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Village of Royal Palm Beach

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Community Background Report

Village of Royal Palm Beach

Boundaries
North: 40 St N  
South: Southern Boulevard  
East: State Road 7  
West: Royal Palm Beach Pines Natural Area / Folsom Road

Community Type: Municipality

History
The Village of Royal Palm Beach occupies 11 square miles of land in central Palm Beach County. The village is located 72 miles north of Miami and 12 miles west of West Palm Beach. The 2009 population of Royal Palm Beach was nearly 30,000.

During the Civil War, the 7,227-acre area occupied by the Village of Royal Palm Beach was part of the beef-producing Indian River Ranch. In the early 1950s the property was purchased by Philadelphia supermarket magnates Sam and Hattie Friedland, who subsequently sold 65,000 acres to Arthur Desser of Lefcort Realty Corporation in the late 1950s. Lefcort’s plan was to create a community of 1,000 homes, and in June, 1959 the area incorporated as Royal Palm Beach. In 1959 work began on the village’s myriad waterways and a basic system of roads, and by 1962 there were 100 homes on the territory of Royal Palm Beach. In the early 1960s Lefcort’s bankruptcy and damage caused by Hurricane Donna resulted in the sale of the property back to Sam Friedland, who in turn formed the Royal Palm Beach Colony. Residents of the Village finally gained control after the first election in March, 1964. Royal Palm Beach underwent a period of booming growth in the 1980s and 1990s.

The village’s Parks and Recreation Department oversees approximately 325 acres (1.32 km²) of parks and green space, as well as the village’s 6,300-square-foot (590 m²) Cultural Center, which opened in 1993. Since 1990, Royal Palm Beach has been named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Community Dynamics
The Village of Royal Palm Beach is densely developed, with many condominiums, paved roads and major shopping centers and retail outlets. In recent years a feud has developed between
the Village of Royal Palm Beach and Acreage, which is an adjacent unincorporated area of an estimated 110 square miles and an estimated 39,000 residents. According to a 2010 Palm Beach Post article, “the causes include a dispute over a cell phone tower that Royal Palm Beach erected along its border, a 10 percent surcharge being imposed on Acreage residents' water bills”, and the fact that “village leaders also question the authority of The Acreage's quasi-government, the Indian Trail Improvement District, to assess taxes on village residents who live in a stretch near Southern Boulevard”.¹ Acreage is governed by Palm Beach County zoning codes and many of its roads are unpaved, whereas the village of Royal Palm Beach has strict codes regulating many aspects of community life, including “the height of hedges and the size of businesses’ signs”.²

Demographic Highlights³

The population of Royal Palm Beach has grown rapidly in recent years, and the trend is forecasted to continue.
In the years between 2000 and 2009 the population of Royal Palm Beach grew 37%. It is forecasted to grow another 14% by 2014.

More than 3/4 of residents in Royal Palm Beach are White and non-Hispanic.
In 2009 78% of residents of Royal Palm Beach classified themselves as White, 13% classified themselves as Black, and 3% classified themselves as Asian. Only 14% of residents classified themselves as Hispanic. By 2014 Royal Palm Beach’s White population is projected to decrease slightly (from 78% to 76%).

The median household income in Royal Palm Beach is considerably higher than in Palm Beach County.
In 2009 the median household income in Royal Palm Beach was $76,956, while the median household income for Palm Beach County was $62,114.

Most of Royal Palm Beach’s residents speak English and are native-born US citizens.
In 2009 84% of Royal Palm Beach’s residents spoke English and 85% were native-born US citizens.

The percentage of households in Royal Palm Beach with an income of $100,000 and over is larger than in Palm Beach County.
In 2009 31% of households in Royal Palm Beach had an income of $100,000 and over, compared to 26% in Palm Beach County. During the same year, only 5% of households in Royal Palm Beach had an income of $200,000 and over, compared to 8% in Palm Beach County.

Nearly 1/3 of residents of Royal Palm Beach have a college degree or higher.
In 2009 28% of Royal Palm Beach’s residents had a college or graduate degree.
Almost ½ of Royal Palm Beach’s housing was built in 1999 or later.
The 2000s were a particularly active decade for housing construction in Royal Palm Beach. 43% of all housing in Royal Palm Beach was built in 1999 or later.

Transportation Trends
Royal Palm Beach can be accessed from the Florida Turnpike and the nearby Amtrak station in West Palm Beach. Major surface roads include Southern Boulevard, Okeechobee Boulevard, State Road 98 and State Road 441.

The Village of Royal Palm Beach has received $2 million from the Federal Stimulus for the conversion of Okeechobee Boulevard into an urban section with drainage, bike lanes and pedestrian pathways.

The tables below illustrate projected transportation trends in the Village of Royal Palm Beach:

Average household transportation costs:
2009: Village, $9,873.94/County, $9,162.52
2014: Village, $12,083.10/County, $11,276.10

Average household transportation costs for public transportation:
2009: Village, $632.16/County, $607.69
2014: Village, $818.41/County, $783.55

Forecasted travel time to work for the employed population, 2014:
Work at home: Village, 4 percent/County, 5 percent
Less than 15 minutes: Village, 11 percent/County, 20 percent
15-29 minutes: Village, 27 percent /County, 37 percent
30-59 minutes: Village, 50 percent /County, 31 percent
60+ minutes: Village, 9 percent /County, 7 percent

Forecasted means of transportation to work for employed individuals, 2014:
Car, Truck, Van to Work: Village, 95 percent / County, 92 percent
Public Transportation to Work: Village, 0.05 percent / County, 1 percent
Other Transportation to Work: Village, 1 percent / County, 2 percent

Forecasted number of vehicles per household, 2014:
No vehicles: Village, 2 percent / County, 6 percent
1 vehicle: Village, 29 percent / County, 41 percent
2 vehicles: Village, 51 percent / County, 42 percent
3 vehicles: Village, 15 percent / County, 9 percent
4+ vehicles: Village, 4 percent / County, 2 percent
Special Events

The Village of Royal Palm Beach maintains a calendar of special events on its website. Please visit http://www.royalpalmbeach.com/Pages/RoyalPalmBeachFL_SpecialCal/?formid=158 or call (561)790-5100 for more information. Royal Palm Beach’s Cultural Center is active in organizing various cultural and community events. For more information about the Cultural Center please visit http://www.royalpalmbeach.com/Pages/RoyalPalmBeachFL_Cultural/index or call (561)790-5149. Below is a sampling of recurring special events.

**Kids’ Garage Sale** – This annual sale features children’s items, including baby clothing, accessories, furniture, toys and much more. The event takes place in February in Veterans Park on Royal Palm Beach Boulevard.

**Community Garage Sale** – Held annually on a Saturday in April, this sale begins at 8 am Veterans Park on Royal Palm Beach Boulevard. The park is filled with vendors, musical entertainment and refreshments.

**Cultural Diversity Day** – Organized by Caribbean Americans for Community Involvement (CAFCI), this annual event takes place on a Saturday in May. It is a celebration of all cultures in Royal Palm Beach, and aims to increase knowledge and awareness of others by sharing diverse identities. Enjoy food, fashion, history, arts, entertainment and cultural programs illustrating Royal Palm Beach’s diverse communities. It is held at Veterans Park on Royal Palm Beach Boulevard in May.

Business Landscape

The top employment sectors in Royal Palm Beach are education, health and social services (22 percent), professional, scientific, management and administrative service (9 percent), and retail trade (11 percent). There was 8.3 percent unemployment in the Village of Royal Palm Beach in 2009.

Sources


2 Ibid.


7 Ibid.