

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT
SUPPORT DOCUMENT**

Data, Inventory & Analysis

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A. Introduction

Economic Development is an optional Element in Clay County's Comprehensive Plan, but the importance of the economy to the county's overall future, its communities and its neighbors, justify the inclusion of this topic. This Element addresses and provides direction for the economic issues that the county faces today, as well as into the future.

While this Element focuses upon issues such as business retention, expansion and recruitment, it is important to recognize there are multiple strategies, policies, and programs for achieving successful economic development. The Economic Development Element is a starting point. It interacts with every chapter in every Element of this Plan to promote economic vitality. In fact, the Comprehensive Plan itself can be considered an economic development tool.

The economy has a central role in maintaining the vitality and quality of life within a community. Economic development is typically described as the creation of jobs and wealth and the improvement of quality of life for all residents and visitors. A healthy economy creates good paying jobs, providing economic opportunities to all citizens. The economy also supports the tax base, which enables the provision of schools, police, fire protection, parks and many other community facilities and services.

Economic development is not an isolated activity contained within the borders of our county. It can be affected by events occurring at a city, county, regional, state, national or international scale. To be successful, economic development activities must be carried out through partnerships with other governments or agencies. The direction of this Comprehensive Plan, along with the actions and initiatives of the public and private sectors, work in concert to achieve the overall economic success we so desire for our community.

The coordination of economic development with other land use goals is important to the overall quality of life in Clay County. Economic policy choices must be supportive of other adopted county goals. The benefits of a healthy economy are recognized when economic programs revitalize neighborhoods and business districts, brings good jobs into the community, provide adequate and affordable housing for all residents, and support walkable communities. Clay County is recognized for having an excellent quality of life, especially for young families and older adults. Quality of life indicators include the natural environment, recreational, public safety, education, and affordable housing. A positive perception of these quality of life indicators is critical for many businesses when they are determining whether or not to invest in an area.

The ability of a community to attract and sustain economic development is also tied to the quality of its infrastructure including roadways; telecommunications infrastructure, stormwater systems; water, sewer, and reclaimed water systems; electric generation and transmission systems; solid waste collection, recycling and disposal facilities; schools; parks; and various other facilities. The provision of these infrastructure systems and services often requires intergovernmental coordination, as projects often cross municipal borders throughout the county and the region. Funding identified in capital improvement programs ensures that infrastructure is available to the public in a timely manner, meets level of service requirements for such facilities, and is in place to support and enhance the area economy.

B. Data and Analysis

The data utilized in this report provides for a broad overview of major economic metrics which are indicators of the status and character of the local economy. Overtime, these indicators may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of economic development policies and to analyze the achievement of community goals as identified in the Comprehensive Plan. The data included is derived from a number of publically available sources which can be utilized to review either a snapshot in time or trends in the community as well as provide comparisons with the State of Florida or the United States.

Population and Income

Population Projection

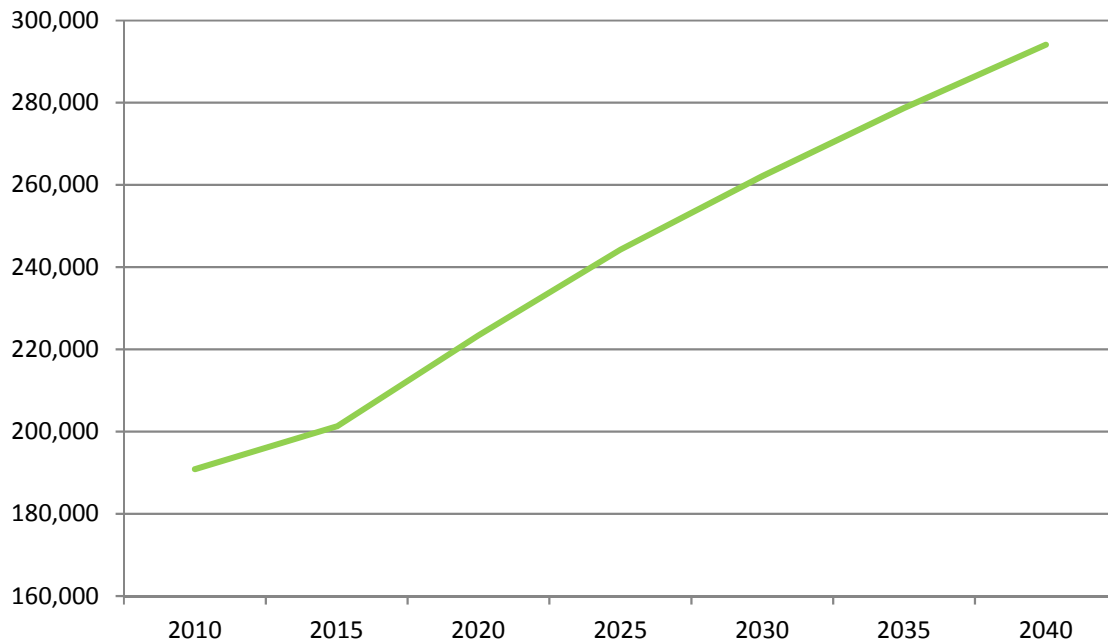
As illustrated in **Table 1** the population projection for Clay County from 2010 through 2040 reflects a total change of 103,235 persons.

Table 1 - Clay County Population Projection, 2010 to 2040

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	190,865	201,280	223,400	244,200	262,100	278,700	294,100
Increase Over Previous	--	5.5%	8.8%	9.3%	7.3%	6.3%	5.5%

Source: *Medium Projections of University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research Florida Population Studies; Bulletin 177, April 12, 2017 Clay County Division of Planning and Zoning, May 16, 2017*

Figure 1 – Clay County Population Projection, 2010 to 2040



Source: *Medium Projections of University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research Florida Population Studies; Bulletin 177, April 12, 2017 Clay County Division of Planning and Zoning, May 15, 2017*

Population Projection by Age

By 2040, the largest percent increase in the population age cohort is projected to be residents aged 75 years and older -- an increase of 165 percent from 2020. This trend reflects a common phenomenon of an aging population in communities all across the US and represents a number of opportunities and challenges. All age cohorts are projected to increase in population by 2040, with those aged 40 to 49 years indicating the next largest increase which comprises of 15,140 persons -- an increase of approximately 56 percent from 2020.

