

11-11-2011

Cooper City

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Community Background Report

Cooper City

Boundaries

North: Griffin Road
South: Sheridan Street
East: SW 136th Avenue
West: SW 106th Avenue

Community Type: Municipality

Report Last Updated: November 2011

History¹

The history of Cooper City is closely tied to that of the Town of Davie. Originally inhabited by the Seminoles, the Davie/Cooper City area first saw an attempt to prepare the swampy land for development in 1906, when R.P. Davie of Colorado bought 27,000 acres, constructed irrigation and drainage canals, and sold the land in 10-acre parcels through advertisements around the nation. The early settlers of Davie/Cooper City were farmers, grew oranges and raised livestock.

The current site of Cooper City was once Wacico Groves, short for the Walsh Citrus Company, based in Indiana. There are two conflicting stories about how the founder of Cooper City, Morris Cooper, obtained the land. One story states that Mr. Cooper purchased the Wacico Groves after the 1947-1948 floods devastated the groves; the other claims that the purchase was made from the University of Miami. Regardless, Mr. Cooper envisioned a well-zoned community, and officially incorporated the municipality as Cooper City in 1959. By the end of that year, 85 residents lived in 35 completed homes. A significant portion of those residents (27) were dedicated solely to helping the community develop (i.e., providing street lights, paved streets and signs, and making arrangements for mail service and negotiations for a school). During the 1960s, Cooper City began to resemble a fully functioning city: the first baby was born there in 1960, the first community newspaper was published in 1960, Griffin Road was paved in 1963, Stirling Road was paved in 1967, and the first mayor was elected in 1963.

At the time of Cooper's death in 1975, the city's population had grown to more than 4,000 people. Suellen Fardelmann was elected Police Commissioner in 1978, and served her first term as mayor in 1983. She was the first woman mayor of Cooper City and served 22 years in that position, making her the longest-serving elected official in Cooper City history.

Today the municipality is generally characterized as a suburban, low-density residential area, with supporting retail and community facilities. In 2007 the city was recognized as one of "America's Ten Best Cities for Families" by Family Circle magazine.² Cooper City's motto is "Something Special". Over the years, the city has maintained the strong sense of community on which it was founded.³

Community Dynamics

During the late 1980s, Cooper City found itself at a crossroads in terms of growth management. The city was seeking to increase its tax base by encouraging more commercial or industrial development, and proposed allowing this development on land designated for residential use.⁴ The city submitted applications to the county to rezone residential land for commercial use along Flamingo Road, on Sheridan, and on 115.9 acres of land near what is now Brian Piccolo Park.⁵ The city met with significant resistance from residents to commercial growth in what was a bedroom community.⁶ The project also drew heavy opposition from county planners and from neighboring Sunshine Ranches residents, who were concerned about how the changes could disrupt their rural lifestyle.⁷ Eventually, the proposals were withdrawn.

During this same time, another event was taking place that had the potential to change the city's character and tax base. The area's historic dairy farms were being sold, and the land annexed to neighboring jurisdictions. In 1986 Gianolio Dairy's 630-acre homestead was sold to develop 1,500 new homes and 500,000 square feet of office space (the land had been annexed to Cooper City in 1985).⁸ The planned development was anticipated to bring new revenue to Cooper City by increasing the city's population by 4,500 people and creating at least 1,000 jobs.⁹ At the same time, the southern end of a 1,300-acre farm formerly owned by the Pownall family was also annexed by Cooper City.¹⁰ The sale of these dairy farms marked the beginning of rapid development of the area's agricultural land. Between 1984 and 1988, Broward County's land devoted to agriculture fell from 151,346 acres to 13,105.¹¹

The trend continued well into the next decade, when the last operating dairy farm in the Miami and Broward County area, the family-owned Waldrep Dairy Farm, was sold in 2005 after operating for seven decades.¹² The developer, TOUSA, proposed a transformation of the 500-acre farm into a \$1 billion development of homes, multistory condo towers and commercial space, called "Monterra".¹³ Two years prior, in 2003, Cooper City had annexed the Waldrep farm after beating out the Town of Davie, which also had hopes of absorbing the land.¹⁴ The city speculated that the annexation would create a strong tax base and generate up to \$5 million in property taxes. Additional revenues would come from construction, building permits, garbage fees, and water service fees.¹⁵ The project became a campaign issue during Cooper City elections in 2005 and 2008. Many residents harbored concerns about housing density, heavily congested roads and overcrowded schools, once Monterra was developed.¹⁶ Despite these concerns, the city pressed on and worked with TOUSA to rezone the site, allowing the developers to create a community development district, a quasi-governmental entity that could borrow money in the bond market and tax Monterra residents to pay off the bonds issued for infrastructure improvements.¹⁷

