

4 *Long-Term Economic Goals and Objectives*

OVERVIEW

As established in earlier chapters of this *Economic Element*, Pinellas County currently enjoys a robust and relatively diverse local economy. More than 35,000 businesses make their home in Pinellas County. Pinellas generally compares well economically with similar-sized counties in other parts of the United States, and against neighboring counties in its immediate geographic area as well. Pinellas County has several distinguishing factors that have led to its current economic composition, and various strengths and weaknesses that must be factored in to any future strategies for continued economic growth and resilience. With all of the previous sections under consideration, this chapter focuses on long term economic goals and objectives and the economic conditions Pinellas County wishes to achieve and maintain. Topics include the identification of targeted industries, employment and economic diversity goals, sustainability objectives, and the necessary policies and strategies for achieving them. These are the ideas and tools designed to help Pinellas County's economy remain robust and viable, while supporting and complementing quality community efforts and environmental well-being.

ECONOMIC GOALS TO PROMOTE AND ACHIEVE

Employment and Earnings Goals

Employment growth is an important variable in maintaining a strong economy, but simply adding a certain *quantity* of jobs is not a complete answer. Job *quality* is also a key factor. In order to sustain the level of prosperity that the County currently enjoys, it will be necessary to enhance both job quantity and job quality. The overall number of jobs influences the size of the economy and the number of jobs provided by high-wage primary businesses affects the quality of the economy. Jobs of high quality are often termed high-wage 'primary jobs', and those businesses that offer them are referred to as 'primary employers'. The distinguishing trait of primary businesses is that they import at least 51 percent of their revenues from outside of Pinellas County. Economic development efforts often focus on industries producing exportable products or services – those that inject dollars into the local economy as a result of conducting business. They do not solely nor primarily serve their local market area. High-wage jobs are those that pay at least 130 percent of the overall average annual wage of the County.

How many high-wage primary jobs will be needed to maintain Pinellas County's ongoing economic success? *Pinellas by Design: an Economic Development and Redevelopment Plan* provides a framework to answer that very important question. Finalized in 2005, *Pinellas by Design* is a redevelopment strategy for Pinellas County that aims to foster business development while preserving quality of life. The purpose of *Pinellas by Design* was to identify the means by which the County can maintain and enhance its long-term economic vitality. It estimated that some 50,000 new jobs at salary levels approximately 30 percent above the average wage (high-wage primary jobs) will need to be created over the next 20-year period to maintain the same level of economic health that the county enjoyed over the previous 20

years. The plan argues that absent a concerted effort and coordinated public policy it will be difficult to achieve this goal, particularly as build out is reached and the ability of the private sector to find and utilize the land necessary to locate and expand business opportunities is limited.

Related to *Pinellas by Design*, a detailed study of the supply and demand of industrial land in Pinellas County (*Target Employment and Industrial Land Study for the Pinellas Community*) was begun in 2006 and finalized in April of 2008. More than 2,000 businesses in targeted industry (see below for more information on targeted industries) clusters were surveyed about their use of, and need for, industrial-designated land and other types of real estate. The feedback was combined with an analysis of the existing land supply using Geographic Information System technology. The final report recommends long-term regulatory and economic strategies for ensuring a supply of appropriately located, economically viable real estate that can accommodate high-wage primary employers (see 'Policies and Strategies for Achievement' section below). The findings of both *Pinellas by Design* and the *Industrial Land Study* contribute in various ways to the discussions of this chapter.

Targeted Industries

Targeted industries are a subset of primary employers that are actively recruited by a particular region or local government. They pay average wages that meet or exceed the definition of high-wage jobs. The targeted industries that are being recruited by Pinellas County have certain traits in common. They are all growing at the national level and in the State of Florida. Further, they are able to utilize the unique assets and cope with the particular challenges of Pinellas County (see Chapter 3 for a discussion on Pinellas County's economic strengths and weaknesses). In essence, the idea is to focus business development activities around industry clusters that build on competitive advantages and offer good opportunities for continued growth and quality jobs.

Several key factors were considered when Pinellas County, through its Economic Development Department, determined its specific targeted industries. The list of factors were:

- Pinellas County's unique geography restricts certain large-scale industries,
- The type of industries sought should be inherently contributory,
- The wages provided must meet the wage milestone,
- The industry must be growing nationally,
- The type of industry should utilize area assets and be able to cope with area liabilities,
- The industry must provide a high number of workers per work space area.

Pinellas County's chosen targeted industries are discussed separately below. The Pinellas County Economic Development Department actively recruits and encourages the growth and retention of businesses from these industries. The average 2006 Pinellas County wage for its targeted industry businesses was \$58,411. This was an increase of 2.7 percent from 2005 numbers. For comparison, the 2006 average Pinellas County wage for all businesses was \$36,989. Targeted industry wages were 158 percent of the overall average wage, easily exceeding the 130 percent criteria. See **Table 34** for a brief synopsis of the targeted industry businesses currently located in Pinellas County.

Advanced Manufacturing

The broad Advanced Manufacturing industry includes all high-tech production companies. Florida's advanced manufacturing industries often include companies that specialize in breakthrough technologies. Examples are extensive and include businesses involved in microelectronics, high tech and modeling/simulation applications. Pinellas County is ranked second in the State of Florida for manufacturing employment and third for the number of manufacturing firms.

Aviation and Aerospace

From the first commercial airline flight in 1914 (which occurred in the Tampa Bay area) to today's NASA space program, Florida has a rich tradition in aviation and aerospace. Pinellas County is no exception. Its Aviation and Aerospace industry employs over 7,000 professionals, with an average annual wage of \$58,583 for an annual economic impact of \$418 million.

Information Technology

Business categories that fall under the information technology umbrella include Internet service providers, data processing and hosting services, custom computer programming services and design services, as well as computer facilities management services. Pinellas County is located at the western end of the 'Florida High Tech Corridor' (FHTC), one of the five fastest growing high tech centers in the country. Twelve percent of the total FHTC Information Technology industry employment is located in Pinellas County. Over 4,500 workers are employed in Pinellas County's information technology companies with an average annual salary of over \$52,000, creating a salary impact of over \$241 million.

Business and Financial Services

As seen in the growth of online banking, ATMs, electronic trading/brokering services and online insurance quotes, technology is transforming the way financial companies interact with their customers. Therefore, there is a need for highly skilled employees for depository financial, non-depository financial, securities and commodities, and insurance institutions. A comparison of financial services hotspots across the globe has named Florida one of the best places to establish financial technology and support facilities. Nineteen percent of the Florida High Tech Corridor's financial services industry employment is located in Pinellas County. Over 22,000 Pinellas County professionals are employed in business and financial services. The average annual wage for the industry is approximately \$46,000.

