erosion and capital assets from destructive forces, while also providing for emergency evacuation and procedures for post-disaster redevelopment. According to the South Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, unified sea level rise projections for South Florida project sea levels will rise by three to seven inches by 2030 and nine to 24 inches by 2060. While the City understands potential impacts of climate change, sea level rise, intense storm events and shoreline exposure, an effective disaster management plan that incorporates resiliency and sustainability strategies is not in place. Areas of the City are prone to flooding and risk impacts from hurricanes and sea level rise. Flood zones designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the City's Coastal High Hazard Area, coastal sea level rise projections, and hurricane storm surge projection maps are provided in Maps 4-7. These maps indicate areas of the community vulnerable to flooding and hurricanes. This information can help inform policies to protect infrastructure, residents, and the coastline.



4.2 Potential Social, Economic and Environmental Impact

The City of Stuart seeks to provide its residents a high quality of life and attract tourists and businesses that will contribute to the economic vitality of the City. Implementing policy, planning and CIP guidelines that encourage pedestrian and transit friendly development; reduce negative impacts on the natural environment; and identify strategies for a resilient and sustainable future, will help create a community where families want to work, live and play. Redevelopment in areas of adequate infrastructure and services reduces impact on natural areas and greenhouse gas emissions. Policies to support a smart and resilient city will shift the social behavior of the community towards a more efficient and sustainable use of City resources, resulting in an increased quality of life for residents and visitors of Stuart.

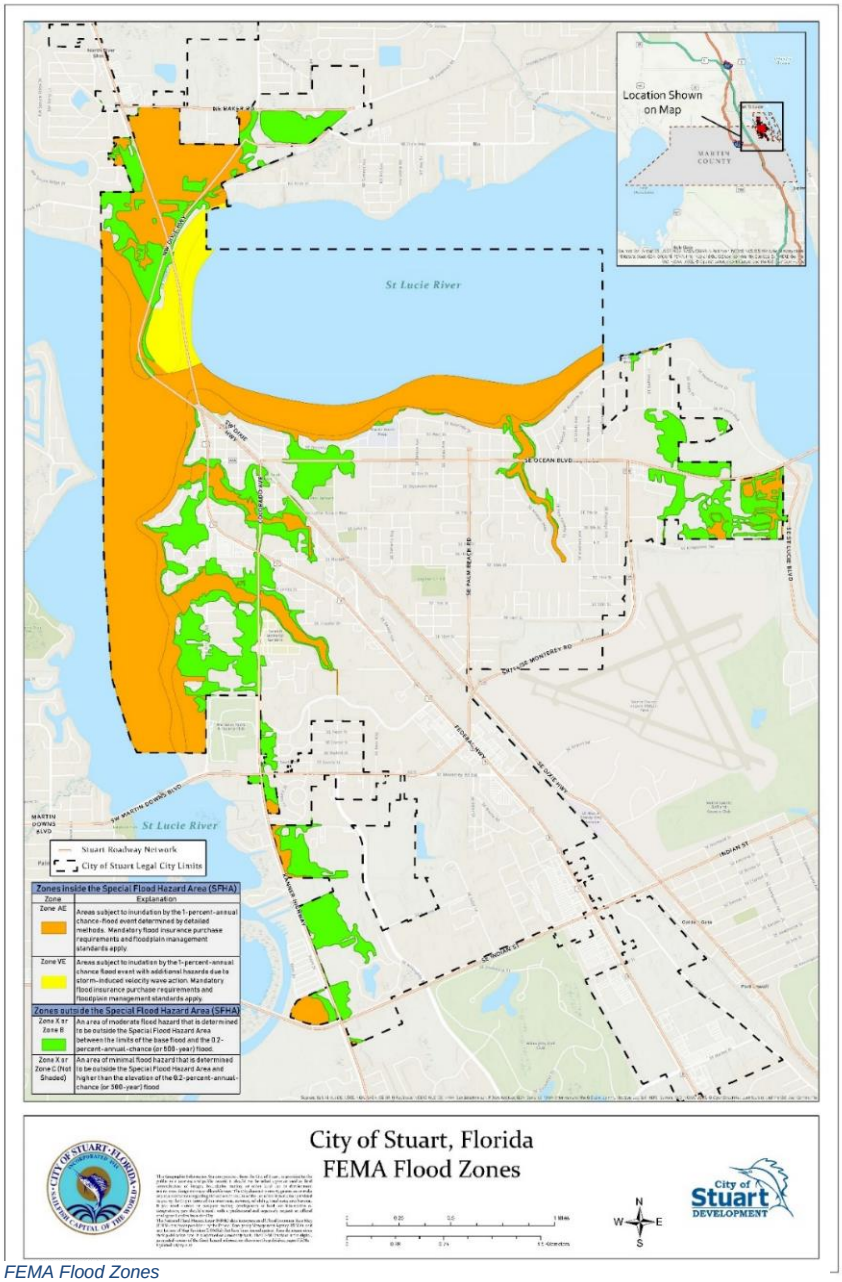
a. **Water Quality and Natural Resources:** Most residents are drawn to the natural beauty of Stuart. The health of the natural environment is crucial to maintaining the

City's economic vitality, which is largely impacted by tourism and seasonal residents. The City recognizes the importance of the health of the natural environment and its role in the City's sustainable future. The City is exceeding their goals for providing conservation and open space. In an effort to improve water quality, Stuart is working to convert septic systems to public sewer, currently providing residential and commercial users financial incentives to convert. There are further opportunities for the City to improve stormwater runoff to reduce environmental impacts from development.

b. **Renewable and Alternative Energy and Resource Use:** For a sustainable future, energy reliability is critical. The City of Stuart's primary source of power is provided by Florida Power and Light, who currently has one of the lowest emission profiles of any utility in North America. This is important for local air quality and health of Stuart residents and visitors. In addition, individual solar projects are being built in the City however, power production is currently unknown. By quantifying the energy realized by the solar panels projects, the City can set baseline goals by which to measure proposed projects. By educating and communicating renewable and alternative energy information to the public, the City can encourage individuals and developers to support sustainable energy sources within the community. Implementing policy that includes measurable standards for development review, requiring alternative energy credits, providing a matrix of choices for developers (such as incentives for electric charging stations or quantifying solar requirements for appropriate projects) are all efforts the City can promote for greater sustainability.

c. **Resiliency Planning:** Being resilient to sea level rise and storm events is one of the most pressing issues for Florida communities. The future economic, social, and environmental costs can be catastrophic if a community is not well prepared. Flood risk needs to be mitigated with strong policies, tools, and strategies. Other coastal communities are finding that the cost of sea level rise and storm impact have forced them to develop practices and policy that can improve climate change resilience. Practice and policy that should be considered by the City include pushing development outside of areas prone to flooding and developing and redeveloping more resilient structures, particularly in flood-prone areas. Development tools may include retrofitting buildings for increased flood risk; designing infrastructure that can withstand higher water levels; raising seawalls; installing tidal valves; implementing natural drainage features, such as bioswales and stormwater buffers; reducing the heat island effect through increased landscaping, shading, and green building practices; and adopting building practices that reduce vulnerability to increased storm events.

