

**2014**

**City of Rockledge  
Demographic & Regional Information**

A Publication of the City of Rockledge & the  
Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency  
Feb. 2014



## **2013 Demographic and Regional Information**

Strategically located on Florida's east coast and bordered on the east by the picturesque Indian River and to the south by Viera, Brevard County's newest community, the City of Rockledge encompasses 11.5 square miles and has a population of 25,309. U.S. Highway 1 traverses through the heart of the commercial core of Rockledge, and there is an I-95 interchange on the southwest border of the City.

Recently, the Florida Department of Transportation completed a \$27-million infrastructure and streetscape enhancement project on U.S. 1 in the retail district of Rockledge that expanded the roadway from four lanes to six lanes. In 2009, Barton Boulevard, a significant connector to the Rockledge business district, also experienced widespread improvements, including decorative lighting, sidewalk improvements and landscape enhancements.

Rockledge operates under a Council-Manager form of government, has had only two city managers in 50 years, and is well known and admired for its political stability. A full-service community, Rockledge provides law enforcement; fire and advanced medical life support; solid waste and recycling collection; building services; wastewater and water reclamation; stormwater management; and a Public Works Department. Home to three distinct industrial areas, the City contains numerous commercial and retail centers and is the home of Wuesthoff Health System. Perhaps the greatest asset of the City of Rockledge is the spirit of the community.

With several retail centers located in our Community Redevelopment District, we know we have something for you!

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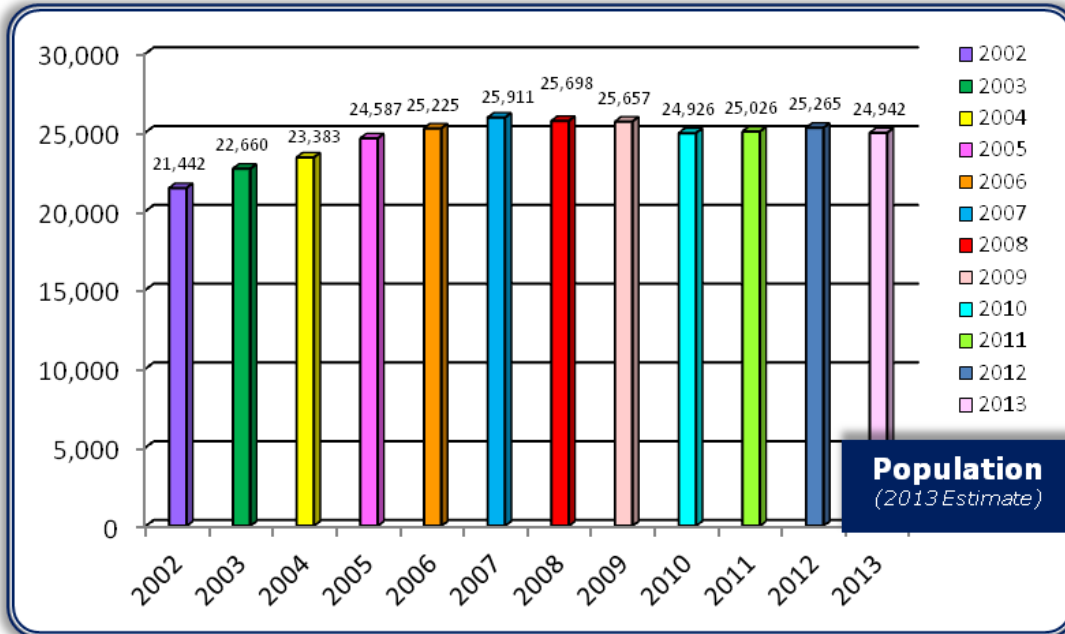
**Orlando: 45 mins. | Melbourne: 20 mins. | Beaches: 15 mins. |  
Port Canaveral: 15 mins. (shipping/duty-free trade)  
Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway (parallel to U.S. 1)  
Redevelopment District Incentives**

