

# The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce



Clearly  
Zephyrhills

## Zephyrhills Industrial Corridor *BizWalks* 2018-19

*Assessing the Business Climate | Advancing Retention and Expansion*

A report by the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the  
Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition

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### ZEDC Mission Statement

The Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition seeks to stimulate economic growth, promote business diversity and cultivate and enrich the vitality of the greater Zephyrhills community.

### ZEDC Vision Statement

The ZEDC provides leadership and excellence in delivering economic development services for our clients, prospects, investors and partners.

The 6 objectives of our economic services are:

- Market and promote the greater Zephyrhills community by conducting and providing market research and business analysis
  - Facilitate the retention and expansion of existing business and industry
  - Create opportunities for advancement and education of the workforce
  - Create a healthy environment for the growth and expansion of existing business and new development
  - Advocate for policy to attract and retain a diverse workforce
  - Secure and enhance private/public leadership and investment
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## Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition

Partners in Zephyrhills area business and economic development



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*is the PLACE for BUSINESS*

**Zephyrhills BizWalks 2018-19**

*Assessing the Business Climate | Advancing Retention and Expansion*

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## **Introduction**

*BizWalks* are surveys of business conducted by a combination of in-person interviews and/or online surveys. The Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition (ZEDC) first published the results of an industrial corridor *BizWalk* in 2014. The industrial corridor generally conforms to locations on the east and southeast side of Zephyrhills in general proximity to the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport (airport). The 2018-2019 *BizWalks* strove to update information and trends from the 2014 study and to document new businesses that may have located in the corridor. Surveys were conducted by ZEDC volunteers and Chamber staff. The City of Zephyrhills also conducted an industrial corridor/airport master plan during the same time period. Preliminary data from the *BizWalks* were used to inform the master plan. A significant new use of survey data is to create business profiles. Profile information will be added to the *ClearlyZephyrhills.com* website so that website users can easily see what businesses are located in the corridor and what goods or services are produced by these businesses.

## **Background**

The *BizWalk* program was new to Zephyrhills in 2014. It was also the first locally initiated program of its kind in Pasco County. The Zephyrhills *BizWalk's* ultimate goal is to ensure an authentic pro-business climate that keeps the wealth and job-creating companies in town (retention) by understanding their needs and supporting their success and growth (expansion.) Such a business environment will retain those valued, existing businesses and, at the same time, create positive synergies to attract new business.

## **Targeted Outcomes**

**Outcome 1:** Take the pulse of local business through a direct dialogue with business owners and between leaders in business and economic development;

**Outcome 2:** Assess the local business climate by analyzing the new data that will help to identify and track trends, challenges, success stories, and solutions over time;