Life Sciences/Medical Technologies

The Life Sciences and Medical Technologies industry covers everything from designing and building new medical equipment to tracking dangerous diseases in a high tech laboratory. In central Florida, the sector features a blend of biotech, pharmaceutical and medical device companies, along with an extensive network of hospitals and clinics. Pinellas County is a leader within Florida's High Tech Corridor, with 4.6 percent of the medical technology employment, and 23 percent of medical technology companies. The Pinellas County average annual wage for the medical technology industry is \$45,598. Seventy percent of the more than 10,000 medical technology jobs in the Tampa Bay region are located in Pinellas County.

Optics and Photonics

The Optics and Photonics industry includes companies of all kinds that make, service or utilize products that use light. The term 'optics and photonics' refers to products and technologies

based upon the generation, transmission, detection, and manipulation of light and defines a class of high tech devices and systems that includes sensors, lasers, displays, precision optics (e.g., mirrors and lenses), fiber optics and other telecommunications components, as well as many other complex devices and systems. Optics and photonics are found in almost every application area, including medicine, manufacturing, defense, aerospace, energy, communications, information recording and storage, security, and many others. There are nearly 1,800 optics and photonics professionals employed in Pinellas County, accounting for 28 percent of the total optics and photonics employment in Florida’s High Tech Corridor. The average annual wage for the optics and photonics industry in Pinellas County is \$49,582, generating an overall annual economic impact of \$66 million.

In addition to those targeted industries described above, it is worth mentioning that Pinellas County actively recruits organizations that specialize in innovation, research and development, regardless of industry type. Such businesses do not necessarily create a high number of jobs within their own operations, but can spin off new companies that do provide a sizable number of local high-wage primary jobs. Also, the increasing national and global focus on the need for alternative and sustainable energy may provide opportunities to attract and encourage businesses specializing in those fields.

TABLE 34
PINELLAS COUNTY’S TARGETED INDUSTRIES

Targeted Industry	Number of Businesses	Number of Employees	Average Wage
Advanced Manufacturing*	2,315	32,818	\$57,181
Aviation and Aerospace	55	7,084	\$54,765
Information Technology	854	5,075	\$52,822
Business and Financial Services	985	9,991	\$66,928
Life Sciences/Medical Technologies	160	5,838	\$45,598
Optics and Photonics	33	1,258	\$47,034
TOTALS	4,402	62,064	\$56,823

Source: Pinellas County Economic Development Department, 2005.

* Includes High Tech, Microelectronics and Modeling/Simulations, among others.

The Retention and Expansion of Existing Businesses

Businesses currently existing in Pinellas County need to feel just as welcome, wanted and appreciated as new businesses attracted to the area. Existing business development and expansion offers tremendous potential for job and investment growth. In many locations, the growth of existing businesses constitutes 85 percent or more of the area’s overall employment and investment growth. Local economic development programs, through business assistance and incentive programs, play a critical role in the retention and growth of local businesses. Pinellas County’s Economic Development Department is very active in its efforts to assist existing business retention and expansion.

A Diverse, Sustainable Economy

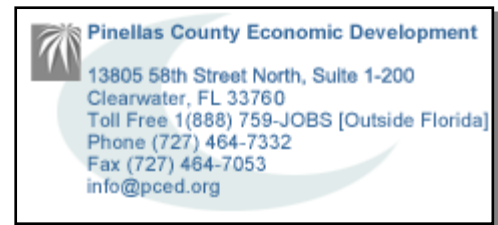
Industry and employment diversity is important to the ongoing and future prosperity of any local economy. A diverse economy, in most cases, is more sustainable and resistant to the periodic downturns of any one industry. It is the opposite of those cases experienced in the 'rust belt' region of the United States when the traditional manufacturing industries experienced large scale shutdowns in the 1970s and 1980s. Many communities in those areas were devastated when the one type of business they relied on shut its doors and folded or moved overseas. In extreme cases, some communities never fully recovered. The same situation is somewhat repeating itself today with the pending closure of automobile manufacturing plants in locations where they have been the major employer for decades.

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this Element, Pinellas County for many years relied very heavily on tourism and the retirement industry for economic growth and prosperity, but that is no longer the case. While tourism and retiree inputs remain important to the local economy, they are but two pieces of the County's increasingly diverse economic tapestry. The County should continue to embrace tourism as an economic positive derived from its prime coastal location, but only in conjunction with continued efforts to grow and expand targeted industries and primary businesses to help ensure a stable economic future. Other, more non-traditional sectors also have a place in a diverse economy. For example, a flourishing arts and culture scene complements other industries, enhances the community and provides a forum for new thought and innovative ideas.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING DESIRED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Economic Development Department

In late 1997, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners created the Pinellas County Economic Development Department . The Economic Development Department strives to improve the business climate within the County by acting as a liaison between the various public and private sector stakeholders in order to facilitate the creation of high-wage jobs and to assist business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to succeed. Most of the programs and initiatives discussed in this chapter are carried out and/or involve the Economic Development Department. The Department is at the forefront of Pinellas County's efforts for achieving its desired economic conditions.



The Pinellas County Economic Development Department's mission statement encompasses the following strategies: *Retain* existing businesses and encourage their success and expansion; *Attract* new high-quality, high-wage and diversified employment to Pinellas County, *Improve* the business climate in Pinellas County, while preserving the quality of life; *Develop* and *Cultivate* an entrepreneurial environment for small business development *Serve* as liaison, partner, facilitator, advocate, and provider among public agencies, private companies, business associations, and educational institutions, to deliver strong, fast, efficient and effective support to Pinellas County businesses in a 'Team Pinellas' format; and *Facilitate* availability of a trained and productive workforce, to assure a vital and diversified Pinellas County economy.

Adequate Industrial Land Use Base and Location

Maintaining Industrially-Designated Land

With Pinellas County's increasingly built-out condition, it is imperative that adequate opportunities exist for the proper location and expansion of targeted industries. Raw industrial land is not as readily available as in other Tampa Bay area locations. At the current rate of development intensity, the job creation goal of 50,000 additional high-wage primary jobs proposed by *Pinellas by Design* will require about 8,000 acres of developable land. Pinellas County, however, has fewer than 4,000 vacant acres designated for employment-related uses, leaving a projected deficit of another 4,000 acres. It should be noted that this is a conservative estimate because it is highly unlikely that all of the existing vacant acreage will be available or suitable for development.

Because of the scarcity of vacant developable acreage, the preservation of existing industrial land uses is crucial. In Pinellas County, there are two industrial future land use categories: Industrial Limited and Industrial General. Industrial General allows more intensive heavy industrial uses, but is less common than the Industrial Limited category (1,390 acres vs. 7,900 acres, respectively). Most targeted industry businesses do not require the intensities that Industrial General allows, making Industrial Limited adequate for their needs. There is a general consensus, however, that it is in Pinellas County's best economic interest to at least maintain the current acreages of the Industrial General category because some businesses are involved in heavy industrial manufacturing, while more Industrial Limited designated land may be needed for the majority that are not.

