

Indian River County

# Land Use Vision Study

Updated - August 31, 2022



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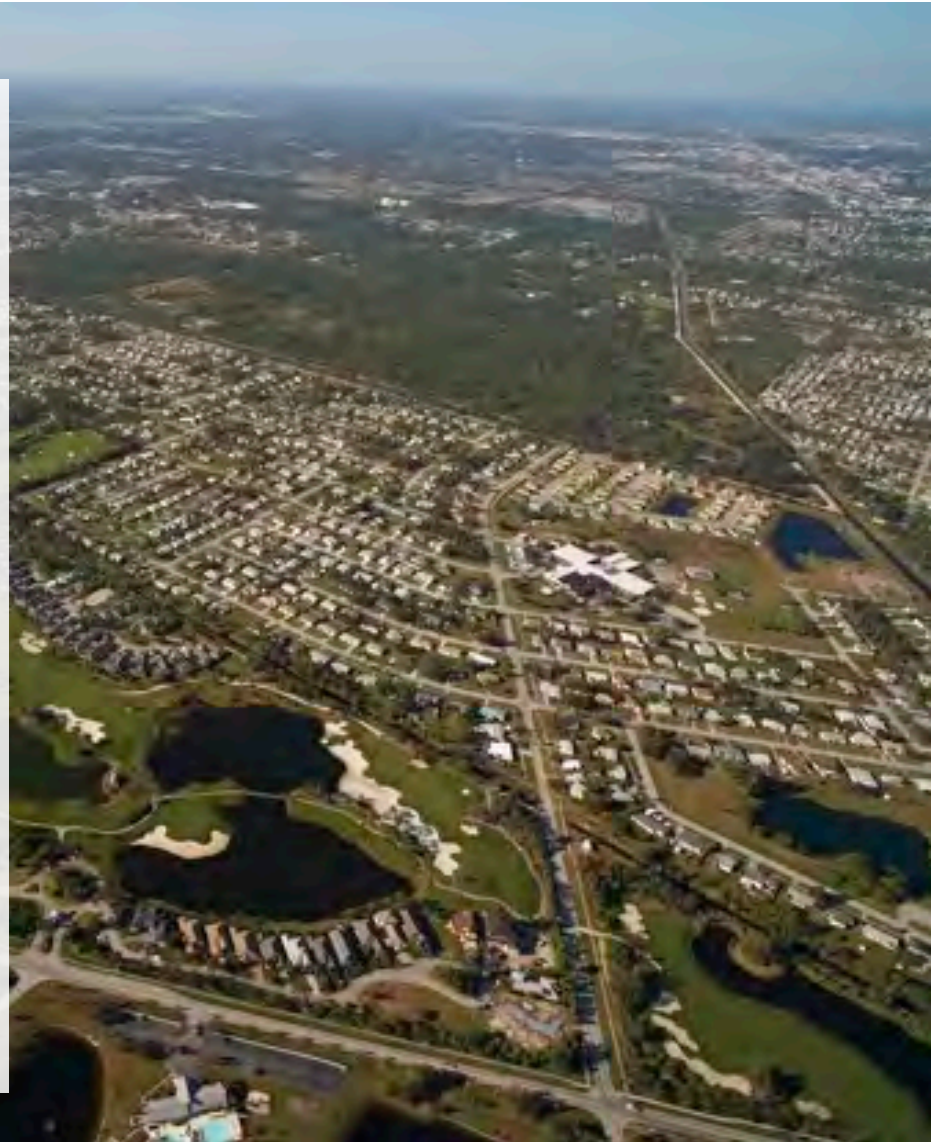
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## STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the Indian River County MPO's Land Use Vision Study is to conduct a high-level review and technical analysis of the County's land use and development policies, specifically those related to rural lands.

This analysis, as well as a review of the policies of peer communities, was used to develop and evaluate alternate future land use scenarios for rural portions of the County, and to inform the MPO's next Long Range Transportation Plan.

This plan was undertaken in response to changing economic pressures and emerging local, statewide, and national trends.



# EMERGING AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

This study is intended to consider changing economic and social conditions and the increasing development pressures on rural lands in the County. There are several emerging and anticipated challenges associated with future land use policies, including:

## NEW TECHNOLOGY

Land use decisions will have to consider advances in technology and their influence on things such as transportation (e.g., automated/ electric vehicles, rideshare services) and commuting patterns (remote/hybrid work).

## EVOLVING ECONOMICS

- Agriculture – Due to market conditions and trends for some agricultural products, some landowners may look to replace uses that are no longer viable and explore higher and better uses of their land and other options to monetize their land holdings.
- Retail – Changes in consumer preferences and the increased prevalence of delivery services may impact demand for retail space and warehousing/distribution facilities.
- Housing Affordability – Increased demand for affordable housing options, including a diversity of housing types, will be a consideration as it relates to economic development, maintaining and attracting a workforce, and aging-in-place.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- The County's natural environment and water quality are important considerations with continued growth and development pressures.

## GROWTH WILL HAPPEN... BUT HOW? AND WHERE?

- Growth in the County is anticipated to continue which will require policies that guide the timing and location of development, likely to occur in following ways:
  - » Infill development within existing urban areas
  - » Redevelopment
  - » Development of vacant land/greenfield sites

# RURAL CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

The short- and long-term planning for land use in rural areas presents unique challenges based on a number of issues:

## CHANGING ECONOMICS OF AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTY

- As some landowners in rural areas react to evolving agricultural markets, they may look to other opportunities to leverage the value of their land and pursue other options.

## COST TO PROVIDE PUBLIC SERVICES

- New development in rural areas can be costly as it often requires the extension of transportation and utility (water/sewer) infrastructure to areas not previously contemplated for non-agricultural uses or increased density/intensity.

## LOSS OF "KEY" HABITATS AND AREAS

- New development in rural areas can potentially encroach on wildlife habitat and sensitive environmental areas.

## COMPATIBILITY (RURAL VS SUBURBAN)

- With new development in rural areas, sound planning principles are required to ensure compatibility between adjacent land uses, as well as for transitions from rural to more suburban contexts.

