

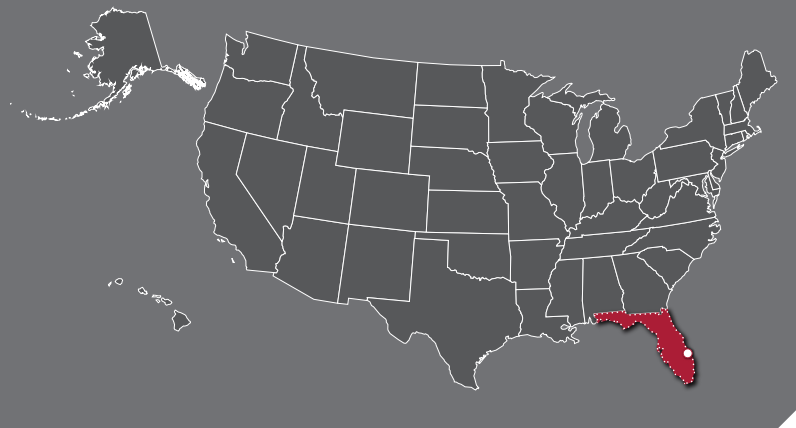
HUD PD&R Housing Market Profiles

Port St. Lucie, Florida



Quick Facts About Port St. Lucie

- **Current sales market conditions: slightly tight**
- **Current rental market conditions: soft**
- **The city of Port St. Lucie hosts the New York Mets spring training at Clover Park, as well as games for the Florida Grapefruit League. Each New York Mets spring training game averaged approximately 5,625 visitors from 2010 through 2019 (Florida Sports Foundation, most recent data available).**



By [Alex M. Remillard](#) | As of August 1, 2024

Overview

The Port St. Lucie, FL Metropolitan Statistical Area (hereafter, Port St. Lucie metropolitan area) includes St. Lucie and Martin Counties on the southeastern coast of Florida. St. Lucie County has 21 miles of white sand beaches and includes the Treasure Coast International Airport, which generates an estimated \$509 million in economic impact a year (The Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, Inc.). Martin County has 22 miles of coastline, including Hutchinson Island and Jensen Beach, and hosts nonprofit arts and culture events, including ArtsFest, that generated \$15.1 million in visitor spending in the county in 2022 (Arts & Economic Prosperity 6). Tourism is a significant part of the economy in the metropolitan area, supporting jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector. Three of the six largest employers in the metropolitan area are healthcare providers, including HCA Florida Lawnwood Hospital, the largest private employer, supporting jobs in the education and health services sector. Community of Caring Hospital is under construction in St. Lucie County, and HCA Florida St. Lucie Hospital is undergoing a \$72 million expansion. These expansions in the sector are partly due to strong population growth and

continued on page 2



PD&R

continued from page 1

the increasing proportion of older adults in the metropolitan area. Adults 60 years or older accounted for 35 percent of the population in 2023, up from 33 percent in 2016 and well above the 24-percent rate for the nation (American Community Survey 1-year data).

- As of August 1, 2024, the population of the metropolitan area is estimated at 533,100, an average annual increase of 15,100, or 2.9 percent, since April 2020. By comparison, from July 2016 to April 2020, before the most significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the average annual increase was 7,675 people, or 1.6 percent (U.S. Census Bureau population estimates as of July 1; U.S. Census Bureau decennial census counts; estimates by the analyst).
- Population growth from April 2020 to August 2024 came entirely from net in-migration, which averaged 16,900 people a year, up significantly from an average of 8,750 people a

year from July 2016 to April 2020. From July 2022 to August 2024, net natural decline averaged 1,325 people annually, exceeding the average decrease of 1,050 people annually from July 2016 to April 2020 but well below the average decrease of 2,200 people annually from April 2020 to July 2022, during the height of the pandemic.

- As of July 1, 2023, St. Lucie County had a population of 373,600, more than twice the population of Martin County, 163,300. This disparity has been increasing because the population growth rate in St. Lucie County has been greater than in Martin County since 2014. From July 2022 to July 2023, the population of St. Lucie County increased 4.1 percent, or by 14,700, slowing from a 4.3-percent increase a year earlier, and the population of Martin County increased 0.8 percent, or by 1,325, slowing from a 1.1-percent increase a year earlier.