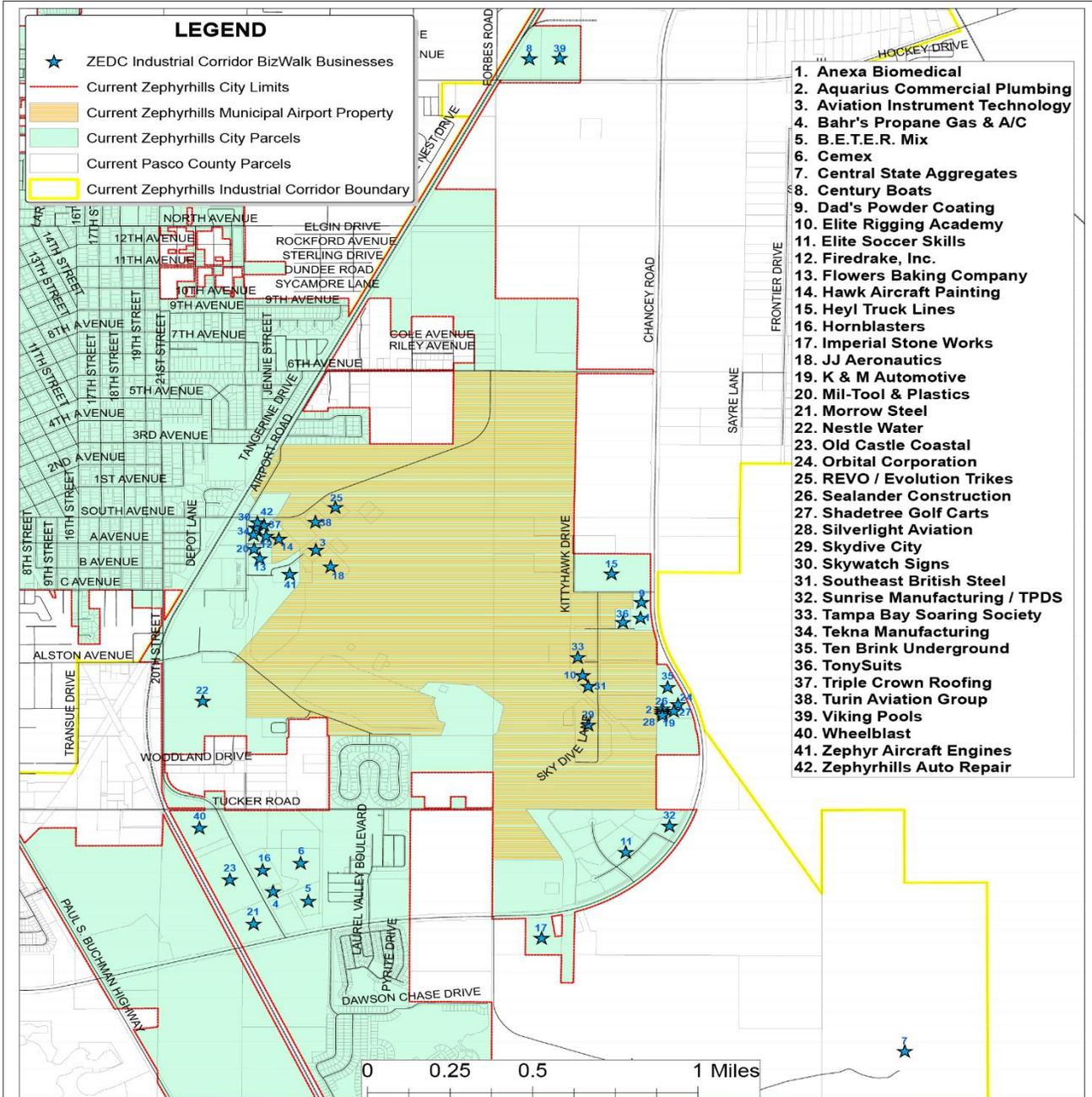
**Outcome 3:** Collect and inventory facts, stories, and successes that can be used in ongoing business development and marketing strategies;

**Outcome 4:** Identify key business issues for action through near and long-term business development purposes;

**Outcome 5:** Develop a pro-business agenda (Program of Action) for Zephyrhills alongside a ZEDC commitment to champion programs and initiatives in favor of business and economic development.

### About the Businesses

A map shows the area included in the survey with markers locating the 42 businesses included in the study.



**ZEDC Industrial Corridor  
 BizWalk Businesses**  
 September 2019  
 NOTE: For Planning Purposes Only

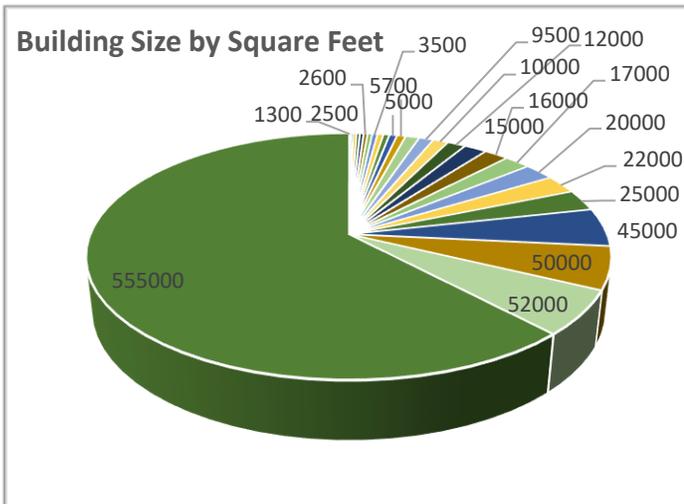
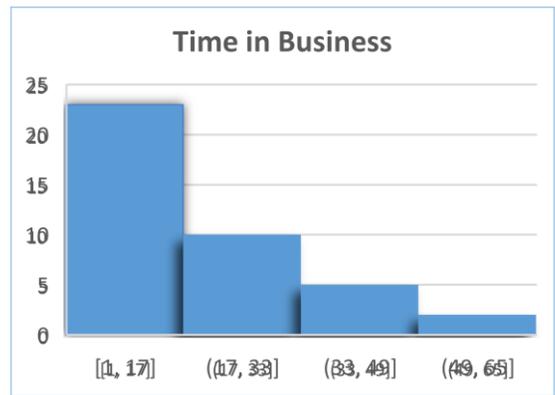


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As noted, the industrial corridor generally conforms to locations on the east and southeast side of Zephyrhills in general proximity to the Zephyrhills Municipal Airport (airport). Several of the businesses are located on airport property, “within the fence” and others not so. Even for those business not located on airport property; the airport serves to generally identify the location of the industrial corridor.