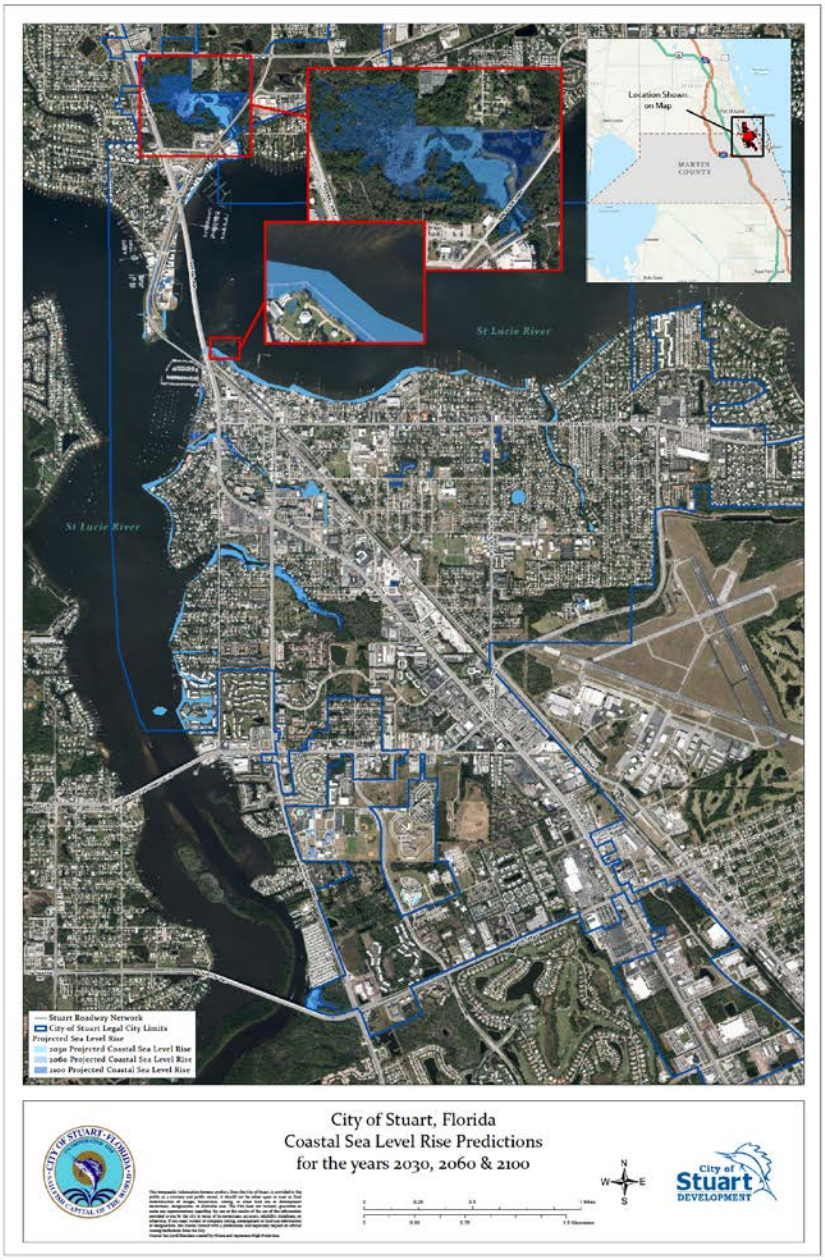




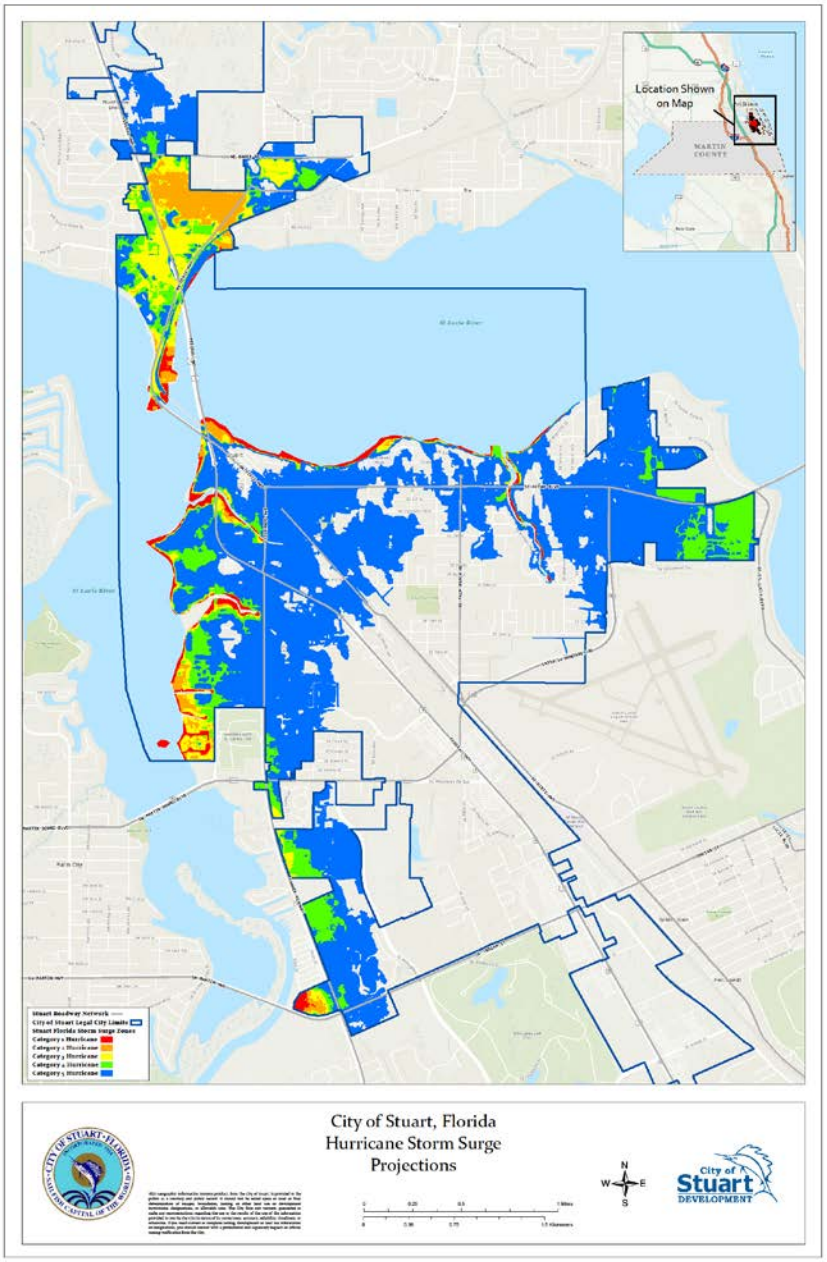
Map 4: FEMA Flood Zones



Map 5: Coastal High Hazard Area



Map 6: Coastal Sea Level Rise Predictions



Map 7: Hurricane Storm Surge Projections

4.3 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

a. **Water Quality and Natural Resources:** In order to show its commitment to improving and protecting water quality, the City must enforce its established policies. Coastal Element Policy A1.1 calls for enforcing and monitoring the City's master drainage plan and flood control prevention ordinance; however, the data for these will need to be updated and reviewed with the new FEMA maps and climate change information available. Conservation Element Policy A2 and Infrastructure Element A4d encourages LID practices in development project; however, there are no specific measures or practices in place to guide developers and plan reviewers, or goals and timelines established by which to accomplish these LID practices.

b. **Renewable and Alternative Energy and Resource Use:** The Conservation Element Goal A provides for and supports renewable and alternative energy use, but there are no set goals or timeline established by which the City can measure their progress. The goal statement promotes the use of renewable resources when appropriate, but the goal is not specific or measurable. Established polices other than Future Land Use Element A6.5, which specifically promotes and encourages use of renewable and alternative energy, should be updated to provide incentives for their use and quantify the requirements.

1. **Resiliency Planning:** The Coastal Element goals protect the coastal and natural resources with programs and procedures that balance coastal development activities with the preservation of natural resources. Risks of stronger storm events and sea level rise has resulted in the need to adapt redevelopment and development in vulnerable areas. Based on the new FEMA Flood Zone, Coastal High Hazard, Sea Level Rise, and Hurricane Storm Surge Maps (Maps 4-7); review of vulnerable areas; and needing to meet requirements of the Perils of Flood Act, the Coastal Management Element needs policy updates. Moving development out of flood-prone areas and requiring stricter and more resilient redevelopment and development standards in vulnerable areas will help protect the City from major financial and infrastructure losses occurring from major storm events. This will also lead to a more resilient and sustainable future for the City.



4.4 Recommendations

Resilience and Sustainability

1. Incorporate climate change narrative and identify best available information on weather and climate change phenomena that are current and potential future threats to the area, and outline a general framework for adaption, mitigation, and resilience.
2. Add policy to develop a resilience strategy as part of standalone Sustainability Plan, recognizing the risks of Stuart's geographic location and outlining the City's commitment to resilience-building efforts.
3. Add policy to become designated as a SolSmart Community.
4. Strengthen policy to encourage new development in higher elevations and areas less vulnerable to flooding.
5. Consider resiliency general design guidelines and/or area-based/targeted form-based codes that mandate resilient design in vulnerable areas.
6. Consider sea level rise in government infrastructure and stormwater infrastructure projects.
7. Add policy to replace City fleet vehicles with hybrid or electric cars, when possible.
8. Encourage new development to include infrastructure for electric vehicles.



Coastal Management

1. Required: Amend the Coastal Management Element to add new policies

pertaining to the adoption and implementation of strategies to protect property and infrastructure from the impacts of climate change and coastal flooding for compliance with Chapter 163.3178.

a. Add policy to reduce the flood risk in coastal areas that result from high tide events, storm surge, flash floods, stormwater runoff, and the related impacts of sea level rise.
b. Add policy to encourage removal of coastal real property from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone designations.
c. Add policy to follow site development techniques and best practices that may reduce losses due to flooding and claims made under flood insurance policies issued in Florida.
d. Add policy for development to be consistent with, or more stringent than, the flood-resistant construction requirements in the Florida Building Code and applicable flood plain management regulations set forth in 44 C.F.R. part 60.
e. Add policy to require construction seaward of the coastal construction control line to be consistent with chapter 161, Florida Statutes.
f. Add policy for the City to remain a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System to achieve flood insurance premium discounts for its residents.

2. Consider policy to encourage engineering and natural (living shoreline) techniques along the shoreline to reduce wave impacts during normal and extreme storm events.
3. Consider impacts of public expenditures and development within the coastal high-hazard area.
4. Consider creating an Adaption Action Area(s) to prioritize areas for adaptation planning and infrastructure needs. This area may include the Coastal High Hazard Area and areas of the City projected to be inundated by sea-level within a determined set of time to match planning horizons.

