

# The Palm Beach Post

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## WESTLAKE RISING

County's newest city looking to achieve a downtown feel

**Valentina Palm** Palm Beach Post | USA TODAY NETWORK

WESTLAKE – Built over an old orange grove, Westlake is showing its first signs of becoming a place where people do more than sleep.

Visitors can see residents unloading boxes into spacious homes and driving golf carts, while construction workers are erecting the walls of commercial developments.

Financed by Minto Communities, Westlake became Palm Beach County's 39th city when it

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incorporated seven years ago. Homes range from the \$400,000s to the \$800,000, and the city is projected to see stores, restaurants and even an attraction park come to the rural western suburbs of West Palm Beach.

John Carter, Minto's vice president, speaks of Westlake as pedestrian and golf cart-oriented city and said it was planned to offer options to "live, work and play" for people in the area, rather than driving 15 miles east to West Palm Beach.

Here are five things to know about Westlake, Palm Beach County's newest city:

### **City's population is growing, diverse and upscale**

In 2017, the city had a population of five people, according to the U.S. Census Data. By 2020, it was home to over 906.

In terms of demographics, white residents accounted for 40% of the population, followed by Hispanics at 35.7% and Blacks at 17.3%. The median age is 34 and the median income is about \$100,000 a year, U. S. Census Data shows. By comparison, the county's median income is \$65,000.

Minto projected Westlake will have over 11,300 residents in the next six to 10 years, or about equal to Lantana's population.

### **Half of Westlake's 4,500 homes already have been built**

Minto has built 2,500 homes, just over half of the 4,500 approved for the city.

At the rate of 400 homes built a year, Carter expects Westlake to be built out within five years. Neighborhoods are designed in pods and connected by pathways to the city's commercial strip.

Carter says Minto built townhouses, single-family homes and estate homes to address the lack of available housing in Palm Beach County, especially in its western suburbs, and to appeal to young professionals, families and multigenerational households.

Westlake offers programs to help buyers with down payments and closing costs. They are income-based and available for those who qualify for workforce housing.

### **What's already open?**

The first phase of Westlake Adventure Park, off Seminole-Pratt Whitney Road near the community's sales center, has opened with a resort-style pool, splash pad and food stand.

h The city has a free-standing emergency room, affiliated with Wellington Regional Medical Center, and a Palm Beach County Fire Rescue station.

h The Palm Beach County Tax Collector has opened its western regional office there.

h Christ Fellowship is expected to open an 800-seat worship center on March 5.

h One of its two 7-Eleven stores houses the first Florida location of the Mexican deli, Taco Laredo.

### **What businesses are coming?**

h A 46,000 square-foot Publix Super Market will open this summer off Seminole- Pratt Whitney.

h The Shoppes at Westlake Landings plaza will bring retail and fast-food businesses to open at Seminole-Pratt Whitney and Persimmon Boulevard.

h Westlake Commerce Center will open a business park and a retail warehouse this fall near Seminole Ridge High School.

h James Business Park will have offices and a warehouse distribution site off Persimmon near Seminole-Pratt Whitney. Jamlyn Supply will move its offices there this year from West Palm Beach.

h Zeus World, formerly known as Adrenaline World, is an entertainment center completing plans for a complex.

### **Wants to be a 'downtown' for western Palm Beach County**

Westlake's commercial and entertainment area is planned as a strip along its main street, Seminole-Pratt Whitney Road. Carter hopes it will become the downtown for residents of west-central Palm Beach County.

"It's centered on providing basic services that really not only serve Westlake but will certainly serve the over 20,000 homes that are immediately surrounding us," Carter said.