Economic Conditions

The economy in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area is strong, but growth is moderating. Nonfarm payrolls declined in 2 of the 11 sectors, and growth slowed in another 7 sectors as of the 3 months ending July 2024 compared with a year earlier. Payroll growth accelerated only in the mining, logging, and construction and the professional and business services sectors. As of the 3 months ending July 2024, nonfarm payrolls averaged 175,200 jobs, up by 4,600 jobs, or 2.7 percent, from the same period a

year ago. Payroll growth during the 3 months ending July 2024 was below the 4.2-percent increase of 6,900 jobs a year earlier but greater than the 1.6-percent increase for the nation. Current nonfarm payroll levels in the metropolitan area are 22,200 jobs, or 14.5 percent, greater than the average during the 3 months ending July 2019, before the pandemic, compared with an increase of 5.1 percent for the nation.

continued on page 3

Job gains in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area as of the 3 months ending July 2024 were greatest in the professional and business services and the education and health services sectors.

	3 Months Ending		Year-Over-Year Change	
	July 2023 (Thousands)	July 2024 (Thousands)	Absolute (Thousands)	Percent
Total Nonfarm Payrolls	170.6	175.2	4.6	2.7
Goods-Producing Sectors	22.7	23.4	0.7	3.1
Mining, Logging, & Construction	14.4	15.2	0.8	5.6
Manufacturing	8.3	8.2	-0.1	-1.2
Service-Providing Sectors	147.9	151.8	3.9	2.6
Wholesale & Retail Trade	28.7	28.7	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Utilities	7.0	7.3	0.3	4.3
Information	1.5	1.4	-0.1	-6.7
Financial Activities	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0
Professional & Business Services	23.7	25.4	1.7	7.2
Education & Health Services	31.1	32.4	1.3	4.2
Leisure & Hospitality	21.9	22.1	0.2	0.9
Other Services	8.1	8.3	0.2	2.5
Government	19.4	19.7	0.3	1.5
Unemployment Rate	3.4%	3.8%		