Table 2 – Clay County, Population Projections by Age, 2015-2040

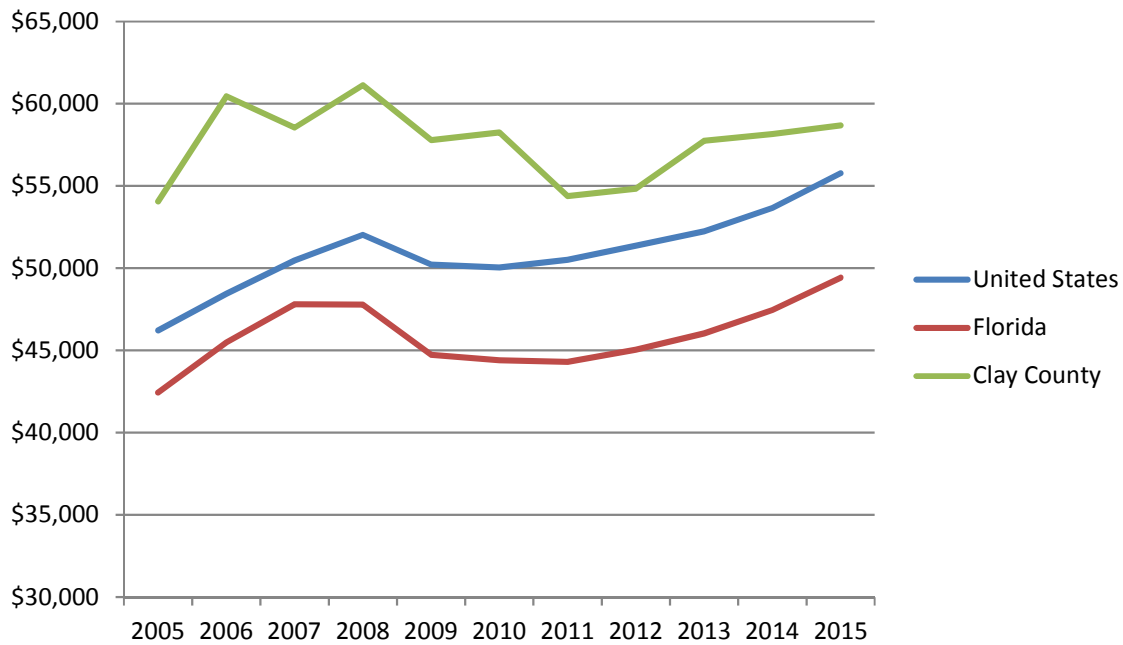
Age	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
0 to 4 Years	12,717	13,892	14,991	16,025	16,530
5 to 9 Years	14,514	15,569	16,778	17,972	19,098
10 to 14 Years	14,858	16,540	17,558	18,772	19,980
15 to 19 Years	13,878	14,807	16,156	16,971	18,045
20 to 24 Years	12,417	12,731	13,374	14,593	15,314
25 to 29 Years	13,466	13,358	13,574	14,211	15,310
30 to 34 Years	12,342	16,130	15,802	15,865	16,474
35 to 39 Years	13,681	14,938	19,357	18,790	18,806
40 to 44 Years	13,190	15,328	16,427	21,114	20,417
45 to 49 Years	13,934	13,955	15,942	17,066	21,847
50 to 54 Years	13,857	14,197	14,049	16,012	16,942
55 to 59 Years	14,771	14,017	14,232	13,976	15,765
60 to 64 Years	12,716	14,827	13,978	14,057	13,732
65 to 69 Years	10,342	12,513	14,501	13,567	13,650
70 to 74 Years	8,500	9,727	11,601	13,327	12,458
75 or more Years	11,534	16,051	20,504	25,353	30,542
Total Unincorporated County	206,717	228,580	248,824	267,671	284,910

Source: *Population Projections by Age, Sex, Race & Hispanic Origin for Florida and Its Counties 2010-2040*
 University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research

Household Income

Since 2005, Clay County’s median household income has remained higher than Florida’s and the U.S. While it has followed the same general pattern of growth and decline from 2005 to 2015, median household incomes in Clay County appeared to be more negatively impacted during the recession and more variable than Florida and the U.S. Following a peak in 2008 of \$61,130, median household income in Clay County declined for the following three years to a low of \$54,389 in 2011. Recovery since 2012 has been gradual and steady; however, the county has yet to surpass the household income level achieved in 2008. From 2013 to 2015, household income has been almost level with very minimal gains. Overall, median household income from 2005 to 2015 has increased 7.9% in Clay County, 14.1% in Florida and 17.1% in the U.S.

Figure 2 – Median Household Income, 2005-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2005-2015, S1903

Table 3 – Median Household Income in Dollars, 2005-2015

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
United States	46,212	48,451	50,470	52,029	50,221	50,046	50,502	51,371	52,250	53,657	55,775
Florida	42,433	45,495	47,804	47,778	44,736	44,409	44,299	45,040	46,036	47,463	49,426
Clay County	54,055	60,450	58,555	61,130	57,783	58,263	54,389	54,827	57,757	58,153	58,676

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, Median Income, S1903

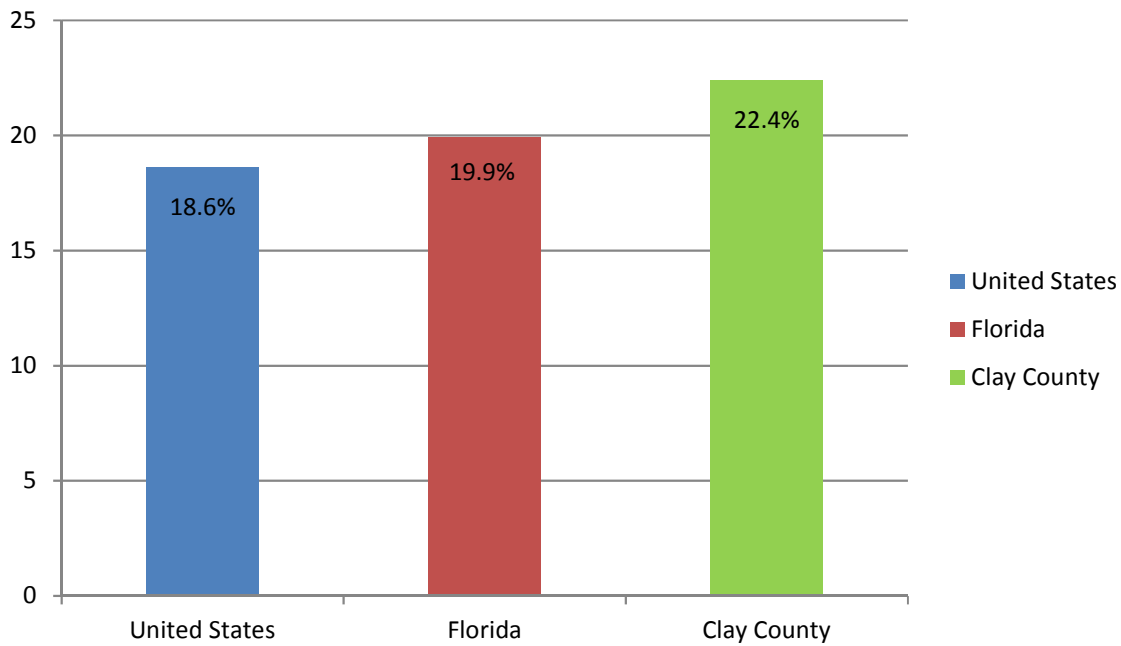
Sources of Household Income

Household incomes can come from a variety of sources including wages and earnings from employment, monies from investments (e.g., interest, dividends or rent), retirement income, and through government social programs. Analyzing the sources of income for Clay County residents can help us better understand the different sources of income that contribute to the local economy.

Retirement Income

Relative to Clay County’s demographic composition, the share of households receiving retirement income was slightly higher in 2015 with 22.4% compared to 19.9% and 18.6% for Florida and the U.S., respectively. Also, the mean retirement income for households in Clay County (\$25,388) was similar to Florida (\$25,845) and the U.S. (\$24,945).

