

# Recommendation Report

Draft #1

September 2024



URBAN SERVICE BOUNDARY STUDY

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

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# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Introduction

Indian River County adopted its Urban Service Boundary (USB) in 1990, which is an area of the County that includes public facilities and services to accommodate suburban and urban growth, shown on Figure 1. The USB is outlined in Future Land Use Element Objective 2, within the County's Comprehensive Plan. Per Future Land Use Policy 2.2, the County is to encourage and direct growth into the USB (also known as the Urban Service Area) through zoning, subdivision, and land development regulations. These regulations shall promote efficient development by requiring utilization of the existing street system, extension of public facilities where necessary, connection to the centralized potable water and sanitary sewer systems where available, and incentives for mixed use projects.

The USB provides another important function as the County's urban growth boundary. Properties inside the boundary are eligible for higher densities that are offered through the County's suburban and urban land future land use map designations. Properties that are outside of the USB are restricted to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acres.

Indian River County has experienced significant population growth since the adoption of the USB in 1990. The population of the County has nearly doubled over that time frame, and population projections show that the County will continue to experience growth through 2050. Further, projections show that the unincorporated area accounts for 68% of the County's overall population, most of which is located within the USB. As local population and development pressures continue to grow, the County has decided to evaluate its existing USB to see if it should be expanded to accommodate future residents.

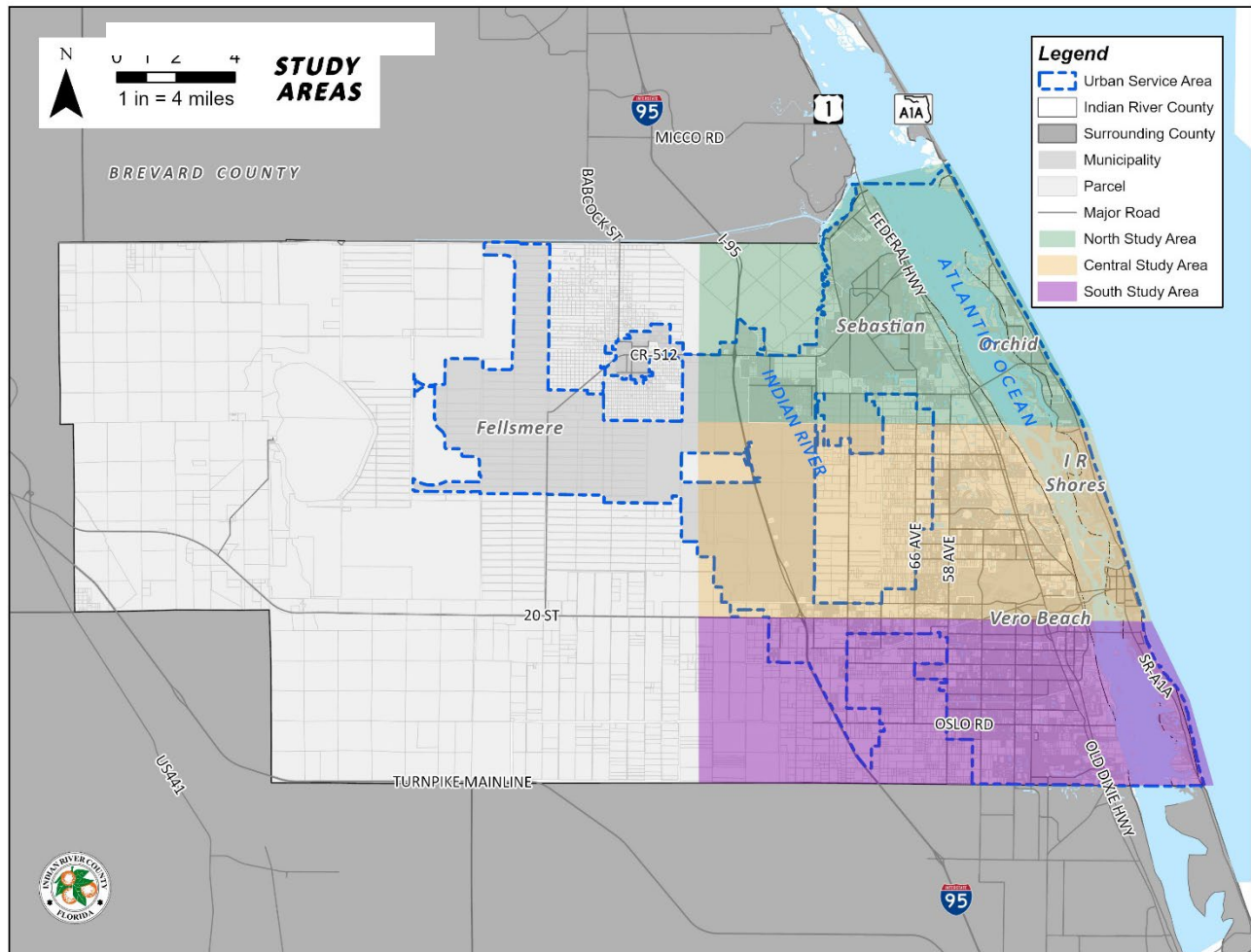
The Urban Service Area is approximately 125,630 acres in size and includes all municipal areas within the County: Fellsmere, Indian River Shores, Orchid, Sebastian, and Vero Beach. The Study Area for the purposes of the analysis does not include incorporated areas, as those municipalities are subject to their own population projections and comprehensive plans. The Urban Service Area, apart from the portion which includes Fellsmere, is generally located east of Interstate 95 to the Atlantic Ocean.

For purposes of this report, a 151,176 acre Study Area (shown in **Figure 1**) was selected to focus the analysis on the east side of the County. Of the total Study Area, approximately 42,659 acres are within unincorporated Indian River County and within the USB. The remainder of the Study Area is comprised of property that is within unincorporated Indian River County and outside of the USB (41,070 acres), property that is incorporated (40,460 acres), and property that does not have assigned parcels such as rivers and rights-of-way (26,987 acres).

This report provides the existing context of the USB, including demographic, regulatory, and infrastructure information to better understand the Study Area. For the purposes of this analysis, the full Study Area was divided into three subareas when visualizing detailed geospatial data: the North, Central and South Study Areas.

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**Figure 1. Study Area and Urban Service Boundary**



Sources: Indian River County, Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

## Demographics & Socioeconomic Data for the Study Area

### Population

**Table 1** shows the estimated population for the Study Area and County based upon data from the American Community Survey. The Study Area has grown by approximately 25% since 2010, at a slightly faster rate than the County overall. Areas surrounding the County's municipalities experienced growth in this timeframe, with suburban development increasing the proportion of unincorporated residents.

**Table 1. Estimated Population**

	2010	2023	Percent Change
Study Area	86,913	108,960	25.4%
Indian River County	138,028	167,781	21.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022, 5-year estimates; BEBR, 2024

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## Population Projections

As part of this effort, population projections found in **Table 2** were developed through the year 2050. These projections are based on estimates from the University of Florida's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BEBR), historic population trends, and estimates for seasonal population. A full set of population projections can be found in **Appendix A** of this report.

**Table 2. Summary of Population Projections**

Year	BEBR Medium Population (Countywide)	Permanent Unincorporated Population	Seasonal Unincorporated Population	Total Unincorporated Population
2025	173,100	117,708	13,035	130,743
2030	184,400	125,392	13,885	139,277
2035	193,100	131,308	14,541	145,849
2040	199,200	135,456	15,000	150,456
2045	204,100	138,788	15,369	154,157
2050	208,400	141,712	15,693	157,405

Source: BEBR, April 2023, Indian River County, 2024

## Educational Attainment

**Table 3** shows the educational attainment of the Study Area compared to the County overall and the State. The Study Area has a slightly lower level of higher educational attainment than the County and State (Bachelor's Degree or higher); however, the Study Area is otherwise relatively consistent with the County's overall educational attainment.

**Table 3. Educational Attainment**

Education Level (Residents 25 years or older)	Study Area	Indian River County	State of Florida
	%	%	%
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2.4%	2.4%	3.7%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5.4%	4.9%	5.4%
High School Graduate	28.0%	27.9%	28.2%
Some College, No Degree	19.5%	18.5%	17.4%
Associate degree	11.5%	11.4%	10.9%
Bachelor's Degree	20.0%	21.2%	21.6%
Graduate/Professional Degree	13.1%	13.7%	12.7%
Did not receive High School degree or equivalent	7.8%	7.3%	9.1%
Bachelor's Degree or higher	33.1%	34.9%	34.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022, 5-year estimates

## Local Employment

The median household income within the Study Area is approximately \$61,697, which is slightly lower than the County's and State's median household income of \$62,233 and \$65,081, respectively. A large proportion of the population of the Study Area are no longer within the labor force, which may be attributed to an older population with more retired individuals living on fixed incomes. Of those within the labor force

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(approximately 45,000 individuals), 5.5% are considered unemployed and seeking employment or underemployed. The most common industries employing residents are Services, Retail Trade, Construction, and Finance/Insurance/Real Estate, as shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 4. Employed Population by Industry**

INDUSTRY	PERCENT EMPLOYED
Agriculture/Mining	1.2%
Construction	7.8%
Manufacturing	4.7%
Wholesale Trade	1.4%
Retail Trade	15.1%
Transportation/Utilities	4.6%
Information	0.8%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	7.8%
Services	53.4%
Public Administration	3.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2018-2022, 5-year estimates

## Housing Characteristics

Based upon American Community Survey data, there are approximately 52,733 housing units within the Study Area. **Table 5** shows the number of housing units based on the structure type. The most common housing type, similar to many suburban communities, is the detached single-family home (64% of all units). The second most common housing type is apartments or condominiums in structures of 10 to 19 units.

Within the Study Area, 24% of housing units are considered vacant. Approximately 50% of the vacant units are used seasonally or for vacation homes.

**Table 5. Housing Units by Units in Structure**

Type of Housing	# of Units	% of Total
1-unit detached	33,510	63.5%
1-unit attached (i.e., townhomes)	2,843	5.4%
2 units (duplex)	897	1.7%
3 to 4 units (triplex or quadplex)	1,417	2.7%
5 to 9 units	2,353	4.5%
10 to 19 units	4,518	8.6%
20 or more units	2,770	5.2%
Mobile home	4,364	8.3%
Other (Boat, RV, Van, etc.)	62	0.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,733</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2017-2021, 5-year estimates



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## Land Use

The following subsections discuss existing land use (how the individual parcels are currently being used), future land use (the County's vision for the future and the types of developments which can occur), and zoning (regulations which dictate the use and dimensional standards of developments). The analysis focuses only on the current land uses, future land uses, and zoning districts found in unincorporated areas within the USB.

### Existing Land Use Patterns

Existing land use patterns show how parcels are being used, whether for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, or other uses. These existing land use categories are derived from the Department of Revenue (DOR) land use codes provided within the most recent data from the Indian River County Property Appraiser.

**Table 6** provides a breakdown of the acreages and proportions of each land use within the USB, while **Figure 2**, **Figure 3**, and **Figure 4** show maps of the current land use pattern within and outside of the USB. The most prominent land uses in the USB Study Area are Single Family Residential (31%), Vacant or undeveloped (24%), Public/Institutional (9%), and Agriculture (7%). Residential Common Area (common space surrounding multifamily or single-family residences), Recreation, and Conservation land uses account for 7%, 6%, and 4%, respectively. Multifamily, Mobile/Manufactured Home, Industrial, Commercial, Right-of-Way/Utilities, Office/Professional, Mixed Use, and Water land uses account for smaller proportions (less than 3%) of the unincorporated area within the USB.

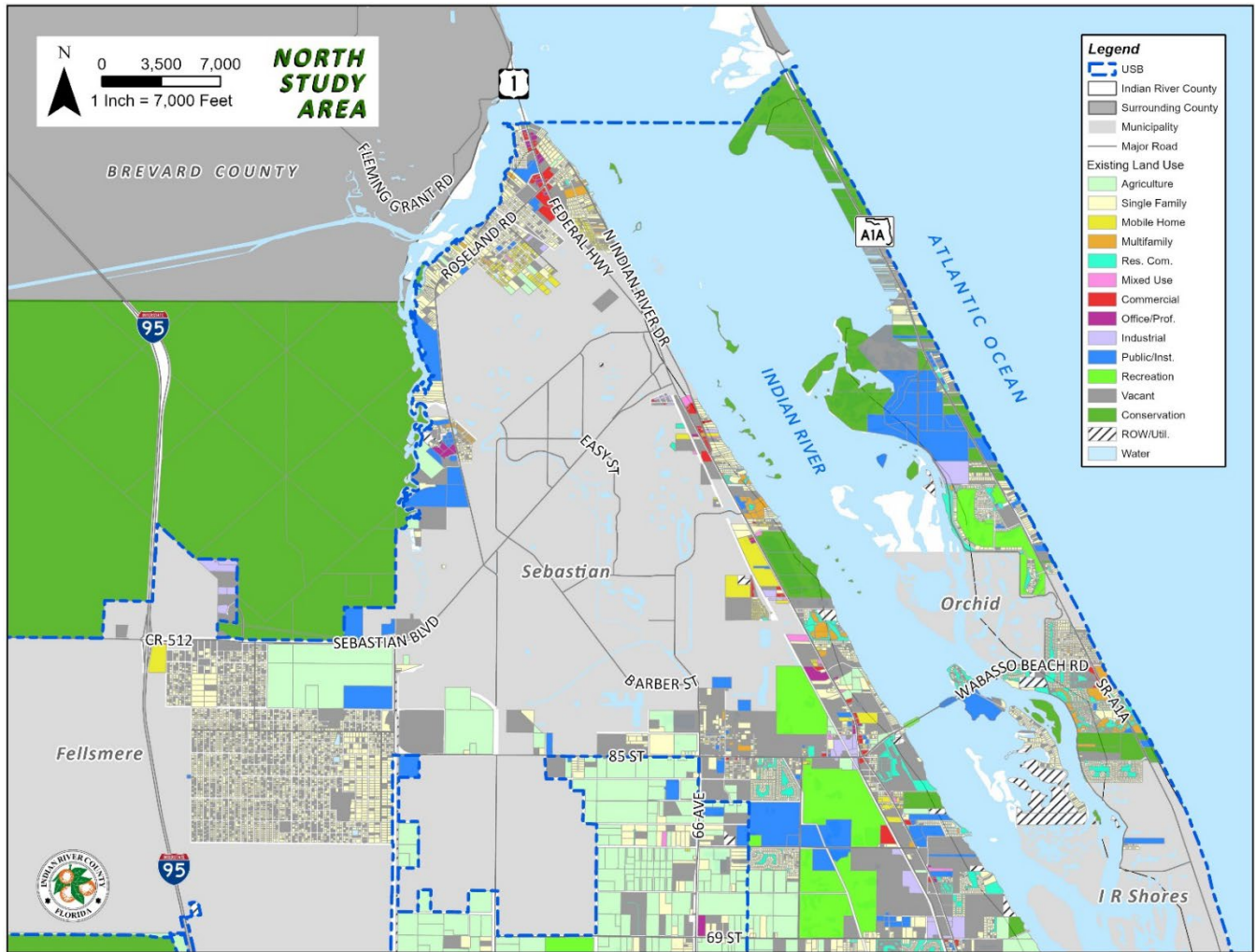
**Table 6. Existing Land Use**

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent (%)
Single Family Residential	13,197.5	30.9%
Vacant	10,257.6	24.1%
Public/Institutional	3,642.3	8.5%
Agriculture	3,027.3	7.1%
Residential Common Area	2,824.7	6.6%
Recreation	2,441.1	5.7%
Conservation	1,847.3	4.3%
Multifamily	1,158.4	2.7%
Mobile/Manufactured Home	1,127.5	2.6%
Industrial	975.1	2.3%
Commercial	929.2	2.2%
Right-of-Way/Utilities	692.8	1.6%
Office/Professional	253.8	0.6%
Mixed Use	184.2	0.4%
Water	83.9	0.2%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>42,642.6</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sources: Indian County Property Appraiser, 2024

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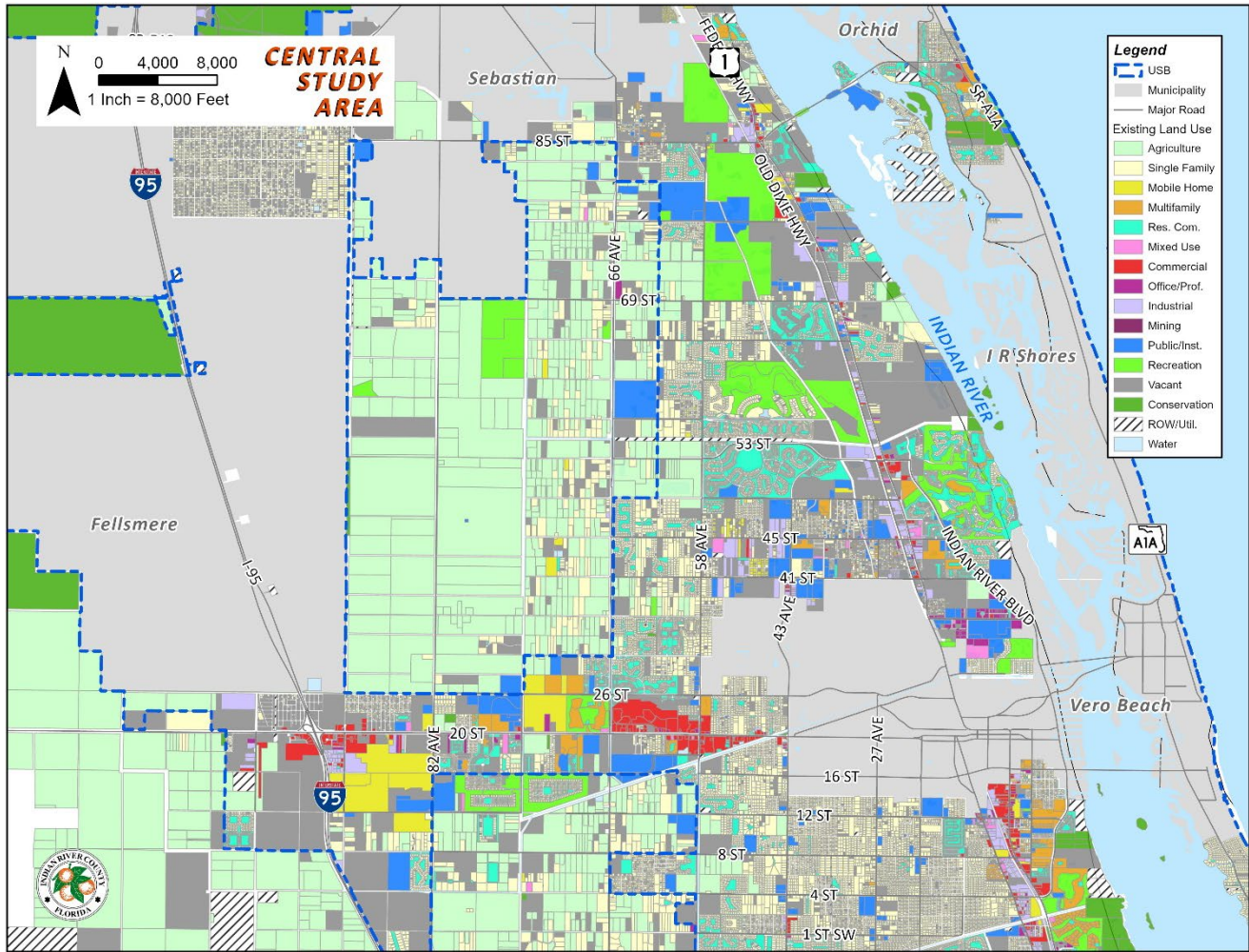
Figure 2. Existing Land Use - North Study Area



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, FGDL, 2024

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**Figure 3. Existing Land Use - Central Study Area**

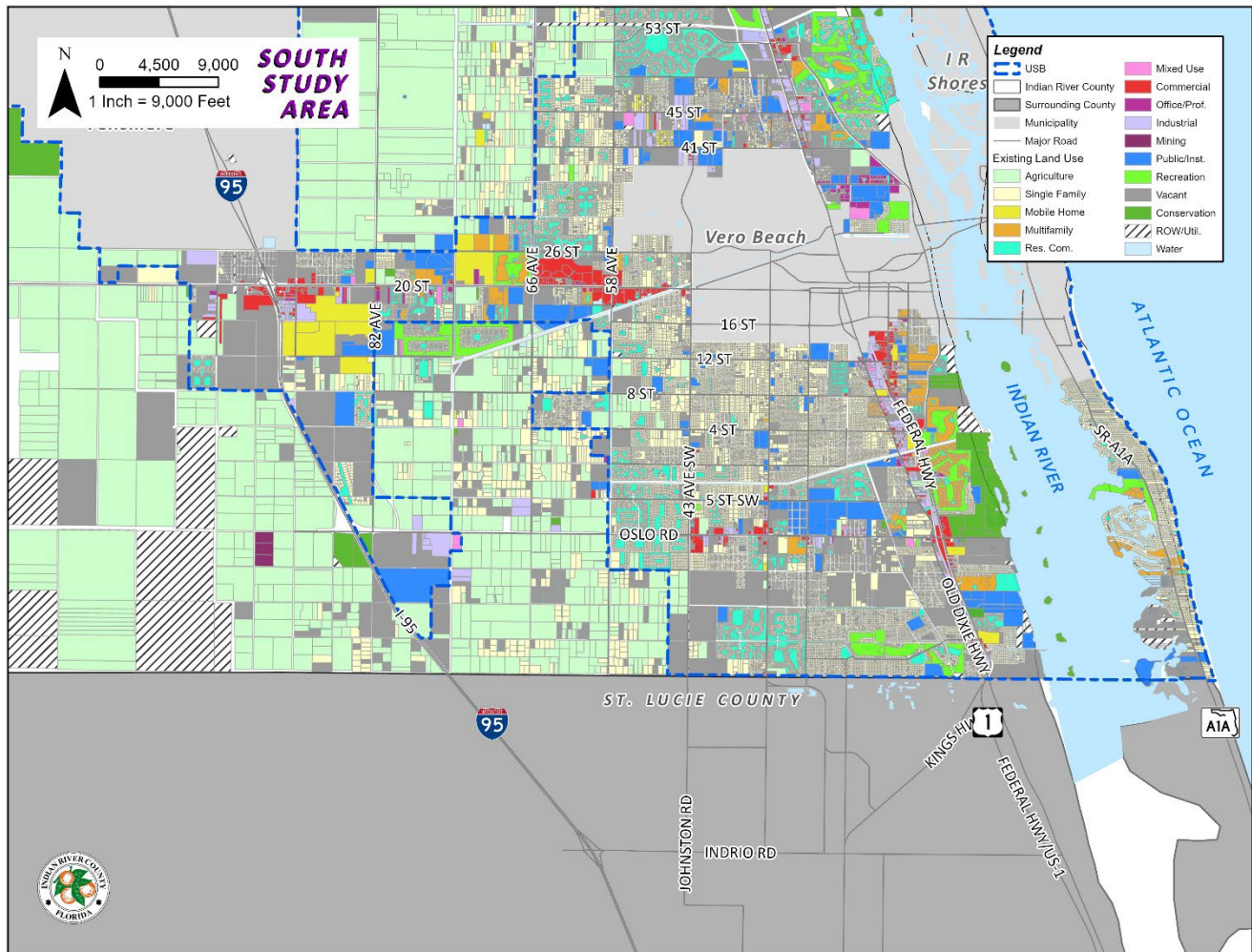


Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, FGDL, 2024



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**Figure 4. Existing Land Use - South Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, FGDL, 2024

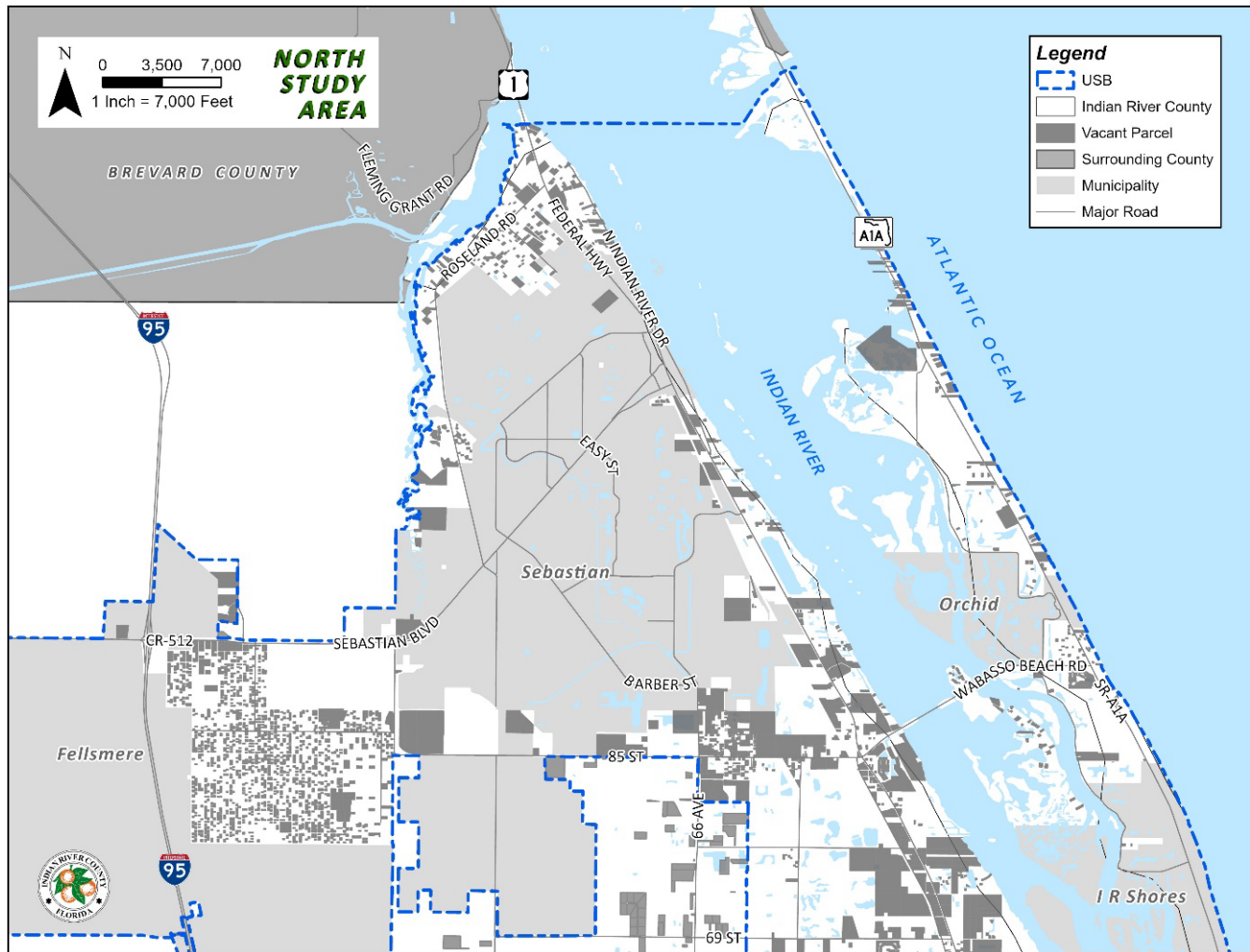
## Vacant Parcels

The current land use analysis estimates that there are approximately 10,000 acres of vacant and undeveloped land within the USB Study Area. These parcels are scattered throughout the Study Area with higher concentrations near I-95, US Highway 1, and Old Dixie Highway. Some vacant parcels are platted for future single family residential development, often within established subdivisions. As such, these platted parcels are likely to become developed in the future. Some of the identified vacant parcels may be undevelopable due to the presence of environmental constraints, such as wetlands or critical habitats. Understanding the locations of vacant parcels assists in quantifying the County's capacity for future development which is discussed in the Carrying Capacity section. **Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7** show these vacant parcels.



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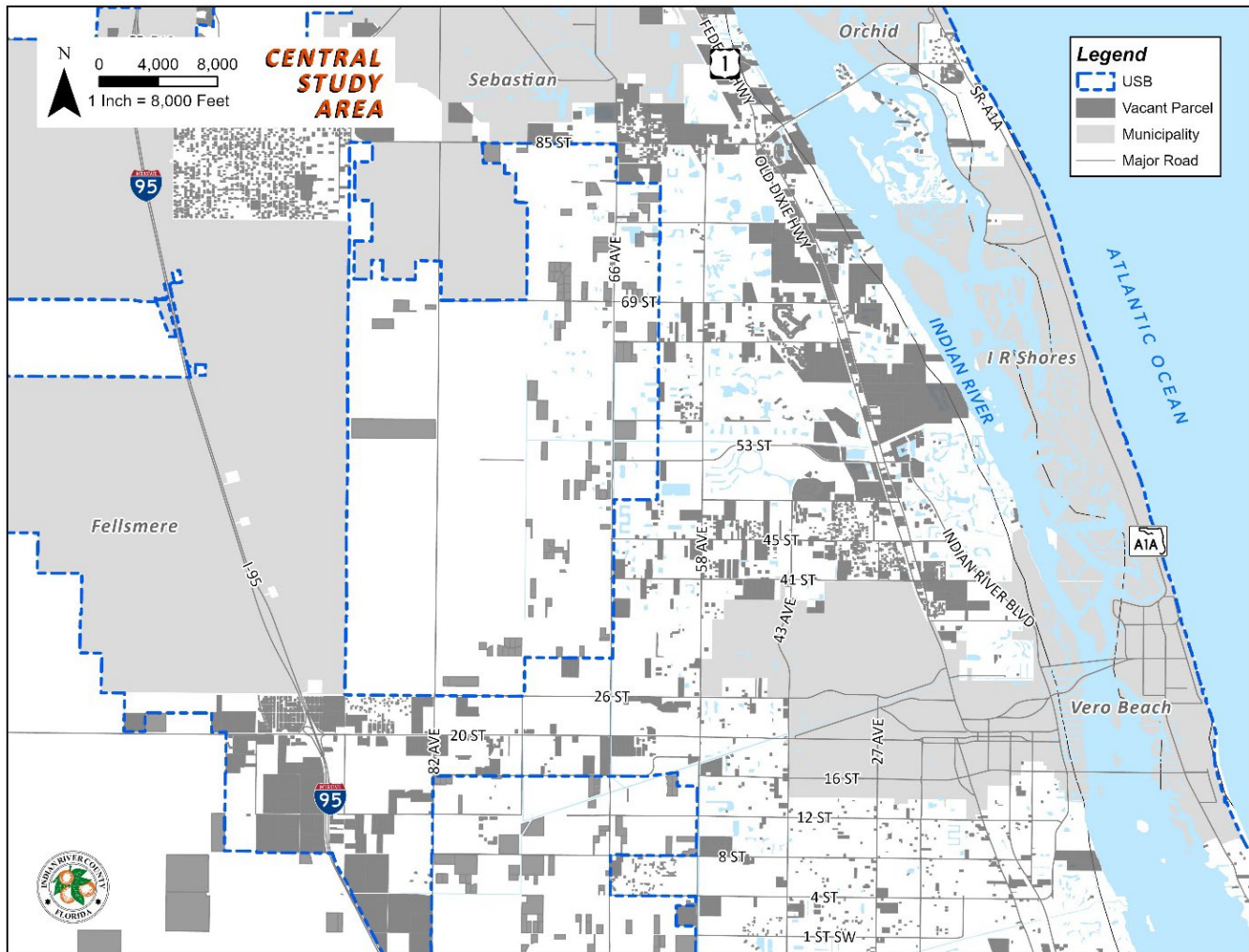
**Figure 5. Vacant Parcels - North Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, FGDL, 2024

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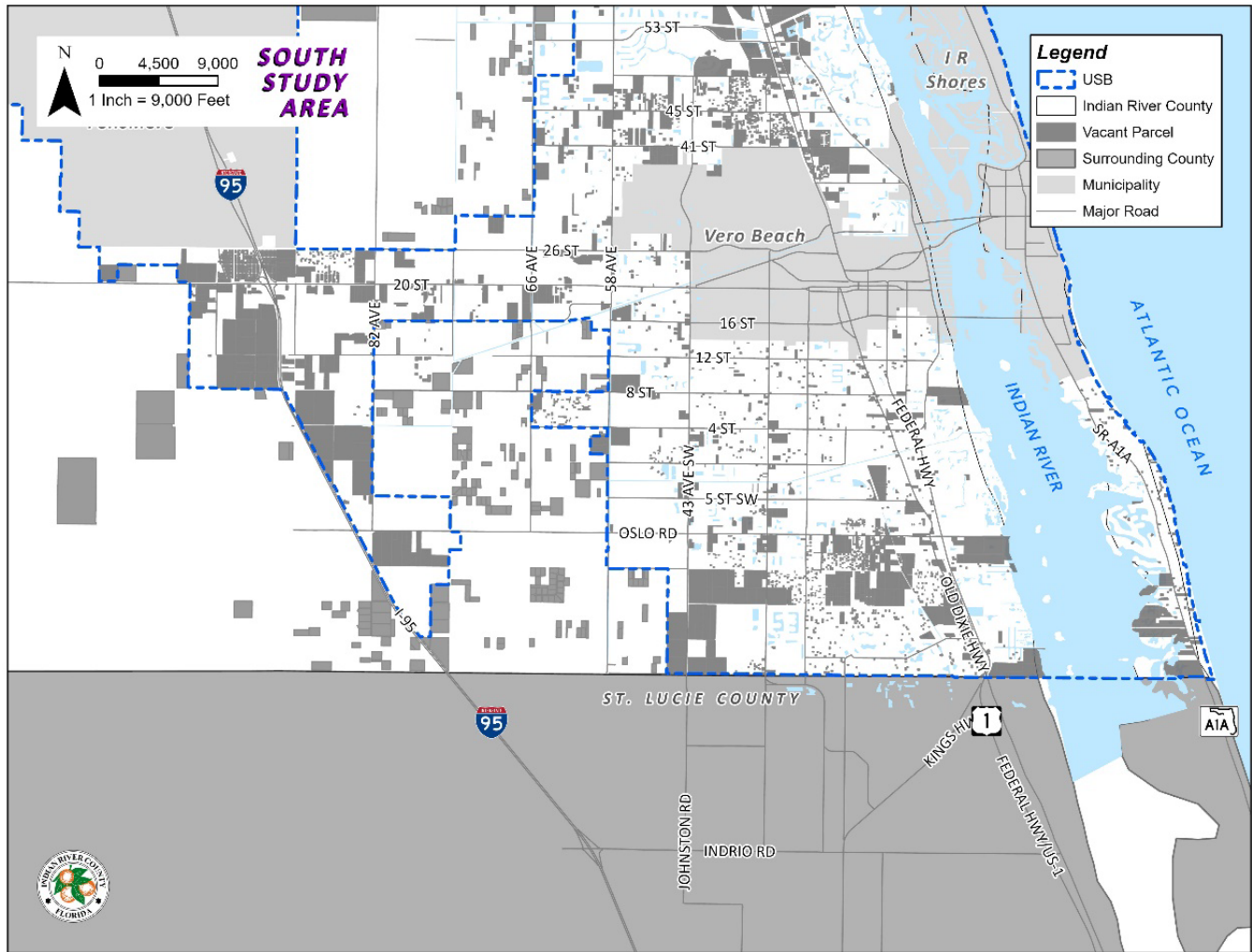
Figure 6. Vacant Parcels - Central Study Area



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, FGDL, 2024

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**Figure 7. Vacant Parcels - South Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, FGDL, 2024

## Future Land Use

The County's Comprehensive Plan establishes Future Land Use (FLU) designations within the County to guide future growth toward a shared community vision. The County's Future Land Use Map, as well as its goals and policies, provide a direction for economic growth and development in certain areas, while preserving and protecting environmental and cultural resources. **Table 7** provides the breakdown of acreage and proportion of the land use in the USB Study Area, and **Figure 8**, **Figure 9**, and **Figure 10** show the future land use designations in and outside of the USB.