Note: Numbers may not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



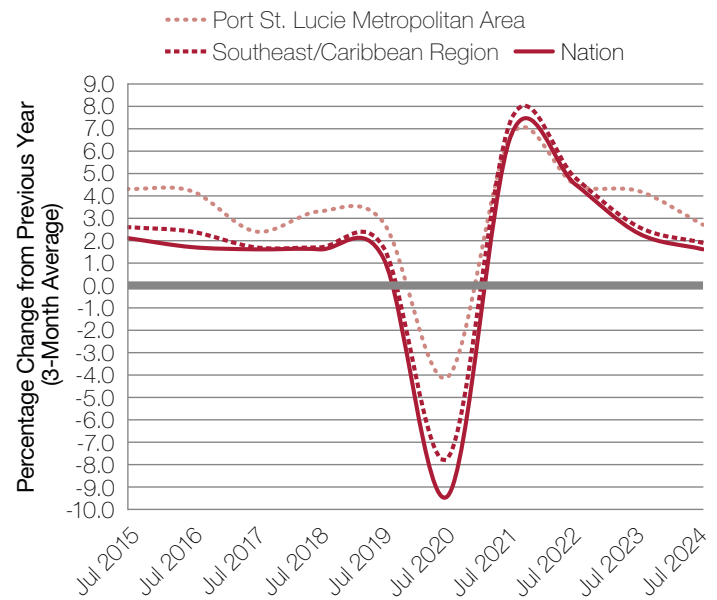
continued from page 2

As of the 3 months ending July 2024—

- The largest sector in the metropolitan area, the education and health services sector, accounted for 32,400 jobs, or 18 percent of total payrolls, up by 1,300 jobs, or 4.2 percent, from the same period a year earlier. The increase was partly due to expansions at Cleveland Clinic Martin Health, which increased the number of resident physicians, and HCA Florida St. Lucie Hospital, which recently opened a larger emergency department.
- The professional and business services sector increased by 1,700 jobs, or 7.2 percent, up from an increase of 300 jobs, or 1.3 percent, a year earlier, representing both the largest sector increase and the fastest rate of sector growth in the metropolitan area. The higher growth is partly due to increased demand for support services from the expanding hospitals in the area.
- Payroll growth in the mining, logging, and construction sector accelerated, with an increase of 800 jobs, or 5.6 percent, from the same period in 2023, up from an increase of 600 jobs, or 4.6 percent, a year earlier. The faster growth is partly due to increased construction, including single-family home developments and a new Costco Wholesale Corporation distribution center on 200 acres in the city of Port St. Lucie.
- The unemployment rate averaged 3.8 percent, up from 3.4 percent during the same period a year ago but slightly below the prepandemic rate of 4.0 percent during the 3 months ending July 2019. By comparison, the unemployment rate for the nation averaged 4.2 percent during the 3 months ending July 2024, up from 3.7 percent a year earlier.

Visitors to the metropolitan area contribute significantly to the economy. During 2023, more than 1.0 million people visited St. Lucie County, down from 1.2 million visitors during 2017. Meanwhile, the economic impact of tourism reached \$1.1 billion in 2023, an increase of 56 percent from 2017 to 2023 (Visit St. Lucie Florida). Visitor spending supported an estimated 8,525 jobs, largely in the leisure and hospitality sector, and generated an estimated net tax benefit of \$9.1 million in St. Lucie County during 2023. In Martin County, arts and cultural events drew approximately 615,800 people in 2022, with a total economic

Nonfarm payroll growth in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area slowed recently but was faster than the regional and national rates.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Largest Employers in the Port St. Lucie Metropolitan Area

Name of Employer	Nonfarm Payroll Sector	Number of Employees
HCA Florida Lawnwood Hospital	Education & Health Services	1,900
Cleveland Clinic Martin Health	Education & Health Services	1,550
City of Port St. Lucie	Government	1,375

Note: Excludes local school districts.

Source: The Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County, Inc.

impact of \$31.3 million, including spending by visitors and organizations (Arts & Economic Prosperity 6). The economic impact included 380 jobs, providing \$14.4 million in payrolls. Non-local attendees spent \$7.4 million in Martin County during 2022, including more than \$5.0 million for lodging, food, and drink. In addition to the \$921,000 in city and county tax revenue generated by the events, access to cultural events enhances the quality of life for residents.

Sales Market Conditions

The home sales market in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area is slightly tight, with an estimated vacancy rate of 1.5 percent as of August 1, 2024, down from 2.2 percent in April 2020. Total home sales rose slightly at the start of the pandemic, then increased rapidly and reached a recent high during 2021, when mortgage interest rates were low and the sales market

was tight. The average interest rate for a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage was 6.85 percent during July 2024, up slightly from 6.84 percent a year earlier and well above the recent July low of 2.87 percent in 2021 (Freddie Mac). The higher recent mortgage interest rates have reduced sales demand by increasing the cost of homeownership and limiting the

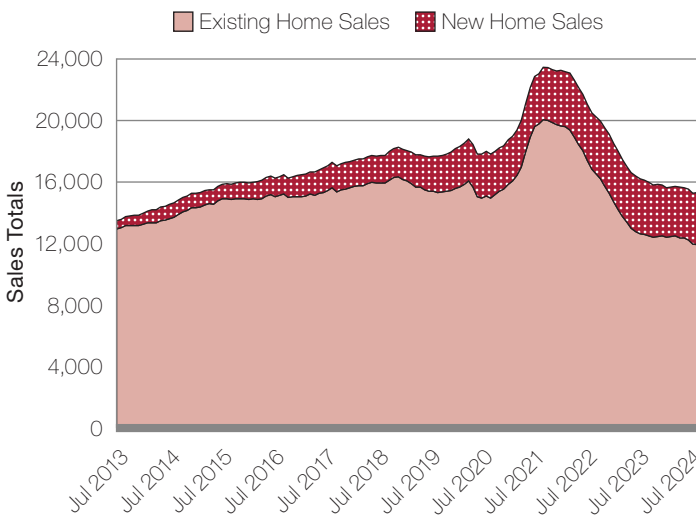
continued on page 4

continued from page 3

number of qualified homebuyers. Existing home sales began to decline during 2022, and by early 2023, both new and existing home sales were decreasing. Slower net in-migration to the metropolitan area in 2023 further reduced sales demand.