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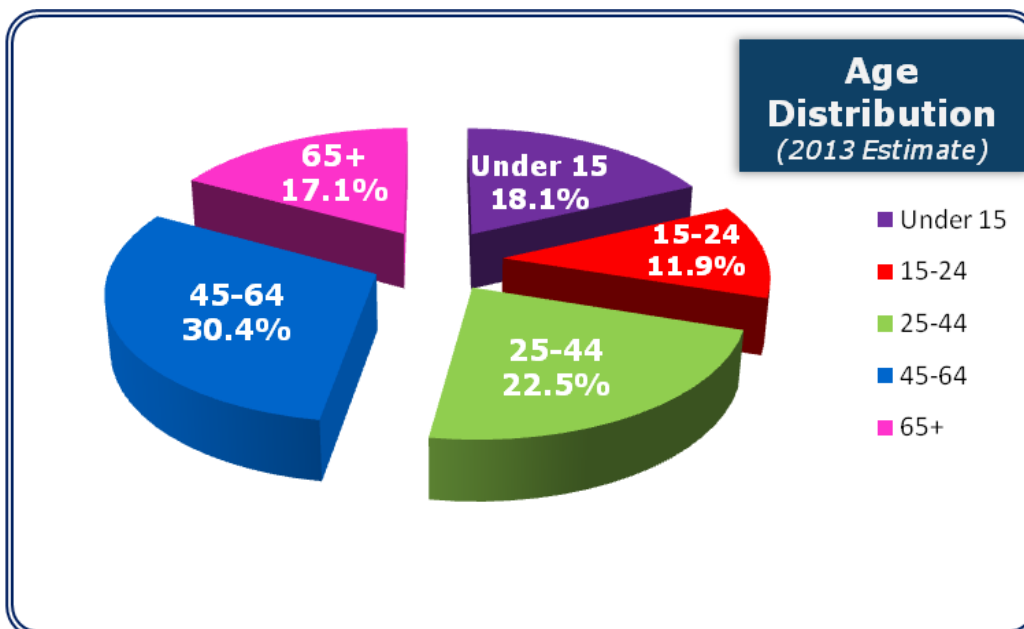
**Note:** The demographic and industry information on the following pages was furnished by the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast. The most recent data available was utilized.