Conservation

1. Incorporate climate change, resiliency, and sustainability into Elements, where appropriate.
2. Incorporate area-based, light Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) principals to reduce transportation related impacts, increase density where appropriate, and reduce greenfield development.
3. Encourage low-emission transportation options.
4. Modify objective that encourages Low-Impact Development (LID) to reduce impacts of stormwater runoff and require integration of site-specific LID best management practices for all new development.
5. Support and incorporate policy for green and sustainable design guidelines.
6. Update Landscape Code to remove inconsistencies and encourage use of Florida-friendly and native plants.
7. Encourage a variety of groundcovers within landscape requirements, including

xeroscaping groundcover options, to reduce the requirements for sod in new development.

8. Review and update wetland protection standards within the Land Development Code.

9. Support reduction of the heat island effect and encourage implementation of shade strategies through Landscape and Development Codes. Strategies to create more shade in the urban environment include increased tree coverage, use of green roofs and parking shade structures with solar panels, and roof lines to cover sidewalks.



10. Establish tree canopy baseline and implement policy to encourage expanding tree coverage. Include language to allow for a reduced tree canopy grace period following natural disasters.

11. Update City's ordinances and Land Development Code to encourage and remove barriers to renewable energy production.

12. Enhance solid waste reduction by increasing recycling goals and strengthening the public education program.

13. Develop baseline of renewable energy usage within the City to allow for measuring future successes.

14. Add policy to reduce City's dependence on Surficial Aquifer through public education, reducing water usage, and seeking alternative supply sources.
15. Add policy to support tree mitigation for planned unit developments (PUDs) and new development that replaces plant/tree-life within City limits, including living shoreline projects.
16. Add policy to allow City's tree replacement fund to be used for living shorelines and stormwater projects.
17. Add objective to increase pervious areas and allow for a variety of pervious hardscape materials.
18. Add goal, objectives, and policy to promote brownfield redevelopment.



5.0 Neighborhoods

"Promote desirable, affordable, and vibrant neighborhoods that meet the demands of our current and future residents"

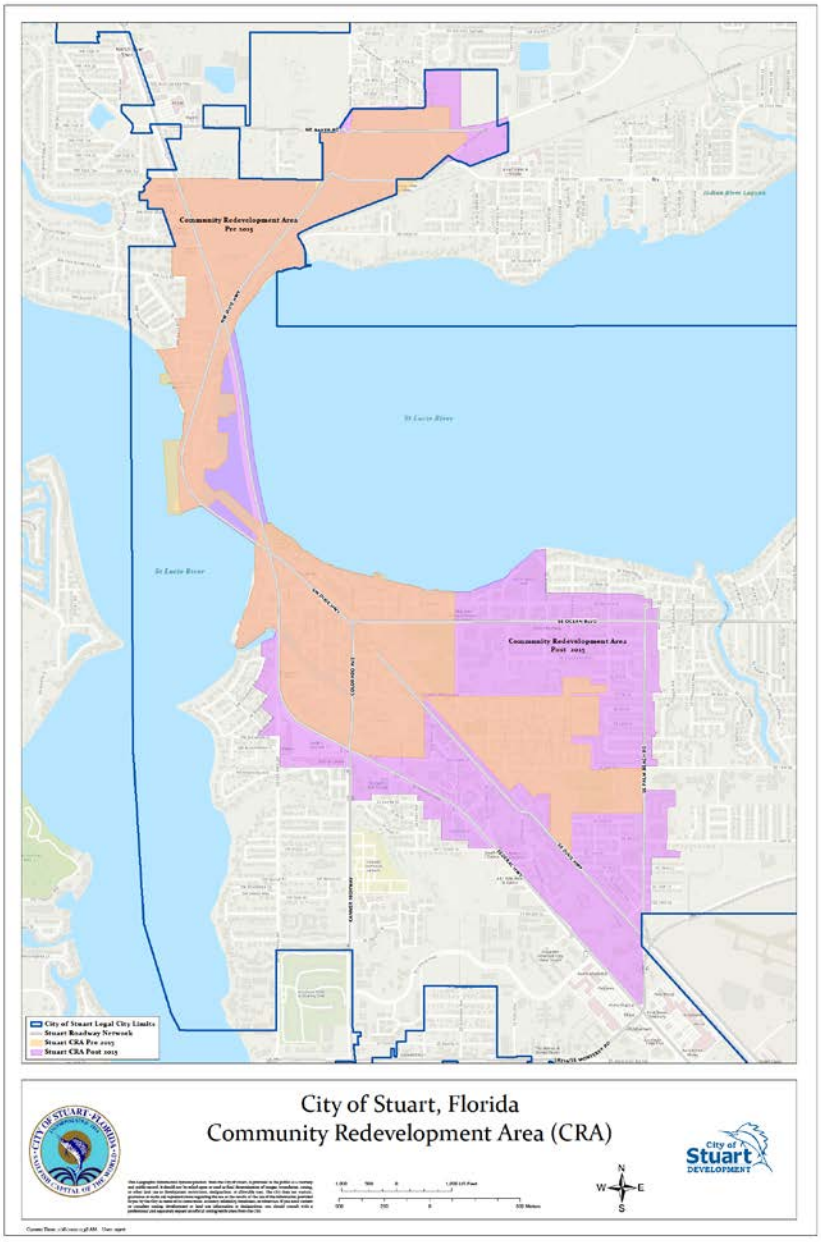
Strong neighborhoods are at the center of the City of Stuart's community identity. The City has identified areas in which the Comprehensive Plan should be updated to promote positive development and redevelopment patterns. The existing Elements, objectives, and policies in the Comprehensive Plan will be evaluated on their effectiveness in promoting desirable, affordable, and vibrant neighborhoods that meet the demands of Stuart's current and future residents. Stuart strives to provide neighborhoods that provide a diverse housing stock, promote density and walkability, and preserve and enhance the area character.

5.1 Description of the Issue



Stuart has strived to maintain its unique area character while faced with the challenges of growth and development. These planning efforts date back to 1986 with the creation of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). This effort spurred a series of planning initiatives to maintain and enhance neighborhood health and vitality including the Downtown Master Plan of 1988 and the 2002 Community Redevelopment Plan. In the 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report, recommendations were provided on issue of land use compatibility, architectural design, and neighborhood vitality. In 2015, the CRA expanded its limits as shown on Map 8, covering an estimated 1,168 acres, and gaining a larger footprint of residential land within Stuart. In August 2019, the City of Stuart adopted a Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) with the purpose of guiding the city in identifying priorities and opportunities within the CRA. The CRP outlined a vision for growth and unification of Stuart while protecting the existing built and natural environments. The CRP's goals, vision, and objectives align closely with those of the greater Stuart limits and the overall Comprehensive Plan objectives and policies.

As Stuart continues to grow and adapt to current development trends, new challenges arise while old challenges persist. It is recommended that the Neighborhood Pillar be broken down into the following four Elements to address the major issues facing Stuart: Future Land Use; Housing; Recreation and Open Space; and Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Vibrancy.