Significantly, 94 percent of industrial land in Pinellas County is located within 'prime' areas, where industrial parcels are concentrated, access to transportation facilities is good, and other characteristics make the land appropriate for targeted industries. This land is most in need of protection from conversion to other uses. There is ongoing pressure to redevelop certain industrial parcels to residential and retail uses, which tend to return a higher short-term profit to landowners, but are the least beneficial for the countywide economy over the long term. As mentioned earlier, existing industrial acreages must be maintained or even expanded in order to successfully add 50,000 new high-wage jobs by 2030. Strategies needed to accommodate target employment include a balanced approach for protecting industrial/office properties from conversion to other uses wherever feasible and using vacant property classified for employment purposes to the fullest extent possible.

In cases where industrially-designated land is proposed for a change in land use, the *Industrial Land Study* recommends adopting criteria for evaluating whether such conversions should be approved. Suggested criteria should address the following:

- *Contribution to the Economy* – number and type of jobs added or lost under proposal
- *Site Characteristics* – size, configuration and physical characteristics
- *Locational Characteristics* – compatibility with surrounding land uses
- *Transportation and Infrastructure Features* – is the site well-served
- *Unique Features* – e.g., water dependent, working waterfront, transit-oriented uses
- *Redevelopment Plans* – is the site part of a Community Redevelopment Area
- *Related Comprehensive Plan Policies* – does the proposal further key Plan policies

By examining each of these criteria by their own merits and looking at them as a whole, the appropriateness and potential economic ramifications of a proposed industrial land use conversion will likely become more apparent.

Another method of helping to ensure adequate land use availability for targeted industries would be the possible creation of a new Targeted Industry land use designation. Such an available designation could be utilized to direct the siting and growth of targeted industry businesses to the most suitable locations. It may be also worthwhile to examine the possibility of adding residential to the allowable mix of uses to any proposed Targeted Industry designation, in appropriate amounts and configurations that support employers and design flexibility, but do not compete with them or cause compatibility issues.

It should also be noted that many targeted industry businesses often include clean high-tech manufacturing, research/development and office activities rather than traditional industrial uses. About two-thirds of existing target industries in Pinellas County are located on land with non-industrial designations such as Commercial General, Residential/Office/Retail, Residential/Office General and Central Business District. Therefore, commercial and mixed-use land, while not as threatened as industrial land, must also be included in any planning for target employment. It may even be beneficial to consider the feasibility of allowing light industrial uses in commercial areas, which is already done as a conditional use.

Land Assembly

Land and building data indicate that Pinellas County requires parcels in a broad range of sizes to serve the needs of targeted industries, and that small size alone should not be used as a criterion for allowing a parcel that supports employment to be converted to a non-employment related use. According to the *Industrial Land Study*, 87 percent of targeted industry businesses were located on parcels measuring 7.5 acres or smaller, and 49 percent were located in buildings measuring less than 24,000 square feet. Nevertheless, larger spaces are needed for the biggest employers and for expansion purposes. Because a relatively small acreage parcel size predominates in Pinellas County and intervening infill properties are widespread, the need for a public land assembly program to assist with both the mechanics and cost of assembling the land area necessary to accommodate the location and expansion needs of certain target industry businesses that require larger parcels is readily apparent.

Redevelopment and Revitalization

Land costs are generally higher in Pinellas County than in surrounding areas due to vacant land scarcity and other factors. Redeveloping a site may be two to three times more expensive than building on greenfield locations. Added costs of redevelopment can include increased environmental analysis, demolition and/or major renovations. In certain cases, public assistance can help offset the costs of demolition and site preparation. Performance-based redevelopment incentives that encourage companies to invest in revitalization of commercial properties can also be used. In addition, the County could identify surplus public lands that demonstrate the potential for quality redevelopment.

Pinellas County currently utilizes certain programs and tools to help businesses offset the costs of redevelopment and revitalization. A couple of them are discussed below.

Brownfield Program

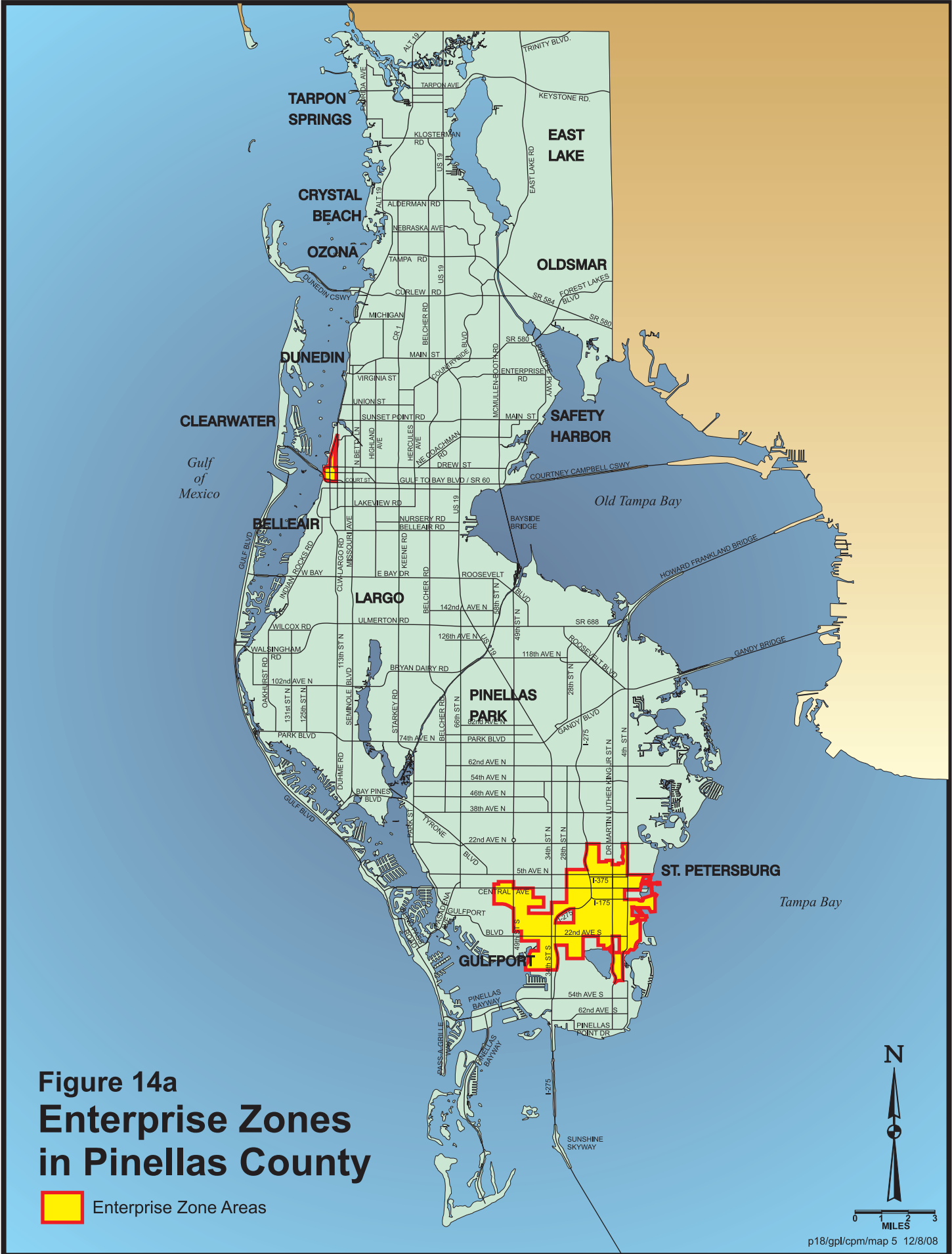
Brownfield sites are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by actual or perceived environmental contamination. Common brownfield site examples include vehicle or boat maintenance facilities, gas stations, dry cleaners or other former commercial facilities. As the cost of construction rises, redevelopment of these existing commercial sites using performance-based job creation incentives can save financial resources, provide tax credits and benefit the environment. The Brownfield Program is an essential redevelopment investment tool that allows Pinellas County to offer incentives to aid businesses interested in joining Pinellas County's redevelopment efforts. Businesses that redevelop a brownfield site may be eligible for tax incentives, job creation incentives, loan guarantees, sales tax credits, site assessment assistance, and/or liability protection. In essence, the Brownfield Program combines redevelopment opportunities and economic development programs to enhance economic vitality and overall quality of life.