# Demographics

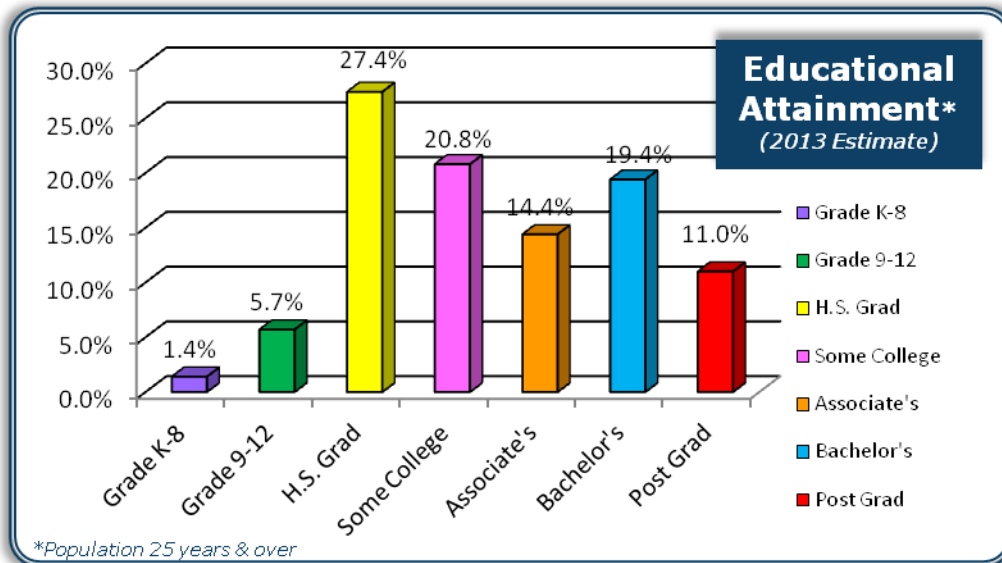
## Population



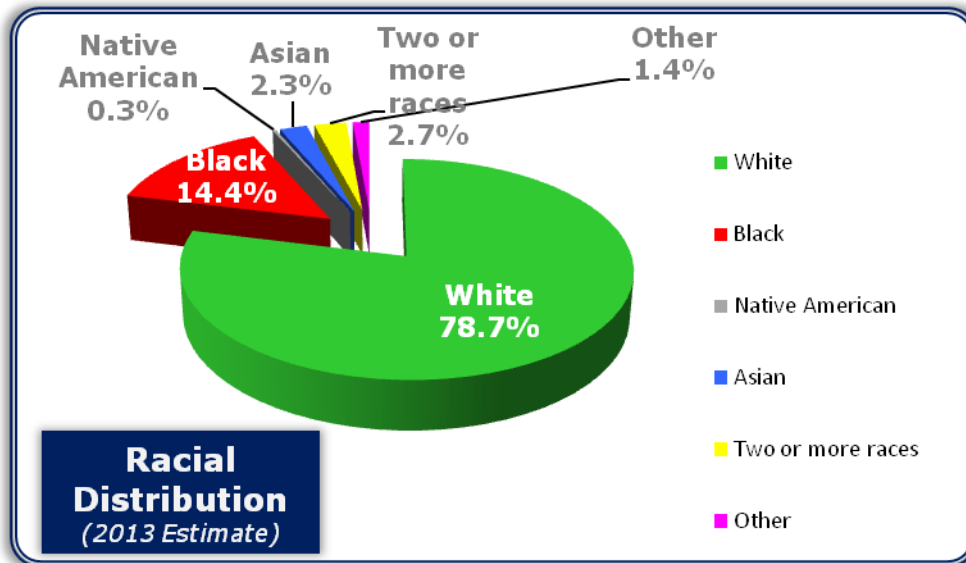
## Age Distribution



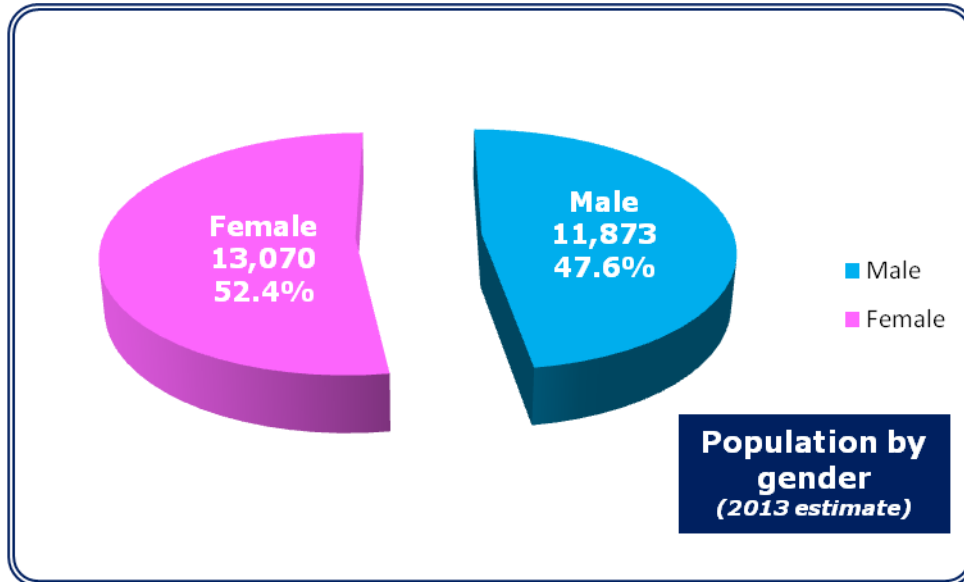
## Educational Attainment



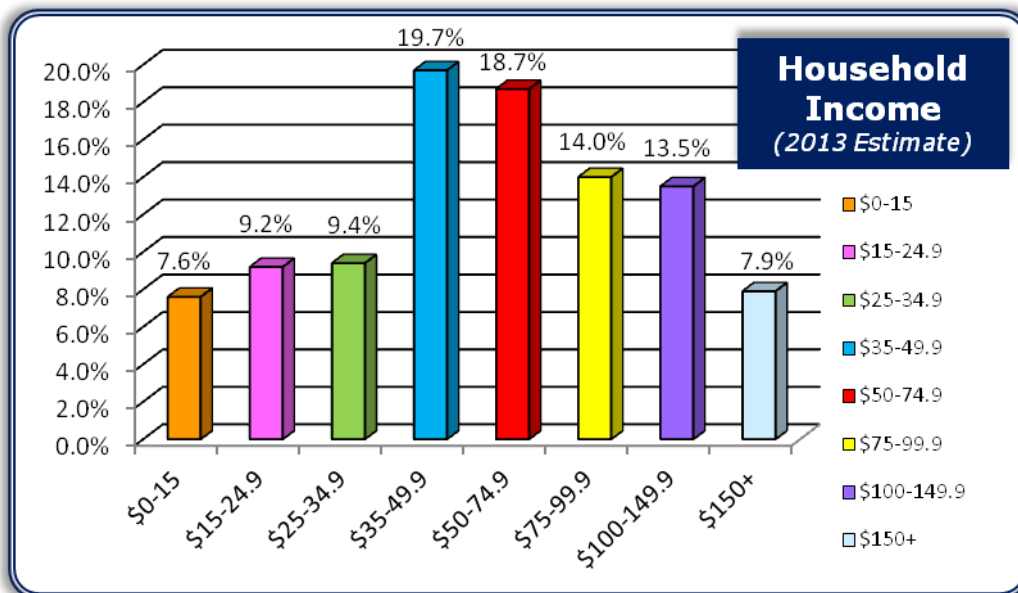