Figure 3 – Percent of Households with Retirement Income, 2015

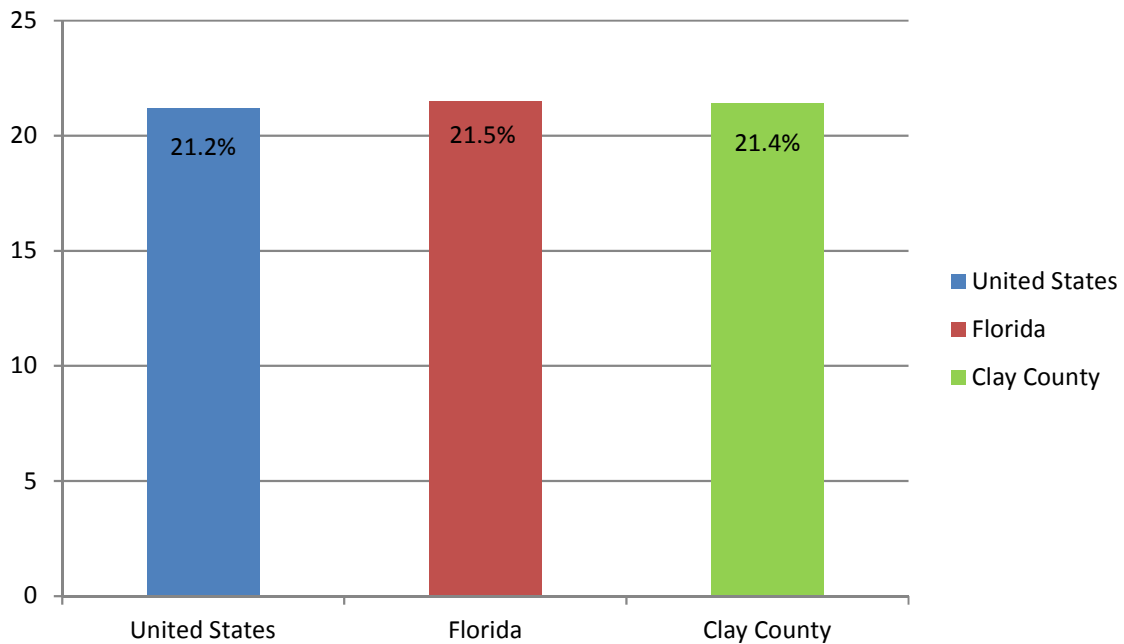


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2015, S1902

Income from Interest, Dividends or Rental

In 2015, the mean household income from interest, dividends and rent was significantly lower in Clay County (\$12,809) when compared to Florida (\$26,377) and the U.S. (\$20,129). However, as a percentage of total household income in Clay County, the income derived from interest, dividends and rent income is comparable with Florida and the U.S., which lends support to the character of households in Clay County being younger in composition than in Florida and U.S. and not yet in a financial position to earn significant income from these sources.

Figure 4 – Percent of Households with Income from Interest, Dividends, or Net Rental, 2015



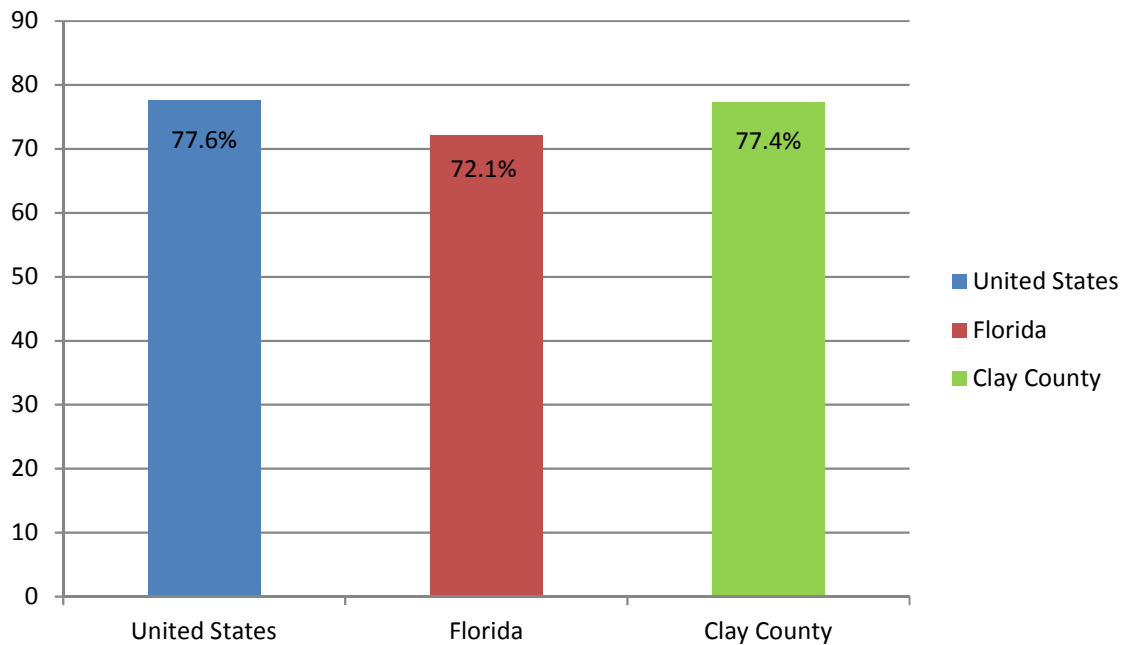
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2015, S1902

Income from Earnings

Clay County’s household income from earnings is impacting growth of the total income. In 2015, about 77.4% of the households in Clay County received income from earnings, compared to 72.1% in Florida and 77.6% in the U.S. While a higher proportion of households in Clay County obtain income from earnings, the actual amount (\$68,739) is lower than the income from earnings of households in the U.S. (\$79,909) and slightly less than household income from earnings in Florida (\$70,475).

As depicted in the data, the growth in household income from earnings in Clay County has lagged Florida and the U.S. Mean income earnings for households in Clay County increased only 7.9% from 2005 to 2015, compared to 15.8% for Florida and 16.4% for the U.S. over the same period. Meanwhile, earnings from the working population, whose lower wages are experiencing very little growth compared to the state and the nation, are suppressing overall income growth in Clay County.

Figure 5 – Percent of Households with Income from Earnings, 2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2015, S1902

Table 4 – Mean Household Earnings, 2005 and 2015

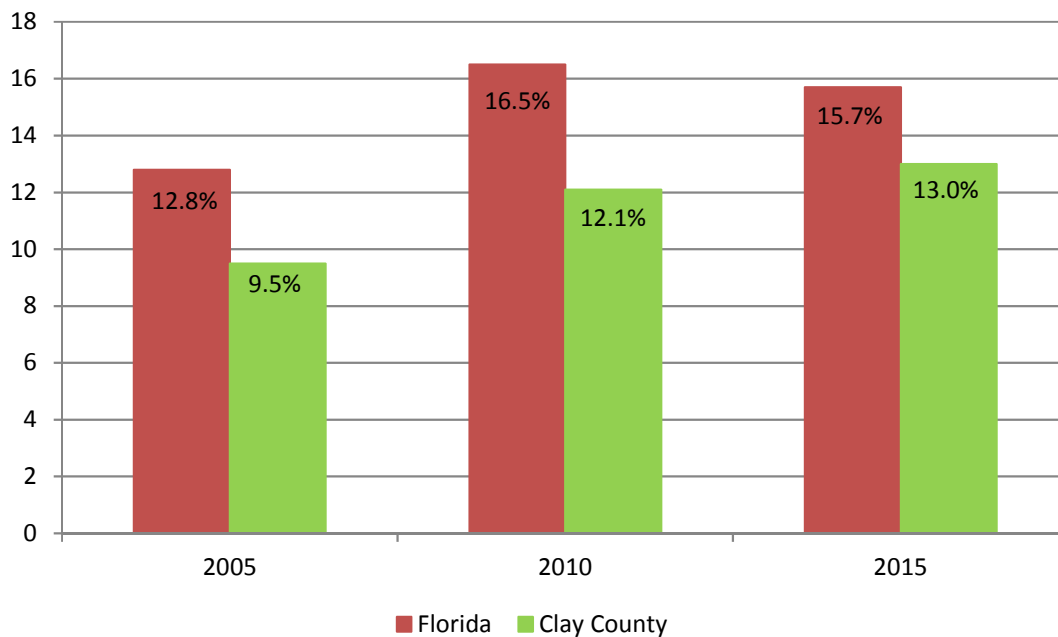
	2005	2015	Change 2005-2015
United States	\$66,834	\$79,909	16.4%
Florida	\$59,336	\$70,475	15.8%
Clay County	\$63,289	\$68,739	7.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2005 and 2015, S1902

Poverty Status

The official federal poverty measures are primarily used to determine eligibility for federal and state programs. Poverty status are also used as a measure of a community’s well-being relative to other communities or states. The term “in poverty” refers to those households or individuals below the poverty threshold. The poverty status of a community has broad implications to its overall health as well as social and economic opportunities for its residents. As depicted in Figure 6, poverty levels in Clay County remained below that of the State of Florida between 2005 and 2015. However, the percent of the population in poverty in Clay County has increased.