Enterprise Zones

An Enterprise Zone is a geographic area targeted for economic revitalization. The program encourages environmental improvement and business reinvestment to re-create economically and environmentally sound workplaces with significant cost savings for employers. Pinellas County has Enterprise Zones in its two largest cities, St. Petersburg and Clearwater (see **Figure 14a**). St. Petersburg's Enterprise Zone encompasses 10 square miles in its downtown and midtown areas (see **Figure 14b**). Clearwater's Enterprise Zone encompasses 0.35 square miles in its downtown area (see **Figure 14c**). The Enterprise Zone program allows Pinellas County companies to receive tax credits and financial incentives while improving the quality of life for the county's citizens and business community. Enterprise Zone business incentives include Enterprise Zone jobs tax credit (applied to either corporate income taxes, or sales and use taxes), Enterprise Zone property tax credit (applied to corporate income tax), sales tax refund for building materials used in rehabilitation of real property, sales tax refund for business machinery and equipment, and the Community Contribution Tax Credit Program. In essence, Enterprise Zones combine financial resources and tax incentives with improving the environment to implement a comprehensive redevelopment plan.

Land Development Regulations and Other Codes

In order to facilitate business recruitment and employment expansion efforts, it may be necessary to revise certain land development regulations and other codes to add design flexibility, particularly for redevelopment projects. At minimum, a policy is needed for researching potential land development regulation changes in ways that appropriately promote the economy without degrading community and environmental quality. Possible changes could help facilitate new construction projects and renovate older commercial/industrial buildings for a variety of mixed-use, residential and commercial projects. As an example, in some cases there may be potential for existing properties to be redeveloped at higher intensities in order to accommodate more jobs on less land. Doing so would likely require amendments to existing land development regulations. Because of Pinellas County's near built out status and increasing emphasis on redevelopment, a shift to a more redevelopment-friendly code could be warranted, and development standards that better facilitate building rehab and reuse should be considered. In addition, the County is evaluating ways to streamline the development review process in an effort to promote efficiency and reduce costs.



