

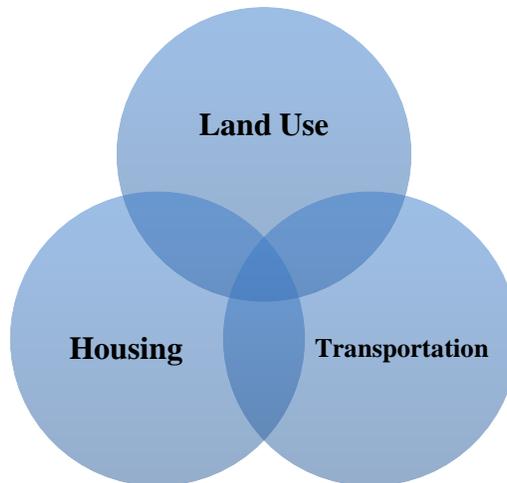
## **CHAPTER 2 LAND USE ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the inventory and analysis of background data for preparation of the Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map pursuant to Section 163.3177(6), Florida Statutes. The data and analysis provides the framework for evaluation of key land use issue and preparation of the Future Land Use Map and goals, objectives, and policies presented in the Policy Document. All the referenced figures may be found at the end of the chapter.

The purpose of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan is to influence existing and future land use patterns by designating appropriate locations for future land uses and establishing a policy framework for managing future growth and development to accommodate anticipated employment and population. These policies focus not only on the location of land uses and the density and intensity of these uses, but also on the form and character of the physical development.

Long range sustainable community planning recognizes the interrelationship between land use, housing and transportation. The Future Land Use Element provides the policy mechanism to coordinate these three factors to provide a mix of housing and land uses that will satisfy demand; and support a balanced, inclusive community.



The Land Use Element is the critical policy mechanism for integrating the policies and strategies of the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan into a coherent and consistent set of land use goals, objectives, and policies. As such, the element must be consistent with all other elements of the Comprehensive Plan and incorporate the concepts and principles of these elements in its land use policies in a manner that minimizes impacts on natural and historic resources, provides and maintains public services and facilities at adequate levels of service, enhances community character and the quality of life of the city's residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Future Land Use Map and policies of this element provide the policy framework and rationale basis for City’s land development regulations and programs to implement the Comprehensive Plan. Pursuant to Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, all land development regulations and development permitting actions are required to be consistent with the Future Land Use Element and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

To effectively guide and direct future land uses within the City of Vero Beach, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of existing land use patterns, trends, and natural and manmade factors influencing future development.

**Generalized Land Uses**

The pattern and mix of land uses within the City of Vero Beach reflect its historical development patterns and role as the county seat and major government, employment, and commercial center of Indian River County. The total acreage for existing land uses, including vacant lands and rights-of-way is 7,256 acres. Not included in this total is the 1,219 acres within the city limits that is occupied by the Indian River Lagoon and open water. Therefore, the City limits covers approximately 13 square miles.

Figure 2-1 provides a detailed map of existing land uses in 2015. The distribution of existing land uses by acreage are tabulated in Table 2-1 below:

Table 2-1. Existing Land Use 2015

Land Use	Number of Acres	% of Total
Residential	1,954	27.0
Single Family	1,585	
Multi-Family	325	
Mobile Homes	44	
Commercial	400	5.5
Transportation/Communications/Utilities	1,048	14.4
Industrial and Wholesale Trade	157	2.2
Education, Government, Health Care, & Institutional	360	5.0
Parks and Recreation	429	5.9
Conservation	959	13.2
Vacant	753	10.3
Rights-of-Way	1,196	16.5
Total	7,256	100.0

Sources: Vero Beach Planning and Development Department Field Survey and Public Works Geographic Information System Parcel File Data, 2015.

Residential. Residential land use constitutes 27 percent of the land acreage within the corporate limits and is the major land use within the city. The residential land use category contains single-family, duplex, and multi-family units and mobile homes (manufactured

housing). This category does not include motels, hotels, or mixed residential-commercial projects.

Of the total land in residential use, over 80 percent is in single family use. The average net density (including right-of-way) for single family uses ranges from 2.3 to 4.5 units per acre. Such uses may be principally found south of the Main Relief Canal on the mainland west and northeast of the downtown, along the eastern edge of the Indian River Lagoon, and throughout the barrier island.

Multi-family uses, which include duplex and multiple dwellings on a single parcel/lot, account for 17 percent of total residential acreage. The average net density for multi-family uses ranges from 6 to 12 units per acre. Not included in this category are residential units mixed with commercial uses, but included are condominium projects that include dwelling units occupied for seasonal and transient residential uses. Multi-family uses are scattered throughout the City and may be found along urban arterials and collector roads and within historic neighborhoods near the downtown.

Mobile homes are concentrated in several mobile home parks. These parks are a City-owned mobile home park south of the Vero Beach Municipal Airport; two parks located north of 24<sup>th</sup> Street between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues; and a large park along the Indian River Lagoon south of the City's wastewater treatment facility.

Commercial. Commercial uses account for 5.5 percent of total existing land use acreage. Commercial uses are located in linear strips along major commercial corridors east of downtown, along SR 60, and along US Highway 1 and the Beachland Boulevard corridor on the barrier island. Commercial uses are also concentrated clusters in five discrete major commercial districts:

- Downtown generally situated between 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west to the Florida East Coast Railroad on east, 21<sup>st</sup> Street to the north and 18<sup>th</sup> Street to the south;
- Miracle Mile (21<sup>st</sup> Street between US. Highway 1 and Indian River Boulevard);
- Royal Palm Point along the Indian River Lagoon;
- Ocean Drive and Cardinal Drive on the barrier island; and
- Beachland Boulevard on the barrier island.

Commercial uses include retail/personal sales and services; finance, insurance, real estate, professional, legal administrative, scientific technical services; commercial marinas; and motels, hotels, and other transient residential uses. Except for several motels and hotels scattered located along US. Highway 1 and the Hampton Inn and Suites on SR 60 in the Miracle Mile area, the primary concentration of tourist commercial development is on the barrier island.

Transportation/Communications/Utilities. Transportation, communications, and utilities account for 14.4 percent of total existing land uses. Theses uses include all manner of transportation facilities, vehicle motor pool, storage, and repair yards, dedicated public parking facilities, telecommunications, and utilities. The vast majority of the acreage is occupied by

runways, taxiways, and hanger areas at the Vero Beach Regional Airport and the City's wastewater, water treatment and electric power plants.

Industrial and Wholesale Trade. The City's industrial and wholesale uses account for only 2.2 percent of total land use acreage. Industrial and wholesale trade uses include assembly, manufacturing and warehouse and storage services, outdoor storage of heavy equipment or construction/landscaping materials, and construction and other building contractor services. These uses are principally located at the Vero Beach Regional Airport, the 79-acre Piper Aircraft property, and along the Florida East Coast (FEC) railroad tracks located south of the SR 60 and north of 27<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side of the FEC railroad.

Education, Government, Health Care, and Institutional. Education, government, health, and institutional uses include public/private schools and educational, government administrative, legislative, and legal facilities, fire and rescue services, places of worship, non-governmental organization, hospital and medical clinics, nursing, assisted/independent living facilities, congregate housing, rehabilitation/transitional community residences, and death care services (funeral homes, crematories, and cemeteries). These uses are found throughout the city and account for 5.0 percent of total existing land uses.

Parks and Recreation. Parks and recreation uses, which account for 5.9 percent of total land use in the city, include public/private parks and recreational facilities, country clubs with recreational facilities, not-for-profit museums and art galleries, public marinas and yachting club facilities, and commercial amusement, sports, or recreational establishments. Public parks and the Historic Dodgertown facility, and private golf courses account for the vast majority of this acreage.

Conservation. Conservation lands account for 13.2 percent of total existing land use. A significant portion of these lands are located at the Vero Beach Regional Airport, dredge spoil islands located in the Indian River Lagoon and lands abutting the lagoon that are under public ownership or restricted for wetlands mitigation.

Vacant. Those lands that are not currently undeveloped are classified as a vacant land use. Undeveloped land held by a public or quasi-public entity for conservation purposes are classified as a conservation use.

Vacant lands account for 10.3 percent of the total existing land use acreage. A more detailed discussion of developable vacant lands is discussed later in this chapter. However, most of these vacant lands are dispersed throughout the City with the most predominate vacant land available for development is a 333-acre tract of land south of the Vero Beach Regional Airport and west of 43rd Avenue.

Rights-of-Way. This category of land use includes State, County, City and private roads rights-of-way and Indian River Farmers Water Control District and Florida East Coast rights-of-way. Rights-of-way account for 16.5 percent of total existing land uses.

## **Adjacent Land Uses to the City of Vero Beach**

The areas of unincorporated Indian River County that are adjacent to the corporate limits are almost entirely developed. The existing development that surrounds the City limits opportunities for any significant expansion of the corporate limits through voluntary annexation.

Bordering the City's western and southern boundaries west of US Highway 1 are mostly single family subdivisions. Mixed residential, commercial and institutional uses are found along the City's northern corporate limits east of US Highway 1, including the planned residential development of Grand Harbor and the large medical complex including the Indian River Memorial Hospital centered on 37<sup>th</sup> Street. On the southern City limits, commercial uses stretch south in the US Highway 1 corridor. Towards the Indian River Lagoon may be found single family uses and large multiple-family developments along Indian River Boulevard.

On the barrier island, the City of Vero Beach is bounded on the north by the Town of Indian River Shores. Most development in this high value residential community consists of single family and multiple family uses in planned residential developments. To the south of the City on the barrier island are mostly high value single family uses in gated planned residential developments.

## **Historic and Archaeological Resources**

Twelve sites within the City of Vero Beach are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Five of these sites and a single family house in the Original Town neighborhood are listed on the Vero Beach Register of Historic Places and are protected under the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. In 2015, the City was approved as a Certified Local Government by the U.S. Department of the Interior and Florida Department of State.

In 2012, the City designated the 8.6-acre "Old Vero Man Site" as a "Historic Site/Archaeological Zone" on the Vero Beach Register of Historic Places. The site is located on the Vero Beach Regional Airport property adjacent to the Main Drainage Canal and right-of-way owned by Indian River Farms Water Control District (IRFWCD). Many of the artifacts and fossils found in the zone and nearby on IRFWCD property are from the Pleistocene age over 13,000 years ago. Under the leadership of the not-for-profit Old Vero Ice Age Sites Committee, scientific excavation of the site was initiated in 2013.

The Osceola Park Residential Historic District was designated on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2014. The historic neighborhood covers approximately 40 acres and contains 89 contributing buildings and 25 noncontributing buildings.

Figure 2-2 shows the location of the aforementioned designated historic sites, historic site/archaeological zone, and historic neighborhood district. Others sites of historic and archaeological value not shown in Figure 2-2 may be found on the Florida Master Site File. These sites include shipwrecks and artifacts; Indian middens; and many private buildings eligible

for historic designation. The City is currently pursuing a grant to update its inventory of historic resources. The last such survey was conducted in 1992.

## **Natural Resources**

Natural features and resources affect development patterns. They may restrict or support various types of land uses in terms of providing constraints to development, such as wetlands or providing access to the amenities needed to attract residential and tourist uses such as the water bodies, beaches, and climate. However, except for water bodies, wetlands, and flood vulnerable areas, the City of Vero Beach has few natural constraints to development due to its relatively flat topography.

This section provides a brief summary of the City's natural features and resources. A more detailed description of the features and resources pertinent to growth and development is provided in the Conservation, Coastal Management and Recreation and Open Space Elements.

Climate. Vero Beach is generally characterized as having a humid, subtropical climate. The City's southern latitude, the moderating influence of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf Stream, and its location on the Florida peninsula, make summers that are long and humid with mild winters.

The City receives on average an annual rainfall of 55 inches. Over half of this rainfall amount occurs during the May through September period. The average year-round temperature is 73.4 degrees F. In an average year, the City has 80 days with temperatures of 90 degrees F or higher and only 4 days with temperatures below 32 degrees F.

Topography. The physiographic features of the Vero Beach area consist of a coastal ridge and sandy flat lands. The Atlantic Coastal Ridge is located on the mainland and is parallel to and just west of US Highway 1 and reaches elevations of 30 feet within the City's limits. It is a remnant of an ancient offshore sand bar.