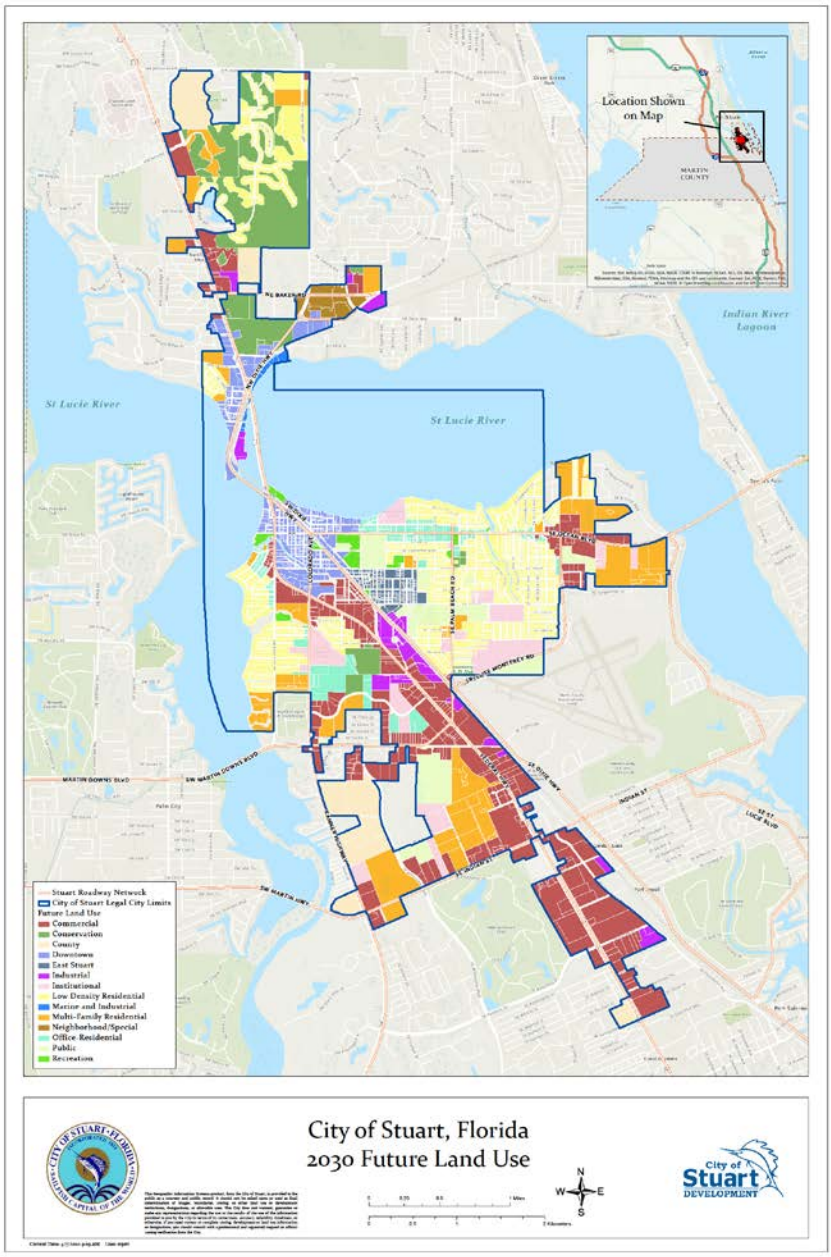


Map 8: Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) 2015 Expansion

a. **Future Land Use:** The current 2030 Future Land Use Map is provided as Map 9. Several issues have been identified related to land development patterns and future land use needs within the community, which should be explored in the Comprehensive Plan update. Stuart has identified a need to increase development density for the purposes of promoting more walkable neighborhoods, increased use of public transit, improved access to public amenities, and access to downtown businesses. Allowing more density in key areas throughout the community will also encourage a more diverse housing stock and affordability of housing options. Stuart should evaluate opportunities for infill development and possible revision to design criteria that can be a barrier to infill development projects. Stuart has identified a need to better define architectural and site design standards in the Comprehensive Plan. Clearly defining desired architectural and site design standards that encompass the unique character of the community within the Comprehensive Plan will better serve to influence new minimum requirements in the Land Development Code. New development should complement existing development while allowing for a range of architectural design types.

b. **Housing:** Like many areas in Martin County, the City of Stuart has a need for a more diverse and affordable housing stock that meets the demands of current residents and is attractive to future businesses and residents. Currently, Stuart has the lowest median home value within the County and struggles with an aging housing stock with most homes built between 1970 and 1989. As a result, many neighborhoods within the City limits, and specifically in the CRA, suffer from vacant or dilapidated properties and widespread blight. Due to the age of existing properties, many homes do not meet current standards and building codes for hurricane and storm resiliency. Finding opportunities to incentivize rehabilitation of existing structures, infill development, and historic preservation will aid in combating blight, improving home resilience, and increasing affordable housing opportunities. Stuart also lacks diversity in available housing types. The Comprehensive Plan should be evaluated to allow for and promote mixed use and missing alternative housing types (i.e., cottage lots, granny flats, accessory dwelling units, etc.). As seen in Table 5-1, there is large multi-family and mixed-use residential housing potential within the community. Providing a greater mix of housing types will also support the need for affordable housing and promote a thriving community.





Map 9: 2030 Future Land Use Map

Table 5-1 - 2019 Vacant Residential Land Development Potential

Land Use Designation	***Land Use***		
	Acres	*Dwelling Units*	*Maximum DU/Acre*
Multi-Family Residential	*66.87*	*668*	*10*
Neighborhood/Special District	*25.51*	*382*	*15*
Office/Residential	*13.41*	*134*	*10*
Low Density Residential	*37.47*	*326*	*8.7*
Downtown	*28.25*	*423*	*15*
East Stuart	*12.12*	*206*	*17*
Total Acres	*183.63*	*2139*	

c. **Recreation & Open Space:** The City has a need for comprehensive planning initiatives to improve existing recreation and open spaces and identify opportunities for new recreation and open space in the community. Many of the existing facilities are in need of updating to improve accessibility, pedestrian infrastructure and beautification. Current recreation and open space planning strategies within the Comprehensive Plan will be evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting and anticipating future needs for a growing population. The Comprehensive Plan should address the inventory of vacant property comparatively to the needs for future recreation and open space. The connectivity between all recreation and open space should also be evaluated to promote walkability, bike-ability, and increase overall accessibility to these neighborhood amenities. The Comprehensive Plan should make healthy communities a priority by marketing and promoting recreation opportunities. In addition, the need for new amenities for healthy communities, such as fitness stations and greenway trail systems, as well as fitness programming should be evaluated.

d. **Historic Preservation & Neighborhood Vibrancy**: History and historic preservation drive much of the character, aesthetic, and sense of place that exists in the community. The process in which we updated existing and proposed building architecture should be evaluated to ensure new development does not overpower the existing character. Site design standards and the public realm must be addressed to improve connectivity and the pedestrian experience within community open space. By strengthening its historic preservation efforts, the City aims to stabilize many neighborhoods, increase property values, and support more sustainable development. The City needs to evaluate existing methods for developing an inventory of and preserving historic structures. The City also should consider developing an inventory of cultural assets as they move to push more artistic installations, mural programs, and other cultural projects to promote neighborhood vibrancy.

5.2 Potential Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts

Providing a healthy range of land uses to drive the future growth of Stuart is essential to the social, economic, and environmental health of the city. Incentivizing greater density and infill development patterns will aid in the preservation of open space and protection of natural resources. Establishing policies that promote infill and redevelopment activity, that maintain neighborhood compatibility and minimize negative impacts on adjacent properties will contribute to neighborhood stability. It will also increase property values, occupancy rates and marketability of properties. As these neighborhood changes occur, the economic vitality and status of Stuart as a commercial hub for greater Martin County is enhanced.

Communities facing a lack of affordable and diverse housing stock face a number of economic and social issues including poverty, homelessness, foreclosures and displacement of residents. Community blight and dilapidated housing lower morale and sense of place, discourage tourism, and negatively impact the overall quality of life for all Stuart residents. In addition, as the quality of the built environment degrades, so does public perception of place, promoting lack of ownership in community spaces, encouraging illicit activity, and setting the stage for further blight to occur. Communities that fail to provide adequate affordable housing for residents lack an economically and socially diverse population that is essential to healthy cities. Increasing opportunities for quality affordable housing can increase the level of disposable income for residents and their ability to spend their money in the neighborhood and downtown. Gaining more housing diversity in the City will also serve as an economic development incentive as many employees of existing Stuart businesses commute in from outside the City. Providing opportunities for its workforce to live and work within the City is a great incentive for existing businesses as well as a draw for future businesses. Securing adequate housing stock may in turn draw employees back to the City as a live-work destination.

Improving community amenities, recreation opportunities, public access to open space, and pedestrian level infrastructure is essential to safe, inviting, and vibrant communities. The primary issues facing the community in recreation and public space include: the need to update and improve existing parks within the city limits; the need to find additional opportunities to preserve open space and provide more parks; the need to provide Stuart residents with access to the waterfront; and, the need to develop connectivity between open space, recreation and other community amenities. Weaving recreation and public space amenities into the fabric of existing neighborhoods will ensure resilient and strong neighborhoods. Ensuring that access to the water and greenspace is maintained and enhanced will have positive economic and social impacts by promoting the protection of natural resources, improving air and water quality,



providing more space for social interaction, enhancing quality of life, and retaining residents.

Cities with vibrant neighborhoods and a strong sense of place are typically more socially diverse and stable. These communities tend to evoke more community pride and residents can be seen interacting in public spaces, attending programmed events, and enjoying life in the downtown commercial corridors. Cities with a strong neighborhood vibrancy also tend to be more environmentally conscious, preserving sensitive environmental resources, and encouraging more compact development patterns that promote community interaction. Tree canopy and improved landscape beautification efforts are also linked to increased community identity and sense of place. Developing complete street projects, entry gateways, and beautification initiatives encourages pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, improves safety, and stimulates community and economic development.

5.3 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation



a. **Future Land Use.** The City has adopted a number of objectives and supporting policies in the Future Land Use (FLU) Element that promote increasing housing density, affordability, and reducing sprawl. FLU Element Objective A5 – Residential Development encourages compatible land use activities and recommends working with developers to integrate vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems, bike paths, parking, building locations and architectural design into a cohesive development. Policy A5.1 then further promotes compact urban development by including sufficient land suitable for the public utility facilities needed to support the projected level of development. There is opportunity within the existing FLU Element to strengthen the requirements and incentives to support infill development and make it more feasible for interested parties. FLU Element goal A8 proposes an urban core overlay zone to promote a mix of uses, traditional neighborhood development, a pedestrian oriented land use pattern, complements transit oriented development and discourages large expanses of parking. As the city pushes to implement more complete streets and transit oriented design principals, there is opportunity to update this goal to prioritize transit oriented design to support multi-modal transit for the urban core.

b. **Housing**. The current Comprehensive Plan allows for a wide variety of housing types needed to support the demand for infill development and increased density. Existing Housing Element policy A2.5 protects the availability and number of affordable

housing units by allowing for rental accessory dwelling units. This language can be strengthened to provide flexibility in the type of accessory dwelling units permitted. The Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code currently do not allow for flexibility where multi-family housing is permitted and do not incentivize the revitalization and re-use of existing and historic homes.

c. **Recreation and Open Space.** The Recreation and Open Space Element in the Comprehensive Plan speaks to the need for public access in Objective A2 through the promotion of mass transit routes, encouraging new public transit routes to access city facilities, ensuring Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access and parking at all public facilities for the handicapped and elderly population. There is a need to expand upon this objective to ensure that all members of the community can access recreation, open space, and public waterfront sites through more multi-modal forms of transportation. The City has also identified a need for the Comprehensive Plan to encourage more public open space within the community through incentives with new developments.

d. **Historic Preservation & Neighborhood Vibrancy.** The City has identified a need to promote history and create more vibrant neighborhoods in the community through preservation and cultural initiatives. Some of these needs should be addressed through changes to the Conservation Element to allow for a more diverse landscape and to the Land Development Code to allow for more groundcover options. The Comprehensive Plan identifies an inventory of historical and archaeological resources completed in 2002, referenced in the Housing Element Objective B1. This objective is in need of updating and expanding upon so that all cultural and historical assets within the community are inventoried and maintained. FLU Element Policy B3.5 says that the City shall implement the special district land use regulations for historic areas of mixed land use. FLU Objective C2 also supports historic resources with policy to preserve historic sites. Goal B allows for public lands to be set aside for the relocation of historic buildings. However, there is still a need to conduct a greater inventory of historic sites and incentivize preservation efforts. A need has also been identified within the City to ensure strong and vibrant neighborhoods through art and the promotion of cultural resources in the City which should be supported in the Comprehensive Plan update.