Figure 6 – Percent of Population Below Poverty Level, 2005, 2010 & 2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2015, S1902

Education

With almost 90% of its residents aged 25 and over with at least a high school diploma and nearly one out of every four adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher, Clay County's population is considered well educated (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2015 1-year estimates, DP02). In 2015, Clay County exceeded the US and State of Florida for its percentage of the population aged 25 and over that are high school graduates. The schools, colleges and technical institutions position the county for the continued quality educational achievement of its residents. Information presented in this section describes the current situation which indicates that although more actual residents are obtaining Bachelor degrees in Clay County, there is a decrease in the percentage of the population attaining higher education degrees, specifically the population aged 25 to 34 years old when compared to the US and State of Florida.

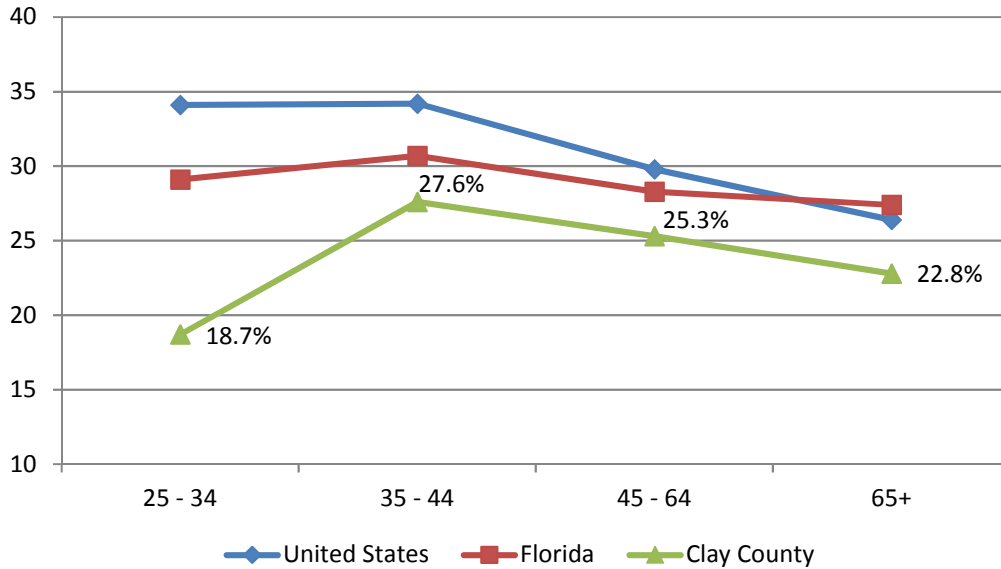
Clay County School District

Based on measures of student performance, in 2016 the Florida Department of Education (FLDE) graded Clay County as a "B" district. The primary and secondary educational needs of the county's population are met in a variety of school options, both public and private. Public school choices (also consisting of tuition-free charter schools and online/virtual education platforms) include a nationally recognized military academy and schools with specialized curricula based on the arts, physical activity/health, and other emphases.

Educational Attainment

The primary working age populations, particularly the 35 to 44-year-old group, are the most educated in Clay County. This is a similar situation when compared to the US and the State of Florida. Clay County also follows a similar trend to the US and Florida, which shows that educational attainment decreases with age. In 2015, Clay County's population aged 25 to 34 years old were well below the US and Florida metric regarding the attainment of a Bachelor's degree or higher. Overall, the percentage of Clay County's population aged 25 and over with a Bachelor's degree or higher was 23.7 percent in 2015, while in the US and Florida the percentage was 30.6 percent and 28.2 percent respectively.

Figure 7 – Percent Population Aged 25 and Over with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher, 2015

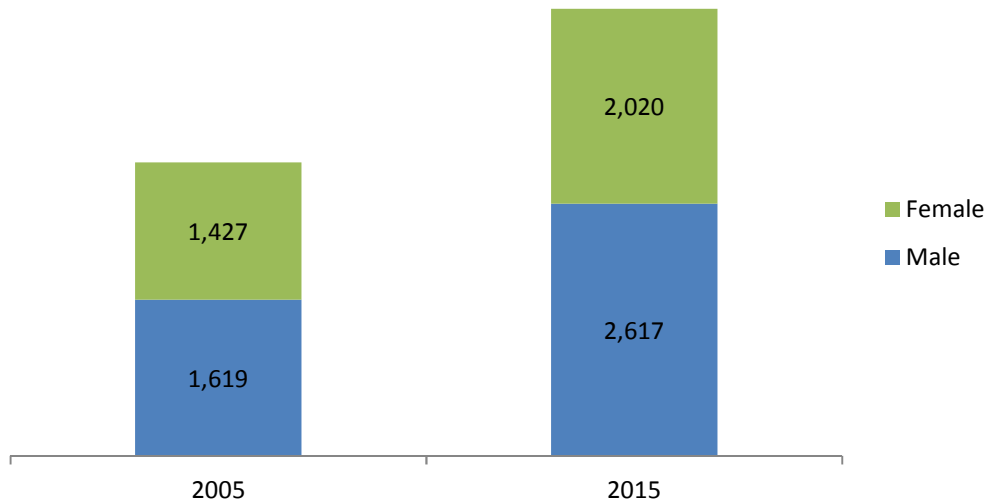


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2015, B15001

Bachelor Degrees

The percentage of young adults aged 25 to 34 years old in Clay County who have earned a Bachelor’s degree has decreased from 21.1% in 2005 to 18.4% in 2015. Although the percentage of young adults with a Bachelor’s degree has declined, the actual number of young adults with a Bachelor’s degree in Clay County has increased by 34.3% from 2005 to 2015. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), in 2015 fewer than 4,700 adults aged 25 to 34 in Clay County had a Bachelor’s degree, while in 2005, it was slightly over 3,000 adults.

Figure 8 – Population Aged 25-34 with a Bachelor’s Degree, 2005 & 2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2005 & 2015, B15001

Education and Workforce Development

Clay County has several post-secondary educational resources available for personal and professional enrichment. St. Johns River State College offers a wide range of programs from professional certification to Bachelor's degrees. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University recently opened a satellite campus in Fleming Island which offers a range of Bachelor and higher degree courses. Fortis College in Orange Park provides career education and training for the medical and dental fields. Everest University in Orange Park focuses on preparing students for the workplace through hands-on training, and a variety of degree programs.

In addition, there are many college and technical education facilities to serve Clay County's adult population which are located throughout the region as identified below.

Major Regional Educational Institutions

University of North Florida, Jacksonville
University of Florida, Gainesville
First Coast Technical College, St. Augustine
Flagler College, St. Augustine
Florida State College at Jacksonville
Jacksonville University

Alternative Educational Credentials

Data on post-secondary education often focuses on the attainment of college degrees as described above, however, professional certifications, trade apprenticeships and technical training should also be recognized as contributing to a more educated and skilled workforce. The U.S. Census Bureau is beginning to track "alternative educational credentials" and has found that about 25% of adults in the U.S. have a professional certification, license, or educational certificate and that there is a clear labor market value in these credentials, particularly for those with low levels of education (i.e., below the bachelor's degree level). (Measuring Alternative Educational Credentials: 2012, U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2009 Panel, Wave 13). There is no data available for Clay County at this time for alternative educational credentials.

