

WALTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN'S Evaluation & Appraisal Report

BoCC Hearing
September 23, 2025



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Crabtree Group Inc | Clark Partington | GIT | Impact Campaign |
Gridics | Jacobs | Urban3 | Larry Davis



SB-180 – Potential Adjustments to Restore Planning Flexibility



Targeted Land-Use Freeze

Apply only to parcels directly impacted by a declared storm — not broad “within 100 miles” zones.



Clear, Objective Standards

Define “more restrictive or burdensome” in measurable terms to avoid halting-routine updates.



Protect Voter-Approved Plans

Exempt comprehensive-plan amendments approved by local referendum from SB-180 preemption.



Local Floodplain Authority

Restore ability to adopt “cumulative substantial improvement” rules consistent with NFIP standards.



Environmental & Growth Management Safeguards

Preserve wetland buffers, rural boundaries, and sprawl-control policies unrelated to storm recovery.

- Built countywide awareness of the project
- Encouraged engagement through multiple channels and opportunities
- Drove attendance and participation to the Visioning Charrette
- Captured feedback along the way to inform technical recommendations



PlanForWalton2040



Properties



Layers



Filters



3D Zoning



Projects

Layers

Template

Select Saved Template

Manage

PLACES & PARCELS

ZONING

PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL

HISTORIC

ADDITIONAL LAYERS

FUTURE LAND USE

CHARRETTE

☒ Sector Maps☒ Grow☒ Maintain☒ Preserve☐ Place Types

Modify System

Adopt Place Types
through a Sector Plan

Preserve

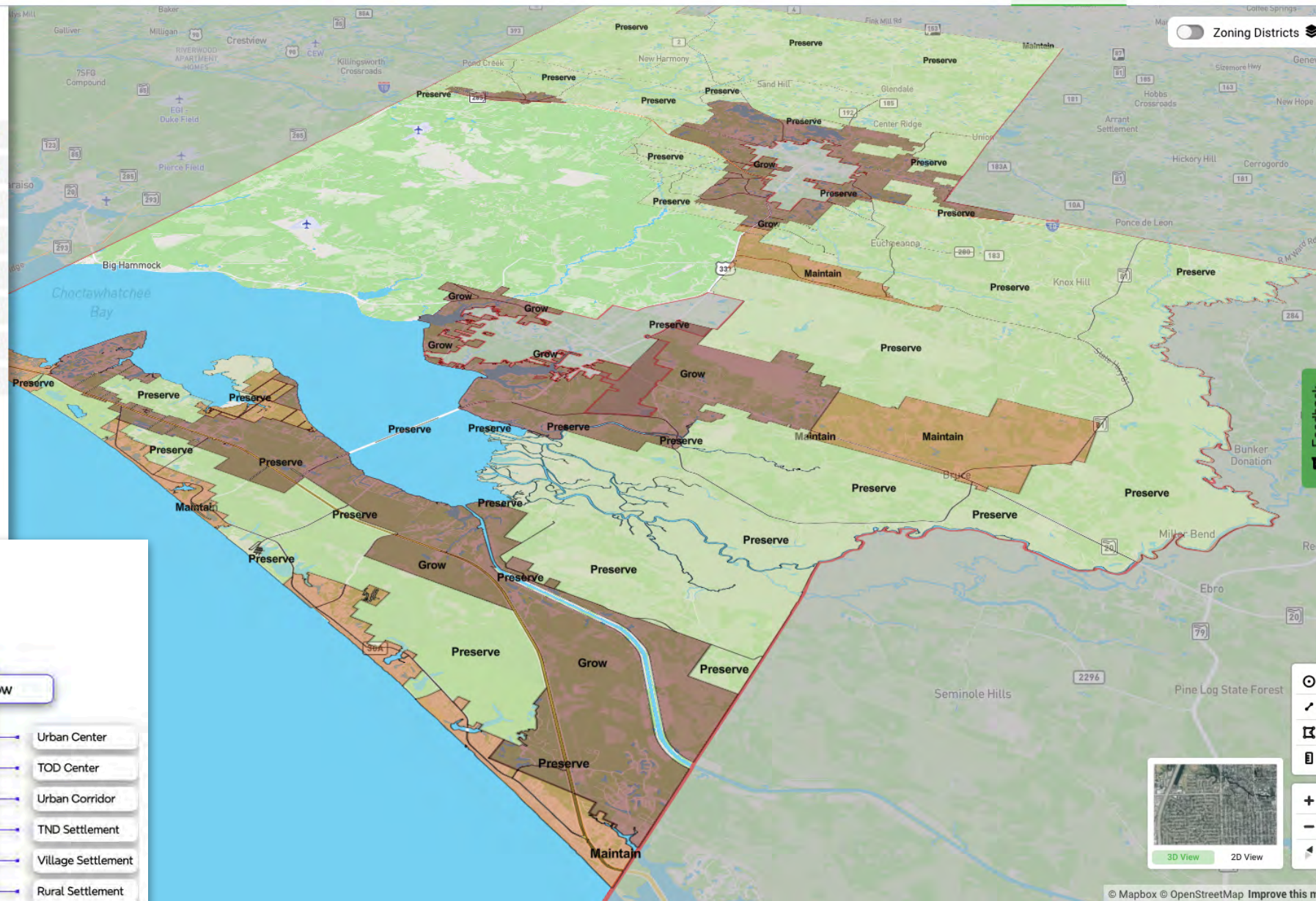
- Rural Center
- Rural Corridor
- Agriculture
- Conservation