Low-Density Residential-2 (L-2) and Low-Density Residential (L-1) are the most common FLU designations in the USB Study Area, and account for 31% and 26%, respectively, of the land area. L-2 allows for a maximum residential density of six dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and L-1 allows for three du/ac. However, historically, new residential development has occurred below the maximum density allowed under the County's FLU designations. These designations allow for single family and multifamily residential developments. As discussed in the County's Comprehensive Plan, there is a focus on the prevention of low-density suburban sprawl within the USB by promoting clustered development, connected



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neighborhoods, and a mix of uses. The L-1 and L-2 designations also allow for recreational uses, public facilities, institutional uses, schools, professional/office uses up to 0.35 floor area ratio (FAR).

Commercial/Industrial (C/I) is the third most common FLU designation in the USB Study Area, accounting for 12% of the land area. The C/I designation is applied to areas which are suitable for urban scale development and intensities, generally near existing urban centers and commercial nodes.

**Table 7. Future Land Use Designations**

Future Land Use	Acres	Percent (%)
L-2: Low Density Residential-2 (6 du/ac)	13,001.5	30.5%
L-1: Low Density Residential-1 (3 du/ac)	10,897.4	25.6%
C/I: Commercial/Industrial	5,197.5	12.2%
M-1: Medium-Density Residential-1 (8 du/ac)	4,362.1	10.2%
C-1: Conservation-1 (0 du/ac)	2,112.4	5.0%
M-2: Medium-Density Residential-2 (10 du/ac)	1,740.5	4.1%
C-2: Conservation-2 (1 du/40 ac)	1,492.1	3.5%
REC: Recreation	1,338.4	3.1%
MHRP: Mobile Home Rental Park (8 du/ac)	763.3	1.8%
PUB: Public Facilities	725.3	1.7%
R: Rural Residential (1 du/ac)	367.9	0.9%
C-3: Conservation-3 (1 du/2.5 ac)	257.7	0.6%
RC: Regional Commercial	129.2	0.3%
AG-1: Agricultural-1 (1 du/5 ac)	93.0	0.2%
T: Transitional Residential (1 du/ac)	25.1	0.1%
AG-2: Agricultural-2 (1 du/10 ac)	27.1	0.1%
Municipal	27.8	0.1%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>42,558.2*</b>	<b>100%</b>

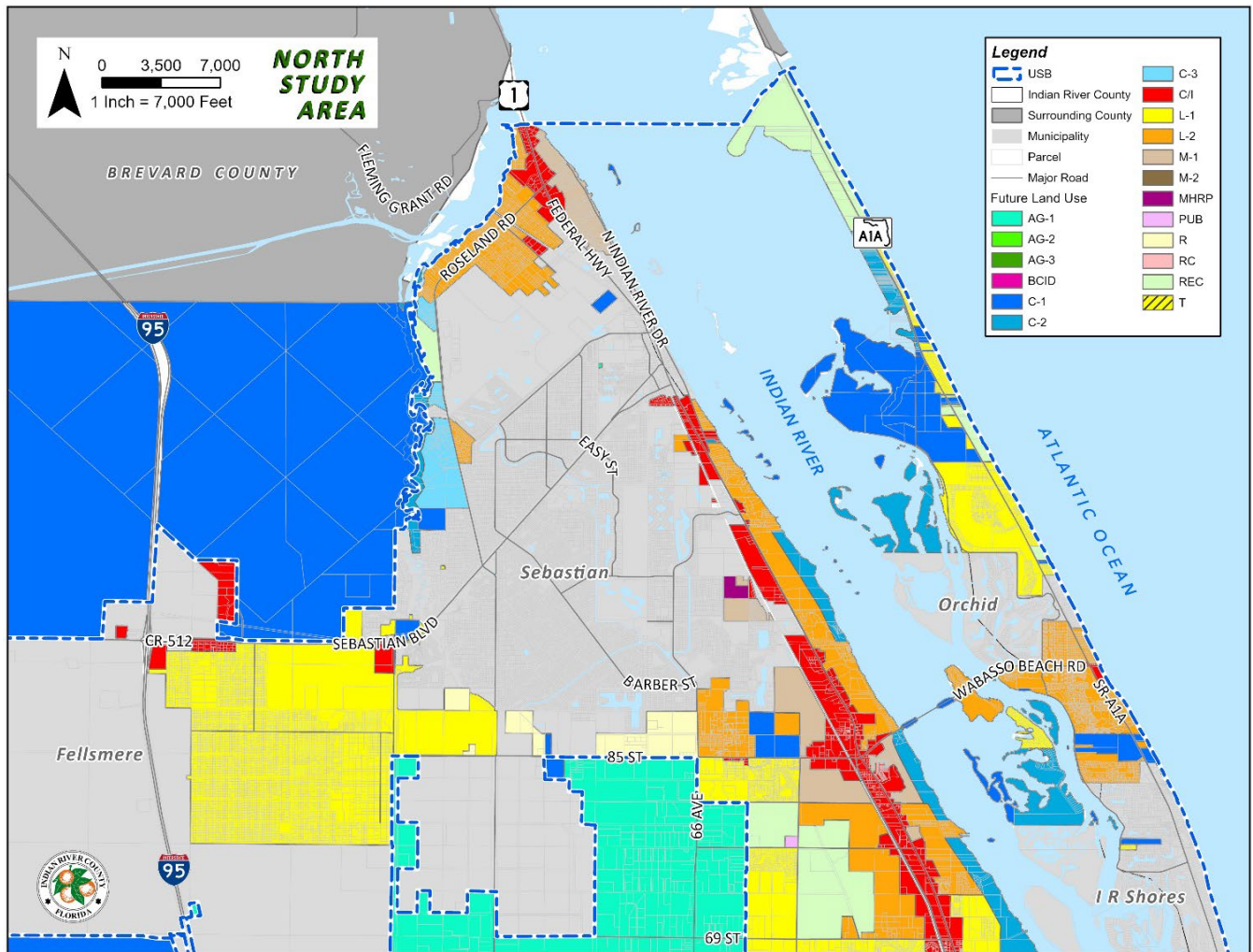
Sources: Indian River County, 2024

*\*Note: This total acreage is different from the Existing Land Use total acreage due to the differences in parcel data. Waterways are included in Existing Land Use data but not in Future Land Use.*



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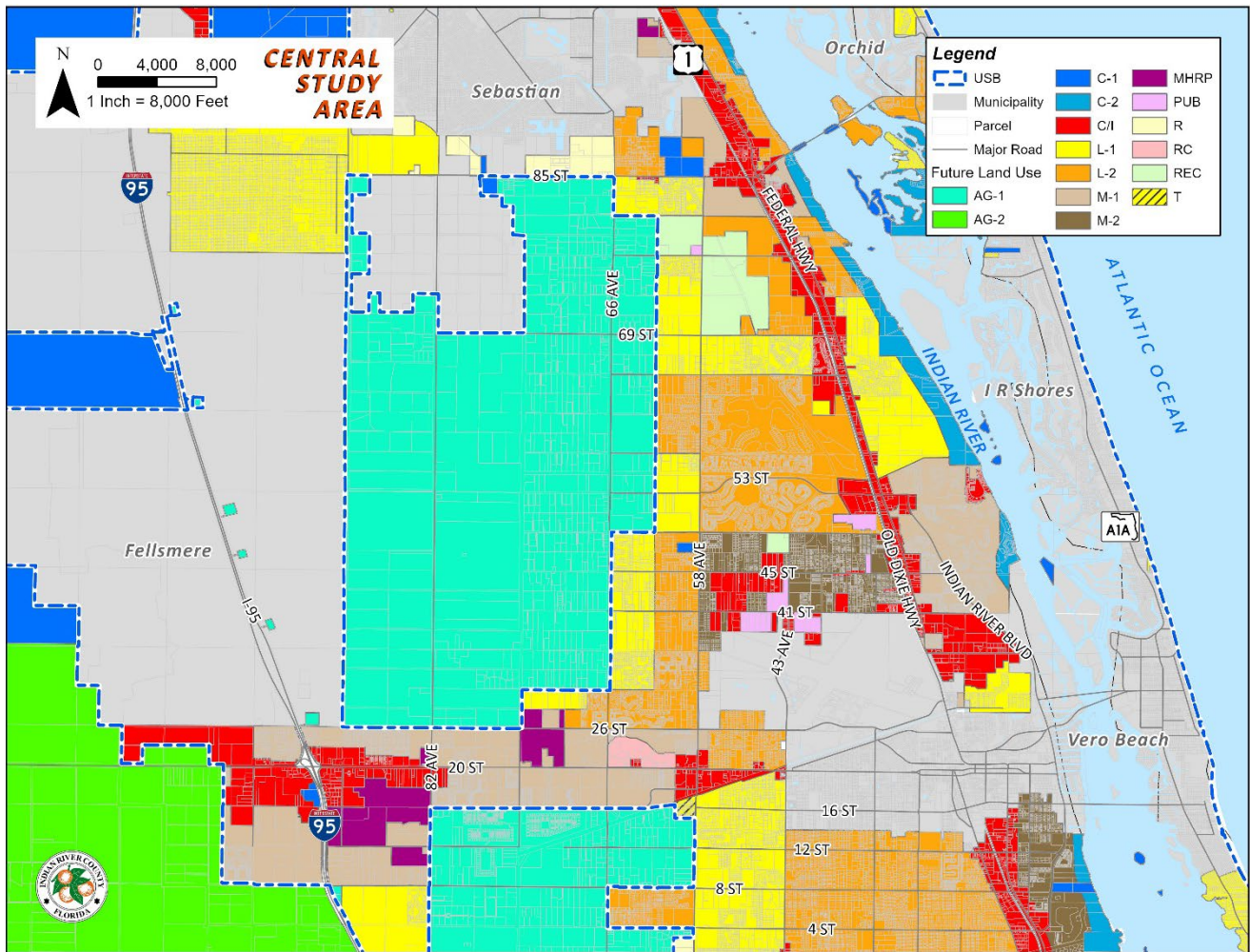
**Figure 8. Future Land Use - North Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

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**Figure 9. Future Land Use - Central Study Area**

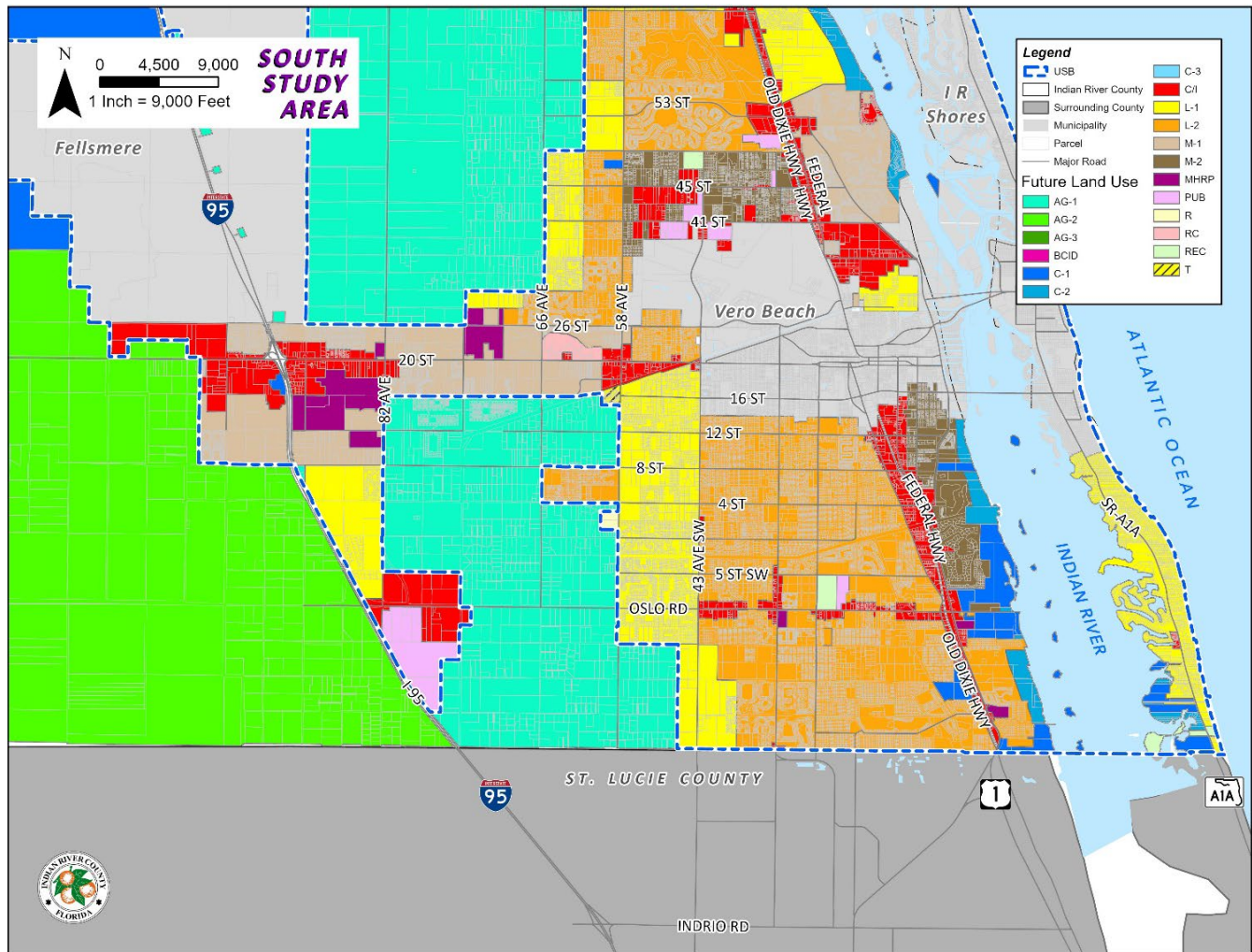


Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024



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**Figure 10. Future Land Use - South Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

## Zoning

Zoning districts are found in the County's Land Development Code and assist in implementing the Comprehensive Plan through the establishment of development standards for each of the districts. Zoning districts guide permitted, prohibited, administrative permit, and special exception uses of the land, as well as site development criteria, building footprints, and public realm aspects (signage, landscaping, design, etc.). **Table 8** lists the zoning districts and their associated acreage, and **Figure 11**, **Figure 12**, and **Figure 13** show the district locations within the Study Area.

The two most prominent zoning districts in the Study Area, accounting for over 40% of the land area, are single-family residential districts, RS-3 and RS-6. The purpose of the single-family districts is to manage land designated for residential purposes, to provide single-family housing opportunities, to ensure adequate public facilities meet the needs of residents, and to provide diverse housing types. The lot sizes for the RS-3 are significantly larger than those for RS-6 (12,000 square feet compared to 7,000 square feet). RS-3 allows for a maximum density of three dwelling units per acre (du/ac), while RS-6 allows six du/ac. Historically, projects within these districts are rarely built to their maximum densities based upon market

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dynamics. Nonresidential development is also allowed with the RS districts as permitted, administrative permit, and special exception uses.

RM-6, a multiple-family residential district, accounts for 10% of the Study Area. The purpose of the multiple-family districts is to provide multifamily housing opportunities, to ensure adequate public facilities, and to allow for a varied and diverse housing supply. RM-6 allows for a maximum of six du/ac and a maximum building height of 35 feet (the same for the single-family residential districts). Again, the multiple-family residential districts allow for nonresidential development as permitted, administrative permit, and special exception uses.

The most common zoning districts within the Study Area are intended to create relatively low density, suburban-style development with a focus on residential uses (only a small proportion of the Study Area is zoned for commercial uses). The multifamily zoning districts (RM) have regulations which prevent buildings over three stories and provides a mixing of housing types and higher densities. Based upon community feedback, suburban-style developments are preferred, though as populations age, having a diversity of housing options, a mix of uses, and higher densities may assist older residents “age in place.”

**Table 8. Zoning**

Zoning	Acres	Percent (%)
RS-3: Single-Family Residential (3 du/ac)	9,980.8	23.5%
RS-6: Single-Family Residential (6 du/ac)	7,396.5	17.4%
RM-6: Multiple-Family Residential (6 du/ac)	4,232.2	10.0%
A-1: Agricultural-1 (1 du/5 ac)	4,146.7	9.8%
PD: Planned Development	2,851.2	6.7%
CON-1: Public Lands Conservation	2,140.1	5.0%
RS-1: Single-Family Residential (1 du/ac)	1,825.6	4.3%
CG: General Commercial	1,547.0	3.6%
RM-10: Multiple-Family Residential (10 du/ac)	1,212.6	2.9%
RM-4: Multiple-Family Residential (4 du/ac)	920.3	2.2%
RMH-8: Mobile Home Residential (8 du/ac)	887.1	2.1%
IL: Light Industrial	733.3	1.7%
RM-8: Multiple-Family Residential (8 du/ac)	670.4	1.6%
IG: General Industrial	574.9	1.4%
CL: Limited Commercial	569.5	1.3%
CH: Heavy Commercial	529.1	1.2%
PDTND: Planned Development Traditional Neighborhood	427.9	1.0%
MED: Medical	400.3	0.9%
RS-2: Single-Family Residential (2 du/ac)	298.9	0.7%
A-2: Agricultural-2 (1 du/10 ac)	212.0	0.5%
RM-3: Multiple-Family Residential (3 du/ac)	170.8	0.4%
Rose-4: Roseland Residential (4 du/ac)	154.2	0.4%
CRVP: Commercial Recreational Vehicle Park (14 du/ac)	144.3	0.3%
OCR: Office, Commercial, & Residential	112.0	0.3%
AIR-1: Airfield/Residential	92.2	0.2%
RMH-6: Mobile Home Residential (6 du/ac)	73.2	0.2%
RM-10 ex: See FLUE Policy 10.4, exception to Zoning Ordinance	57.3	0.1%
RT-6: Two-Family Residential (6 du/ac)	39.3	0.1%



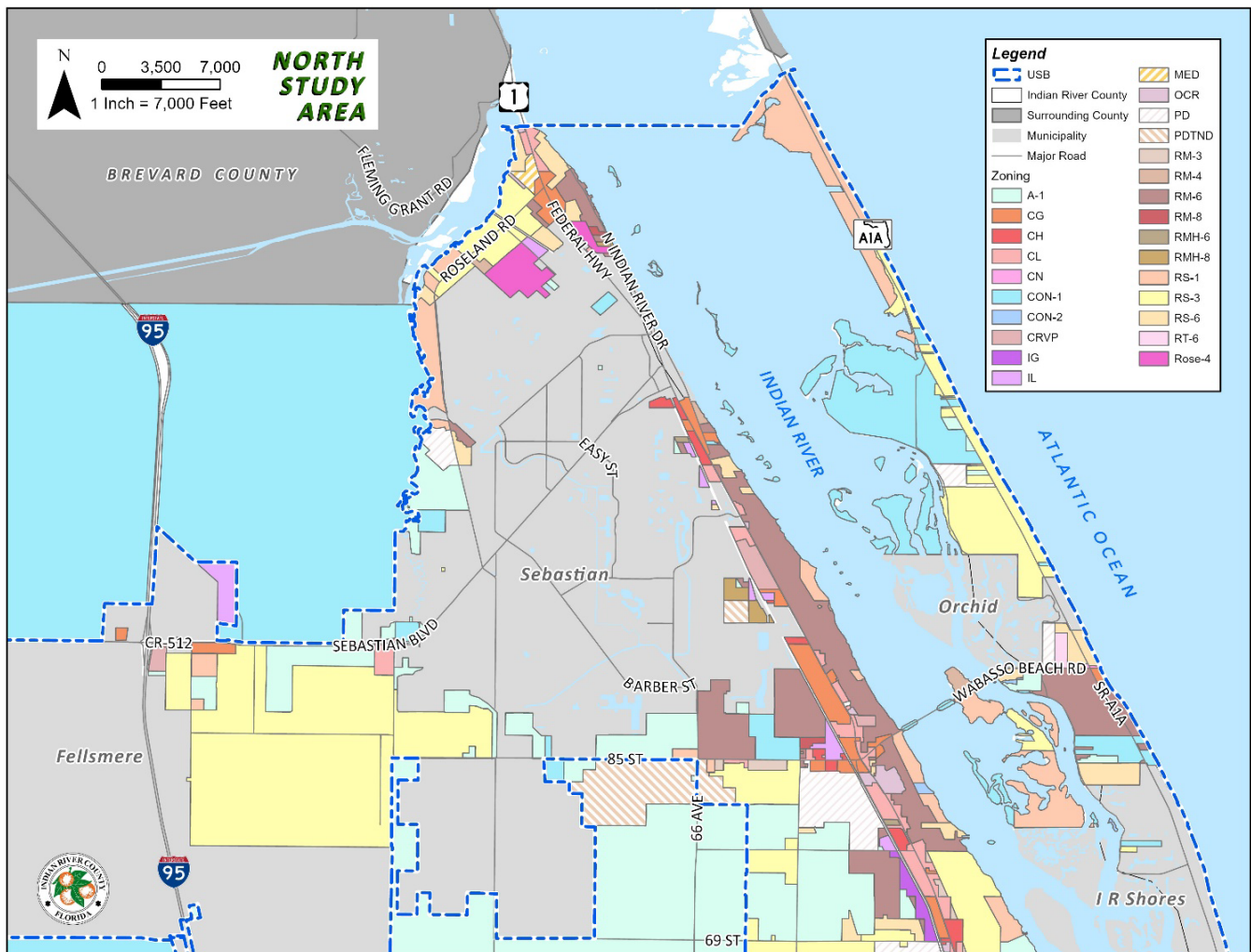
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Zoning	Acres	Percent (%)
CON-2: Estuarine Wetlands Conservation (1 du/40 ac)	23.7	0.1%
MUNI: Municipal Zoning	22.9	0.1%
PDMXD: Planned Development Mixed Use	22.4	0.1%
CN: Neighborhood Commercial	14.4	<0.1%
PRO: Professional Office	10.5	<0.1%
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>42,493.8*</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sources: Indian River County, 2024

\*Note: This total acreage is different from the Existing Land Use and Future Land Use total acreages due to slight variances in how geospatial data is drawn.

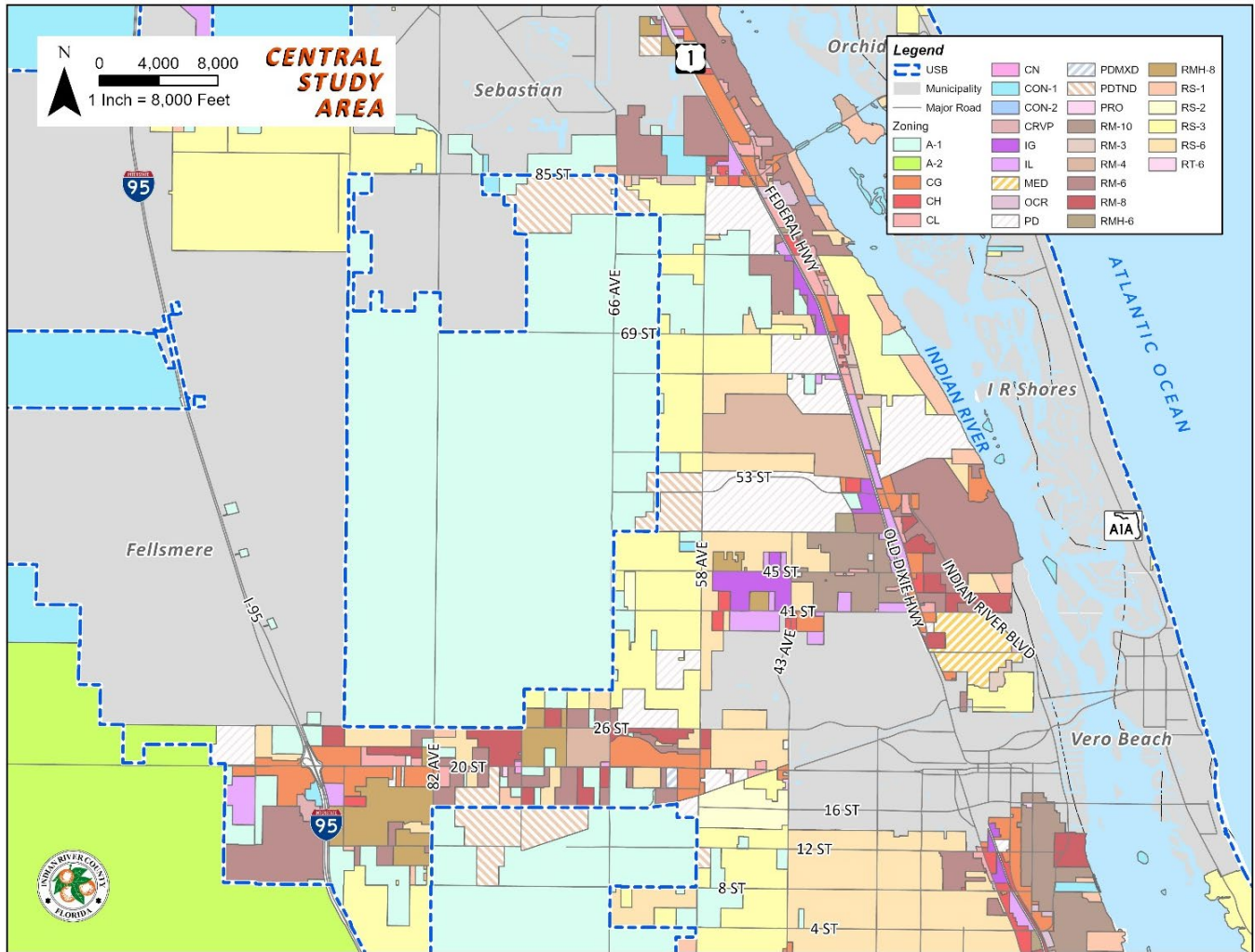
**Figure 11. Zoning - North Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

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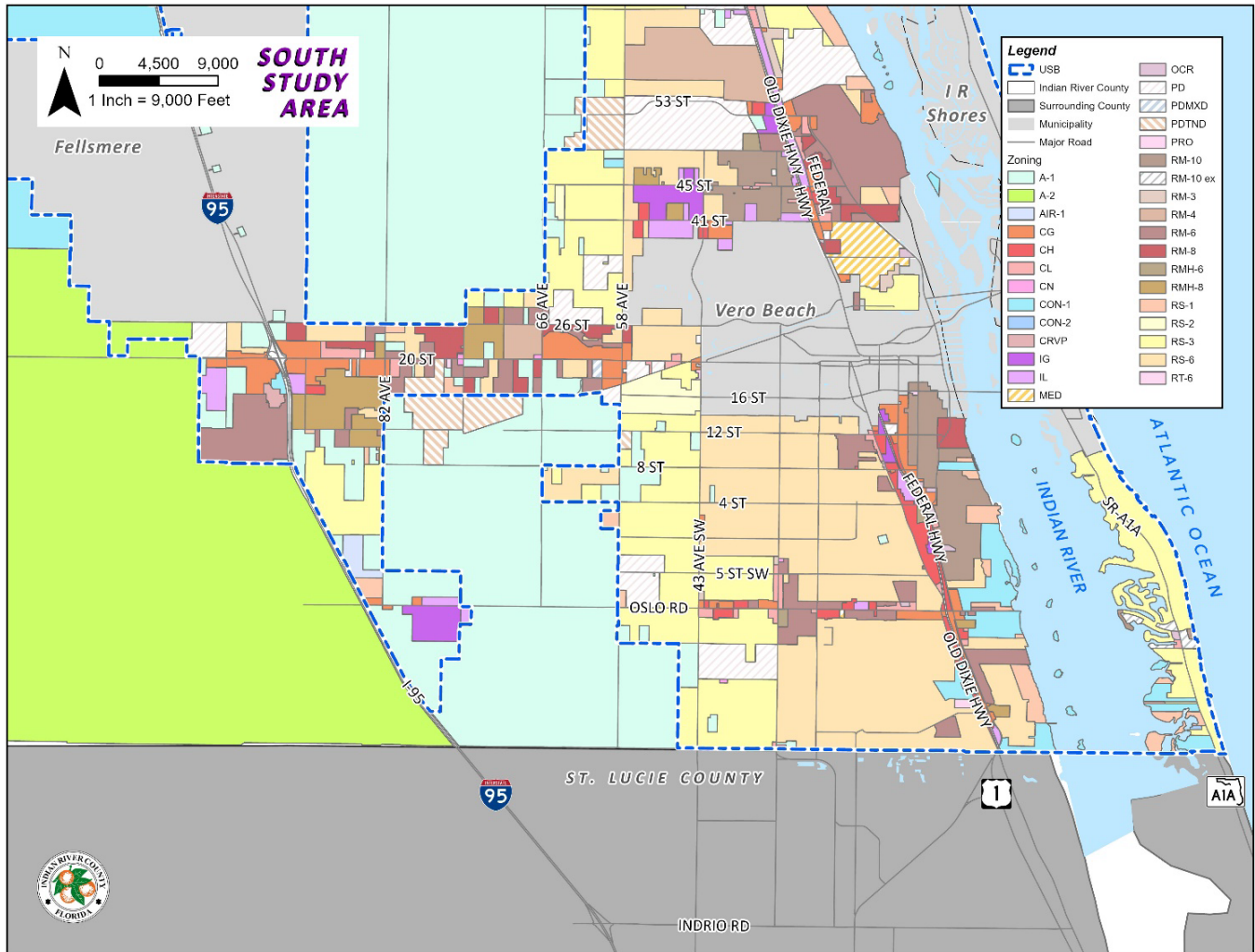
Figure 12. Zoning - Central Study Area



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Figure 13. Zoning - South Study Area



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

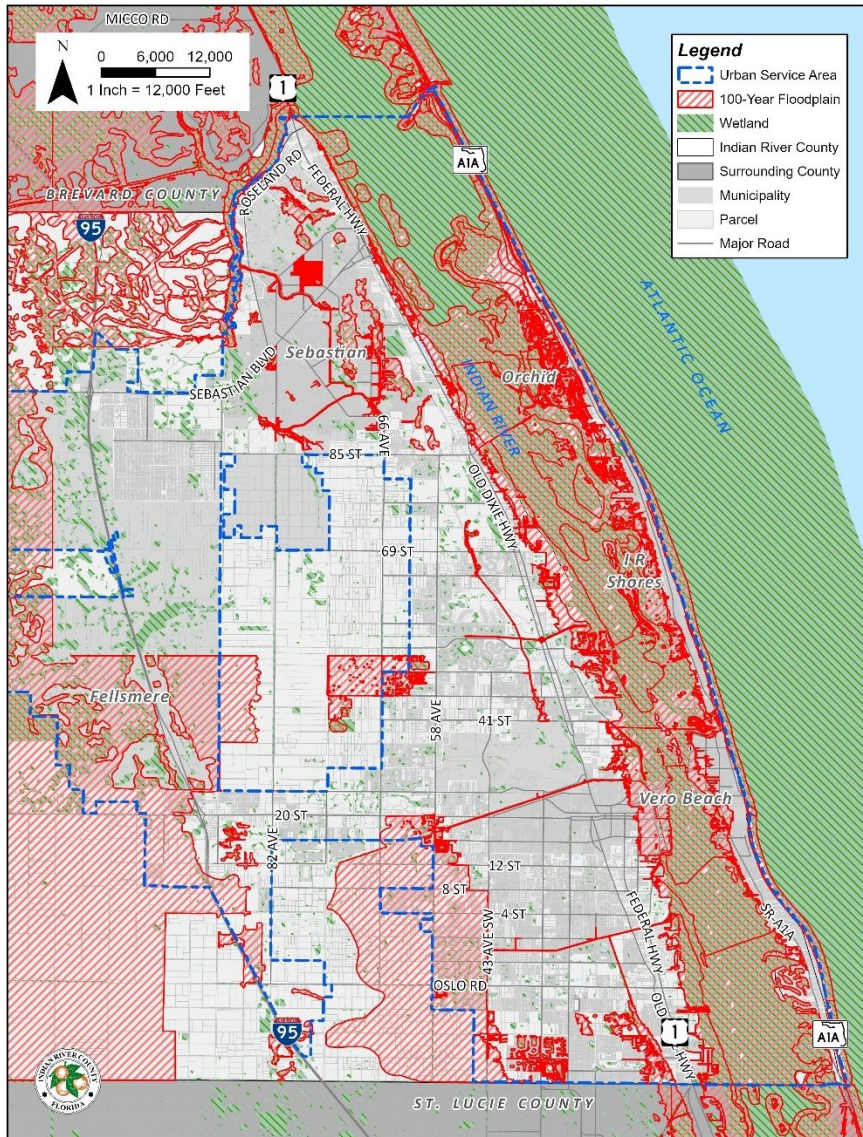


## Environmental Constraints

Another factor regarding the expansion of the Urban Service Area, as well as development, in general, is environmental constraints. Typically, during a development review process, the presence of floodplains, wetlands, and other relevant constraints are considered. One of the County's criteria for expansion of the Urban Service Boundary is an area's "environmental suitability for urbanization." If an area has significant environmental constraints, it is unlikely to be developed and included within the Urban Service Area.