5.4 Recommendations

a. General Recommendation

1. Reorganize Elements under Neighborhoods with required and optional Elements of: Future Land Use, Housing, Recreation and Open Space, and Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Vibrancy.

b. Future Land Use

1. Review and update FLU Policy A5.1 and FLU Objective B1 to address infill development needs including more flexible stormwater requirements, shared or flexible parking requirements, fee-in-lieu-of required landscaping, and reduced open space so that infill development is feasible for interested parties.
2. Develop master stormwater plan for downtown and urban areas to encourage new development, infill development, and increased density. Review and updated FLU Objective B1 to encourage the use of shared public utilities, including stormwater, to promote the compact urban form.
3. Develop Transit Oriented Development district or add policies to CRA to support potential train station and related multi-modal systems/stations.
4. Review opportunities for master parking neighborhoods and consider language for exempt targeted areas to manage neighborhood parking volumes.
5. Update tree mitigation plan to identify areas where tree mitigation is a priority.



c. Housing

1. Expand upon Housing Element Policy A2.5 to allow for a wider range of accessory dwelling units (i.e. granny flats, in-law units, backyard cottages, and converted garages).
2. Support existing FLU Goal A through incentivizing higher density housing opportunities to meet market demands and affordability needs.
3. Incentivize revitalization of existing homes and prioritizing revitalization of historically significant homes.
4. Create policy to encourage repurposing existing commercial properties to mixed-use with a residential component.



d. Recreation & Open Space



1. Expand upon Recreation and Open Space Objective A1 to develop a parks and open space master plan that inventories existing recreation and open space and identifies new opportunities, to promote health, fitness, and social interaction.
2. Promote Stuart Health Trail and health and fitness programing.



3. Add policy to Recreation and Open Space Objective A2 to conduct gap analysis of sidewalk and bicycle lanes to close gaps where feasible and promote safe access to recreation and open space sites.
4. Enhance existing public realm with improved pedestrian infrastructure, (i.e., safety features, seating, lighting, wayfinding signage, plant material and hardscape) to promote safe and inviting open space.
5. Review and update Recreation and Open Space Objective B1 to incentivize more accessible large and small pocket park opportunities where possible in new development.

e. Historic Preservation & Neighborhood Vibrancy

1. Revise Conservation Element Policy A5.4 to include Florida friendly plant species in addition to native plant species in the city list of plant species available to residents and developers.
2. Encourage a variety of groundcovers within landscape requirements, including xeriscaping groundcover options, to reduce the requirements for sod in new development.
3. Initiate a cultural asset mapping project to strengthen community vibrancy initiatives and encourage the development of a cultural heritage district.
4. Support and enhance wayfinding signage programs and feature historic properties.
5. Revise and update existing inventory of historic and archaeological resource, noted in Housing Element Goals B, Policy B1.
6. Revise Housing Element Policy B1.1 to encourage moving historic structures, rather than demolishing them, by providing land for their relocation as well as

other incentives for preservation.

7. Update Housing Element Policy B1.3 to encourage and incentivize participation in the voluntary Historic Preservation Program for historic property owners.
8. Establish urban design, place making, and general design guidelines that reflect the historical architectural styles of Stuart as a reference for new construction.
9. Encourage programs that assist property owners in maintaining and rehabilitating commercial building exteriors.
10. Encourage and support success of community districts.
11. Support and encourage programs that promote public art to foster community vibrancy.





6.0 Mobility

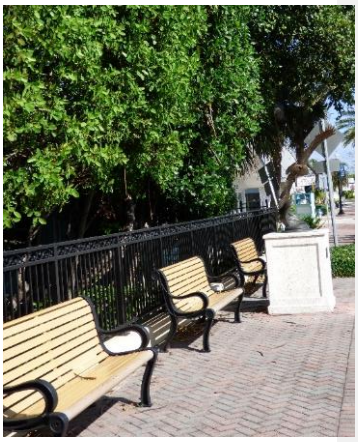
The City strives to provide safe and walkable developments with access to alternate modes of transportation that will create a more sustainable and mobile Stuart for all residents.

"Provide sufficient means of transportation for all patrons who live, work, and visit the community!"

6.1 Description of the Issue

For Stuart to become a city in which residents can live, work, and entertain, it must provide sufficient means of transportation for all members of the community. The following major issues have been identified through community engagement activities and interviews with City staff and should be addressed through updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives and policies.

a. Walkability & Pedestrian Infrastructure:





Improving connectivity through sidewalks, trails (greenways), and waterways (blueways) is a priority for the Stuart community. Improving connectivity and walkability is important to a healthy community because it will increase community interaction, access to public spaces and parks, and improve the pedestrian experience and perception of safety on City streets. Stuart's efforts to improve connectivity are evident in many of the current efforts within the City as well as its partnership with the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The City of Stuart plans to work with the MPO and build upon proposed connectivity projects to increase connections throughout the city, especially for disadvantaged neighborhoods which would benefit from access to safe, walkable and bikeable streets. The City is working closely with the MPO to close the gaps in identified problem areas and provide trail systems to serve the greater area including: NW Dixie Highway Sidewalk Extension Project (under construction); SE Florida Street Sidewalk Extension project (under construction); Martin MPO Blueway Paddling Trails – St. Lucie Trail (under construction); East Coast Greenway project; among other proposed trail, midblock crosswalks, pedestrian bridges, nature trails, sidewalk expansions proposed per the Martin MPO Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan.

In portions of the City, Stuart needs to improve existing streetscape to provide a safer, healthier, and more vibrant pedestrian experience. A first step to addressing the streetscape will be to evaluate each street individually and implement the Florida Department of Transportation (*FDOT) Complete Streets Design Manual* principals where appropriate. Stuart can improve

wayfinding signage, street furniture, shade trees and structures, lighting, and landscaping to create more inviting streets. It will also be a priority to make streets safer through sidewalk widening, bump outs to decrease crosswalk lengths, installing median refuge islands within crosswalks, and overall increasing the visibility to make pedestrians a priority where appropriate on Stuart streets. The Community Redevelopment Plan (CRP) completed by the CRA in August 2019 included several streetscape improvement initiatives. As of January 2020, the short term initiatives have been completed. The Comprehensive Plan should be amended to ensure that the following mid- and long-term goals of the CRP can be implemented including: Downtown Wayfinding Signage; Urban Core Improvement Initiative (Increase night-time activity, improve pedestrian access between parking and businesses, improve safety, widen sidewalks, increase street furniture, and consider art and culture in new infrastructure); Frazier Crescent Subdivision Streetscape Improvements; Dixie Highway and SE Florida Street Sidewalk Extensions Project; Riverside Park Neighborhood Macro Action Plan (MAP); MLK Blvd Complete Street Project; and the Seminole Street Alleyway Improvements.

In addition to increasing connectivity and creating safe and inviting streets, Stuart should also consider the built environment and development patterns that complement the streetscape. Transit Oriented Design (TOD) principals promote compact urban mixed-use development that allows people to safely and conveniently walk from their homes to jobs, shops, services, schools, parks, and other community facilities. TOD principals also prioritize the walkability and access to multi-modal transit options, before vehicular use and essentially put the pedestrian first. Establishing minimum design requirements which support TOD projects in strategic locations ultimately lead to more pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and create a healthier and mobile Stuart community.

b. Multi-modal Transportation:



Traditionally, vehicular transportation has been the dominant mode for most residents in the community. However, dependency on vehicular travel can increase traffic, congestion, and degradation of the road network. Although there has not been a significant increase in traffic since the completion of the City's 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report, promoting alternate forms of transportation to benefit residents and visitors a goal for the City. Alternative forms of transportation can also alleviate congestion and stress on the existing road network. The Comprehensive Plan should be evaluated on its effectiveness to encourage multi-modal transportation as a means to improve connectivity, reduce vehicular dependency, improve the environment, and the overall health of Stuart residents. Some of the current

initiatives to increase multi-modal transportation per the *MPO Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan* include a proposed bike lane along SE Monterey Rd and a proposed bike land along SE St. Lucie Blvd. The City has also constructed green painted bike lanes, including along S. Colorado Avenue.