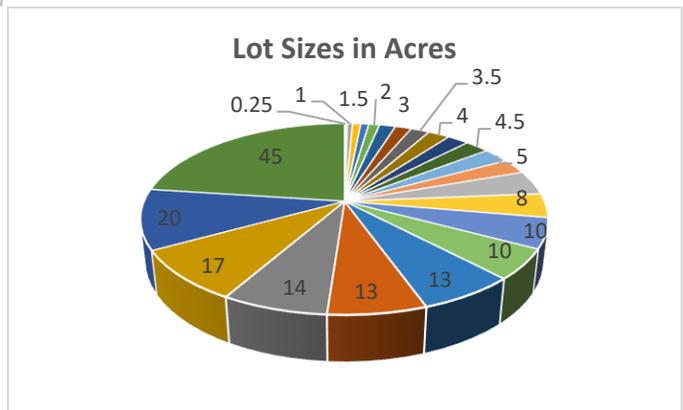
The Corridor is made up almost entirely of small businesses. Businesses range in size from one full-time employee up to 500 employees. There are many very small businesses with fewer than five employees (44%), with the majority (54%) employing five to 49 employees. Only two businesses, Nestle Waters and Morrow Steel, employ more than 100 workers.

Many businesses have been in Zephyrhills for a long time. The average time in Zephyrhills is 20 years with the range from one to 56 years.



Most of the businesses are in small, rented spaces scattered throughout the corridor. However, some of the business locations span multiple acres with large or multiple buildings. Building size ranges from 1,300 to 555,000 square feet. The pie chart below shows the distribution of building sizes. Note that one business with a very large building occupies most of the pie chart on the left.

Business facilities include space in a multiple unit facility with no outside space to buildings located on lots of several acres in size. The mean lot size is 8 acres for those businesses with separate lots. The distribution of lot sizes is shown in the graph on the right.



**Products and Services Provided**

Industrial corridor businesses range from service providers, e.g. golf cart refurbishment, to manufacturing, e.g. ultra-lite personal aircraft. Some businesses produce multiple products. Recreational sky diving services range from sky diving and sky diving instruction, to rigging training and wing suit manufacturing. Construction-related products include cement, blocks, and industrial steel. These goods and services are marketed locally, regionally, nationally, and even internationally. Forty percent of respondents reported the use of internet sales as part of their business model. A complete list of products and services is shown in the table below.

air compressors	general contractor	sandblasting
air horn manufacturing	glider instruction	seawall fabrication
air suspension kits	glider rides	sewing
aircraft maintenance	golf cart service and acc.	sewing military gear bag
aircraft painting	golf cart sales	short distance hauling
auto mechanic	golf cart upgrades	skydiving containers
automotive suspension	granite countertops	skydiving jumpsuits
avionics	gyroplanes	skydiving wingsuits
aviation repair (FAA cert)	headsets (aviation)	specialty/custom metal roofs
BASE jumping apparel	HVAC	steel fabricators
boat manufacturing	hyperbaric chamber manuf.	suit alterations and repairs
bottled water	laser etching	tankless water heaters
bread thrift store	long distance hauling	tool and die maker
cable assembly (US DoD)	machine shop	training, aircraft maintenance
cement sales and distribution	master rigging course	underground utilities
coatings of metals	mining of stones	underground utilities
commercial plumbing	metal fabrication	upholstery
commercial signs	parachute container (harness)	vintage aircraft restoration
competition soccer training	powder coating	wire harness
concrete block manufacturing	propane gas	
crushed stone production	residential plumbing	
defense electronics	saline solution (medical)	

**Business Profiles**

Profiles are being created for all the industrial corridor businesses using data from the surveys. These profiles will be accessible and searchable via the *ClearlyZephyrhills.com* website. A business profile will include the following information in sample.