## Racial Distribution



## Gender Distribution



## Income Levels



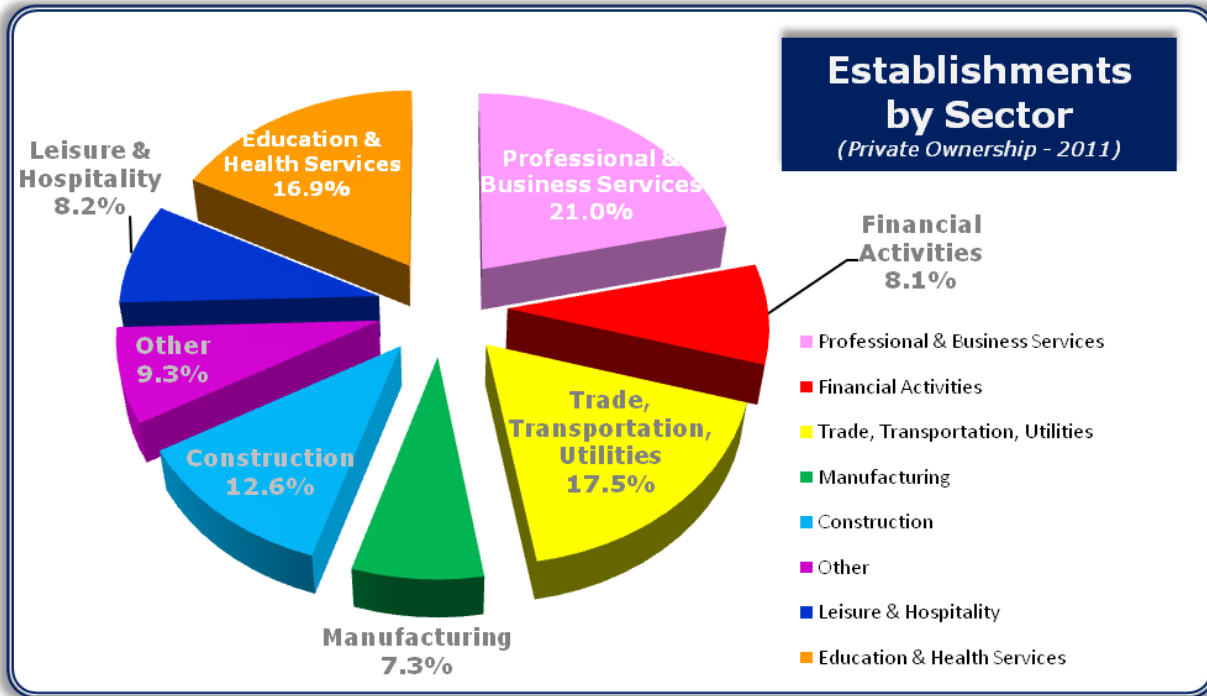
## Labor Force



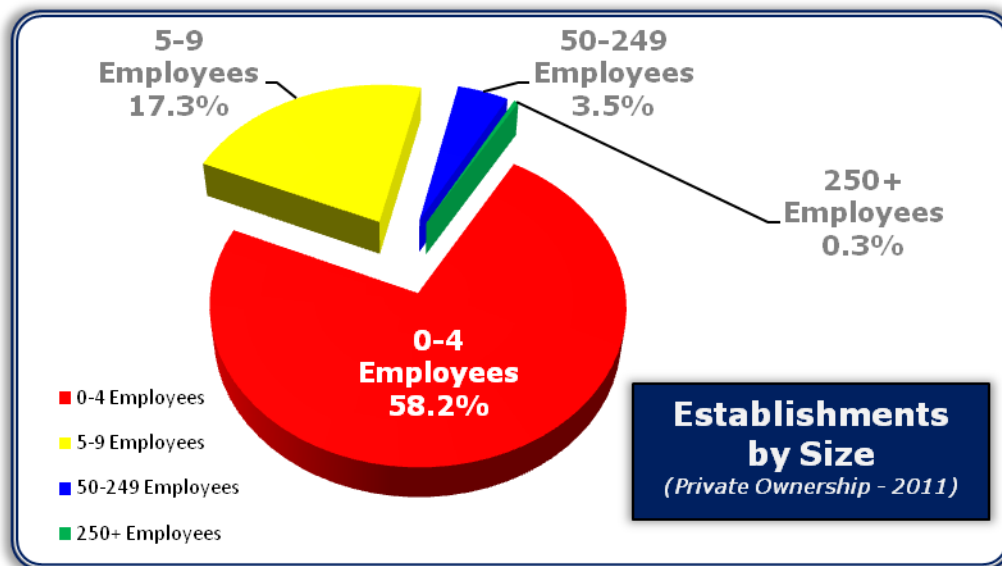
**Source:** *Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast*