In conjunction with the MPO, Stuart is encouraging bicycle use by increasing bike lane miles within the City, requiring bicycle parking and supporting facilities in new, redeveloped and existing developments, as well as in strategic locations throughout the city. While the bicycle is the most accessible multi-modal transportation option, Stuart has also identified ways in which it may increase the range of transportation options. Stuart has improved the schedule and routes for the Tram system, but would like to continue to expand the service areas to provide access to a wider range of residents. With increased Tram service, there will be a need to improve upon and expand the number of tram stations and shelters.

Virgin Trains USA, is high-speed rail that will be running through the City by 2022. Virgin Trains USA will be improving safety features at pedestrian and vehicular crossings; however, the City will need to evaluate future plans to determine if additional safety features are needed. The City is reviewing opportunities for a potential station, which would improve multi-modal transportation opportunities within the City.



c. Parking & Vehicular Infrastructure:

Parking and vehicular infrastructure will remain a priority for the City. Increasing multi-modal transportation options will alleviate stress on the existing road network; however, it will not eliminate the need of maintaining and improving the network. As part of the update to the Comprehensive Plan, it will be important to assess the road network and identify opportunities to improve it to safely and effectively serve current and future residents. While many of Stuart's roads meet assigned Level of Service (LOS) standards, additional infrastructures updates may be required in environmentally sensitive areas. These updates may be needed to provide a more

resilient traffic network in the face of climate change. Stuart has identified several vulnerable areas in which sea level rise, storm surge, and other significant weather events might compromise existing roads. Emergency routes and roadway elevations in these vulnerable areas may need to be increased.

Parking has been a concern for the City since the completion of the 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report. In 2009, a downtown parking study was conducted which indicated a deficit for long-term parking spaces within the retail core of downtown. The study also indicated that simply providing more spaces in the downtown as development grows, will not solve the parking deficit. More important issues are where new parking will be located and the management and flow of existing parking areas. This study, along with community feedback drove development of the Downtown Parking Master Plan that included the following goals:

1. Provide a supply of convenient and appropriately designed parking that meets the current and future demand of the downtown.
2. Pursue opportunities for share parking and joint use of facilities with new and existing developments.
3. Develop a parking system that is financially sustainable with all cost/benefits being accounted for.
4. Provide public parking that does not detract from the pedestrian environment and over time, minimizes surface parking.

In 2018, the City of Stuart contracted with a consultant to provide a Future Parking Needs Analysis. The study found that in 2018 there was not a current need for a parking garage downtown and provided strategic recommendations for immediate, mid-term, and long-term parking needs. By 2020, the City has completed the immediate parking recommendations which included: a redesign of the tram system route and schedule; providing adequate space for Uber/Lyft and valet parking services; identifying adequate loading and unloading zones; providing more bicycle racks; extending parking hours; exploring options for a paid parking system; and entering into shared parking agreements with private lots. It is important to update the Comprehensive Plan to align with the identified mid-term and long-term recommendations from the Future Parking Needs Analysis report.



6.2 Potential Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts

a. Walkability & Pedestrian Infrastructure



Providing a safe and inviting streetscape and a more compact development pattern has many benefits for the community. By giving residents more opportunity to walk or bike to their destination, it becomes more likely that residents will choose those options over driving to their daily destinations within Stuart, especially for shorter trips. Encouraging residents to use sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes will promote a more active community lifestyle, reduce vehicular-related air pollution, and contribute to healthier residents. Bringing people to the streets also can promote more social interaction, thereby strengthening connections within the community.

b. Multi-modal Transportation

The existing transportation infrastructure in Stuart primarily accommodates vehicle travel and supports land use patterns that affect accessibility. Not all residents within the community have direct access to an automobile and depend on alternate forms of transportation to get to employment, entertainment, and to address daily needs such as the grocery store. To be an economically viable and resilient city long term, Stuart will need to provide a transportation system to serve the needs of all residents in the community. Improving access to employment opportunities and other destinations within the city will positively impact the economic health of Stuart by increasing the available workforce, increasing the mobility of the customer base, and serve as an economic incentive to attract new businesses to the area. In addition to serving a greater and more diverse population and attracting new businesses, decreasing dependency on vehicular travel has many environmental benefits. Implementing a more robust multi-modal transportation system can reduce urban sprawl, increase conservation of environmentally sensitive lands, and preserve more open space.

c. Parking & Vehicular Infrastructure

Vehicular dependency can have negative impacts on the environment including air and water pollution and energy consumption. Increased vehicular use drives the need for more surface parking lots which increases demand on the stormwater management systems, increases stormwater pollutants, and creates more urban heat islands. By allowing for more innovative parking solutions, including permeable paving, and shared parking opportunities, the need for more pavement downtown will be decreased while still providing ample parking to service the needs of businesses and residents. Another opportunity to incentivize a more environmentally friendly community is to provide premium parking opportunities for electric charging stations to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

6.3 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

The current Comprehensive Plan successfully references and aligns with the Metropolitan Planning Organization's Regional Long Range Transportation Plan and should be updated to reflect the most current plan, rather than referencing the 2030 plan which is no longer applicable. The Comprehensive Plan should more effectively prioritize the pedestrian and multi-modal transportation opportunities. In addition to promoting the availability of multi-modal transportation, putting the pedestrian and bicycle safety first within the Comprehensive Plan will ultimately bring more people to the streetscape of Stuart. Through the review of the Comprehensive Plan, it was also noted that the city has the opportunity to market and promote the community as walkable, bikeable, and overall pedestrian friendly as a tool to spur growth for the city. Currently the Comprehensive Plan recommends the completion of a bicycle master plan, however, in addition to the master plan the city could benefit from the completion of an internal sidewalk and bike lane gap analysis to help prioritize the immediate needs to close sidewalk and bike lane gaps to provide a more diverse residential base with access to public amenities, facilities, and the downtown.

Through community engagement, parking was identified as an issue for the city. Parking needs for the city have been studies, specifically as they apply to the CRA. The Comprehensive Plan includes parking objectives and policies for the CRA which should be updated to reflect the mid and long-term goals of the Community Redevelopment Plan. In addition, there is opportunity to expand the parking language within the Comprehensive Plan to apply to the city needs as a whole, not limited to the limits of the CRA. Some additional parking needs, including parking wayfinding, organization, and opportunities for electric vehicle parking are not covered in the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan also addresses the needs for emergency evacuation and disaster planning as it relates to mobility, but a need was identified to address mobility as is relates to climate, change, resiliency, and the needs to update vulnerable infrastructure in the face of sea level rise.



6.4 Recommendations

a. General Recommendations:



1. Rename Transportation Element to Mobility Element and incorporate it within the Infrastructure Pillar.
2. Update Objective 1, Policy 1.9, and Objective 12 to references Metropolitan Planning Organization's most current Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan.
3. Collaborate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization to build upon existing transportation plans to include additional needs and priorities for walkable routes, multi-use trails, sidewalk connections, and multi-modal transportation within Stuart.
4. Review and update Objective 1, Policy 1.8 per the below mentioned EAR Mobility recommendations.

b. Walkability & Pedestrian Infrastructure

1. Increase pedestrian visibility and safety through streetscape and crosswalk improvement initiatives.
2. Enhance pedestrian safety as a priority to the City through print, social media, and the City website.
3. Enhance existing public realm with improved pedestrian infrastructure, (i.e., safety features, seating, lighting, and wayfinding signage) to promote safe and inviting streetscapes.
4. Reduce vehicular dependency by incorporating, when and where feasible, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) principals in new development to promote walkable neighborhoods.

c. Multi-modal Transportation



1. Improve bicycle infrastructure and promote safety through increasing bike lane visibility, improving bike lane connectivity, and increasing bike parking opportunities.
2. Enhance bicycle safety and infrastructure as a priority to the City through print, social media, and the City website.
3. Review and update Objective 5 to implement Complete Streets objectives and policies, when and where feasible, to reflect the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Complete Streets Design Manual.
4. Incorporate artistic features into mobility infrastructure to enhance identity and

sense of place (i.e., creative bus shelters, bike racks, wayfinding signage).

5. Conduct gap analysis of sidewalks and bicycle lanes to close gaps where feasible and promote safe access to recreation and open space sites.
6. Plan for bus shelters and pull-offs during the development phase.

d. Parking & Vehicular Infrastructure



1. Consider advanced parking guidance system and other wayfinding signs to inform of available parking options.
2. Encourage flexible parking options for infill development.
3. Consider climate change and resiliency in the planning and design of new transportation infrastructure.
4. Evaluate transportation infrastructure vulnerability as it relates to climate change and resiliency.
5. Prioritize improvements for identified vulnerable transportation infrastructure.
6. Encourage the potential for electric vehicle charging facilities at existing and new and existing parking facilities.
7. Encourage the expansion of infrastructure for golf cart use.

7.0 Public Services

In order to provide the best public service delivery and still maintain their sovereign identity, the City has implemented several successful new capital improvement projects while continuing their partnerships with other public agencies for efficient use of resources.

