

Recently, land use decisions by the City of St. Petersburg, supported by the Pinellas Planning Council and the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (acting both locally and in their countywide planning capacity), approved residential land uses in close proximity to the County's Solid Waste Operations. While the issue of compatibility of land uses is meant to be addressed through the County's imposition of certain conditions and criteria, including a buffer zone, it remains to be seen whether or not eventual opposition to a landfill operation adjacent to residential uses threatens the long-term visibility of this critical County operation. While the project is intended to help integrate residential uses into the surrounding employment area, it is imperative that countywide solid waste disposal responsibilities and operations remain the priority in this location.

RECREATION

Countywide, the ability to meet increasing demand for active recreation is a challenge. In a County that is virtually built-out, with little vacant land left, there are simply few - if any - sizable venues for new recreational ventures. In some cases, entire communities feel left out when it comes to recreational opportunities. For example, the unincorporated Highpoint community (**see Figure 3**) desires better access to community-level active recreation, but finding a location to meet their needs has proven difficult. With a scarcity of land, it is likely that the solutions to recreation in the future will be based more on partnerships among providers, agencies and governments, enhancements to the existing infrastructure, and simple ingenuity. The challenges of providing for recreation in this County need to be seriously considered in the planning for the Gateway area, particularly if the population is to increase as a result of the residential construction in the Area. While some of the new residential development will likely provide for a playground area, clubhouse, pool and maybe tennis courts for their residents, this will do little to address the burgeoning demand for organized and diverse public recreational opportunities as the overall population increases.

TRANSPORTATION

An effective transportation system is critical to sustaining a healthy economy. This includes roadways that operate at acceptable levels of service, public transportation that provides timely service to and from employment centers, and walking and bicycling facilities that allow bicyclists and pedestrians to travel safely. Transportation and employment are logically related, and planning successfully for employment requires planning effectively for the transportation system needed to get employees to and from work. But the transportation system must also serve the overall mobility needs of the residential communities located in the Gateway Area, not just get people to and from work. The following describes the diversity of the planned and existing transportation infrastructure in the Gateway Area.