

**Economic Development Plan and Marketing Strategy  
Executive Summary Update**

**Ocala/Marion County Economic  
Development Corporation**

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Connecting Companies With Communities™

## ■ COMMUNITY STRENGTHS/ASSETS VS. WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES

A critical aspect of developing an economic development strategy is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a community in terms of resources and business environment. The following assessment is derived from the perspective of a site selection consultant with inputs from local employers and stakeholders from the community.

STRENGTHS/ASSETS	WEAKNESSES/CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateway to serve Florida, Caribbean and South America.</li> <li>• Access to I-75, I-10 and FL Turnpike.</li> <li>• Access to Gainesville airport and three major airports.</li> <li>• Ocala airport: 7,467' runway with tower.</li> <li>• Rail access . . . potential for Magna Business Park</li> <li>• College of Central FL training resources.</li> <li>• Access to the Univ. of FL (R&amp;D and students).</li> <li>• Equine center with national reputation.</li> <li>• High quality medical care.</li> <li>• Skills derived from diverse manufacturing presence.</li> <li>• “Hidden” workforce of retirees.</li> <li>• Multiple sites available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived as retirement community.</li> <li>• Although high growth, average age is high and worker participation is low.</li> <li>• Four-year+ adult college attainment low.</li> <li>• Key voter profile is retired, fixed income and anti-growth.</li> <li>• Travel time to major airports &gt;1 hour.</li> <li>• I-75 capacity around Tampa is issue.</li> <li>• Limited capacity of water, sewer and landfill operations.</li> <li>• Broadband capacity limited in portions of county.</li> <li>• Energy cost is high relative to other southern communities.</li> <li>• Industrial sites in low readiness state.</li> <li>• Limited contemporary buildings available.</li> <li>• Lack of QOL for young professionals.</li> <li>• Lack of entertainment, sports and convention venues.</li> <li>• Limited relationships with Univ. of FL.</li> <li>• Limited access to venture capital (for small business growth).</li> </ul>

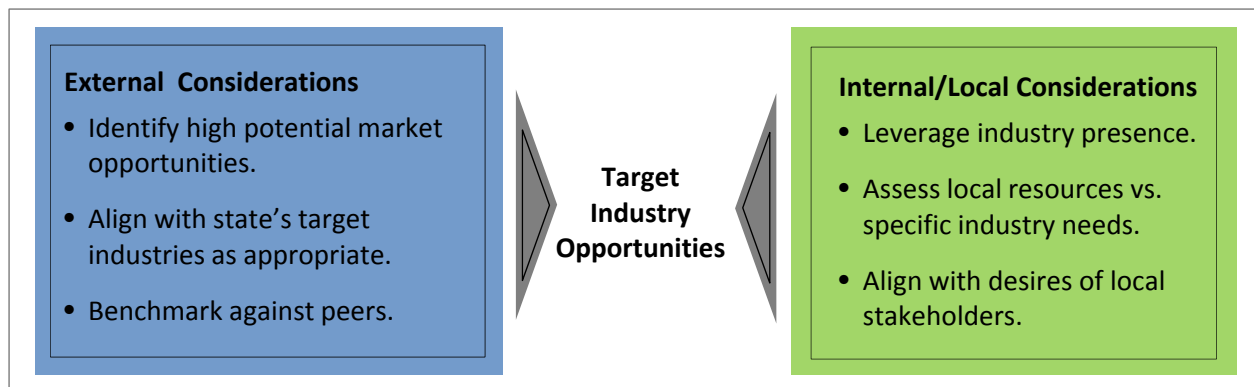
## ■ TARGET INDUSTRY IDENTIFICATION

In selecting target industries for Ocala/Marion County, there were specific objectives that were incorporated into the process:

- Growth potential and stability of industry over a reasonable time horizon.
- Wage/skill levels and number of jobs that can be produced.
- Competitive strength of location to attract specific industry.
- Alignment within cluster vs. diversification of industry.

Within the selection process, there were both external and internal/local considerations (as outlined below) that required research and evaluation. A meeting with a cross-section of community stakeholders was conducted to gather feedback on local interest in specific industries as well as interviews with local employers from existing industries to gain insight as to why they are located in the county.

### Six Key Considerations for Making Target Industry Selections



## ■ TARGET INDUSTRY IDENTIFICATION

### MANUFACTURING OPPORTUNITIES

- Metal, plastic and composite parts and components manufacturing for aerospace, electronics and other industries located within 250 miles of Ocala.
- Regional modification/fixture fabrication center for solar panels and other energy-related products.
- Regional applications center for solar and other renewable energy products.
- Boat fabrication and production of other recreation vehicles/equipment.
- Medical device and bio material production center in support of Univ. of Florida R&D activity.
- Windows, doors, cabinets and other construction-related products.
- Food, nutraceutical and some niche pharmaceuticals for human/equine.
- Modification center for specialty vehicles.

### REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION CENTER FOR FL

- Industrial products.
- Consumer/retail products.
- FDA-certified distribution center (food, nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, bioproducts and medical equipment).
- Construction-related products (windows, doors, structural components, tools, etc.).
- Energy-related products (solar panels, small wind turbines, other power generation and transmission parts and equipment, energy management and conservation products).

### BACK OFFICE/SHARED SERVICES CENTER

- Customer Service Center
  - Sales support
  - Technical support
  - Billing/issue resolution
- Insurance processing center
- Credit card support center

### PROF./TECHNICAL/CREATIVE SERVICES

- Legal
- Accounting
- Engineering
- Internet web site and related services
- Software application services
- Graphic designers
- Medical/dental lab services

### OTHER SERVICES

- Aircraft-related repair/maintenance (engine, frame and avionics)

**■ BUSINESS PARK EVALUATION**

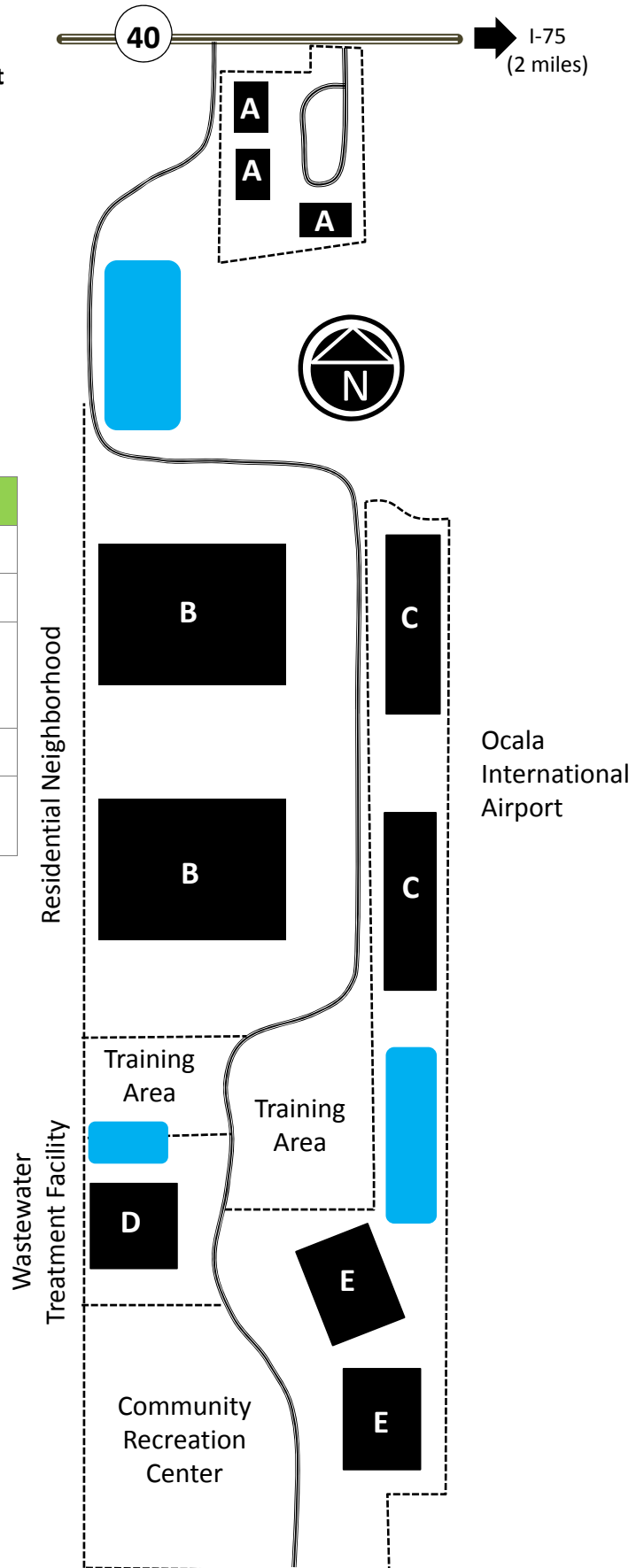
**Ocala Business Park at Ocala International Airport**

Under full build-out, the estimated available space within the park could be:

- 225,000 sq ft of flex space (3 buildings)
- 3 million sq ft large warehouse space (two buildings)
- 800,000 sq ft of intermodal or aircraft maintenance space (2 buildings)
- 1.3 million sq ft of manufacturing /flex space (3 buildings)

Building	Size	Type of Building
A	75,000 sq ft	Flex space (3 buildings)
B	1.5 million sq ft	Warehouse (2 buildings)
C	400,000 sq ft	Intermodal distribution or aircraft maintenance (2 buildings)
D	450,000 sq ft	Manufacturing/Flex
E	425,000 sq ft	Manufacturing/Flex (2 buildings)