Provide adequate public facilities for existing and future land use while maximizing use of and protecting investment of existing facilities.

7.1 Description of the Issue

LOS standards for potable water, wastewater and solid waste are set forth in the Capital Improvement Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The adopted LOS standards are being met, as Public Services' actions and investment in systems have provided adequate capacity to meet projected demands. The delivery systems and facilities are in good condition and current and long-term maintenance programs are in place to meet LOS goals without large capital expenditures on existing systems. Moving forward, this allows the Public Works Department to plan for resiliency with investments in alternative sources for potable water, water reclamation and solid waste management for a sustainable future.

Less dependency on the Surficial Aquifer System, greater connection to the central sewer system, increased residential and commercial recycling, and projects that help meet the City's resiliency and sustainability goals will be priorities for capital improvement projects and policy change. Strategic investments made in these infrastructure areas will promote Stuart as a community where families can comfortably and safely live, work, and play. The following major issues relating to Public Services have been identified through community engagement activities and interviews with City staff and should be addressed through updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives and policies.

a. **Potable Water:** The City owns and operates its own potable water supply system. In addition, there are areas of Stuart that receive potable water service from the Martin County Consolidated Water System. Raw water for the Stuart water system is provided by 24 production wells drawing from the Surficial Aquifer System. The Surficial Aquifer System is the shallowest of Florida's three primary aquifers. It is primarily recharged by rainfall, but its levels can also be impacted by surface water bodies, such as rivers, creeks, and lakes. This aquifer system provides the majority of public water supply for St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties. Florida's growing population, development, and dependence on rain has strained the Surficial Aquifer System, leading to saltwater intrusion concerns. Table 7-1 shows how the population for water service is projected to increase by 2,443 persons between 2020 and 2035. Therefore, the City of Stuart is being proactive in seeking an alternative source for potable water: the Floridan Aquifer, Florida's deepest aquifer. The City plans to construct a reverse osmosis water treatment facility and has a 20-year Interlocal Agreement with Martin County to provide water from the Floridan Aquifer to meet future demand.



Table 7-1 Population Projections (Resident Population): Stuart Water Service Area

Year	Service Area Component		Service Area Total
	City of Stuart	Unincorporated Area	
2020	16,769	1,150	17,918
2025	17,490	1,199	18,689
2030	18,212	1,248	19,460
2035	19,064	1,297	20,361

Source: Stuart Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan; January-2019

Projections of finished water demand for the Stuart service area are presented in Table 7-2. It is projected that the Stuart service area finished water demand will attain a level of 3.36 million gallons per day (MGD) by 2029. Based upon this projection, the City's 6.0 MGD water treatment plant has the capacity to provide for the finished water needs of the Stuart service area beyond the 2035 period. The planned reverse osmosis water treatment facility will provide an estimated additional capacity of 1.0 MGD by 2022 and 3.0 MGD by the year 2032, utilizing the Floridan Aquifer System as an alternative water source. Investing in the Floridan Aquifer as an alternate water supply would both diversify the City's water supply while adding system flexibility to ensure that the City meets its mission of supplying the highest quality drinking water to its customers.

Table 7-2 Projected Finished Water Demand Stuart Service Area

Year	Population	Use Rate (gpcd)	Total Use (million gal./year)
2020	17,918	174	1,137.9
2025	18,689	174	1,186.9
2030	19,460	174	1,235.9
2035	20,360	174	1,293.1

Source: Stuart Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan; January 2019

b. Water Reclamation: Although many areas within the City's service area now have central sewer available, 48% of the properties where service is available have not yet connected. As septic systems fail, the Martin County Health Department mandates that those properties connect to the City's central sewer system. The exception to this requirement is property that is subject to annexation. The water reclamation facility has a design capacity of 4.0 million gallons per day (MGD) and is currently permitted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) at 4.0 MGD. The City's primary effluent disposal option is providing reclaimed water for irrigation purposes with the deep injection well disposal system, rated at 13.4 MGD as an alternative disposal option. Current wastewater use is measured at 1.80 MGD (average daily flow). It is projected that the City's wastewater needs will attain a level

of 3.275 MGD (average daily flow) by 2035. Wastewater projections prepared for the 2020 to 2035 period using the total generation rate are presented in Table 7-3. Based upon the demand projections presented in Table 7-3, the wastewater plant has sufficient capacity to serve projected population within the service area at least through 2035.



Table 7-3 Wastewater Treatment Demand Projections (MGD) Stuart Service Area

	2020	2025	2030	2035
Resident Population (service area)	17,918	18,889	19,460	20,361
Annual Average Day Flow (MGD)	1.54	1.77	2.04	2.13
Maximum Three Month Day Flow (MGD)	1.80	2.07	2.38	2.74

Source: Staff projections based on a connection rate of 3% per year

c. Solid Waste: Solid waste, including residential and commercial garbage, single stream recycling and yard trash, is collected and transported by the Public Works Department and is the responsibility of the City for properties within Stuart to haul solid waste to Martin County landfill, bio solids to Okeechobee County landfill, and yard waste to the City's closed landfill site. Recent historical solid waste generation data are presented in Table 7-4. The City will continue to monitor the cost for disposal and explore cost effective alternatives on an annual basis. Projections of residential and commercial (non-residential) solid waste generation, assuming growth rates proportionate to projected population growth, are presented in Table 7-5. Combined, Stuart currently generates approximately 18% of the solid waste (garbage + trash and other waste) generated in Martin County. It is anticipated that the City's role will continue to consist of collection and transport services per the City's agreement with the Martin County Landfill until 2032, while monitoring their recycling program.



Table 7-4 Current Solid Waste Generation

Type (measure)	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020*
Residential Garbage (cubic yards)	2,762	2,855	2,834	2,746	3,200
Residential Recycling (tons)	1,302	1,214	1,246	1,164	1,344
Commercial Garbage (cubic yards)	17,263	16,434	16,563	17,753	18,670
Commercial Recycling (tons)	635	638	694	645	678
Yard Waste (yards)**	21,633	18,745	20,633	22,658	22,000
Debris (tons)	1,082	1,222	1,322	1,200	1,250

* Estimated generation
** Waste hauled to Old City Landfill to be mulched and removed
Source: City of Stuart FY 2020 Budget

Table 7-5 Projected Solid Waste Generation

Type (measure)	2020	2025*	2030**	2035**
Residential Garbage (cubic yards)	3,200	3,360	3,528	3,704
Residential Recycling (tons)	1,344	1,411	1,462	1,556
Commercial Garbage (cubic yards)	18,670	17,504	18,379	19,298
Commercial Recycling (tons)	679	713	749	787
Yard Waste (yards)***	22,000	23,100	24,255	25,468

* Estimated generation, City of Stuart FY 2020 Budget
** Staff projections
*** Waste hauled to Old City Landfill to be mulched and removed
Source: Staff projections

7.2 Potential Social, Economic and Environmental Impacts

a. **Potable Water:** For a City to be sustainable, having a reliable and economic potable water source is crucial. The City has adopted a finished potable water LOS standard of 250 gallons per day per equivalent residential connection, as part of the Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan (2018-2028). While the City is currently reliant on the Surficial Aquifer, the City is being proactive in diversifying its potable water sources to maintain a sustainable water supply. The City plans to have a one million gallon per day reverse osmosis water treatment facility operating in 2022. This planned reduced dependency on the Surficial Aquifer System will reduce risks of salt water intrusion into Surficial Aquifer System, while diversifying the City's water supply which will help meet future supply demands.



b. **Water Reclamation:** The City of Stuart believes the elimination of septic tanks in existing neighborhoods reduces the potential for contamination of the area's groundwater and surface water resources, thereby improving both the public health as well as the environment.

   The City has completed its infrastructure for potential conversions from septic to sewer. While the program is not yet mandatory, the City is offering financial incentives for residential and commercial users to connect to the City sewer infrastructure so the program can be completed in 10 years. Efforts to support conversions for those with socio-economic vulnerability are also planned.

   As the water reclamation facility is meeting projected future demands, no additional plant expansion improvements are required during the 2020-2035 period.

c. **Solid Waste:** To be better environmental stewards, the City is looking to reduce waste and improve and increase recycling for economic and environmental reasons as well as to preserve the life of the landfill. Recycling saves natural resources, lowers energy consumption and reduces greenhouse gases, air and water pollution. To financially incentivize commercial recycling, customers who sign up for service receive a $1 reduction per cubic yard on their commercial garbage fees. Thus, an increased emphasis on residential and commercial recycling are anticipated with no additional facility improvements planned for 2020-2035. In order to avoid overuse and dependency on landfill waste, the City will continue to monitor the cost for disposal to all three landfills and explore cost-effective alternatives on an annual basis.