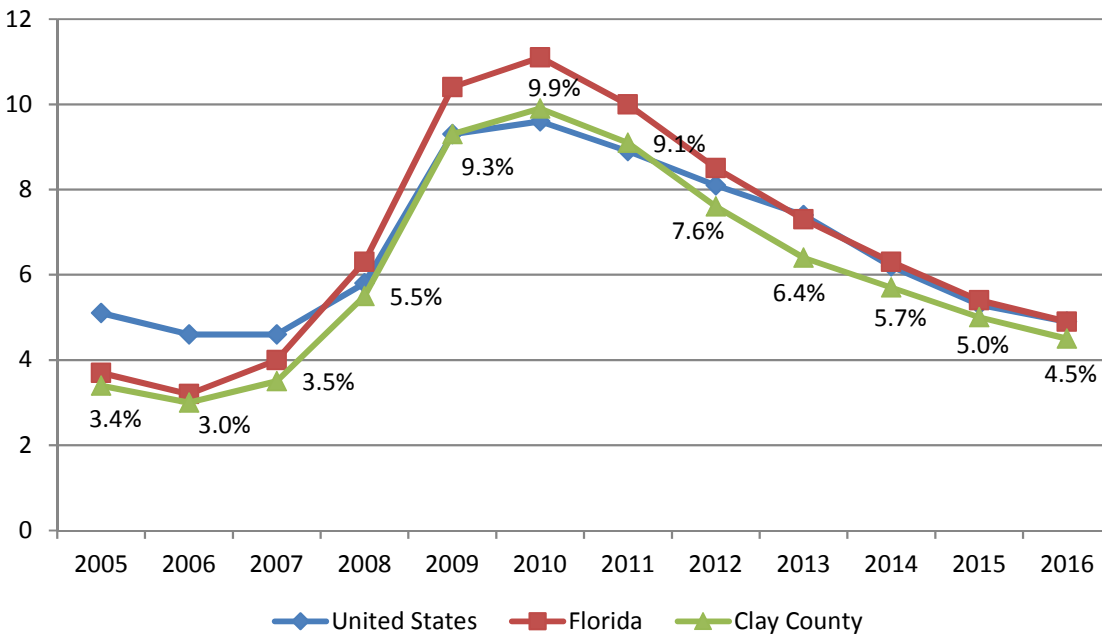
Employment and Industry

Unemployment Trends

Prior to the Great Recession, Clay County enjoyed relatively low unemployment rates. As a result of its economy dominated by construction and service-based industries, the county was more sensitive to the economic downturn and experienced rates of unemployment similar to the State of Florida and the US. At its worst, the unemployment rate in Clay County reached nearly 10%.

Since its peak in 2010, the recovery period has been marked by consistent decline in the unemployment rate and Clay County is now on par with Florida and US rates, but has yet to return to pre-recession levels.

Figure 9 – Clay County, Florida and U.S. Percentage Annual Average Unemployment Rate, 2005-2016



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 2005-2016, <http://floridajobs.org>

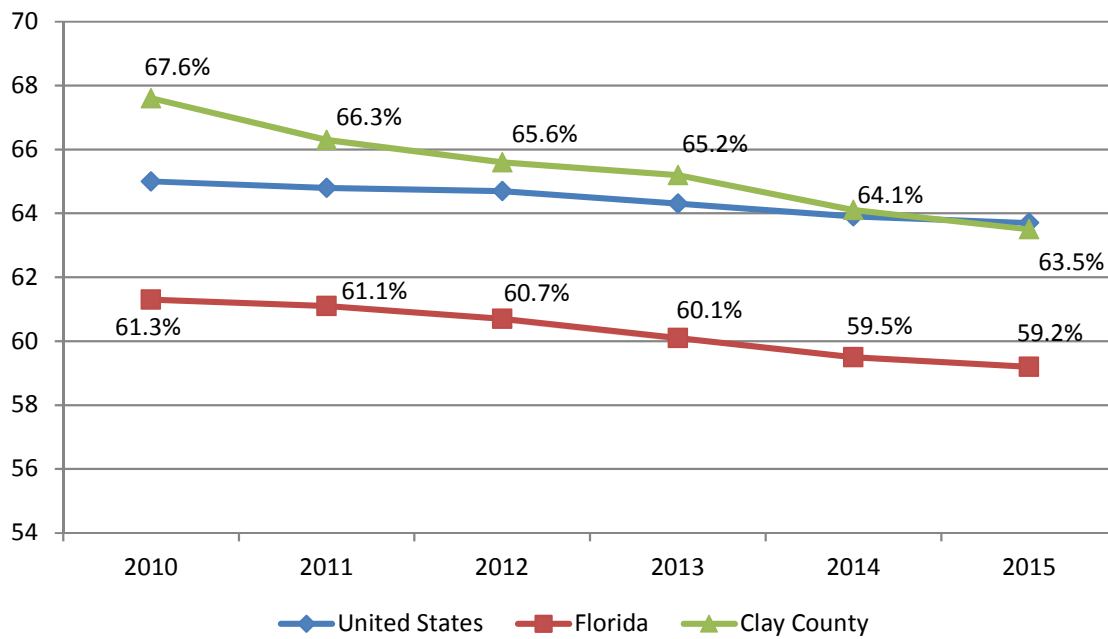
Labor Force Participation

The labor force includes those persons who are currently employed as well as those that may be unemployed but looking for work. Persons not included in the labor force would be those that are retired, going to school or otherwise not seeking employment perhaps due to a disability or child/elder care responsibilities, transportation issues or are discouraged and no longer seeking employment. The labor force participation rate measures the percent of the labor force compared to the total civilian non-institutionalized population, typically aged 16 and over. Labor Force conditions may reflect the general level of economic activity in the community. A growing workforce is an asset to economic development activities such as supporting business retention and expansion efforts, recruiting new businesses to the community, and providing employment opportunities for County-wide residents.

In 2015, 63.5% of Clay County’s population aged 16 and over participated in the labor force, which is higher than Florida (59.2%) and similar to the U.S. (63.7%). Labor force participation rates since 2010 indicate that while the labor force expanded in Clay County as the economy was growing, the rate has been declining slowly from 67.6%. There are several factors that may contribute to this decline. Clay County’s aging population results in a greater share of the population entering retirement while the share of the working age population decreases. This trend will likely be intensified as the baby boom cohort is entering retirement age. Additionally, during an economic downturn and the recovery which follows, young adults may choose to stay in school longer rather than begin actively searching for employment; older adults may choose to return to school to enhance their job skills and marketability or pursue new career paths to adjust to a changing economy.

These trends, among others, are resulting in the gradual decline in Clay County’s labor force which could hinder the county’s recovery and future economic growth. A declining labor force can be perceived negatively by employers as having a limited availability of local workers. Moreover, when segments of the local workforce are becoming less educated in Clay County (in particular, adults under age 35), it may become unfavorable for employers who desire to expand or relocate in an area.

Figure 10 – Participation Rates as Percentage of Population 16 and Over in the Labor Force, 2010-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, 2010-2015, DPO3

Industry Employment

In Clay County, the industries with the most employees include Education, Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade and Professional Food Services. These three industries account for less than half of all jobs in Clay County. The following table ranks industries in Clay County by employment size, in addition to their growth from 2010 to 2015. As depicted, there are many industries which are still adjusting to the post-recession economy and continue to lose employment. Monitoring changes in the local employment numbers is critical to projecting the need for new urban infrastructure in the community.