**Figure 14** shows wetlands and 100-year floodplains throughout the Study Area.

**Figure 14. Environmental Constraints**



Source: National Wetland Inventory 2023; FEMA 2021

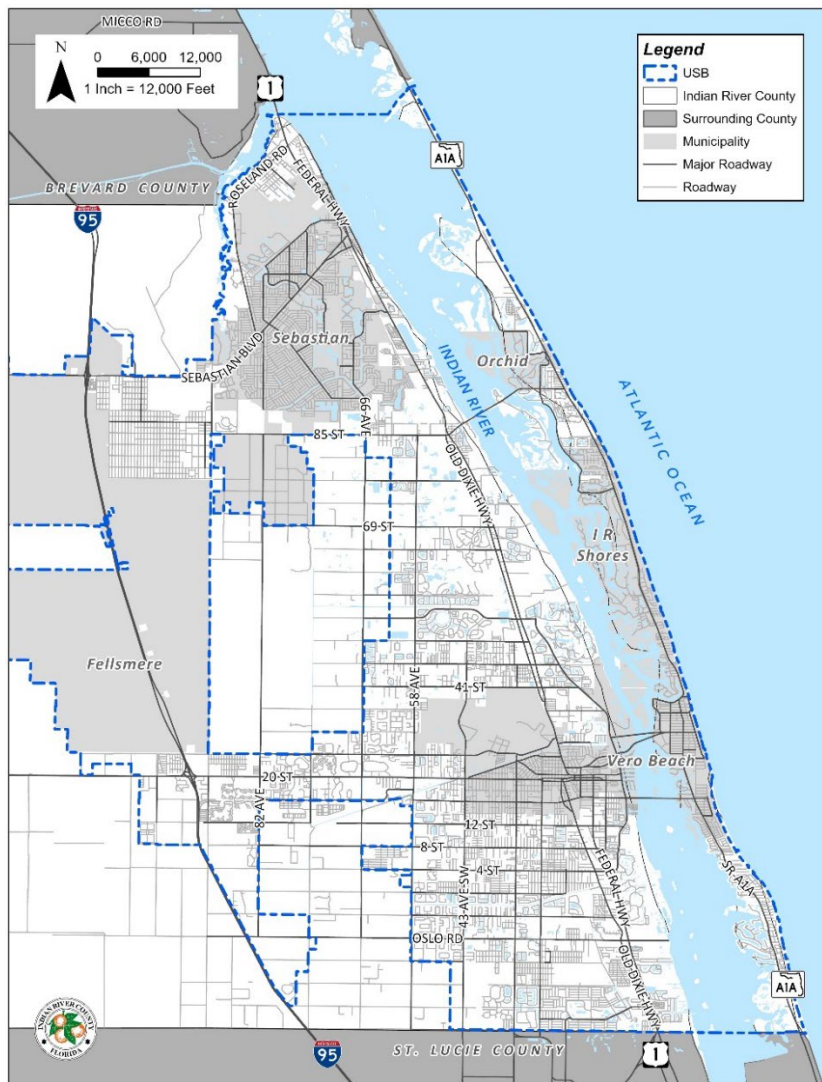
# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Transportation System

### Roadways

The Study Area has several major roads, including Interstate 95, US Highway 1, State Highway A1A, SR 60, and Old Dixie Highway. Roadways in the Study Area form a partial grid, though many residential subdivisions are built without substantial connections to the surrounding grid. When new residential developments are built, developers will be responsible for the payment of impact fees to provide revenue for capital improvements, which will assist in offsetting increased demand of roadways and public infrastructure. Areas outside of the USB have limited roadway connectivity, as can be seen in **Figure 15**, though a planned interchange at Interstate 95 and Oslo Road will improve connectivity in the Study Area.

**Figure 15. Roadways**



Source: Indian River County, Florida Geographic Data Library, 2024

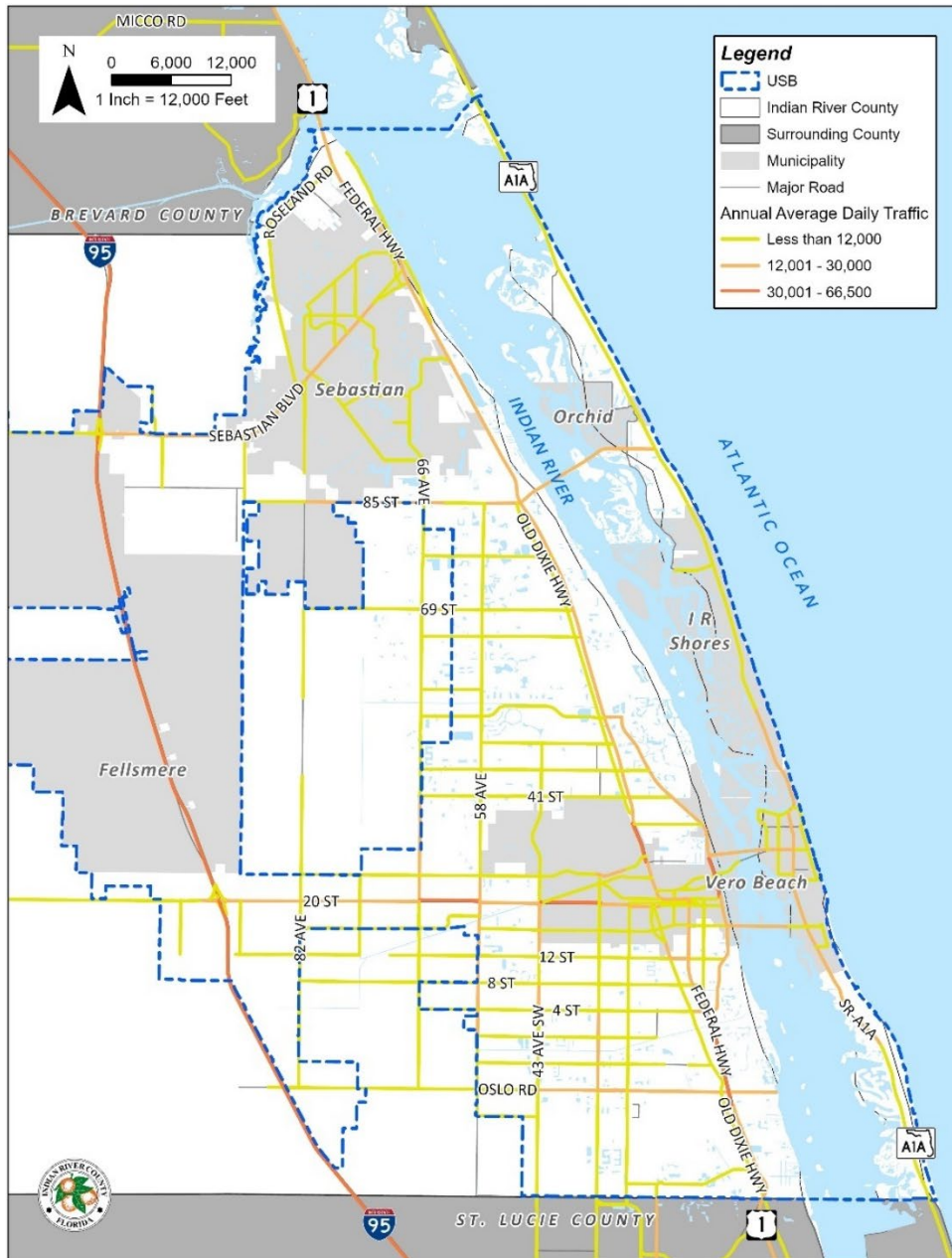


# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Traffic Volumes

As expected, Interstate 95 has the highest volume of traffic per day (see **Figure 16**). The highest volume of traffic is seen within or near incorporated areas in the Urban Service Area. Oslo Road, Sebastian Boulevard, 85<sup>th</sup> Street, and SR 60 also have relatively high traffic volumes in the Study Area.

**Figure 16. Annual Average Daily Traffic**



Source: FDOT, 2024

## Public Transportation

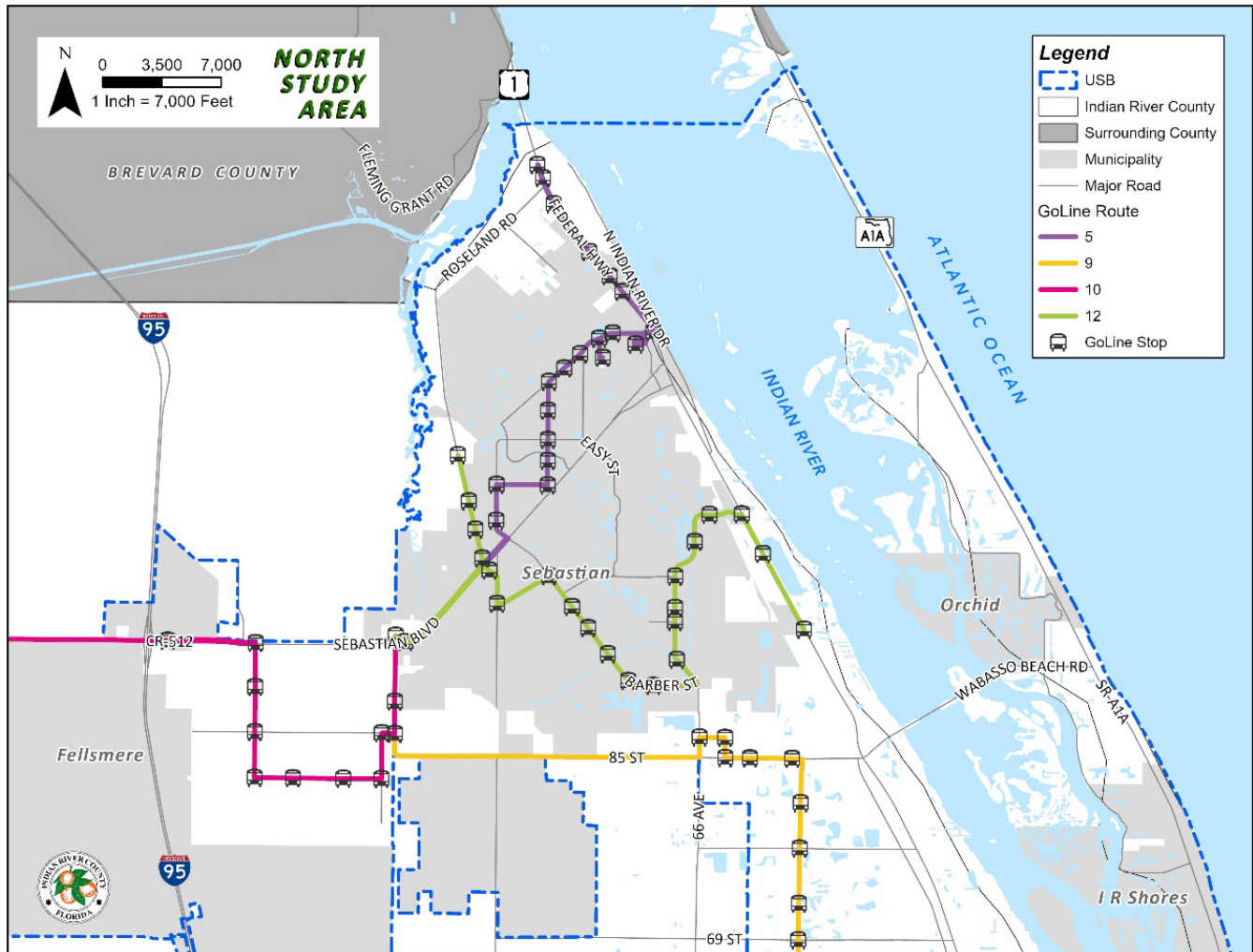
GoLine provides fare-free public transportation and bus service to the County. The bus system has 14 fixed routes, mostly in the eastern portion of the County. GoLine provides access throughout the County's



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

municipalities, as well as the unincorporated areas. The bus system serves areas within the USB, though there is a door-to-bus stop connector available for riders without access to a GoLine bus stop.

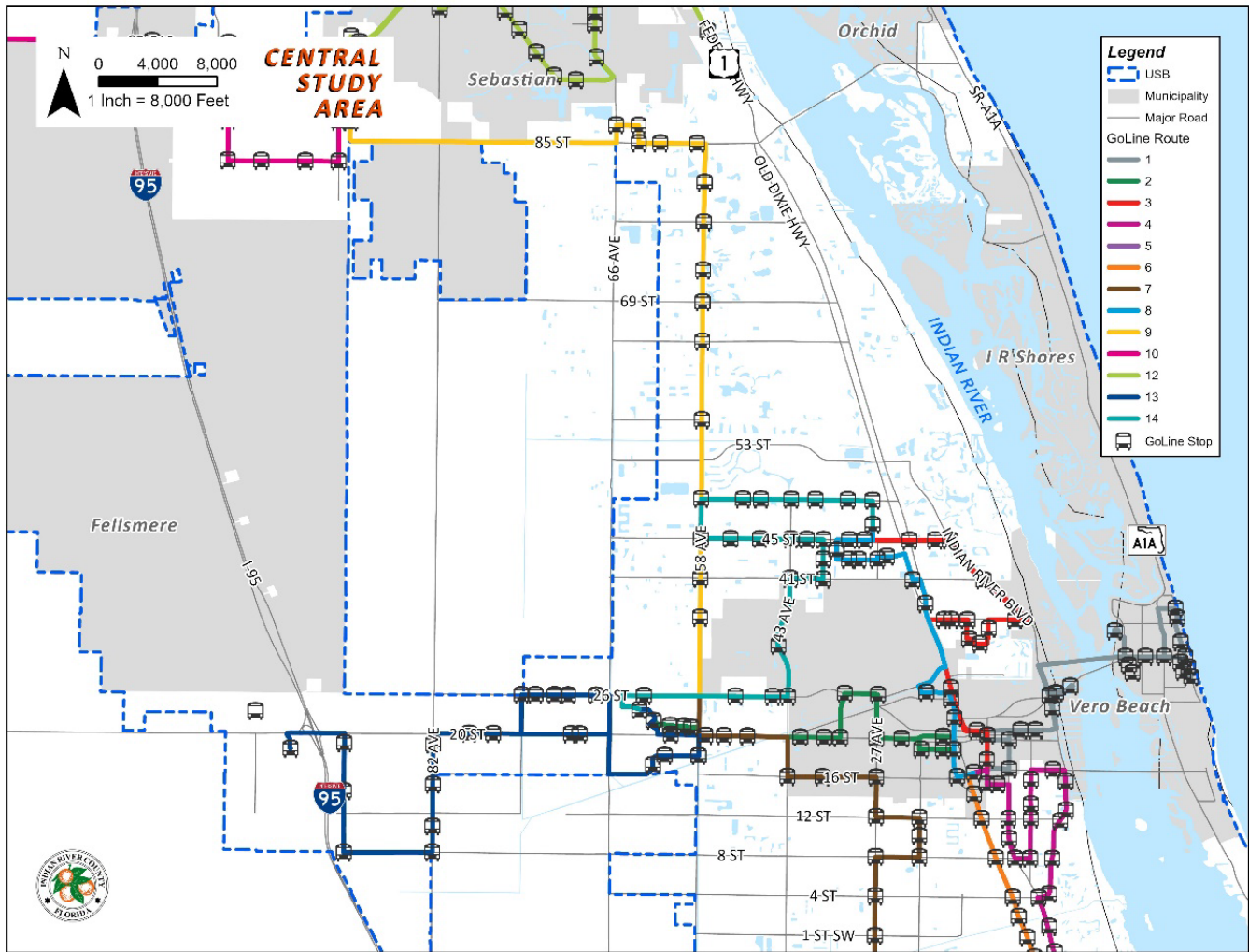
**Figure 17. Public Transportation - North Study Area**



Source: Indian River County, 2024

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

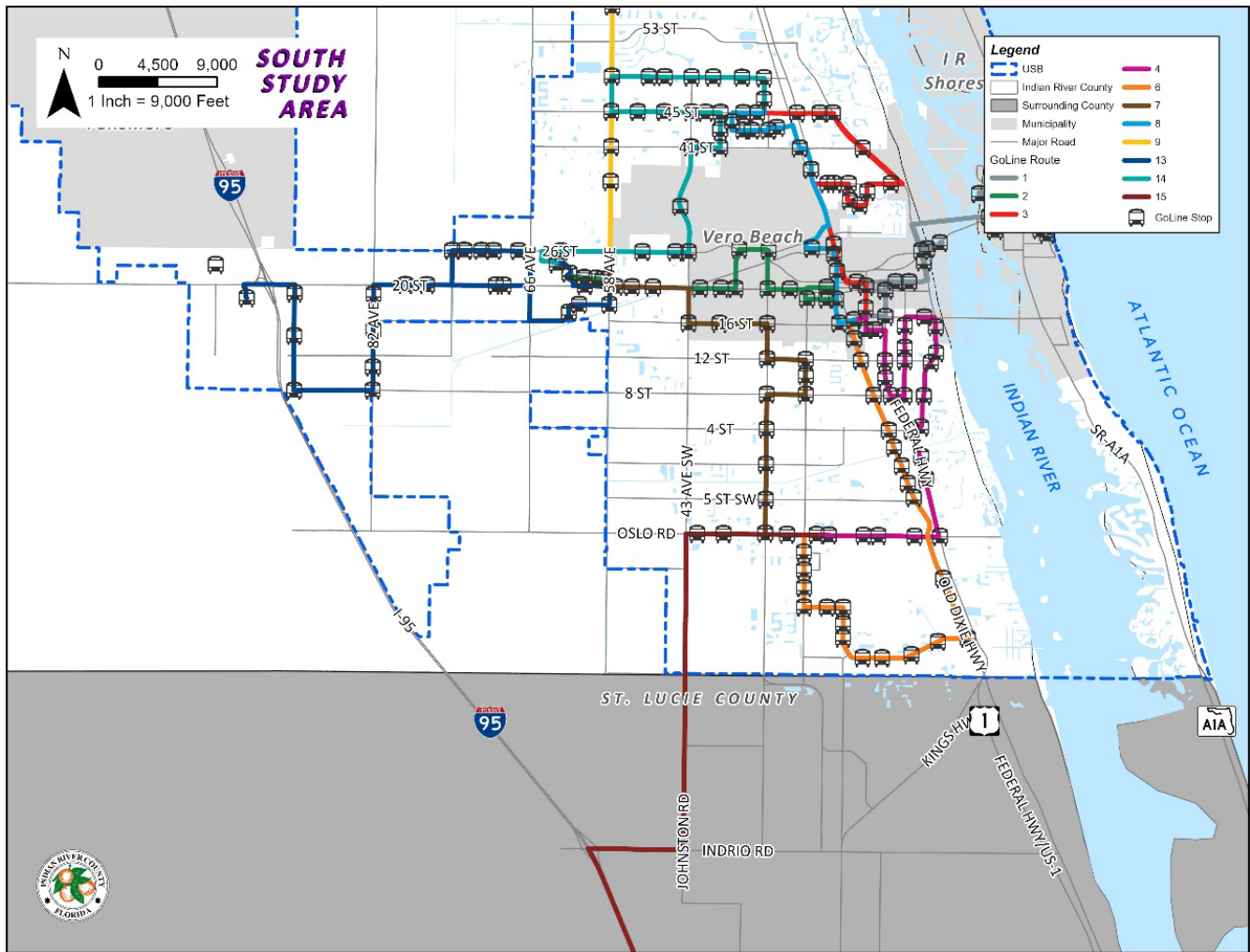
Figure 18. Public Transportation - Central Study Area



Source: Indian River County, 2024

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**Figure 19. Public Transportation - South Study Area**



Source: Indian River County, 2024

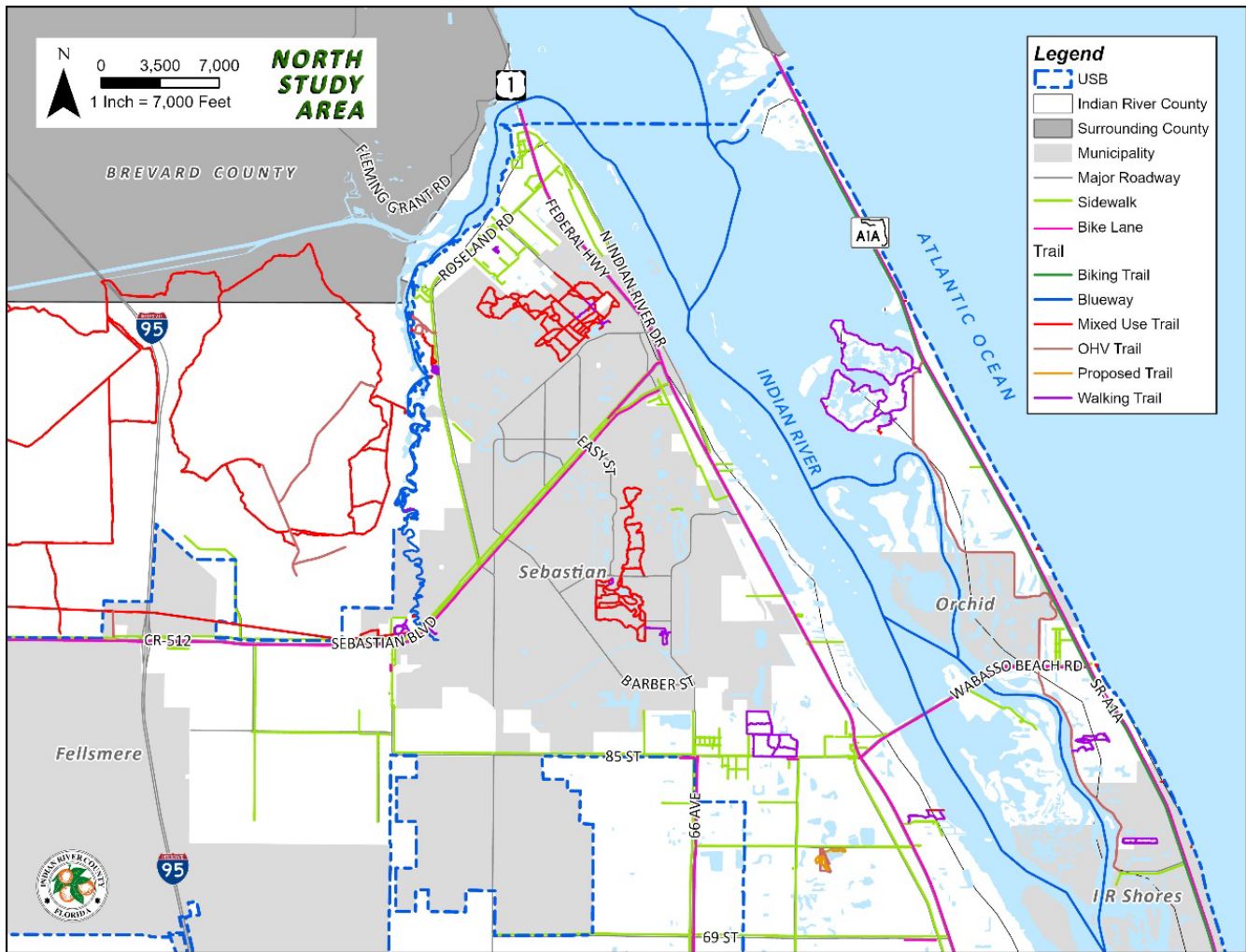
## Pedestrian, Bike, and Trail Infrastructure

The Study Area has a wide variety of pedestrian, bike, and trail infrastructure. There are several types of trails, including nature trails, hiking trails, biking trails, equestrian trails, off-road vehicle trails, and blueways (paddling trails) which serve the County's residents and visitors. There are more limited connections for on-road biking (bike lanes) and sidewalks. As can be seen in **Figure 20**, **Figure 21**, and **Figure 22**, the pedestrian, bike, and trail infrastructure are generally found inside of the USB.



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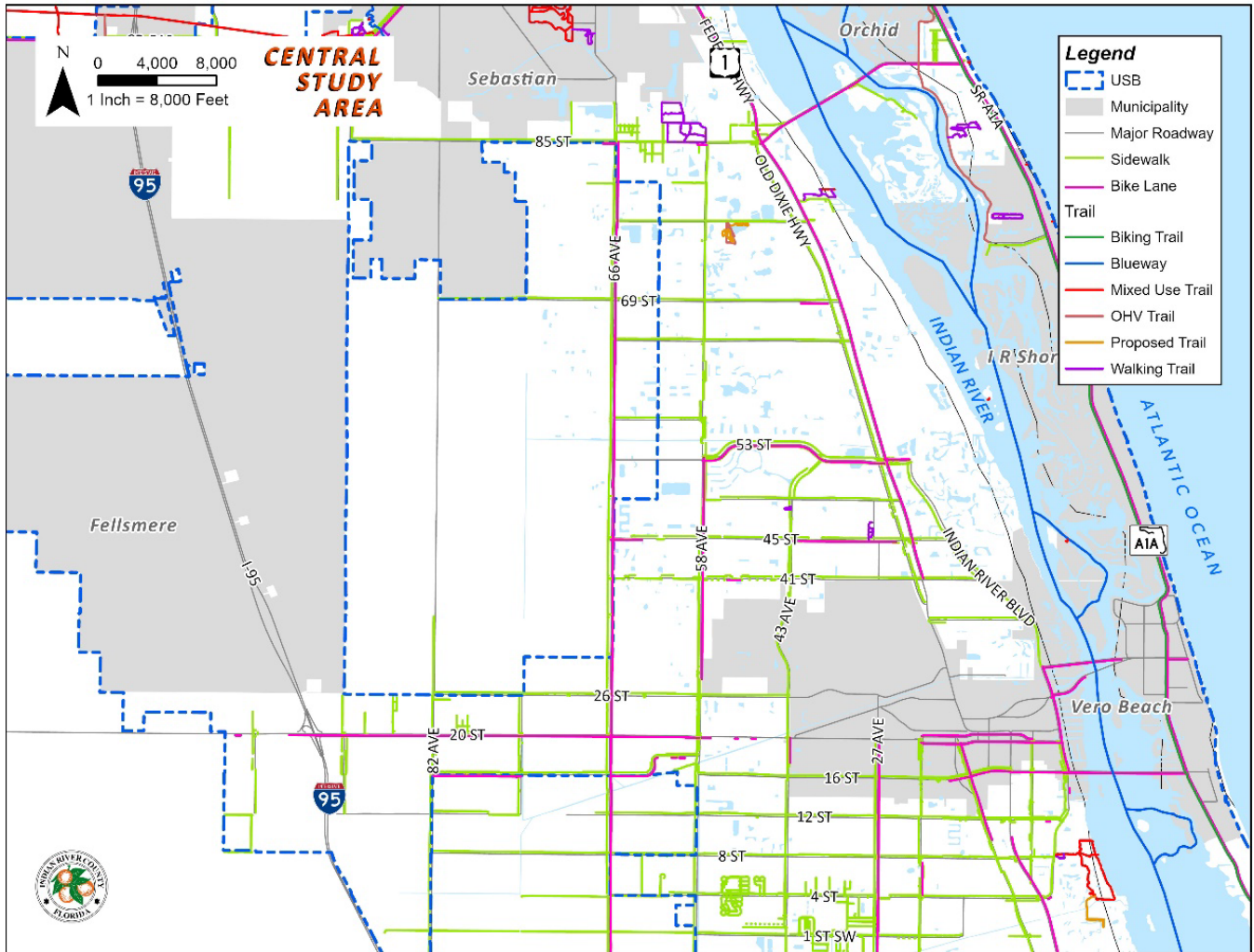
**Figure 20. Pedestrian, Bike, and Trail Infrastructure - North Study Area**



Source: Indian River County, 2024

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

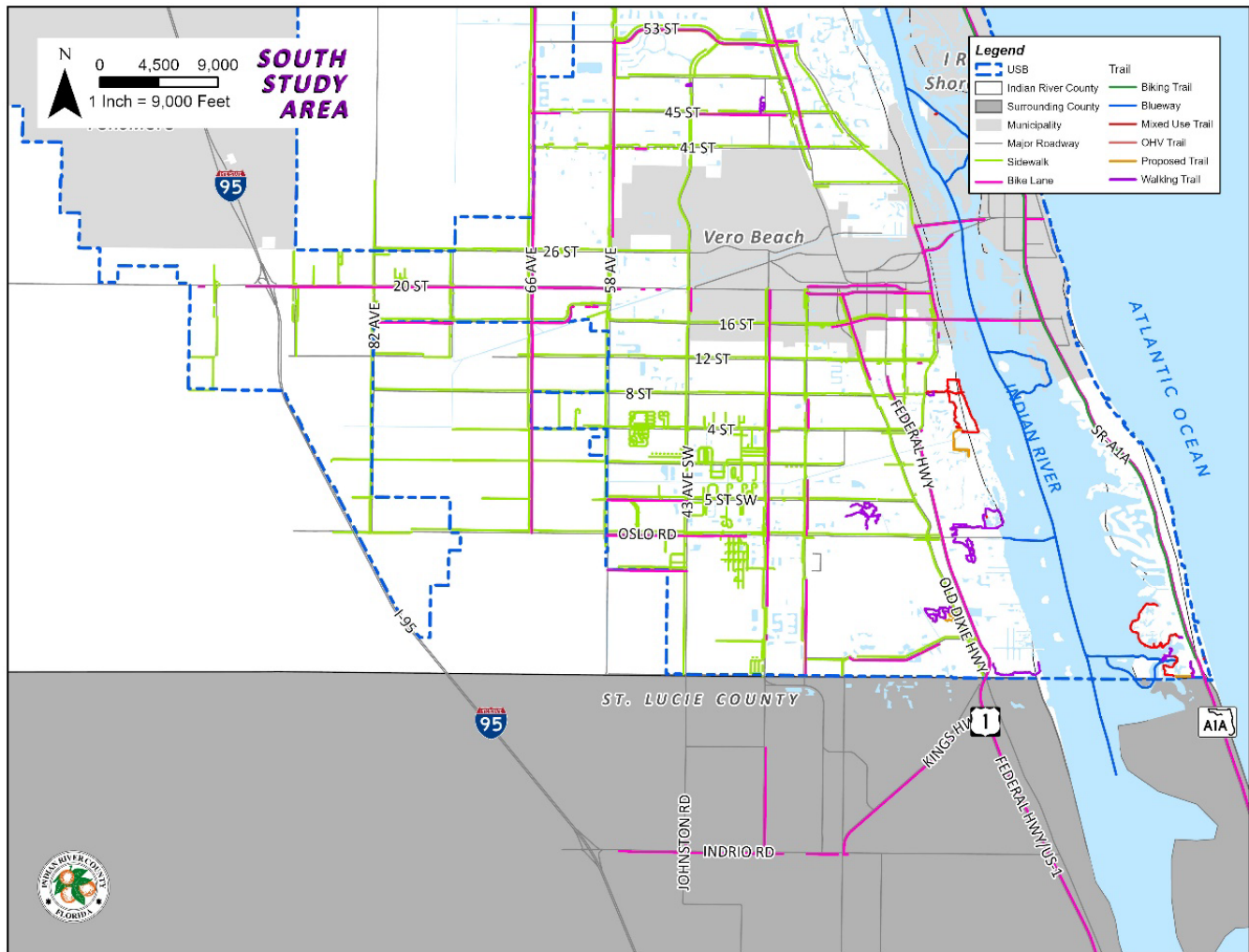
Figure 21. Pedestrian, Bike, and Trail Infrastructure - Central Study Area



Source: Indian River County, 2024

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**Figure 22. Pedestrian, Bike, and Trail Infrastructure - South Study Area**



Source: Indian River County, 2024

## Carrying Capacity Analysis

The Carrying Capacity Analysis estimates the capacity of the Study Area to accommodate its projected growth in population (42,698 additional residents by 2050 based on the population projections). The Carrying Capacity Analysis shows that the existing future land use map can accommodate at least 51,049 new residents with no change in density or the USB. **Figure 23, Figure 24, and Figure 25** show the future land use designations of the undeveloped parcels within the Study Area. The analysis of estimated capacity is based on several assumptions:

1. Developed properties would retain their existing onsite uses and densities.
2. Undeveloped (vacant) lands would be developed to the densities permitted by their current FLUM designations. However, a 70% development factor was applied to these maximum densities, as residential maximum densities are rarely achieved based on historic trends.
3. The portions of vacant parcels containing wetlands would remain undeveloped.