Maintain

- TND Settlement
- Village Settlement
- Rural Settlement
- Rural Corridor

Grow

- Urban Center
- TOD Center
- Urban Corridor
- TND Settlement
- Village Settlement
- Rural Settlement



Option 3: Adopt Place Types through a Sector Plan

Urban Center



Axonometric View

Place Type Description

The **Urban Center Place Type** is reserved for the highest intensity and mix of uses within the County, and may become a regional destination. They are conveniently located adjacent to transit or transit-ready routes at major corridor intersections, or immediately adjacent. Development is embedded within (and should reinforce) a walkable, vibrant, high-quality public realm and provide dining, shopping, office, lodging and civic activities. Urban Centers support a wide range of residential building types, mostly consisting of mixed-use or multi-family buildings and attached single-family dwellings, with few or any single-family detached dwellings. Buildings are up to 4 stories, and typically located close to the wide sidewalk to enhance the pedestrian experience. They are typically located at the intersection of a priority corridor with a collector. They may include major anchor uses that serve the entire county. Shared parking, as well as pedestrian, bicycle and micro mobility routes to surrounding neighborhoods are encouraged. They typically do not contain large areas of preserved natural environment or other environmental features.

Defining Features

- **Size:** Minimum 20 acres.
- **Density:** Minimum 6 du/ac - Maximum 30 du/ac
- **Mobility:** FDOT C4 or C5 urban residential and commercial contexts, designed to be transit-ready, and supportive of pedestrians, cyclists and micro-mobility options.
- **Zoning Districts:** Permitted as shown
- **Parking:** Located on street and behind to the side or buildings, typically accessed by alleys, or occasionally by side driveways.



Plan View

Characteristics

Existing Zoning	Zone Mix
GC, TND, CCMU, NC, CC	up to 95%
CON	per existing conditions
PF, INST	5% min.



Sector Allocation



Rural

Ag (medium)
Ag (small)

Single-Family

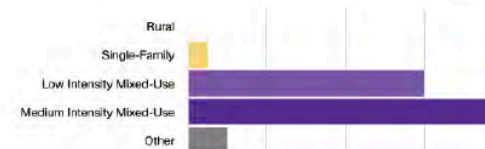
Single-Family (Estate)
Single-Family (Large)
Single-Family (Medium)

Low Intensity MU

Single-Family (Medium)
Single-Family (Small)
Single-Family (Cottage)
Town House
Small Multi-family (walk-up)
Live/Work

Medium Intensity MU

Town House
Small Multi-family (walk-up)
Live/Work
Medium Multi-family
Large Multi-family (4 stories)
Mixed-Use
Commercial



Rural Settlement



Axonometric View

Place Type Description

The **Rural Settlement Place Type** is a quiet, very low intensity settlement in the rural areas of the County, consisting of single-family detached dwellings on very large lots, and may include hobby farms or the keeping of animals. They typically have limited infrastructure and are surrounded by agricultural or natural areas. They provide for a quieter, slow-paced lifestyle with a focus on outdoor activities.

Defining Features

- **Size:** Minimum 40 acres
- **Density:** No minimum - Maximum 5 du/ac
- **Mobility:** FDOT Mostly, C2, and C2T rural contexts, with a limited C4 urban context permitted at its center. Designed to be supportive of pedestrians, cyclists and micro-mobility options.
- **Zoning Districts:** Permitted as shown
- **Parking:** Located on street and preferably either behind or to the side of buildings. Parking in front of buildings is discouraged, but if provided, it must be respectful of its rural context.