Table 5 – Clay County Employment by Industry 16 and Over, 2010 & 2015

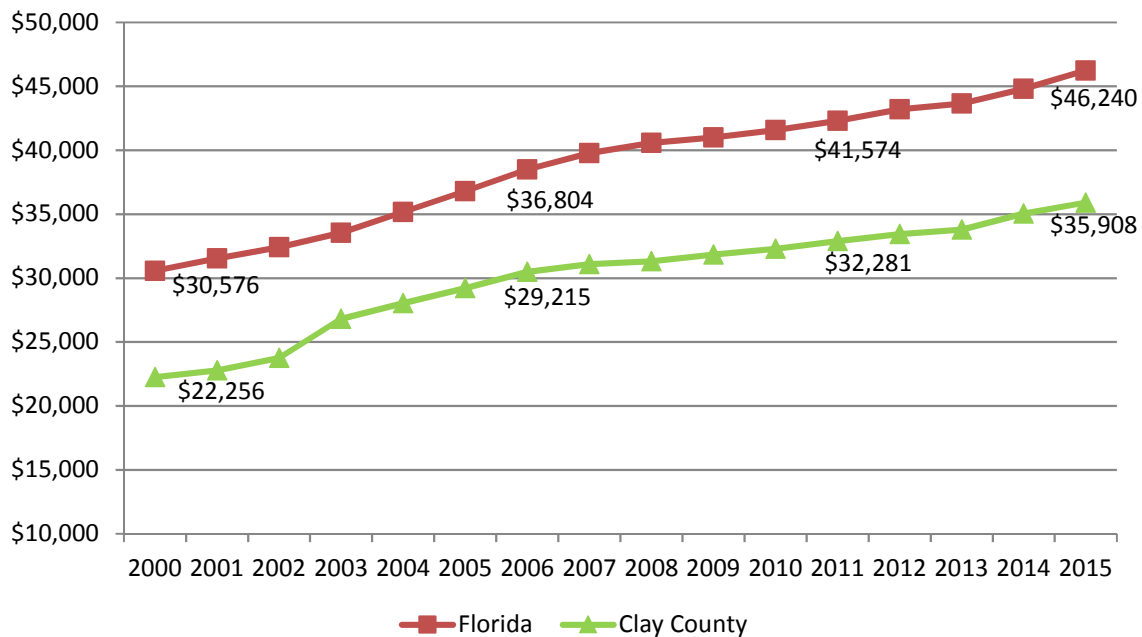
Industry	Employment 2015	# Change 2010-2015	% Change 2010-2015
Educational services, health care & social assistance	19,156	2,491	14.9%
Retail trade	11,628	503	4.5%
Professional, scientific & management services	8,963	10	0.1%
Arts, entertainment & recreation	7,570	618	8.9%
Finance and insurance	7,334	-902	-11.0%
Construction	6,524	-955	-12.8%
Transportation/warehouse	6,107	-755	-11.0%
Public administration	5,867	-269	-4.4%
Manufacturing	4,367	-801	-15.5%
Other services	4,326	414	10.6%
Wholesale trade	2,605	50	2.0%
Information	1,552	-104	-6.3%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting & mining	375	-187	-33.3%
Total	86,374	113	0.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, 2010 & 2015, DPO3

Employment Wages

Wage levels reflect conditions of the local economy and indicate the health of local companies and the economic well-being of workers. Average annual wages in Clay County continue to increase as depicted in Figure 11. However, when compared with the State of Florida, Clay County average annual wages remain lower. In 2015, Clay County’s average annual wage amounted to \$35,908 compared with \$46,240 for the State of Florida, a difference of 29 percent.

Figure 11 – Average Annual Wages, All Industries, 2000-2015

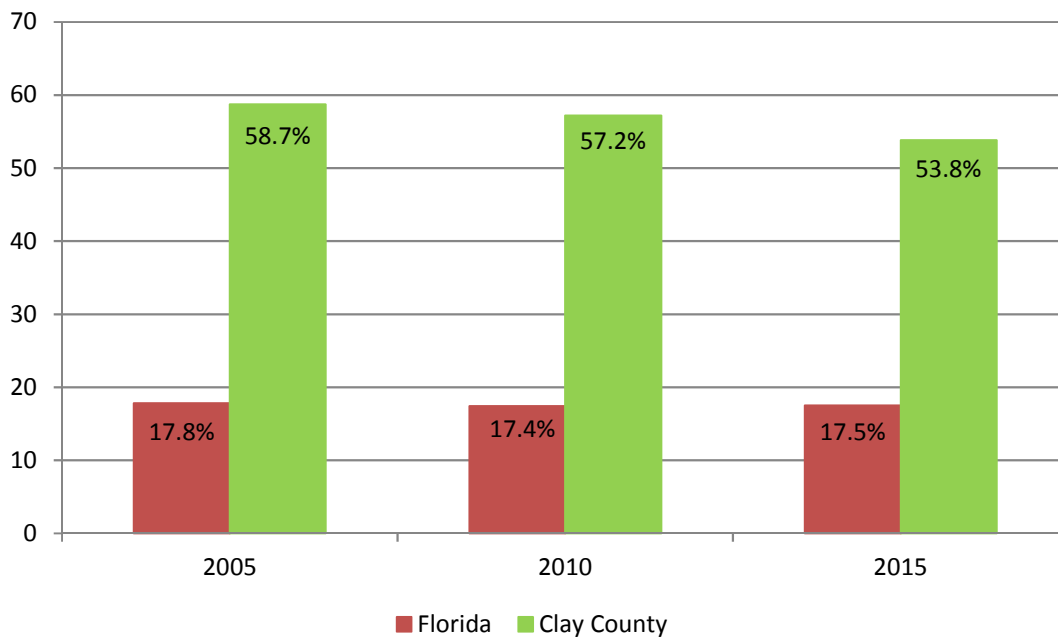


Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Labor Market Statistics Center, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program (QCEW), 2000-2015

Place of Work and Commute Time

The percentage of residents working outside of Clay County continues to be significant. As depicted in Figure 12, in 2005, almost 59 percent of the County’s residents worked outside of Clay County. For the State of Florida, the percentage of residents working outside of their county of residence is approximately 18 percent. In 2015, the percentage of residents working outside of Clay County had decreased to approximately 54 percent. Alternatively, there are a significant number of workers who reside in other counties yet work in Clay County. This labor inflow/outflow creates an imbalance of workers which is a unique characteristic to Clay County and the region.

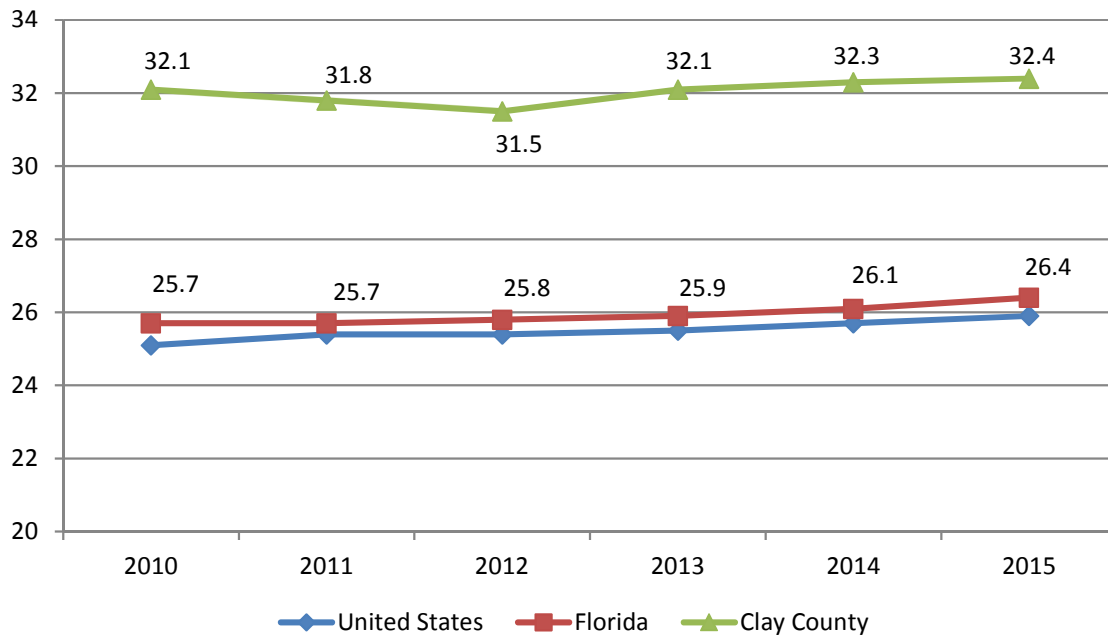
Figure 12 – Percent Working Outside County of Residence, 2005, 2010 & 2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, 2005, 2010 & 2015, S0801

The commute time of Clay County workers also continues to be significant. As depicted in Figure 13, in 2010, the commute time to work for the County’s residents amounted to 32.1 minutes. For the State of Florida, the commute time for workers amounted to 25.7 minutes, which is similar for the commute time of US workers. The commute time to work in 2015 has not changed significantly from 2010 and was 32.4 minutes. The commute time for Clay County workers is approximately 22 percent higher than workers throughout the State of Florida.