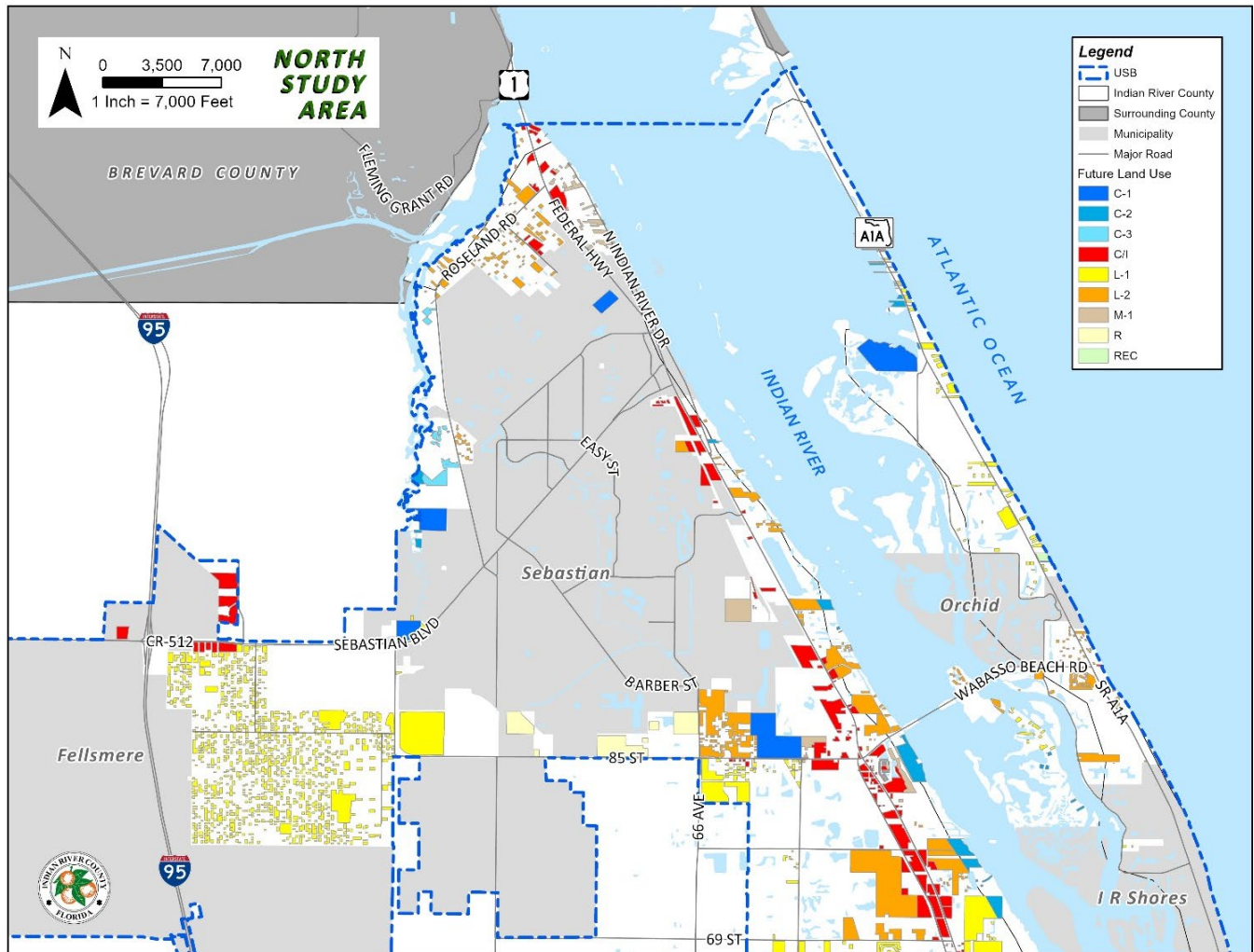
# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**Table 9: Carrying Capacity**

	All Parcels within USB (Unincorporated)		Vacant Parcels within USB (Unincorporated)		Vacant Lands with Wetland Features	Remain. Vacant Land	Max. Res. Share for Rem. Vacant Land	Max. Permitted Density	Residential Carrying Capacity <sup>1</sup>
	(ac)	(%)	(ac)	(%)	(ac)	(ac)	(%)	(du/ac)	(Units)
Future Land Use Map									
AG-1: Agricultural 1	93.0	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0	100%	0.2	0
AG-2: Agricultural 2	27.1	0.1%	0.9	0.0%	0.3	0.7	100%	0.1	0
AG-3: Agricultural 3	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	-	100%	0.05	-
BCID		0.0%	-	0.0%	-	-	0%	10	-
C-1	2,112.4	4.9%	876.4	2.0%	485.4	391.1	0%	0	-
C-2	1,492.1	3.45%	260.4	0.6%	201.6	58.9	100%	0.025	1
C-3	257.7	0.6%	40.4	0.1%	2.6	37.8	100%	0.4	15
C/I	5,197.5	12.0%	1,705.9	3.9%	142.5	1,563.5	0%	0	-
L-1	10,897.4	25.2%	2,980.5	6.9%	226.4	2,754.1	100%	3	8,262
L-2	13,001.5	30.0%	2,437.6	5.6%	265.5	2,172.1	100%	6	13,032
M-1	4,362.1	10.1%	1,218.2	2.8%	84.3	1,133.9	100%	8	9,071
M-2	1,740.5	4.0%	251.7	0.6%	19.1	232.7	100%	10	2,327
PUB	725.3	1.7%	241.9	0.6%	23.0	218.9	0%	0	-
R	367.9	0.9%	179.8	0.4%	36.1	143.7	100%	1	144
RC (Regional Commercial)	129.2	0.3%	4.7	0.0%	-	4.7	0%	0	-
REC	1,338.4	3.1%	6.5	0.0%	-	6.5	0%	0	-
T	763.3	1.8%	-	0.0%	-	-	100%	1	-
MHRP	763.3	1.8%	18.2	0.0%	0.0	18.2	100%	8	146
Total	43,268.6	100.0%	10,223.3	23.6%	1,486.8	8,736.5	N/A	N/A	32,998
2050 Carrying Capacity			51,049 Potential Residents <sup>2</sup>						
Projected Population Increase by 2050			42,698 Residents						
<sup>1</sup> Determined using the following formula: Developable Vacant Land x Maximum Permitted Density x Maximum Residential Share									
<sup>2</sup> Assuming buildout at 70% of the maximum allowable density and an average household size of 2.21									

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

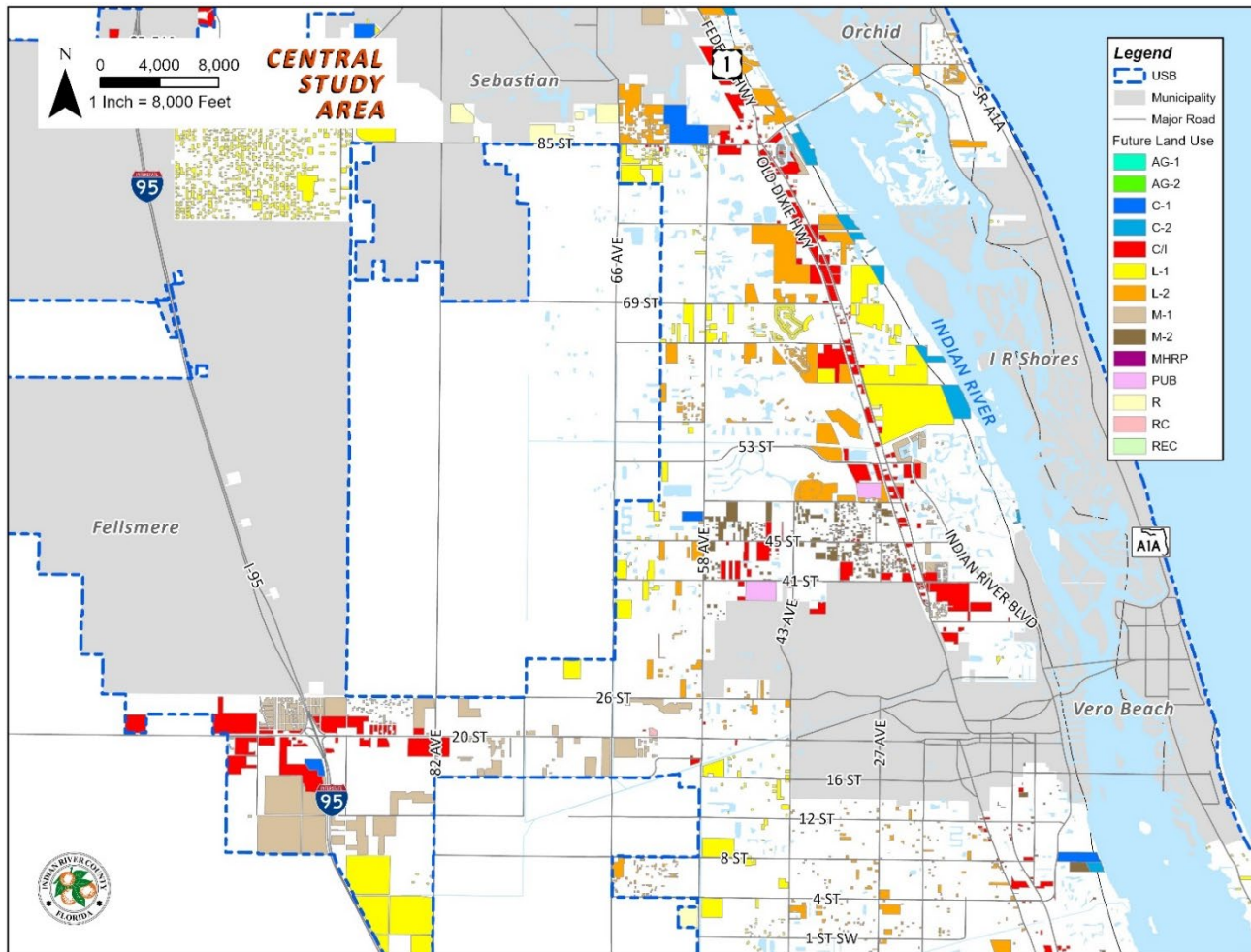
**Figure 23. Vacant FLU – North Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

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**Figure 24. Vacant FLU – Central Study Area**

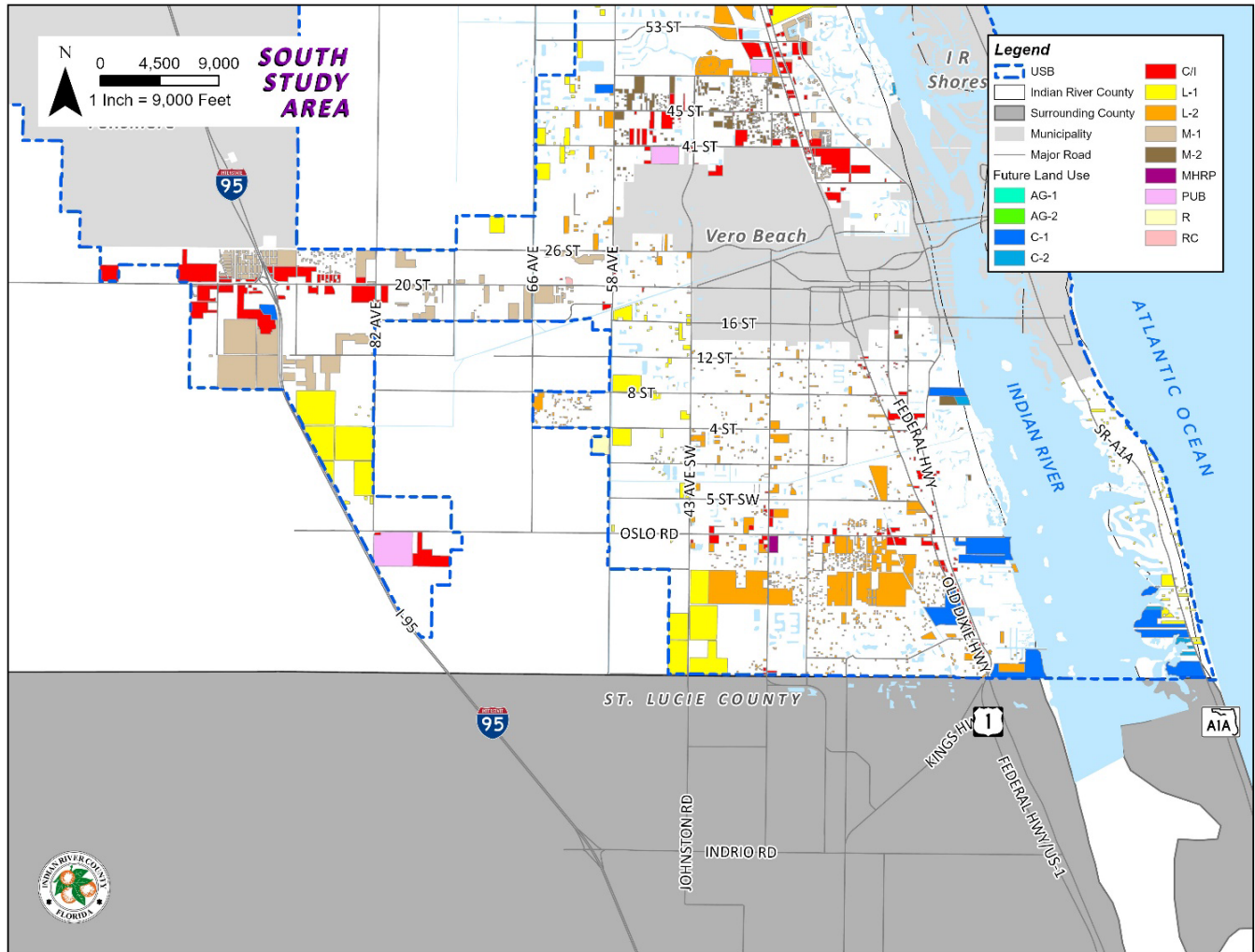


Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**Figure 25. Vacant FLU – North Study Area**



Sources: Indian River County, Indian River County Property Appraiser, 2024

## Infrastructure Capacity

### Water Supply

Indian River County completed a Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan in January of 2024. This plan was developed to identify and plan for the water supply sources and facilities needed to serve existing and new development within the USB for the period from 2024 to 2033. Potable water in Indian River County is primarily provided by the Indian River County Department of Utility Services, the City of Vero Beach, and the City of Fellsmere. There are currently five water treatment plants within the County, which are operated by the three water suppliers, as shown in **Table 10**.

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**Table 10: Water Treatment Facilities and Capacity**

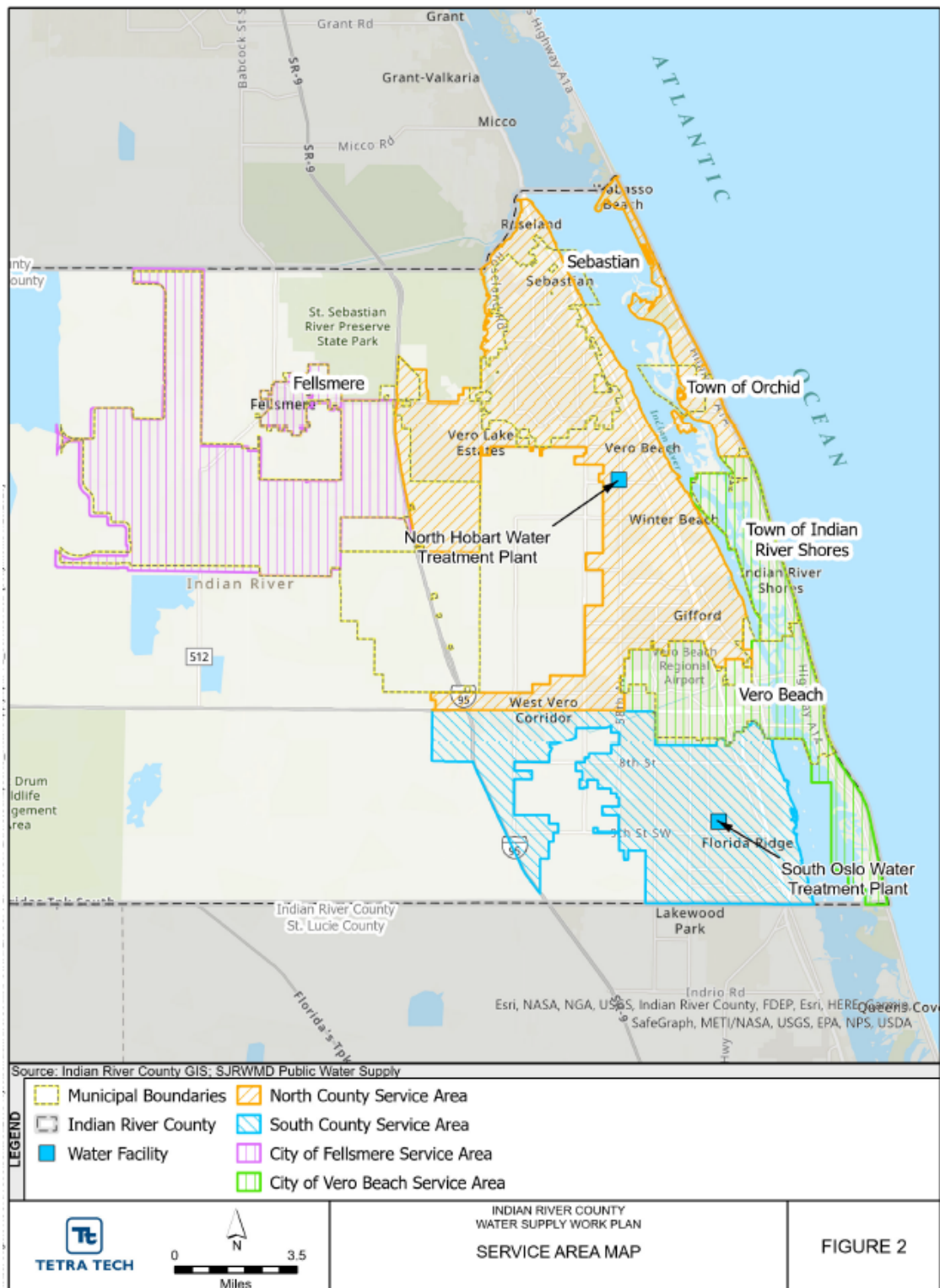
Utility	Number of Water Treatment Plants	Consumptive Use Permit Number	CUP Permitted Withdrawal (MGD Annual Average)	Type of Treatment	Permitted WTP Capacity (MGD)
IRCDUS	2	10524-10	12.84	Nanofiltration	11.44 (Hobart WTP); 8.57 (Oslo WTP)
City of Vero Beach	2	2-061-10705-7	7.57	Lime Softening, Reverse Osmosis	12.99 (Lime Plant); 3.3 (R.O. Plant)
City of Fellsmere	1	2377-6	0.44	Ion-Exchange	0.65

*Source: 2024 Indian River County Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan*

In focusing on the Indian River County Department of Utility Service area, 2022 data from ESRI Business Analyst, ESRI Data Axle, indicates that the 2022 functional water demand was 109 gallons per capita per day. This functional demand included both residential and non-residential uses. Based on the projected 2050 unincorporated population of 157,405, this would result in a capacity demand of 17.16 million gallons per day (MGD). While the County currently has a permitted water treatment capacity of 20.1 MGD, the existing Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) only allows a groundwater allocation of 12.84 MGD. The County is currently in the process of modifying the CUP to increase the allocation to 16.23 MGD in order to meet the projected demand through the year 2033. It is anticipated that the County would need to further increase the allocation to meet the projected demand through 2050.

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**Figure 26. Water Service Areas**



Source: Indian River County, 2024



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## Wastewater Capacity

Indian River County Department of Utility Services currently owns six wastewater treatment plants within the County's service area. Of the six, four of the facilities are currently operational. **Table 11** shows the permitted capacity, average flows, and outstanding flow commitments by facility.

**Table 11: Wastewater Treatment Facilities and Capacity (January 2023 – December 2023)**

Name of Treatment Plant	Central WWTF	North WWTF	Sea Oaks WWTF	South WWTF	West WWTF	Blue Cypress WWTF
DEP Permit Number / Facility ID	FLA010431	FLA104388	FLA104299	FLA10435	FLA00441637	FLA010439
Max monthly ADF over last 12-month period	2.61 MGD	Not in operation	Not in operation	0.91 MGD	2.54 MGD	0.0023 MGD
Max 3-month ADF over the last 12-month period	2.56 MGD	Not in operation	Not in operation	0.90 MGD	2.366 MGD	0.0019 MGD
Months for max 3-month ADF over the last 12-month period	2/2023 – 4/2023	N/A	N/A	6/2023 – 8/2023	1/2023- 3/2023	10/2023- 12/2023
Current permitted capacity (AADF)	4.00 MGD	N/A	N/A	2.00 MGD	6.00 MGD	0.017 MGD
Current outstanding flow commitments against capacity	0.30 MGD	N/A	N/A	0.092 MGD	0.14 MGD	0.00025 MGD

Source: Indian River County Department of Utility Services, 2024

Per the County's comprehensive plan, the adopted level of service for sanitary sewer is 250 gallons per day (GPD) per equivalent residential unit. The County is currently undertaking a Master Utility Plan update to study the needs of the projected growth in the area.

## Applicable Plans & Planned Improvements

Indian River County has adopted additional plans that guide future growth within the County. These plans include neighborhood, corridor, and vision plans, as shown in **Table 12**.

**Table 12: County Planning Initiatives**

Plan Name	Year Adopted	Last Updated
Gifford Neighborhood Plan	2002	2014
Historic Roseland Neighborhood Plan	2001	2003
Wabasso Corridor Plan	1995	2017
State Road 60 Corridor Plan	1997	1998
IRC Land Use Vision Study	2022	N/A

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## *Neighborhood Plans*

The Gifford Neighborhood Plan started as a grass roots effort in 1999, and the first plan was adopted in 2002. The plan was most recently updated in 2014. The goal of the Gifford Plan is to revitalize the area with quality housing, infrastructure, well-maintained neighborhoods and public spaces, and to provide economic opportunities for neighborhood residents. Under the goal of providing quality housing, the Gifford Neighborhood Plan aims to rehabilitate substandard housing, remove dilapidated structures, and build new housing stock. Under the goal of providing economic opportunities, the Gifford Plan promotes new commercial and industrial development within the Gifford area.

The Historic Roseland Neighborhood plan was established in 2001 as a joint effort between the Neighborhood Task Force and Indian River County staff. The goal of the Roseland Neighborhood Plan is to ensure that the growth pattern in the area is compatible with the existing neighborhood. The effort was necessary due to the neighborhood's proximity to the City of Sebastian and concerns regarding the future growth of the area surrounding the neighborhood. Additionally, the neighborhood plan seeks to preserve the natural and historic resources within the community, ensure compatibility of land uses, and maintain the existing infrastructure and the quality of life of the residents.

## *Corridor Plans*

State Road 60 is considered the entranceway into the County as it is the major east-west road which provides access to Interstate 95, US Highway 1, and the Florida Turnpike. The State Road 60 Corridor Plan was established to promote an attractive and inviting corridor from both a functional and aesthetic standpoint. The Corridor Plan targeted three key areas of focus: transportation improvements, allowed uses, and design standards. At the time of the initial plan in 1997, many transportation improvements were scheduled for the corridor. The goal of providing connectivity and multi-modal opportunities was of concern to the County at the time of adoption. Additionally, the need for a variety of uses to remain along the corridor was also viewed as important, as was the pressure to prohibit land use changes from non-residential to residential uses. The Corridor Plan emphasized additional standards that would be required for non-residential development.

Wabasso, including West Wabasso, is one of Indian River's oldest communities. Due to its central location, it is primed to be an area for growth and redevelopment. The Wabasso Corridor Plan balances plans for future development while keeping the area consistent with an overall community vision. This vision is to recognize the Wabasso community, increase property values, prevent incompatible land uses, and enhance the functions and appearance of the corridor. The Corridor Plan also establishes additional design criteria (architectural and landscaping) for non-residential development in an effort to further create value along the corridor.

## *Vision Plan*

In 2022, Indian River's MPO embarked on a land use vision study to assess land use and development policies to inform the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The study evaluated concerns of area residents regarding the increasing development pressure, loss of native habitat and environmental areas, and compatibility concerns. The study evaluated strategies that Indian River County could implement to preserve natural resources and consolidate the growth into specific pockets. These strategies include cluster development, new towns, agrihoods, and transfer of development rights. The study also identified that by 2045, there would be deficiencies in the transportation network and that short-term and long-term planning efforts should be considered to address those deficiencies. The short-term strategies identified were to increase the flexibility of splitting parcels, allow additional agricultural uses, allow for accessory dwelling units, and encourage infill. The long-term strategies included additional uses in agricultural

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zoning and revisiting and updating the new town ordinances. The plan also identified that further evaluation was needed to evaluate the need to potentially expand the Urban Service Boundary.

## ***Programmed Improvements***

There are currently programmed improvements that will increase the transportation capacity within Indian River County. A new intersection at Oslo Road and Interstate 95 is currently under construction with an estimated completion date of 2027. Additionally, there is a road widening project on County Road 510, and programmed improvements to 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that will increase transportation capacity within the County. These programmed improvements will provide better access within Indian River County and increase the development opportunities along the corridors, especially along Oslo Road and CR 510.

## **Interlocal Agreements**

Indian River County has entered into interlocal agreements with the municipalities within the County, St. Lucie County, and the Indian River School Board dating back to 2005. These agreements address a variety of topics including the transfer of the City of Sebastian's utility system to Indian River County, the interconnection of utility systems between Indian River County and St. Lucie County, the provision of emergency water supply services to Fellsmere, wastewater system improvements within the City of Sebastian, and school concurrency. A summary of each of the applicable interlocal agreements is found below.

### ***Interlocal Agreement Providing for the Transfer of the City of Sebastian Water and Wastewater System by and between the City of Sebastian, Florida and Indian River County, Florida (1995)***

In 1995, the City of Sebastian entered into an interlocal agreement with Indian River County to transfer the City's water and wastewater system to the County. This sale included all real property and interests controlled by the City for water and wastewater purposes, all water and wastewater facilities owned by the City, the Riverfront Project, all equipment and other tangible property used by the City exclusively in connection with the operation of the water and wastewater facilities, all water and wastewater easements in favor of the City, all current customer records and plans associated with the facilities, and all existing permits and approvals for the system.

### ***Interlocal Agreement by and between St. Lucie County and Indian River County (1996)***

In 1996, Indian River County and St. Lucie County entered into an interlocal agreement for the interconnection of utilities. The purpose of this agreement was for the Counties to assist one another in meeting their respective future demands for potable water and water emergency need. The agreement stated that the locations for utility connection would be determined by subsequent agreement and that each jurisdiction would be responsible for the cost of constructing their portion of the utilities to the connection point. Additionally, the agreement stated that the parties would establish standard procedures for requesting and sending water depending on the type of interconnection and outlined the responsibility of payment between the parties.

### ***Interlocal Agreement between the City of Fellsmere and Indian River County, Florida for the Provision of Emergency Water Supply Services (2000)***

In 2000, the City of Fellsmere and Indian River County entered into an agreement for the provision of emergency water supply services. This agreement appears to be instigated by Fellsmere, as the City did



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not have an emergency backup water supply source during a possible City water treatment or supply failure. The agreement outlined the purpose and terms for the construction of a one-way transmission of water from the County's system to the City during times of emergencies. The cost for the interconnection and maintenance of the associated infrastructure was to be borne by the City.

## ***Interlocal Agreement for Coordinated Planning and School Concurrency by and between Indian River County, Indian River County School Board, City of Fellsmere, City of Sebastian, City of Vero Beach, and Town of Indian Shores (2008)***

In 2008, Indian River County, the Cities of Fellsmere, Sebastian, Vero Beach, and the Town of Indian River Shores entered into an agreement for coordinated planning and school concurrency. This agreement addressed matters such as coordination between the participants, school location, level of service standards, and concurrency.

While the County and the Cities have a history of intergovernmental coordination, there are no specific agreements with relation to annexation or land use planning. The existing interlocal agreements address specific utility provisions and school concurrency. There was an effort to form an Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) between the County and surrounding municipalities that occurred between 2007 and 2009. This was viewed as a preferred option for managing growth on a countywide basis. The draft ISBA included "Municipal Annexation Reserve Areas" covering a substantial amount of the non-conservation, non-USB areas within the unincorporated portions of the County. The intent was that much of County's agricultural areas would have eventually been annexed into the surrounding municipalities and be subject to municipal land use regulations. The proposed ISBA Agreement was ultimately not adopted when it moved forward in 2009.

## Adjacent Municipalities

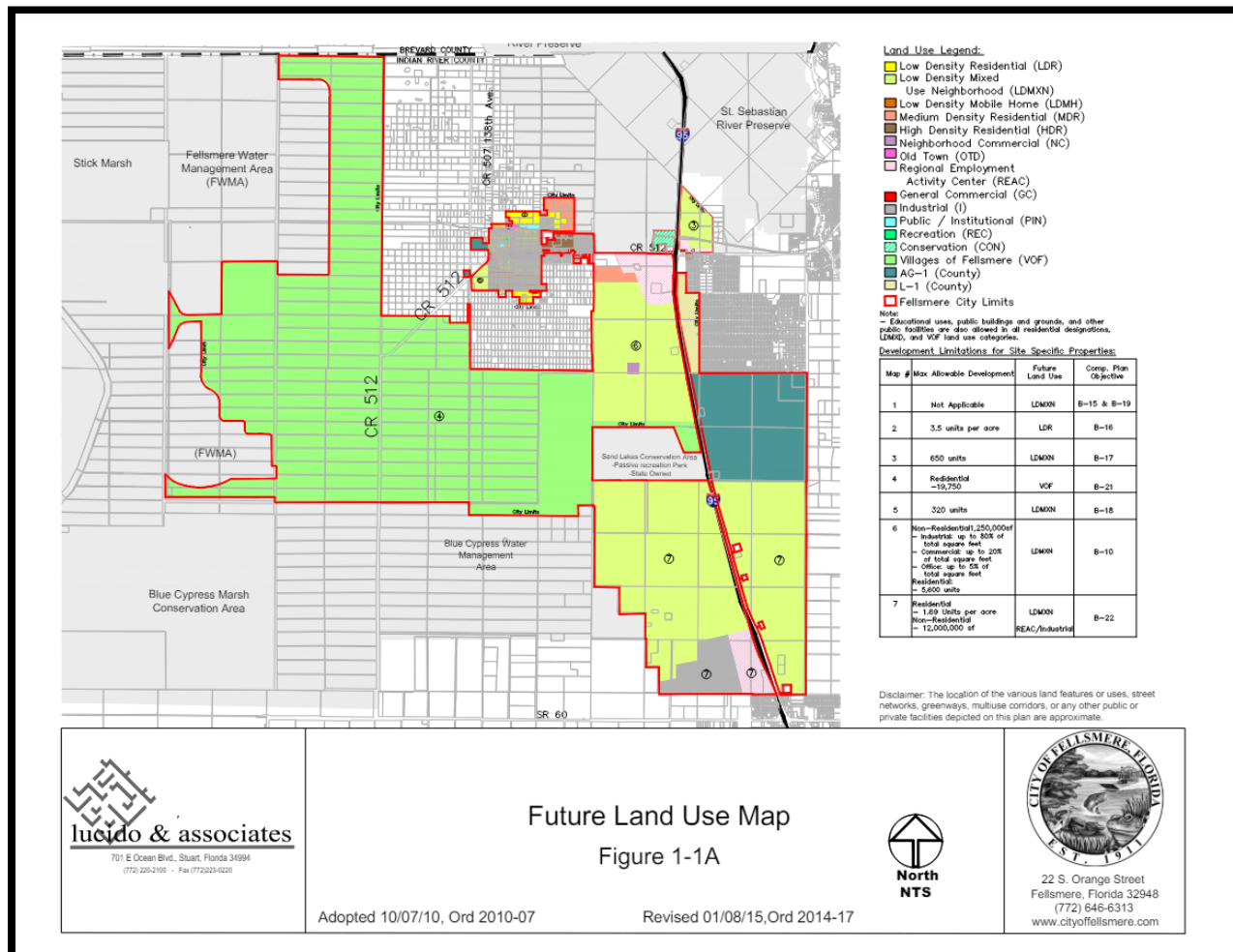
### ***Fellsmere***

The City of Fellsmere is located on the western boundary of the unincorporated area, between 69<sup>th</sup> Street and 26<sup>th</sup> Street. This area of Fellsmere was annexed into the City and is therefore now within the USB. The Future Land Use Map of Fellsmere delineates a predominantly Low Density Mixed Use Neighborhood (LDMXN) designation along the I-95 corridor from the St. Sebastian River Preserve State Park to the West Vero Corridor. Along Fellsmere's western border with unincorporated Indian River County, there is land designated as a Low Density Mixed Use Neighborhood (LDMXN) located east of the CR 512 / I-95 interchange, which is designated for 650 residential units. There is property west of Vero Lake Estates that retains its historic County L-1 designation and property south of Vero Lake Estates that retains its historic County AG-1 designation. Finally, there is another LDMXN that forms the eastern boundary of Fellsmere that runs from 69<sup>th</sup> Street south to 26<sup>th</sup> Street. This area, located between the I-95 and unincorporated Indian River County, allows for consideration of up to 1.69 residential dwelling units per acre.

LDMXNs, as outlined in Policy FLUE A-2.10.4 of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Fellsmere, are designated as master planned communities containing a mix of residential and commercial areas. Mixed use LDMXN developments may contain a maximum of 85% residential of the total acreage for residential uses, while the non-residential portions may contain a mix of commercial and residential uses, "in attached or detached styles, encouraging residential uses in the upper floors of commercial structures, as well as a variety of housing styles and types." The LDMXN "may change location within the community as environmental, transportation, and other internal land use patterns dictate as long as approved by the City."

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**Figure 27. Fellsmere Future Land Use Map**



Source: City of Fellsmere

## Sebastian

The City of Sebastian borders the Urban Service Boundary to the north, and the City recently expanded the USB south of CR 510 with the addition of the Graves Brothers South annexation. This 2,044-acre annexation allowed for a future land use change from County AG-1 (one dwelling unit per five acres) to City Mixed Use. The City Mixed Use policy allows for consideration of a maximum density of 12 dwelling units per acre and a non-residential intensity of 1.0 FAR.