Plan View

Characteristics

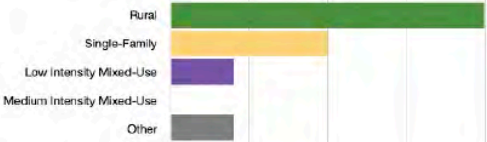
Existing Zoning	Zone Mix
NC, VMU, SN	5% max.
SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI	10% to 50%
Gen Ag, LS Ag	30% min.
CON	per existing conditions
PF, INST	5% min.



Sector Allocation



Rural	Single-Family	Low Intensity MU	Medium Intensity MU
Ag (medium) Ag (small)	Single-Family (Estate) Single-Family (Large) Single-Family (Medium)	Single-Family (Medium) Single-Family (Small) Single-Family (Cottage) Town House Small Multi-family (walk-up) Live/Work	Town House Small Multi-family (walk-up) Live/Work Medium Multi-family Large Multi-family (4 stories) Mixed-Use Commercial



Existing	Proposed		Existing	Proposed	
FLU	Place Types		Equivalent Zoning	Applicable Sector	
Center Types					
Mixed-Use / Commercial	Urban Center		GC, TND, CCMU, NC, CC	Grow	
			SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI		
			Gen Ag, LS Ag		
			CON		
			PF, INST		
Mixed-Use / Commercial	TOD Center		GC, TND, CCMU, NC, CC, LI	Grow	
			SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI		
			Gen Ag, LS Ag		
			CON		
			PF, INST		
			LI		
Commercial	Suburban Center		BP	per existing	
Commercial	Rural Center		GC, TND, NC	Preserve (As per Mapping) Maintain	
			SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI		
			Gen Ag, LS Ag		
			CON		
			PF, INST		
Corridor Types					
Mixed-Use / Commercial	Urban Corridor		GC, TND, NC	Grow	
			CON		
			PF, INST		
Commercial	Suburban Corridor		BP	per existing	
Large Scale Ag / General Ag	Rural Corridor		Gen Ag, LS Ag	Preserve Maintain	
			CON		

Existing	Proposed		Existing	Proposed	
FLU	Place Types		Equivalent Zoning	Applicable Sector	
Settlement Types					
Mixed-Use / Commercial, Residential	TND Settlement		GC, TND, VMU	Grow Maintain	
			SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI		
			Gen Ag, LS Ag		
			Con		
			PF, INST		
Mixed-Use / Commercial, Residential	Village Settlement		TND, NC, VMU, SN	Grow Maintain	
			SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI		
			Gen Ag, LS Ag		
			CON		
			PF, INST		
Conservation Residential, Rural Residential, Residential	Suburban Settlement		CR, RP, LDR 2/1, RR, RV	per existing	
Mixed-Use, Residential, Rural Residential	Rural Settlement		NC, VMU, SN	Grow Maintain	
			SN, LDR 4/1, UR, NI		
			Gen Ag, LS Ag		
			CON		
			PF, INST		
Other Types					
Large Scale Ag / General Ag	Agriculture		Gen Ag, LS Ag	Preserve	
Conservation	Conservation		CON	Preserve	
Public Facilities & Institutional, Eglin, Industrial	Other		Eglin, LI, HI, EU, PF, INST	per existing	
			CON		