Scale: 1" = 1,333'

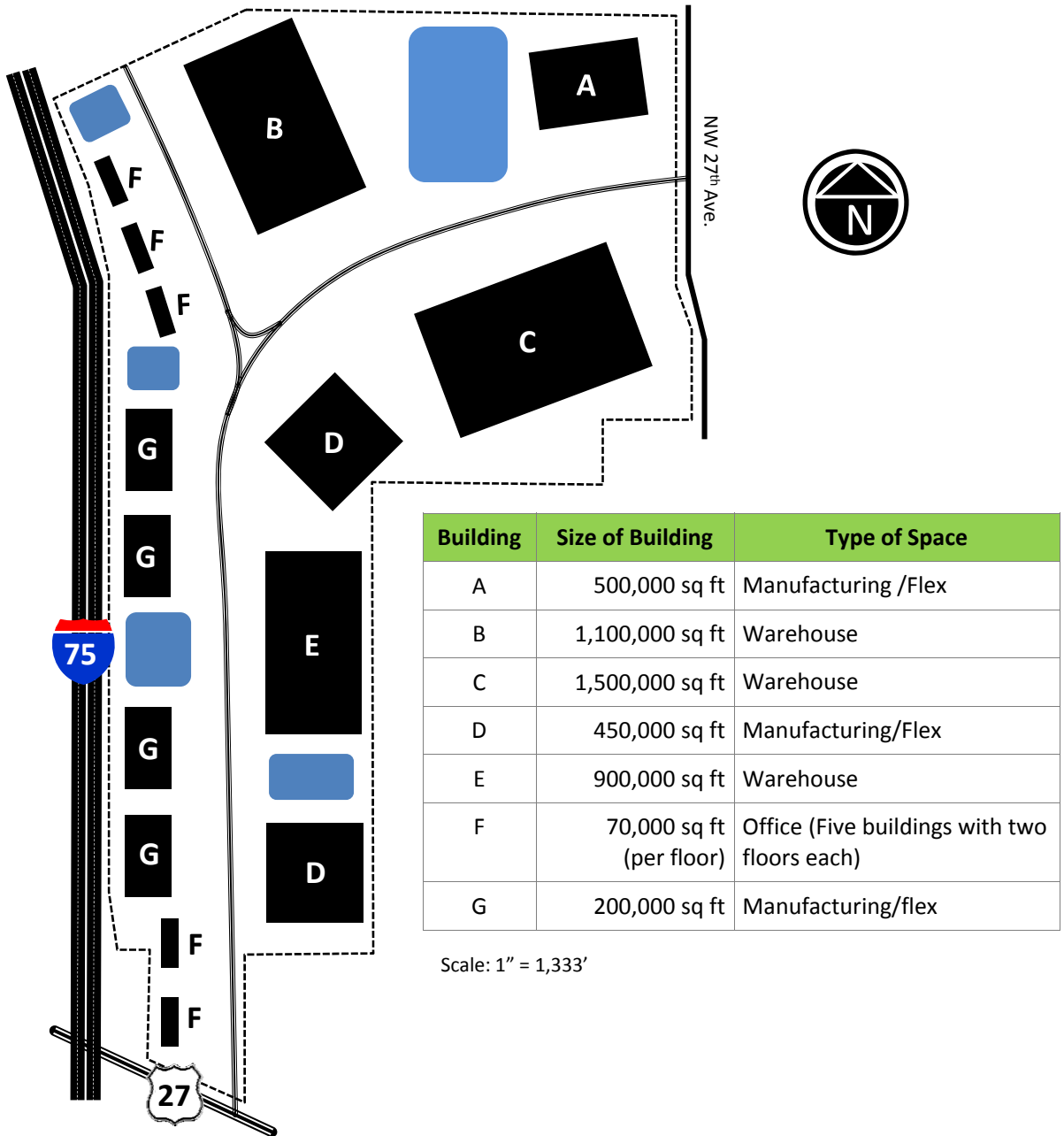


■ BUSINESS PARK EVALUATION

**Magna Business Park**

Under full build-out, the estimated available space within the park could be:

- 3.5 million sq ft of large warehouse space (3 buildings)
- 2.2 million sq ft of manufacturing/flex space (7 buildings)
- 700,000 sq ft of office space (assuming five buildings with two floors each).



## ■ MARKETING STRATEGY

A successful marketing strategy is based on the understanding and positioning of the resource assets a community has and the ability to communicate them to those industries of interest to the community that would value from the resources. Outlined below is the marketing process for promoting the community and the available tools that can be utilized.