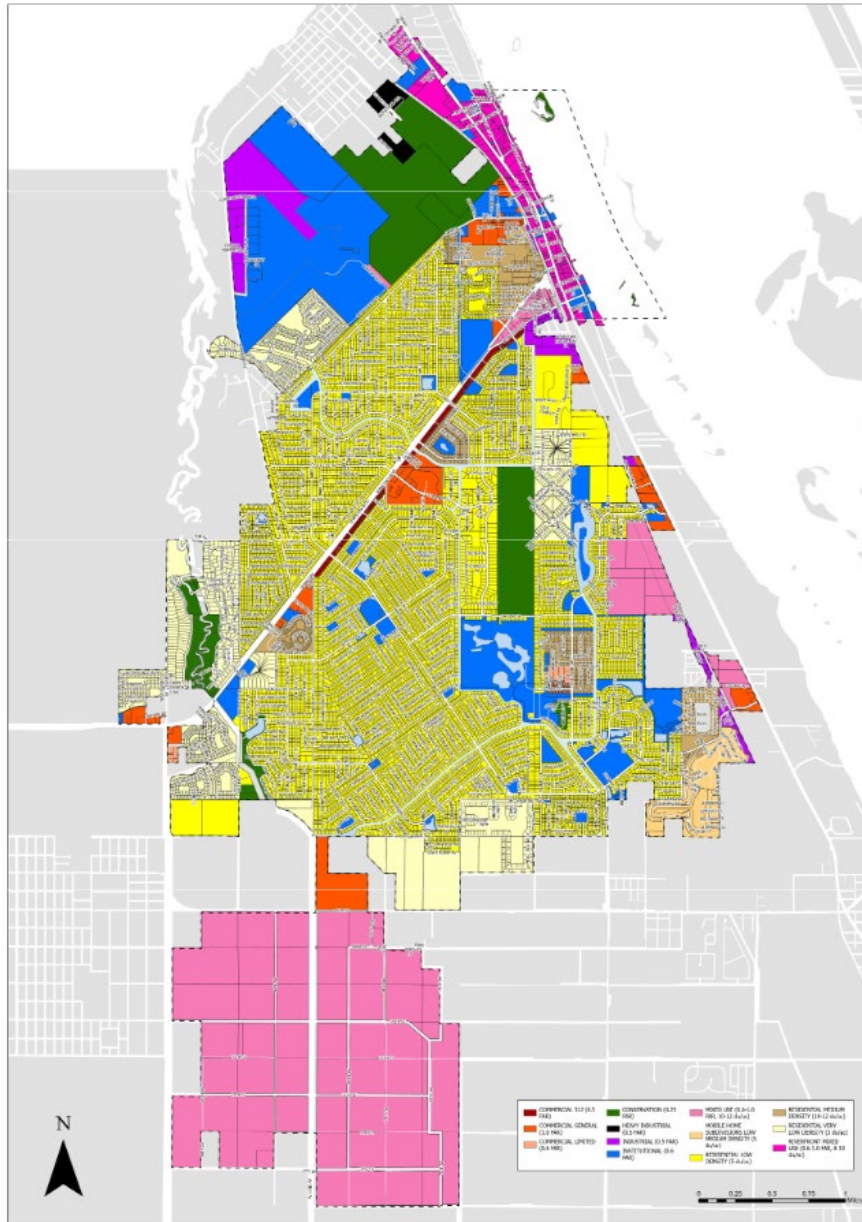
The Graves Brothers South property also has specific site-specific policies within the City's comprehensive plan, Policy 1-1.7.1 requires the property to contain a variety of housing types and a town center. The site-specific policies also require increased buffers adjacent to the low-density areas outside of the project boundary and a minimum of 50% open space for the residential areas and a minimum of 30% open space for the non-residential areas.

The City of Sebastian also borders the boundary along the north end of County Road 510 with a future land use map designation of Very Low Density Residential, which allows a maximum density of 4 dwelling units per acre.

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Between 2007 and 2009, there were discussions between the municipalities and Indian River County regarding the creation of an Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA), which would allow the municipalities to create “Municipal Annexation Reserve Areas” that would regulate areas for municipal annexations. However, the ISBA was never adopted. Despite the lack of an ISBA, the City of Sebastian adopted the Annexation Reserve Areas in their comprehensive plan to show areas of potential annexation.

**Figure 28. City of Sebastian Future Land Use Map**

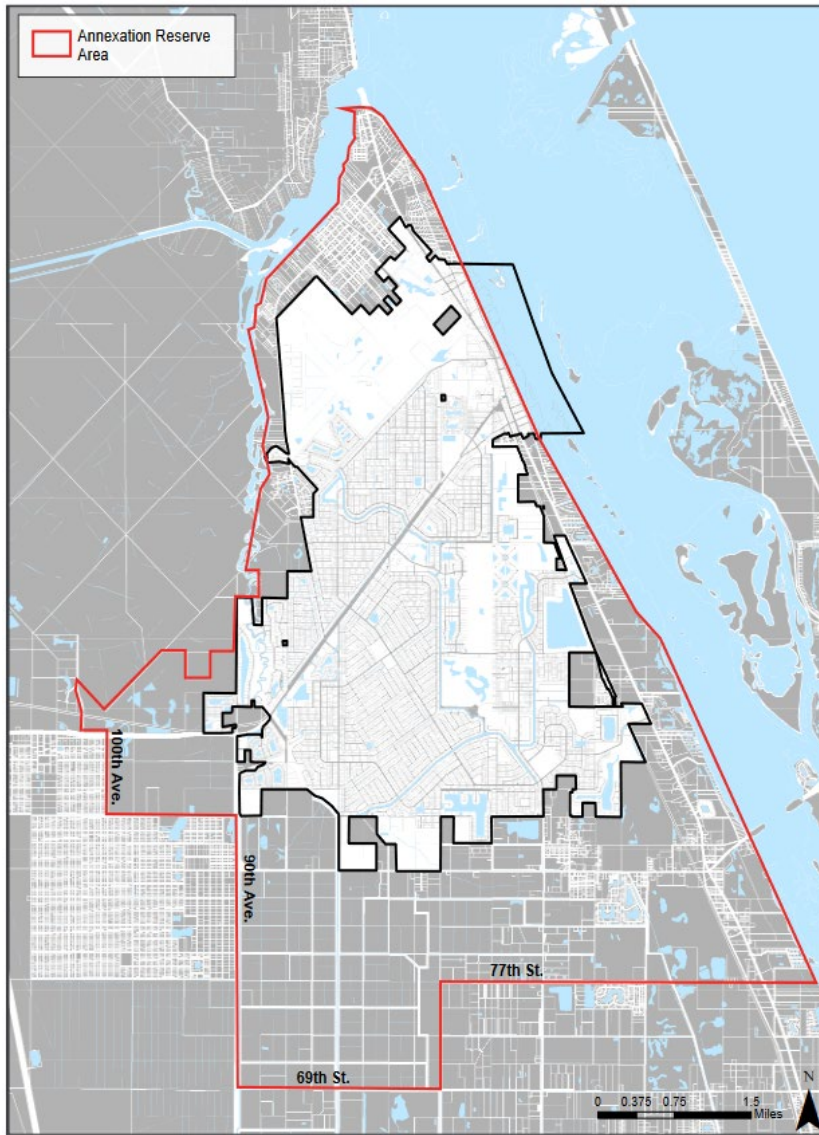


Source: City of Sebastian



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**Figure 29. City of Sebastian Annexation Reserve Areas**



Source: City of Sebastian

## Vero Beach

While the municipal boundaries of Vero Beach are not adjacent to areas outside of the County's USB, there is still a possibility of municipal annexation. However, Vero Beach's comprehensive plan includes policies that direct annexations to areas that are currently within the USB. Policy 2.3 states the following:

The City shall restrict its annexation of adjacent unincorporated lands to only those areas included within the Indian River County's designated 2030 Urban Service Area depicted on the County's adopted Future Land Use Map and shall pursue the following policies in the annexation of and provision or extension of services to those areas:

- a. The City will not negotiate annexation agreements with property owners to secure higher intensity or density zoning for the property owner as a quid pro quo for annexation of their property.

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- b. The City will not annex any area that will have a negative short-term financial impact on the City's general or enterprise funds unless it is determined by the City Council to be in the City's best interests; and
- c. The City will not annex an area unless it is currently served or will be served by the extension of water and sewer facilities, except where extenuating circumstances and costs make connection to the available County utilities a more practical solution for both the property owner and the City.

Due to the proximity to the edge of the USB and its existing comprehensive plan policies, it is unlikely that Vero Beach will pursue annexations outside of the existing USB.

## Public Engagement

As part of this effort, Indian River County and Inspire conducted public engagement sessions with County residents and stakeholders. This engagement was designed with a multi-faceted approach, with a mix of online surveys and in-person workshops. The intent of the engagement was to determine resident preferences about the type and location of development to be constructed within the County through 2050. A full summary report of the public engagement activities can be found in **Appendix B**.

Both the public engagement workshops and online survey findings reveal a community deeply rooted in Indian River County, with nearly all respondents living locally and many having long-term residency. There was also a high proportion of older adults among the respondents, particularly retirees and full-time employees.

In summary, the community's concerns about future growth predominantly center around environmental impact, infrastructure readiness, and traffic congestion, reflecting a desire to balance development with responsible planning and environmental stewardship.

Both the workshops and online survey indicate a preference for low-density, single-family housing, while also revealing notable support for more compact, multi-modal urban environments. The Community Idea Wall primarily collected calls for more affordable housing, equitable access to services, and effective management of population growth and natural resources.

When pressed for preferred locations to accommodate future growth in the County, responses emphasized strategic areas like Downtown Vero Beach and the 85<sup>th</sup> St. Corridor, highlighting the community's interest in managed growth within existing urban areas rather than expansive developments beyond the USB. The only identified hot spot outside the boundary was located at the future transportation hub west of the new Oslo Interchange.

Survey results indicate a substantial segment of the population advocating for maintaining current boundaries. Additionally, suggestions for infill development and adaptive reuse of existing spaces, such as the Indian River Mall, highlight a preference for maximizing existing resources before expanding into new areas.

In summary, responses from Indian River County residents expressed housing preferences for larger single-family homes while there is still some desire for diverse living options and sustainable development practices. The community's commitment to preserving its natural and rural character, while enhancing its infrastructure and improving access to services, underscores a dedication to maintaining quality of life as the County continues to grow.

## Peer Jurisdictions

To gain additional perspective on Urban Service Boundaries and how they are addressed by comparable jurisdictions, Inspire studied the USBs located in Martin County and Manatee County. Both of these coastal counties have experienced development pressure to expand their USBs inland, similar those being felt by Indian River County. The case studies of those counties and how they addressed the challenges associated with their USBs can be found in **Appendix C** of this report.

## Summary and Recommendations

Indian River County has experienced significant growth since the adoption of the USB in 1990. This growth is anticipated to continue both within municipalities and the unincorporated portions of the County through the updated comprehensive plan's horizon year of 2050. While capacity is available within the existing USB to accommodate the projected growth through 2050, there are other factors that need to be considered by the County when considering an expansion of the USB.

First, the County does not have an Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) or Joint Planning Area (JPA) Agreement to address annexation or land uses within the enclave areas with either Sebastian or Fellsmere. Those municipalities form the border of the central enclave area that is outside of the USB, between 69<sup>th</sup> Street and 26<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a considerable likelihood that these cities may continue to grow through annexation, which will further expand the USB, outside of the County's control.

Additionally, there are environmental constraints within the southern enclave area that is outside of the USB, between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and the Indian River County / St. Lucie County line. A significant portion of this enclave is within the 100-year floodplain, which will pose challenges for development.

Through the project's public engagement efforts, residents expressed concerns related to environmental impacts, infrastructure readiness, and traffic congestion. Attendees stated that the preferred locations to accommodate future growth in the County were Downtown Vero Beach and the 85<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, which are both within the existing USB. The only location identified outside of the USB was the area west of the new Oslo Road interchange. Attendees also stated the desire to accommodate affordable housing within the County. This was the top priority identified by the community from the Idea Wall, a community engagement tool on the project website.

Finally, the new interchange at Oslo Road and I-95 has the potential to be a development catalyst for the area. The section of I-95 adjacent to Oslo Road currently experiences 56,000 average daily trips, and the new interchange will provide access to the southern portion of the County. Once opened, it is anticipated that the County will experience significant development pressure west of I-95, within the interchange's influence, and eastward throughout the Oslo Road corridor to U.S. 1.

Based on the compiled quantitative data, analysis of the USB, and qualitative citizen feedback, Inspire recommends the following strategies be integrated into the overall Indian River County Comprehensive Plan update:

1. **Targeted USB Expansion:** Evaluate a selective USB expansion near the Oslo Road/I-95 interchange. While the current USB can support projected 2050 populations, expanding the boundary in this area could address potential growth due to increased development pressures. Analyze property ownership patterns, environmental constraints like wetlands, and infrastructure capacity to accommodate growth without compromising natural resources.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

2. **Interlocal Service Agreements:** Negotiate Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements (ISBAs) or Joint Planning Area (JPA) agreements with neighboring cities, Sebastian and Fellsmere. These agreements should align municipal service provisions and annexation processes, streamlining development efforts and addressing land use conflicts, particularly in enclave areas. This promotes a coordinated regional growth strategy.
3. **USB Expansion for Affordable Housing:** Create policies that allow USB expansions for developments that meet certified affordable housing criteria, provided they are located near existing USB lines. This would target housing for low- to moderate-income residents and help alleviate the county's affordable housing shortages without displacing current residents or burdening services.
4. **Policy for Bisected Properties:** Establish guidelines to include properties partially within the USB as fully within it, if they were split by the boundary prior to the Comprehensive Plan's adoption. This would prevent arbitrary restrictions on property use, while ensuring protections for environmentally sensitive lands through zoning and conservation measures.
5. **Increased Densities for Affordable Housing:** Develop policies that allow for higher residential densities within the USB specifically for certified affordable housing projects. This approach would help meet housing demands within urbanized areas while limiting the need for future boundary expansions, thus protecting rural and undeveloped lands.

# Appendix A

# POPULATION PROJECTIONS



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY



Indian River County

## DRAFT POPULATION PROJECTION TABLES

Table 1. Historic Population Trends

1970	35,992	813	76	8	825	11,908	22,362	62%
1980	59,896	1,161	1,254	19	2,831	16,176	38,455	64%
1990	90,208	2,179	2,278	10	10,205	17,350	58,186	65%
2000	112,947	3,813	3,448	140	16,181	17,705	71,660	63%
2010	138,028	5,197	3,901	415	21,929	15,223	91,363	66%
2020	159,788	4,834	4,241	516	25,054	16,354	108,789	68%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2020; BEBR, April 2023

Table 2. Seasonal Population Estimate

Total [Permanent] Population for Unincorporated County	109,501
Total Units	55,161
Total Occupied Units	43,344
Persons Per Household (Adjusted to match Carrying Capacity)	2.21
Total Vacant Units	11,817
Vacant Units for Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	6,170
Total Seasonal Population	13,636
Total Population [Perm + Seasonal]	123,317

Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022; Indian River County, 2024

Table 3. Population Projections for the Indian River County Unincorporated Area (Assuming 68% Unincorporated & 11.07% Seasonal Constant)

BEBR (April 2023)	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
	161,000	163,200	162,700	159,800	156,100	152,200	109,480	110,976	110,636	108,664	106,148	103,496	12,123	12,289	12,251	12,033	11,754	11,461
	121,603	123,265	122,887	120,697	117,902	208,400	173,100	184,400	193,100	199,200	204,100	208,400	117,708	125,392	131,308	135,456	138,788	141,712
	13,035	13,885	14,541	15,000	15,369	15,693	130,743	139,277	145,849	150,456	154,157	156,93	179,150	195,000	208,300	218,850	228,050	236,550
	121,822	132,600	141,644	148,818	155,074	160,854	13,490	14,684	15,685	16,480	17,172	17,812	135,312	147,284	157,329	165,298	172,246	178,12
	185,200	205,600	223,500	238,500	252,000	264,700	125,936	139,808	151,980	162,180	171,360	179,996	13,946	15,482	16,830	17,959	18,976	19,932
	139,882	155,290	168,810	180,139	190,336													

Source: BEBR, April 2023; Indian River County, 2024

### Assuming Medium Projections...

- Population Growth is projected to be 42,698 by 2050 (Seasonal & Permanent)
- Carrying Capacity shows FLU can accommodate at least 51,049 new residents with no changes in Density or USB



# Appendix B

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



URBAN SERVICE BOUNDARY STUDY

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

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## Introduction

Indian River County engaged Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc. (Inspire) to evaluate the County's existing Urban Service Boundary (USB) to determine its ability to accommodate growth through the year 2050. As part of that analysis, Indian River County and Inspire conducted public engagement sessions with County residents and stakeholders. This engagement was designed with a multi-faceted approach, with a mix of online surveys and in-person workshops. The intent of the engagement was to determine resident preferences about the type and location of development to be constructed within the County through 2050. This was accomplished through the following activities:

1. **Online Survey:** A website was created as a one-stop shop for information related to the project. The website included an eleven-question survey, with the goal of obtaining demographic data on the respondents and their preferences for growth. The survey was open from April 17, 2024, through June 28, 2024, and it received 1,126 contributions from interested parties.
2. **Public Workshops:** The County hosted six total workshops over a three-day period to engage a diverse cross section of the community. The workshops were originally planned to be held in summer, but they were rescheduled to the month of May to accommodate the County's large seasonal resident population. The following workshops were conducted:
  - May 8, 2024: North County Library, Sebastian, FL (11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)
  - May 22, 2024: Intergenerational Recreation Center, Vero Beach, FL (11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)
  - May 29, 2024: Indian River County Board of County Commissioners Chambers, Vero Beach, FL (11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)

As part of the public workshops, attendees were given three exercises to determine their preferences for growth. Those exercises were as follows:

- a. **Population Growth Exercise:** The intent of this exercise was the attendees' preferences for the location of population growth through the year 2050. Attendees were provided four dots, each of which represented 10,000 people. The attendees were free to place the dots anywhere within the County. Workshop facilitators encouraged the placement of the dots within unincorporated Indian River County, as the population projections and Future Land Use Map for the County only reflect the unincorporated area.
- b. **Housing Typology Exercise:** The intent of this exercise was to determine the type of growth that attendees preferred to see constructed within the community through the year 2050. Attendees were provided with four dots, which could be allocated to various types of housing that included large-lot single-family, townhomes, multifamily, vertical mixed-use, and others.
- c. **Community Idea Wall:** A Community Idea Wall was provided to allow for free-form responses on topics related to and adjacent to the USB effort. This feedback was facilitated on large notepads and the comments have been included directly within this report.



## Online Survey Results

The eleven-question online survey was opened for participation on April 17, 2024, and closed on June 28, 2024. This survey was promoted on social media, advertised at the in-person events, and Indian River County staff sent it to each registered voter within the County via text message.

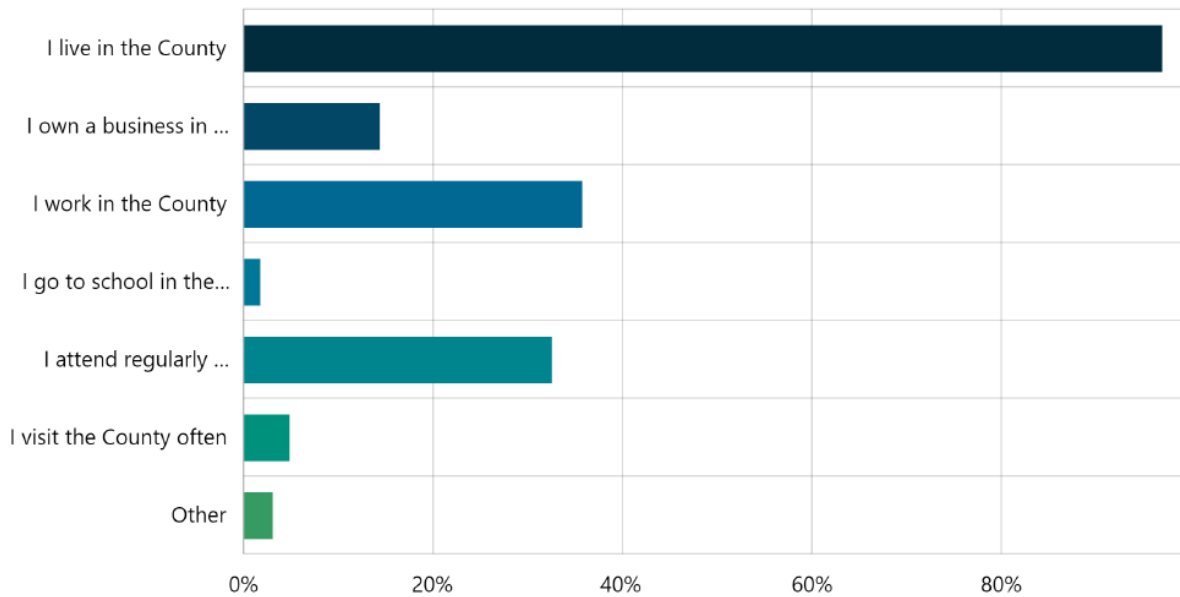
The questions were developed to provide background information on the respondents, including their relationship to the County, how long they have lived in the County, age, employment status, and their perception of different forms of development.

Four of the survey questions included aerial and street-level imagery of places with different characteristics, with the intent on gauging how the respondents would label each type of development from rural to urban. This exercise helps to tie specific imagery to the nomenclature that was used within the in-person portion of the public engagement. For example, if respondents on the Community Idea Wall included remarks to retain rural character, the community's perception of the definition of rural generally follows the survey responses in which that character was selected.

The survey's most substantive questions asked what type of growth should be prioritized in the County over the next 25 years, and how that growth should be accommodated. The website had over 4,100 views during the time that the survey was open, and 1,126 people shared their feedback through the survey during that time. The results are as follows.

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

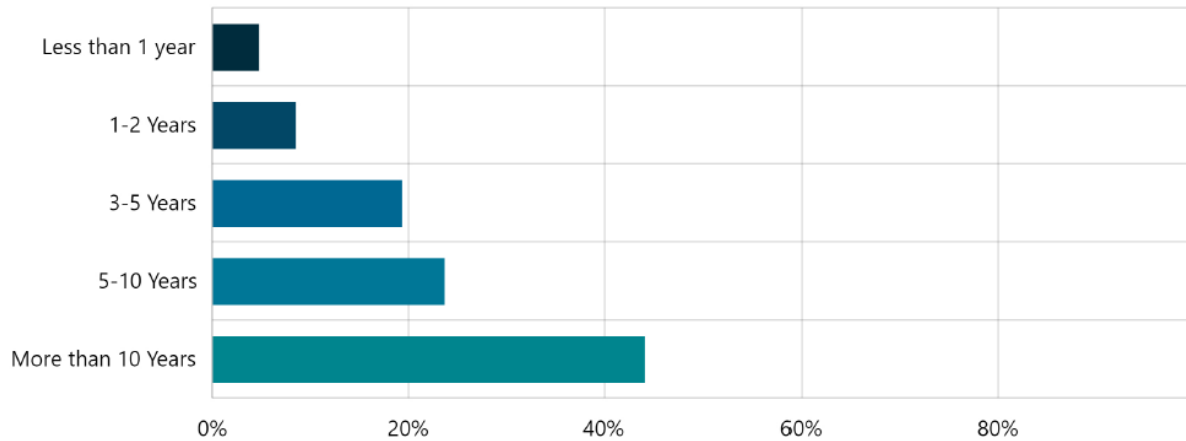
## What is your relationship to Indian River County?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
I live in the County	96.89%	1,090
I own a business in the County	14.31%	161
I work in the County	35.73%	402
I go to school in the County	1.69%	19
I attend regularly scheduled events/services (e.g. church services or organizational meetings) in the County	32.53%	366
I visit the County often	4.80%	54
Other	3.02%	34

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## How long have you lived in Indian River County?



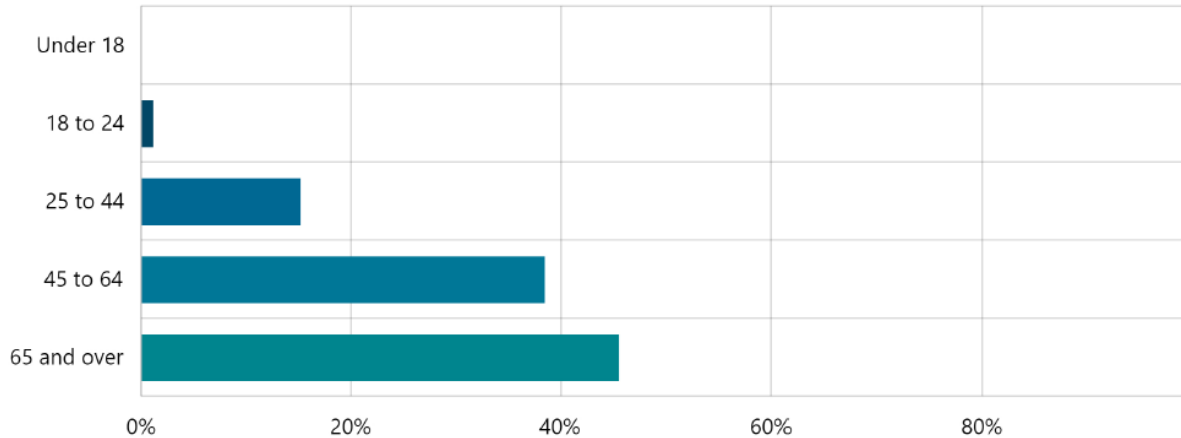
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	4.68%	25
1-2 Years	8.43%	45
3-5 Years	19.29%	103
5-10 Years	23.60%	126
More than 10 Years	44.01%	235
Total	100.00%	534

44.01% of respondents have lived in Indian River County for over ten years, while 23.6% have lived in the County for 5-10 years and 19.29% have for 3-5 years. Two thirds of respondents have lived in the County for over five years, which signals interest in the project from long-time residents.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## What is your age?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Under 18	0%	0
18 to 24	1.07%	12
25 to 44	15.12%	169
45 to 64	38.37%	429
65 and over	45.44%	508
Total	100.00%	1,118

45.44% of the respondents were ages 65 and over, while 38.37% were 45 to 64 and 15.12% were 25 to 44. In total, nearly 84% of the respondents were age 45 or older. Only 1.07% of the respondents were 24 or under. This may be due to the distribution of the survey to registered voters, which are only eligible for registration at age 18.

The age breakdown of respondents does however reflect the population of Indian River. The County does have an older demographic than the average Florida county. When looking at the percentage of participants older than 25 the percentages do align with Indian River's demographic profile, with the older demographic slightly higher represented. The table below shows the comparison between the estimated population breakdown with the survey respondents.

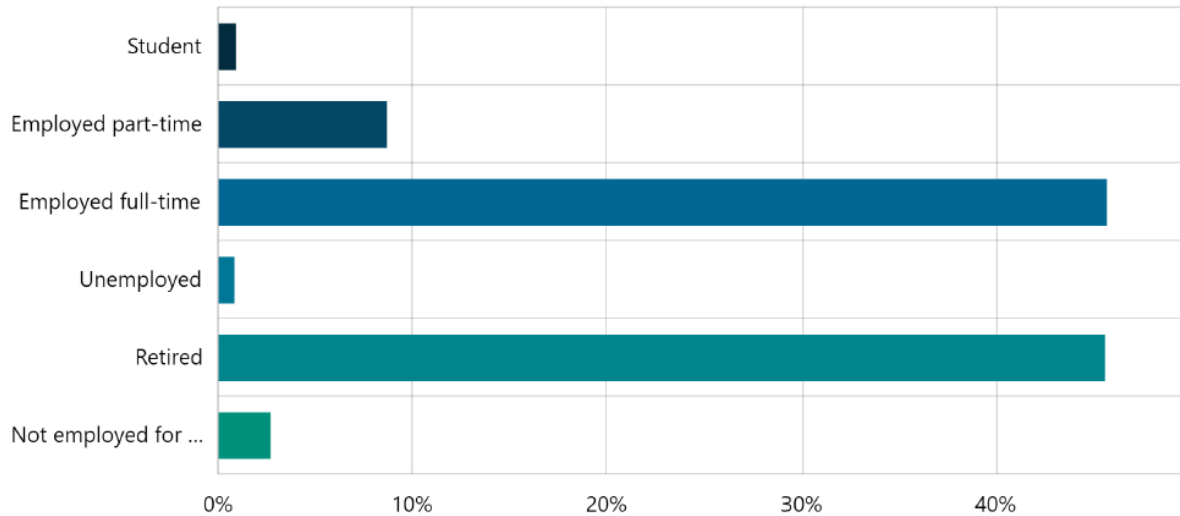
**Table 13: Comparison between Indian River Demographic Profile and Survey Participants**

Age Range	Percentage of Population per 2022 ACS	Percentage of Survey Responses
0-18	15%	0%
18-24	6.1%	1.1%
25-44	17.7%	15.1%
45-64	25.8%	38.4%
65+	35.4%	45.4%

Source: ACS 2022 Demographic Profile

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## What best describes your employment status?



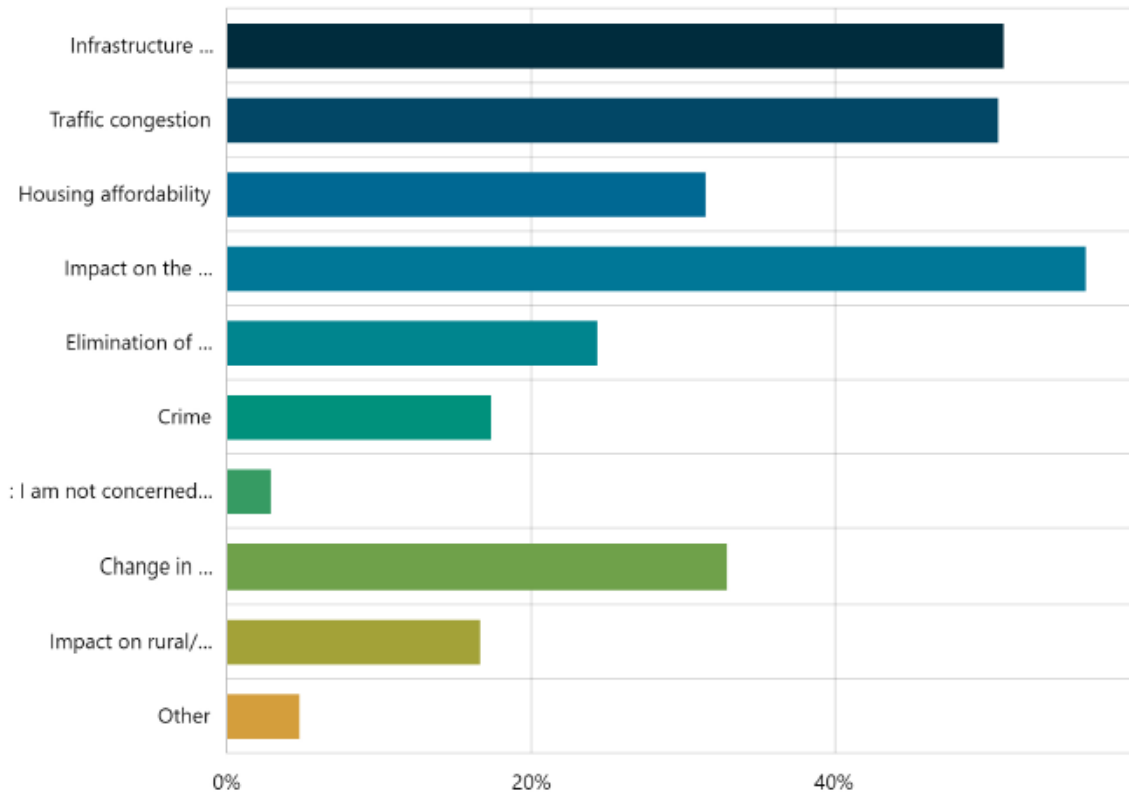
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Student	0.89%	10
Employed part-time	8.65%	97
Employed full-time	45.63%	512
Unemployed	0.80%	9
Retired	45.54%	511
Not employed for other reason	2.67%	30

Retirees made up 45.54% of the respondents, which is consistent with the fact that 45.44% of the respondents were age 65 and over. People employed full time made up 45.63% of the respondents, while 8.65% were employed part-time and 2.67% were not employed for another reason.

While ACS data does not specifically provide data on retirees and estimates the percentage of retirees to be close to the amount of people 65 and older. Since Indian River has a larger older population it correlates to a large number of retirees that took the survey.

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

**What are the top concerns you have related to future growth within the County?**



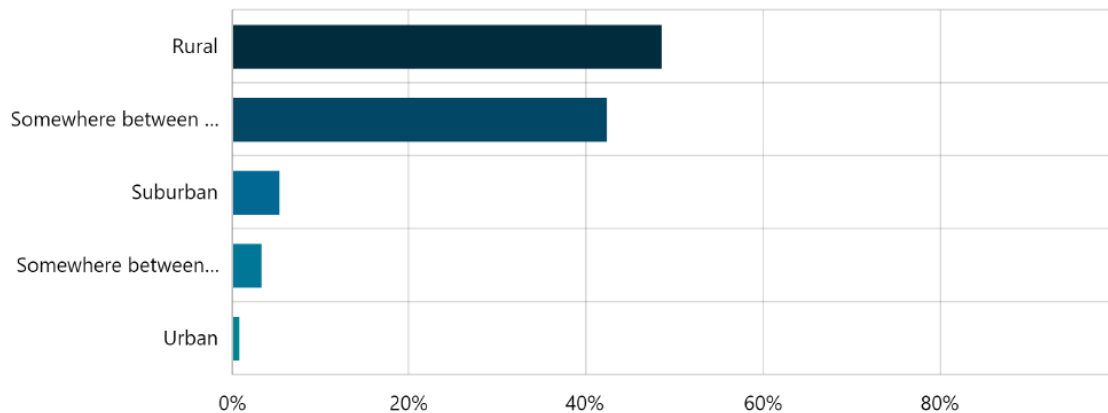
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Infrastructure (roadways, utilities, etc.)	51.07%	574
Traffic congestion	50.71%	570
Housing affordability	31.41%	353
Impact on the natural environment	56.49%	635
Elimination of agricultural lands	24.29%	273
Crime	17.26%	194
: I am not concerned with the impacts of future growth in the County	2.76%	31
Change in community character	32.83%	369
Impact on rural/agricultural lifestyle	16.55%	186
Other	4.63%	52

The top concern related to future growth within the County was the impact on the natural environment (56.49%). Other top concerns were infrastructure (51.07%) and traffic congestion (50.71%). Only 2.76% were not concerned with future growth. Participants were instructed to select up to three choices.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Do you feel this aerial shows a RURAL, SUBURBAN, or URBAN area?

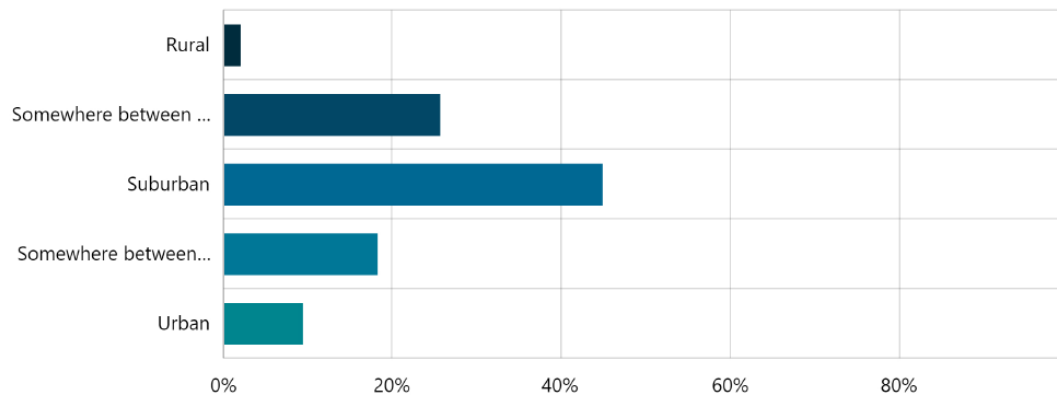


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Rural	48.53%	545
Somewhere between Rural and Suburban	42.30%	475
Suburban	5.25%	59
Somewhere between Suburban and Urban	3.21%	36
Urban	0.71%	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,123</b>

48.53% of attendees perceived the above image as representing a rural area, while 42.30% viewed it as somewhere between rural and suburban. 5.25% identified it as suburban. This information is helpful when evaluating statements of preferred character for the area. This was the lowest density images supplied, and for no option was there a majority consensus that an area was rural.