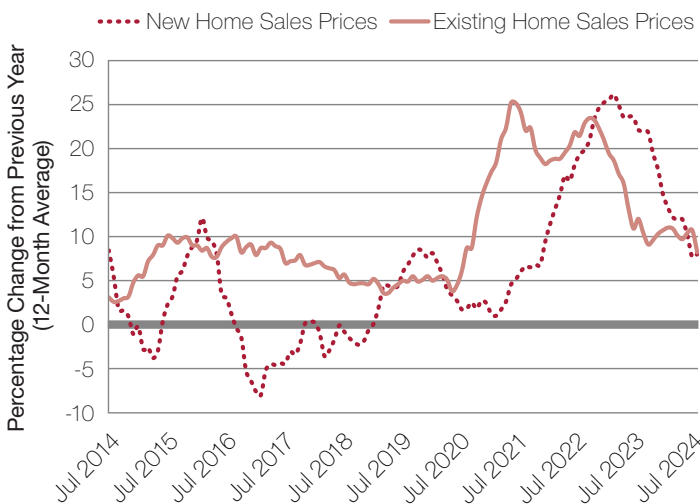
Total home sales prices increased rapidly during 2021, and price growth remained strong in 2023 despite decreased sales. During the 12 months ending July 2024, however, home price growth slowed to near-prepandemic rates as sales continued to

Existing and new home sales in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area continued to decline from recent respective highs in 2021 and 2022.



Note: Sales are for single-family homes, townhomes, and condominiums.
Source: CoreLogic, Inc., with adjustments by the analyst

Home sales price growth in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area slowed to near-prepandemic levels during the 12 months ending July 2024.



Note: Prices are for single-family homes, townhomes, and condominiums.
Source: CoreLogic, Inc., with adjustments by the analyst

decline. The easing sales market caused the available inventory to increase. As of July 2024, the number of homes for sale in the metropolitan area represented a 4.4-month supply, up from 3.2 months a year earlier and the highest supply during July since 2014 (CoreLogic, Inc.).

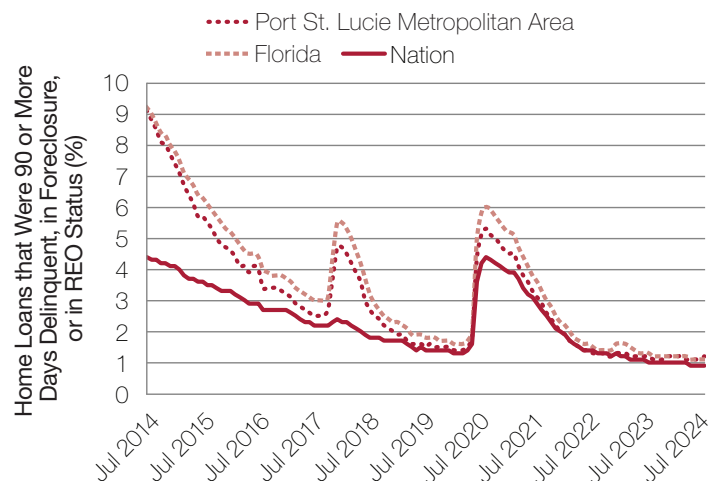
As of July 2024, the share of mortgages in the metropolitan area that were seriously delinquent or in real estate owned (REO) status was unchanged from a year ago at 1.2 percent, slightly above the respective rates of 1.1 and 0.9 percent for Florida and the nation (CoreLogic, Inc.). By comparison, in August 2020, during the pandemic, the share of mortgages that were seriously delinquent or in REO status reached recent highs of 5.3, 6.0, and 4.4 percent for the metropolitan area, Florida, and the nation, respectively.