Aligning Comp Plan & Zoning

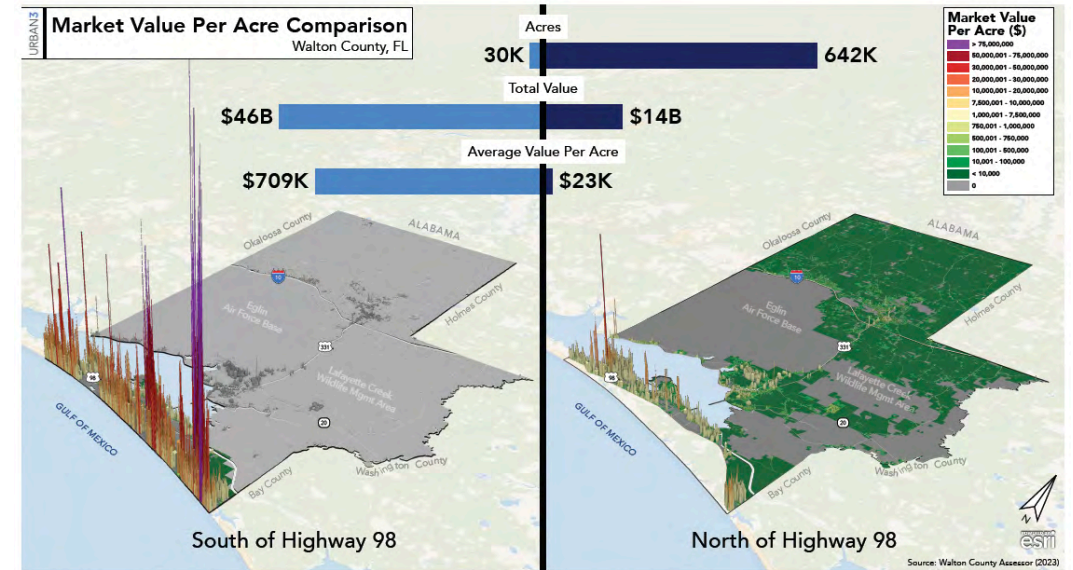
1. To preserve neighborhood character, consider the reduction of height of single-family homes from 50 feet, to 40 feet or 3-½ stories maximum in neighborhoods with Preservation Plans. If successful, adopt across the County.

2. Consider reclassifying single-family homes, with five or more bedrooms that are used as short-term rentals for more than six months per year as commercial buildings.