The relatively flat terrain of the city poses few constraints to development, except the low topography exposes portions of the city to risk from tropical storms and rising sea level. It is a significant feature in the natural drainage system which is discussed in detail in the Infrastructure Element.

Soils. Soils are important in that they may impact construction costs where soils have poor load bearing capacity or have high-shrink swell characteristics. Soils may also severely limit the use of on-site wastewater systems, such as septic systems, or landfills, if they are highly permeable and are wet with high water tables.

The United States Soil Conservation Service has identified 40 different soil types in the City of Vero Beach, which are depicted on Figure 2-3. These soil types are further classified into 13 generalized soil types distributed under the four following physiographic areas: sand ridges; coastal islands and tidal marshes; flatwoods, low knolls and ridges; and sloughs and poorly defined drainage ways and hammocks. A description of these general soil types may be

found in Figure 2.18 of the *Future Land Use Element* of the *2030 Indian River County Comprehensive Plan*.

Except for the aquifer recharge area for the shallow aquifer as discussed in the next section, the wet soils and highly permeable sandy soils, soils provide few constraints for development in Vero Beach. The impacts of these types of soils on surface and groundwater resources and septic systems are discussed in more detail in the Infrastructure and Conservation Elements.

Geology/Hydrology. The underground geologic formations contribute to the movement, availability, quantity, and quality of surface and groundwater. These formations contain two basic aquifers. The shallow aquifer, which extends from the surface to depths of 150 feet, is confined to the Anastasia and Fort Thompson Formations. The deeper Floridan Aquifer underlies the entire city and ranges in depths of 250 to 500 feet below sea level. Both aquifers are separated by confining beds consisting of clay and other materials of Hawthorne and Tamiami Formations.

The shallow aquifer is recharged primarily by direct infiltration of rainfall. The principal area for recharge is along the Atlantic Coastal Ridge. This area is characterized by coarse permeable sands exposed at the surface. Figure 2-3 depicts the location of soils that overlay the recharge area. Other than water withdrawn from the aquifer for municipal and private irrigation purposes, natural discharge occurs as subsurface flow to the Indian River Lagoon within the City.

Recharge to the deeper Floridan aquifer is outside the City of Vero Beach in northwest Indian River County, except for discharge of treated effluent from the City's wastewater treatment plant. The water entering the aquifer moves eastward and discharges to the Atlantic Ocean.

Both the shallow and Floridan aquifers serve as potable water sources for the City of Vero Beach. Figure 2-4 depicts the City's existing production wells.

Water from the Floridan aquifer contains high chloride concentrations, which is treated using reverse osmosis method to make it potable. Except for lateral saltwater intrusion to groundwater under the barrier island and lands adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon, water from the shallow aquifer is acceptable for potable uses with limited treatment.

Both aquifers are under stress due to increased withdrawals and development of natural recharge areas, which will only be further exacerbated with continued growth and development in Indian River and surrounding counties. The intrusion of saltwater in the Floridan aquifer is considered a critical problem. Continued reliance on the shallow aquifer is also a concern due to threats from contaminants and susceptibility of the resource to droughts. A discussion of these issues and regional alternatives being considered for future water supply may be found in the Conservation and Infrastructure Elements.

Minerals. No recoverable, commercially valuable minerals exist in the City of Vero Beach.

Wetlands. The primary un-impounded wetlands in the city are estuarine wetlands bordering on the mainland side of the Indian River Lagoon and various spoil islands within that water body. A few isolated freshwater wetlands in the form of freshwater ponds and freshwater forested/shrub wetlands exist on the mainland.

The general location of these wetlands is depicted in Figure 2-5. Excluding estuarine and marine deepwater wetlands, approximately 494 acres of wetlands are contained within Vero Beach. Table 2-2 provides a breakdown of wetlands by type:

Table 2-2. Wetlands Acreage by Type

Wetlands Type	Number of Acres	% of Total
Estuarine and Marine Deepwater	1,312	72.6
Estuarine and Marine Wetland	343	19.0
Freshwater Pond, Riverine, Emergent	55	3.1
Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland	96	5.3
Total	1,806	100.0

Source: St. Johns Water Management District; 2015

The estuarine wetlands contain salt marshes and mangroves. The mangroves tend to be heavily forested with red, black, and white mangroves. They function as nursery areas for marine life and provide food for fish species and rookeries for coastal birds. Mangroves play an important role in protecting shorelines from erosion, particularly during storm events.

Additionally, the impounded wetlands created for mosquito control are also present along the Indian River Lagoon. As these wetlands are not connected with the Indian River, they are generally not considered productive nurseries for marine life; however, they do provide habitat and shelter for animals and birds.

The protection and preservation of wetlands is critical due to its significant role in the ecosystem of the Indian River Lagoon. A discussion of the relevant issues related to wetlands is covered under the Conservation Element.

Beaches, Shorelines, and Estuarine Systems. Vero Beach's barrier island has over 3 miles of beach frontage. The Indian River, which is an estuarine lagoon, separates the barrier island from the mainland. Within the Indian River in Vero Beach, are submerged and estuarine wetlands that create certain development constraints and unique recreational, economic, and environmental opportunities.

Within the Indian River estuarine system are seagrass beds. These beds are critical to the stabilization of the lagoon's bottom, maintenance of water quality, and provide a feeding ground and protective cover for immature shellfish and fish. Figure 2-5 depicts seagrass beds in the Indian River Lagoon.

A discussion of the problems and opportunities related to these natural systems is presented in the Coastal Management and Conservation Elements.

Floodplains. Areas of Vero Beach on both sides of the Indian River are subject to flooding. Figure 2-6 depicts the special flood hazard zones in the City based on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. As a requirement of participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, the City has adopted a floodplain ordinance to regulate existing and new development in these flood hazard areas.

Except for flooding that occurs due to the inadequate storm drainage during intense rainfall events, the principal source of flooding in the City is from tropical storm events. Strong hurricanes may create storm surges and tides of up to 15 feet above sea level. The threat of rising sea levels is increasing such storm threats and is discussed in the Coastal Management Element.

### **Facilities, Services and Infrastructure**

Man-made improvements and services shape and define development intensity, characteristics and patterns. These improvements may not only increase the development capacity of land, but may also be used to encourage or discourage development in specific areas. Such facilities, services, and associated infrastructure ensure that development is supported in a manner that provides housing, employment, recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities to ensure a high quality of life for the City's residents while protecting the unique environment resources of the area.

Pursuant to State law, the City has adopted a concurrency management system to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the impacts of new development. Through the concurrency management system, potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, stormwater management, roads, parks and open space, and schools are monitored. If capacity is not available to serve the proposed development, no development permit may issued except under certain limited circumstances.

The impacts of development on many of the other types of facilities and services are also reviewed during the development permitting process. However, as these services are not part of the concurrency management system, the lack of capacity of those services cannot be the basis for denial of a development permit. These services include electricity, telecommunications, telephone, police, fire protection, and emergency services

Transportation. Transportation is essential for the development of land by providing access between land uses for movement of people and goods. To provide for an efficient and effective transportation system requires coordination with land use development in a manner that reduces the length and number of vehicle trips and is energy efficient. A detailed discussion of transportation is presented in the Transportation Element.

*Road system:* The City is serviced by four major roadways: State Route 60 running east-west through the middle of the city connecting the barrier island, Indian River Boulevard and US

Highway 1 with Interstate 95; US Highway 1 running north-south through the middle of the city; Indian River Boulevard running north-south through the city generally paralleling the Indian River Lagoon; and State Route A1A running north-south bisecting the barrier island.

Individual roadways within the City are maintained by the Florida Department of Transportation, Indian River County, City of Vero Beach, or private homeowners associations. All public roadways within the City currently meet level of service standards established in the Comprehensive Plan.

*Mass transit:* A fixed route transit service is provided in Indian River County and the City of Vero Beach by GoLine, established in 1994. GoLine is operated by the Indian River County Senior Association, which also provides demand-response services for the transportation disadvantaged. Ten of GoLine's 16 transit routes directly serve the City of Vero Beach.

The funding sources for GoLine are federal and state grants, Indian River County general fund and gas taxes, various not-for-profit agencies, and advertising. GoLine charges no fares. Ridership has been dramatically increasing over the last couple of years to over one million in fiscal year 2013/2014.

*Aviation:* The 1,700-acre Vero Beach Regional Airport is the largest airport in Indian River County. It provides general aviation services and is capable of accommodating high performance and large corporate and commercial jet aircraft with one runway of over 7,300 feet. In 2013, the airport had over 185,000 air operations, which included many "touch and goes," as it serves as a major flight training center. An update to the airports' master plan is currently underway.

In December, 2015, regularly scheduled commercial air service was initiated at the Vero Beach Regional Airport between Vero Beach and Newark, New Jersey. The City has lacked any scheduled commercial air service since 1996. Until this new service was initiated, the nearest airport with scheduled commercial air service was Melbourne International Airport in Brevard County.

*Rail:* The Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad provides freight rail service through the City of Vero Beach with its nearest freight yard located in Fort Pierce. Approximately 1.9 miles of mainline tracks bisect the City generally paralleling U.S. Highway 1.

No passenger rail service is currently provided to the City. Over the last ten years, the City in conjunction with the State and other municipalities in the region have explored possible reinstated of passenger rail service in conjunction with passenger rail service between Jacksonville and Miami without any positive results.

A significant and polarizing issue is the proposed "high-speed" passenger rail service between Miami and Orlando that is planned to go through the City without making any local stops. It is anticipated that 32-passenger trains a day will go through Vero Beach at speeds reaching 110 miles per hour. Additionally, improvements to the FEC rail system made in

conjunction with the proposed passenger rail service will allow for more rail freight to pass through the City.

The City and other municipalities and counties in the region are very concerned about the adverse impacts of the proposed high-speed passenger rail service and increased rail freight traffic on public safety and health, road network, quality of life, historic and cultural resources, land uses, and property values. The high-speed rail service will require specific improvements to all existing rail road crossings.

*Ports:* Although the Indian River Lagoon provides water transportation as part of the Inter-coastal waterway, no deepwater port exists in the City or Indian River County. The nearest deepwater port facilities are located in Fort Pierce.

Utilities Infrastructure. Utilities infrastructure consists of facilities and services for the provision of potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater management, and solid waste management. These infrastructure elements are essential to support development in a manner that conserves and protects the natural resources of the area. The various infrastructure facilities are more thoroughly discussed under the Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Elements. Issues related to some of these systems are also discussed in the Conservation and Coastal Management Elements.

*Potable Water:* The City of Vero Beach provides water service within its corporate limits and to customers in unincorporated Indian River County and the Town of Indian River Shores with an estimated service population of over 38,000. Private wells withdrawing water from the shallow aquifer are also located within Vero Beach for lawn or landscaping irrigation.

The sources of the potable water are the shallow aquifer (26 wells) and Floridan aquifer (7 wells). Water withdrawn from the Floridan aquifer is treated through a reverse osmosis process that results in a brine by-product that requires treatment before discharge. Water drawn from the shallow aquifer is treated by a lime softening process.

The City's two water treatment facilities are located at the Vero Beach Regional Airport. These plants are a Lime Softening water treatment plant (WTP) of 12.99 million gallons per day (MGD) and a Reverse Osmosis WTP of 3.3 MGD. In 2015, the average daily flow of the two facilities was 5.573 MGD with a maximum daily peak flow of 8.09 MGD.

Except for a large vacant tract on its western borders, the City's water service area is predominately built-out. Increased water conservation measures and water reuse in combination with constraints on groundwater will have a dampening effect on future demand. The system has sufficient capacity to meet anticipated future demand.

Figure 2-4 shows the location of existing water production wells and water treatment facilities.

*Sanitary Sewer:* The City of Vero Beach provides wastewater treatment service to basically the same area served by its water service, which includes the Town of Indian River

Shores and portions of unincorporated Indian River County. Within Vero Beach corporate limits, approximately 1,500 single family residences are on septic tanks with almost two-thirds of these on-site systems located on the barrier island. The estimated population served by central sewer is 30,850 of whom about 15,000 are City residents.

The City's wastewater treatment facility (WWTF), located along the Indian River Lagoon, is a tertiary treatment plant with a capacity of 4.5 MGD. The primary means of effluent disposal is through a reuse system and in rainy weather through a deep injection well at the City's airport. The deep injection well has a permitted capacity of 9.7 MGD with a total depth of 3,000 feet.