# Industry

## Establishments by Sector



## Establishments by Size



Source: Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast

# The Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency

Authorized by Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, and established in 2002 by Rockledge City Council, the primary objective of the Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency is to revitalize its designated sub-districts by supporting projects to improve the infrastructure and enhance the overall aesthetic qualities of the area, with the overarching goal of preserving and enhancing the tax base.

## The Agency's Mission & Vision

The mission of the Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency is to:

- Foster revitalization of the specifically identified sub-districts through public investments in order to improve infrastructure and aesthetics, resulting in an inviting area in which the private sector will want to more actively invest.
- Create a wide variety of opportunities to generate interest in and return people to the City of Rockledge to live and work. This goal is accomplished through hosting a number of special events.
- Preserve and enhance the tax base.

The vision of the Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency is to...

- stimulate economic growth;
- promote private-sector development opportunities; and
- maintain a safe and prosperous community

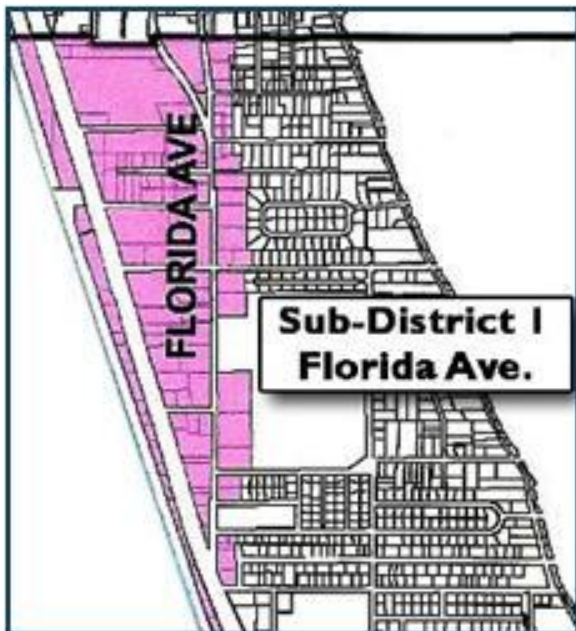
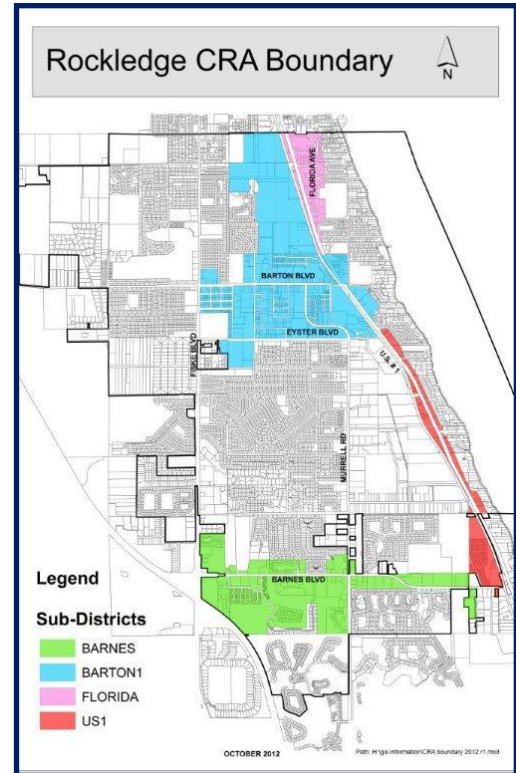
...all while enhancing the quality of life for the City's families and citizens.

# The Community Redevelopment District

After determining it was necessary to tackle the blighting conditions threatening its commercial core, in 2002 the Rockledge City Council created the Community Redevelopment District, which is composed of four sub-districts.