## NO CLEAR CONSENSUS ON DEVELOPMENT

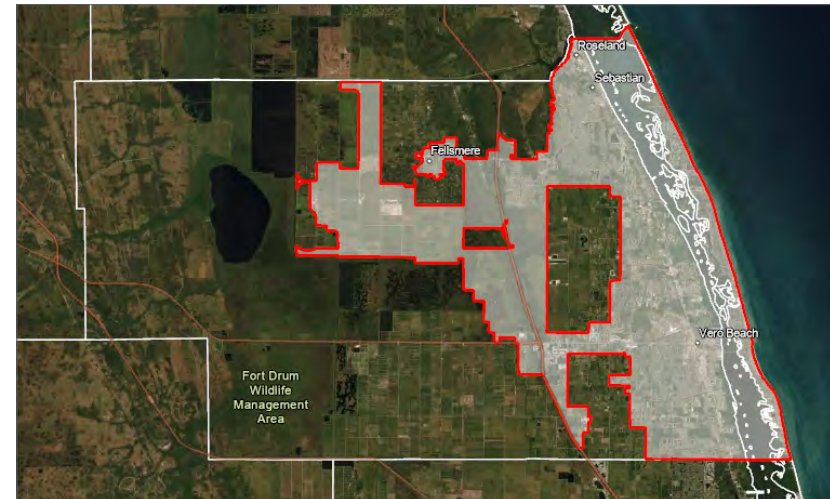
- Generally, there is opposition to 'urban sprawl' in rural areas, however lack of planning and guidance for desired development patterns can lead to low-quality development.

# URBAN SERVICE AREA & OTHER RURAL LAND POLICIES

## EXISTING URBAN SERVICE AREA

Indian River County's Urban Service Area (USA) is that portion of the county where urban services and facilities are provided and where urban development is encouraged.

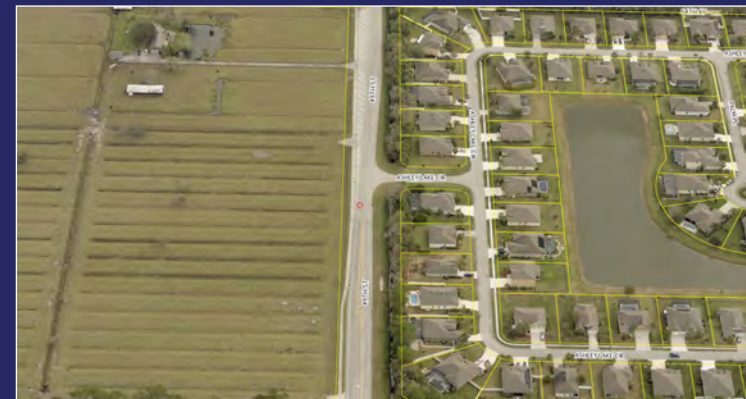
Based on data available at the time of this report, and considering existing land use policies, there is substantial capacity for growth to be accommodated within the USA. This includes the potential for infill or redevelopment inside of the cities and unincorporated county areas within the USA. There are also areas inside the USA for greenfield development on undeveloped lands - this is especially the case in the unincorporated areas of the county, City of Fellsmere, and City of Sebastian. Despite the capacity for development within the USA, many of those areas may not have transportation access and/or utility services as available as within some of the rural lands outside of the USA.



## Sample Urban Service Area Boundary Issues

Examples like the image to the right highlight some of the issues that exist with the current urban service boundary. To the left urban services are not provided while to the right they are and higher densities are allowed.

These two very different land uses are separated by a roadway which provides connectivity to the roadway network and utilities. In essence the investment has been made to provide services, but those services are not being used efficiently to their full potential.



## POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

This study initially identified several areas within the County that are currently located in agricultural zoning districts that will likely attract development interest. A review of the characteristics of these areas was used to guide the analysis of potential development concepts.

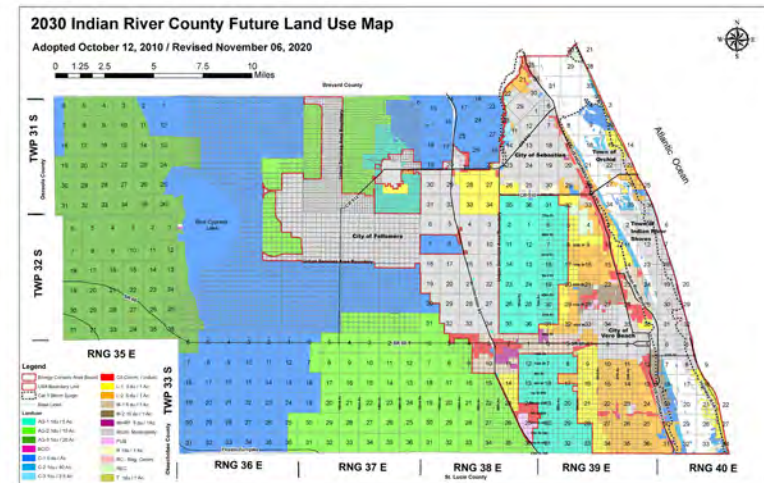
## CURRENT LOCAL POLICIES FOR AGRICULTURAL AREAS

This study initially identified several areas within the County that are currently located in agricultural zoning districts likely to attract development interest. A review of the characteristics of these areas was used to guide the analysis of potential development concepts. This study evaluated the County's current land development regulations, particularly identify the allowable residential densities and allowable uses in its three current agricultural zoning districts:

- AG-1: 1 unit/5 acres
- AG-2: 1 unit/10 acres
- AG-3: 1 unit/20 acres

The review of these current policies provided the context by which potential new land use strategies, including potential zoning text changes, may be evaluated and/or compared to the policies of comparable communities.

The County's current policies allow two types of urban development in agricultural areas: New Towns and Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) developments. With the exception of Fellsmere, Indian River County cities generally do not have agricultural zoning within their boundaries. Fellsmere, which is the only city in the County located west of I-95, actively promotes agriculture within its jurisdiction. Parabel Nutrition, an aquafarming operation, is one example of a growing agricultural enterprise in Fellsmere.



*While no New Towns have been developed in the County, four TND developments have been approved so far: Pointe West, Liberty Park, Providence Pointe (above), and Mandala Village.*

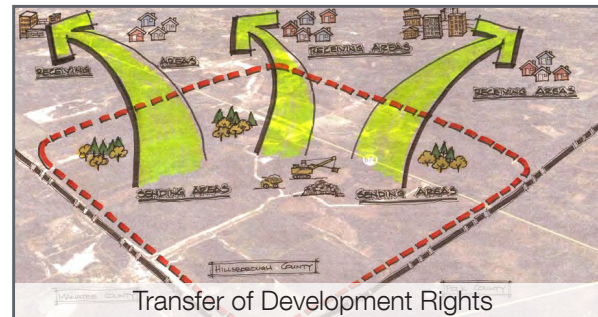
# RURAL LAND STRATEGIES: OVERVIEW

## PEER COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

This study included a review of the rural land use policies of several other communities in Florida that are similarly situated and comparable to Indian River County.

The evaluation of these policies was used to inform the list of potential strategies for the County to consider. Some of the peer community policies and strategies reviewed include:

- Implementation of targeted agricultural districts (e.g., mining, single-family estate, industrial)
- Master plans for specific rural areas that consider land use, development, redevelopment and protection of natural resources
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs





# RURAL LAND STRATEGIES: CLUSTER SUBDIVISIONS

Cluster subdivisions feature reduced lot sizes, setbacks, or other site development regulations, to allow for the provision of more open space while not increasing the overall density of the development.