The average annual average daily flow from the City's WWTF was 3.54 MGD in 2014, which is approximately 79 percent of design capacity. The expansion of central sewer to single family residences on existing septic systems and development of the large tract of vacant land along the City's western corporate limits, may require further evaluation of the need to expand the treatment capacity of the plant.

The reuse system has a permitted capacity of 4.5 MGD, which is fully utilized for irrigation of residential areas, golf courses, recreation areas, and roadway medians. The reuse system has three reuse water ground storage tanks. In addition to treated sewage, the water is drawn from the Main Relief Canal and treated at the WWTF before transmission to the reuse system.

Figure 2-4 depicts the location of the wastewater treatment plant and public/private lift stations within the service area.

*Stormwater Management:* Stormwater management is the process of controlling runoff from rainwater to minimize water quantity and quality impacts. The lack of natural drainage systems and the increase in impervious surface from the development has resulted in managing stormwater through a system of detention/retention ponds, drainage ditches, canals, and ex-filtration trenches.

Other than private on-site systems, the responsibilities for man-made drainage improvements for specific drainage basins within Vero Beach are held by the Indian River Farms Water Control District (M-Series Basin) and the City of Vero Beach (R-Series and Beach Series Beaches). Permitting for stormwater management is the responsibility of the Indian River Farms Water Control District, St. Johns Water Management District, and City of Vero Beach.

The City's municipal stormwater system is currently operating under a stormwater discharge permit from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. This permit is a Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit required by the federal Clean Water Act, National Pollution Discharge Elimination Program (NPDES).

The existing drainage facilities are capable of accommodating existing development and future anticipated development based on current level of service standards. Although the permitting requirements require on-site detention of 1.5 inches for 25 year/24 hour storm event,

these standards generally apply only to new development or substantial improvements to existing development or a significant increase in the amount of impervious surface.

With requirements for water quality improvements in the discharge of stormwater to the Indian River Lagoon, the City is currently retrofitting its outfalls as part of its NPDES Phase II MS4 permit. The City is exploring the creation of a stormwater management district to help fund and accelerate the retrofitting of its outfalls and other needed drainage improvements.

*Solid Waste Management:* Solid waste management involves the removal, storage, and disposal of trash, garbage, yard waste, and other debris. Door-to-door garbage service is provided by the City to residences on a twice-a-week basis and commercial garbage collection is provided two to six days a week depending upon the customer needs. Residential yard waste is collected by the City at least once a week or more if a special pickup is required.

Curbside pickup of recycling is provided for single family homes by a Indian River County franchised hauler. Recycling services for businesses and multiple family development is through commercial haulers.

Collected solid waste is disposed at the 595-acre Indian River landfill located south of the City of Vero Beach. Collected yard waste and recycling materials are also processed at this site. This landfill has sufficient capacity with improvements has the capacity to handle projected waste demand for the County and the City of Vero Beach through 2035.

The City's solid waste program is financed through service fees. A non-ad valorem assessment finances landfill operations managed by the Indian River County Solid Waste Disposal District.

Parks and Recreation. The adequate availability and access to parks, recreation facilities and programs, and open space are important factors in the quality of life of City residents. For a City of its size, Vero Beach has a significant array of recreation facilities and park open space, which attract many residents of Indian River County outside the City limits.

The City of Vero Beach has 23 City-owned and designated parks and recreation facilities totaling approximately 180 acres. These parks range in size from the 69-acre Riverside Park with its various recreational and cultural facilities to smaller sized neighborhood parks of less than 5 acres in size.

The City's park system includes four beach parks along the Atlantic Ocean totaling 31.9 acres with over 3,340 linear feet of beach frontage, including South Beach Park owned jointly by the City and Indian River County. In addition beach access is provided through 10 public access corridors.

The City Marina, located on the east side of the Indian River Lagoon north of the Barber Bridge provides 108 wet slips, 57 mooring buoys, and 75 dry slips. Boat ramps are provided in three locations on the barrier island providing access to the Indian River Lagoon and Intercoastal Waterway.

In addition to the City-owned facilities, the County owns a 12-acre ball field complex north of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, which the County placed on the market in 2016 for sale. Within the City is the former 72-acre Dodgertown sports complex, now called the “Historic Dodgertown” is owned by Indian River County and leased to Minor League Baseball. This facility hosts numerous sporting events and provides training and conference facilities for hosting various sports teams.

The existing park and open space facilities within the City of Vero Beach are more than sufficient to serve the existing and future anticipated population of the City. Parks, recreation, and open space are discussed in detail in the Recreation and Open Space Element.

Public Safety. Police protection is provided by the City’s Police Department with headquarters located on the southwest corner of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Place across from the Vero Beach City Hall. Correction facilities are operated by Indian River County Sheriff’s Department on a 40-acre site located outside of Vero Beach north of the Vero Beach Municipal Airport.

Fire/Rescue protection services are provided by the County’s Department of Emergency Management and funded through a municipal service taxing district. Fire/rescue staff are dual certified as fire fighters and paramedics. Every developed portion of the City is within 3 miles of one of the three County Fire/Rescue stations located within the city limits. This service distance provides a high rating based upon criteria by the Insurance Service Office (ISO). The ISO establishes specific ratings that are used in the determination of property insurance premiums.

Hospital Care and Public Health. The general hospital that services Vero Beach is the 335-bed Indian River Medical Center located on 36<sup>th</sup> Street just north of the city. It is the center of a large complex of medical offices and clinics contained within special medical zoning district established by Indian River County. Public health services are provided by the County Health Department located at the County’s new administrative complex located on 27<sup>th</sup> Street in Vero Beach.

Education and Libraries. The Indian River County School District provides public education throughout Indian River County. The Indian River County School District has sufficient capacity to accommodate any future student growth that may be anticipated in the City over the next 20-years.

The City is served by the Beachland, Vero Beach, and Dodgertown Elementary Schools (K-5); Gifford Middle School (6-8); Freshman Learning Center (9<sup>th</sup> grade); Vero Beach High School; and the Rosewood Elementary Magnet school. Five charter schools and several private and parochial schools operate in Indian River County. Just outside the City of Vero Beach within the State Route 60 corridor near the Indian River Mall, is Mueller Center Branch of the Indian River State College. Indian River State College offer two-year and four-year degrees. Its main campus is in Ft. Pierce.

Library Facilities. Indian River County provides public library services. The only County library in Vero Beach is the Main Library located within the downtown.

## ANALYSIS

This section first examines the key factors necessary for rational and efficient land use planning. These factors include:

- the amount of land need to accommodate residential, commercial and industrial growth over the 20-year planning period;
- the availability and suitability of vacant land to accommodate growth;
- the restraints on future development; and
- the need for infill and redevelopment.

The section concludes with an in-depth analysis of significant opportunities and development policy issues to be addressed in this element and the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The emphasis of the plan update is to build upon the direction provided in the 2005 *Vero Beach Vision Plan* and as further updated and expanded upon in the 2010 *Evaluation and Appraisal Report* as well as meet the requirements of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes.

The *Vision Plan* called for keeping Vero Beach’s small town character intact, while being proactive in maintaining the City’s unique character and attributes as conditions change. To maintain and enhance the City, requires focusing on promoting walkable, connected residential and commercial neighborhoods, mixed use projects, and a vibrant downtown and commercial districts, while at the same time protecting the City’s natural and historic resources and small-town character.

### **Land Needed to Accommodate 2035 Population and Uses**

An analysis of the amount of needed acreage designated by the Future Land Use Map for residential, commercial, industrial, and public land uses to accommodate the projected 2035 population of the City of Vero Beach is required. To perform this analysis requires baseline information on the distribution of future land uses from the City’s existing Future Land Use Map and specific parameters on the density, intensity, uses, and location factors relevant to each future land use category. This information is applied in evaluating and determining future land use needs and the capacity of the existing Future Land Use Map to meet these needs.

Distribution of Uses of Future Land Use Map. The existing Future Land Use Map is shown in Figure 2-7. Future land use designation by acreage is presented in Table 2-3 below:

Table 2-3: Future Land Use Acreage by Designation

Future Land Use Designation	Number of Acres	% of Total
Residential	2,688	44.6
Low	2,076	
Medium	408	
High	147	
Mixed Residential	12	
Mobile Home Park	45	

Commercial	365	6.1
Mixed Use	203	3.3
Industrial	1,209	20.0
Government/Institutional/Public Use	216	3.6
Parks	166	2.8
Environmentally Significant	415	6.9
Conservation	764	12.7
Total	6,026	100.0

Source: Public Works Geographic Information System Parcel File Data, 2015

Residential Land Uses. Residential land uses account for over 44 percent of the total land use acreage designated by the Future Land Use Map. The five categories of designations are discussed in detail below.

*Residential Low (RL):* The RL designation accounts for over 77 percent of the land allocated for residential uses which reflects the historical growth and development of the City of Vero Beach. This category includes single-family detached dwelling units on a single lot or parcel and along with supportive recreation and community services and facilities. Additionally this category allows for master plan development (projects of 200 or more acres) that may include non-residential development principally serving the project.

This designation is applied to those areas that are suitable for low-density single-family development based on existing development patterns, infrastructure capacity, natural conditions, and constraints. These uses are located away from adverse impacts of major highways and intensive commercial and industrial activities.

The maximum gross density is up to 6 units per acre; however, the average net density that includes right-of-way ranges from around 2 to 4 units per acre except it is less than 2 units per acre in some of the more upscale barrier island neighborhoods. The floor area ratio (FAR) of this designation is a maximum of 0.38.<sup>1</sup>

*Residential Medium (RM):* The RM designation accounts for about 15 percent of the land allocated for residential uses. This category includes single-family detached and detached dwellings, duplexes, and multiple dwellings on a single lot along with supportive recreation and community services and facilities, adult congregate living facilities, and other institutional uses. This designation also allows for professional offices and other limited non-residential uses.

The RM designation is for those areas with good highway and street access. It is intended to serve as a transition between single-family detached and more intensive and higher density uses.

The maximum gross density is up to 10 units per acre. Approximately one-quarter of land designated as RM is restricted by zoning that only allows non-residential uses, except for single-family detached housing. The FAR for this designation is a maximum of 0.5; however,

---

<sup>1</sup> FAR is calculated by dividing the area of a lot or parcel by the floor area of the building(s) on the lot or parcel.

projects being developed under this classification may be limited to a maximum of 0.4 FAR due to underlying zoning.

*Residential High (RH):* The RH designation accounts for 5.4 percent of the land allocated for residential uses. This category includes uses similar to Residential Medium, except higher density housing is permitted. As with the RM, this designation allows for professional offices and other limited non-residential uses.

The RH designation is for those areas with access to arterials and collector streets that provide a transition between lower density residential areas and more intensive and higher density uses. It may also provide a break between commercial uses located in commercial corridors.

The maximum gross density is up to 15 to 18 units per acre. The FAR for this designation is a maximum of 0.5 unless restricted by the underlying zoning.

*Mixed Residential (MR):* The MR designation occupies only 12 acres in one small area of the city. This designation is intended for areas with a mixture of housing types, including manufactured housing, that are deteriorating or which have a substantial amount of substandard housing. The maximum density is up to 12 units per acre with a maximum FAR of 0.5. Underlying zoning restricts uses to residential and ancillary community and institutional uses and FAR to a maximum of 0.40. Many of the existing residential structures have been demolished due to code enforcement action and actions by individual owners.

*Mobile Home Park (MHP):* The MHP designation occupies 45 acres. This designation is for existing mobile home parks and intended for locations near commercial uses and adjacent to other types of residential uses. The maximum density is 8 mobile homes per acre with a maximum FAR of 0.3.

Commercial (C). The C designation accounts for 5.9 percent of the total land use acreage depicted on the Future Land Use Map. This designation is intended for highway and tourist commercial uses on lands located near existing urban centers, areas in transition from residential uses to offices, and high access points such as the intersection of arterial streets, and lands located adjacent to arterial and collector streets. This designation allows for a mixture of permanent and transient residential, commercial, and office uses and a wide range of other public, cultural, and institutional uses.<sup>2</sup>

The maximum FAR is 1.0; however, most existing developed properties have a FAR of less than 0.5 due to underlying zoning, off-street parking, and storm drainage requirements. The maximum density is 15 dwelling units per acre for permanent residential and 30 rooms or units per acre for transient residential, which includes hotels, motels, time-share, and vacation rentals.