After the real estate market collapsed in 2008, TOUSA filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and stopped all work at the site, after having invested \$100 million in Monterra's development. Residents and city leaders were left wondering what would become of the sprawling project and often referred to it as the "dust bowl".¹⁸ The following year, two well-known developers, Jimm Carr and Armando Codina, purchased more than 400 acres of the 530-acre parcel (one of the largest undeveloped sites in Broward County) at a 29 percent discount.¹⁹ To make the numbers work in a freefalling housing market, Carr and Codina scaled back the density to 1,600 homes and lowered the prices. Eventually, they also plan to build a drug store, a grocery store, and retail shops.²⁰ Today, Monterra is the only new residential development within 20 miles of Cooper City.²¹ The reduced density has eased residents' concerns about city services being stretched thin.²² However, the decreased density and downscaled homes, selling from the \$200,000s to the low \$400,000s, will also decrease the expected tax windfall for the city; the amount of the decrease is still uncertain.²³

The Monterra sales center opened in 2010. The developers are turning a profit by selling new homes for prices competitive with what foreclosed homes, short-sale deals, and other new homes in the area fetch.²⁴ In 2011 sales at Monterra were strong, and considered as a “pocket of strength” in South Florida’s housing market.²⁵

Demographic Highlights²⁶

Cooper City experienced a modest increase in population during the period between 2000 and 2010.

In 2010 the population of Cooper City was 28,547 and population density was 3,533 per square mile. Between 2000 and 2010, the city experienced a two percent increase in population.

The majority of the city’s population is White. However, this was also the only racial category to experience a decrease in population during the last decade. The Hispanic population has grown significantly over the last decade and now makes up 23 percent of the total.

In 2010 the majority (85 percent) in Cooper City was White. This group experienced a small, two percent decrease between the 2000 and 2010 Census counts. In 2010 Asians made up 6 percent of the population, while Blacks made up 5 percent. Although Asians and Blacks still are small minorities, the Asian population rose by 27 percent between 2000 and 2010, and the Black population rose by 63 percent. With respect to ethnicity, the Hispanic population has experienced a 50 percent growth over the last decade and now represents 23 percent of Cooper City’s population.

Cooper City’s median age is similar to the county’s median age.

In 2010 the city’s median age was 41, only slightly higher than the county’s median age of 40. It is interesting to note that in 2000 Cooper City’s median age was 37 and the county’s was 38.

The city’s median household income in 2009 was significantly higher than the county’s overall median household income.

In 2009 the median household income in Cooper City was \$90,705, considerably higher than the county’s median household income of \$51,731.

Cooper City is a very stable community: the housing vacancy rate is only three percent, and 89 percent of the housing units are owner-occupied. From 2000 to 2010, the city’s overall housing stock increased by seven percent.

In 2010 there were 9,912 housing units in Cooper City. Of these units, 97 percent were occupied. Most were occupied by homeowners (89 percent), and 11 percent were renter-occupied units. During this same time period, there were 284 vacant units in Cooper City, which represent only 3 percent of the city’s housing units (compared to the 15 percent vacancy rate for the county). Of those housing units that were vacant in Cooper City, 44 percent were reported as for rent or for sale.

Transportation Trends²⁷

The tables below illustrate projected transportation trends in Cooper City.

Forecasted means of transportation to work for employed individuals, 2014

	City	County
Car, Truck, Van to Work	95%	93%
Public Transportation to Work	1%	2%
Other Transportation to Work	0%	2%
Work at Home	4%	4%

Forecasted number of vehicles per household, 2014

	City	County
0 vehicles	2%	7%
1 vehicle	20%	40%
2 vehicles	54%	40%
3 vehicles	20%	10%
4+ vehicles	5%	3%

Travel time to work for the employed population, 2014

	City	County
Work at Home	4%	4%
Less than 15 minutes	14%	16%
15-29 Minutes	32%	33%
30-59 Minutes	41%	38%
60+ Minutes	9%	8%