### Conventional Subdivision



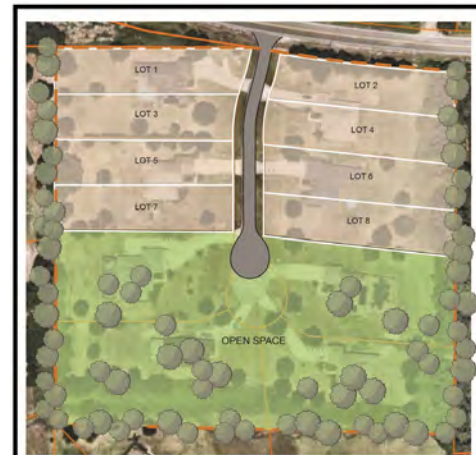
**(No Common Open Space,  
Larger Private Yards)**



### Cluster Subdivision



**(Common Open Space Provided,  
Smaller Private Yards)**



# RURAL LAND STRATEGIES: AGRIHOODS

These developments aim to integrate agricultural uses within single-family, multi-family, or mixed-use communities with clustered home sites. They often include a working farm or community garden as a focal point and promote the use of trails and active transportation. Currently under construction, the Spirit of Sebastian development is an example of a proposed agrihood in Indian River County.



## Case Study: Arden - Palm Beach County



- 1,209-acres
- 2,000 home lots at buildout (projected 2027)
- 5-acre farm and event barn with general store
- Community garden
- Residents can work farm and receive share of harvest

# RURAL LAND STRATEGIES: NEW TOWNS

New Towns are essentially new cities, are often developed on greenfield sites, and feature traditional town/village centers, a mix of housing types, open space, and active transportation infrastructure. Although Indian River County has maintained a New Town policy for many years, there are no examples of New Towns within Indian River County. However, there are several Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND)/mixed use developments that share many elements and concepts similar to New Towns. These include Pointe West, Windsor, and Liberty Park.



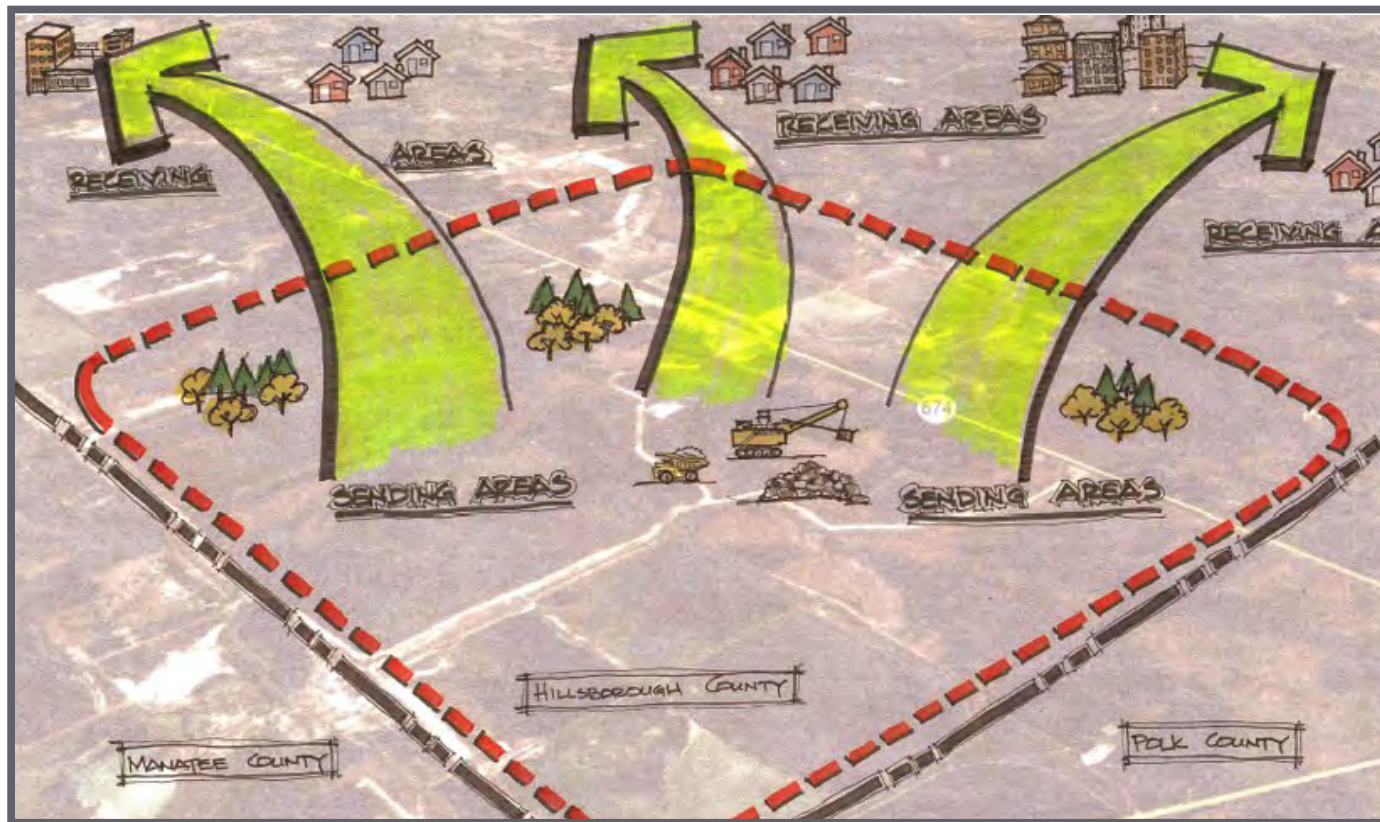
## Case Study: Babcock Ranch - Charlotte County



- 19,500 homes and 6,000,000 SF of commercial space at buildout
- Adjacent to 73,000-acre Babcock Ranch Reserve
- Includes K-8 School
- Solar energy production
- Transportation alternatives (e.g. bike share, autonomous vehicle services)

# RURAL LAND STRATEGIES: TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

These programs involve the transfer of dwelling units or development rights to another property through transfer or sale. Sending Zones or Areas (SZ) and Receiving Zones (RZ) are identified, which may not necessarily be located within the same geographical/planning area. These programs are incentive-based, market-driven, and voluntary. TDR programs are focused on preservation, conservation, long-term agriculture, and sustainable development, as opposed to the development patterns and densities typically associated with suburban-style developments.



# RURAL LAND STRATEGIES: FLEXIBLE USES

This potential strategy involves changes to the County’s land development regulations, particularly within the agricultural zoning districts to allow for more flexibility in the type of development that is permitted. Some local examples of activities being promoted in agricultural areas include Peterson Groves and Nursery; Countryside Citrus; Schacht Groves (see images below), which includes farm-to-table dining, farmers market, and venue rentals, to support its citrus operation, and Bhakta Farms, which is proposed to include a high-end distillery and cottages.