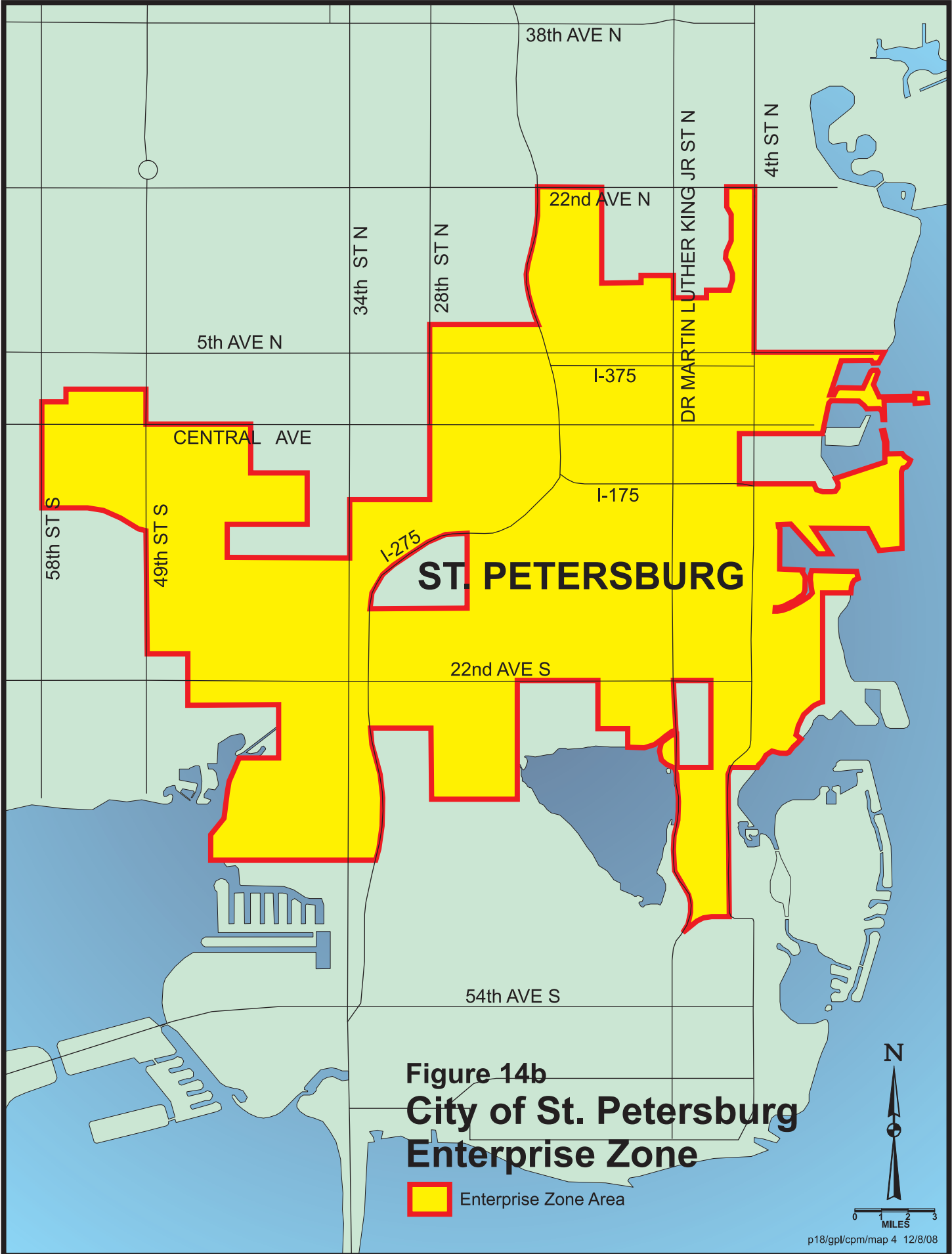

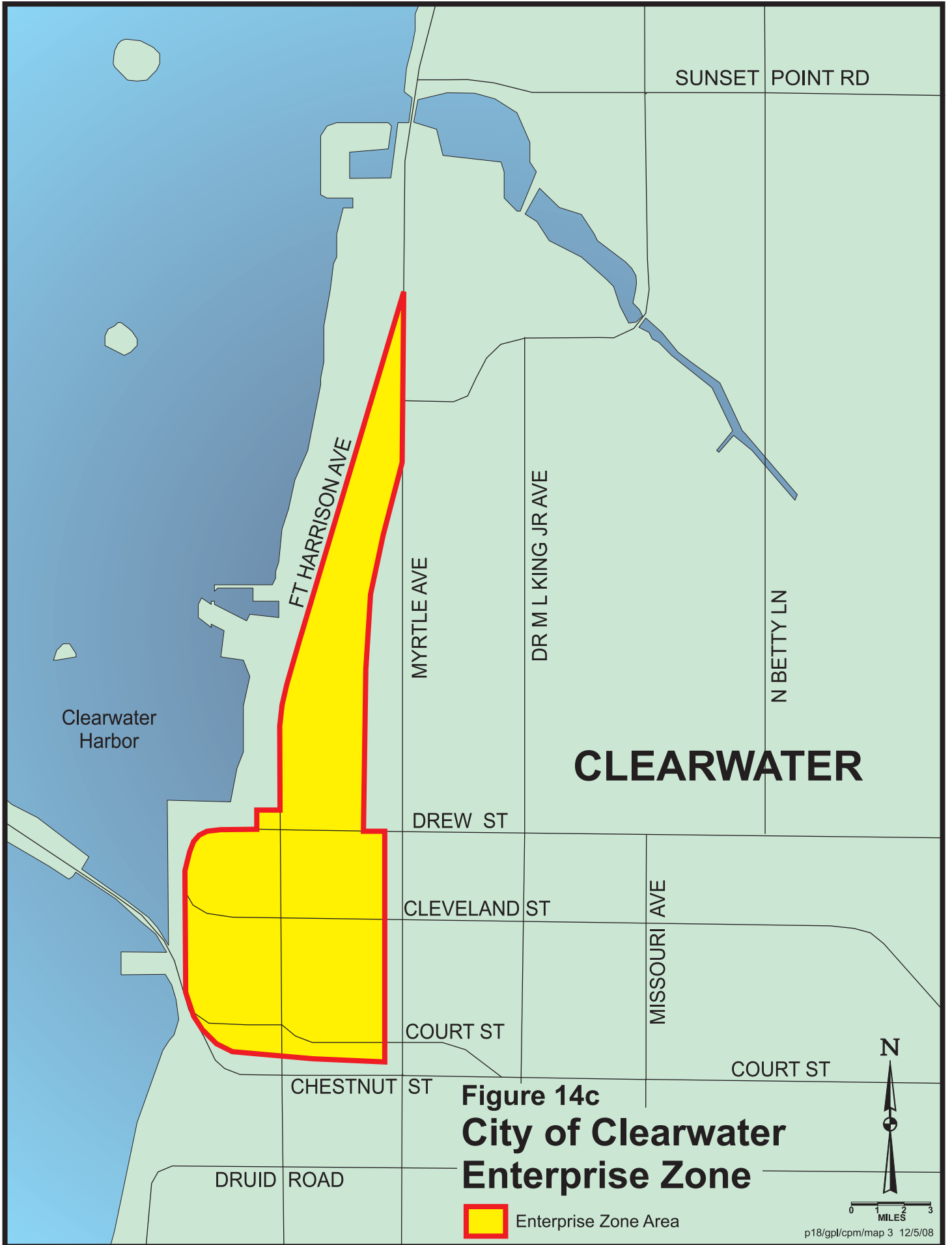


Figure 14b
**City of St. Petersburg
Enterprise Zone**

 Enterprise Zone Area





Business Support Services

Pinellas County is committed to supporting the training of tomorrow's workforce through unique workforce development programs, internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training, fellowships, entrepreneurial training, continuing professional education, and extensive partnerships with local colleges and universities. It should be a policy of the County to help sustain such needed services and to continue support for programs that help develop and bring in new businesses.

While much of the emphasis of this Chapter has been on targeted industries and primary employers, small businesses and entrepreneurs remain vital to the well-being of the local economy. They provide many innovations, jobs and services for Pinellas County residents. Therefore, small business assistance and classes/training for new start ups and entrepreneurs should continue into the future, including the County's Small Business Enterprise Program that allows small businesses to place bids for County purchases from \$5,000 up to \$25,000. Efforts to identify and evaluate other potential methods of small business and entrepreneur assistance is warranted as well.

Business Incentives Programs

Business incentives have become an important tool for economic development programs all across the country. They are often used to help lure prospective companies to locate or relocate to the local area. Recruiting primary businesses and targeted industries is becoming increasingly competitive, and incentives often become the dealmaker for such efforts.

Incentives are numerous and varied. They could be awarded to a company based on certain criteria, such as the number and wage scale of jobs created, transit-oriented development, green building design and overall design quality. Incentives also come in the form of tax credits, workforce training grants, infrastructure improvement grants, small business development, and (re)development assistance. Revenues to assist in financing such incentives can be raised from various sources, such as industrial revenue bond fees. Many of the programs originate and are administered at the State level.

Pinellas County currently employs a broad incentives policy and utilizes many business investment tools, primarily geared toward the recruitment, retention and growth of targeted industries. Several of these incentives are listed by type and discussed below.

Job Creation Tools

STATE OF FLORIDA QUALIFIED TARGET INDUSTRY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program (QTI) is available for companies that create high-wage jobs in targeted, high value-added industries. This incentive returns a portion of taxes paid by the business after the company meets its job creation and wage commitments. Pre-qualified businesses receive tax refunds of \$3,000 per net new-to-Florida job. Additional 'per job' bonuses are available for businesses paying 150 percent or more of the average annual wage or locating in Enterprise Zones or Brownfield designated areas.

QUALIFIED DEFENSE CONTRACTOR TAX REFUND

The Qualified Defense Contractor Tax Refund may be up to \$5,000 per job created or saved in Florida through the conversion of defense jobs to civilian production, the acquisition of a new

defense contract or the consolidation of a defense contract which results in at least a 25 percent increase in Florida employment or a minimum of 80 jobs.