Average household transportation costs

	City	County
2009	\$10,941.10	\$8,836.33
2014	\$13,406.50	\$10,880.30

Average household transportation costs for public transportation

	City	County
2009	\$798.05	\$555.02
2014	\$1,046.09	\$721.64

The information provided below briefly summarizes the transportation services and projects in Cooper City:

Cooper City's Community Bus Service²⁸

This service is designed to work in conjunction with connections to Broward County Transit Routes 2, 16 and 23. Cooper City also connects with the Town of Davie and the City of Pembroke Pines. The Cooper City Community Bus Service is air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible. There is no fare required when using the community bus service within Cooper City. The service operates Monday through

Saturday, with 45-minute headways. For more information on Cooper City's Community Bus, please go to: <http://www.broward.org/BCT/Services/Documents/coopercity.pdf>

Broward County Transit²⁹

The Broward County Mass Transit Division operates Broward County Transit (BCT), a fixed-route bus system serving nearly all of Broward County's developable area. The following BCT routes provide service to Cooper City:

Route 2: travels along University Drive between Sheridan Street and Stirling Road

Route 16: serves Stirling Road and a portion of Flamingo Road North of Stirling Road

Route 12: intersects with Cooper City for a short distance at Davie Road Extension and University Drive

Cooper City Senior Transportation Service (ages 62 and over)³⁰

Cooper City offers its residents aged 62 and over limited door-to-door transportation to local doctors, pharmacies, Memorial West and Memorial Pembroke Hospitals, local banks and grocery stores. Advance notice is necessary to schedule transportation. Annual registration with the Recreation Department is required.

Comprehensive Plan –Transportation Element³¹:

Cooper City identified the following transportation objectives in its comprehensive plan, adopted by the City Commission of Cooper City in May, 2002, and last updated in December, 2007. The plan states that Cooper City shall:

- Continue to take action at the local level and participate in cooperative intergovernmental plans and programs that will improve safety.
- Continue to take action at the local level and participate in cooperative intergovernmental plans and programs that will increase the availability, efficiency and convenience of transportation facilities, including public transportation.
- Continue to participate in cooperative intergovernmental plans and programs that will improve energy efficiency of the transportation system.
- Continue to maintain and, where feasible, improve the functional relationship between the transportation system and the future land use maps, to ensure that transportation modes and services meet the transportation needs resulting from existing and future residents and land use patterns.
- Coordinate the transportation system with transportation plans and programs of other entities.
- Ensure development does not encroach upon existing rights-of-way or future rights-of-way as provided in the Broward County Trafficways Plan.

Palm Avenue Project³²

The widening of Palm Avenue is a Broward County project that seeks to alleviate the chronic traffic congestion between Stirling and Griffin roads by expanding Palm Avenue from two to four lanes. The city's commission asked the county to implement this project at three different times since 1983 by issuing resolutions. The project was approved by the County Commission Board in 2003 and construction started in January, 2010.

Special Events

Cooper City organizes numerous events each year. Below is a sample of recurring events.

Please visit Cooper City's community calendar for a full list of events:

http://www.coopercityfl.org/index.asp?Type=B_EV&SEC={7AD881AC-E590-483F-9B0B-775F2E9D0AC1}&MODE=LIST

Cooper City Annual 5K Run – Held every March, this 5K race starts on Stirling Road at the Cooper City Sports Complex (10300 Stirling Road) and runs through the community of Embassy Lakes. For more information, call (954) 434-4300, ext. 259.

Cooper City Community Cabaret – The community talent show is held at the Cooper City Community Center (9000 SW 50th Place) in the month of February.

Cooper City Community Center Monthly Potlucks – The Cooper City Community Center (9000 SW 50th Place) hosts monthly, themed luncheons for adult residents. For more information, please call the Community Center at (954) 434-4300, ext. 255.

Cooper City Mom's Club – The local chapter of the Mom's Club (aimed at stay-at-home moms) hosts a monthly meet-and-greet at 10:00 am every third Friday of the month. The event takes place at the Cooper City Pool and Tennis Center (11600 Stonebridge Parkway).

Daddy Daughter Dinner Dance -- Cooper City fathers, stepfathers or grandfathers share a special date with their daughters or granddaughters (2nd grade and up). This event takes place at Pioneer Middle School (5350 Southwest 90th Avenue) in the month of November.