Use	Suggested Change	Current Code
Crematoriums	Adopt as Special Exception (S)	Not permitted
Reupholsters & furniture repair/manufacturing	Adopt as Administrative Permit Use (A)	Not permitted
Recreation – gun range	Adopt as S	Not permitted
Welding	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Driving (golf) ranges	Adopt as A	Spec. Exception
Veterinarian clinic	Adopt as A	Admin. Permit
Garden supply stores	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Meat and fish markets	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Fruit and vegetable markets	Change to A	Spec. Exception
Dairy product stores	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Retail bakeries	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Florists	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Amphitheaters	Adopt as A	Not permitted
Recycling center	Adopt as S	Admin. Permit
Cement and concrete products	Adopt as S	Not permitted
Dude ranches, retreats, and camps	Change to A	Spec. Exception

# INFILL/REDEVELOPMENT

Infill development occurs where vacant property largely surrounded by other built uses is developed. For example, a subdivision of 60 lots may have 4 undeveloped lots can be developed. Redevelopment involves modifying or tearing down an existing use and constructing a development that results in activating a vacant use or which increases the intensity or type of use(s). Indian River County is beginning to see some of this type of development activity, especially in Vero Beach. Examples include the old power plant site where a mixed use development is being considered which would include a marina, hotel, restaurant, and retail. Existing large retail sites and non residential uses are likely to experience some level of redevelopment as they get older. The trend toward online retail is reducing the demand for large retail spaces which typically are on substantial sites with large parking lots. These will be prime redevelopment sites as time goes on.



*The Three Corners project at the site of the old Municipal Vero Beach Power Plant represents a potential major mixed use redevelopment opportunity.*

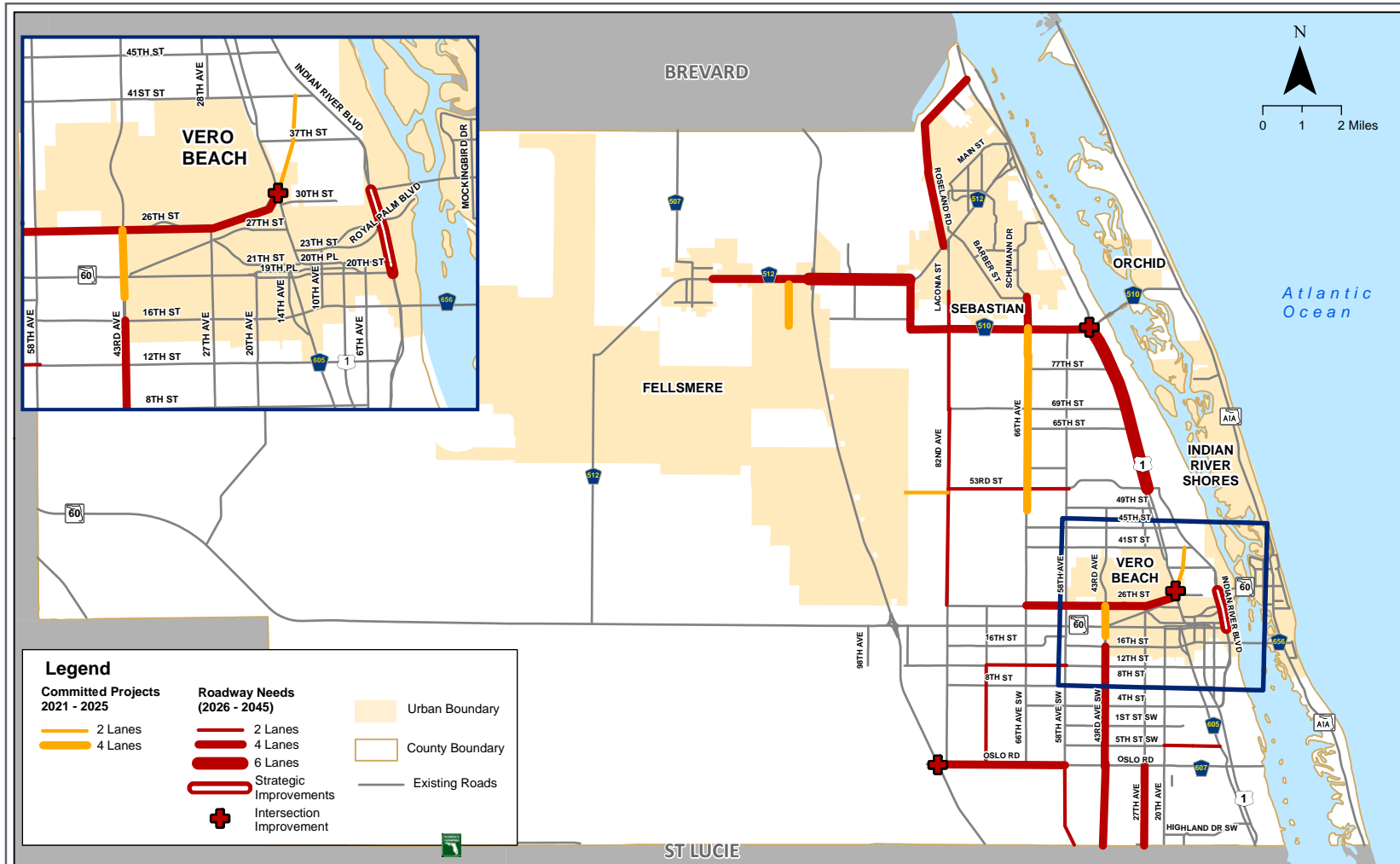
# TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS

Considerable growth is expected in Indian River County through 2045 and beyond. This is based on the analysis of local, regional, and national trends, population data, and employment data. Future transportation needs of an area are largely based on the type and amount of growth that is anticipated. There are many strategies to address growing travel demand in a community like Indian River County. Addressing future travel demand may include land use patterns that reduce the number or length of additional trips, make use of existing unused system capacity, or may require the construction of new transportation capacity.

The transportation needs and development patterns (such as land use, development density and intensity, building design, and site layout) cannot be considered independently. Indian River County has relatively low levels of congestion due to a robust, connected network. Congestion in the County is typically in areas where the Indian River restricts travel options or in Sebastian where a grid network largely does not exist. Thoughtful application of context-based planning and design considers all modes of transportation. For example, in the cities and urban cores, emphasizing multimodal elements may be important to match the diverse level of activity. In suburban and rural areas, vehicular travel remains important.



Based on currently projected population growth alone, the MPO area faces a future of South Florida-style congestion and sprawl unless the necessary transportation improvements and development patterns are implemented. The projected 2045 roadway deficiencies serve as the starting point for the development of the roadway improvement project needs, which are depicted in the map below and the table on the following page.