Focused around the City's major arteries and collector roadways, these four sub-districts include:

- 1) Florida Avenue;
- 2) Barton Boulevard;
- 3) U.S. Highway I; and
- 4) Barnes Boulevard.



## Sub-District I: Florida Avenue

The Florida Avenue sub-district encompasses the commercial areas along Florida Avenue in the northern portion of Rockledge. The sub-district also includes U.S. Highway I from the northern City limits south to Orange Avenue.

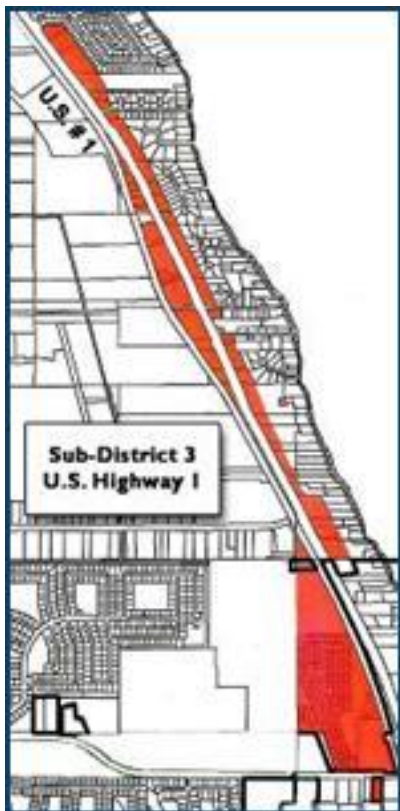
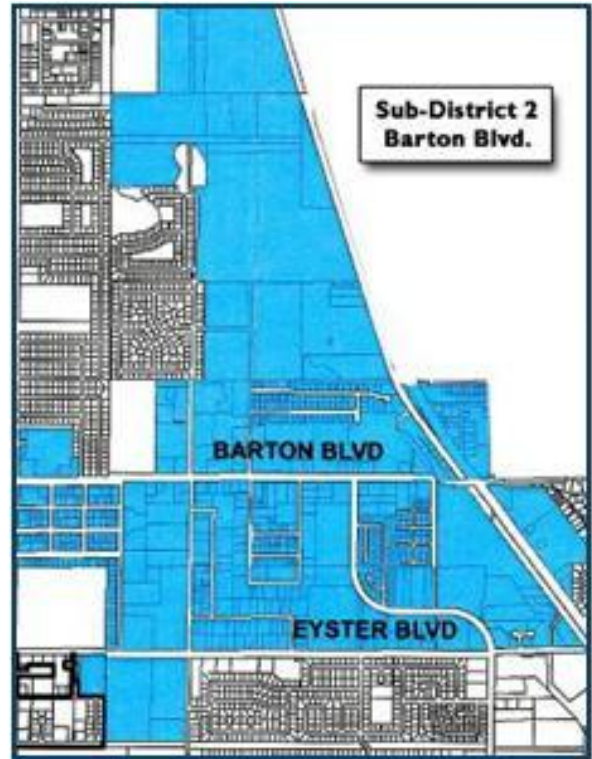
Currently, a number of medical offices that serve to support Wuesthoff Hospital maintain a strong presence in this sub-district, and, in adhering to the principles of the Agency's Community Redevelopment Plan, this area will continue to be promoted as a medical hub for the central Brevard area.

## Sub-District 2: Barton Boulevard

Barton Boulevard serves as an important connector roadway, linking the residential areas surrounding Fiske Boulevard and the residential communities along the riverfront to the diverse commercial core of Barton Boulevard.

After undergoing an extensive streetscape enhancement project in 2008, which included the installation of decorative lighting, landscaping and sidewalk improvements, Barton Boulevard garnered the Florida Redevelopment Association's "Best Capital Project/Beautification" award in 2009.

Because Rockledge City Hall is located at the intersection of Barton Boulevard and Huntington Lane, this strategic locale in the Barton Boulevard sub-district has been identified for a potential "commercial hub."