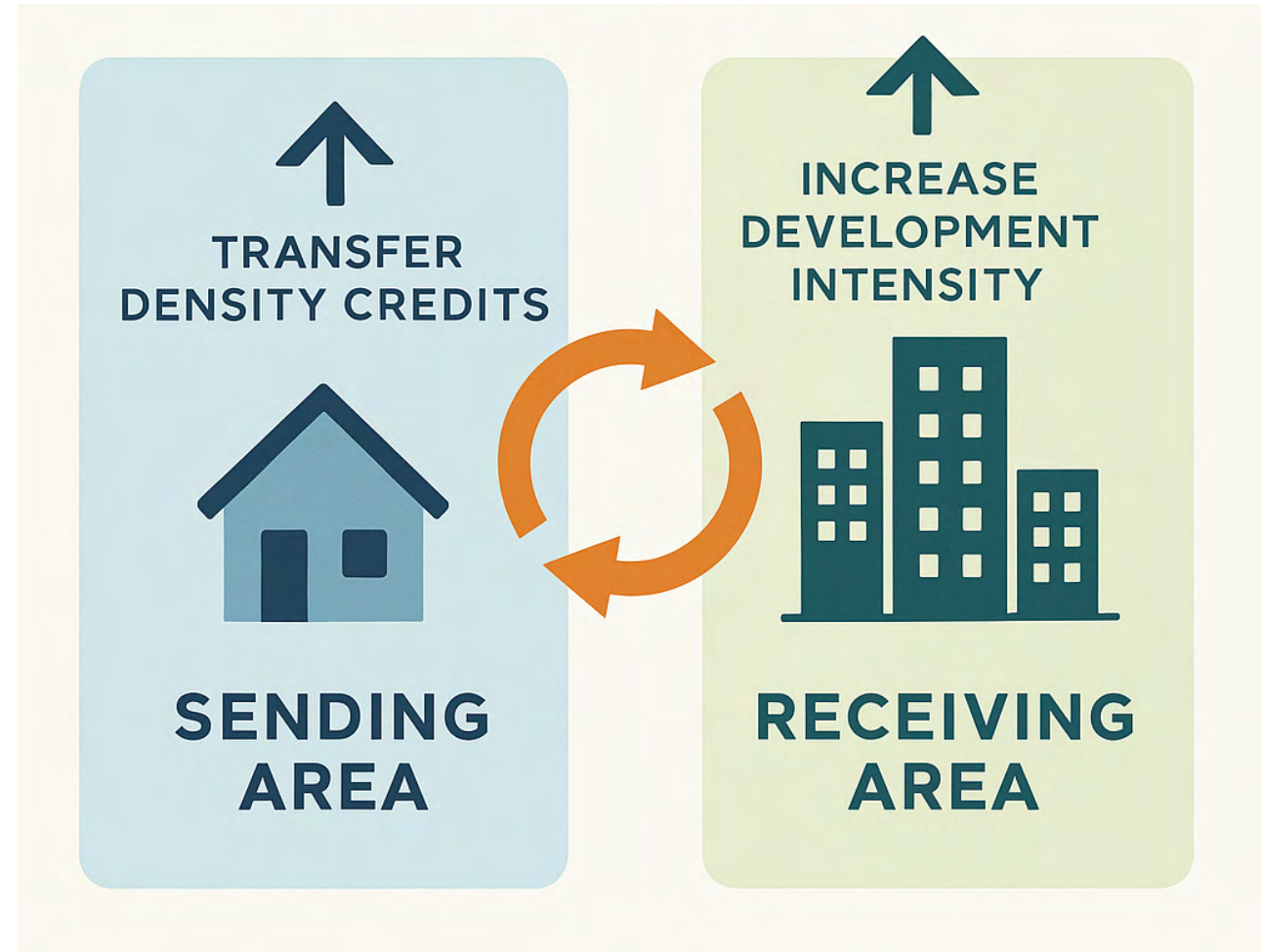
Housing Summary Recommendations

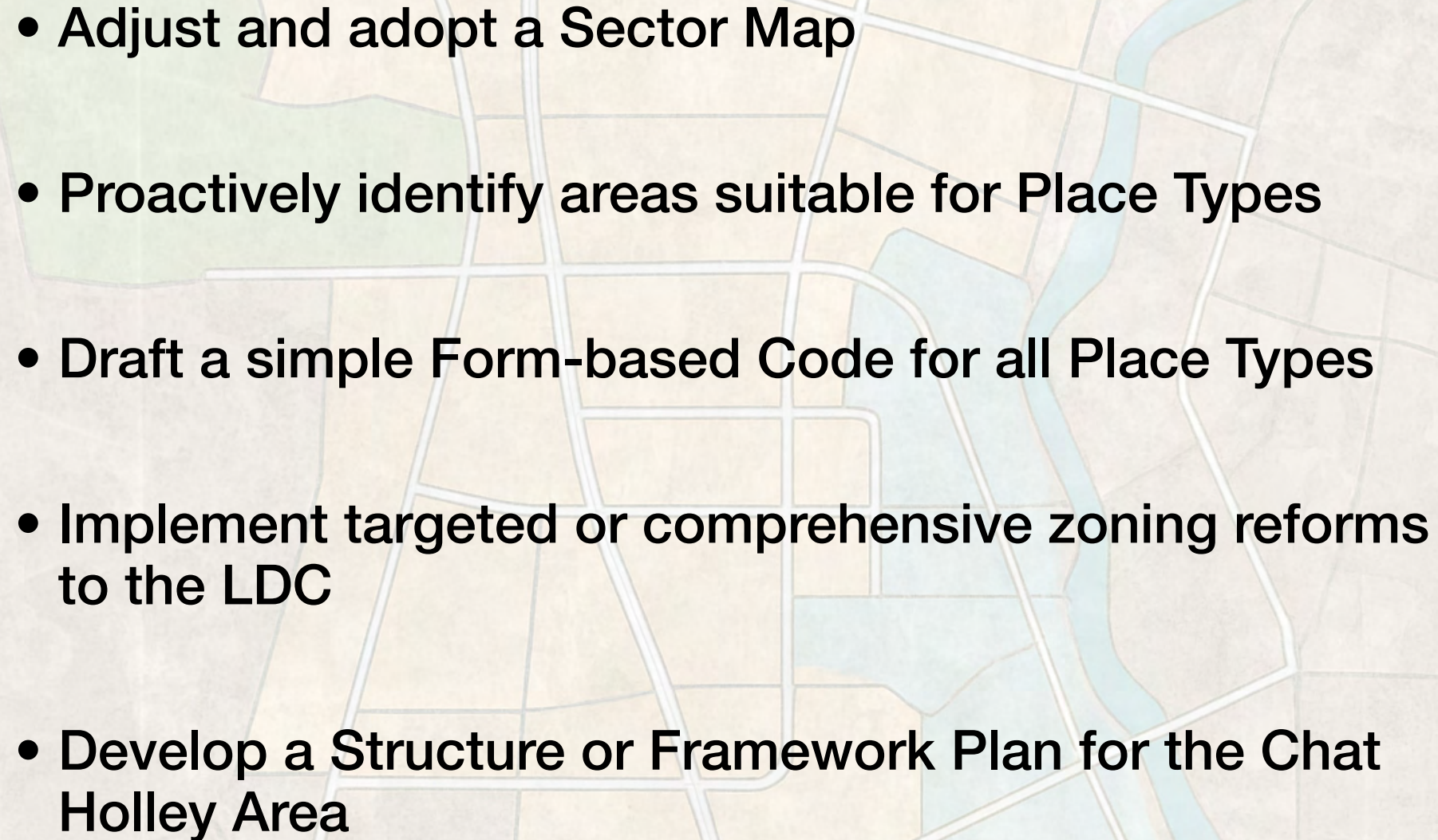
- **New Policy: L-1.2.7** - Adopt a Sector Map for Walton County
- **New Policy: L-1.3.2** - Encourage rural clustering for the rural village place type in the north planning area (concentrated around the commercial centers)
- **New Policy: L-1.6.3** - Incorporate Place Types as FLU Categories
- **New Policy: L-1.4.3** - Consider an increase to the maximum permitted density for a few FLU categories that are included in new Place Types
- **New Policy: L-1.22.3** - Incentivize and facilitate the redesignation of parcels larger than 20 acres to appropriate Place Types permitted by the County, particularly within designated growth areas and compatible Future Land Use categories (ie: Bay Walton Sector Map).