Mixed Use (MX). The MX designation accounts for 3.4 percent of the land use acreage depicted on the Future Land Use Map. This designation is intended for mixture of residential,

---

<sup>2</sup> As applied in this Comprehensive Plan and the City's Land Development Regulations, transient residential use applies to any temporary occupancy of a dwelling, room, or unit of less than 30 days.

office, commercial, industrial, public, community service, educational, and institutional uses in areas suitable for urban scale development and intensities that are located near arterial and collector streets with access to multi-modal transportation alternatives. These locations include the central core of the City and its downtown.

The maximum FAR is 2.0; however, underlying zoning limits FAR outside the downtown zoning district to a maximum of 0.5 FAR. Where zoning allows residential and transient residential uses, the maximum density is 17 dwelling units or 30 rooms/units per acre.

Industrial (I). The I designation accounts for over 20 percent of the land use acreage depicted on the Future Land Use Map. A significant portion of lands designated I is found at the Vero Beach Regional Airport. This designation is intended for those areas suitable for urban scale development intensities that contain or are located adjacent to major transportation facilities such as airports, arterial streets or railroads, which are buffered from residential neighborhoods or located with consideration to environmental impacts and other performance standards. The designation contains a wide mixture of light industrial, aviation related, warehouse, highway-oriented commercial, professional offices, permanent and transient residential uses, including a wide variety of public, cultural, community, park and recreation uses.

The maximum FAR is 1.00 unless restricted by underlying zoning. The maximum density is 15 to 18 dwelling units per acre or 30 rooms/units per acre.

Government/Institutional/Public Use (GU). The GU designation accounts for only 3.6 percent of the land use acreage depicted on the Future Land Use Map. This designation was intended for areas where public services and facilities are necessary, which may have a potentially adverse impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods. This designation includes government facilities, public utilities, hospitals, educational facilities, hospitals, transportation terminals, and small-scale recreational activities compatible with and subordinate to an existing governmental utility.

The maximum FAR is 0.50. No dwelling units or transient rooms/units are allowed.

Parks (P). The P designation accounts for 2.8 percent of the land uses depicted on the Future Land Use Map. This designation is intended for active and passive parks and public recreation facilities including cultural activities. Depending upon the facilities and functions of these uses, the areas to be so designation are intended for locations central to neighborhoods, near access corridors and transportation, or access to appropriate water or land resources. The maximum FAR is 0.40. No dwelling units or transient rooms/units are allowed.

Environmentally Significant (ES). The ES designation accounts for 6.9 percent of land use acreage depicted on the Future Land Use Map. This designation is intend for those areas that contain or are adjacent to lands that are predominately environmentally sensitive. This designation allows for very low-density single-family detached development, parks and open space, conservation and limited community service facilities and utilities. The maximum density

is 0.2 dwelling units per acre on the barrier island and Indian River Lagoon islands and 0.5 dwelling units per acre on the mainland. The maximum FAR is 0.30.

Conservation (CV). The CV designation occupies 764 acres, which is 12.7 percent of land use acreage depicted on the Future Land Use Map. This designation is applied to those areas which possess lands with qualities and features that play an essential role in the functioning of the Indian River Lagoon ecosystem. This designation is applied to public and non-governmentally-owned conservation lands. Use of these lands is restricted to conservation, open space, limited passive recreation, and public utilities.

### **Land Needed to Accommodate Future Growth**

To establish policies for guiding land use patterns and policies for 2035, an important consideration is the amount of land needed in the two major future land use categories to serve the future population. These two categories are residential and commercial/industrial uses.

Other nonresidential uses such as public facilities and recreation are not included as the projection of future population is insignificant, which is the major factor contributing to demand for these land use categories. The commercial and industrial demand is a different matter as the City is anticipated to experience some growth in its employment base despite a stable or slightly increasing future population, since as the County seat and center of government and commerce in Indian River County, the City is anticipated to gain employment which will directly impact the need for nonresidential land.

Residential Demand. As indicated in Chapter 1, the permanent population for the City of Vero Beach is projected by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research to decline with seasonal population to increase slightly over the 20-year period of the Comprehensive Plan. Seasonal population is expected to increase by slightly less than 100 seasonal, visitors, and tourists.

The population projections for the City in the recent socio-economic data projections for the Indian River County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan indicates a population growth of less than 1,000 during this same period. However, even under this projection, the City has substantial amount of vacant residential land, vacancies in dwelling units, and redevelopment possibilities to accommodate further population growth.

Therefore, based on the above, it was not necessary in this planning update to estimate any demand for residential land use. However, the amount of vacant land available for new residential is identified and evaluated under vacant land availability and suitability section below.

Nonresidential Demand. The City's employment is expected to continue growth over the next 20-years due to anticipated development at the Vero Beach Regional Airport, and redevelopment and infill in the City's several business districts discussed in this chapter. Using employment projection data prepared for the Indian River County 2040 Long Range

Transportation Plan, employment in Vero Beach is anticipated to increase from 21,600 in 2015 to about 26,050 in 2035.<sup>3</sup>

Due to the mix of land uses inherent in both the Future Land Use and Zoning categories and the lack of specific employment data and site-specific floor area data, the staff had to apply a very simplistic forecasting methodology to determine land use acreage to accommodate future growth.

The acreage of existing land use within the Commercial, Transportation/Communications/Utilities, Industrial and Wholesale Trade, and Education/Government/Health Care and Institutional categories was totaled. The acreage of the occupied by the Vero Beach Regional Airport runway and taxi aprons was deducted from the aforementioned total to provide the estimated amount of existing employment based land uses.

The estimated employment-based existing land use was determined to be 1,065 acres in 2015. Based on an estimate of .26 FAR as the consolidated average for all nonresidential uses, the amount of existing floor area occupied by private and public businesses was calculated at 12.5 million square feet. This estimated was divided by the estimated employment for 2015 of 21,600 to yield an average of 579 square feet per employee.

The figure of 579 square feet per employee was utilized for projection of future land use needs. It was assumed that 60 percent of projected employment would be accommodated on property with existing uses, as redevelopment and infill opportunities coupled by increase land values will encourage higher utilization of existing properties.

Therefore, it was assumed that 40 percent (1780) of the projected employment increase of 4450 by 2035 would be accommodated on vacant land. Using the figure of 579 square feet per employee and an assumption the vacant lands would be developed at a FAR of .35' it was estimated that an additional 67.6 acres of land for nonresidential uses would be needed. This estimate is considered on the high-end of land needed for nonresidential development.

Vacant Land Availability and Suitability. The following is a breakdown of vacant land by future land use category available for residential and nonresidential development:

*Vacant Land Availability:* As discussed above, the number of vacant houses and the projected loss of or stabilization of the City's population over the next 20-years translates into little or no demand for new residential land use, except for proposed projects that are under review by the City. However, should conditions change, the City does have ample available vacant land to accommodate any anticipated growth inside its current corporate boundaries as shown in Table 2-3 below.

The available vacant land for nonresidential uses is presented by future land use designation in Table 2-3 below. The information in this table shows that the City has almost

---

<sup>3</sup> The employment projection data was extrapolated by Planning and Development Department staff assuming a level increase in employment over the 20-year period.

twice times the amount of available vacant land for nonresidential uses to meet the projected demand of slightly less than the additional 68 acres between 2015 and 2035.

Table 2-3. Vacant Land Availability

Future Land Use Designation	Number of Acres
<i>Residential</i>	
Residential Low (up to 6 units/acre)	386
Platted Vacant Lots (147)	53
Unplatted Land	333
Residential Medium (6 to 10 units/acre)	27
Residential High (up to 15-18 units/acre)	4
Mixed Residential (up to 10 units/acre)	7
<i>Nonresidential</i>	
Commercial (FAR .5/30 hotel rooms/acre)	33
Industrial (FAR .5)	67
Mixed Use (FAR .5-2.0/ 30 hotel rooms/acre)	29

Source: Vero Beach Planning and Development Department, 2015.

*Vacant Land Suitability-Soils:* Within the City, soils can limit development activity in two major ways: load bearing capacity and suitability for sanitary facilities. Poorly drained soils, which comprise a significant area of the City create building limitations due to the wetness of the soil and limitations on septic tanks. This lack of drainage can result in the ponding of water, flooding and caving of excavation. These limitations may be overcome through building techniques and standards such as raising the elevation of sites through use of fill dirt and enhancing the natural drainage area of new development. The City’s stormwater regulations and program to eliminate septic systems and connect them to the central sewer system should be emphasized in the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. A more detailed discussion is provided in the Infrastructure Element.

Moderately and excessively drained soils also create issues. These soils are shown in Figure 2-3. The most significant issue for development is that such soils are poor filters and, in the case of excessively drained soils may create the potential for groundwater contamination. Such containment may adversely affect groundwater recharge areas shown in Figure 2 and create potential for infiltration of nutrients from septic systems into the Indian River Lagoon.

Except for areas within existing development that are covered by impervious surfaces, the aquifer recharge areas are primarily contained within the boundaries of the Vero Beach Regional Airport. These areas are protected through a Conservation future land use designation and State/City regulations regarding protection of production wells. These issues are addressed more fully in the Infrastructure Element.

*Vacant Land Suitability-Coastal High Hazard Area.* Almost all vacant lands within the Coastal High Hazard Area (see Figure 2-8) are designated as Environmentally Sensitive or Conservation. Due to the presence of wetlands and significant habitat only isolated parcels may be developed for single-family residential use within the ES designated areas.

*Vacant Land Suitability-Wetlands.* A significant portion of wetlands are located within designated Conservation and Environmentally Sensitive Areas; however isolated pockets of wetlands exist on vacant lands suitable for residential development. These areas and the Indian River Lagoon are to be protected through the City’s stormwater and development regulations and specific policy recommendations of this Plan. See discussion of wetlands earlier in this chapter and Chapter 8, Conservation.

*Vacant Land Suitability-Flood Prone Areas.* The major flood prone areas of the City may be generally found along the Indian River Lagoon on the barrier island and mainland. See Figure 2-6. These areas create special problems both for new and existing development; however, with increased emphasis on flood protection and enhanced requirements for development in special flood hazard areas these lands don’t constitute a significant problem for development.

### **Urban Sprawl**

As stated in the Indian River County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, urban sprawl is characterized by “scattered, poorly planned urban development that occurs in urban fringe and rural areas and frequently invades lands important for environmental protection. Urban sprawl typically manifests itself in one or more of the following patterns: leap frog development, ribbon strip development, and large expanses of low-density, single-dimensional development.” Such patterns of development lead to increased cost of public services and facilities, loss of valuable open natural land and resources, inefficient use of land, excess increased transportation costs, increased vehicle miles travelled, greenhouse gas emissions, and lack of non-motorized travel options.

As noted previously, the City of Vero Beach is almost entirely built-out, except for a large tract of land suitable for development west of 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and north of 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Most existing development is rather compact and of urban density and intensity. Where new development is occurring it is mostly infill or replacement development.

The City should continue to implement specific strategies and policies to encourage and promote compact development patterns, which include the following:

- Promoting infill and mixed-use development in appropriate locations in major commercial corridors and commercial districts and infill development in the City’s older neighborhoods in proximity to the Downtown through incentives and increased flexibility in the City’s land development regulations;
- Promoting walkable and connected neighborhoods that provides for a mix of uses at urban densities and intensities that support a range of housing choices and a multi-modal transportation system.

- Improving non-auto dependent connectivity between residential, shopping, entertainment and employment areas through the provision of interconnected sidewalks, bike lanes/paths and expanded regional transit service;
- Directing future economic growth and associated development to areas of the City in a manner that does not have an adverse impact on and protects natural resources and ecosystems through specific policies in the Comprehensive Plan and implementation through the City's land development regulations; and
- Limiting annexation of properties in unincorporated Indian River County to only those lands within the designated Indian River County Urban Service Area and areas already served or able to be cost-effectively served by City utilities unless extenuating circumstances require connection to County utilities.