During the 12 months ending July 2024—

- A total of 3,375 new homes were sold in the metropolitan area, a decrease of 4 percent from the previous 12 months. By comparison, during the 12 months ending July 2022, the number of new home sales increased 11 percent from a year earlier to 3,650 homes, the highest number of new homes sold during a 12-month period ending in July in the past decade (CoreLogic, Inc., with adjustments by the analyst).
- Existing home sales decreased to 11,900 homes, down 5 percent from the previous 12 months and the lowest number of existing home sales during a 12-month period ending in July since 2012. Existing home sales have declined since the 12 months ending July 2021, when 19,750 homes were sold, up 31 percent from a year earlier.

continued on page 5

The rate of mortgages that are seriously delinquent or in REO status in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area has declined since the start of the pandemic and has been near the state and national rates since 2022.



REO = real estate owned.
Source: CoreLogic, Inc.

continued from page 4

- The average new home price increased 8 percent from the previous 12 months to \$521,900, slowing from a 22-percent increase a year earlier. The average existing home price of \$447,200 was also 8 percent higher than during the previous 12 months, slowing from a 12-percent increase 1 year earlier.
- St. Lucie County accounted for nearly three-fourths of the homes sold in the metropolitan area, or 11,100 home sales, down 6 percent from the previous 12 months, and the average home price in the county increased 7 percent from a year earlier to \$411,800. Meanwhile, home sales in Martin County decreased 3 percent to 4,175 homes, and the average home price increased 9 percent to \$601,800 during the same period.

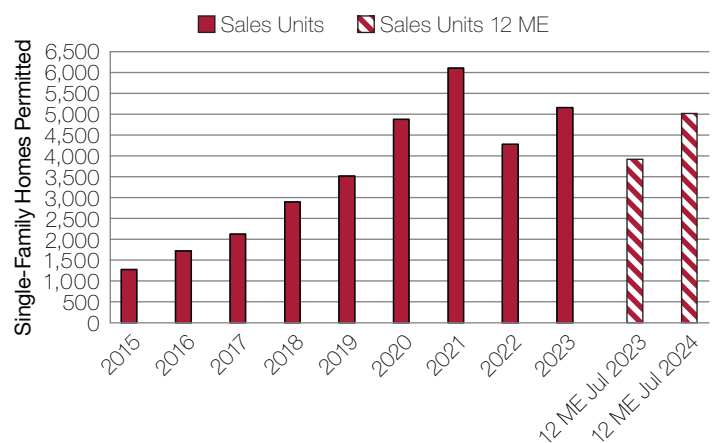
Construction of sales units in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area, as measured by the number of single-family homes, townhomes, and condominiums permitted, increased rapidly from 2020 through 2021 as net in-migration increased. The number of sales units permitted declined during 2022 but was above prepandemic levels and increased during the 12 months ending July 2024. Sales construction has been concentrated in St. Lucie County, which accounted for 89 percent of single-family homes and townhomes permitted for sale in the metropolitan area during the past 12 months.

- During the 12 months ending July 2024, approximately 5,000 sales units were permitted in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area, an increase of 1,100 units, or 28 percent, from the previous 12 months (preliminary data, with adjustments by the analyst).
- During 2021, approximately 6,100 sales units were permitted in the metropolitan area, up by 1,225 units, or 25 percent, from a year earlier and a recent high (annual data, with adjustments by the analyst).

Rental Market Conditions

Rental market conditions in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area are currently soft, largely because of the recent completion of rental units that began construction in 2021 and 2022. As of August 1, 2024, the estimated overall rental vacancy rate is 14.2 percent, up significantly from 9.0 percent in April 2020, when the market was slightly tight. The rental market tightened significantly during the start of the pandemic because net in-migration contributed to increased demand for rental units, reflected in declining apartment vacancy rates and accelerated rent growth. The apartment vacancy rate reached 3.4 percent in 2021, the lowest second quarter rate in the past decade, whereas the average apartment rent increased 13 percent from a year earlier, the highest second quarter rate in the past decade (CoStar Group). Although apartment absorption was

Permitting of sales units in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area during the past 12 months was below the recent high in 2021 but increased from a year earlier.