1. Proposed **SENDING** areas may include:
 - a. Parcels zoned General Commercial in the more rural areas of the County;
 - b. Undeveloped parcels zoned Residential Preservation or equivalent, and surrounded by conservation lands, with no planned infrastructure upgrades;
 - c. Parcels in V and VE flood zones may impose stricter density limitations to discourage higher-density development in high-risk coastal areas, enhancing safety and resilience.

2. Proposed **RECEIVING** areas may include:
 - a. Future transit urban corridors place types along US-98 and US-331;
 - b. Parcels requesting a TND or an Urban Center Place Type designation;
 - c. Parcels zoned Urban Residential, immediately adjacent to Freeport or Defuniak Springs.

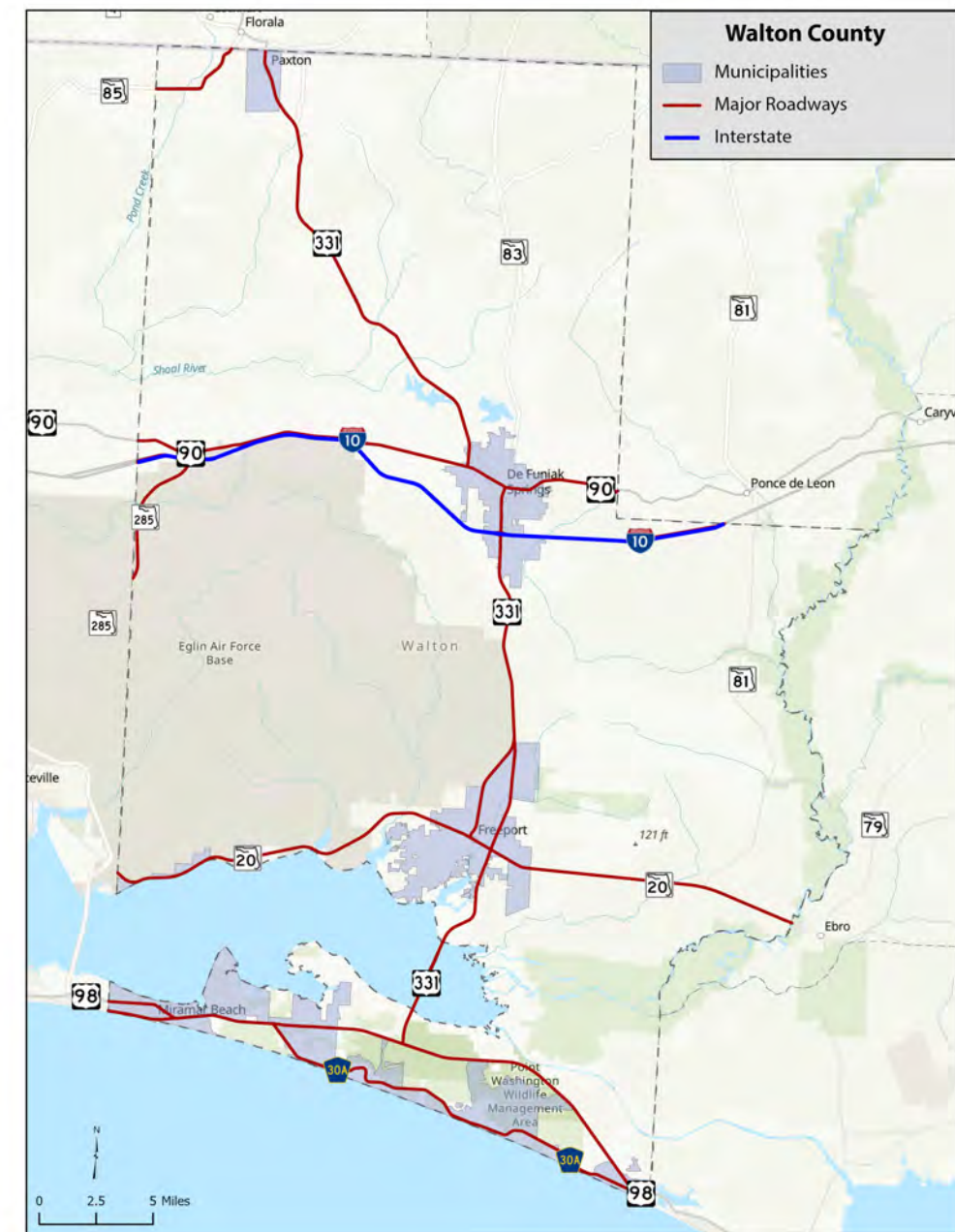


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- **Adjust and adopt a Sector Map**
 - **Proactively identify areas suitable for Place Types**
 - **Draft a simple Form-based Code for all Place Types**
 - **Implement targeted or comprehensive zoning reforms to the LDC**
 - **Develop a Structure or Framework Plan for the Chat Holley Area**

Suggested Next Steps

WALTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

- Vision & Goals aimed at:
 - Increasing the traffic safety
 - Accommodating multimodal
 - Reviewing traffic performance
 - Focusing on key corridors
 - Considering alternative transportation
 - Incorporating mobility hubs



MAJOR AMENDMENTS

Develop a Vision Zero Action Plan or adopt FDOT's Target Zero policy:

- Increasing severe crashes in the last 10 years
- Sets achievable goals

Develop an active transportation master plan for pedestrians and bicycles in the County:

- Provides vision to integrate into SUN Trail network
- Eco-tourism, connecting recreation points of interest in the County



NEXT STEPS

Consider the following:

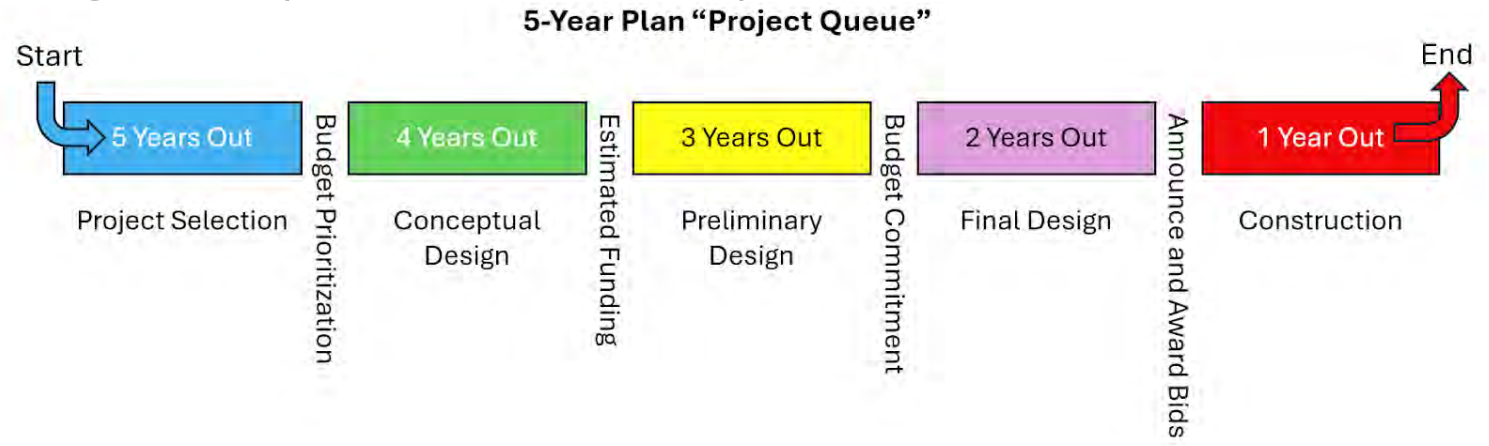
- **Safety** - Conduct full safety assessments
- **Operations** - Perform updated traffic analyses of corridors
- **Multimodal** - Fill in network gaps
- **Parking** - Assess daily and seasonal usage and trends
- **Transit** - Review options and examples for services