**Business Name**

**Business statement**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Owner	
Number of years in Z-Hills	
Size of facility, building	
Land	
Lease or Own	
Additional info	

**EMPLOYMENT**

Current employees	
Do you plan to increase	
Qualifications	
Difficulties with employees	

**MARKET**

Where is your market located	
Have sales increase in past year	
Do you sell online	

**PRODUCT/ SERVICES**

What are your primary products or services	
--	--

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Phone number	
Email	
Website	
Address, linked to a map	

**FUTURE PLANS**

Do you have plans to expand within the next two years	
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**Growth/Expansion Prospects**

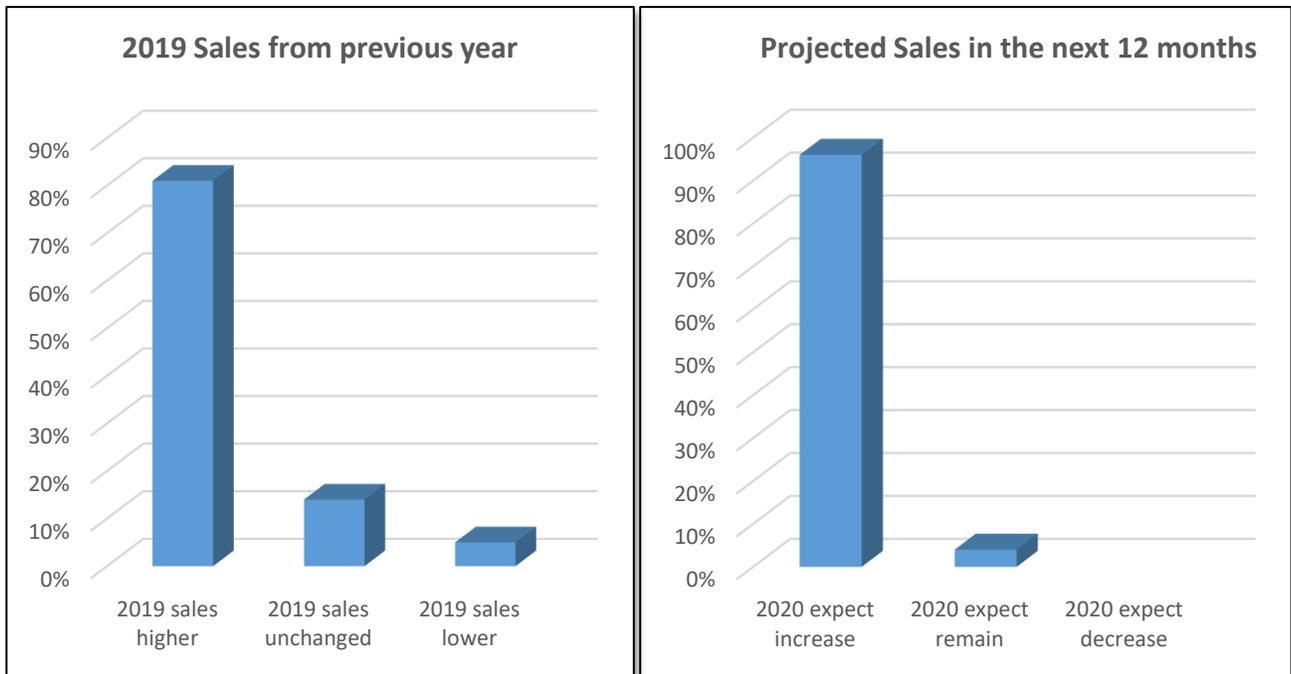
Almost 40% of the businesses that responded reported they were considering expanding their businesses in the coming year. Many businesses (81%) reported increased sales over the preceding year, with only one business reporting lower sales. A majority of those surveyed (96%) projected that sales would increase in the current year.