JOB CREATION INCENTIVE GRANT

This investment tool is available for companies that create jobs paying at least 150 percent of the average county wage in targeted, high-value added industries, with a capital investment of at least \$50 million in Pinellas County. The grant award is equal to \$500 per new job created for jobs paying 150 percent of the average county wage and \$1,000 per new job created for jobs paying 200 percent of the average county wage.

Employee Training Tools

QUICK RESPONSE TRAINING

This is a customer driven training program designed as an inducement to secure new value-added business to Florida as well as provide existing businesses the necessary training for expansion. Training is limited to 18 months or less and can be conducted at the business' own facility, at the training provider's facility or at a combination of sites that best meet the needs of the business. Eligible projects are new or expanding/existing Florida businesses that produce exportable goods or services, create new permanent, full-time jobs and employ Florida workers who require customized entry-level skills training.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM

This program provides training to currently employed workers at Florida companies for the purpose of maintaining competitiveness in a global economy and for business retention. Training can be conducted at the business facility, the training provider's facility or a combination of sites. The Program is open to all Florida businesses that have been in operation for at least one year, have at least one full-time employee and require training for existing employees. Businesses must provide a matching contribution to the project.

Redevelopment Incentive Tools

BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT BONUS

This is a program that is available to encourage redevelopment and job creation within designated Brownfield areas. Pre-approved applicants receive tax refunds of up to \$2,500 per new job created in a designated Brownfield area. The amount of the refund is equal to 20 percent of the average annual wage of the new jobs created. Refunds are based upon taxes paid by the business. No more than 25 percent of the total refund approved may be paid in any single fiscal year. The Brownfield Redevelopment Bonus may be awarded in addition to the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund. Qualifying companies must be pre-approved by State agencies prior to committing to a new location.

ENTERPRISE ZONE INCENTIVES

Tax incentives are offered to businesses located within designated Enterprise Zones. Florida offers an assortment of tax incentives to businesses that choose to create employment within an Enterprise Zone, which is a specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalization. These include Jobs Tax Credit, Business Machinery and Equipment Refund, Property Tax Credit and the Community Contribution Tax Credit Program. The two Enterprise Zones in Pinellas County are depicted in **Figure 14**.

Tax Credit Tools

URBAN JOB TAX CREDIT

This is a tax credit incentive for eligible new or expanding businesses creating new full-time jobs located in a designated area of St. Petersburg (see **Figure 15**). Companies within specified industries can receive a \$500 credit per job, which can be taken against either the state corporate income tax or the state sales and use tax (can only be taken against one).

CAPITAL INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT

This is a tax credit used to attract and grow capital-intensive industries in the form of an annual credit against corporate income tax for up to 20 years in an amount equal to five percent of the eligible capital costs. Eligible costs include expenses incurred in the acquisition, construction, installation and equipping of a project. Amount of annual credit may not exceed a specific percentage of annual corporate income tax liability. Each qualified applicant must be in a designated high impact sector, create at least 100 new full-time jobs and make a cumulative investment of at least \$25 million. Qualifying companies must be pre-approved by State agencies prior to committing to a new location.

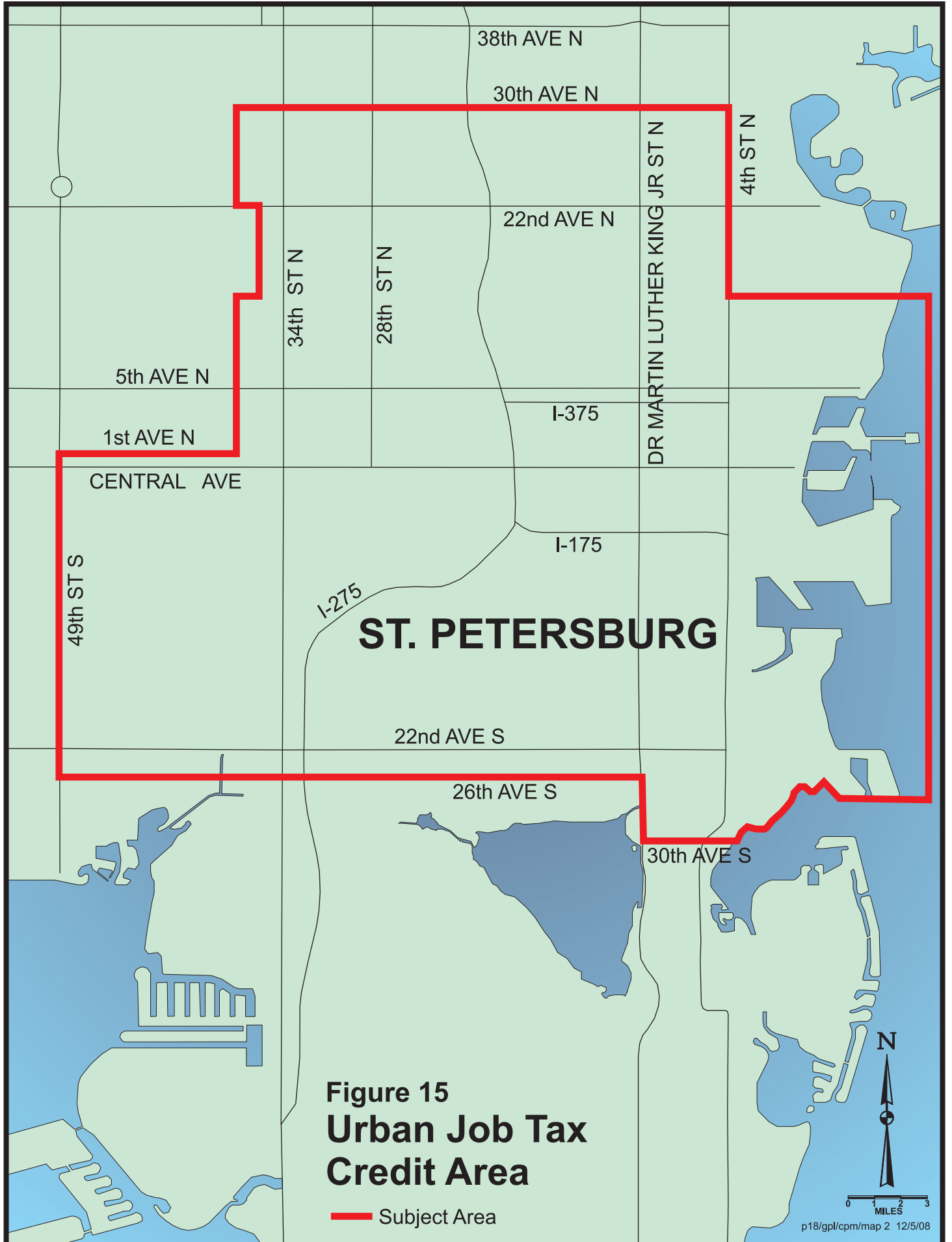
HIGH IMPACT PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE GRANT

This is a negotiated incentive used to attract and grow major high-impact facilities in Florida. Pre-approved applicants must be in high-impact industry sectors, create at least 100 new full-time jobs (75 for R&D companies) in a three year period and make a cumulative investment of at least \$100 million (\$75 million for R&D companies) in a three year period. Once certified, the high impact business is awarded 50 percent of their eligible award and is given the remaining balance once project goals are met.

