The Economic Geography of Lake County

How to balance Job Creation and Grow Smart
Background

- Richard L. Levey, AICP
- Academic training as an Urban Geographer
- 24+ years of local government experience in Florida
- Former Alachua County Planner
- 18+ years with the City of Orlando
- City Planning Bureau Chief
- Last 7 years as City Administrator

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Economic Development Background

- Economic Development Administration in the Administrator’s Office:
- National Recruitment of Major Employers
- Corporate Headquarters: Manufacturing, Airlines, Financial Institutions
- Airline Support Facilities
- Warehouse Distribution
- Technology Firms: Software, Simulation
- Film & Television Production
- Public Private Partnerships: Universal Studios & Millenia Mall Interchanges
Economic Development

- How does the County balance job creation with other growth management objectives?
- Can you have high value job creation and still maintain high quality of life?
- How does Lake County Create an effective economic development strategy?
- Where is the best location for job creation in Lake County?
Economic Development

How does the County balance job creation with other growth management objectives?

- A strong Comprehensive Plan that addresses environmental protection and economic growth equally.

- Setting the bar higher for the quality of the built environment.

- Existing residents and future employers want unique ‘place making.’

- Identifying the opportunities for these unique employment locations should be done now in the Comprehensive Plan.
Economic Development

Can you have high value job creation and still maintain high quality of life?

- Yes. Examples exist throughout central Florida:
  - Maitland Center
  - Lake Mary/Heathrow
  - Lake Nona/Innovation Way
  - UCF Research Park
Economic Development

How does Lake County create an effective economic development strategy?

• Identify and clarify the vision.
  – What are Lake County’s strengths?

• Aggressively seek partnerships.
  – Community Colleges, Universities, Hospitals, Lake School Board

• Take advantage of the County’s spatial position in the region.
  – Unprecedented opportunity to capture the next wave of high value jobs
Economic Development

Where is the best location for job creation in Lake County?

- Site Selection consultants identify these factors as critical to ‘new age’ job creation:
  - Business Climate
  - Workforce
  - Operating Costs
  - Accessibility
  - Quality of Life and ‘special placemaking’

- Lake’s cities have some, but not all of these assets.

- Best opportunities may lie in new ‘workplace’ areas close to Lake’s cities but most located in unincorporated areas.

- Accessibility is the primary issue for Lake County. The goal should be to reverse commute, keep Lake residents ‘home’ and draw from Orange County’s economic activity.
  - Seminole County is a prime example of the success of this strategy
Where is the best location for job creation in Lake County?

- Significant future employment centers have been considered on the draft Future Land Use Map:
  - City of Leesburg – Turnpike and CR 470
  - US 27 and Turnpike
  - US 27, SR 19 and Turnpike
  - Hills of Minneola – Turnpike and New Interchange
  - Mount Dora Area Employment Center
  - South Lake @ Orange County Line (SR 429)
Draft
Future
Land Use
Map

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Employment Centers

City of Leesburg Plan

Lake County Plan

CR 470 & Turnpike

City of Leesburg

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Employment Centers

US 27 & Turnpike

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US 27, SR 19 & Turnpike

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Employment Centers

Hills of Minneola

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Employment Centers

Mount Dora Area Employment Center

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South Lake and Horizon West
Economic Development

Where is the best location for job creation in Lake County?

- 4 of the 6 areas shown on the draft Future Land Use Map are along the Florida Turnpike;
- Mount Dora location is based on planned expansion of the Orlando Beltway (SR 429);
- South Lake is adjacent to Horizon West in Orange County and the newest leg of the Orlando Beltway.
Employment Centers

CR 470 & Turnpike
US 27 & Turnpike
US 27, SR 19 & Turnpike
Hills of Minneola

The Turnpike ‘String of Beads’

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Where is the best location for job creation in Lake County?

- The job creation ‘engine’ of Orlando and Orange County is the core economic driver for all of central Florida;

- Over time, employment grows outward from the core as accessibility is improved. Examples include:
  - Maitland Center
  - Heathrow
  - LeeVista @ Orlando International Airport
  - Research Park @ UCF

- Current LPA Comp Plan emphasizes employment centers as a ‘string of beads’ along the Turnpike traveling northwest from Orlando;

- High quality employment centers will ring the Orlando beltway long before they will develop along the ‘string of beads.’ Warehouse and distribution centers may evolve along the ‘string’, but the County’s economic aspirations should be higher.
Economic Development

Likely development along the ‘string of beads.’

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Smart Growth Strategies and Job Creation

Where is the best location for job creation in Lake County?

Turnpike String:
- City of Leesburg – Turnpike and CR 470
- US 27 and Turnpike
- US 27, SR 19 and Turnpike
- Hills of Minneola – Turnpike and New Interchange

Most may be best suited for warehouse/distribution uses at this time

Beltway Locations:
- Mount Dora Area Employment Center
- South Lake @ Horizon West and the Beltway

These are the prime ‘near term’ targets for high value/high wage jobs
- Study completed in 2006
- Reaffirms policy profile with minor modifications
- Capital Improvement Plan
  - $1.3 billion in existing system improvements
  - $4.8 billion in potential expansion projects
- Expands Renewal/Replacement program
- Participate in New Markets/Services, where feasible
Myregion.org and the Penn Design Study
No consideration of Turnpike and Mount Dora locations
How will we grow?

What if no changes are made?
How do we grow?

Is there a different way?
How do we grow?

The ‘better’ way calls on South Lake to attach to the Beltway.

This is also the fastest way to foster ‘new age’ job creation.
Smart Growth and Job Creation

What Smart Growth Principles must be applied to an emerging Employment Center for Lake County?

- Mix Land Uses – Employment, Education, Leisure and Living
- Compact Building Design
- Walkable Development
- Distinctive and Attractive
- Strong Sense of Place
- Preserve Critical Environmental Elements
- Encourage Collaboration in Decision Making
Smart Growth and job creation
The potential future of south Lake at Horizon West
Economic Development

Likely development along the ‘string of beads.’
Smart Growth and Job Creation

Summary

• The Orlando Beltway is Lake County’s lifeline to the economic engine of central Florida;

• The Mount Dora area employment center and South Lake at Horizon West are the two primary locations where Lake can build great ‘places’ that are driven by new employment;

• South Lake at Horizon West is poised to host the next wave of high quality/high wage job growth in a regional employment center, long before the ‘string of beads’ and before Mount Dora due to the existence of the Beltway;
Smart Growth and Job Creation

Recommendations

• Develop strategies in the Comprehensive Plan that build on the County’s strengths;

• Continue to encourage Warehouse and Distribution uses in the “String of Beads” and improve the quality of these areas through the adoption of design standards;

• Establish the Mount Dora and South Lake at Horizon West Employment Centers as ‘smart growth places’; and

• Include smart growth policies and standards in the Comprehensive Plan that foster great ‘placemaking’ in these high wage/high value employment centers.