Indian River County

Roadway Needs/Potential Deficiencies

2045 Final Roadway Needs Projects



Facility	From	To	Improvement
New Interchange/Modify Intersection			
I-95		@ Oslo Road	New Interchange
I-95		@ 53rd Street	New Interchange
CR 510		@ US 1/SR 5	Intersection Improvement
26th Street/Aviation Blvd		@ US 1/SR 5	New Interchange
Widen from 2 Lane to 4 Lane (or equivalent capacity)*			
CR 512	Willow Street	I-95	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
CR 510	CR 512	87th Street	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
CR 510	87th Street	82nd Avenue	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
CR 510	82nd Avenue	58th Avenue	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
CR 510	58th Avenue	US 1	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
66th Avenue	49th Street	69th Street	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
66th Avenue	69th Street	81st Street	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
66th Avenue	81st Street	CR 510	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
66th Avenue	CR 510	Barber Street	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
26th Street/Aviation Blvd	66th Avenue	43rd Avenue	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
26th Street/Aviation Blvd	43rd Avenue	US 1	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
43rd Avenue	St. Lucie County Line	Oslo Road	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
43rd Avenue	Oslo Road	16th Street	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
Roseland Road	CR 512	US 1	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
27th Avenue	St. Lucie County Line	Oslo Road	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
Oslo Road	I-95	58th Avenue	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
SR 60 @ 43rd Avenue Intersection	18th Street	26th Street	Widen from 2 lane to 4 lane
Widen from 4 to 6 Lane (or equivalent capacity)*			
US 1	53rd Street	CR 510	Widen from 4 lane to 6 lane
CR 512	I-95	CR 510	Widen from 4 lane to 6 lane
New 2 Lane/4 Lane or Substandard to 2 Lane			
Aviation Blvd Extension	US 1/SR 5	41st Street	New 2 lanes
53rd Street	58th Avenue	66th Avenue	New 4 lanes
53rd Street	66th Avenue	82nd Avenue	New 2 lanes
53rd Street	82nd Avenue	Fellsmere N-S Rd 1	New 2 lanes
74th Avenue	Oslo Road	12th Street	New 2 lanes
69th Street	82nd Avenue	CR 512	New 2 lanes
17th Street SW	27th Avenue	58th Avenue	New 2 lanes
21st Street SW	27th Avenue	58th Avenue	New 2 lanes
St. John Heritage Park Extension	CR 512	County Line	New 2 lanes
13th Street SW	27th Avenue	58th Avenue	New 2 lanes
Fellsmere N-S Rd 2	CR 512	69th Street	New 2 lanes
98th Avenue	12th Street	4th Street	New 2 lanes
Fellsmere N-S Rd 1	CR 512	SR 60	New 2 lanes
4th Street	66th Avenue	98th Avenue	New 2 lanes
25th Street SW	27th Avenue	58th Avenue	New 2 lanes
26th Street	82nd Avenue	CR 507	New 2 lanes
58th Avenue	Oslo Road	St. Lucie County Line	New 2 lanes
12th Street	74 Avenue	58th Avenue	Substandard to 2 lanes
82nd Avenue	26th Street	69th Street	Substandard to 2 lanes
82nd Avenue	69th Street	CR 510	Substandard to 2 lanes
82nd Avenue	CR 510	Laconia	Substandard to 2 lanes
5th Street SW	20th Avenue	11th Square SW	Substandard to 2 lanes
5th Street SW	11th Square SW	Old Dixie Highway	Substandard to 2 lanes
Other			
Indian River Boulevard (SR 60)	20th Street	Merrill P. Barber Bridge	Strategic Improvements

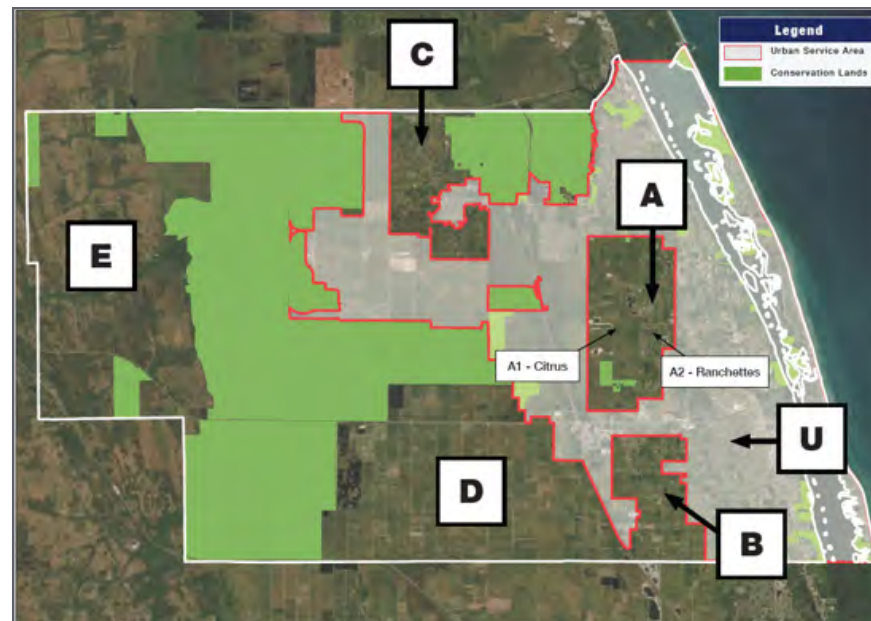
# SCENARIO EVALUATION

## ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO EVALUATION

Scenario planning evaluates different future conditions through consideration of technical and policy issues. However, scenario planning does not represent intensive technical evaluation, but rather it is an evaluation of the relative performance of different future alternatives. The three scenarios for how land use in rural areas of the County may evolve were identified are listed below:

- Baseline - Maintain Existing Trends (i.e., “Hope for the Best”)
- Flexible Uses - Update land development regulations to expand allowable uses in agricultural areas
- Clustered Development/Agrihoods - Utilize these strategies in specific areas such as Map Areas ‘A1’ & ‘B’

The scenarios were compared based on their respective alignment with a list of values and visioning principles identified during the study process. The table below reflects how each of the scenarios may further each value/principle and was used to inform recommended next steps.



	Baseline	Flexible Uses	Clusters/Agrihood
Conservation of sensitive environmental lands	High	High	High
Infrastructure improvements	Low	Low	Medium
Housing affordability for all	Low	Low	Medium
Diversity of housing types	Low	Low	High
Mobility and multimodal transportation options	Low	Low	Medium-High
Economic development	Low	Medium	Medium
Attracting businesses to the County	Low	Medium	Medium
Maintaining agricultural industry	High	High	Medium
Maintaining rural character and feel	High	Medium-High	Medium

# PUBLIC OUTREACH

## PHASE 1

The initial public outreach activities for this study included two Consensus Building Workshops held at the Indian River County Intergenerational Recreation Center on October 14, 2021 and February 3, 2022 respectively. The public was also provided the opportunity to give feedback on the study at the February 24, 2022 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting.