### **Residential Neighborhoods Preservation and Stabilization**

The City of Vero Beach is almost entirely built out. Many of its older, historic neighborhoods located on the mainland surrounding the historic downtown have been under pressure for change resulting from expansion of nonresidential uses into neighborhoods, increased traffic, softening of property values, infill development inconsistent with the character of these neighborhoods, and deteriorating maintenance of yards and structures. The major issue is how residential, principally older historic neighborhoods should be preserved and stabilized using as starting point in the development of specific strategies.

As stated eloquently in the *Vero Beach Vision Plan* ("*Vision Plan*"), "Vero Beach is a community of neighborhoods—neighborhoods of all shapes, sizes, characters, and styles" and from neighborhoods on the barrier island to those on the Mainland represent "more than mere places to live." Neighborhoods form the backbone and lifeblood of the community.

Vero Beach neighborhoods have been undergoing increased pressure for change since the adoption of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. In some neighborhoods, particularly on the barrier island, existing residences, some of which are of historical significance, have been replaced with larger, more expansive residences which some residents believe are out of scale and the character with existing residences in the neighborhood and adversely affects the overall quality of life.

In older neighborhoods, commercial and institutional uses have experienced intrusion by institutional and nonresidential uses disruptive to these neighborhoods' integrity and the quality of life of their residents. The very fabric of some of the older, less affluent neighborhoods show symptoms of destabilization, such as: loss of property values; a real or perceived increase in crime and a reduction in the sense of security among residents; an increase in the proportion of absentee landlords; and lack of property maintenance and code compliance.

During and subsequent to the "Great Recession," experienced throughout most of the country and Florida, the City experienced numerous foreclosures. The adverse impact of these foreclosures on neighborhood stabilization has been confined primarily to mainland neighborhoods.

The City has addressed property maintenance, squatters, and vandalism problems with these properties through code enforcement and abatement measures where necessary and appropriate. Unfortunately, the City has had to primarily rely on General Fund resources to pay for these abatements.

Residents of these neighborhoods, as typified in neighborhood enhancement strategies prepared for the Original Town and Osceola Park neighborhoods in 2009, recognize that the lack of private investment and market factors contribute to these problems, but that insufficient public infrastructure, lack of amenities and inadequate policies and regulations to protect these neighborhoods and promote reinvestment are also contributing factors.

The City has undertaken some capital improvements to improve its older, established neighborhoods through provision of new sidewalks, lighting, street resurfacing, stormwater and sewer improvements and expansion of the Neighborhood Watch program to more neighborhoods. Although these efforts are limited by the lack of sufficient financial and personnel resources and other competing needs, it would be appropriate to provide policy guidance in the Comprehensive Plan to address neighborhood stabilization and revitalization concerns.

General Neighborhood Issues and Strategies. As identified in the 2010 *Evaluation Appraisal Report*, specific objectives and policies are needed. The specific objective and policies need to be more pro-active than just maintaining the status quo and emphasize comprehensive strategies for managing redevelopment to enhance and maintain the character of neighborhoods.

The *Vision Plan* calls the City of Vero Beach, a “community of neighborhoods-neighborhoods of all shapes, characters, and styles.” Due to the importance of neighborhoods to residents’ quality of life, the Comprehensive Plan should be updated to elevate the importance of neighborhoods to include specific objective and supporting policies focusing, particularly on neighborhood preservation and stabilization.

The following policy areas from the *Vision Plan* and *Evaluation Appraisal Report* were analyzed for consideration in preparation of policies in the update of the Comprehensive:

*Property Maintenance and Housing Standards:* A significant factor in the conservation and stabilization of neighborhoods is the need for code enforcement to ensure that properties are maintained and to prevent deterioration of properties that adversely impact other properties in the neighborhood and create a public nuisance.

The City has done its best to enforce property maintenance through the sanitary property regulations and public nuisance provisions of the City Code. Additionally, it has enforced the provisions of the Standard Housing Code and Standard Unsafe Building Abatement Code; however, both these codes are no longer supported by any sponsoring organization.

Many localities, including Indian River County, have adopted the International Property Maintenance Code or a modification of this model code. This code regulates and governs the condition of all property, buildings and structures. A policy needs to be included committing the City to follow through with adopting its own code using this model code or similar code.

*Neighborhood Conservation/Historic Preservation Overlay Districts:* The 2005 *Vision Plan* recommended that “residential regulations/overlay districts (with stricter zoning standards or the regulations of architectural design issues) or local historic preservation designation should be considered only by a neighborhood request or petition representing a “super majority” of property owners.

In amending the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate specific objective and policies for Original Town, this recommendation was thoroughly vetted by the staff and the Planning and Zoning Board. Two issues arose from this analysis.

Many of the City’s older historic inner City neighborhoods suffer from the lack of investment that decreases the value of such neighborhoods for residential development. Although such regulations regulating building and site design may be appropriate in some cases, any such regulations should be linked to incentives to promote redevelopment and infill compatible with the existing neighborhood and in a manner that does not gentrify and displace long-term residents. The bottom line is more regulations without incentives will only further discourage investment and create significant opposition from property owners.

The second issue related to the threshold for enacting overlay or historic designation districts. Existing Policy 12.7 for Original Town that presents the policy guidelines for consideration of an overlay or historic designation district should be moved under on objective and policies for all residential neighborhoods.

*Conditional nonresidential and institutional uses:* The expansion of nonresidential and institutional uses has threatened the residential character of several older, historic neighborhoods on the mainland such as Osceola Park and Original Town. Guidance on this issues has been addressed for the Original Town neighborhood (see below) in a Comprehensive Plan text amendment, but such policy guidance needs to be expanded to include specific development criteria to be applied city-wide for the locating and expansion of non-residential uses in the RM and RH designations. Any such policy guidance must balance the rights of property owners with the public purpose to stabilize and preserve older city neighborhoods.

Particular subject areas for such policy guidance should include, but are not limited to:

- Buffer standards for conditional uses in the Land Development Regulations to ensure they meet specific purposes intended and are compatible with maintaining the character of the neighborhood.
- Restrictions on approving nonresidential uses through rezoning or development approval, particularly those proposed uses that may adversely impact historic resources.

- Development and design standards for nonresidential uses to ensure compatibility with existing residences in neighborhood.

*Residential Infill and Redevelopment:* The establishment of specific incentive programs for residential infill development, similar to initial efforts in commercial areas is needed. The City adopted an ordinance that provides limited property tax abatement for renovation or improvements to structures designated or eligible for designation as a historic structure or a contributing structure in a designated historic neighborhood.

Existing Policy 3.8 b. calls for density bonuses to “encourage infill, redevelopment, and provide affordable housing in designated locations and districts.” The City has never adopted any regulations regarding such density bonuses, except through the Transfer of Development Regulations (TDRs) provisions of the Mixed Use zoning district.

A major obstacle to any such density bonus is the City’s Charter. The Charter limits density levels (both permanent and transient residential densities) to those existing in the City’s Zoning Ordinance in effect on August 15, 1989, unless an increase is approved by referendum. As called for in the 2010 *Evaluation and Appraisal Report* this policy needs to be further reviewed and modified not only for residential multi-family land use designations, but also for nonresidential designations to encourage mixed use development.

The residential infill issue was clearly identified in the two neighborhood enhancement strategy plans prepared for Osceola Park and Original Town. Both documents identified the need for more efficient use of land to provide greater diversity and opportunities for residential development. The older neighborhoods are losing population due to many contributing factors that threatens their long term viability.

These older neighborhoods, generally designated as Residential Medium or High on the Future Land Use Map with underlying multiple family zoning, provide the opportunities for additional housing; however, the existing Land Development Regulations are a barrier due to restrictions on new development. More incentives and flexibility is needed to provide a wide range of housing types and styles that would enhance the sustainability of older developed neighborhoods. A discussion of the location areas within the City limits that the focus of residential infill and redevelopment is presented later in this chapter.

The following policy concepts should be considered in guiding the City’s regulations and actions to encourage and promote infill development in its older neighborhoods:

- Infill development must show tangible benefits to the community as a whole, not just developers or new residents.
- Any policy and regulatory framework must balance the market demands for such infill development and the rights of property owners with the distinctive low density/intensity character of Vero Beach as espoused very clearly in the *Vision Plan* and the underlying goal of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Infill policies and regulations should be firmly based on the development costs and local market factors.
- Regulations need to be crafted in a manner that promotes flexibility to allow a diversity of housing opportunities, such as, but not limited to cottage housing, small lots, accessory housing, townhouses, zero-lot lines, TDRs and density bonuses, and revisions to nonconformity regulations. Such regulations must be not be incompatible with the character of the existing neighborhood. Compatibility may be achieved through context-sensitive building design and site design such as the preparation of pattern books for individual neighborhoods if appropriate. Infill regulations may be implemented through an overlay district, special small lot standards, or planned residential development similar to concept of planned commercial developments allowed in the City's C-1A and C-1 zoning districts.
- Policies and resulting programs and regulations to foster infill residential development need to be incentive based and flexible in application both to encourage innovation and investment in the City's older neighborhoods and to ensure a diverse mix of housing types and market prices that serve the entire spectrum of future residents from singles, families, empty nesters and retirees.
- Policies should address neighborhood organizations and coordination with City staff as recommended in the neighborhood strategies for Original Town and Osceola Park.

*Neighborhood Infrastructure and Connections:* The viability and livability of neighborhoods is greatly dependent upon the presence and maintenance of basic infrastructure facilities such as sidewalks, lighting, street drainage, street paving, streetscape, and neighborhood parks. The City has routinely addressed these facilities through its Five-Year Capital Program, but some policy guidance in the Comprehensive Plan would further support such efforts.

In particular sidewalks are a major concern. In many older neighborhoods in particular, sidewalks need increased maintenance or are non-existent. Sidewalks provide for walkable neighborhoods that yield health benefits for walkers, reduce dependence on the automobile, and very importantly, a safer neighborhood. Specific policy regarding sidewalks in residential neighborhoods with connectivity to schools, shopping, entertainment and employment need to be considered in any neighborhood infrastructure policy.

Many of the City's older neighborhoods have a traditional grid street network with alley's which allows great connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. However, this grid network has been threatened in some neighborhoods with the abandonment of right-of-way. This issue was addressed in the Original Town plan amendment, but needs to be expanded as a general policy related to right-of-way abandonment in residential neighborhoods.

The grid network provides connectivity, but with connectivity comes traffic issues related to individuals cutting through neighborhoods at speed. To partially address this problem the maximum speed limit on local roads has been reduced to 25 mph. The City has adopted a traffic calming policy and program, which should be reviewed and referenced into the Comprehensive Plan update. The policy applies an incremental approach to traffic calming starting with small scale, relatively inexpensive measures, before going to larger scale and more costly physical improvements.

Although the City is primarily built-out, specific policies on subdivision development standards to ensure network connectivity to avoid issues that result in subdivision development with extensive reliance on cul-de-sacs. Such policies should address vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle connections within and external to a subdivision.

*Neighborhood Protection from Incompatible Uses.* Existing Policy 3.1 of the Comprehensive Plan requires that neighborhoods need to be protected and/or buffered from the encroachment of higher density and intensity uses. This policy should be expanded to consider review of buffer and landscaping requirements between residential districts and nonresidential districts, including buffers between single family districts and multi-family zoning districts. Such measures may include landscape and physical barriers, step-down building setback requirements, and transitional uses.

An important issue that was never addressed in either the *Vision Plan* or *2010 Evaluation Appraisal Report* was short-rental (less than 30 calendar days) of dwellings in the City's residential districts. This issue came to the forefront with a code enforcement case in 2011 and subsequent City Council resolve to comprehensively and proactively enforce the prohibition.

Short-term rentals encourage and promote a constant influx and turnover of strangers obtaining temporary accommodations in the City's residential neighborhoods, similar to a hotel or motel in a commercial district. The constant influx of strangers into a residential neighborhood disrupts the tranquility, privacy, and sense of security that residents expect and deserve living in a residential neighborhood.

Legal challenges have been filed with the Circuit Court that the City's ban was in violation of the Florida Legislature's action in 2011 that pre-empted local governments from regulation the times and duration of vacation rentals. However, it is the City's contention that its regulations have prohibited short-term rentals since at least the late 1970's. Once this legal challenge is resolved, some attention should be given to reviewing the Comprehensive Plan to determine if any appropriate amendment is needed.