## Sub-District 3: U.S. Highway 1

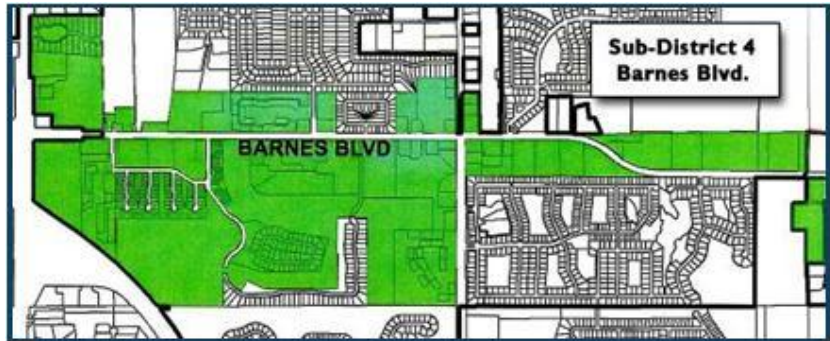
The widening of U.S. Highway 1 was completed during 2010, and a grand reopening celebration was held in December to commemorate this notable achievement.

Stylish lighting, picturesque landscaping, aesthetic signage and sidewalk enhancements were incorporated into the project. Through the Agency's Façade Improvement Grant Program, a significant number of businesses applied for and received funding in the form of a matching grant for renovating the exteriors of their properties.

As U.S. 1 improvements continue to make an impact in this area, additional business owners are seeking funding to refurbish their properties as well. The Agency looks forward to assisting local businesses with the façade grant application and grant administration processes.

## Sub-District 4: Barnes Boulevard

Throughout the past several years, the Barnes Boulevard sub-district has enjoyed the majority of new development. Although this development is highly desirable for the City and the Redevelopment District, it has led to an increased strain on current infrastructure.



As such, planning, right-of-way acquisition, design and permitting have been completed for a County road-widening project that will ultimately expand Barnes Boulevard to four lanes from Fiske Boulevard to just east of Murrell Road. The City of Rockledge has invested approximately \$2 million in the project, and construction is anticipated to commence in 2014.

## **Building Community**

In keeping consistent with the objectives of the Rockledge Community Redevelopment Plan, the Community Redevelopment Agency sponsors a number of signature community events designed to unite Rockledge residents and bring them back to Barton Boulevard, the heart and soul of the City. Realizing the importance of this goal, the Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency sponsors and/or actively promotes a number of exciting activities, such as an annual art and craft show, which is held in conjunction with a classic car show; a Memorial Day parade; "A Mid-Summer's Night" musical celebration; the Rockledge Independence Day Family Picnic; and Light Up Rockledge, the official kickoff of the holiday season. The Redevelopment Agency Board and staff are in the process of reviewing new events to bring to the City.

## **Supporting Local Businesses**

The Rockledge Community Redevelopment Agency remains continuously mindful of one of the most basic principles set forth to guide redevelopment agencies – preservation and expansion of the tax base through increasing economic development opportunities. The Agency understands that, in order to achieve this goal, it is important to not only recruit new businesses, but also to provide outreach and frequent contact to the existing business community. The Agency goes about this by providing a number of initiatives to established Rockledge businesses.

## **Promoting New Businesses**

From eateries to auto repair shops to salons and spas, the Redevelopment District of the City of Rockledge is undoubtedly growing. During 2012, the City of Rockledge welcomed 118 new businesses, 44 percent of which settled in the Redevelopment District. In an effort to provide exposure for these new businesses, Redevelopment Agency staff posts a list of the new merchants and service providers each month on the Agency's website, as well as the Agency's Facebook page.

The Agency is also pleased to offer its assistance to businesses that locate within the Redevelopment District and are desirous of garnering exposure and publicity. As such, the Agency often coordinates grand opening and ribbon cutting events for new businesses, or even existing businesses that are seeking to reinvent themselves or that have been subject to a change in management. For an actual ribbon cutting event, staff designs invitations and

distributes them to prominent City dignitaries, members of a number of City boards and commissions and also City staff. In addition, staff provides a variety of marketing and promotional materials for the business and the event by way of press releases, media advisories, flyers and multiple advertisements on both the Agency and City websites and Facebook pages.

## Advocating for the Existing Commercial Core

In addition to serving as a champion for new businesses, the Agency recognizes the importance of marketing the Redevelopment District's current retail assets. The Rockledge Community Redevelopment District is home to six commercial centers, as well as numerous strategically located outparcels located on Fiske Boulevard at the I-95 interchange and also on Barnes Boulevard.

In an effort to provide exposure for these assets, which offer a great deal of potential for the right tenant, the Agency placed an advertisement in *Shopping Centers Today* magazine. A publication of the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), the magazine boasts a reach of more than 60,000 commercial real estate professionals nationwide.

Running for 12 consecutive months, the ad features the District's six retail centers and outparcels, along with the corresponding leasing agent's contact information.