# PHASE 2

The final phase of public outreach activities for this study included a series of seven public workshops that were conducted throughout the county and offered a different times of the day



Fellsmere City Hall



Sebastian Community Center



IRSC Richardson Center



Vero Beach Community Center



IRC Intergenerational Center



Gifford Youth Achievement Center



Gifford Community Center

## INDIAN RIVER COUNTY Land Use Visioning Study



**Help guide the future of Indian River County!**


The Indian River County Metropolitan Planning Organization is hosting a series of Visioning Workshops to facilitate discussion and gather the community's input on alternative future land use strategies for the County.

For more information on the Land Use Visioning Study, please visit: <https://irco.gov.com/mpo/visioning.html>


<p><b>MONDAY, MAY 16</b></p> <p>2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Fellsmere City Hall 22 S. Orange Street Fellsmere, FL 32948</p> <p>6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Sebastian Community Center 1805 N. Central Avenue Sebastian, FL 32958</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY, MAY 25</b></p> <p>2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Vero Beach Community Center 2366 14th Avenue Vero Beach, FL 32960</p> <p>6:00 PM - 7:30 PM IRC Intergenerational Recreation Center 1390 9th St. SW Vero Beach, FL 32962</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, JUNE 2</b></p> <p>9:45 AM - 11:15 AM Gifford Youth Achievement Center 4875 43rd Avenue Vero Beach, FL 32967</p> <p>6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Gifford Community Center 4855 43rd Avenue Vero Beach, FL 32967</p>
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**TUESDAY, MAY 17**

4:00 PM - 5:30 PM  
IRSC Richardson Center  
6155 College Lane  
Vero Beach, FL 32966



For more information, visit us at [www.irmpo.com](http://www.irmpo.com) or call (772) 226-1455

## WHAT WE HEARD: VISIONING PRINCIPLES

*“As a Vero Beach native with a middle-class job, the housing prices are too expensive, affordable housing must be available for lower/middle income families.”*

*“I enjoy living in Indian River County. I loved the small town feel but understand the need for the County to grow.”*

*“I understand that growth in this area is inevitable, however planning is lagging behind the need.”*

*“It is overwhelming to see the current status of AG lands for sale to be developed.”*

*“I want to explore new places and have new experiences, and I don’t think I can do that here. There doesn’t seem to be a large population of young people.”*

*“I don’t feel that Indian River County caters well to younger people, and I don’t think there are many opportunities for well-paying jobs.”*

# WHAT WE HEARD: YOUTH OUTREACH

Phase 2 also included outreach to more than ninety 11th grade students at Indian River Charter High School. A significant number of students cited a lack of amenities for youth and concerns regarding affordability of living in the County following graduation. Representative comments included:

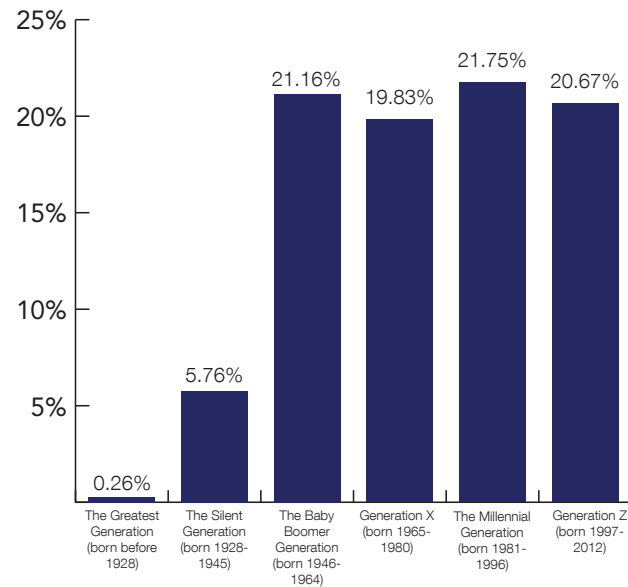
*"I think spaces for young people are missing. Even parks and libraries feel like they are designed for older populations."*

*"I would like to see more places where people can go without having to spend a lot of money."*

*"I would like to see an emphasis on walkability. We have cool stores but none are very easy to walk to."*

*"More opportunities for things to do. Museums. Newer parks. And less traffic!"*

Demographics are cyclical with the Millennial Generation representing an ever increasing percentage of the population. This group is poised to outpace the economic demand in communities. This age group also represents the emerging professional services providers which are critical to the local economy.



Youth-Oriented Activities



Community Gatherings



Walkability



Active Lifestyles

# FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

The culmination of the research, analysis, and public feedback identified over the course of this study resulted in the following key recommendations for the County to consider as it implements its land use vision. Through the development of this study, there was an identification of the following six Visioning Principles which should guide any future policy changes, as appropriate:

## VISIONING PRINCIPLES

1. **Conservation of sensitive environmental lands**
2. **Diversity of housing types that include affordable options**
3. **Infrastructure improvements that provide mobility and multimodal transportation options**
4. **Promote a healthy economy**
5. **Maintain agriculture**
6. **Maintain rural character**





## SHORT-TERM SIMPLE CHANGES

### Minimal Expansion of Flexible Uses in Agricultural Zoning

This would provide for minimal expansion of **allowable uses in agricultural zoning** to allow for use which are now allowed per changes in state statute; for example, this would allow for solar farms and other compatible activities.

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Implement the **Accessory Dwelling Unit** (ADU) policy recommendations of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. ADUs are additional living quarters typically on single-family lots that are independent of the primary dwelling unit. One proposed policy change by the Committee would increase the allowed size of an ADU from 33% of primary residence square footage or 750 sf (whichever is less) to 50% or 1,000 sf.

The need for more affordable housing inventory in Indian River County was a common sentiment shared by the public during the course of this study, particularly as it relates to supporting economic growth (e.g., housing for relocating professionals and starter homes for families) and providing opportunities for ‘aging-in-place’ for seniors and multigenerational housing. In addition to pursuing the aforementioned ADU policy changes in the short-term, the County should consider pursuing additional studies and the evaluation of multiple strategies to addressing affordable housing countywide.

### Flexibility in splitting parcels

This action would reset the date on when **minor lot splits** could be made without going through a major subdivision process. This would allow for the limited splitting of parcels where the splits would be compliant with the existing future land use designations. This approach is usually taken to allow a parent to split a larger parcel into multiple parcels to allow them their children to build homes on separate lots. The normal subdivision process is extensive and presents undue burden on property owners wishing to make small splits.