Another issue not identified in the *Vision Plan* and *2010 EAR* is the emergence of "sober houses," in residential areas.<sup>4</sup> Such uses are protected by the American for Disabilities Act and fair housing laws, but are not addressed satisfactorily in the Land Development Regulations. The biggest concern is not such centers that operated under State licensing, but those that are

---

<sup>4</sup> Sober houses are residential facilities for housing individuals who are transitioning from alcohol or drug dependency.

unlicensed. Specific policy guidance on such use should be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. update.

General City-wide Neighborhood Policies and Program: In preparing a text amendment to this Comprehensive with the participation of stakeholders in the Original Town neighborhood, many specific actions were identified In Policy 12.9 that should be incorporated as city-wide policies to be implemented in conjunction with neighborhood contact organizations, property owners, residents, and businesses. These actions, consistent with the constraints on the City's financial and personnel resources, should include:

- Encourage and support neighborhood participation in the Neighborhood Watch Program.
- Support of neighborhood efforts to impact traffic and pedestrian/bike safety through City's traffic calming program.
- Support efforts to establish neighborhood identification/gateway signs and specialized street signage with historic names.
- Support efforts to stabilize and improve overall appearance of neighborhoods through comprehensive enforcement of zoning, housing, and property maintenance regulations and active participation of residents and property owners with code enforcement and solid waste personnel in comprehensive cleanup programs.
- Encourage and support the establishment of neighborhood, civic, or business organizations as the contact or liaison with staff in matters related to development and permit review, identification of neighborhood issues and needs and the coordination of city planning, code enforcement, community policing and other public programs in the neighborhood.

Original Town. On July 6, 2015, the City Council adopted Objective 12 and supporting policies for Original Town. The specific objectives and policies established for Original Town are still relevant for that neighborhood; however, some of the policies, which are appropriate for city-wide application in other neighborhoods, are recommended to be shifted under a new city-wide objective for neighborhoods. In particular, this includes Policy 12.6 as this investigation of appropriate regulatory changes that would be relevant to other historic inner city neighborhoods of Osceola Park and Edgewood Addition.

Osceola Park. In 2009 the City Council adopted the *Osceola Park Neighborhood Enhancement Strategies*. In the adoption resolution, the City Council directed staff to thoroughly review, refine, modify and/or expand the strategies contained in these documents with the expectation that such strategies would be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. The 2010 *Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)* recommended that an objective with supporting policies based on these documents be prepared for a text amendment to the Land Use Element.

A text amendment was adopted to the Comprehensive Plan for the Original Town neighborhood; however, the cutback in staffing and budget of the Planning and Development Department and other priorities resulted in no action on preparing an amendment for the Osceola Park Neighborhood. However, with the proposed Cultural Arts Village (see later discussion related to the proposed village), it is recommended that a policy be added to the Land Use Element that commits the City staff to preparing such an amendment in coordination with work amendment required to implement the Cultural Arts Village concept.

### **Downtown and Commercial Districts**

The *Vision Plan* identified five distinct commercial districts outside the US Highway 1 strip commercial development corridor that runs through Vero Beach from north to south. The general boundaries of these five districts are depicted in Figure 2-9.

As stated in the *Vision Plan*, the challenges facing the City, business community, and other stakeholders is how to encourage and foster a diverse commercial environment in each of these districts. Such commercial environment needs to be sustainable and supportive of each district's the distinctive character and functions in a manner that is consistent with the small city "feel" of Vero Beach and contributes to the quality of life of its residents and businesses.

Each of these districts present certain challenges and issues, which can't be solely addressed by the market, but requires proactive public-private cooperation and partnerships that involve amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and land development regulations, and public and private investment with a central focus on strategies and incentives to encourage appropriate infill, redevelopment, and mixed use development. As applied in the *Vision Plan* and this Comprehensive Plan mixed use is defined as the combination of permanent residential or transient residential (hotels/motels) with compatible non-residential development such as professional offices, retail, restaurants, and entertainment establishments. Such development is intended to establish a pedestrian-friendly environment based on access and improved connections between various uses without over reliance on the automobile.

Downtown. Historically, the Downtown was the center of commerce, government, and professional white collar employment for the City and Indian River County; however, with the development of Miracle Mile and the Indian Rive Mall, its commercial functions changed. While losing many of its retail establishments to newer, more suburban commercial centers, the vacated space has been replaced with many destination restaurants and bars, and numerous art galleries and antique shops. Several close-in historic residential neighborhoods are within walking distance of the Downtown.

Downtown property values have generally followed the trends throughout the rest of the city, although no significant new development has occurred in the Downtown over the last decade. Properties are generally well maintained with many interesting, historic buildings. Sidewalks and other streetscape features are fairly well maintained. On- and off-street public parking is generally available, except parking is tight in the area south of SR 60 along 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Old Dixie Highway, where there is a dense concentration of restaurants and bars.

In early 2016, the City declared the old Diesel Plant on the National Register of Historic Places as surplus property to be sold. After going through a RFP process, upon recommendation of the staff RFP Committee, the City Council selected a firm for purchase of the property and the development of the property as a microbrewery.

The Goal of the *Vision Plan* for the Downtown is to “reinforce downtown as a mixed-use office, employment, and governmental center, as well as a unique cultural, arts, entertainment, and residential enclave, with shopping and dining opportunities that support the district and its surrounding neighborhoods.” This goal was taken verbatim from Policy 7.3 of the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

However, as articulated by the *Vision Plan* and the subsequent report entitled *Downtown Charrette*, prepared for Main Street Vero Beach, and the *Downtown Action Plan* prepared by a consultant for the City in cooperation with the Main Street Board of Directors, Downtown has issues and challenges which are restricting its potential as a vibrant destination in the region. Some of the more significant issues identified include need for traffic calming modifications to State Route 60; more diversification of retailers; need for a master plan or unified urban design; lack of residential and transient residential development in the immediate Downtown area; more public landscaping and streetscape improvements; and need for funding mechanisms to finance public improvements.

The *Vision Plan* called for “increased downtown density” to encourage residential and transient residential needed in the downtown to support office and commercial development and create a more pedestrian-oriented environment. However, City Charter that does not allow for any increased density (dwelling units or hotel rooms) in a specific zoning district that was not in the City’s zoning regulations in 1989 without voter approval in a referendum.

Other mechanisms need to be explored to provide for increased density on a site without increasing the overall density in the downtown district. Such mechanisms as TDRs and “planned development” regulations that provide increased flexibility in development should be considered in the preparation of policies in the Comprehensive Plan update.

A major issue that continues to dominant the discussion regarding the future of Downtown is SR Route 60 (“Twin Pairs”). In numerous studies and public meetings concerns regarding the adverse impacts of this facility that splits the Downtown. These concerns are about the adverse impact on pedestrian safety, community appearance and vitality of Downtown businesses by encouraging speeding, limiting the visibility of retailers, and creating barriers to pedestrian movement between businesses.

In March 2013, a consulting firm for the City prepared a traffic calming feasibility study of the “Twin Pairs.” This study, which was approved by the City Council, demonstrated that a reduction in travel lanes was feasible without adverse impacts on travel times and capacity of SR 60.. A detailed discussion of this issue is presented in the Transportation Element.

Another significant transportation issue that has come to the forefront is the proposed “Brightline” (a.k.a. “All Aboard Florida”) high speed rail service, which will not provide any rail

service to the City, but will bring 32 high speed passenger trains passing through the middle of the City. Community concerns have been raised regarding the potential adverse impacts on Downtown property values, land uses, future investment in the Downtown, traffic safety, emergency services, and on the costs to local government. A more detailed discussion of this issue is presented in the Transportation Element.

In May 2012, the City County enacted Ordinance 2012-07 that authorized the establishment of economic development zones to enable the utilization of tax increment financing under the City's home rule powers. Subsequently the Historic Downtown Vero Beach Economic Development Zone (EDZ) was designated along with establishment of a five-person advisory committee. This advisory group will recommend specific capital improvements and other actions to the City Council to promote and enhance the economic development and vitality of the Downtown.

The City should move forward by considering the recommendations from the above documents and subsequent actions taken by the City for policy consideration. in the preparation of a specific objective and supporting policies for the Downtown.

Cardinal Drive/Ocean Drive. The commercial district on the barrier island centered on Ocean Drive and Cardinal Drive was recognized by the *Vision Plan* as a "symbolic heart" to many residents and visitors. The district is typified by small scale boutique retail and personal service businesses, hotels, and restaurants set in an up-scale pedestrian-oriented environment with a significant level of available public on-street and off-street parking facilities and well maintained landscaping.

In response to the recommendations of the *Vision Plan*, the *Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive and Beachland Boulevard Master Plan (Master Plan)* was prepared by a planning-engineering consulting firm and adopted by the City Council on March 20, 2007. After a six -year period of numerous public workshops and hearings on specific development standards for the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive commercial district, the City Council adopted the Ocean Drive/Cardinal Drive Commercial Overlay District in 2013.

As of the date of this writing, only one project has been reviewed and approved under these overlay development standards. Continued monitoring and evaluation are called for to ascertain if modifications to the regulations are appropriate. At a minimum, specific policies should be considered for incorporation in this Comprehensive Plan update to reflect policies set forth in the *Vision Plan* and *Master Plan* for this commercial district.

As part of this consideration of policies some focus should be placed on addressing parking. Parking has become an issue again in the overlay district with the recovering economy. The *Parking Management Strategies* for the beachside business district prepared by an engineering-planning consulting firm in 2009 should be reviewed to identify specific policies for consideration in the Comprehensive Plan update.

Beachland Boulevard. As the primary entrance to the barrier island and the Cardinal Drive/Ocean Drive commercial district, Beachland Boulevard is characterized by large office structures primarily occupied by financial and banking institutions and professional offices. The

*Vision Plan* found that the market forces were replacing retail uses in the corridor, west of Eagle Drive, to financial and professional office uses. The newer buildings with smaller setbacks and planting areas, were replacing the “green spine” of the corridor characterized by many Live Oak trees.

The *Vision Plan* found that displacement of retail uses with office ones has a positive effect in that it reinforced the desired functions of the corridor as a financial, banking, and professional office district. According to the *Vision Plan*, this district has the capacity to absorb more office demand in Class A office space. Unlike the eastern segment of Beachland Boulevard, the segment west of Eagle Drive is much more automobile-oriented and retail uses on the ground floor are not essential to its viability.

The *Vision Plan* identified multiple functions for Beachland Boulevard. Beachland Boulevard should remain as the primary entrance gateway to the Barrier Island; respond to market demand for additional “Class A” office space to relieve pressures along Ocean Drive; and serve as an “entry portal” to neighborhoods and recreational opportunities in proximity to the corridor. A particular importance was also given to maintaining the “green spine” that historically defined Beachland Boulevard’s character.

Since the *Vision Plan*, little new development has occurred in this Beachland Boulevard corridor. Preparation of a overlay zoning district were dropped due to other pressing priorities. However, it would be beneficial to consider specific policies for inclusion from the recommendations of the *Vision Plan* and 2010 EAR.

Royal Palm Pointe. Royal Palm Pointe was created when the Barber Bridge was constructed in 1995. At that time, the roadway and bridge approach was lined with primarily auto-oriented commercial uses. With the construction of the bridge, through vehicle access through the corridor was eliminated. This created an opportunity for a new and unique commercial district in Vero Beach.

Significant public and private investments in common parking areas and the installation of extensive landscaping and streetscape improvements to the median in the early part of this decade encouraged redevelopment and upgrading of properties located on the finger peninsula. A public park was constructed at the tip of the peninsula.

Although the *Vision Plan* gave credit to this transformation, it found that further transformation is needed to achieve its potential as “one of Vero Beach’s and Florida’s most innovative mixed use districts.” The goal of the *Vision Plan* called for “complete the transportation of Royal Palm Pointe as a regional mixed-use center residential, commercial, and entertainment district; focusing on restaurants, recreation, and boutique retail venues.”

The *Vision Plan* identified a couple of issues that are still relevant the problem with multiple zoning districts that limit or discourage mixed use development and the lack of public water access. These issues have recently gained more attention with the development of a private country club-hotel replacing a former restaurant and the replacement of retail uses with a small condominium project on the peninsula. These issues and others identified by the *Vision*

*Plan* should be examined in the preparation of an objective and supporting policies for this commercial district.