***Businesses reported many factors pointing to favorable business climate and outlook:***

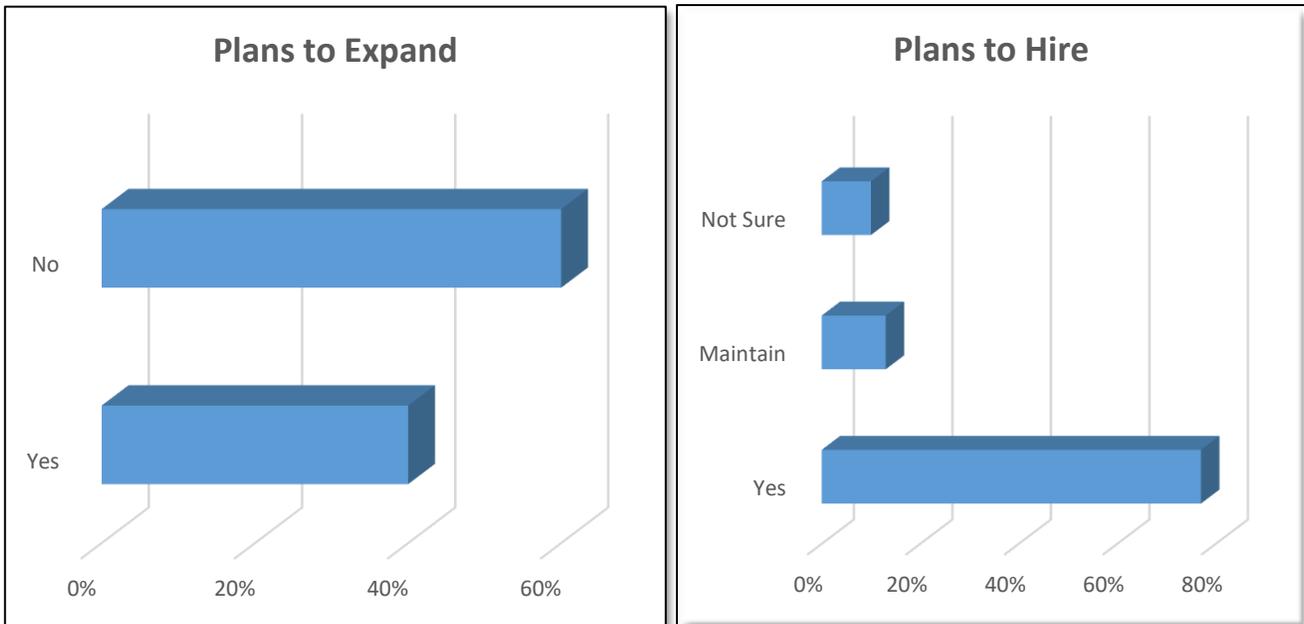
**Stability:** 20 years was the average time in which participating businesses had been located in Zephyrhills. We can infer from this that many are seasoned businesses with proven business models and stabilized sales contributing to local economic stability. Additionally, that duration tells us that the area has long-term viability.

**Hiring:** Many (77%) plan to hire additional employees in the next 6 months while some (13%) felt they would maintain current workforce. No business had plans to reduce their workforce.

**Sales Results & Outlook:** Relative to last year, sales volume is increasing and is expected to continue in the next year. All but one of those surveyed (96%) expect sales to increase over the next 12 months. Their shared, positive outlook regarding sales volume is evidence that businesses of vastly different scales can enjoy similar success. Therefore, the size of any given business should not preclude Zephyrhills as a suitable location.



**Expansion & Growth:** Businesses plan to expand their workforce, equipment, and facilities in the near future; 40% plan to expand facilities within the next two years and 77% plan to hire new employees within the next year, of which 35% plan to hire “many” new employees.



\* Room to expand is in question as 36% do not have space to do so at their current location and is addressed in “opportunities for action.”

**Market Reach:** A central location within the State and proximity to major roadways have enabled the majority of local companies to reach beyond their immediate market into Pasco County (55%) and the Tampa Bay Region (34%). Many had customers further still, engaging in business statewide (54%), and nationwide (44%). An impressive 33% reported international sales to Europe, South America, Asia, and the Mediterranean. New roadway expansion projects, recently completed and slated, are imperative to the future and continued growth of regional, national and international market sales.

**Challenges**

Survey completers were pleased to assist in the development of the industrial profiles being created from these data. Not as many were interested in reporting challenges to their business. Only 14 respondents completed the question asking what was the single most important issue facing their business today. Of those responding, 64% reported workforce as the single most important issue. Economic uncertainty and government regulations were listed at 14% each with access to capital being an issue for 7%.

**Opportunities for Action:**

While there were a number of conclusive indicators of a favorable business climate, one of the primary objectives of the survey was to determine where the opportunity for improvement existed. When participants were asked to choose the *single* most important issue inhibiting growth or expansion, qualified workforce was most often cited as the single most important issue facing employers.

**Workforce quality** – Those surveyed who listed workforce quality as the primary issue faced, indicated difficulty recruiting qualified employees. Additionally, of the 77% who planned to hire new employees in the next year, 67% indicated difficulty recruiting qualified employees. Assuming that the 77% who are planning to hire are, or have been, hiring, it can be inferred that the majority of firms are faced with this issue when hiring, and the issue is likely to be a primary one. Employers noted reliable, strong work ethic as well as specific technical skills and trade certification were needed in the most eligible workers and the most difficult to find. Given the recent growth to the industrial sector, this will probably continue to be an issue unless addressed.