### Encouragement of Infill/Redevelopment

The focus of growth and development in Indian River County will continue to be **infill and redevelopment** in the cities and those areas within the Urban Service Area.

### Coordination on Mutual Strategies

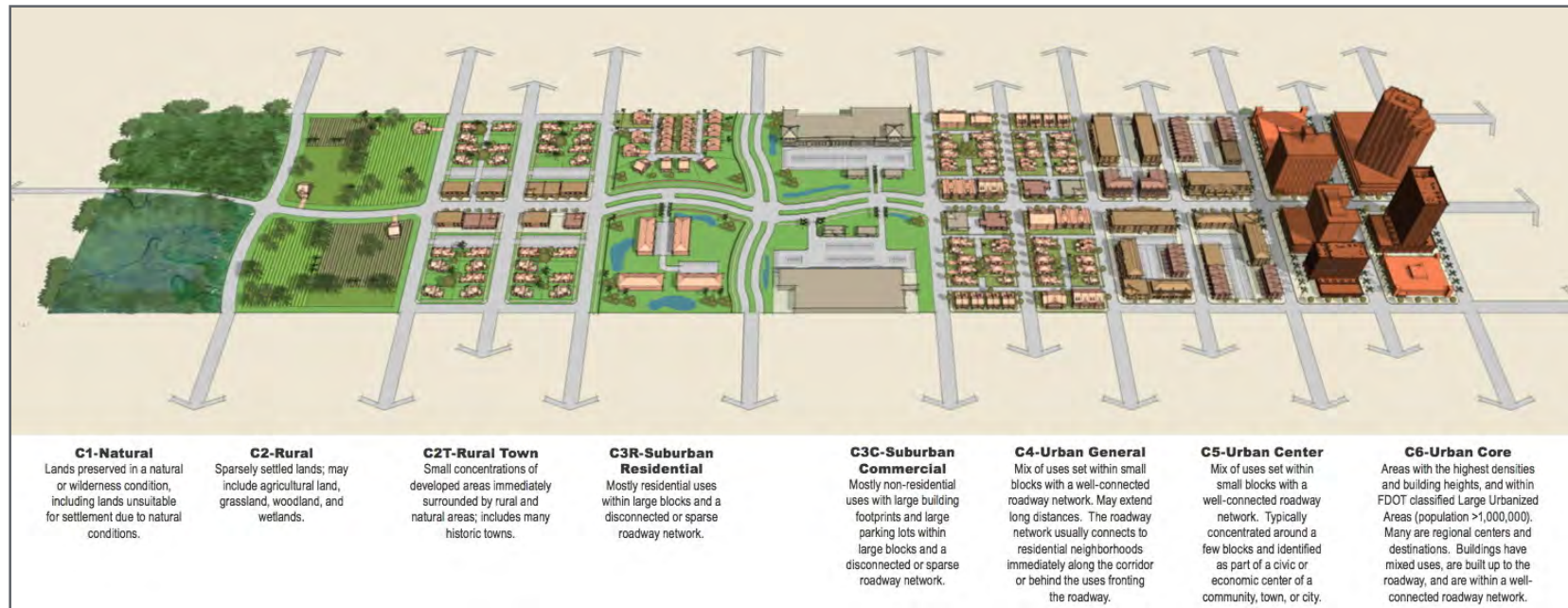
Through the MPO, local jurisdictions should continue to approach FDOT for **projects of mutual benefit**, such as CR 510, 66th Avenue, and 82nd Avenue in the present and CR 512 in the future. FDOT has the capabilities and resources needed to manage large projects such as these, as is evidenced by the MPO’s recent approved \$400 million **Transportation Improvement Program** (TIP). In addition, local jurisdictions should coordinate to resist legislative preemption on local issues such as home based businesses, vacation rentals, etc., and to prepare for potential new requirements, such as inclusionary zoning.

Coordination is especially important with regard to the following:

## Compatibility Along the Urban/Rural Edge

With the decline of agriculture, many large landowners are seeking development opportunities compatible with a municipal urban form. The results of the visioning process have identified the importance of economic development and affordable housing along with preservation of **sensitive environmental lands** and the County's **agricultural heritage**. Therefore, it is recommended that strong protections and/or agreements be entered into that ensure compatibility between jurisdictions and promote common objectives. Among the items that should be included within such agreements are maintaining the **grid network**, promoting **mixed use** development in appropriate locations, and providing **green spaces and buffers**.

FDOT has developed a **context classification system** that broadly identifies the various built environments existing in Florida, as illustrated in the figure below. Roadways may extend through a variety of context classifications. Addressing the different model travel demands will change with the contexts. Limiting development options to very low intensity development patterns typically demand significant construction of roadways that will be underutilized and will result in longer average trip lengths.



## *Annexations and Recreation*

Whether the county decides to expand the urban service boundary and allow more development, growth is likely to occur in western lands due to previous and future annexations. Facilities needed to support new development, including **schools, transportation, conservation**, and especially **medical**, should be identified through agreements.

A significant challenge of annexations is how to address the concerns of older, existing neighborhoods and communities. As new growth has extended past the urban core, some of these areas have experienced disinvestment, depreciation, and marked decline. To encourage revitalization, the County should be more deliberate in the review of any annexation proposal and should encourage **redevelopment** of existing areas over new development on vacant properties.

Expansions of the County's urban service boundary should only be considered in instances where the economic growth or quality of life of the residents would benefit. Examples include the allowance of large-scale, **employment-generating industrial/high-tech projects; mixed-use developments** on multiple-acre sites, and **conservation** or green space areas that could be utilized as recreational facilities. In those instances, where growth adds continual revenue and public amenities, expansions may be justified.

The rural areas within the western portions of the County are particularly suited for recreational facilities with the potential to be a source of adaptability for a community, providing cutting-edge amenities that cater to all demographics and aptitudes. **Mountain bike parks, disc golf, and radio-controlled (RC)** car courses are three examples of recreational amenities that promote outdoor activities. **Esports** are also gaining more traction, encouraged by the success and acknowledgment of the industry worldwide. Whether it be a modest game room equipped with suitable technology, a competition showground, or any space in between, providing a home for esports can be an attraction for community members of varying ages, incomes, and abilities.

**Demonstration kitchens** and **nutrition centers** are becoming more common as neighborhoods look to integrate cooking classes and nutrition instruction into their planning. Rooftop **fitness spaces** and **community porches** are a few ways that areas may be designed to allow for broad community recreation features and integrate nature into their overall design. Community wellness hubs that offer health-related services, like **mindfulness centers** or **wellness retreats**, can augment existing, traditional fitness facilities.