### Marketing Process


#### PHASE I

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1. Build initial marketplace awareness
  2. Screen for key influencers and prospects
    - Site consultants/real estate brokers
    - Media contacts
    - Target companies/industries.
    - Heart of Florida Region
    - Enterprise Florida

Under Phase I within the marketing process steps 1 and 2 go together and are iterative in nature. The marketing team is constantly expanding market awareness while key influencers and prospects are identified.


Phase II (Steps 3 and 4) puts a face on a contact and begins the process on an on-going relationship. The area needs to be thought of beyond a line item in a database but a place that has solid assets and a positive environment for business.

#### PHASE II

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3. Establish/sustain relationships.
  4. On-going multi-media communications.

Phase III is the sales phase where the community confirms its resource assets and engages in final negotiations. This requires a unique set of skills that transcend the traditional marketing approaches.

#### PHASE III

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5. Response to inquires.
  6. Closure on projects.

### Marketing Tools

- Area branding.
- Resource profiles.
- Site/building profiles.
- E-media (web site, e-mails, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.)
- Familiarization tours for influencers and companies)
- Mailing of material packets.
- Media releases.
- Articles/advertising in trade journals, other publications.
- Word of mouth.
- Information Center.
- One-on-one interface at conferences and trade shows.
- Interface with Enterprise Florida and other organizations.

A key aspect of this project is to identify the best types of marketing tools to reach each target industry. The outcome of this project will also prepare a resource profile of the area and develop a prototype site/building profile.

■ **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Perception of Labor Force**

From an data perspective, the Ocala demographics describes an area with an older population with a low level of education attainment and a low workforce participation level. The data is what it is but it does not reflect the situation that sees “retirees” returning to the workforce for full and part-time employment nor does it quantify the value of having access to highly experienced talent. It also does not reflect the impact that Central Florida College has and will have on the education level of the community.

**Recommendations for Addressing This Issue:**

- Details of workforce dynamics will be covered in the area resource profile and in the awareness marketing materials.
- Encourage the existing population to continue to upgrade their skills and maximize high school and beyond attainment.

Parameter	Marion County	Florida	U.S. Average
Population Growth: 2000 to 2008	24.6%	13.8%	7.0%
Education Attainment (4-Yr.+ College)	16.5%	25.7%	27.4%
Median Household Income (2008)	\$41,128	\$48,637	\$52,175
Median Age	43.3	40.1	36.7
Population: 20-34 Yrs. Old	18%	18.7%	20.2%
Population: 35-54 Yrs. Old	24.5%	28.1%	28.9%
Population: 55-64 Yrs. Old	11.0%	11.5%	10.8%
Population: 65+ Yrs. Old	24.2%	17.1%	12.6%
Workforce Participation	52%	61.3%	62.5%
Unemployment (6/10)	13.6%	11.7%	9.5%

**2. Level of Site Readiness and Available Buildings Needs to be Addressed**

A critical resource required for attracting prospective companies and influencers is having “shovel ready” sites and available buildings. Currently, the Ocala Business Park is nearly shovel ready while the Magna site is still in the concept stage. There are some available buildings but many are older and need code upgrades and the ceiling heights are low (<20’).

**Recommendations for Addressing This Issue:**

- Define and complete actions required to make the Ocala Business Park “shovel ready” and seek the certification status of Shovel Ready. MS&B will complete this under the existing contract at no additional cost.

Actions required to prepare the site for marketing include signage at the two entrances, clear brush along the SR 40 section of the property, complete the roadway through the site, and have utilities run through the site.

## ■ OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a virtual building design for several sites within the Ocala Business Park and seek approvals for site layout and building design from the city. This will minimize the delay in getting a building constructed on a site without actually providing a spec. building.
- Consider offering to market the Merillat building, and if it is sold, make arrangements to construct a replacement building in the Ocala Business Park or in the Magna Business Park (if available) at the time of need in the future.

### 3. Enhance Marketing Activities to Attract Prospective Companies to the Area

The area needs enhanced marketing efforts to expand market efforts and attract businesses that have relocation plans as the economy begins to expand in the near future.

#### Recommendations for Addressing This Issue:

- The Resource Profile and Site/Building Profiles developed from this project will be utilized with the upcoming marketing campaign in the fall.
- Advice on reaching certain influencers and companies/industries will be provided as an output from this project that will be completed in August.

### 4. Address the High Industrial Energy Rates Within the City of Ocala

For industrial clients that require significant quantities of electric power (process industries; glass operations; machinery intense operations; food coolers, cookers and freezers; etc.), there needs to be access to lower cost power (5 to 8 cents/kWh). The current rate offered by the City of Ocala is above 10 cents/kWh.

There is also a strong market demand for access to green (non-fossil fuel) based energy.

#### Recommendations for Addressing This Issue:

- Short term: offer a competitive industrial rate for local industrial customers.
- Longer term: support the development of a biofuels energy plant derived from horse/cow manure and other locally available sources.

Electric Power Rates for Selected States  
(Cents/kWh)