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Do you feel this aerial shows a RURAL, SUBURBAN, or URBAN area?



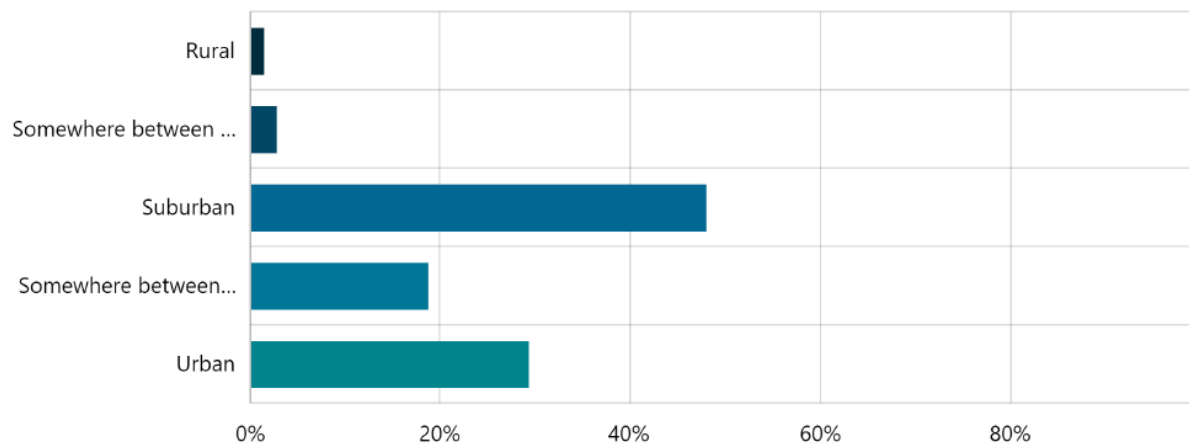
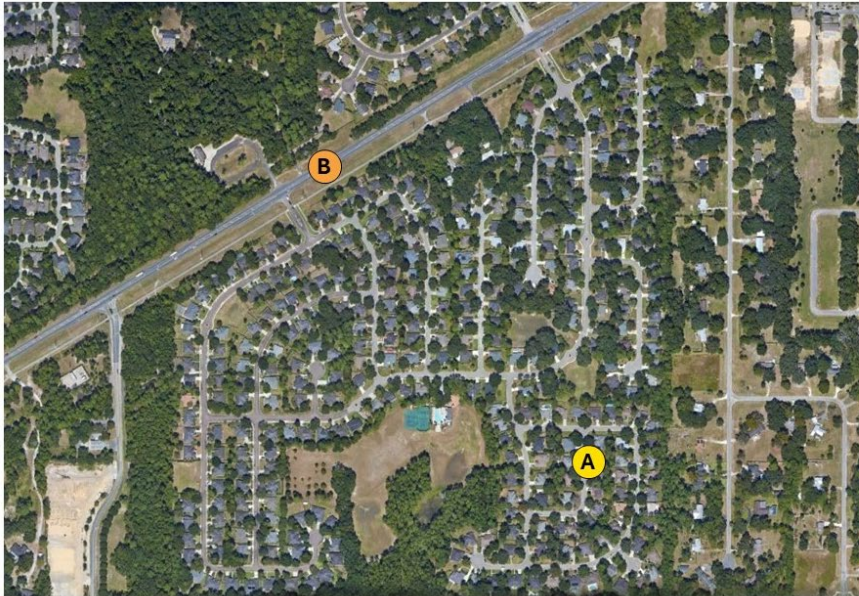
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Rural	1.97%	22
Somewhere between Rural and Suburban	25.63%	286
Suburban	44.89%	501
Somewhere between Suburban and Urban	18.19%	203
Urban	9.32%	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,116</b>

44.93% of attendees perceived the above image as suburban, while 25.56% viewed it as somewhere between rural and suburban. 18.21% considered it to be somewhere between suburban and urban.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Do you feel this aerial shows a RURAL, SUBURBAN, or URBAN area?



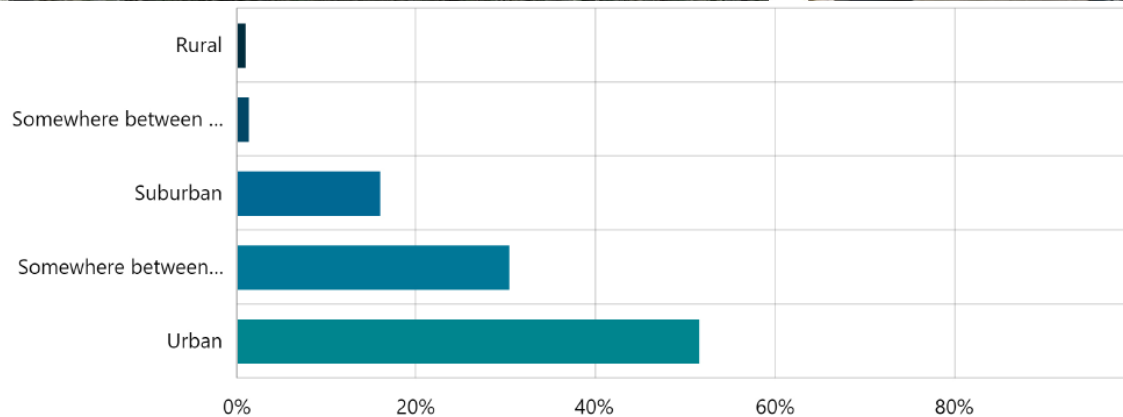
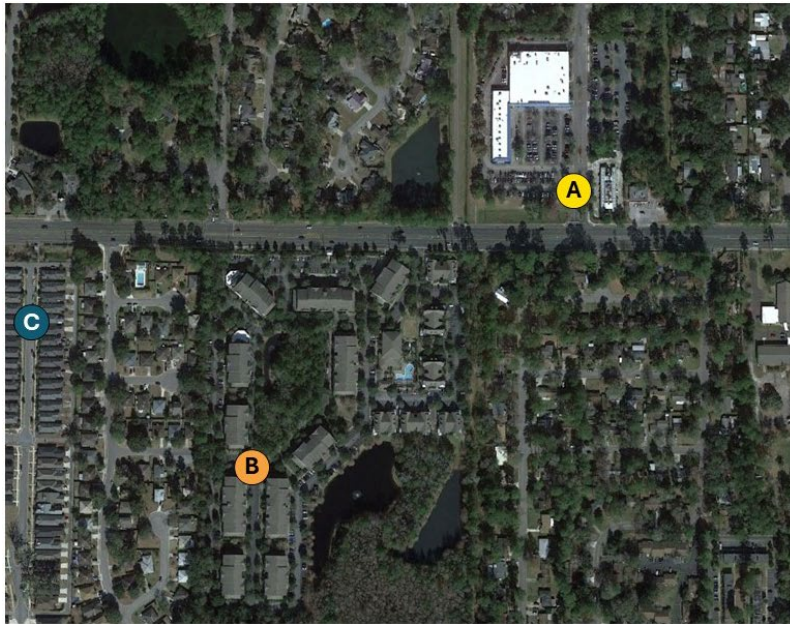
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Rural	1.36%	15
Somewhere between Rural and Suburban	2.71%	30
Suburban	47.97%	531
Somewhere between Suburban and Urban	18.70%	207
Urban	29.27%	324
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,107</b>

47.97% of attendees characterized the above image as suburban, while 29.27% described it as urban. 18.70% perceived it to be somewhere between suburban and urban.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

Do you feel this aerial shows a RURAL, SUBURBAN, or URBAN area?

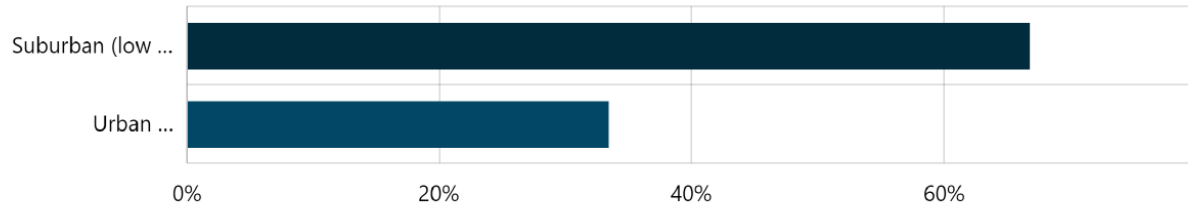


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Rural	0.91%	10
Somewhere between Rural and Suburban	1.27%	14
Suburban	15.94%	176
Somewhere between Suburban and Urban	30.34%	335
Urban	51.54%	569
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,104</b>

51.54% of attendees perceived the above image as urban, 30.34% viewed it as somewhere between suburban and urban, and 15.94% considered it suburban. This is the only set of images where a majority agreed on a single designation.

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## What type of development should the County prioritize within the next 25 years?



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Suburban (low density, primarily single-family housing, car-dependent)	66.70%	741
Urban (medium to high density, mix of single and multi-family housing, several available modes of transportation)	33.30%	370
Total	100.00%	1,111

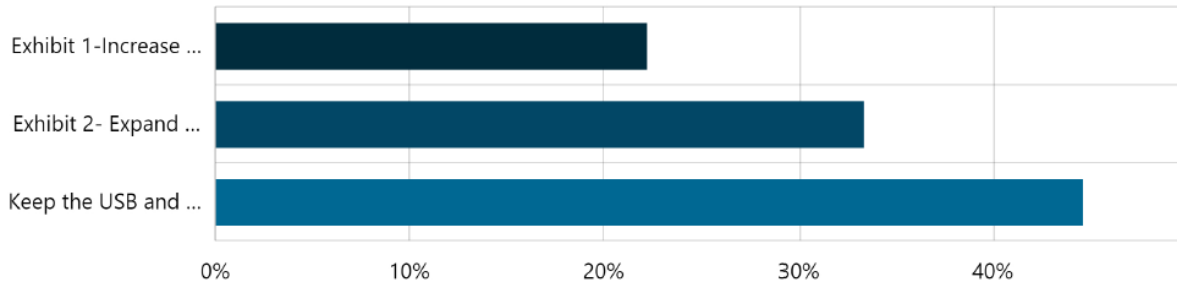
Approximately two-thirds (66.70%) of the respondents favor prioritizing low-density, car dependent, primarily single-family housing developments over the next 25 years. One-third (33.3%) believe the County should prioritize medium-to-high density, multi-family, and multi-modal, transportation-rich urban development.

The question asked about growth priorities for the future. The numbers are very similar to the current distribution of housing types in the present. According to ACS 2022 data, 69.2% of housing units in the County are single-family detached.

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## To accommodate future growth, should Indian River County:

- **Exhibit 1:** Increase densities within the existing Urban Service Area
- **Exhibit 2:** Expand the Urban Service Boundary to allow for additional suburban development
- Keep the USB and densities unchanged



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Exhibit 1-Increase Densities within the existing Urban Service Area	22.18%	248
Exhibit 2- Expand the Urban Service Boundary to allow for additional suburban development	33.27%	372
Keep the USB and densities unchanged	44.54%	498
Total	100.00%	1,118

44.54% of respondents advocated for maintaining the Urban Service Boundary (USB) while keeping current densities unchanged. Meanwhile, 33.27% support expanding the boundary, and 22.18% favor increasing densities within the existing Urban Service Area.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Public Workshop Results

### Housing Typology Exercise

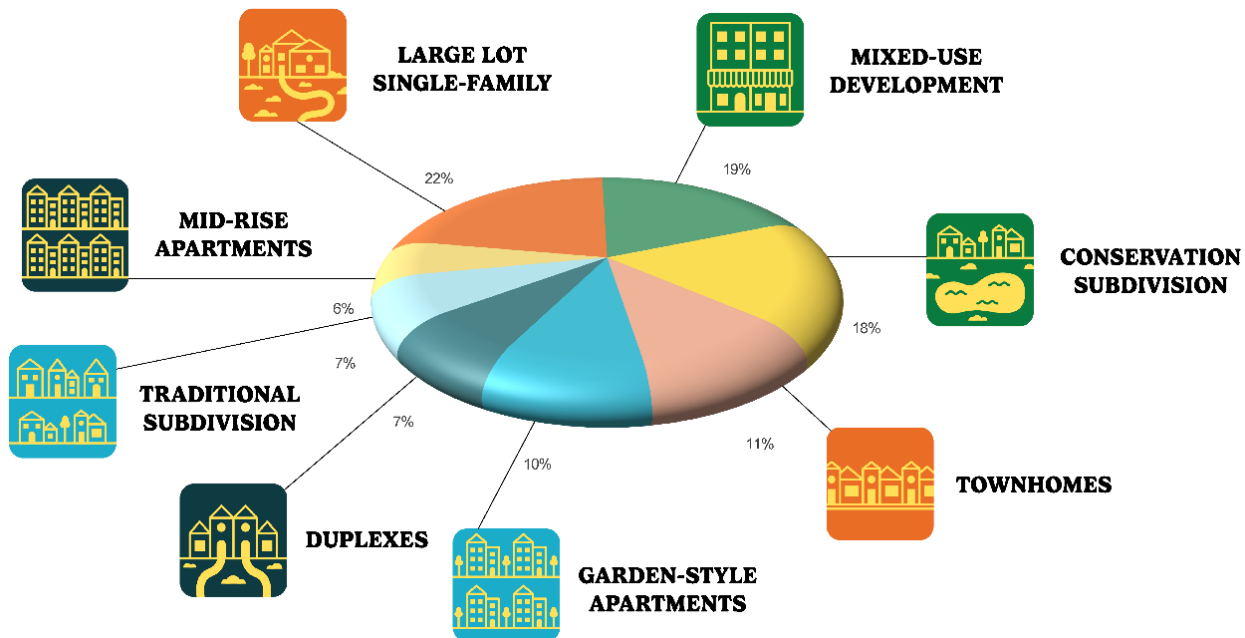
Residents were asked to place four votes in any of the following categories for the types of housing they would like to see more of in Indian River County. They could place all their votes for one housing choice or spread them out amongst any of the eight choices.

#### Results:

Among the respondents, large-lot single-family homes emerged as the most favored option, garnering 135 votes and 22% of the total. Mixed-use developments and conservation subdivisions followed closely, with 119 votes (19%) and 109 votes (18%) respectively, indicating a significant interest in diversified living environments.



Rounding out the top five were townhomes (11%) and garden-style apartments (10%), while duplexes (7%), traditional subdivisions (7%), and mid-rise apartments (6%) received less interest.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## *Population Growth Exercise*

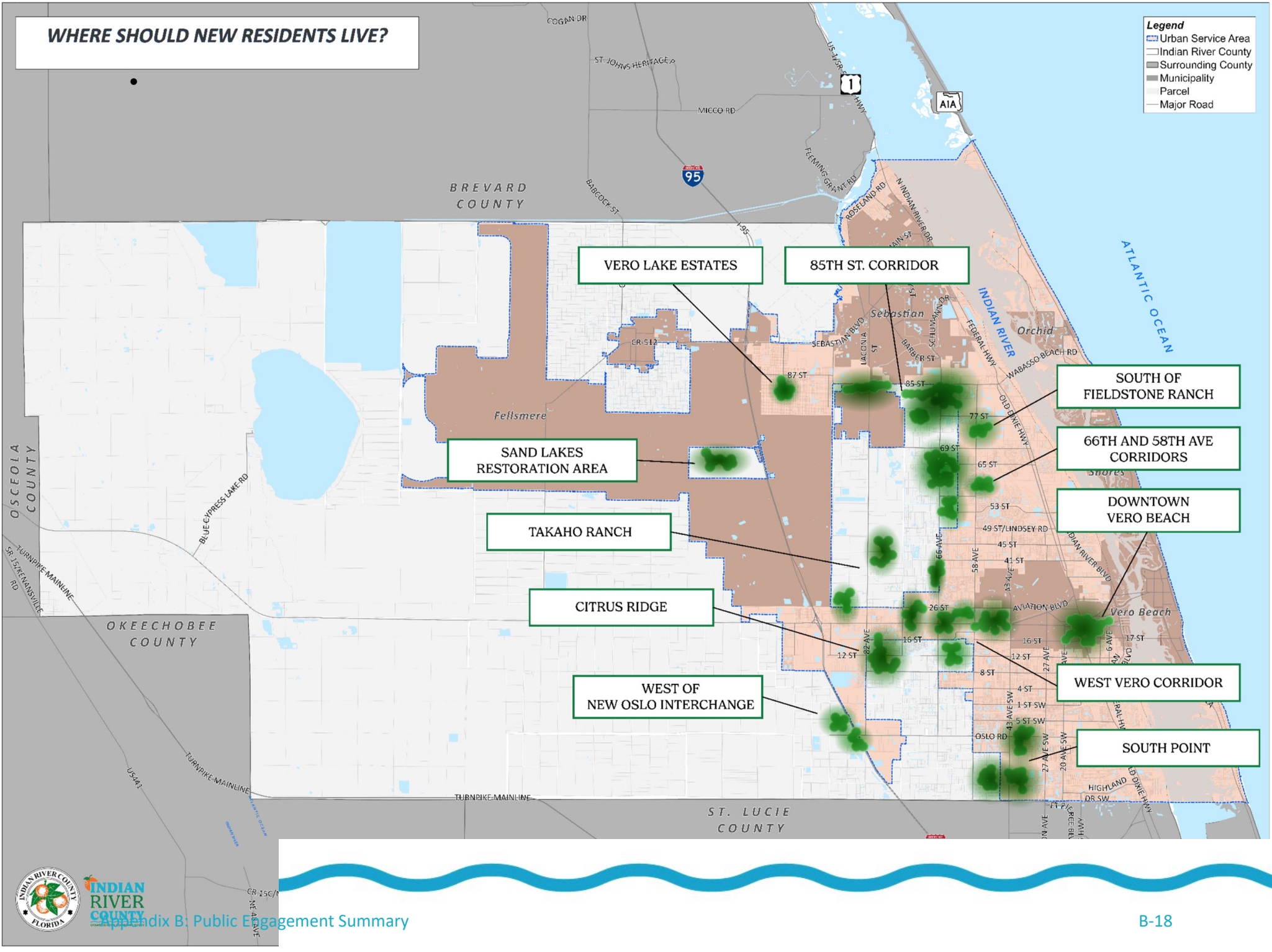
Residents were then asked to select four locations as areas they favored for future growth within the County. Residents were given four stickers to place anywhere on a map of the County, allowing them to indicate their preferences for where they believe development should be concentrated. This approach provided a visual and interactive means for residents to express their opinions on future growth areas.

### Major Hot Spots:

- **Vero Lake Estates:** A significant residential area, located off CR 510 and encompassing the western portion of Wabasso Road, with unincorporated status and a substantial housing stock of over 2,700 homes.
- **85<sup>th</sup> St. Corridor:** The corridor serving as a link between Vero Lake Estates and Wabasso and essential for daily commutes and potential developments in the region.
- **South of Fieldstone Ranch:** A 27-acre property owned by Syngenta Crop Protection LLC that lies south of the Fieldstone Ranch community and west of the Sandridge Golf Club.
- **66<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Ave. Corridors:** Key corridors between Wabasso and Vero Beach.
- **Sand Lakes Restoration Area:** A 1,256-acre state park, located west of I-95 and within Fellsmere's southern boundary, with no public access.
- **Takaho Ranch:** A low-density agricultural area of 610 acres owned by Takaho Ranch LLC.
- **Citrus Ridge:** The area between Vero Palm Estates and Pointe West County Club.
- **Downtown Vero Beach:** The urban core of the city of Vero Beach.
- **West Vero Corridor:** A census-designated place running along the corridor of SR 60, serving as a key commercial and residential artery.
- **South Point:** The southernmost point of Vero Beach South, marking a geographical and developmental boundary.
- **West of New Oslo Interchange:** Located just outside the Urban Service Area, this hub at the new interchange connects the southern part of the County to the interstate.

# WHERE SHOULD NEW RESIDENTS LIVE?

- Legend**
- Urban Service Area
  - Indian River County
  - Surrounding County
  - Municipality
  - Parcel
  - Major Road





# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Community Idea Wall

Residents were also given the opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns on a Community Idea Wall, which received a total of 106 comments. The comments were then categorized into themes that cover the following topics:



### Top Themes

1. Affordable Housing (16)
2. Growth Management (15)
3. Equitable Access to Services (10)
4. Natural Resource Management (10)
5. Environmental Compliance (10)
6. Infill Development (9)
7. Preserving Rural/Coastal Character (7)
8. Walkability and Bikeability (6)
9. Adaptive Reuse (5)
10. Conservation Development (3)
11. Low-Impact Development (3)
12. Dark Sky Protection (3)
13. Urban Agriculture (2)
14. Renewable Energy and Waste Management (2)
15. Economic Development (2)
16. Public Transportation (1)
17. Public Education on Urban Policies (1)
18. Public Safety and Crime Prevention (1)

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Word Cloud

A word cloud displays the most frequently used words in the comments at a size proportional to their frequency, The most frequently used words were:

Housing (17)

Affordable (14)

## Development/Developments (9)

Urban (8)

New (6)

Water (6)



## Top Trigrams

Looking at “trigrams”, sets of three consecutive words, can help identify common phrases and topics in the comments at a glance. The most commonly occurring sets of three consecutive words were:

### Eliminating septic tanks (5)

### Affordable workforce housing (3)

Do not move (3)

(in every case, this phrase related to the urban services boundary)



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Idea Wall Summaries

The submissions to the Community Idea Wall have been categorized into thematic categories. While certain submissions may overlap across multiple categories, each comment has been tagged according to the theme it most closely aligns with. Additionally, comments with check marks or numerical indicators, denoting support or agreement, have been noted and factored into the analysis.

### Affordable Housing

The most frequently mentioned theme was affordable housing, with an emphasis on the necessity of accessible housing and home ownership for middle-class families and essential workers. One respondent emphasized the need to clearly define “affordable housing,” while another proposed expanding the urban service area with the condition that new developments prioritize affordability and adhere to heightened density standards.

Suggestions included creating a new land use designation with minimum separations between new residential units and a required percentage of affordable units if the USB is expanded. Additionally, there were calls for repurposing vacant or underutilized spaces, such as Indian River Mall, for affordable housing initiatives. Specific areas like North County and Wabasso up to 66<sup>th</sup> were mentioned as targets for future affordable housing developments.

#### Responses:

- Expand urban service area to a limited degree into the two donut holes east of I-95 provided that all housing approved and built must be “affordable” workforce housing that would include going up in height above current standards
- Attainable homes
- Reuse current empty (building) space i.e. mall! for affordable housing
- Focus on bringing affordable/workforce housing to Vero (+1)
- Affordable housing (+3)
- Housing for healthcare workers, teachers, first responders
- “Affordable” home ownership
- Need affordable to attract middle-class and service workers – not more single family
- Encourage home ownership and families
- Define Affordable housing
- If the USB is expanded, create a new land use designation that requires a min. separation between new residential units and pre-existing 5-acre + parcels and has a min % affordable-size units per smallest category of TIF for MF + SF
- More affordable houses/buildings in North and Wabasso area up to 66th

### Growth Management

Respondents emphasized the importance of managing growth effectively, advocating for the retention of the current USB with minimal alterations and completion of infrastructure prior to new construction projects. Suggestions included establishing a clear development vision for Indian River County and fostering joint agreements between the cities and County for services in new enclaves.

Comments included a focus on integrating growth management efforts with the cities’ downtown master plans, while others voiced concerns about potential water issues and environmental impacts, such as paving over wetlands. Respondents cautioned against uncontrolled development, providing comparisons to Port St. Lucie. Additionally, one participant proposed enhancing the population growth map exercise during the workshop to identify areas within the USB where density has not been fully maximized.



# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Responses:

- Managed planned growth
- Do not move urban service line except for rare cases
- Keep USA, just minor changes
- Finish infrastructure before building
- Wha? -> 510 and US 1
- Regarding where people should live, instead of expanding into “enclaves” which could be new cities per previous charettes, that new city and County could have joint agreement to put in services. This is a different 3<sup>rd</sup> option but not provided on that map, instead of simply expand USB or not into “enclaves”
- Regarding where people should live, would have been helpful for map to show areas where density was not already maximized within the USB
- IRC should begin with a vision for development
- Do not move the boundary (+1)
- Integrate w/ city downtown master plan! (+1)
- Water problems with more people / water levels down
- People paving over \*wetlands\* - no one monitors in County
- Don't turn us into PSL

## Equitable Access to Services

Respondents emphasized a need to prioritize providing services, particularly sewage services, to those within the USB. Suggestions included establishing enclaves of workforce housing with improved access to alternative transportation while emulating the diversity of housing options seen in Celebration, Florida.

Essential services such as schools, hospitals, fire departments, grocery stores, and trash collection were identified as priorities, along with the need for additional rescue centers and the development of an amphitheater or sports complex for the community. Furthermore, there was a call for more multilingual public engagement opportunities to better reflect the County's demographic diversity.

## Responses:

- Prioritize those inside USB who don't have services
- Place enclaves of workforce housing intermixed with lower residential density to help prevent slums but also provide better access to alt. transportation
- Look to Celebration for diversity of housing choice (+1)
- Schools, hospitals, fire depts, grocery stores, trash
- Supply urban services to those who live within the boundary (sewer) (+1)
- Engage more multilingual opinions/comments and information and results in other languages than English (represent demographics)
- More rescue centers in Wabasso within area on 61 and 58 street + 2 story buildings
- Amphitheater/Sports Complex

## Natural Resource Management

Suggestions included the completion of an open space and natural resources plan prior to any boundary alterations. Environmental conservation was emphasized, including a prioritization of a comprehensive water study, mandates for native plant incorporation, a halt to clear-cutting practices, and protection of wildlife habitats. Concerns were raised regarding the feasibility of conservation subdivisions due to the inherent disruption of ecosystems by human development. Respondents advised against development near wildlife areas and advocated for improved

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Responses:

- Complete open space / natural resources plan before thinking about moving the line (Turn into overlay district)
- Finish the water study before decision making
- 50% native plant required
- Stop clear cutting
- Protect wildlife areas (no development near)
- Land Trust, Environment
- Do not believe a “conservation subdivision” can exist. Wildlife always lose habitat and perhaps lives, such as alligators and birds. Even in Audubon golf courses, native trees butchered so birds cannot nest and rest and be safe from predators. Conservation land must prioritize wildlife and native plants and keep humans out.
- Plant oak trees with new developments
- No one monitors that the trees/bushes that were planted are cared for
- Tree preservations

## Environmental Compliance

Respondents emphasized the addressing of environmental concerns by advocating for the elimination of septic tanks and stricter enforcement of fertilizer regulations to mitigate environmental damage. Additional suggestions included the formulation of comprehensive plans for water supply and waste management, with an emphasis on conducting a thorough water study before proceeding with any further actions.

## Responses:

- Fertilizer ordinance enforced!
- Eliminating septic tanks (+4)
- Adequate plan for water supply and garbage (+1)
- Finish water study before moving forward
- Fertilizer ordinance enforced

## Infill Development

Submissions underscored the promotion of infill development as a means to optimize land use efficiency and curb urban sprawl. Respondents emphasized the importance of completing infrastructure within the urban service area before embarking on new development projects beyond its boundaries. Suggestions included raising building heights in Downtown Vero Beach to accommodate higher density developments and rectifying past planning shortcomings through retrofitting efforts. Additionally, respondents advocated for mixed-use developments that align with the existing community fabric, favoring locations such as malls over adjacent areas to traditional subdivisions or private homes.

## Responses:

- Promote infill
- Infrastructure needs to be completed in Urban Service Area
- Focus on retrofitting past planning probs
- Raise building heights in Downtown Vero
- Prioritize infill development, do not expand urban service boundary
- Higher density as an incentive to mixed use
- Housing types should reflect the existing community where its being developed... mixed use development at the mall, not next to traditional subdivisions or private homes.
- More mixed-use buildings

## Preserving Rural/Coastal Character

Respondents voiced support for preserving rural lifestyles and limiting beachfront redevelopment. One comment stressed the significance of maintaining old Florida lifestyles without a necessity for senior living

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

or affordable housing, while another questioned the potential removal of trailer parks along US 1. Another suggestion centered on retaining ranches and ranchettes amidst potential development pressures.

## *Responses:*

- Keep rural lifestyle choices for those who want it
- Old FL lifestyles/natural living, family “compounds” – no need for senior living/affordable housing
- No mid rise beachside
- No beachfront redevelopment post-hurricane
- Preserve rural/ag lifestyles
- Are all trailer parks to be abolished? Along US 1
- Ranchettes/ranches should be kept

## Walkability and Bikeability

Respondents highlighted the importance of improving walkability and bikeability in the community. Suggestions included prioritizing natural trails over sidewalks, adding bike lanes on the mainland, and providing more sidewalk access to residents. Additionally, there were calls for the creation of walkable communities with mixed-use development integrated into the natural environment.

## *Responses:*

- Natural trails in lieu of sidewalks
- Increase walkability
- Bike lanes on mainland
- Preplan for dual sidewalks
- Commercial/retail down – residential up – walkable
- Create walkable communities with parks / native plants

## Adaptive Reuse

Suggestions emphasized the revitalization of derelict properties and blighted areas as a means of improving the community’s aesthetic and economic appeal. Responses included proposals to rezone and repurpose Indian River Mall into a multi-functional space featuring multi-family residential units, professional offices and mixed-use facilities. One comment underscored the necessity of providing more housing options for essential workers such as medical professions, police officers, and teachers, while another suggested exploring the adaption of the mall into an educational institution.

## *Responses:*

- 1<sup>st</sup> priority – refurbish old derelict properties
- Indian River Mall: Introduce multi-family, residential, professional offices, mixed use – Rezone, if necessary, the defunct majors (Seas, Macys) similar to City Place in West Palm
- Repurpose – need places for “real” people to live – medical, police, teachers
- What to do with the mall – schools, trade schools, etc. (see Carver Career Center in Charleston, WV)
- Incentives for re-development and refurbishment of structures and properties in blighted areas of the County.

## Conservation Development

Comments underscored a need to provide incentives for conservation-oriented development as a way of protecting open space. One suggestion supported Babcock Ranch-style developments that incorporate low-impact techniques and agricultural integration, while another proposed prioritizing green spaces in higher density housing options.

## *Responses:*

- Conservation Subdivision Ordinance provides incentives or waivers to encourage developers to pursue rather than traditional PUD – must protect open space



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- Babcock Ranch style developments, low-impact development, agricultural throughout new developments (community gardens / urban agriculture)
- Higher density housing (no matter the style) should allow for more greenspaces AND actual conservation

## Low-Impact Development

Respondents emphasized the importance of low-impact development, suggesting measures to minimize environmental impact, reducing sod on laws, and exploring alternative road materials, potentially conforming to ASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) standards.

### Responses:

- Require LID (low impacted development) when building
- Reduce sod on lawn to 15-20%
- Different road materials (ASHTOW?)

## Dark Sky Protection

Respondents proposed policies regarding outdoor lighting, emphasizing the importance of implementing ordinances to mitigate light pollution and preserve dark skies.

### Responses:

- Lighting ordinances (+1)
- Dark skies

## Urban Agriculture

Respondents supported urban agriculture initiatives as a means to bolster regional economies.

### Responses:

- USDA-Urban Ag / Innovative Producers (1/8 acre and up)
- Support local farming and ranch services

## Renewable Energy and Waste Management

Suggestions included exploring the conversion of waste into energy as a sustainable solution.

### Responses:

- Make electricity from our poop
- Poop into energy!

## Economic Development

Comments underscored the importance of economic development and job creation.

### Responses:

- Econ dev please
- Jobs – what does Vero have to offer?

## Public Transportation

One respondent advocated for expanding public transportation options.

### Response:

- More public transit options + increase # of bus stops with bus shelter

## Public Education on Urban Policies

One respondent emphasized the importance of educating the community about annexation processes.

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## Response:

- Educate on annexation

## Public Safety and Crime Prevention

One respondent raised concerns about crime patterns along Interstate 95 and its exit points.

