1-1-2011

Town of Lake Park

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Recommended Citation

"Town of Lake Park" (2011). *Palm Beach County*. 7.
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Community Background Report

Town of Lake Park

Boundaries

North: Village of North Palm Beach and North Lake Boulevard
South: City of Riviera Beach and Silver Beach Road
East: Intracoastal Waterway
West: Undefined Boundary

Community Type:

Located in northeastern Palm Beach County, the Town of Lake Park is a primarily residential municipality with some commercial and light industrial areas.[1] The community borders the City of Riviera Beach to the south, the Village of North Palm Beach to the north, and the Intercostal Waterway to the east.

History

The Town of Lake Park had its origins in 1919 when Harry Seymour Kelsey of Boston moved to Florida to develop "Kelsey City." This area would later be known as Lake Park. Kelsey hired Dr. John Nolan and the famous Olmstead brothers (relatives of Frederick Law Olmstead, the founder of landscape architecture) to plan and design the town. They designed a 900-acre community with an 18-hole golf course and a resort. By 1920, Kelsey City was attracting national attention as a revolutionary planned community. The Florida Land Boom spurred growth, and in 1923 the town was officially incorporated.[2]

The real estate boom slowed by 1925, as did development and improvements in Kelsey City. Development was further affected by a hurricane in 1928 which caused great devastation. With the 1929 crash, many residents left Florida, abandoning their homes and businesses. Kelsey himself suffered financial difficulty and returned to Massachusetts. In 1930, the population and business activity of Kelsey City had decreased so much that the state revoked the city's charter.[3]

In 1939, the local garden club petitioned the state to re-incorporate the area, changing the community's name to the Town of Lake Park. With the advent of WWII, military personnel and their families moved into the area, bringing greater prosperity and construction. Multimillionaire John D. McArthur bought property in the area in the mid-1950s and invested in a new water

system and a private sewage treatment company. The population increased again with the arrival of Pratt & Whitney aircraft engine manufacturing to Palm Beach County.[4]

Today, the Town of Lake Park reflects much of the original layout conceived by the Olmsted brothers and Nolan in the early twenties. The architectural styles of the different phases of the area's development are also evident in the town's historic buildings.[5]

Community Dynamics

The Town of Lake Park is a predominantly Black community with a high concentration of poverty. The population is younger and has a lower educational level than the population for Palm Beach County as a whole. Though most of the residents are US nationals, there are pockets of the population from Haiti, Honduras and other Central and Latin American countries who do not speak English. As such, outreach efforts in this community should be provided in various languages, particularly in French and Creole.

It is also important to know that the Lake Park community has a strong commitment to preserving the area's historic structures and efforts to revitalize and redevelop the community have centered around maintaining the town's historic character. According to the *Town of Lake Park 2008 Comprehensive Plan EAR-Based Amendments,* the primary goal of the community is to "ensure that the historic small town character of Lake Park is maintained, while fostering development and redevelopment…of existing neighborhoods and commercial areas."[6] In order to accomplish this, the town's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes historic preservation and encourages development and redevelopment through increased densities and the creation of a Mixed-use Zoning District, as well as a **Bioscience Research Protection Overlay (BRPO)**.[7] The town also has policies that encourage transit oriented development and multi-modal transportation.[8]

In order to help revitalize the economy in the area, a **Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)** was created and operates as an independent special district within the town. The Lake Park CRA is responsible for preparing and adopting "a redevelopment plan for the area, which includes plans for public safety, economic development, affordable housing, downtown marketing, and historic preservation."[9]

The Town of Lake Park provides sanitation, building inspections, code enforcement, as well a recreation services to its residents. Essential services, such as police and fire protection, are contracted through Palm Beach County, and a separate utility authority provides water and sewer service.[10]

Public facilities in the community include the Town of Lake Park Library and Lake Park Elementary School. The community also has four churches: First Baptist Church of Lake Park; Pilgrim New Hope Baptist Church, Bethlehem Baptist Church; and St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Demographic Highlights

Lake Park's population has declined since 2000. In 2010, the population of Lake Park was 8,155 compared to 8,721 in 2000, a decrease of 6.5%.[11]