Employers generally reported difficulty recruiting for jobs requiring specific technical skills and trade certifications and are interested in on-the-job training (50%), specialized or certified worker training (42%), as well as management training (8%) programs and resources to bolster their workforce.



***Knowing the concerns of employers will help determine where we channel resources. To begin to address this need, the following programs and initiatives begin to explore such opportunities with meaningful solutions:***

Knowing that workforce issues are significantly influenced by educational opportunities within the community, ZEDC is seeking to work more closely with Zephyrhills schools to help the schools know more about business needs. Letting the business community better understand the many ways local schools are innovating and motivating students is also important for ZEDC. To better serve these interests, a series of face-to-face meetings have been held during the past few months with k-12 schools. The Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce and ZEDC have also benefited by having a senior administrator from PHSC join the Board of Directors. Zephyrhills is fortunate to have a state college (PHSC), a private university (St. Leo) and a major research university (USF) within easy commuting distances. More information about schools in and near Zephyrhills can be found on the Clearly Zephyrhills website.

**Other opportunities for action:**

**Infrastructure** – It should be noted that while infrastructure was not specifically named as a primary inhibitor to existing business growth, it was identified in personal interviews as needing attention. New airport facility infrastructure is slated and has been met with mixed reaction by the aviation business and airport tenants. All businesses surrounding the airport voiced concern for the need for further development of facilities as well as amenities.

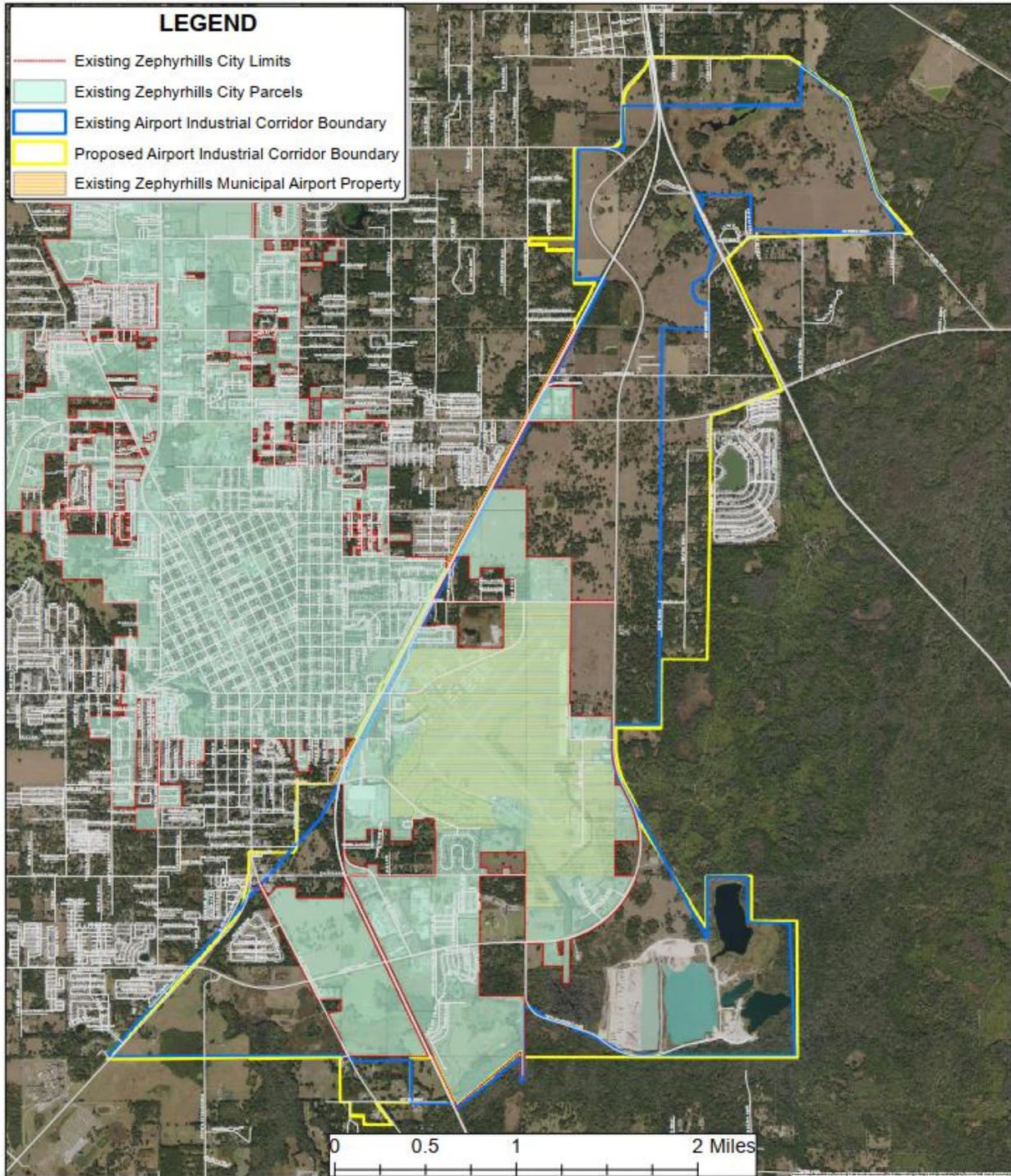
Generally, other issues identified as critical to near future growth are transportation and site-readiness. As previously noted, 40% of companies surveyed plan to expand facilities within the next two years, but 36% of those looking to expand do not have space to do so at their current location, clearly indicating that site-readiness is critical not only to prepare to land new business, but to accommodate expansion of existing businesses. The recent opening of 4 lane SR 56 has improved access east to west to the industrial corridor. A new extension study to extend SR 56 to Hwy. 39 is underway. However, the clear consensus is that the area needs continued attention on development and modernization of the transportation network to meet both current and future community growth.