## Response:

- Crime flows up I-95 and off the exits (See PSL & Martin City)

## All Community Idea Wall Submissions

- Expand urban service area to a limited degree into the two donut holes east of I-95 provided that all housing approved and built must be “affordable” workforce housing that would include going up in height above current standards
- Conservation Subdivision Ordinance – provides incentives or waivers to encourage developers to pursue rather than traditional PUD – must protect open space
- Complete open space / natural resources plan before thinking about moving the line (Turn into overlay district)
- Babcock Ranch style developments, low-impact development, agricultural throughout new developments (community gardens / urban agriculture)
- USDA-Urban Ag / Innovative Producers (1/8 acre and up)
- Old FL lifestyles/natural living, family “compounds” – no need for senior living/affordable housing
- Natural trails in lieu of sidewalks
- Different road materials (ASHTOW?)
- Keep rural lifestyle choices for those who want it
- Attainable homes
- Higher density housing (no matter the style) should allow for more greenspaces AND actual conservation
- More public transit options + increase # of bus stops with bus shelter
- Bike lanes on mainland
- Increase walkability
- Promote infill
- Prioritize those inside USB who don’t have services
- Fertilizer ordinance enforced!
- Reuse current empty (building) space i.e. mall! for affordable housing
- Lighting ordinances (+1)
- Dark skies
- Require LID (low impacted development) when building
- Managed planned growth
- Educate on annexation
- Infrastructure needs to be completed in Urban Service Area
- Finish the water study before decision making
- Focus on retrofitting past planning probs
- Reduce sod on lawn to 15-20%
- 50% native plant required
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- Make electricity from our poop
- Place enclaves of workforce housing intermixed with lower residential density to help prevent slums but also provide better access to alt. transportation
- Preplan for dual sidewalks
- No mid-rise beachside
- Raise building heights in Downtown Vero
- Commercial/retail down – residential up – walkable
- Do not move urban service line except for rare cases

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- Focus on bringing affordable/workforce housing to Vero (+1)
- Eliminating septic tanks (+4)
- Protect wildlife areas (no development near)
- Adequate plan for water supply and garbage (+1)
- Affordable housing
- Housing for healthcare workers, teachers, first responders
- No beachfront redevelopment post-hurricane 50
- Look to Celebration for diversity of housing choice (+1)
- Prioritize infill development, do not expand urban service boundary
- Finish water study before moving forward
- Poop into energy!
- Fertilizer ordinance enforced
- Keep USA, just minor changes
- Higher density as an incentive to mixed-use
- “Affordable” home ownership
- 1<sup>st</sup> priority – refurbish old derelict properties
- Finish infrastructure before building
- Preserve rural/ag lifestyles
- Support local farming and ranch services
- Repurpose – need places for “real” people to love – medical, police, teachers
- Need affordable to attract middle-class and service workers – not more single-family
- Econ dev please
- Encourage home ownership and families
- Schools, hospitals, fire depts, grocery stores, trash
- Land Trust, Environment
- Jobs – what does Vero have to offer?
- What to do with the mall – schools, trade schools, etc. (see Carver Career Center in Charleston, WV)
- Wha? -> 510 and US-1
- Are all trailer parks to be abolished? Along US-1
- In regards to where people should live, instead of expanding into “enclaves” which could be new cities per previous charettes, that new city and county could have joint agreement to put in services. This is a different 3<sup>rd</sup> option but not provided on that map, instead of simply expand USB or not into “enclaves”
- Incentives for re-development and refurbishment of structures and properties in blighted areas of the county.
- In regards to where people should live, would have been helpful for map to show areas where density was not already maximized within the USB
- Do not believe a “conservation subdivision” can exist. Wildlife always lose habitat and perhaps lives, such as alligators and birds. Even in Audubon golf courses, native trees butchered so birds cannot nest and rest and be safe from predators. Conservation land must prioritize wildlife and native plants and keep humans out.
- Housing types should reflect the existing community where its being developed... mixed-use development at the mall, not next to traditional subdivisions or private homes.
- Define Affordable housing
- IRC should begin with a vision for development
- Do not move the boundary (+1)
- Supply urban services to those who live within the boundary (sewer) (+1)
- If the USB is expanded, create a new land use designation that requires a min. separation between new residential units and pre-existing 5 acre + parcels and has a min % affordable-size units per smallest category of TIF for MF + SF
- Affordable housing (+2)
- More mixed-use buildings (+1)
- Indian River Mall: Introduce multi-family, residential, professional offices, mixed-use – Rezone if necessary the defunct majors (Seas, Macys) similar to City Place in West Palm
- More affordable houses/buildings in North and Wabasso area up to 66<sup>th</sup>
- Engage more multilingual opinions/comments and information and results in other languages than English (represent demographics)

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- More rescue centers in Wabasso within area on 61 and 58 street + 2 story buildings
- Integrate w/ city downtown master plan! (+1)
- Amphitheater/Sports Complex
- Create walkable communities with parks / native plants
- Plant oak trees with new developments
- No one monitors that the trees/bushes that were planted are cared for
- Ranchettes/ranches should be kept
- Water problems with more people / water levels down
- Crime flows up I-95 and off the exists (See PSL & Martin City)
- People paving over \*wetlands\* - no one monitors in county
- Tree preservations
- Don't turn us into PSL



## Analysis/Key Takeaways

### *Respondent Characteristics*

Both the public engagement workshops and online survey findings reveal a community deeply rooted in Indian River County, with nearly all respondents living locally and many having long-term residency.

There was also a high proportion of older adults among the respondents towards older adults, particularly retirees and full-time employees.

### *Respondent Preferences*

Concerns about future growth predominantly center around environmental impact, infrastructure readiness, and traffic congestion, reflecting a desire to balance development with responsible planning and environmental stewardship.

Both the workshops and online survey indicate a preference for low-density, single-family housing, while also revealing notable support for more compact, multi-modal urban environments. The Community Idea Wall primarily collected calls for more affordable housing, equitable access to services, and effective management of population growth and natural resources.

When pressed for preferred locations to accommodate future growth in the County, responses emphasized strategic areas like Downtown Vero Beach and the 85<sup>th</sup> St. Corridor, highlighting the community's interest in managed growth within existing urban areas rather than expansive developments beyond the USB. The only identified hot spot outside the boundary was located at the future transportation hub west of the new Oslo Interchange.

Survey results indicate a substantial segment of the population advocating for maintaining current boundaries. Additionally, suggestions for infill development and adaptive reuse of existing spaces, such as the Indian River Mall, highlight a preference for maximizing existing resources before expanding into new areas.

In summary, responses from Indian River County residents expressed housing preferences for larger single-family homes while there is still some desire for diverse living options and sustainable development practices. The community's commitment to preserving its natural and rural character, while enhancing its infrastructure and improving access to services, underscores a dedication to maintaining quality of life as the County continues to grow.

# Appendix C

## PEER JURISDICTIONS REPORT



**INDIAN  
RIVER  
COUNTY**

URBAN SERVICE BOUNDARY STUDY

# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

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# INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

## Introduction

The Indian River County Urban Service Boundary (USB) was adopted in 1990, and it is generally defined as the area in which the County is responsible for providing public facilities, such as water and wastewater service. The USB also plays an important role as the urban growth boundary, in which property within the boundary is eligible for suburban and urban uses, including residential, industrial, and commercial. Property outside of the boundary is restricted to a maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acres. Indian River County's population has nearly doubled since the USB was adopted in 1990, with the Countywide population increasing from 90,208 to 167,781 over that period. The County is now evaluating the need for expansion of the USB to accommodate projected growth through 2050. As part of this exercise, two comparable jurisdictions, Martin County and Manatee County, have been studied to evaluate how they have handled changes to their USBs to accommodate population growth over time. While these counties may not be identical to Indian River County, the lessons learned will help to guide County decision making moving forward.

## Manatee County

Manatee County is located on the west coast of Florida, south of Hillsborough County and the Tampa – St. Petersburg – Clearwater Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). According to the U.S. Census, the County had an estimated population of 441,095 in 2023, which represented a 10.4% increase in population from the 2020 population of 399,710. While more populated than Indian River County, there are similarities in that the County is outside of a major MSA, it is served by a major north/south interstate highway, and it has historically urbanized along the coast. Manatee County's population growth rate from 2020-2023 was significantly higher (10.4%) than Indian River County's population growth rate (6.3%), which makes it an interesting case study on how that growth was accommodated from a spatial perspective.

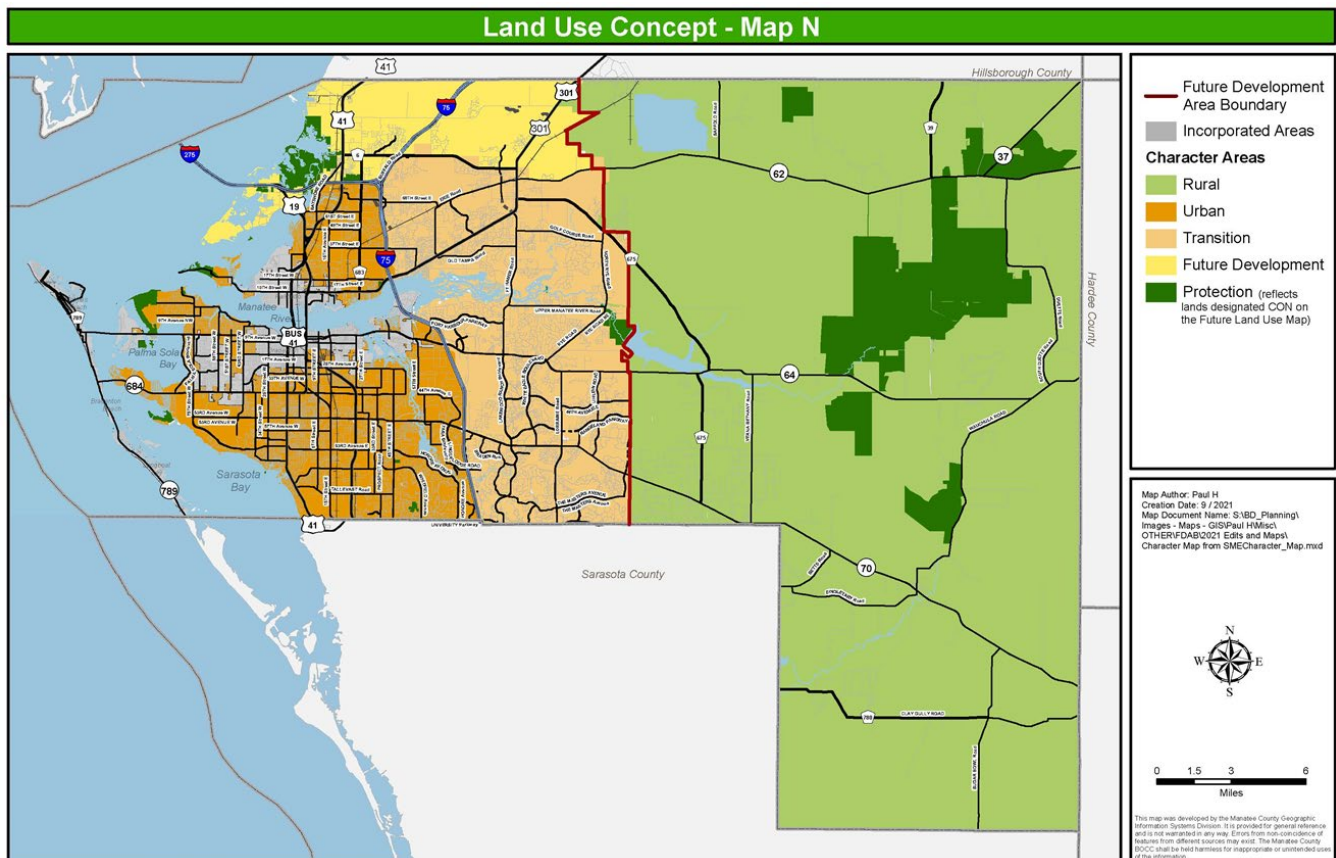
### *History of the Manatee County Future Development Area Boundary*

Manatee County utilizes a Future Development Area Boundary (FDAB), which is defined in **Objective 2.1.2** – Geographic Extent of Future Development, and associated policies within the County's comprehensive plan. The FDAB was originally adopted by the County in 1989, and it was last revised in 2006, with the intent that capacity within the boundary would be sufficient to sustain the County's growth through 2040. The current FDAB is shown in red on **Figure 1**, Manatee County Land Use Concept Map.



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**Figure 30: Manatee County Land Use Concept Map**



Source: Manatee County, 2021

Map N of the Manatee County’s Comprehensive Plan depicts character areas and shows Urban development surrounding the cities of Bradenton and Palmetto on the west side of the County and Rural east of the FDAB. The area between the Urban and Rural character areas south of Moccasin Wallow Road/SR 62 is shown as a Transition area. The land north of Moccasin Wallow Road/SR 62 is marked as a Future Development area.

## Manatee County Urban Service Area (USA)

Manatee County also has an urban service area (USA), but it functions differently than Indian River’s USB. The USA was adopted to encourage redevelopment and infill within the County where public services and infrastructure are available. This is highlighted in **Section 3 of Ordinance 13-13**, which states: “Urban Service Area shall mean the area identified in the comprehensive plan within the Future Land Use Map Series, which illustrates areas where public facilities and services, including, but not limited to, central water and sewer capacity and roads, and already in place or are identified in the capital improvements element. Such map may be amended from time to time as determined appropriate by Manatee County.”

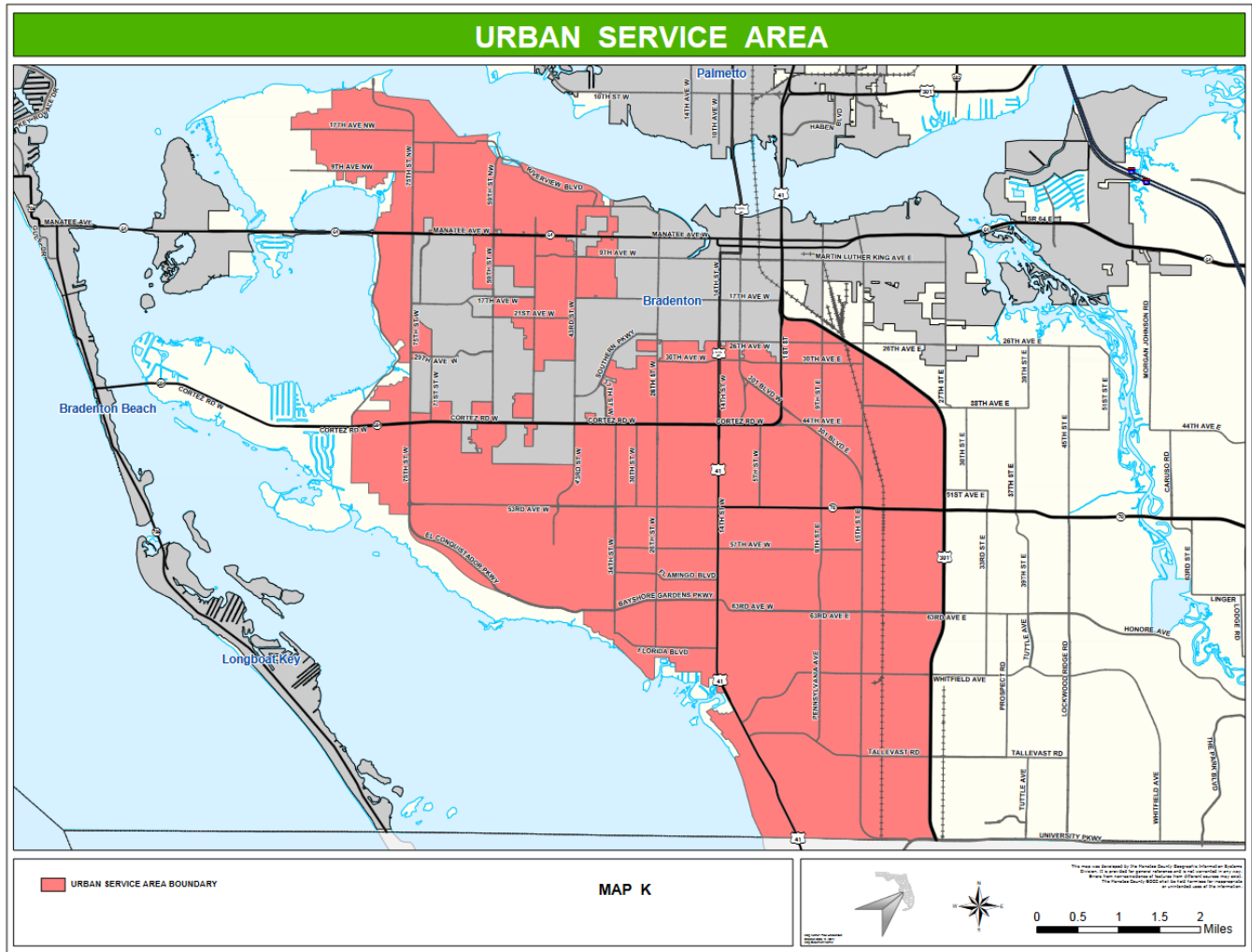
Furthermore, the Text Amendment to the Future Land Use Element (**Policy 2.1.1.6**) states that “Manatee County shall encourage growth, infill and redevelopment to concentrate within the Urban Service Area.” This policy aims to support sustainable growth while directing development to areas supported by existing

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infrastructure while reducing the cost of extending services and minimizing environmental impacts of sprawl.

**Figure 2** shows the boundary of the USA. This report will focus on the FDAB in lieu of the USA, as the purpose and intent of the FDAB is more in line with that of Indian River County's USB.

Figure 31: Manatee County Urban Service Area

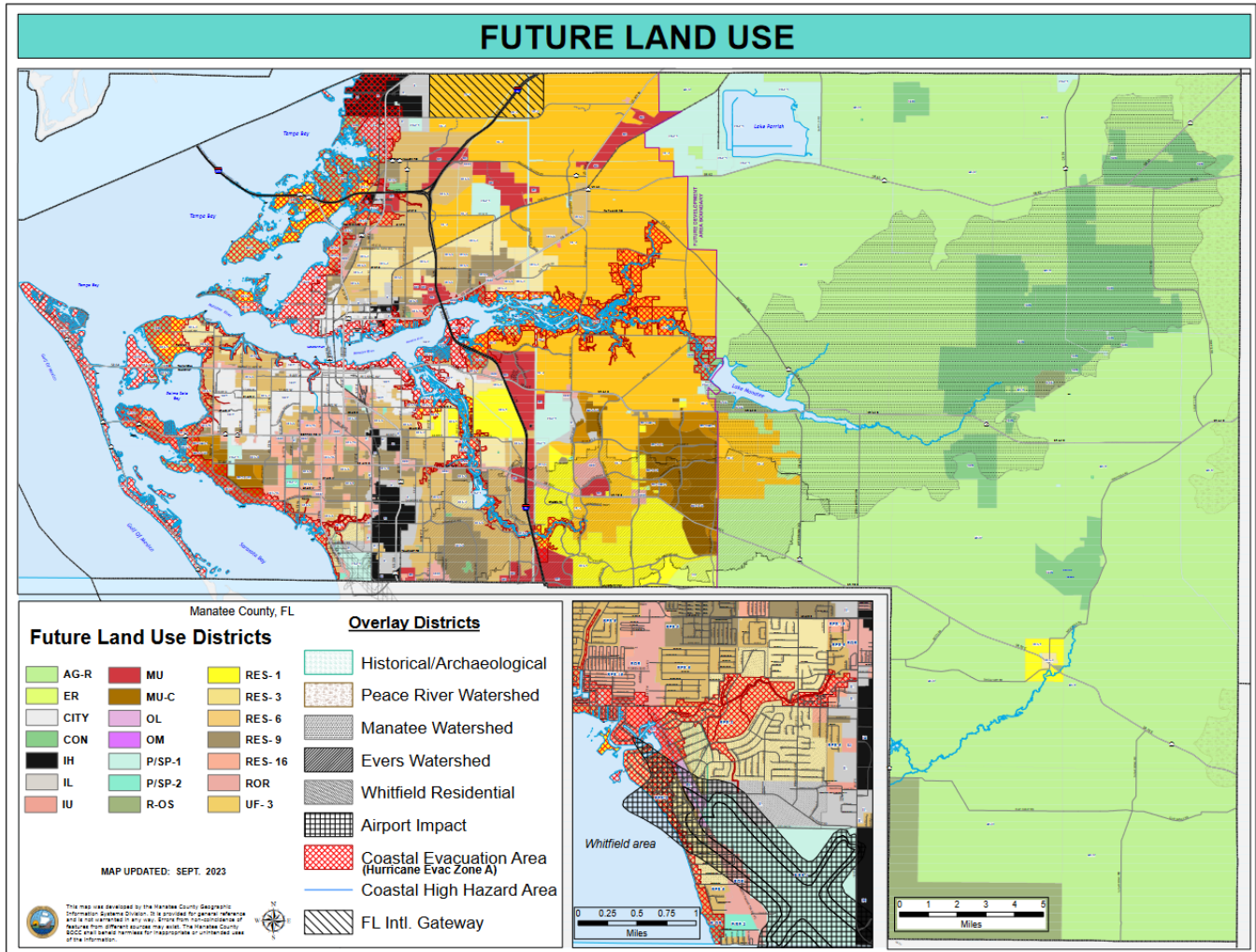


Source: Manatee County, 2024

It should be noted that the eastern boundary of the Manatee County USA is U.S. 301; however, the County's Future Land Use Map allows for higher densities and urban development east of the U.S. 301 corridor. **Figure 3** shows the County's Future Land Use Map.

Figure 32: Manatee County Future Land Use Map

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Source: Manatee County, 2023

## Policy Basis for the Manatee County FDAB

Manatee County's FDAB is defined in Objective 2.1.2 – Geographic Extent of Future Development, and associated policies within the County's comprehensive plan. This area is also mapped on the County's Future Land Use Map and Potable Water / Wastewater Service Areas map. Per Objective 2.1.2, the purpose of the FDAB is to limit sprawl by accommodating future development consistent with the adopted Land Use Concept Map (Map M). The objective further directs development to the west of the FDAB line, with the intent of preserving agricultural uses east of the FDAB through the plan's horizon year of 2040.

**Policy 2.1.2.2** states that the County shall limit sprawl by prohibiting future development in the area east of the FDAB, but the policies include the following exceptions:

- (a) Small commercial development providing for the needs of the agricultural community
- (b) Agricultural and industrial development when associated with approved mining operations
- (c) Residential development in excess of 0.2 du/ga (one dwelling unit per five acres) for the following:
  - (1) Farm worker housing;
  - (2) Residential within Myakka City;



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- (3) Legal lots of record prior to May 15, 1989;
  - (4) Redevelopment per Policy 2.9.3.2;
  - (5) Cluster development intended for the protection of open space and/or agricultural operations. Such cluster development is subject to the site's future land use category restrictions and standards adopted in the Land Development Code; and
  - (6) Lands that have been approved pursuant to Policy 2.1.2.8.
- (d) Plan amendment resulting from a change in the Future Land Use Concept Map.
- (e) Planned Village Overlay (PV designated property).

**Policy 2.1.2.8** addresses coterminous and contiguous lands. As noted in Policy 2.1.2.2, lands approved under Policy 2.1.2.8 are permitted to exceed a density of one dwelling unit per five acres, subject to specific criteria. This policy was adopted in 2021 as a privately initiated comprehensive plan text amendment and states that development east of the FDAB may be permitted under the following criteria:

- (a) A portion of the area to be developed is coterminous and contiguous to the FDAB or contiguous and coterminous to lands that have been approved pursuant to Policy 2.1.2.8;
- (b) The lands generally west of the area to be developed are primarily developed or being developed pursuant to a suburban development pattern;
- (c) The area east of the FDAB line to be developed will be developed as a continuation of that existing development pattern with the new development under a single, master developer responsible for infrastructure improvements;
- (d) Infrastructure for utilities and roads must be available to the area to be developed without adversely impacting the County's ability to serve the Utility Service Area;
- (e) The area to be developed must be able to gain access to one or more roadways designated as a thoroughfare in the Manatee County Comprehensive Plan, with any extension of a thoroughfare beyond the FDAB and within the area to be developed to be constructed at the expense of a Community Development, Stewardship District or master developer, serving the area to be developed; and
- (f) The area to be developed must be served by sanitary sewer supplied by Manatee County with all transmission lines (force mains), expansion of plant capacity, if needed, and installation or expansion of lift stations (including wet wells and pumps), if needed, to be constructed at the expense of a Community Development District, Stewardship District or master developer, serving the area to be developed.

Policy 2.1.2.8 is implemented through the Urban Fringe-3 (UF-3) FLUM designation and requires a rezoning to Planned Development and the review and approval of a Local Development Agreement that addresses the construction and timing of construction of roadways and utility infrastructure needed for the area to be developed. Policy 2.2.1.8 has been used to permit development east of the FDAB, and those projects are covered later in this report.

## ***Planned Village Overlay District***

Another exception to the FDAB policies is the Planned Village Overlay future land use designation, which was adopted as a privately initiated text amendment for the L3 Partnership / Gamble Creek Village Plan Amendment in 2021. This amendment added the exception to Policy 2.1.2.2 and new **Policies 2.2.2.10** through **2.2.2.10.7**, related to the Planned Village Overlay District.



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The purpose of the Planned Village Overlay is to allow for an agriculturally oriented small town surrounded by large tracts of agricultural or open space areas. The minimum size for a Planned Village is 5,000 acres and it allows for a range of uses to include retail, wholesale, office, commercial, industrial, research/corporate uses, warehouse/distribution, residential, lodging places, recreational uses, public/semi-public uses, schools, hospitals, or agricultural uses.

Applications for a Planned Village must include a FLUM designation of AG/OS (Agricultural/Open Space) for a minimum of 40% of the overlay area, a FLUM designation of Mixed Use (MU) for the establishment of a central village center (to be designed as neo-traditional development), and FLUM designations that allow for a maximum residential density of up to three dwelling units per acre for the areas not included within the Mixed Use designations.

As part of the request, a Village Master Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Board of County Commissioners. This Master Plan shall include a financial strategy document to ensure that the resulting Planned Village Overlay area is not a fiscal burden to the County. The Master Plan must also include overall design principles such as neighborhood form, distinct places, and public amenities. Additionally, the Master Plan shall include a thoroughfare plan and transportation framework to address mobility within the Overlay.

As per **Section 5 of the Plan Amendment PA-18-03/Ordinance 21-17**, any utilities within the Planned Village Overlay district and east of the FDAB that may be provided by Manatee County must file a privately initiated amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. This amendment is necessary to adjust the boundaries of the FDAB Line and the Potable Water/Wastewater Service Area to encompass the proposed development. Alternatively, private infrastructure can be used to accommodate the buildout within the Planned Village Overlay. Comprehensive Plan **Policy 2.2.2.10.5.1.1** requires a financial strategy for infrastructure improvements to be submitted with the associated Village Master Plan. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that the establishment of the Planned Village Overlay is not a fiscal burden to the remainder of the County. The fiscal strategy is required to include the following:

- (a) Analysis of the public facility capital costs through buildout both with the development boundaries and outside of the development boundaries;
- (b) Analysis of the public facility operating costs;
- (c) Identification of revenue sources to cover capital and operating costs;
- (d) Evaluation of the degree of self-sufficiency;
- (e) Recommendations on revenue sources to promote self-sufficiency to include independent impact fee schedules, Community Development Districts, Municipal Taxing Units, Municipal Benefit Districts, and or Stewardship Districts;
- (f) Regulatory steps to achieve the plan;
- (g) Adoption of the Local Development Agreement to address implementation.

As written, there are multiple options to fund the infrastructure within the Planned Village Overlay, with the goal of self-sufficiency to reduce the burden on existing public infrastructure.

## ***Projects Outside of the FDAB***

The County has approved at least six residential projects outside of the FDAB. **Figure 4** shows the location of residential projects approved outside of the FDAB. Most recently, the County approved two expansions of Lakewood Ranch, known as the Taylor Ranch and the East River Ranch. The Taylor Ranch project includes up to 4,500 residential units on 2,307 acres. The East River Ranch will include up to 5,378

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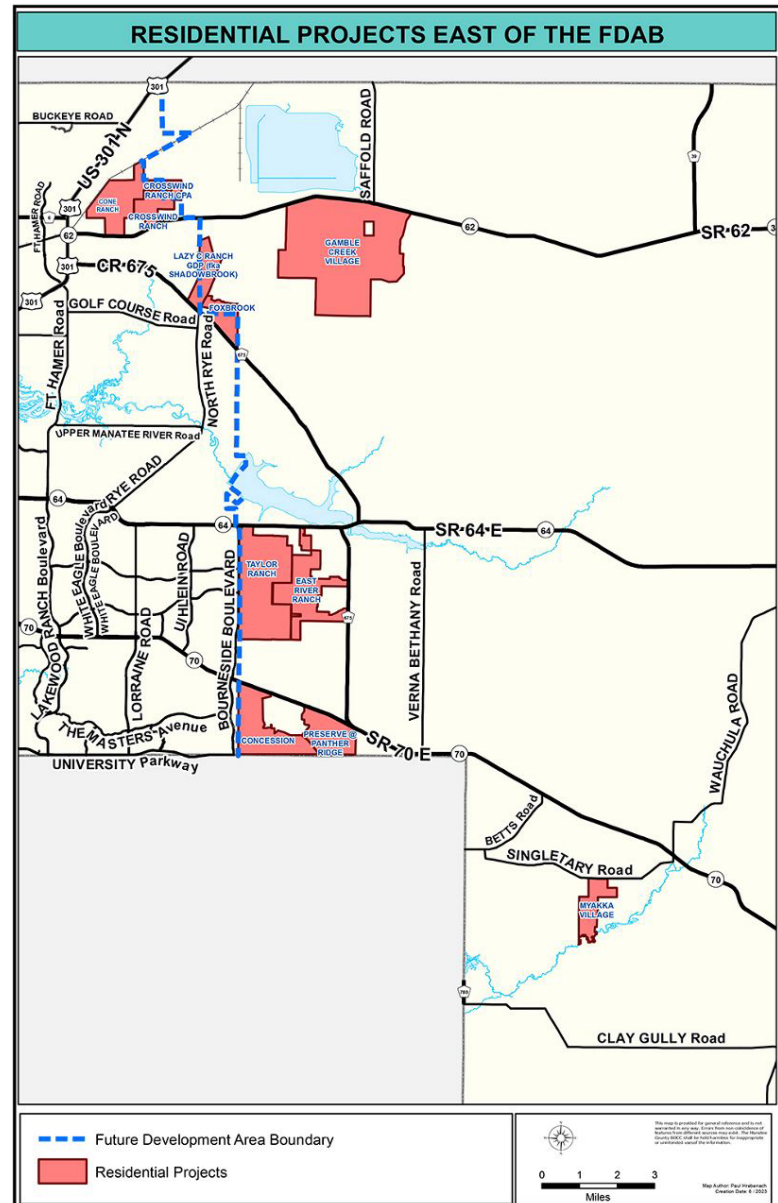
residential units; 900,000 square feet of commercial uses; 300,000 square feet of self-storage; 300,000 square feet of office; a school; and a fire station on 1,381 acres.

In late 2023, the County approved the Lazy C Ranch project that added another 1,100 dwelling units on 495 acres. The majority of this project is located east of the FDAB.

The Taylor Ranch, East River Ranch, and Lazy C Ranch projects were approved under Policy 2.1.2.8, which allows for coterminous and contiguous land to be exempt from the prohibitions associated with properties outside of the FDAB, subject to conditions.

Additionally, in 2021, the County approved the Gamble Creek Village, a 7,200-unit development on 5,000 acres east of the boundary line in rural eastern Manatee County. The official website brands the development as an “antidote to urban sprawl” despite its location beyond the FDAB. This project was approved under the Planned Village Overlay District framework that was added to the County’s comprehensive plan as a private-initiated text amendment in 2021.

Figure 33: Residential Projects East of the FDAB



Source: Manatee County, 2023

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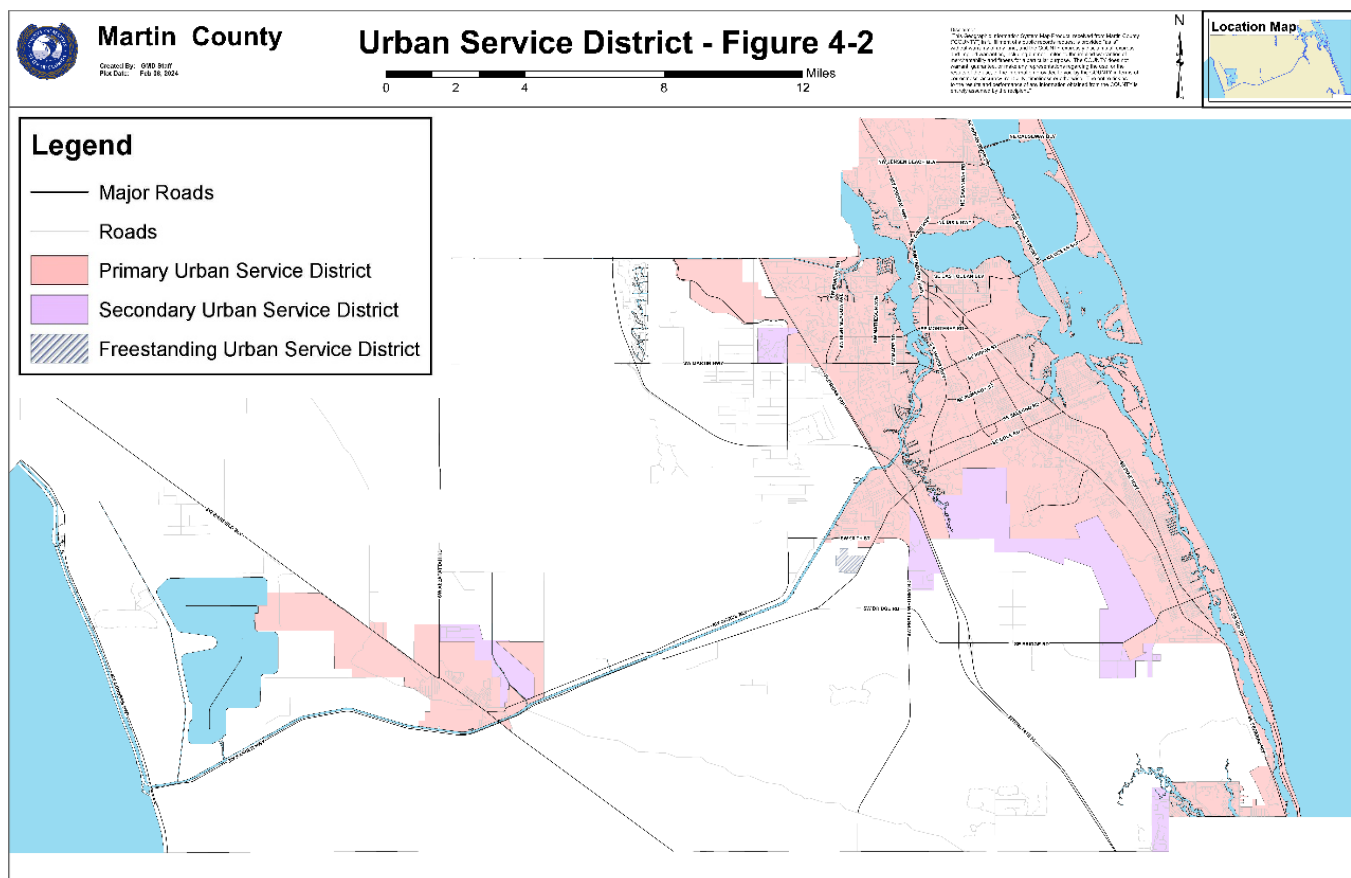
## Martin County

Martin County is located on the east coast of Florida, north of Palm Beach County and the Miami – Fort Lauderdale – West Palm Beach Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). According to the U.S. Census, the County had an estimated population of 163,315 in 2023, which represented a 3.1% increase in population from the 2020 population of 158,431.