Infrastructure Tools

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRANSPORTATION FUND

Grant funding can be awarded to local governments in need of assistance for transportation projects that will serve as an inducement for a company's retention, expansion or relocation to Pinellas County. The Economic Development Transportation Fund is an incentive tool designed to alleviate transportation problems that adversely impact a specific company's location or expansion decision. These grants are limited to \$2 million and are awarded by the State to the local government for public transportation facility improvements.



International Trade Zone Tools

FOREIGN TRADE ZONE

This is a cost benefit program available to local companies involved in international trade. It was created to enhance U.S. production and job opportunities by deferring, reducing or eliminating formal customs entries, eliminating duty on goods processed and exported from the zone, as well as materials and parts used in production. Additional benefits include a reduction in federal excise taxes and elimination of quota restrictions. The boundaries of Pinellas County's Foreign Trade Zone is depicted in **Figure 16**.

Pinellas County Economic Development's international trade services include export counseling, international trade missions, educational seminars, market research, overseas promotion, and trade office assistance. Pinellas County's global strategy includes improving economic, commercial, educational and cultural relationships with the numerous foreign markets that represent potential business opportunities for Pinellas County companies.

Other Incentives

INDUSTRIAL REVENUE BONDS

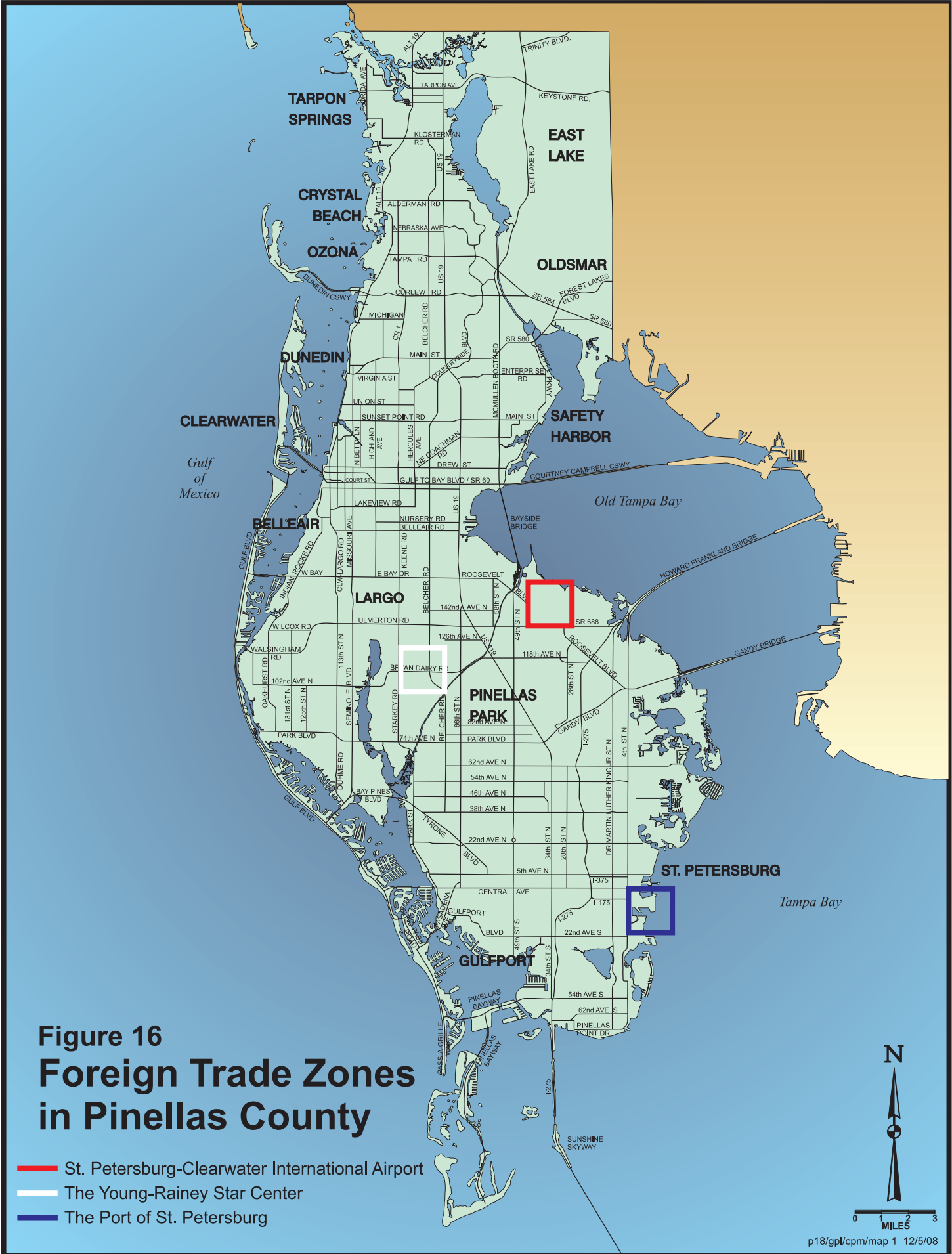
Industrial Revenue Bonds are tax-free, below-market-rate, long-term financing of fixed assets for qualified manufacturing and 501(c) 3 non-profit organizations. Industrial Revenue Bonds are issued by local governments on behalf of private companies to finance land, building and equipment. They cannot be used for inventory, working capital or refinancing of existing debt. There is no minimum project size (\$1 million is considered to be the minimum for economic feasibility) with a \$10 million maximum.

ENTERPRISE BONDS

The State of Florida provides financial assistance through the Enterprise Bond Program. The program offers tax-exempt, low-interest bond financing to qualified manufacturing and 501(c) 3 non-profit organizations. This program was designed to improve low cost capital availability to Florida's growing and expanding businesses to allow them to be more competitive in the global and domestic marketplace. Loan amounts range between \$500,000 and \$1.2 million in Pinellas County.

SALES AND USE TAX EXEMPTIONS

These include tax exemptions for manufacturing machinery and equipment, electricity used in the manufacturing process, maintenance or repair of certain aircraft, pollution control abatement or monitoring, semiconductor, defense and space technology, and the labor component of research and development expenditures.