## *Natural Resources*

Communities within Indian River County depend on the same scarce natural resources, particularly water. Coordination between jurisdictions is essential for protecting sensitive areas such as the Indian River Lagoon. **Low Impact Development (LID)** is a design approach that conserves and protects natural resources while also reducing long term infrastructure costs. Successful examples of LID development techniques include vegetated filter strips at the edges of paved surfaces, rain barrels and cisterns, bioswales, residential or commercial rain gardens designed to capture and soak in stormwater, porous pavers, porous concrete, and porous asphalt, as well as green roofs.

The benefits from LID are wide-ranging and can benefit a variety of stakeholders many different ways:

### *Environment*

- Protect site and **regional water quality**
- Preserve on-site **hydrologic systems**
- Preserve **trees and natural vegetation**
- Reduce potential for **flooding impacts**
- Create and preserve **open space**

### *Developers*

- **Reduce land clearing** and grading
- **Increase quality** of building lots and project **marketability**
- Increase number of units due to less land needed for detention ponds
- **Reduce infrastructure costs**
- Preserve or create **natural amenities** that can **increase property values**

### *Public/Municipalities*

- Balance urban growth needs with **environmental protections**
- Reduce impact on **public stormwater infrastructure**
- Reduce potential for **flooding impacts**
- Reduce system-wide **municipal infrastructure and utility maintenance costs**

### *Property Owners*

- Save money via water conservation
- Reduce potential for flooding impacts
- **Reduce insurance costs**



*Bioswales are a Low Impact Development practice that utilize native plants to improve water percolation and remove pollutants.*

## LONGER-TERM COMPLEX CHANGES

### Expansion of Flexible Uses in Agricultural Zoning

This would allow for more **expansive uses in agricultural zoning districts** with appropriate **protections for** existing farms and ranches. These expanded flexible uses would include any specific requirements and are the potential activities “Permitted” uses, require an “Administrative Permit”, or require a “Special Exception.” This may also include limited increases in agricultural density.

### Update the County’s New Town Ordinances

Since the 1990’s, the County’s land development regulations have allowed for the creation of **new town development** and provided guidelines and requirements for their development approval. The guidelines requires that new towns be compact, self-contained projects, having a mix of commercial and residential uses with traditional neighborhood design features, and located on large sites surrounded by agricultural or natural land greenbelts **Although the county has allowed new towns since 1990, no new town proposal has gone beyond the conceptual stages.** This is likely due to a combination of the standards that must be met developing a new town, the complexity involved in getting a new town project approved, and the high absorption rate needed.

The combined requirements of the County’s existing New Town Ordinance can **serve as a barrier** to implementing what is often considered to be a preferred land use form. Some of these requirements include, but are not limited to:

- New Towns have to justify their need and are limited to current population and employment forecasts for the County.
- New Towns are required to be self sufficient and sustainable - other land uses do not have this requirement.
- New Towns are required to provided their own public facilities despite the fact that existing facilities may be sufficient.
- New Towns are required to provide a mix of residential and non-residential uses in the town center yet building heights are limited to 50 feet.
- New Towns are required to provide a mix of residential and non-residential uses concurrently throughout the different phases of development. This is not practical in that many retail/commercial uses require a threshold population to be successful.
- New Towns are required to be dense yet to achieve that density they will likely need to purchase transferred development rights (TDRs). New towns are expensive developments and requiring TDRs increases the cost even more.
- Residential is limited to a maximum of 35 percent of the development area.
- New Towns must provide a minimum of 10 percent affordable and/or workforce housing.
- New Towns must be located with arterial roadway access and have a greenbelt buffer. Generally, the commercial cores of new towns are not successful unless they are directly located on the arterial roadway. Note the land adjacent to the arterial is likely the most valuable property.

## Urban Service Boundary Adjustments

The potential expansion of the County's existing Urban Service Area (USA) was the subject of a considerable number of comments and feedback provided during the study. This is a very **complex issue that requires further study and analysis**, which may be undertaken as part of the **Evaluation and Appraisal Report process**. There are a number of factors to consider in exploring any expansion to the USA:

### *Potential factors supporting expansion of USA*

- Desire or need for more **affordable housing**
- **Logical continuity** of existing USA boundary into adjacent areas where agriculture is no longer feasible
- Consideration as part of a **holistic, comprehensive process** rather than expansion on an ad hoc or piecemeal basis

### *Potential factors against expansion of USA*

- Existing inventory of vacant land within USA
- Concerns regarding environmental and quality of life impacts
- Infrastructure costs

### *Potential approaches to modifying USA boundary*

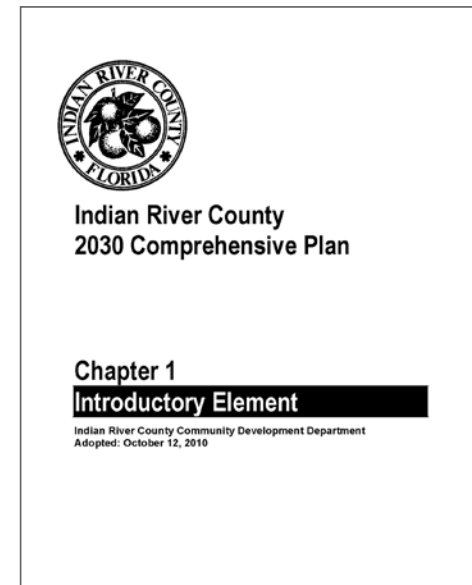
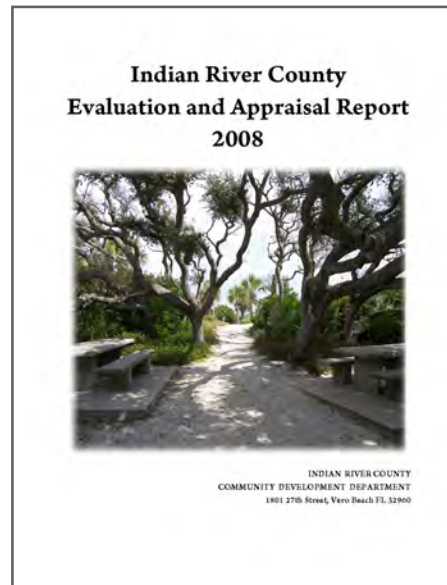
- "Wholesale Expansion" to include all areas east of I-95
- Smoothing out irregularities in the current boundary
- Expand at transportation nodes and along corridors (i.e. near new Oslo Road interchange, along Oslo Rd east of I-95, and future 53rd Street corridor east of I-95)
- "Swaps" where areas along the current boundary trade inside/outside
- Expand to include large contiguous parcels for master planned communities

# NEXT STEPS

Indian River County will undertake the following actions to implement the findings and recommendations of this study:

- 2050 **Long Range Transportation Plan**
- **Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)** for the County's Comprehensive Plan
- Revise **Land Development Regulations**
- EAR- and Vision Plan-Based **Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

Any updates or changes to these documents will include appropriate public outreach.



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