Egg Hunt—As part of their Easter celebration, Cooper City holds two egg hunts. The first one is for children in the fifth grade and younger, held at Brian Piccolo Park (9501 Sheridan Street). The second event, the Tween Twilight Egg Hunt, is for Cooper City middle school children in grades 6, 7, & 8. Contestants search Brian Piccolo Park for the hidden eggs at night, with their flashlights.

Founder's Day—Every April, Cooper City residents come together for the Cooper City Founder's Day Celebration to enjoy parades, arts & crafts, children's activities, bingo and other games, music, and fireworks.

Grandparents Day Celebration - Grandparents and their grandkids gather at the Cooper City Pool and Tennis Center (11600 Stonebridge Parkway) to enjoy an afternoon poolside, honoring grandparents. The event takes place in September on a Sunday afternoon.

Light Up Cooper City - As part of their holiday celebration, the city “lights up” Cooper City Memorial Park (located between City Hall and the Community Center). The event takes place in early December.

Mother & Daughter Tea—Cooper City mothers and their daughters, aged 4 and up, wear party dresses to share a day of tea and entertainment in May, at the Cooper City Community Center (9000 SW 50th Place).

Mom & Son Night of Fun—Cooper City mothers share a special date with their sons (Kindergarten through 5th grade) at the Cooper City Community Center (9000 SW 50th Place). This event takes place in the month of September.

“Pop-In” Family Fun Pool Nights--This event is held the first Friday of each month, April through August, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Cooper City Pool and Tennis Center (11600 Stonebridge Parkway). Families gather to play poolside bingo and other games in the pool.

“Tour de Cooper” Family Bike Ride – In the month of May, residents tour Cooper City in this non-competitive, 3-mile, 6-mile, or 12-mile bike ride. After the ride, participants enjoy music and refreshments. The event starts at the Cooper City Sports Complex (10300 Stirling Road) at 7:30 am.

Trick or Treat Shop to Shop – On the Saturday before Halloween, the Countryside Shops of Cooper City (corner of Flamingo Road and Stirling Road) host a Halloween celebration for children. Please call the Cooper City Community Center for more information at (954)434-4300, ext. 233.

Business Landscape³³

As a bedroom community, Cooper City has had limited business development and its economic base stems primarily from property taxes. Comprised of mainly of single-family residential neighborhoods, the city does have limited, but compatible, commercial-industrial development.³⁴ Although the city does not have any blight or significant deterioration, it does have older commercial centers that need maintenance and repair. The city is encouraging redevelopment or reinvestment in these older centers.³⁵

The following section lists various statistics, business-related initiatives and recent developments that help to describe the Cooper City business landscape.

Top Industries

According to Nielsen 2010 estimates, the following are the top five employing industries in Cooper City:

Employment by Industry	People Employed	% Employed in this Industry	
		Cooper City	Florida
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,341	13.92%	11.81%
Educational Service	1,986	11.81%	7.51%
Retail Trade	1,812	10.77%	13.05%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,680	9.99%	6.18%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,439	8.56%	8.21%

Top Property Taxpayers

Cooper City’s top five property taxpayers in 2010 were:³⁶

Tax Payer	Taxable Assessed Value
CC Broward Property VII LLC	\$27,168,370
IRT Property Co.	\$22,163,770
Publix Supermarkets, Inc.	\$20,117,240
Weingarten Realty Investors	\$17,610,040
SPG Cooper City TR	\$11,440,100
Walmart Stores, Inc.	\$10,712,340

Centre at Stirling & Palm, Inc.	\$10,635,620
Limoch Striling LLC	\$9,440,930
Sunshine Wireless Co., Inc.	\$9,373,210
PG Cooper City TR	\$8,000,000
Total	\$146,661,620

Top Employers

In the year 2010 the city's major employers were:³⁷

Employer	Employees
School Board of Broward County	537
Publix	451
Walmart	304
High Point Treatment Center	179
Winn-Dixie	140
Animal Medical Center	103
Integrated Medical System	99
Cooper City	97
Beverly Hills Café	74
Walgreens	67
Total	2,051

Cooper City's Business Advisory Board

Throughout its history, Cooper City has been recognized as a family-oriented bedroom community. Consequently, businesses developed slowly over the years and its economic base came primarily from real and personal property taxes.³⁸ Providing necessary services to a rapidly expanding population, while preserving the strong sense of community, are the main challenges this municipality faces.³⁹ As the city seeks to continue to be the place “where families can live, work and play”, the desire to attract and retain business has grown. In an effort to support existing businesses and draw new businesses, the city created a Business Advisory Board in February of 2009.⁴⁰ The purpose of the board is to evaluate and analyze the city business codes and to come up with suggestions for modifications to codes that are not in line with the city's motto and philosophy, but that would help in promoting business.⁴¹