Maintaining and Expanding Business Assistance Programs

To remain competitive in the primary business and targeted industry recruitment process, it is imperative that Pinellas County continue its broad incentives program and policies supporting grants. Consideration could be given to enhancing the County's economic development assistance mechanisms in the following ways, some of which have been discussed previously in this chapter:

- *Infrastructure investment*, by directing public improvements in a manner that helps assure adequate infrastructure in support of targeted industries. Regional stormwater systems provide one example.
- *Land assembly and cost*, through establishment of a program to assist with both the mechanics and cost of assembling the land area necessary to accommodate expansion and location of targeted industries.
- *Tax incentive*, by adding to the current roster of incentives, including Qualified Targeted Industry bonus allotments.
- *Utilization of revenues*, raised from various sources such as industrial revenue bond fees to be applied to assisting with the location and expansion of targeted industry.

Partnership Opportunities

Effective partnerships with local municipalities, regulatory agencies, community development groups, local colleges and universities, the Tampa Bay Technology Forum, and the private sector are needed for a successful economic development and redevelopment program. Regional coordination can help facilitate the growth and retention of businesses throughout the Tampa Bay area. The Tampa Bay Partnership is an example of a regional organization focused on stimulating economic growth and economic development. Such organizations play crucial roles in bringing various stakeholders together and championing regional economic causes. The Florida High Tech Corridor Council expands the cooperative regional boundaries beyond Tampa Bay to include 23 separate counties spanning the breadth of central Florida. It's mission is to attract, retain and grow high tech industry and the workforce to support it. As a prime player in the Tampa Bay region's and central Florida's economic future, it is important for Pinellas County to remain involved at the regional level. Local intergovernmental coordination is also important and is particularly crucial in Pinellas County considering the 25 local governments that occupy it. Coordination with the School Board, area colleges and universities can provide a more effective means of workforce education and training. The County should also engage the private sector as opportunities arise for beneficial public/private partnerships.

By establishing industry associations, through organizations such as the Florida Medical Manufacturers Consortium and Bay Area Manufacturers Association, the Pinellas community has created a network of industry members, educational and governmental partners with vested interests in expanding targeted industry sectors that create skilled high-wage jobs. Industry organizations promote collaboration and business development throughout Pinellas County and Florida, creating a competitive and strong industry base. For example, the STAR Technology Enterprise Center, Tampa Bay's manufacturing technology accelerator, is

committed to the region's rapid growth of high-tech companies. The accelerator promotes and encourages the development of new technology and expedites products to market.

The Young-Rainey STAR (Science, Technology and Research) Center provides a prime example of a successful economic development partnership. The Center is the nation's first successful conversion from a former U.S. Department of Energy defense manufacturing facility to a commercial, high technology center. The STAR Center's success signifies the commitment to economic development by local public and private enterprises who work together to redevelop, revitalize and transition aging facilities to commercially viable market space. The STAR Center has been the recipient of several national, state and regional awards acknowledging the successful facility conversion. As of 2007, with the addition of STAR IV, a new 150,000 square foot building, the Young-Rainey STAR Center campus encompasses 1.2 million square feet of manufacturing and office space. At 98 percent occupancy, the Center is a hub of high tech, manufacturing and defense industry leaders. Because of its success, the STAR Center program should continue and similar opportunities should be sought.

SYNERGY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AND QUALITY COMMUNITY GOALS

It is important for Pinellas County to employ an aggressive economic (re)development program for many reasons. The competition for attracting high-paying businesses is strong and Pinellas must compensate for the constraints imposed by its built out status and lack of vacant developable land. It is also imperative, however, that economic (re)development be sensitive to environmental and community concerns. By focusing economic, environmental and quality community efforts in unison, a better all-around Pinellas County can emerge.

Economic initiatives and the redevelopment process should synergize with, and enhance where possible, the County's environmental and quality community goals in the following ways:

Environmental Enhancement – As discussed previously in various sections of this Element, the redevelopment process provides an opportunity to improve degraded environmental conditions that have occurred as a result of past unsustainable building practices. New building and development techniques, such as Low Impact Design and Green Building standards, can improve stormwater runoff, noise, light pollution, and other negative environmental impacts.

Promote Livability and Design Flexibility – A strategic approach to mixed-use redevelopment is paramount to continued economic expansion in a community that values the parks and beaches that make it among the most livable in the nation. Mixed-use development and other types of design flexibility provide opportunities to increase density/intensity where appropriate, and help achieve improved development plans, streetscapes and livability concepts that are compact, pedestrian-friendly, and provide housing options in close proximity to employment centers that helps ease traffic congestion and reduces worker commutes. The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed a Livable Communities Model Code that addresses these issues. Please see the *Transportation Element* for more information.

Compatibility with Community Character – All redevelopment and infill development projects should be compatible with the character of the surrounding community. Pinellas County has many areas that take pride in their unique character. Many economic related projects will be

located in existing industrial zoned districts where this is less of a concern. The less intensive office-type uses, however, have the potential to be sited in a much broader range of land use designations, and need to fit in with, and not detract from, the surrounding area.

Historic and Architectural Preservation – The preservation of historic and significant architectural resources should be encouraged through the redevelopment process wherever feasible. The rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of certain buildings and properties can give them new life while refurbishing and enhancing their unique qualities for the enjoyment of current and future generations. The County may consider an historic and architectural preservation incentives program to help facilitate the protection of such resources.

Promote and Support Quality of Life Enhancements – Pinellas County is blessed with many natural, cultural and entertainment resources. Through its economic recruitment efforts, the County should promote its local parks, recreation and cultural amenities as quality of life enhancers and business/workforce attractors. Entertainment establishments and retail goods and service providers should also be promoted. The economic (re)development process should benefit from, and must not detrimentally affect such resources.

Enhance Tourism Opportunities and Experiences – In addition to primary businesses and targeted industries, Pinellas County and its municipalities will continue to focus investments in the area's tourism industry. As part of that effort, the County should examine the feasibility of financial and regulatory incentives to help offset the high cost of building new tourist accommodations, and should encourage the renovation of existing properties with historic and/or unique architectural value. In addition, the County should explore and develop collaborative programs to expand economic development and local tourism incentives, initiatives, and opportunities. The County should also continue implementing the Gulf Boulevard Improvement Project, a cooperative endeavor with beach municipalities, and seek additional opportunities to increase the County's attractiveness to tourists.

COMMITMENT TO UNINCORPORATED AREAS

While many of the economic strategies discussed in this Chapter have countywide implications through its Economic Development Department, the County government also has the responsibility for governing the unincorporated areas. Pinellas County's unincorporated areas are home to almost a quarter of a million people living in many communities that are spread out in various sections of the County (see **Figure 11** in Chapter 3 for a mapped depiction of the County's unincorporated areas). The County must remain committed to the economic vitality of the unincorporated areas. As part of that commitment, specific strategies should be developed for these areas based on collected data, citizen and business input, and community need. For much more information on the unincorporated areas of Pinellas County, please see the *Future Land Use and Quality Communities Element* of this Comprehensive Plan.