More than half of Lake Park's population is Black, with whites making up the second largest group. The 2010 Census shows that 55% of the population in Lake Park is Black. Whites make up 37.45% of the population, followed by residents of two or more races at 2.82%, Asians at 2.43%, and "other" races at 2.05%.[12]

Lake Park's population is generally younger than the overall population of Palm Beach County. Lake Park residents ages 65 and older represent 11.39% of the total population, compared to 21.6% for the Palm Beach County as a whole.[13]

The level of education is generally lower in Lake Park than in the county as a whole.
Only 45.1% of the town's residents had some college education, a college degree or graduate degree, compared to 60.13% for Palm Beach County.[14]

Education	Study Area	%	County	%
With a Degree or Some College				
Doctorate	8	0.16%	11,103	1.19%
Professional	54	1.06%	28,863	3.10%
Master	160	3.15%	68,815	7.40%
Bachelor	473	9.31%	186,552	20.07%
Associates	463	9.11%	73,088	7.86%
Some College	1,134	22.32%	190,510	20.49%
	2,292	45.1%	558,931	60.13%
High School or Less				
High School	1,751	34.46%	248,302	26.71%
Below High School	1,038	20.43%	122,361	13.16%
	2,789	54.89%	370,663	39.87%
Total	5,081	100%	929,594	100%

Lake Park's average income per capita is below that of Palm Beach County. The average per capita income in Lake Park is $16,898, compared to $33,610 for Palm Beach County as a whole.[15]

Approximately 26.28% of the total population of Lake Park is living in poverty, compared to 16.48% for Palm Beach County as a whole.[16]

The percentage of renter-occupied units is higher in Lake Park than in Palm Beach County as a whole. Approximately 39.58% of the total housing units in Lake Park are owner-occupied and 44.44% are renter-occupied. In comparison, the percentage of owner-occupied units in Palm Beach County is 58.46%, with renter-occupied units making up only 23.43% of the housing stock.[17]

Approximately 8.01% of residents identified themselves as Hispanic.[18]

Place of Birth, Nationality, and Language Spoken at Home

Place of Birth [19]

Born in Florida	2,940	36%
Born in Different State	2,520	31%
Born in Puerto Rico or abroad to American parent(s)	121	1%
Foreign Born	2,609	32%
Total population	8,190	100%

Foreign Born Population: Top Ten Places of Birth[20]

Haiti	1,372	53%
Honduras	511	20%
Peru	159	6%
Jamaica	148	6%
Laos	106	4%
Other Caribbean	72	3%
Canada	48	2%
Thailand	33	1%
Brazil	33	1%
Guyana	24	1%

Language Spoken at Home[21]

Language	Population 5 Years and Over	%	Speak English Less Than Very Well	%
English only	4,676	60%	0	--
Language other than English				
Spanish	915	12%	766	38%
Other Indo-European languages	1,917	25%	1,091	54%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	178	2%	117	6%
Other languages	54	1%	33	2%

Language	Population 5 Years and Over	%	Speak English Less Than Very Well	%
Total Population 5 years and over	7,740	100%	2,007	100%

Transportation Trends

The figures below provide key transportation indicators for the Town of Lake Park:[22]

Housing units with vehicles available:
Lake Park   2,628 (95.53%)
Palm Beach County   490,820 (93.82%)

Mean (Average) Vehicles per households:
Lake Park   1.31
Palm Beach County   1.54

Means of Transportation to work:

	Lake Park	Palm Beach County
Carpool	16.42%	11.15%
Drive Alone	64.56%	78.66%
Public Transport	3.26%	1.55%
Motorcycle	0.33%	0.27%
Bicycle	6.34%	0.59%
Walking	4.39%	1.69%
Other	0.69%	1.16%
Work at Home	4%	4.92%

Special Events

The Town of Lake Park organizes several events during the year for its residents. The venues most often used for these events include: Kelsey Park and Park Avenue. Below is a list of the main events held by the Town of Lake Park:

Art on Park Art Festival – This two-day fine arts event is held each March on Park Avenue in downtown Lake Park. Works are selected by a jury of art professionals.