12 ME = 12 months ending.

Note: Data include new single-family homes, townhomes, and condominiums.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey; 2015–23—final data and estimates by the analyst; past 24 months of data—preliminary data and estimates by the analyst

- During the 12 months ending July 2024, approximately 4,450 sales units were permitted in St. Lucie County, an increase of 960 units, or 22 percent, from the previous 12 months. During the same period, the number of sales units permitted in Martin County increased 27 percent, or by 130 units, to 550 units.
- Rivella is a 291-unit, single-family home development under construction in St. Lucie County near the St. Lucie River. Prices in the community start at \$378,000 for 2,050-square-foot homes, \$392,000 for 2,300-square-foot homes, and \$403,000 for 2,400-square-foot homes. The base prices are slightly below the averages for new and existing homes in the area, and 73 of 95 available lots have been sold.

elevated, a large supply of newly constructed units came on line during the past 2 years, outpacing absorption. As a result, apartment vacancy rates have increased significantly, and average rent growth has stalled.

As of the second quarter of 2024—

- The apartment market in the metropolitan area was soft, with a vacancy rate of 13.4 percent, the highest second quarter rate in the past decade. The vacancy rate represented an increase from 11.8 percent as of the same period in 2023 and was well above the prepandemic rate of 4.8 percent as of the second quarter of 2019 (CoStar Group).
- The average apartment rent increased less than 1 percent to \$1,941 from the second quarter of 2023. By comparison,

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

the average apartment rent increased 1 percent a year earlier, well below the prepandemic increase of 4 percent as of the second quarter of 2019.

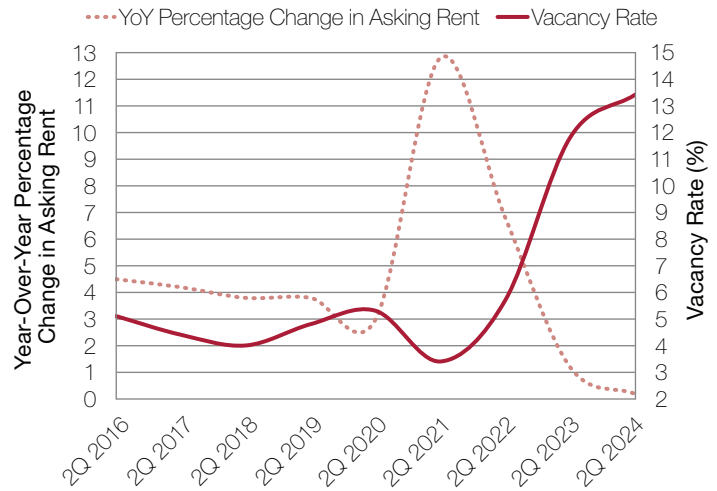
- The average rents for studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom apartments during the second quarter of 2024 were \$2,201, \$1,786, \$1,912, and \$2,155, respectively. The average rent for studio apartments increased 2 percent from the second quarter of 2023, whereas the average rent for three-bedroom apartments decreased 1 percent during the same period.
- St. Lucie County accounted for approximately 65 percent of the apartment units in the metropolitan area and had an average apartment vacancy rate of 14.0 percent, compared with 11.9 percent in Martin County. The average apartment rent in St. Lucie County decreased less than 1 percent from a year earlier to \$1,873, and the average apartment rent in Martin County increased 1 percent to \$2,060 during the same period.

Rental construction in the metropolitan area, as measured by the number of rental units permitted, decreased at the start of the pandemic compared with the preceding 2 years, then increased dramatically during 2021 and 2022, when the market was tight. During 2023, however, rental construction slowed and continued to moderate during the past 12 months, when the units that started construction in 2021 and 2022 came on line and contributed to the softening market.

During the 12 months ending July 2024 —

- The number of rental units permitted in the metropolitan area fell to 940 units, down 41 percent from the 1,600 units permitted during the previous 12 months (preliminary data, with adjustments by the analyst). Despite the decline, rental construction activity was strong compared with the period before 2021, when permitting averaged 520 units a year from 2016 through 2020 (annual data, with adjustments by the analyst).
- Construction of single-family rental units accounted for 47 percent of the total rental units permitted in the metropolitan area, at 440 units, down 53 percent from the previous 12 months. By comparison, from 2016 through 2020, before the pandemic, an average of 40 single-family rental units were permitted a year, accounting for just 7 percent of total rental permitting.
- St. Lucie County accounted for 620 of the rental units permitted in the metropolitan area, down 51 percent, or by 650 units, from the 12 months ending July 2023. By comparison, 320 units were permitted in Martin County, down just 2 percent from the previous 12 months.
- The largest development recently completed in the metropolitan area is the approximately 420-unit Legends Pointe in the city of Port St. Lucie, which opened in June 2024. Apartment rents range from \$1,695 for a one-bedroom unit to \$2,325 for a three-bedroom unit.