The City of Zephyrhills initiated a plan for the large aggregation of industrial-designed lands and surrounding properties within the Chancey Road corridor with these guiding principles in mind:

- #1. Industrial jobs build community wealth and prosperity.
- #2. Infrastructure is vital to Industrial competitiveness.
- #3. Natural landscapes perform ecosystem services; add value.
- #4. Safe, clean, and neat surrounding convey quality.
- #5. The airport is an economic development asset.

### Master Plan Area Map



## **Conclusion & Essential Data**

- 42 Businesses were surveyed during 2018-19.
- General Business location; Chancey Road near Zephyrhills Municipal Airport.
- Surveys were completed online, by phone, and/or face-to-face interviews at the business.
- Interviews were conducted by ZEDC BizWalk Committee, Zephyrhills Chamber staff and volunteers.
- Business longevity ranges from 1 year to over 56 years with the mean time in business of 20 years.
- Size of facilities range from 1,300 square feet to 555,000 square feet, with most being less than 10,000 square feet.
- A majority (57-58%) lease or rent buildings and land, but a substantial number (42-43%) own.
- A small number (4 each) reported being woman or veteran owned.
- Most businesses (54%) have 50 or fewer employees with (44%) having 5 or fewer.
- About half of the responders reported utilizing full- and part-time employees.
- More than half the companies (24) planned to hire new employees during the next year.
- Finding qualified workers was viewed as a challenge with most new hires needing on the job training.
- Many of the workers need to have specialized training and/or certifications.
- Zephyrhills businesses sell goods and services to a wide range of markets including local, county, statewide, national, and international markets.
- Those reporting sales numbers showed strong sales growth over the past year and anticipate continued growth in sales for the coming year.
- Zephyrhills business sell over 70 different products and services ranging from cement products and upholstery to sky diving and ultralight aircraft.
- A majority of responders sell their products online.
- A quarter of businesses plan to expand facilities in the coming year.
- No one issue stood out as a barrier to expansion. Barriers sited included; workforce, lack of customers, and government regulations.

## **Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition Business Agenda:**

The Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition (ZEDC) is comprised of leaders in business, government, education, and economic development who share a common goal to create a sustainable and vibrant business and economic climate in Zephyrhills. After reviewing the 2014-15 Chamber *BizWalks* and combining collective knowledge and understanding of the local economy, the ZEDC Stakeholders Advisory Council in 2015 identified three areas of focus deemed of highest priority to job-creation and business growth. ZEDC partners and advisory council volunteers have been able to champion this agenda through smart business and economic growth programs, services and advocacy efforts for the greater Zephyrhills area. The findings of the 2018-19 Industrial Corridor *BizWalks* show that with continued effort in these three areas should continue to be a priority.

### ***Infrastructure***

Champion policies and funding for modernization of key infrastructure supporting targeted growth sectors of manufacturing, aviation, distribution and small business/entrepreneur.

### ***Education and Workforce Development***

Champion programs, initiatives, policies and funding that develop, attract and retain a highly skilled and educated workforce.

### ***Business-friendly Regulation and Policy***

Champion Business-friendly policy and legislation that focuses on job-creation, business retention and expansion, and the attraction of new business.