Figure 13 – Commuting to Work in Minutes (Mean), 2010-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, 2010-2015, DPO3

Key Industries

The Clay County Economic Development Corporation (Clay EDC) performs economic development activities, and has a Contract for Services with the Clay County Board of County Commissioners. The purpose of Clay EDC is to support the creation of quality jobs through development of a favorable business climate with the overall goal to diversify the economy within Clay County. The Clay EDC has an agreement with the Clay County Board of Commissioners to fund participation in JAXUSA, the Regional Economic Development Partnership, which markets Northeast Florida nationally and internationally to new business opportunities.

Clay EDC oversees the economic development planning function for the County. Clay EDC partners with the County and other public and private entities. Clay County’s economy is powered by a balanced mix of traditional and emerging industries. Key industries are pivotal to the growth of an economy. Companies in a key industry are often major employers in the local economy and typically have emerged as a result of strategic factors such as infrastructure, business climate, location, workforce or clusters of similar industries which contribute to their success and growth. Clay EDC has identified major key industries for Clay County which are identified below in **Table 6**. Industries which are not identified as “key” remain critical to the continued growth and diversity of the local economy.

Table 6 – Clay EDC Key Industries

Industries
Healthcare and Life Sciences
Advanced and Manufacturing
Aviation and Defense
Logistics and Distribution
Information Technology
Business Support Services

Source: Clay EDC, <http://clayedc.betterchamber.com> (website), June 2017

C. Major Issues

Five (5) major local issues regarding the future of Clay County were developed by consolidating public input gathered at ten community meetings held throughout the County and the results of an online survey of County residents:

Major Issue 1

Infrastructure (including roads, parks and recreation, libraries and fire stations) is lagging behind development

The public commented expressed their desire for no more residential development until supporting infrastructure (especially roadway capacity) catches up. They stressed new development should pay for impacts (impact fees) and asked the County to consider financing alternatives such as Tax Increment Financing and public/private partnerships. The public repeatedly commented on the need more funding for the Library System to provide service to the entire county; the need for more fire stations; and a desire for community-scaled parks to include amenities such as athletic fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, Frisbee golf, pickle ball courts and fee based dog parks.

Residents and businesses want to reside in communities that are able to maintain levels of service for public infrastructure and services that provide for a high quality of life. The provision of adequate infrastructure is critical to support the community's existing needs and accommodate an expanding economy. How well a community funds its infrastructure needs can serve as a platform to accommodate future growth and development. Communities which lag in the provision of capital expenditures for infrastructure investment are not able to attract the quality growth and development it desires. Infrastructure planning and funding to accommodate new growth and development is closely related to the community's economic development objectives. For this reason, the funding of infrastructure and the development of financing alternatives to accommodate new community development is a fundamental component of the Economic Development Element of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Clay County.

Major Issue 2

Transportation networks for auto, bicycle and pedestrian need better connectivity and improvements for safety and efficiency

The public commented on the need for addressing deteriorating roads, better street lighting, and signal synchronization; providing more connectivity of roads to offer relief to Blanding Boulevard traffic (Cheswick Oaks Drive, College Drive Extension and connection at Loch Rane); the need for bike lanes/paths and an interconnected system of pedestrian/bicycle trails that includes conservation areas.

A multi-modal transportation network (i.e., transit, vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians etc.) which provides commuter modal choice and regional interconnectivity is critical to a growing community and for safe and efficient circulation. The provision of adequate transportation infrastructure is critical to support the community's existing needs well as serve as a platform to accommodate future growth and development. Modal choice such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities are key components in the provision of quality of life for a community. Transportation funding to accommodate new growth and development is closely related to achieving a community's economic development objectives. Transportation systems connect workers to businesses and connect businesses to regions and international markets. For this reason, a comprehensive transportation network will also facilitate economic development and is a

fundamental component of the Economic Development Element of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Clay County.

Major Issue 3

Develop a balanced economic environment that focuses on the strengths of the County's resources (natural, built and human)

The public commented on the need for employment opportunities in the fields of manufacturing, light (clean) industrial, logistics, and high tech. Comments included the need to refurbish/complete empty commercial to prevent blight and before new construction; provide incentives to keep agriculture industry active; and the need for small business retention and incentives. On more than one occasion the public stressed the need for a mix of job opportunities for professionals and for young adults, as well as more nightlife/family entertainment options.

A balanced economy is one of the critical components for a community's ability to achieve a sustainable natural, built and human environment. Currently, the Clay County economy is not balanced due to the significant outflow of residents who work outside of the County and commute to work. The commute to work for Clay County residents greatly exceeds the commute time for workers throughout Florida and the US. In the long term – this outflow of workers will limit the County's ability to achieve a balanced local economy and the human environment. A similar outflow of residents also occurs with the County's younger population seeking educational, employment and urban lifestyle choices which are not available in Clay County. The ability to retain and attract educated young professionals and entrepreneurs is a key component for supporting the growth and development of the local economy and the human environment. One of Clay County's continuing strengths is its offerings regarding the natural environment and the access provided to its residents. Clay County's urban centers are emerging, yet there are many opportunities for redevelopment and the creation of urban environments which are attractors for residents and businesses. For this reason, a balanced economy and the strengthening of the natural, built and human environments are important elements to facilitate economic development and is a fundamental component of the Economic Development Element of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Clay County.

Major Issue 4

Ensure the health and vitality of the natural environment

The public commented on the need for water quality protection (spring and lakes) and aquifer protection pointing to negative impacts from the drawdown of lakes. The public expressed a need to maintain the rural character of the County's existing rural areas.

While this issue is an important quality of life factor for Clay County and its residents, there are no Economic Development Element objectives or policies that directly relate to or otherwise impact this issue.

Major Issue 5**Provision of recreational opportunities for the entire County**

The public commented on the need for community-scaled parks to include amenities such as athletic fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, Frisbee golf, pickle ball courts and fee based dog parks. They also prefer recreational opportunities/activities for all ages with extended hours and sufficient lighting.

While this issue is an important quality of life factor for Clay County and its residents, there are no Economic Development Element objectives or policies that directly relate to or otherwise impact this issue.

D. Matrix for Evaluating Plan Policies

As part of the evaluation of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan’s Economic Development Element, the County evaluated of each goal, objective and policy against the following six criteria to determine if any modifications to them are necessary or recommended.

1. Does the objective or policy have a measurable target?
2. Are there definitions of the terms contained in the objective or policy?
3. Has the objective or policy been achieved?
4. Is the objective or policy related to one or more of the County-identified major issues?
5. Is the objective or policy required to be included in the Comp Plan by statute?
6. Does the objective or policy support other objectives or policies?

Economic Development	Measurable Target	Defined Terms	Achieved	Major Issue	Statute Requires	Supports Others	Observations
GOAL 1	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Strong support by County and its Economic Development Partners
OBJ 1.1	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.1.1	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.1.2	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.1.3	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Implemented by Clay County EDC
POLICY 1.1.4	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
OBJ 1.2	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.2.1	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.2.2	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.2.3	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.2.4	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
OBJ 1.3	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.3.1	Yes	Yes	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.3.2	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.3.3	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Revise. Relocate Policy to New OBJ
POLICY 1.3.4	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.3.5	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
OBJ 1.4	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.4.1	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.4.2	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified.
POLICY 1.4.3	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.4.4	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.4.5	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.4.6	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.4.7	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
OBJ 1.5	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended

Economic Development	Measurable Target	Defined Terms	Achieved	Major Issue	Statute Requires	Supports Others	Observations
POLICY 1.5.1	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.5.2	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.5.3	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.5.4	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.5.5	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.5.6	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.5.7	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
OBJ 1.6	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.6.1	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.6.2	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	Minor revisions recommended
POLICY 1.6.3	Yes	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.6.4	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified
POLICY 1.6.5	No	No	Ongoing	Yes	Optional	Yes	No changes identified

E. Assessment of Changes to Florida Statutes

As part of the evaluation of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan’s Economic Development Element, the County examined changes in state statutory requirements since 2009, the last update of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Economic Development Element is an optional component of the Clay County 2040 Comprehensive Plan. While there are a number statutory changes that have occurred since 2009, none of these changes directly impact the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Economic Development Element.