Lake Park's Annual Easter Egg Hunt -- The event is held annually at Kelsey Park for children ages 3 to 10.

Great Lake Park Fireworks Festival – The town celebrates Independence Day on the Saturday before July 4th in Kelsey Park.

Seafood Festival – This event is held downtown on Park Avenue in November and is sponsored by the Lake Park Community Redevelopment Agency. Admission is free, with food served by vendors.

Holiday Tree Lighting – In early December, Lake Park starts the holidays with a visit from Santa and a tree lighting ceremony at the corner of Park Avenue and 9th Street.

For more information on the above events, call the Parks and Recreation department at (561)881-3338 or visit http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/content/special-events-sponsorships

Business Landscape

The top five employers in the Lake Park area are mostly in the county government and health care sectors. The largest employer is the School District of Palm Beach County, followed by Palm Beach County, Tenet Healthcare Corp., the Hospital Corporation of America, and Florida Power & Light.[23]

Since most of the town has been developed, Lake Park seeks to stimulate economic growth primarily through redevelopment, and the Lake Park CRA leads this effort. The CRA has sought to bring about revitalization through historic conservation and rehabilitation of target areas, including the commercial Main Street, façade improvement and streetscape improvement programs.[24] The CRA area encompasses 308 acres and follows the land use patterns of the original 1919 Kelsey City Plan, which was promoted as the "first zoned city in Florida." The area is divided into three districts: Arts District, Commerce District, and Hometown District.[25]

A product of the CRA's efforts is the Art on Park Studio & Gallery, a not-for-profit working co-op for art and fine crafts located at 800 Park Avenue. Opened in 2010, the facility offers studio space for lease, a juried art gallery, workshops, classes and a shop.[26] Also noteworthy is the Seeds of Hope Community Garden, a collaborative program between the town, the CRA, and the Lake Park Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit agency committed to serving the residents of Lake Park.[27]

Additional Resources

- **Historic Town of Lake Park 2008 Comprehensive Plan EAR-Based Amendments** by the Town of Lake Park:
  http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/sites/default/files/Comprehensive%20Plan%20(2008).pdf

- **Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan** by the Palm Beach County Planning, Zoning, and Building Department Planning Division**:**
  http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/pzb/planning/comprehensiveplan/tableofcontent.htm

- **Town of Lake Park Community Redevelopment Agency Plan, January 2010** by the Town of Lake Park: http://www.lakeparkcra.com/content/cra-fa%C3%A7ade-improvement-report

- **Town of Lake Park Florida Comprehensive Annual Financial Report - Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2010** by the Town of Lake Park Finance Department: http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/sites/default/files/2010%20Lake%20Park%20CAFR_0.pdf

Sources

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Town of Lake Park. Historic Structures. Retrieved on March 2012, from http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/content/lake-park-historic-structures

[6] *Historic Town of Lake Park 2008 Comprehensive Plan EAR-Based Amendments.* Future Land Use Element. p 6. Retrieved on March 2012, from http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/sites/default/files/Comprehensive%20Plan%20(2008).pdf

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[8] Ibid. Transportation Element, pp 19.

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[14] US Census Bureau. 2006-10 American Community Survey. Retrieved March 2012, from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Town of Lake Park. Finance Department. *Town of Lake Park Florida Comprehensive Annual Financial Report-- Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2010*. p. 105. Retrieved on March 2012, from http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/sites/default/files/2010%20Lake%20Park%20CAFR_0.pdf

[24] Town of Lake Park Community Redevelopment Agency. Retrieved on March 2012, from http://www.lakeparkcra.com/

[25] Ibid.

[26] Town of Lake Park Community Redevelopment Agency. Downtown Businesses. Art on Park Studio & Gallery. Retrieved on March 2012, from http://www.lakeparkcra.com/content/art-park-studio-gallery

[27] Town of Lake Park. Finance Department. *Town of Lake Park Florida Comprehensive Annual Financial Report- - Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 2010*. p. iii. Retrieved on March 2012, from http://www.lakeparkflorida.gov/sites/default/files/2010%20Lake%20Park%20CAFR_0.pdf