Miracle Mile. The Miracle Mile developed as an auto-oriented commercial center in the 1980's attracting retail and other commercial businesses from the Downtown. The development patterns along the Miracle Mile corridor (21<sup>st</sup> Street) resemble typical suburban commercial development of the latter half of the last century with large expanses of concrete for parking arranged in front of long commercial strip centers with little attention to pedestrian access.

The *Vision Plan* recognized the need to make this commercial district more environmentally and aesthetically pleasant and intimately scaled. The major concern in the plan was that such an area, as with other older suburban commercial auto-oriented corridors, will face increasing competition from newer outlying commercial developments.

Since the *Vision Plan* was prepared, the Miracle Mile corridor has witnessed increased private investment as typified by the redevelopment of the old Modern Age furniture store into a 37,000 square foot retail-restaurant-entertainment-office complex and redevelopment of the Three Avenues multiple-use commercial development containing over 65,000 square feet.

Renovations of existing commercial buildings have taken place with the purchase and expansion to approximately 69,000 square feet of the old Winn Dixie grocery store by Publix and purchase and upgrading of the old grocery store, vacated by Publix, by the upscale Fresh Foods market. Immediately adjacent to the north of the Miracle Mile District, is the Parc 24 office project along Indian River Boulevard with a planned build-out of 112,000 square feet of professional office space.

On 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a new 90-unit hotel was recently constructed, approved as a "planned commercial development" under new provisions in the City's zoning regulations. This investment typifies the expressed interest among developers and some major property owners for transforming Miracle Mile into a more active, mixed-use commercial corridor.

These developments have raised concerns about traffic safety and congestion problems on Royal Palm/Indian River Boulevard and 21<sup>st</sup> Street/Indian River Boulevard. To address these problems, the Public Works and Planning and Development Departments propose consideration of an extension of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue across a drainage ditch to connect with Royal Palm Boulevard. The Indian River County MPO has been asked to authorize funds to prepare a study of the impacts of such an extension on the road system. [A more detailed discussion of this proposed facility is presented in Chapter 3, Transportation Element.]

An objective and specific supporting policies to further the pertinent recommendations of the *Vision Plan* that promote creation of a mixed-use and "village" character incorporating residential, transient residential, and other non-retail uses. The real challenge to implement such recommendations is the limitation in the City Charter as discussed previously. One way to address this problem would be through creation of a special purpose zoning district for Miracle Mile. A specific policy for addressing this problem should be considered.

US Highway I Corridor. US Highway 1 bisects the City running north to south, generally following the Florida East Coast railroad tracks. The corridor is characterized by highway commercial uses typified by parking lots fronting linear strip commercial centers.

The appearance and maintenance of properties along the corridor varies. South of the intersection of 21<sup>st</sup> and US Highway 1, development occupies both sides of the highway. Several renovation, redevelopment and infill projects have been proposed, undertaken, or completed. Most properties are generally well maintained and occupied by retail, hotel, restaurant, and automobile service and sales establishments.

North of the above intersection, development is restricted to the eastern side of US Highway 1 due to the railroad tracts. The corridor is less attractive with many buildings and properties lacking proper maintenance and upkeep. Code compliance is a major problem in this segment of the corridor.

The *Vision Plan* treated both Miracle Mile and the US Highway I corridor together even though market and locational factors and zoning designations affecting these commercial areas are very different. The *Vision Plan* called for enhancing “the existing character, marketability, and long-term sustainability of the Miracle Mile and US 1 commercial corridors, while allowing for their future evaluation in accordance with changing commercial development trends.

The *Vision Plan* identified two strategies applicable to US Highway 1: (1) more innovative parking regulations for mixed-use development, interconnections between parking lots; and consolidate of landscape treatments; (2) modifications to zoning ordinances to allow creation of mixed-use and “village” character in strip commercial corridors.

The City’s parking regulations have been completely revised since the *Vision Plan* to reduce parking requirements and promote shared parking. The modifications to the zoning ordinances to promote mixed-uses in C-1 and C-1b zoning districts are restricted by the provisions of the City charter as discussed under the section on the Miracle Mile.

The update to the Comprehensive Plan should address promoting mixed uses through policies to create new commercial mixed use zoning districts that are appropriate for locations in the US Highway 1 corridor. Additionally, specific infill and redevelopment strategies that include development bonus incentives to developers in return for public amenities or meeting of specific public purpose objectives should be considered.

### **Vero Beach Regional Airport Land Uses**

In 2012, the City adopted an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan establishing Objective 11 and ten supporting policies that address land use compatibility with the operations of the Vero Beach Regional Airport. These policies are applied in combination with City’s airport zoning regulations.

Recently, the City initiated work on an airport master plan. In addition to addressing airport related improvements, the Airport’s consultant is investigating alternatives to the existing

Conservation (C) designation for a major portion of the airport. This study is identifying specific habitat and environmental areas, including the City's well fields that need to be protected from development and those areas suitable for development.

This work is being undertaken to comply with a finding in a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) compliance report that the designation of a major portion of the airport property for conservation land "conflicted with the City's obligation to make the land available for airport purposes." As part of this effort, the Airport's consultant has completed a FAA Wildlife Hazard Management Plan and will begin preparation in 2016 of a Habitat Conservation Plan for endangered and threatened species such as the Florida Scrub Jay.<sup>5</sup> It is anticipated that it will be late 2016 or 2017 before any changes to the Future Land Use Map may be proposed.

The draft Master Plan for the Airport is proposing an "Airport Commercial Village" initiative. This concept calls for a mix of compatible commercial developments that may include food and beverage, retail stores, small businesses, and hotel facilities. The general boundaries of this proposed commercial village generally follow the parcels abutting and in the proximity of Aviation Boulevard.

Also being considered in the longer term is the expansion of this commercial area to include the existing Citrus Mobile Home Park. This initiative will most likely require a Future Land Use Map change for the mobile home park and, at a minimum a change in zoning such as an overlay district for the commercial village.

At the northern boundary of the Vero Beach Regional Airport is a 10.5-acre City-owned property currently incorrectly designated as Conservation (C). The property is occupied by the City Police Department's pistol range and zoned ALI-MC (Airport Light Industrial-Multi-activity Center).

The City transmitted an amendment package to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DOE) and other reviewing agencies on January 11, 2016, pursuant requirements of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. On February 12, 2016, the City received an official letter from DOE that it had finished its review and had no comment. Unfortunately, the City is unable to adopt the ordinance amending the Future Land Use Map as it is unable to meet the six-month deadline provisions of Section 163.3184(3) due to the restrictions in Chapter 163 regarding the updating of the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, the proposed change in the Future Land Use Map designation of this property should be included in the update to this Comprehensive Plan.

### **Redevelopment and Infill Potential**

Numerous opportunities exist for infill and redevelopment in small isolated pockets throughout most of the mainland portions of the City; however, several areas of the City may have the potential for neighborhood or areawide approaches for residential and commercial redevelopment and infill.

---

<sup>5</sup> A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is a required as part of an application for an Incidental Take Permit under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act for any non-Federal activities that will result in "take" of a threatened or endangered species.

Residential Redevelopment and Infill. Both Original Town and Osceola Park have been identified for potential residential infill development to encourage investment in residential properties, expand the existing residential population base, encourage more diverse housing opportunities to accommodate various lifestyles and stages in life, and to ensure the long-term residential viability of these neighborhoods. Any such policies should be applied in context of the historic nature of these neighborhoods and the need to ensure compatibility of any infill development with existing historic buildings in terms of mass, scale, and architecture including site design.

Mixed Residential/Commercial Redevelopment and Infill. The following two areas have been identified for potential mixed residential/commercial redevelopment and infill: (1) Sunnyside Neighborhood area generally north of 18<sup>th</sup> Street that is currently designated Commercial, Residential High and Medium on the Future Land Use Map; and the (2) Bullington Subdivision area bounded by SR 60 on the north, 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, commercial development along the US Highway 1 corridor on the east, and 18<sup>th</sup> Street on the south.

*Sunnyside Park Area:* As a result of a recommendation from the *Sunnyside Park Neighborhood Plan*, the City enacted the “Residential, Congregate Living, and Limited Offices” zoning district to replace the RM 10/12 (multiple-family) district. As stated in that document, the purpose of this new zoning district was to “help reverse decline and stimulate new development or redevelopment activity. The standards of the ordinance are intended to preserve the overall residential character of the area while permitting care facilities to mix with well planned, non-residential, office-oriented uses.”

However, the area continues to be plagued by absentee-ownership, poor property maintenance, and lack of private investment. Specific policy guidance to investigate specific needed changes in the zoning regulations based on flexible standards and incentives needs to be considered.

*Bullington Subdivision Area:* In 1989, the City enacted an enabling ordinance to allow for the designation of a Mixed Use zoning district in areas of the city that were in a state of decline and areas where residential redevelopment activity is needed and desirable. The development standards were designed to preserve and enhance the residential development and small-scale, low-intensity nonresidential uses and create an environment where people can live, work, and have recreation opportunities in the same area.

However, this area continues to be plagued by lack of private investment, poor property maintenance, deteriorating buildings, persistence of squatters and vandals, and criminal activity. Further efforts need to be focused on review of the Future Land Use Designation of Mixed Use (see discussion under Future Land Use and Zoning Designations) and the underlying Mixed Use District. The underlying regulations establish voluntary development standards intended to create the type of environment envisioned in purpose statement for the zoning district.

The regulations provided for specific development incentives that may be approved by the Planning and Zoning Board, such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), reduction of open space, and modifications to front yard setbacks. Since the designation of the area as Mixed

Use no development application has been submitted to take advantage of the incentives available in the district. Part of the problem appears to be the inadequacy of the incentives and lack of clarity in the zoning regulations for that district. A specific policy should be considered to address this issue and focus on guidelines for addressing the issues that exist in the neighborhood.

Proposed Cultural Arts Village (Edgewood Subdivision). In 2015, the Leadership Team of the Cultural Council of Indian River County contracted with Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRP) to conduct a charrette for developing a conceptual master plan for the creation of a Cultural Arts Village in the Edgewood neighborhood bordering the Downtown. TCRP conducted the charrette and prepared the *Cultural Arts Village Report*, which was approved by the City Council in March, 2016.

The village is proposed to be located between 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the Edgewood neighborhood together with the Downtown Business District between SR 60 East bound from 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and south to 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The general boundaries of the proposed village are shown in Figure 2-10.

The *Cultural Arts Village Report* calls for an inviting shaded pedestrian-friendly streetscape that supports a diversity of complementary creative environments for living, working, and selling in conjunction with cafes, restaurants, and small businesses. The neighborhood is intended to reflect the principles for retrofitting rather than redevelopment by maintaining a view to preserving structures, street layouts, and motifs that are important parts of this area's heritage and sense of place. The village concept is intended to attract more activities to the downtown district, "contributing to a comfortable, appealing, walkable environment, where people can spend time meeting, shopping, eating, and working.

At a minimum, the Cultural Arts Village Concept will require a text amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Map as well as revisions to the Land Development Regulations to allow for the creation of a special purpose zoning district.<sup>6</sup> The specific boundaries of the propose special purpose zoning district and its permitted uses will be vetted during the public hearing process.

In this update of the Comprehensive Plan the needed text amendment needs to be considered. Specific policy guidance for the development of the Cultural Arts Village should be incorporated in this updated based upon the recommendations of the *Cultural Arts Village Report*.

34<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood: This existing neighborhood, located north of the Main Canal and east of US Highway 1, is centered on 34<sup>th</sup> Street. It is characterized by numerous vacant, unmaintained lots and numerous dilapidated and substandard buildings. Several buildings have been condemned and removed through City abatement procedure. The neighborhood is situated

---

<sup>6</sup> The *Cultural Arts Village Report* recommended that an overlay zoning technique be utilized to implement the recommendations of the report; however, overlay zones are intended to incorporate underlying zoning with possible restrictions on certain uses normally allowed in the underlying zoning. Therefore, the preferred and most legally defensible approach would be to create a special district encompassing the area for the proposed arts village.

under the main runway for the Vero Beach Regional Airport and is impacted by noise generated by air operations.

The existing Future Land Use Designation for the neighborhood is Mixed Residential, which is intended for areas which are deteriorating or have a substantial amount of substandard housing and for areas where a mixture of housing, including mobile homes would not create a detrimental impact on an established residential neighborhood. The underlying zoning is RM 10/12 (multi-family up to 10 units per acre). The appropriateness of these land use designations at this location needs to be reconsidered considering its relationship and proximity to the airport and commercial activity in the US Highway 1 corridor.