F. Conclusion and Proposed Revisions

The Comprehensive Plan is substantively up-to-date and the County has done a good job of implementing its Comprehensive Plan. Most necessary amendments are those as required by changes in State law, or to provide greater emphasis on issues of particular importance to Clay County.

- Add the name of the Element to all GOPs to better differentiate among others in the Comprehensive Plan.
- There are a number of minor corrections to Goal, Objectives and Policies in the Element to update specific terms, references, phrases or entities which are now defined or have changed since the last modification to the Element.
- There is a new goal with supporting objectives and policies that are proposed for inclusion to the Element. The new goal, objectives and policies (GOPs) provide further guidance and aim strengthen the County's decision-making process toward accommodating growth and development which positively impacts economic development. The proposed GOPs amendments implement strategies and recommendations developed by the Clay County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) as identified in the Clay County Economic Development Plan completed in March 2016. The proposed GOPs to the Economic Development Element are listed below:
 - Support land planning related to economic development efforts proximate to the First Coast Expressway
 - Support Workforce Development, Training and Programs
 - Support Workforce Retention
 - Support Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The following offers easy identification of changes made to update the Economic Development Element. New (added) language is underlined and removed (deleted) language is ~~struck through~~.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Goal 1

To indicate the County's intention to grow the local economy:

EDE Goal 1

Clay County will achieve and maintain a diversified and stable growing economy by providing a positive business climate that assures maximum employment opportunities while maintaining the quality of life and quality of the environment.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.1.1

To clarify the need for partnering efforts regarding economic development efforts:

EDE Policy 1.1.1

Clay County shall partner with private sector agencies ~~continue to support the Chamber and the Authority~~ in conducting a coordinated economic development program.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.1.2

To clarify that the Clay County EDC leads the County's economic development efforts:

EDE Policy 1.1.2

Clay County shall maintain public-private partnerships through its continued support of the Clay County Economic Development Corporation Chamber in an effort to provide a sufficient and stable base for business, governmental, and financial support for the County's economic development efforts.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.1.3

To clarify that the Clay County EDC leads the County's economic development efforts and to update the term "primary" industry to "basic" industry and add "key" to reference the County's targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts :

EDE Policy 1.1.3

Clay County shall work with the Clay County Economic Development Corporation Chamber and encourage active development and implementation of programs that promote a diversified economy for Clay County through the following: attraction and retention of targeted/key businesses and basic ~~primary~~ industries, creation of public private partnerships, and the education of the community on the value of economic development.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.2.1

To update the term "primary" industry to "basic" industry and add "key" to reference the County's targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.2.1

Clay County shall prioritize the land use planning of sites meeting the locational requirements of identified targeted/key industries and basic ~~primary~~ industries uses in appropriate and compatible locations and recognize this priority during the review of plan amendments, rezoning requests, site plan approvals and permitting processes.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To identify the importance and role of the First Coast Expressway in achieving the County's long-term transportation and economic development objectives:

EDE Policy 1.2.5

Clay County shall work with its partners to ensure the First Coast Expressway is strategically incorporated into the County's Future Land Use planning framework to ensure the infrastructure investment is maximized to support long-term transportation and economic development efforts.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Objective 1.3

To update the term "primary" industry to "basic" industry and add "key" to reference the County's targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Objective 1.3

Clay County shall promote and encourage the recruitment of new industry as well as the expansion and retention of existing industries that engage in basic ~~primary~~ and/or target/key industry activities which export their goods or services outside the geographic boundaries of the local economy and help to diversify the County's economic base.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.3.1

To update the term “primary” industry to “basic” industry and add “key” to reference the County’s targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.3.1

Clay County shall support efforts to formulate an economic development plan to assist in the attraction and location of targeted/key businesses and basic primary industries to facilitate the diversification of the County’s economic base.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.3.2

To update the term “primary” industry to “basic” industry and add “key” to reference the County’s targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.3.2

Clay County shall evaluate and propose or revise as necessary, Comprehensive Plan policies to create land use for the location of targeted/key businesses and basic primary industries to expand the economic capacity of the County.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.3.3

To update the term “primary” industry to “basic” industry and add “key” to reference the County’s targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.3.3

Clay County shall promote economic diversity and growth by creating an environment which encourages entrepreneurs to engage in basic primary business and target/key industry activities.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.5.1

To clarify the County’s ongoing commitment to funding countywide economic development programs:

EDE Policy 1.5.1

Clay County shall maintain ~~identify~~ dedicated funding for countywide economic development ~~implementation~~ programs which utilize a range of public revenues, grants and private sector contributions

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.5.7

To update the term “primary” industry to “basic” industry and add “key” to reference the County’s targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.5.7

Clay County shall investigate ways to implement a strategy to provide financial or other incentives to assist in the expansion of business and industry, which may includes the mitigation and/or delay of impact fees or similar development costs for qualifying targeted/key businesses and basic primary industries.

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.6.1

To update the term “primary” industry to “basic” industry and add “key” to reference the County’s targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.6.1

Clay County shall endeavor to streamline the review and permitting process for targeted/key businesses and basic ~~primary~~ industries and develop clearly defined development guidelines that will promote the accomplishment of the goal, objectives and policies of this Element

Proposed Amendment to EDE Policy 1.6.2

Minor correction to revise procedures to procedure and to update the term “primary” industry to “basic” industry and add “key” to reference the County’s targeted industries for consistency with Clay County EDC efforts:

EDE Policy 1.6.2

Clay County shall employ the use of priority review and permitting procedures, identify a liaison to assist or other internal processes that may be necessary to expedite site review, permitting, concurrency, and inspection of targeted/key businesses and basic ~~primary~~ industries and the expansion/relocation of existing industries.

Proposed New EDE Goal

A new Goal to identify efforts needed to attract and develop the County’s workforce:

EDE Goal 2

Partner in a community-wide effort focused on attracting, developing and retaining 21st-century workforce to support targeted/key industries and entrepreneurship.

Proposed New EDE Objective

To provide direction for the County to support workforce development efforts for local employers:

EDE Objective 2.1

Support efforts to develop a highly skilled and globally-competitive workforce to meet the needs of employers in Clay County.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To provide direction for the County to support workforce education and training efforts:

EDE Policy 2.1.1

Champion the development of education curricula, training facilities and programs that increase appropriately credentialed employees.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To promote the clustering of educational facilities and employment centers to support workforce development:

EDE Policy 2.1.2

Encourage the clustering or co-locating of high schools, vocational schools and colleges or universities near employment centers to better connect students with potential employment opportunities.

Proposed New EDE Objective

To identify the need to support policies and programs to attract a segment of the workforce to live and work in Clay County:

EDE Objective 2.2

Support practices that encourage the attraction and development of a workforce that is younger, entrepreneurial and diverse.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To implement the objective through policy action that aim to encourage placemaking in the County to attract a younger workforce who are seeking an urban lifestyle:

EDE Policy 2.2.1

Support the implementation of regulations that focus on the development of diverse housing options, multi-modal transportation, employment centers with enhanced social amenities that support placemaking in the County.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To implement the objective through policy actions that aim to encourage placemaking in the County to attract a younger workforce who are seeking an urban lifestyle:

EDE Policy 2.2.2

Expand housing options that support the local workforce by planning new urban residential development near employment centers.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To implement the objective through policy actions that aim to encourage placemaking in the County to attract a younger workforce who are seeking an urban lifestyle:

EDE Policy 2.2.3

Focus on competing for millennials by supporting urban and neighborhood infill development and redevelopment including the adaptive reuse of buildings.

Proposed New EDE Policy

To implement the objective through policies that aim to encourage the development of unique work environments to support business start-ups and entrepreneurs in the County:

EDE Policy 2.2.4

Encourage co-work spaces and incubator accelerators to attract business start-ups and entrepreneurs to Clay County.