Table 7-6 Adopted LOS Standard Updated Comprehensive Plan

Facility Standard	Level of Service
Finished Potable Water	250 gallons per day per equivalent residential connection
Sanitary Sewer	80 gallons per capita per day (residential) 1,100 gallons per acre per day (non-residential) 115 gallons per capita per day (total wastewater flow rate)
Solid Waste	3.5 pounds per capita per day (residential) .0007 pounds per square foot per day (non-residential)

7.3 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

a. **Potable Water:** The City has adopted several objectives and supporting policy to address the potable water supply and has updated LOS for finished potable water in the Capital Improvements Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Objective A2, Policy A2.14 makes it a priority to incorporate alternative water supply projects and Objective 3, Policy A3.1 sets 250 gallons per day as the standard for finished potable water for residential connection. There is opportunity in the Capital Improvements Element to add policy to prioritize capital improvement projects which directly reduce dependency on the Surficial Aquifer. The Infrastructure Element Objective 9, Policy 9.6 calls for cooperation with Martin County and SFWMD to map potential ground water aquifer recharge areas. This policy could be strengthened to set a timeline for map completion and plan for infrastructure to support these recharge areas.

b. **Water Reclamation:** Both Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Elements support septic to sewer programs the City has initiated as a volunteer program. To further this effort, the City can provide education on benefits of septic to sewer conversion to encourage more participation in the City's septic to sewer program. While maps have been created to show the project infrastructure area, additional identification of vulnerable environmental and financial areas for sewer conversion could help enhance this program. Infrastructure Element Policy A8 encourages reclaimed water for irrigation and provides landscape requirements which prioritize native and drought tolerant species, the City can assess future reclaimed infrastructure needs for oncoming disposal effluent and identify areas for conversion to reclaimed irritation.



c. Solid Waste: While the City has committed to ongoing monitoring and reduction of solid waste through its recycling programs, the voluntary efforts of both residential and commercial users could be increased with public outreach programs which highlight the "reduce, reuse and recycle" concept. The City has coordinated its hazardous waste disposal with Martin County but it does not have its own curbside hazardous waste program or its own hazardous waste management plan referred to in the Infrastructure Element.

7.4 Recommendations

a. General Recommendations

1. Review and update Objective A5, Policy A5.6 to remove reference to the required Evaluation and Appraisal Report and establish an appropriate time of review.

b. Potable Water

1. Review and update Capital Improvement Element, Policy A2.14 to include projects which reduce City's dependence on Surficial Aquifer.
2. Update Infrastructure Element, Policy A9.6 to include a time frame for the completion of the natural water aquifer recharge area map and develop a plan of action to support those recharge areas.
3. Assess progress toward implementing directives of the City's Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan and the Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan.

c. Water Reclamation

1. To support Capital Improvement Element's Policy A1.5, further provide education on benefits of septic to sewer conversion to encourage voluntary participation in the City's septic to sewer program.
2. Update Capital Improvements Element Policy A1.8 to include identification of vulnerable areas for sewer conversion and developing long-term funding assistance once infrastructure is ready in that area.
3. To support the Infrastructure Element Policy A8.1, assess future reclaimed infrastructure needs for oncoming disposal effluent and identify areas for conversion to reclaimed irrigation.

d. Solid Waste

1. Broaden the public education program to include "reduce, re-use, and recycle" and provide via public outreach, practices that can help reduce waste before it gets to the bin.
2. In support of Infrastructure Element Policy A4.1, establish programs to assist businesses to focus on "reduce, re-use and recycle" programs to reduce waste hauled to landfills, encouraging commercial business to further engage in recycling effort.
3. Review hazardous waste Objective A9 Policy A4 and identify programs and policy that the City can take on themselves in addition to the existing program with the County.

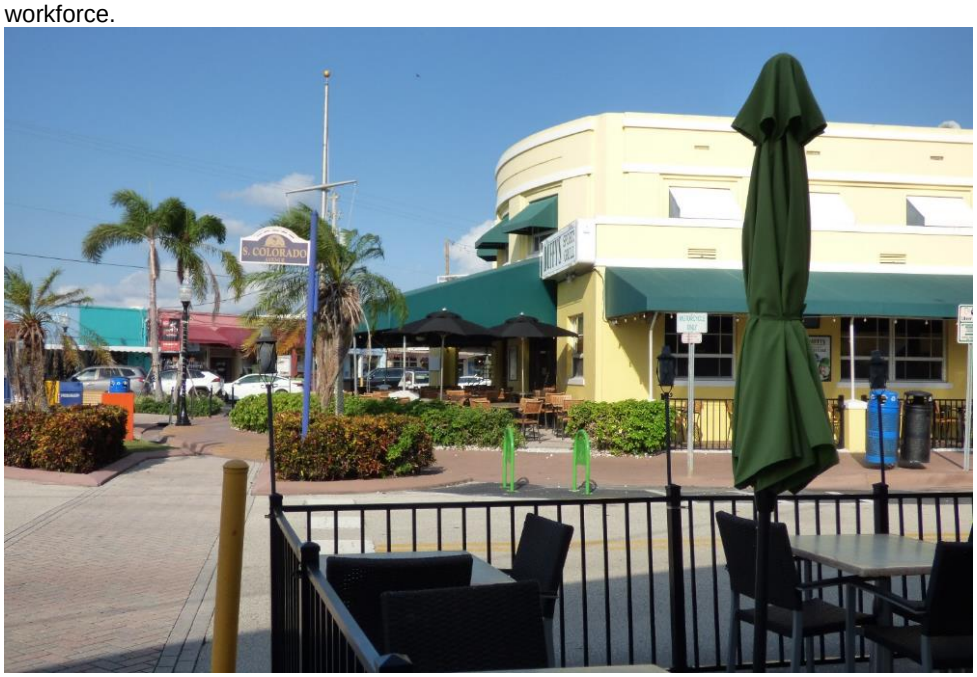
8.0 Community & Economic Development

Developing strong community and economic development strategies are fundamental to the future of Stuart. Developing a healthy economy that includes a diverse range of businesses will position the City as a hub to live, work, and play in Martin County.

"The City will develop and maintain an economic environment that encourages the creation, expansion and retention of business within city limits while maintaining a high quality of life for its residents."

8.1 Description of the Issue

Over the last ten years, the City of Stuart has grown in population and size through annexations. However, growth has been slow and the City identified several opportunities to promote the local community and its economic development. Downtown Stuart has become a destination for dining and shopping but, like most downtowns today, it is challenged with retaining small businesses and attracting new investments to draw users from big box retail centers and online retailers. The City has opportunities to revitalize, repurpose, and redevelopment vacant commercial and retail properties to meet current market demands. The City has been successful in spurring revitalization through increasing pedestrian safety, improving community aesthetics through urban form and public art. The resurgence of the Downtown and Colorado Avenue retail hubs can act as catalysts, spurring redevelopment further outside the Downtown core. The City has further community and economic development opportunities to support training and retention of talent for the local workforce.



8.2 Potential Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts



Economic development is a key factor in maintaining and elevating quality of life for all Stuart residents. By creating jobs, growing the local economy, and promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, Stuart will attract new residents to the area, which in turn will spur increased long-term investment in the community. Positive economic development trends can close the gap between middle- and low-income residents, lower rates of unemployment, and provide residents with the income and resources to spend time and money in the city in which they live. Job training, growth, and diversity of jobs can promote prosperity among residents, eliminating some of the social and economic barriers between residents of differing income levels.

Environmentally, healthy economic growth within the City will provide Stuart with the tax revenue necessary to invest in sustainable development measures, update and maintain sustainable infrastructure, and purchase and protect environmentally sensitive properties. Additional tax revenue spurred by positive economic development will enable to city to protect and plan for climate change and sea level rise, while implementing Low Impact Development (LID) practices and investing in green infrastructure.

8.3 Comprehensive Plan Evaluation

The Economic Development Element in the existing Comprehensive Plan outlines one goal and three objectives that speak to the need to develop and maintain an economic environment that will encourage the creation, expansion, and retention of business within the City limits while maintaining a high quality of life for its residents. While this language supports the City's vision, it is important to build upon this goal to encourage the use of available economic development and community development tools, to align more closely with the Community Redevelopment Area goals and objectives, and promote a more resilient and sustainable community well into the future.

8.4 Recommendations

1. Add a policy to existing Economic Development Objective A1 to encourage entrepreneurs and small business incubator space to attract and foster small business initiatives in the downtown core.
2. Add a policy to existing Economic Development Objective A2 to seek available funding for the assessment, clean-up, and redevelopment of brownfields sites.
3. Add a policy to existing Economic Development Objective A2 to promote properties underutilized to potential developers and business owners to spur redevelopment and revitalization.
4. Add policy to increase pedestrian traffic in retail corridors through sidewalk and safety enhancements.
5. Add a policy to existing Economic Development Objective A3 to promote tourism through historic and cultural arts.

6. Promote the creation of new cultural destinations throughout the City.
7. Create policy to capitalize on the City's character, elevate the historic architecture, and encourage investment in cultural landmarks and art installations to create a vibrant and unique destination.





9.0 Conclusions

The City of Stuart has evaluated its Comprehensive Plan based on changes to the community and State Statutes since 2009. Focus was placed on looking at general, environmental, neighborhood, mobility, public service, and economic development issues and/or areas for improvement within the City. Recommendations are provided throughout the document in their respective sections.

To address changes in State Statutes and requirements of the Peril of Flood Act, Exhibit 1 is attached to make Comprehensive Plan text amendments. Other recommendations will be considered during a broader Comprehensive Plan update to be completed at a later date. The City looks forward to a sustainable community moving into the future.