Recent Commercial Projects⁴²

Sheridan Station

This project is a 3,360-square-foot, full-service gasoline station with a convenience store, an accessory food service/restaurant area, 12 under-canopy fueling positions, a permanent emergency generator, and a 1,167-square-foot mechanical car wash. It is an outparcel of the Cooper City Commons shopping center, located at the corner of Sheridan Street and Pine Island Road. Construction was completed in the spring of 2011.

CVS Drugstore

A CVS Drugstore was approved, permitted, constructed, and received a certificate of occupancy (CO) in 2010. The approved plans reflect a 12,900-square-foot CVS store with an additional 1,924-square-foot mezzanine, and a drive-thru on the northeast corner of the building. The store is located at the northeast corner of Sheridan Street and Palm Avenue, and opened in early 2011.

Related Links

Cooper City Official Web Page

<http://www.coopercityfl.org>

Cooper City District Map

http://www.coopercityfl.org/vertical/Sites/%7B6B555694-E6ED-4811-95F9-68AA3BD0A2FF%7D/uploads/District_Map_with_Subdivisions_November_2010.pdf

Cooper City Municipal Zoning Codes

<http://199.27.243.5/ZoningDefinitions.htm>

Davie-Cooper City Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.davie-coopercity.org>

Cooper City Community Bus Service

<http://www.broward.org/BCT/Services/Documents/coopercity.pdf>

Cooper City Business Advisory Board

<http://babcoopercity.com>

Monterra Development - Cooper City

<http://www.monterrafl.com>

Palm Avenue Project

<http://www.coopercityfl.org/vertical/Sites/%7B6B555694-E6ED-4811-95F9-68AA3BD0A2FF%7D/uploads/%7B6024E4B6-5099-4C74-BEB1-3B7182E61B82%7D.PDF>

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¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all information in this section was obtained from Cooper City, “History”:

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² Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance. “Cooper City Rated Among 10 Best for Families.” 2007:

<http://www.gflalliance.org/index.php?src=news&refno=87&category=Press%20Releases>

³ Cooper City. “Welcome”: <http://www.coopercityfl.org>

⁴ South Florida Sun Sentinel. “Coconut Creek, Cooper City Seek To Expand Commercial Development.” July 08, 1987. http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1987-07-08/news/8702260819_1_industrial-development-tax-base-cooper-city

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- ¹³ South Florida Sun Sentinel. “Developer scales back: Mixed-use plan for Cooper City site gives way to vision of fewer homes.” March 29, 2009. http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2009-03-29/news/0903280148_1_mixed-use-developments-single-family-homes-future-development
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- ²¹ Ibid.
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the South Florida Planning Council Comparative Profile for 2000 and 2010 Census (http://www.sfrpc.com/census/PL2010/SFTCP2010_CooperCity.pdf). Percentage numbers were rounded.

²⁷ All stats cited in this section are from Simply Maps unless otherwise indicated.

²⁸ Cooper City Community Bus Service. <http://www.broward.org/BCT/Services/Documents/coopercity.pdf>

²⁹ Broward County Transit. <http://www.broward.org/bct/Pages/Default.aspx>

³⁰ Cooper City News & Views-Fall 2011. http://www.coopercityfl.org/vertical/Sites/%7B6B555694-E6ED-4811-95F9-68AA3BD0A2FF%7D/uploads/NewsViews_Fall2011.pdf

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³³ All information cited in this section is from Simply Maps and from the Cooper City Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, FY 2010.

³⁴ Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance-Broward County, “Cooper City.”

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³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Cooper City, Florida-Comprehensive Annual Financial Report- FY Ended September 30, 2010

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³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Cooper City-Business Advisory Board. <http://babcoopercity.com/page5.php>

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*NOTE: The above link seems to be dead, got a “not found” message. Already taken down from the web?

⁴² All projects cited on this section are from the Cooper City Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2010, unless otherwise indicated. <http://www.coopercityfl.org/vertical/Sites/%7B6B555694-E6ED-4811-95F9-68AA3BD0A2FF%7D/uploads/%7B06AE797A-F5DE-4C7A-8DC8-66698CAEBBF9%7D.PDF>