## **Acknowledgments**

**About the *BizWalk* Committee:** The 2018-19 *BizWalk* Committee is the Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition’s Business Retention and Expansion “Brain Trust”. Members are comprised of Zephyrhills area leaders in business and education and is supported by staff from the Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce and the Pasco Economic Development Council.

***BizWalk* Committee Members:** John Scott (Gulf Coast Financial), Steve Spina (Former City Manager), Todd Vande Berg (City Planning Director), Tom Ryan (PEDC), Dr. Randy Stovall (PHSC), Sam Turgeon (Sunlight Realty).

***BizWalk* Committee Staff:** Melonie Monson (Zephyrhills Chamber Director).

**Participating Businesses:** Thank you to the following companies who opened their doors to the Committee *BizWalk* site visits: Anexa Biomedical, Aquarius Commercial Plumbing, Aviation Instrument Technology, Bahr’s Propane Gas & AC, B.E.T.E.R. Mix, Cemex, Central State Aggregates, Elite Rigging, Elite Soccer Skills, Heyl Truck Lines, Hornblasters, Morrow Steel, Nestle Waters, Orbital Corporation, Sealander Construction, Shadetree Golf Carts, Siverlight

Aviation, Skydive City, Southeast British Steel, Sunrise Manufacturing, Ten Brink Underground, Turin Aviation, Wheelblast.

**BizWalks Report Editorial Content Development:** ZEDC Stakeholders Advisory Council Chair and BizWalk Committee member Dr. Randy Stovall, PHSC, and Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Melonie Monson.

**The Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition** is a strategic partnership between the City of Zephyrhills, the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce, Pasco Economic Development Council, and Main Street Zephyrhills, Inc. The Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition is housed in the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce and is the Chamber's lead committee to energize its economic development initiatives and programs. The ZEDC has two components: the ZEDC Stakeholder's Advisory Council is a voluntary committee comprised of business and community leaders in the Zephyrhills area who share a common goal to create a sustainable and vibrant local business and economic climate. The members of the Stakeholder's Advisory Council serve at the invitation of the ZEDC.

**The ZEDC Steering Committee** is a working group of economic development practitioners that includes, at a minimum the City of Zephyrhills City Manager, City Planner, Airport Manager, and CRA Director; the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce Executive Director and Economic Development/Government Affairs Chair; Pasco Economic Development Council Economic Development Manager; and Main Street Zephyrhills, Inc. Executive Director. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide coordinated implementation of local economic development plans and initiatives, to provide additional economic development expertise and administrative support with respect to the Stakeholders Advisory Council and the Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition, and to provide propulsion and continuity between meetings of the volunteer committees.

Sample Survey

**Zephyrhills Economic Development Coalition**

**2018 Airport Business & Industrial Survey**

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Web Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Number of year's company has been in Zephyrhills: \_\_\_\_\_  
What is the size of your facility? Building \_\_\_\_\_ Sq. Feet Land \_\_\_\_\_ acres  
Do you \_\_\_\_ Lease or \_\_\_\_ own? If leased, when does lease expire? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is the company veteran owned? Yes No  
Is the company woman owned? Yes No  
Is the company minority owned? Yes No

**B. EMPLOYMENT**

Current employment: Full Time \_\_\_\_\_ Part Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you expect this to \_\_\_\_ increase \_\_\_\_ decrease over the next year?  
Do you have difficulty-recruiting employees? Yes No  
If yes, what type of employee is most difficult to recruit?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Why is it difficult to recruit? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What type of training would you need to improve the efficiency your business?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**C. MARKET**

By percentage where is your market located?  
\_\_\_\_ Zephyrhills \_\_\_\_ Pasco \_\_\_\_ Tampa Bay \_\_\_\_ Florida \_\_\_\_ Nationwide \_\_\_\_ International

During the past year, have your company's sales: \_\_\_\_ increased \_\_\_\_ decreased \_\_\_\_ remained the same

Do you sell products or services direct to customers online? Yes No

If yes, what percentage of your sales are acquired online? \_\_\_\_\_

**D. PRODUCTS/SERVICES**

What are your primary products or services?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

Do you sell your product or services direct to customers online? Yes No

If yes, what percentage of your sales are acquired online? \_\_\_\_\_

**E. FUTURE PLANS**

Do you have plans to expand within the next two years? Yes No

If yes by how much? \_\_\_\_\_ sf

Do you have room to expand at your current site? Yes No

What business issues are preventing your company from expanding?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interview Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date survey completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Completed By: \_\_\_\_\_

ZEDC Follow-up Yes No

Results of Follow-up:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