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Next Steps

1. Create or Consolidate the Existing Five-Year Capital Improvements Plans (outside of the existing Comprehensive Plan) for:

- Transportation
- Transit
- Parks And Recreation
- Wastewater
- Water
- Stormwater



2. Create a Mechanism for Annually updating this Five Year Plan

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Next Steps

3. Select *the* Location for the Technical Design Standards in the Land Development Code. Review Land Development Code's "Chapter 3|Concurrency" **first** – already likely what is needed. Set schedule for review of these standards on par with Comp Plan Update timing.
4. Allocate Resources for creation of Concurrency Capacity and Constraints Map for existing and proposed infrastructure on the 5-year Plan.
5. Pass an ordinance removing a Sidewalk Buyout Fund option.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Next Steps

- I. Create, or Partner with another agency which is already maintaining a map showing areas of high potential groundwater recharge areas, so that the county can more effectively:
 - Protect Aquifers from polluted inflows
 - Increase groundwater recharge where desirable

Conservation Management Overview – Strengthening Existing Policies and New Policies for Tree Removal and Incentive Tools

Walton County's revised Conservation Management framework strengthen protections for wetlands, floodplains, and natural habitats. These changes respond to growing development and climate pressures and include stricter mitigation standards, expanded green infrastructure, and incentive-based strategies that promote long-term preservation.

- **Wetlands and clustering:** Require buffers, stormwater BMPs, conservation easements, and development on uplands only; wetland mitigation with no-net-loss, public involvement, monitoring, and penalties.
- **Stormwater policies:** Compliance monitoring, outreach, BMPs, and enforcement; integrate resilience for higher rainfall intensity; homeowner BMP education; pursue grants and partnerships.
- **Mining oversight:** Vegetative buffers, stewardship plans, habitat protection, and stronger controls for active and abandoned mines.
- **Tree protection ordinance:** Countywide permits for removal, required replanting with native species, alignment with FS 163.045, arborist certification, and incentives/fines.
- **Incentive tools:** Density bonus for upland-only clustering with conservation easements; TND/Village Form options; TDR from floodplains to uplands.

Coastal Management Overview – Strengthening Existing Policies

Walton County's revised Coastal Management framework promotes climate resilience, ecological protection, and responsible development within sensitive coastal areas. Updates focus on shoreline setbacks, central sewer requirements, vegetation restoration, stormwater and floodplain regulations, and resilient post-disaster recovery.

- **Coastal Dune Lakes standards:** 100-ft shoreline setback; GI-based stormwater plans; mandatory sewer connection for new development; no hardened shorelines; at least 60% pervious area within the 300-ft CDLPZ; limits on redevelopment footprint.
- **Vegetation and invasive control:** Require native replanting after removals and enforce restoration standards.
- **Wastewater in lake watersheds:** Mandate central sewer for new development; prohibit new septic; phased transition for existing systems.
- **Coastal land use and building:** Upland siting, climate-resilient building codes, storm protection standards, stormwater BMPs, and maintenance of public access.
- **Beaches, dunes, and flood risk:** Elevated walkovers; no seawalls in sensitive areas; no development seaward of the CCCL or within Coastal Protection Zones; V/VE zones limited to 1 unit per 20 acres, allow TDR to safer areas, require elevation above BFE plus freeboard, and clustering away from flood-prone areas.
- **Public beach access:** Protect legal access points, require ADA access and parking, and use grants/partnerships for upgrades.

Review **SB 180** to determine if that legislation and the Live Local Act would prohibit the changes or require modifications to the proposed EAR amendments.

Application to Walton County proposed EAR

Upon review, the Walton County Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) appear to comply with all updated regulations. The report effectively addresses the statutory requirements outlined in the Community Planning Act, reflecting recent legislative amendments. The EAR demonstrates consideration of current state guidelines, integrates required plan elements, and appropriately evaluates and updates the comprehensive plan consistent with the latest regulatory standards.



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