## Redevelopment District Incentives

### The Façade Improvement Grant Program

Façade improvement grant programs are an integral part of the activities of a community redevelopment agency because they help to revitalize and bring new life, as well as new investment, into these communities. Façade improvements and enhancements assist in increasing the aesthetic nature of the area and also serve as an important aspect in attracting additional private-sector development.

In Rockledge, the Community Redevelopment Agency administers the Façade Improvement Grant Program, which provides matching grant funding in an amount up to \$10,000.00. Funding awarded through the program to eligible applicants and projects can be utilized to refurbish the exteriors of a property that are visible to pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic. Improvements that qualify for grant funding can include landscaping, signage, installation of artificial rooflines, decorative lighting, fencing and enhancements to pavement and parking lots (when combined with other beautification elements). In an effort to ensure adherence to the objectives of the Community Redevelopment Plan, particular design guidelines that are encouraged by the

Redevelopment Agency are discussed with applicants as they begin to formulate their projects. It is important to note that grant funding is also available for new construction projects.

Furthermore, an inventive use of the Program can help businesses that wish to start-up in the Redevelopment District through offering incentive awards by providing grant funding for impact fees and other related fees. In the past, the Agency has paid up to 50 percent of the impact fees and has offered the business owner a deferred repayment schedule for the remaining 50 percent.

With the recent completion of the Barton Boulevard streetscape project and the U.S. 1 expansion and streetscape project, the Agency witnessed a resurgence of merchants with a renewed interest in improving their properties, and a sizeable number of property owners within the Redevelopment District have applied for and received façade grants.

Since the Program's inception in 2004, the Agency has funded 51 successful projects and awarded over \$374,000.00 in grant funding, which has led to nearly \$900,000.00 in improvements and renovations. Four façade improvement grant projects are currently in progress and soon to be completed, and Agency staff is working with a number of other interested applicants.

### **Other Redevelopment District Incentives**

In addition to the Façade Improvement Grant Program, businesses that choose to locate or expand within the boundaries of the Rockledge Community Redevelopment District can potentially be eligible for a number of other advantageous incentives. The following standard incentives are currently in place; however, each potential project is reviewed on a case-by-case basis in order to determine if additional incentives, above and beyond those listed below, can be applied:

#### **Potential for Relaxed Land Development Regulations in a number of categories**

- ◆ Businesses located within the Redevelopment District may qualify for waivers in the following areas:
  - parking;
  - stormwater management;
  - setbacks; and
  - landscaping.

### **Redevelopment Mixed Use Zoning District**

- ◆ The Redevelopment Mixed Use (RMU) zoning designation allows for a wider variety of uses:
  - Under this zoning designation, a density up to 25 units per acre and heights of up to 110 feet are permitted upon meeting certain architectural and site design criteria, as well as a Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR) of up to 1.

### **Expedited Permitting**

- ◆ The District offers one-stop, expedited permitting to businesses locating within the Redevelopment District.

### **What follows are some incentive programs that the Redevelopment Agency has the ability to execute in order to attract prospective developers to the area:**

- ◆ The Agency has the ability to create low-interest loan pools from local banks through the Community Reinvestment Act. These loan pools can be utilized to entice redevelopment investors into the community.
- ◆ The Agency and City can offer free design services or planning and design fee rebates for the redevelopers whose projects are compatible with the Redevelopment Plan objectives.
- ◆ The Agency and City can offer tenant location finder services for redevelopers looking for tenant leases.

In addition, the City recently approved, by referendum, a **tax-abatement program**, which provides for the postponement of payment of property taxes if certain criteria are met.

## Recreation and Lifestyle

As the first city established in Brevard County, Rockledge boasts a relaxed and comfortable lifestyle, all while being strategically located in close proximity to Orlando and all of its attractions, a myriad of beach communities, and Viera, Brevard County's newest community. Rockledge offers residents and visitors the best of both worlds – the ability to travel short distances to a host of activities without the daily grind of traffic jams and gridlock that other, larger communities tend to experience.



Rockledge has one of the premier medical centers, Wuesthoff Health System, within its city limits, as well as a number of “A-rated” schools, several houses of worship, and a truly picturesque landscape, compliments of the Indian River Lagoon.

With several retail centers and a number of available outparcels located within our Community Redevelopment District, we know we have something for you, and we look forward to working with you soon!



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## City of Rockledge

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[www.cityofrockledge.org](http://www.cityofrockledge.org)

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## Redevelopment Agency

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[www.chooserockledge.com](http://www.chooserockledge.com)

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