### History of the Martin County Urban Service District

Martin County employs a strategic planning tool known as the Urban Service District (USD), which was first established in 1982. In 1990, it evolved into the Primary Urban Service District, encompassing approximately 58,270 acres of unincorporated land designated for industrial, commercial, and higher-density residential development. The same year, a Secondary Urban Service District was created, covering roughly 9,769 acres, as shown in **Figure 5**. It was designed to regulate urban sprawl by directing growth efficiently to areas with urban public facilities and services while aiming to accommodate low-density rural and suburban residential development on the urban fringe. It permits rural and estate densities not exceeding one unit per gross acre, with only a reduced level of public facilities planned.

Figure 34: Martin County Primary and Secondary Urban Service Districts Map



Source: Martin County, 2024

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## *Policy Basis for Martin County's Primary and Secondary Urban Service Districts*

Martin County's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan (CGMP) addresses the regulation and management of land use within its Primary and Secondary Urban Service Districts. The plan emphasizes balancing population growth with environmental conservation and encouraging sustainable development practices.

**Section 3.3** of the CGMP identifies potential conflicts arising from land use changes in areas bordering the Primary Urban Service District, municipalities, Indiantown (now a municipality), and traditionally rural areas. As the County continues to experience steady population growth, these areas face increasing pressure for urbanization at the potential expense of agricultural uses and the natural environment. The growth management strategy outlined in **Section 4.2** aims to balance the needs of a growing population with the preservation of natural systems in order to maintain the integrity of both. **Section 4.2A(6)(c)** notes that residential development near coastal areas, water bodies, or wetlands can threaten the preservation of the natural features that attract growth. Martin County recognizes certain areas as environmentally sensitive through federal, state, and local programs while providing public benefits like recreational opportunities, commercial and sport fishing, and water purification. Urban development adjacent to these areas can devastate sensitive habitats critical for endangered wildlife and plants, significantly reducing their environmental value.

Urban development, as cited in **Section 4.2A(6)(e)**, often unnecessarily removes or alters natural vegetation, which serves essential functions, such as producing oxygen, removing carbon dioxide, and reducing soil erosion. Studies have shown that preserving native vegetation enhances residential property values. Additionally, **Section 4.2A(9)** states that ensuring sufficient vacant land within urban service districts to meet projected population needs is crucial for efficient, cost-effective growth. Planning for expansion begins when undeveloped residential acreage within either the Primary or Secondary Urban Service District no longer supports the projected growth within the fifteen-year plan horizon.

Residential capacity within these districts is calculated to meet projected population demand for a fifteen-year period, including:

- Vacant property: Properties allowing residential use as per the Future Land Use Map, using maximum allowable density for calculations, while wetlands are calculated at half the density of other designations.
- Subdivided lots: Vacant single-family and duplex lots recorded as of 1982 and platted after 1982.
- Residential Development in CRAs: Potential for residential development in Community Redevelopment Areas.
- Excess Vacant Housing: Housing not in use by permanent or seasonal residents, with vacancy rates higher than 3%.

**Section 9.3** outlines Martin County's long-range master plan for conservation and recreation, aiming to consolidate efforts and set future directions. It states that public open spaces should be connected to form viable ecosystems and joined with adjacent private preserve areas to create contiguous preserves. The County has policies in place to ensure continuity of preserve areas, enhancing the overall ecological network.

## *Definition of Urban Service Districts*

Martin County's CGMP establishes the Primary and Secondary Urban Service Districts (PUSD and SUSD) as fundamental elements in regulating urban sprawl and directing growth towards areas with existing



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public facilities and services. This strategy is encapsulated in **Goal 4.7**, which aims to manage development in a sustainable and efficient manner.

**Objective 4.7A** aims to concentrate higher densities and intensities of development within the PUSD. This includes commercial, industrial, and residential projects with densities exceeding two units per acre, ensuring that these developments occur where all public facilities are currently available or planned to be available at the base levels of service outlined in the Capital Improvements Element.

**Policy 4.7A.2** further mandates that new residential developments with lots of one-half acre or smaller, as well as commercial and industrial uses, must be located within the PUSD. This ensures alignment with the county's growth management policies while maintaining the Plan's Level of Service standards in a cost-effective manner. Despite this, **Policy 4.7A.3** outlines certain exceptions, allowing facilities such as the Martin Correctional Institution to be served with water and sewer service.

**Policy 4.7A.5** addresses the types of development permissible outside the USDs. These include Agricultural, Agricultural Ranchette, Rural Lifestyle, and Small-Scale Service Establishments, which are defined as small, compact, and low-density developments designed to support or relate to surrounding rural areas.

## *Expansion of the Boundary*

The process for amending the boundaries of either the Primary or Secondary Urban Service Districts is outlined in Martin County's CGMP. According to **Policy 4.7A.6**, any consideration for expansion of the boundary must be preceded by an update to the Residential Capacity Analysis, which must then be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.

**Policy 4.7A.7** establishes criteria for alternation for the Primary USD. The policy states that the land uses and development permitted within the PUSD must have all of the public facilities and services at adopted level of service (LOS) standards. The policy further states that the Board shall consider the following criteria when contemplating an amendment to the PUSD boundary. The Board must find that the requested alteration will:

1. Not create any internal inconsistency with other elements of the adopted CGMP;
2. Not result in incompatibilities with adjacent land uses;
3. Not adversely impact environmental, natural, historical or archaeological resources, features or systems to a degree that is inconsistent with the Plan;
4. Be consistent with Goal 4.9 relating to appropriate residential land use capacities;
5. Demonstrate that reasonable capacity does not exist on suitable land in the existing Primary Urban Service District for the 15-year planning period. The policy further states that "reasonable" means available for development from the standpoint of environmental concerns, efficient uses and expansion of public facilities and services, or availability of development sites in relationship to the projected needs of the population;
6. Demonstrate that the land affected is suitable for urban uses; at a minimum, unsuitable uses include environmentally sensitive areas, prime agricultural areas, prime groundwater recharge areas and critical habitat for endangered or threatened species. This criterion is not intended to preclude development of surrounding lands provided that the unsuitable areas are fully protected;
7. Demonstrate that the full range of urban public facilities and services can be economically and efficiently supplied at the adopted LOS standards; and

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8. Be consistent with the Capital Improvements Element.

**Policy 4.7A.8** allows the boundaries to extend up to a maximum distance of 660 feet beyond the established delineation, provided the expansion aligns with the Plan. It appears that this policy was included to allow the expansion to logical boundaries, such as railroads, water bodies or transportation corridors. **Policies 4.7A.9** and **4.7A.11** encourage the rehabilitation of existing structures and promoting infill development within the boundaries. Allowable development outside the PUSD is outlined in Policy **4.7A.14**, while **Policy 4.7B.3** states that expansion of Secondary Urban Service Districts is permissible under certain conditions:

1. Separation of urban and rural uses
2. Consistency with the CGMP
3. Compatible with adjacent land uses
4. Environmental protection
5. Demonstration of insufficient residential capacity on suitable land within the existing Secondary Urban Service District for the 15-year planning period
6. Expansion that supports the goal of providing adequate and appropriate lands for residential use
7. Suitability for urban development
8. Consistency with the adopted Capital Improvements Element

**Policy 4.7C.2** states that no further Primary or Secondary Urban Service Districts shall be established, while **4.7C.3** states that the County may increase the boundary if a need is determined.

As noted, the County has specific criteria in which it can consider USD expansions. It also has criteria for projects outside of the USB

## *Rural Lifestyle Land Use Designation*

In 2021, an applicant submitted privately initiated changes to future land use and zoning regulations for a 500-acre area located south of Southwest 96th Street. The subsequent year, in 2022, the Martin County Board of County Commissioners adopted a text amendment creating a new future land use designation, referred to as Rural Lifestyle.

**Policy 4.13A.18** of the Martin County CGMP states that the Rural Lifestyle land use designation is “intended to guide development of self-supporting, self-contained, and rural communities including recreational amenities with an emphasis on maintaining and enhancing natural and manmade open spaces and promoting sustainability and stewardship of the land and water.” It initially required a minimum of 1,000 contiguous acres within the county, yet outside the PUSD. A portion of the minimum acreage was required to be adjacent to the PUSD, SUSD, or a Freestanding Urban Service District. However, that policy was amended in 2024 to allow for freestanding projects that were not contiguous to the PUSD, but within 6,000 feet of the boundary.

Developing land designated as Rural Lifestyle is permitted through a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning agreement with standards that include:

- Maximum building height of four stories or 40 feet;
- Minimum 70% of the gross land area must be maintained as open space;
- Gross density is capped at one unit per 5 acres;

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- Duplexes and multi-family dwellings are prohibited unless specifically allowed under certain conditions;
- Developments exceeding one unit per 20 acres must provide off-site open space;
- Golf cottages are permitted as accessory uses to golf courses under ownership and operational controls.

Utilities such as potable water and sanitary sewer services can be extended to the specific parcels designated for Rural Lifestyle development. These utilities must not, however, serve any properties outside of the PUD agreement. All costs associated with the extension, ongoing service, and maintenance of utility services serving the parcel must be fully paid by the developer or entity responsible for the PUD.

Restrictions on utility facilities include the prohibition of constructing a utility plant for a regional sewage system, as well as package water and wastewater treatment plants, within the Rural Lifestyle designation. On-site sewage treatment and septic systems are permitted but must comply with specific requirements outlined in Chapter 10 of the Sanitary Sewer Services Element.

Additionally, the applicant for a PUD must plan and fund public facilities to mitigate the impacts of development, ensuring full cost recovery for necessary capital improvements. All development within the Rural Lifestyle designation must adhere to a comprehensive PUD Zoning Agreement, specifying conditions, public benefits, and infrastructure requirements, while approval of the PUD agreement and master plan must align with Future Land Use Map amendments. The PUD must provide public benefits that include the offset of biological and ecological impacts, enhanced water quality, the protection and management of natural lands, the minimization of greenhouse gas emissions, and community amenities.

In the 2022 case of *Donna Sutter Melzer v. Martin County and Becker B-14 Grove, Ltd.*, the petitioner challenged Ordinance 1185, which introduced the Rural Lifestyle land use designation to the Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. An Administrative Law Judge ruled in favor of Martin County and Becker B-14 Grove on the general compliance of Ordinance 1185, finding the designation consistent with most aspects of the CGMP. The inclusion of a community store in the development, however, was found to be inconsistent with the Plan, deeming it a commercial use conflicting with **Policy 4.7A.2**. The respondents argued that the store was an incidental use supporting residential units, not a traditional commercial establishment, and requested the Administration Commission to overrule the ALJ's decision while asserting the text amendment be considered "in compliance" with the Comprehensive Plan.

In May of 2023, Governor DeSantis and the Cabinet considered the case and determined that the Rural Lifestyle plan amendment aligns with the CGMP. The Governor instructed staff to prepare and distribute a final order of approval. An additional text amendment to the CGMP was approved in 2024, which allows for consideration of additional Rural Lifestyle projects with a minimum of 3,000 contiguous acres within 6,000 feet from a PUSD or Freestanding Urban Service District. A density of one unit per five acres is only permitted if the property is adjacent to one of the service districts, and the 70% open space requirement was maintained. Additionally, the text amendment includes language requiring enhanced nutrient-reducing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems rather than standard septic systems, applicable to both the minimum 1,000-acre or 3,000-acre properties seeking the Rural Lifestyle future land use designation.

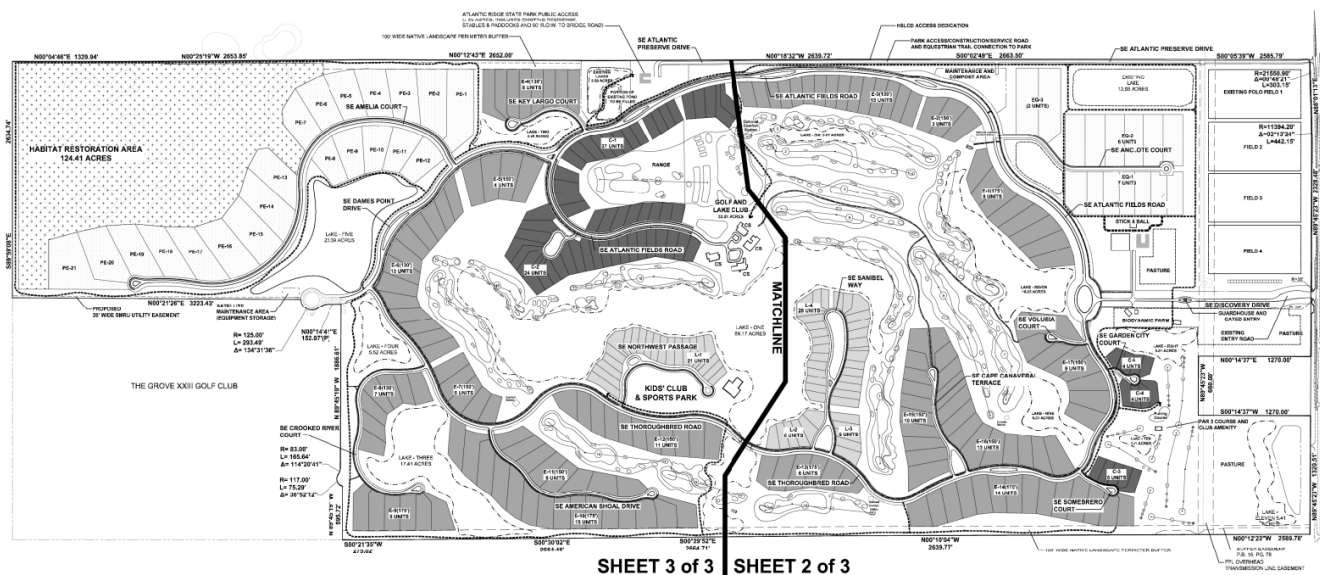
## *Projects Outside of the Primary and Secondary Urban Service Districts*

Since the adoption of the Rural Lifestyle policies, the County has approved two projects that take advantage of the ability to develop outside of the USD. The first project, Atlantic Fields, is a \$1.6 billion development consisting of 317 multi-million-dollar homes and a golf course. This project is located north

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of Bridge Road and east of Interstate 95, and it was the first project to implement the new land use designation in 2022. This project met the criteria of being at least 1,000 acres in size and contiguous to the existing USD. South Martin Regional Utility shall provide potable water and sanitary sewer facilities for Atlantic Fields per their site plan. **Figure 6** shows the Atlantic Fields (Discovery PUD) master plan.

Figure 35: Atlantic Fields (Discovery PUD) Master Plan



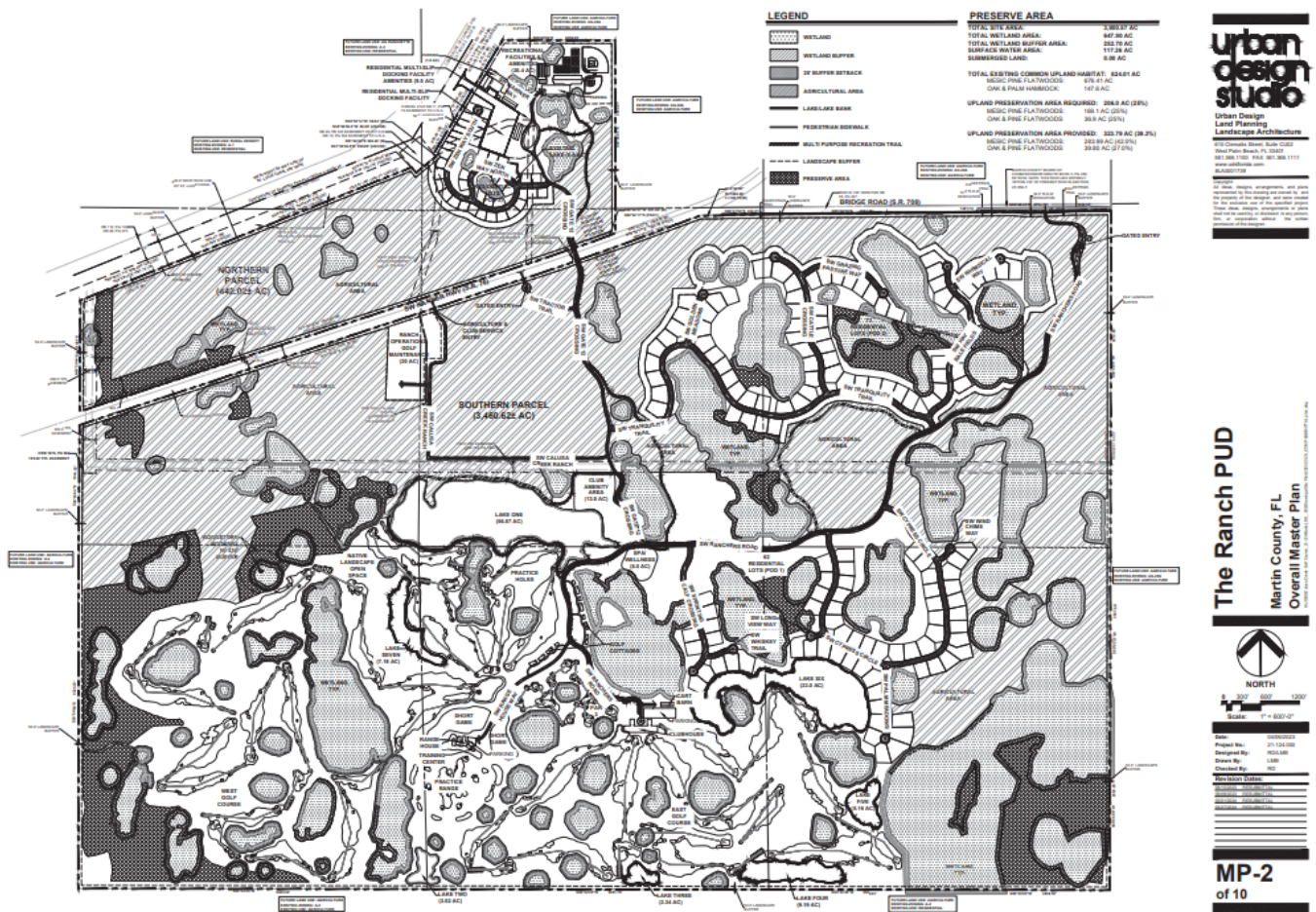
Source: Martin County, 2024

The second project, Calusa Creek Ranch, was approved by the Board in April of 2024, along with text amendments to Policy 4.13A.18, which permits consideration of the Rural Lifestyle FLUM designation on property of at least 3,000 acres that is within 6,000 feet from the Primary USD or a Freestanding USD. Calusa Creek Ranch is a nearly 4,000-acre development with two 18-hole golf courses, 175 single family residences, and 24 golf cottages, and is located outside of the existing USD boundary in the western part of the county. The applicant has stated their intent to cluster homes while eliminating septic tanks and maintaining 91% open space on the ranch. Further, the applicant has committed to ensuring 1,200 acres will remain in agricultural use. Per the zoning agreement with Martin County, irrigation for Calusa Creek Ranch is to be provided from the C-44 canal, while potable water and sanitary sewer services are to be provided by the County. **Figure 7** shows the Calusa Creek Ranch (The Ranch) Master Plan. **Figure 8** shows the location of both the Calusa Creek Ranch project and the Atlantic Fields project in relation to the existing USD.

Figure 36: Calusa Creek Ranch (The Ranch PUD) Master Plan



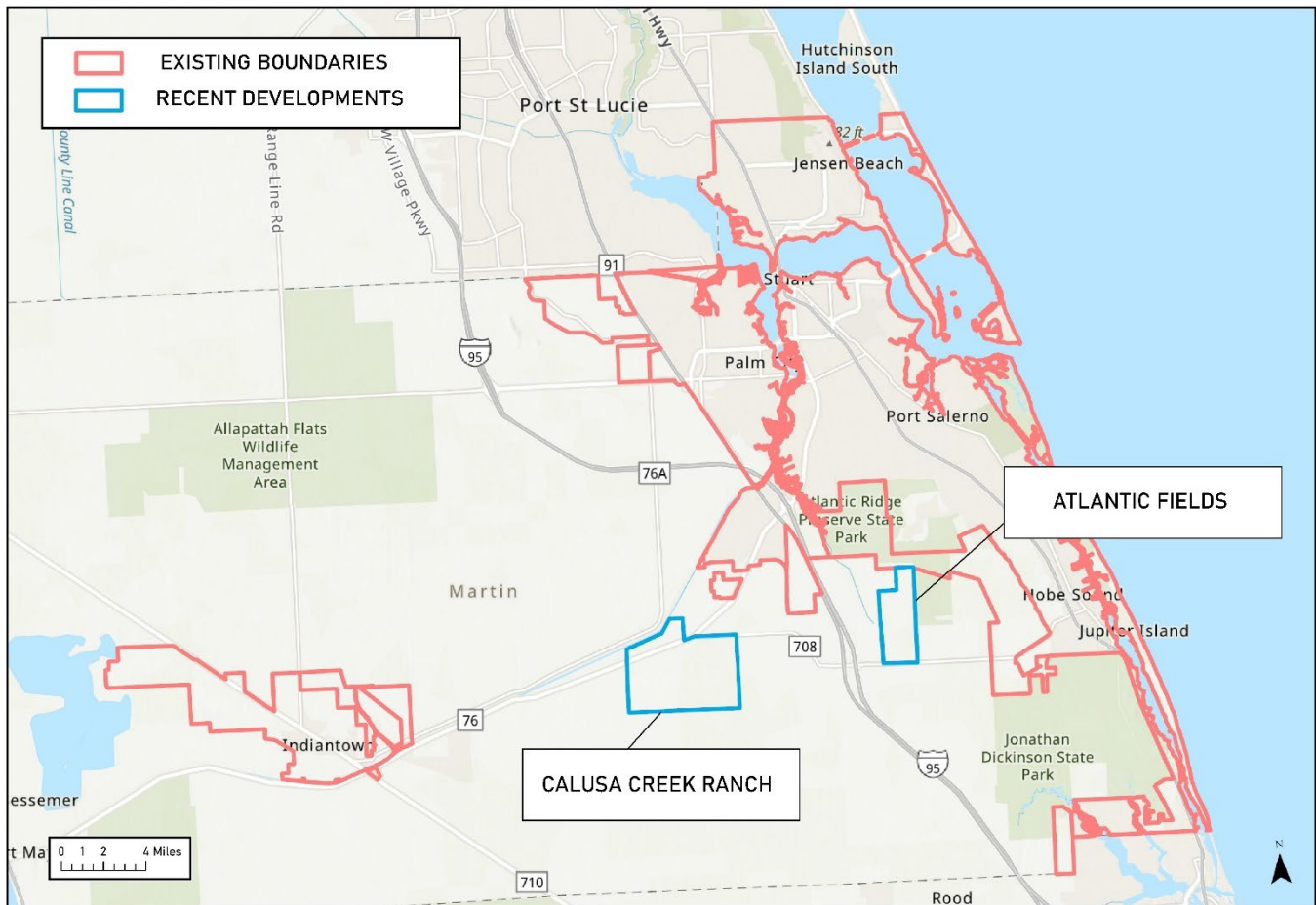
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Source: Martin County Public Records, 2024

Figure 37: Location of Projects Approved Under the Rural Lifestyle FLUM Policies

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Source: Inspire Placemaking Collective, 2024

## Indiantown Case Study

Indiantown is an incorporated village in Martin County with a population of 6,560 in 2020, according to the U.S. Census. The Village was incorporated in 2017 and adopted its first comprehensive plan in December of 2019. It maintains local control over its land use through its comprehensive plan and land development regulations. Its status and local autonomy provide a unique case study of urban service boundaries within Martin County.

Village of Indiantown Comprehensive Plan **Policy L1.1.1** states that urban sprawl is discouraged through land development regulations, while **Chapter 5** in the Land Development Code outlines objectives related to several interlocal agreements with various agencies in Martin County to coordinate planning and development efforts. **Objective L5.2** ensures future land use compatibility with lands outside the village boundaries, while **Objective L5.2.1** focuses on agricultural land preservation and compatibility, and monitoring adjacent land uses to protect agricultural lands.

**Policy L3.3.3** states that the Village of Indiantown “shall seek to coordinate with the private utility in an effort to provide central water and sewer to those residents who are currently not serviced by these services.” Additionally, per **Policy L3.3.4**, the Village plans to negotiate with Indiantown Company to discuss acquiring water and wastewater systems. The plan includes supporting the development and adoption of an interlocal agreement with the Troup Indiantown Water Control District. This agreement aims to coordinate the management of drainage, irrigation, water control, and land reclamation, as well as to



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protect the land from the effects of flooding. Finally, **Goal IWR5** states that the jurisdiction outsources its solid waste collection to a solid waste provider through an interlocal agreement with the Martin County Board of County Commissioners.

In 2022, the Village approved a project known as Terra Lago. This project will ultimately include 2,014 single-family homes, 174 townhomes, 300 multifamily units, 100,000 square feet of commercial space, and an 11-acre central area with a clubhouse and a recreation center. If full buildout is realized at the current 3.41 person per household, it is estimated that this project will more than double the current population of Indiantown. **Figure 9** shows the proposed master plan for Terra Lago.

Figure 38: Terra Lago Master Plan



Additionally, Indiantown is currently considering the annexation of 116 acres from unincorporated Martin County to establish a marine academy, commercial waterfront, and a new boatyard. This annexation is being accompanied by a corresponding future land use map amendment from Martin County Rural to Village Commercial Waterfront, in order to permit urban densities within the Village. As a municipality, Indiantown now has the ability to annex County Rural lands and increase their densities, consistent with the designation within their comprehensive plan. There are additional opportunities for annexation as the Village grows and additional lands become contiguous to the Village boundary. This has the ability to further reduce the amount of County Rural acreage in the western portion of Martin County.

## Analysis and Lessons Learned

Manatee County and Martin County can provide valuable lessons on the use of USBs to control growth. In reviewing these jurisdictions, the two big takeaways are the impacts of policies that allow for exceptions to the boundaries, and the impact of municipalities. Both of these takeaways are applicable to Indian River County, as the County has experienced annexations into areas that were previously outside of the USB, and the County has existing policies that permit “new towns” outside of the USB. The municipalities have therefore expanded the USB through annexations, which is outside of the control of Indian River County. These annexations put the County in a reactive position, as the cities are proactively planning for these areas that are outside of the USB.

### *Exceptions to the USB*

As referenced, both Manatee County and Martin County have policies that allow for growth outside of the existing USBs. In Manatee County, Policy 2.1.2.8 permits expansions of existing urban communities east of the boundary with provisions for the extension of infrastructure from property that is within the boundary. This policy has primarily been used to facilitate the expansion of Lakewood Ranch, which is a 33,000-acre Master Planned Community (MPC) located in both Manatee and Sarasota Counties. Additionally, the Planned Village Overlay allows for consideration of new towns that are not contiguous to the existing boundary, with the intent that these towns will be self-sufficient from an infrastructure perspective. These policies have the ability to facilitate significant growth in the rural areas east of the boundary.

In Martin County, the Rural Lifestyle FLUM designation performs a similar function, as it allows for consideration of contiguous and non-contiguous projects outside of the USD, with a focus on rural cluster residential development. As with Manatee County’s policies, the Rural Lifestyle designation does not formally move the USD line, but it has the effect of permitting clustered residential development within rural areas.

Both counties’ policies are similar in nature to existing policies in the Indian River County comprehensive plan that allow for New Towns. Indian River County **Policy 1.37** states that a New Town land use designation is implemented as a floating zone on any property with an agricultural land use designation (AG-1, AG-2, and AG-3). However, Indian River’s policies require superior design and a mix of uses to create complete communities. They are not intended to facilitate car-dependent, single-use sprawl, but traditional towns with employment options. Indian River County’s policies include the following standards for new towns:

1. Shall be designed to accommodate a build out population of at least 5,000 people (approximately 2,500 residential units);
2. Minimum size of 1,500 acres (east of I-95) or 4,000 acres (west of I-95);
3. Must have access to an arterial road;
4. Maximum of two new towns east of I-95 and two new towns west of I-95;
5. Must be consistent with the Concurrency Management System;
6. Must have no adverse impact on natural resources;
7. Must have sufficient data and analysis to show that the project’s projected population will not significantly increase the county’s residential allocation factor for the time horizon of the comprehensive plan.



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Per **Policy 1.38**, the following standards will apply to new towns and be reviewed through the County's Planned Development (PD) process:

1. PD zoning required;
2. Residential uses shall include single-family and multiple-family units, including residential uses over businesses;
3. Commercial areas required, with retail and personal services as permitted uses;
4. Employment areas required, with office, educational, light industrial, resource management and tourism, and agricultural and related entities as permitted uses;
5. Public facilities (schools, fire stations, police stations, cultural and community facilities, and places of worship) shall be included;
6. Recreational uses shall be included;
7. Natural open spaces and agricultural areas shall be included;
8. Activity or town centers shall be included with residential and non-residential uses (mixed), and other residential uses shall be in compact neighborhoods;
9. Gross density shall not exceed 1.5 units per acre, but can be increased to 2.0 units per acre through transfer of development rights;
10. The mix of uses shall be as follows:
  - (a) Commercial, personal services, and office areas shall be provided at a ratio of three (3) to ten (10) acres per 1,000 residential units;
  - (b) Public facilities shall not exceed five (5) percent of the entire PD area;
  - (c) Residential uses shall constitute between fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35) percent of the entire PD area;
  - (d) Employment areas shall comprise at least two (2) percent of the entire PD area.
11. The following standards will apply:
  - (a) Ten (10) percent of the units are required to be affordable and/or workforce housing units;
  - (b) At least fifty (50) percent of the entire PD area shall be preserved or provided as open space, with at least seventy (70) percent of the minimum required open space being located along the main project boundaries to function as a greenbelt;
  - (c) Active residential uses shall be limited to a maximum of twenty-four (24) percent of the designated open space and twelve (12) percent of the entire PD area, whichever is less;
12. The policies regulate timing of land uses, with no more than twenty-five (25) percent of the proposed residential development permitted until at least twenty five (25) of the proposed commercial and personal service uses and office and light industrial uses are established;
13. Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) standards are required.

The exception policies for all three counties are similar, but the focus of each is different, likely due to the reason the policies were incorporated into each of the jurisdictions' comprehensive plans. Indian River County's policies were intended to allow for sustainable, self-sufficient new towns. These policies have requirements for the timing of commercial development to ensure that the communities can support

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themselves without the need for external trips outside of the new town and into the USB. Manatee County's policies were adopted as privately initiated text amendments to accommodate a specific project, the Gamble Creek Ranch. While the Manatee County Planned Village Overlay policies have a similar intent, they allow for higher densities than the other jurisdictions studied. Martin County's Rural Lifestyle policies are a bit different, in that they are not intended to create new towns with a mix of uses. They are focused on residential cluster development to accommodate high-end golf course communities with limited uses.

**Table 1** shows a comparison of the exception policies for Indian River County, Manatee County, and Martin County.

*Table 14: USB Exception Policy Comparison*

	Indian River County	Manatee County	Martin County
Comprehensive Plan Policy	1.37 – 1.38	2.2.2.10	4.13A.18
Designation	New Town	Planned Village Overlay	Rural Lifestyle
Minimum Acreage	1,500 (east of I-95) / 4,000 (west of I-95)	5,000	1,000 (contiguous to PUSD) / 3,000 (within 6,000 feet of PUSD or FUSD)
Maximum Density	1.5 DU / acre; 2.0 DU / acre through TDRs	3 DU / acre within residential areas; additional density allowed in MU areas; maximum of 7,200 units total	1 DU / 20 acres; 1 DU / 5 acres if additional open space is provided
Uses Permitted	Residential, retail, personal services, office, educational, light industrial, resource management and tourism, agriculture, public / institutional, recreation	Residential, retail, wholesale, office, light industrial, research / corporate, warehouse / distribution; lodging, recreation, public / institutional, hospitals, agriculture	Single-family detached, accessory dwelling units, employee dormitories, golf cottages (with golf courses), maximum 6,000 SF community store for residents only, private security, residential multi-slip docking facilities
Affordable Housing	Minimum of 10% of units	Minimum of 10%, which does not apply to the first 1,000 units	No requirements
Design Standards	TND required	TND-style standards required	Low impact development, water quality, location of agricultural uses, open spaces / trails
Open Space	Minimum of 50% required	Minimum of 40% required	Minimum of 70% required

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	Indian River County	Manatee County	Martin County
Timing of Use Requirements	Yes, residential uses capped until commercial targets are met	Yes, residential uses capped until mixed use and commercial targets are met	No requirements
Concurrency / Infrastructure	Required to be consistent with Concurrency Management System	Financial strategy required (costs and revenues for infrastructure)	Applicant to fund extension of water and wastewater to serve project, economic analysis required

## Impact of Municipalities

It is important to acknowledge the impact of individual municipalities within each county when studying the USB concept. Each municipality has its own comprehensive plan that regulates growth within the community. Absent a Joint Planning Area (JPA) agreement or Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA), these municipalities are free to annex property into their city limits, consistent with the requirements found in **Chapter 171** of the Florida Statutes.

In Indian River County, both Sebastian and Fellsmere have annexed property, which has formed a large area of property that is currently outside of the USB, yet completely surrounded by property within the USB, whether in the cities or unincorporated County. Intergovernmental coordination between the County and the cities is critical to managing the provision of services and land uses within the region. The County recognizes this need for intergovernmental coordination, and Comprehensive Plan **Policy 4.1** requires the County to work with the municipalities within the County to develop an ISBA. Sebastian's Comprehensive Plan includes similar language, as **Policy 7-1.2.3** states that the City shall coordinate with Indian River County and other municipalities within the County to establish an ISBA to address issues including, but not limited to, utility services, public facilities and services, and future annexation areas for each municipality. Fellsmere's Comprehensive Plan includes **Policy ICE A-2.7**, which states that the City should explore an Interlocal Agreement / Joint Planning Agreement to address planning and developmental issues of mutual concern or interest adjacent to the City's urban growth area; address annexation of both enclaves and new lands; and address facilities or services needs as applicable. The referenced ISBA / JPA would allow both the County and the cities to set standards for the provision of utilities, land uses and annexations within the boundary. While the County and cities currently have interlocal agreements that cover school concurrency and utilities, there are no JPAs that address land use and annexations.

Absent an agreement, the cities are free to annex according to state statutes and assign densities to property that is annexed into the City. While the Indiantown case study from Martin County is a bit different due to its recent status as an incorporated Village, it provides an example of a community with plans for growth that were not originally contemplated by the County in which it resides. Intergovernmental coordination will be critical in the development of USB policies moving forward.