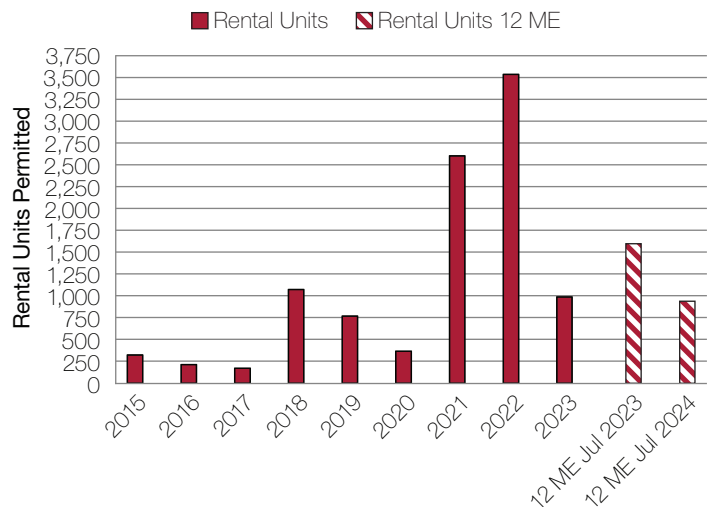
In 2024, rent growth in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area reached the lowest second quarter rate in the past decade, and the apartment vacancy rate reached a recent high.



2Q = second quarter. YoY = year-over-year.

Source: CoStar Group

During the 12 months ending July 2024, the number of rental units permitted in the Port St. Lucie metropolitan area continued to decline from recent high levels in 2021 and 2022.



12 ME = 12 months ending.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permits Survey; 2015–23—final data and estimates by the analyst; past 24 months of data—preliminary data and estimates by the analyst

- Tredici at Central Park in the city of Port St. Lucie is the largest built-for-rent townhome community under construction in the metropolitan area, with 220 units planned for completion in mid-2025. Some completed units are currently available, with rents ranging from \$2,892 for a three-bedroom townhome with a one-car garage to \$3,138 for a four-bedroom townhome with a one-car garage.

Terminology Definitions and Notes

A. Definitions

Absorption	The net change, positive or negative, in the number of occupied units in a given geographic range.
Apartment Vacancy Rate/Average Monthly Rent	Data are for market-rate and mixed market-rate and affordable general occupancy apartment properties with five or more units, including those that are stabilized and in lease up. A property is stabilized once the occupancy rate has reached 90 percent or at least 18 months have passed since the property was changed from “under construction” to “existing” on the CoStar Group website.
Building Permits	Building permits do not necessarily reflect all residential building activity. Some units are constructed or created without a building permit or are issued a different type of building permit. For example, some units classified as commercial structures are not reflected in the residential building permits. As a result, the analyst, through diligent fieldwork, makes an estimate of this additional construction activity. Some of these estimates are included in the discussions of single-family and multifamily building permits.
Distressed Sales	Short sales and real estate owned (REO) sales.
Existing Home Sales	Includes resales, short sales, and REO sales.
Home Sales/Home Sales Prices	Includes single-family home, townhome, and condominium sales.
Net Natural Decline	Resident deaths are greater than resident births.
Rental Market/Rental Vacancy Rate	Includes apartments and other rental units, such as single-family, multifamily, and mobile homes.
Resales	These are home closings that have no ties to either new home closings (builders) or foreclosures. They are homes that were previously constructed and sold to an unaffiliated third party.
Seriously Delinquent Mortgages	Mortgages 90 or more days delinquent or in foreclosure.

B. Notes on Geography

1.	The metropolitan statistical area definition noted in this report is based on the delineations established by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the OMB Bulletin dated April 10, 2018.
2.	The HUD Southeast/Caribbean region includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.