Additionally, the staff has been investigating connecting 37<sup>th</sup> Street in the hospital corridor to Aviation Boulevard to provide a bypass from SR 60 and Royal Palm Boulevard for east-west traffic flow. This extension would open up access to undeveloped properties designated Commercial and Residential Medium (up to 10 units per acre) located north of 37 Street and undeveloped properties in unincorporated Indian River County.

Any proposed action to redevelop the 34<sup>th</sup> Street neighborhood should be undertaken with consideration of a possible connection to 37<sup>th</sup> Street. A policy should be included in the Comprehensive Plan to direct this effort to explore options for redevelopment of this area.

City-Owned Waterfront and Postal Annex Properties. Two City-owned properties located on the Indian River Lagoon warrant further investigation to determine appropriate uses for their potential future development. These properties are a 16.3-acre parcel currently occupied by the City's wastewater treatment plant and the 17.4-acre property currently occupied by the City's Electric Power Plant. The third City-owned property that warrants review is a vacant 4.6-acre property known as the "Postal Annex," located directly across Indian River Boulevard from the two subject waterfront properties.

Any redevelopment of the two waterfront properties is subject to specific restrictions in the City Charter. Both properties may not be sold, leased, traded, or given away unless such action is approved in a public referendum. The exception to this restriction is where the property is leased for a public or civic purpose which serves a recreational, artistic, or cultural purpose, including incidental concessions. The Postal Annex property is not subject to any such restrictions.

At the behest of the City Council, a Task Force headed by the Indian River Chamber of Commerce and the Marine/Recreation Commissions reviewed the three properties and provided recommendations to the Council on the future uses of these properties. [Note; As part of their review, the two groups provided recommendations on the vacant 4.6-acre "Postal Annex" site located directly across Indian River Boulevard from the two subject waterfront properties.

Both groups recommended various uses for all three properties. They suggested the City obtain professional assistance to conduct public meetings or a charrette in reaching a community consensus on future uses and development of these properties.

The following is a description and evaluation from a planning perspective of each of the three subject properties:

*Vacant Postal Annex Property:* The City Council is considering making as surplus the 4.6-acre Postal Annex property located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Indian River Boulevard and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. This property is in a prime location for commercial or mixed use development with good road access in a high volume traffic node and proximity to the waterfront. The property is currently designated Commercial on the Future Land Use Map and C-1A (Tourist Commercial) on the Zoning Map.

*Electric Power Plant Property:* The electric power plant property, located on the northeast corner of the intersection of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Indian River Boulevard adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon contains 17.4 acres. As part of its agreement with the Orlando Utilities Commission, the City shutdown its electric power plant in December, 2015. The large fuel storage tanks and external piping are to be removed after shutdown and the generators and cooling towers sold. However, the building and foundation most likely will remain on the property until a decision is made regarding use of the land and the final location of the electric substation inside the existing power building.

From a strictly planning perspective, the priority should be given to considering water dependent uses (marina, public river access, and water recreation activities). A secondary priority would be for water enhanced uses such as restaurants, specialty retail, and transient and permanent residential uses.

The property is currently designated Government/Institutional/Public use that limits property to government facilities, utilities, and education and institutional facilities. Small scale recreational uses are allowed if compatible with and subordinate to an existing government utility. Clearly the Future Land Use Map will need to be amended to accommodate other uses that may be appropriate for the property.

*Wastewater Treatment Plant Property:* The wastewater treatment plant property located on the southeast corner of the intersection of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Indian River Boulevard adjacent to the Indian River Lagoon contains 16.3 acres. At the present time, the property includes the wastewater treatment plant facilities and an office, storage, ramps/docks and other facilities for the Youth Sailing Foundation of Indian River County.<sup>7</sup>

As the wastewater treatment plant no longer discharges any treated effluent into the Indian River Lagoon, some discussion has been on-going about relocating the plant to the airport where the treated effluent is discharged via deep-well injection. However, the costs for this relocation would be expensive. A recent cost estimate put the plant relocation costs at over \$35 million.

The Youth Sailing Foundation has indicated its desire to expand its activities on the property. Any further expansion of this recreational use will require a consideration of an

---

<sup>7</sup> The Rowing Club, which had been using this property, relocated to leasehold property in the Alex MacWilliam Boat Basin Park.

appropriate change in the Future Land Use Designation of at least that portion of the property occupied by this recreational use as this property is designated Government/Institutional/Public Use. Even if the wastewater treatment plant is to remain, such a change in designation would be necessary to accommodate any expansion of this recreational use.

### **Future Land Use and Zoning Designations and Land Development Regulations**

The *2010 Evaluation and Appraisal Report* identified numerous conflicts and deficiencies that needed to be addressed in both Future Land Use and zoning designations and Land Development Regulations. As such efforts take time and resources to complete that fully involves stakeholders and the public, the approach in this Comprehensive Plan update is to identify actions through its policies that are needed properly address these weaknesses.

As such changes would likely be of a substantive nature, sufficient opportunities should be provided in this process to involve the public, property owners and other stakeholders and to properly vet proposed revisions. The basic approach would be to make appropriate amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and implement any needed changes to the Land Development Regulations as part of the effort to comprehensively revise those regulations.

The following are specific strategies and actions to be considered in the preparation of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that address weaknesses identified in the *2010 Evaluation and Appraisal Report* and other issues that have come to the forefront since the preparation of that document:

- A specific policy that establishes clear standards and criteria for the location and expansion of nonresidential uses in the RM and RH future land use designations and rezoning of properties to Professional Office Institutional (POI) to better protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment by incompatible residential uses.
- Amendments to the descriptions of various Future Land Use categories to identify and address the discrepancies between uses permitted in zoning districts and those uses allowed under specific Future Land Use categories.
- Specific objective and policies addressing TDRs for both environmental protection and provision of density/FAR incentives for infill development.
- Specific policy to establish actions to review the Mixed Land Use designation to narrow its focus which now provides an overly broad mix of different and not necessarily compatible zoning districts and uses; the result is a category that is too broad to be an effective policy or growth management tool, especially in areas where mixed use development, redevelopment, or infill are to be encouraged.
- Specific policy to establish actions to review overlap and conflicts in uses under the Commercial and Industrial future land use designations including underlying

zoning designations, which limit their effectiveness as a policy or growth management tool.

The existing Objective 3 and supporting policies related to the Land Development Regulations should be considered for revisions to reflect further actions to support changes to the Future Land Use designations and supporting text amendment. Any such revisions should consider policies committing the City to a comprehensive revisions and codification of its Land Development Regulations to improve its organization, clarity, and administration, such as, but not limited to:

- Reduction in the number of zoning districts from the current unwieldy 29 by eliminating districts that are no longer relevant (e.g. Hospital-Institutional) or consolidation districts where a majority of uses are duplicated.
- Consolidation of city-wide regulations, such as height, accessory structures and setback modifications into one section similar to what was accomplished for on-site parking regulations.
- Reorganization of content in a manner that is more intuitive for the average user.
- Review and revisions to definitions of uses allowed in districts to eliminate vagueness and inconsistencies.

### **Hazard Mitigation**

As required by State law, the City along with other municipalities in Indian River County, and Indian River County, have prepared Local Mitigation Strategies (LMS) that identify action to permanently reduce or eliminate the long term risk to people and property from different types of hazards. The first LMS was adopted in 1999 and was updated and approved in June, 2015. The City has undertaken numerous strategies and actions identified in the adopted LMS including improvements to flood proof the City's wastewater treatment plant.

Existing Policy 4.5 is recommended to be strengthened by including language for the City's participation in the maintenance and updating of the LMS.

### **Coastal High Hazard Area**

The Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) is defined by the Florida Statutes as that "area below the storm surge line of a category 1 hurricane as established by the Sea, Lake, and Overland Surges (SLOSH) computer model developed by the National Weather Service. This area is one of increased risk to life and property due to hurricanes or severe storms.

The CHHA is depicted in Figure 2-8. Only isolated parcels of land along the Indian River Lagoon are within the storm surge line of the CHHA in areas designated for development. Almost all the area within the CHHA is either designated Conservation (CV) or Environmentally Sensitive (ES). Except for a large tract north of Barber Bridge most of this land is held in

conversation by Indian River County and an one large 122-acre tract held in private ownership as a wetland mitigation bank.

It is recommended that specific policies be considered in this Comprehensive Plan to limit further development by limiting any density increases and limiting extension or expansion of public utilities in the Coastal High Hazard Area.

### **Development/Redevelopment in Flood Prone Areas**

Flood prone areas create various problems, the most serious of which is the potential loss of life and damage to property and environmental degradation due to flood waters and storm surges. Such hazards also increase the cost of development due to site modifications and enhanced building techniques required.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) completed a series of Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Indian River County and its municipalities, which went into effect on December 4, 2012. This series of maps identifies the limits of areas of special flood hazards for the 100-year flood (1% annual chance of flood) and 500 year flood (0.2% annual chance of flood) and areas outside the 500 year flood.

Figure 2-6 depicts the special flood hazard zones in the City of Vero Beach. The major flood prone areas are generally located along the Indian River Lagoon on the barrier island and mainland as follows:

- An extended area on the barrier island containing many high value single-family and multiple-family residences that extends the full length of the City along the Indian River Lagoon with several inland locations where the flood prone areas cross over US Highway A1A.
- A significant area of the mainland running from the south city limits along the length of Indian River Lagoon up to the Barber Bridge generally located primarily east of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue encompassing high value residential neighborhoods, multi-family developments, and commercial-office development including Miracle Mile.
- An area on the mainland north of the Barber Bridge and islands in the Indian River Lagoon that are mostly in conservation use with a few scattered residences with little potential for any development due to zoning, environmental constraints, and lack of public utilities.

Flood prone areas have not been a significant overall problem. In addressing this problem, the City has focused on retrofitting and expansion of its stormwater drainage to improve capacity. The City is considering the establishment of a stormwater utility district to better fund needed improvements to the City's stormwater management system. (See detailed discussion in the Infrastructure Element.)

New development or significant expansions to existing development are required to meet city's stormwater regulations that require retention of the first 1.5" of rainfall in a 24 hour storm event. Much of the barrier island contains excessively drained soils which permit rapid percolation of stormwater reducing flooding potential. All new development is required to meet the finished flood elevations established by the City as a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The City coordinates reviews with state and other regulatory in the review of proposed development projects to ensure drainage and stormwater management requirements are met. Specific policies to continue or enhance this effort to ensure compliance with the NFIP and to further reduce flooding and risks to life and property.

### **Indian River Lagoon**

Concerns over the health of the Indian River Lagoon are of a paramount interest for the City of Vero Beach and other governments in the Indian River Lagoon Basin. The Indian River Lagoon is a 156-mile long estuary, which has been declared by the State of Florida as a water body impaired by nutrients. The water quality degradation of the lagoon has been adversely impacted by many man-made alterations of the water basin and shoreline development that has contributed to an increase in nutrient input, sedimentation, turbidity, atmospheric deposition, nutrient releases from existing muck deposits, and changes in salinity due to freshwater discharges.

These impacts on water quality and other adverse man-made impacts threaten the natural communities that contribute to the lagoon's major role as a spawning and nursery ground for fish and marine life and the economic and recreational benefits to the community of this vital resource.

In response to these significant issues, the City of Vero Beach has taken the following steps to further reduce nutrients and pollutants entering the lagoon estuary from stormwater runoff and the leaching of septic tanks on the barrier island (Please refer to Infrastructure and Conservation Elements for a detailed discussion):

- Adopted a Florida-Friendly Fertilizer Ordinance based on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, major components of which ban the use of fertilizers containing phosphorus; bans application of any fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorus from June 1 through September 30; and establishes fertilizer free zones.
- Adopted enhanced stormwater requirements that require additional on-site retention requirements for new or substantially improved development.
- Initiated a long-term capital program to retrofit City stormwater outfalls with baffles to significantly reduce nutrients and other pollutants entering the estuary;
- Eliminated all discharge of treated wastewater effluent to the lagoon.

- Adopted an Ordinance requiring mandatory pump out and inspection of existing septic tanks on a five (5) year basis and the septic tank effluent pump (STEP) program to encourage and facilitate the conversion of more than 1,500 septic systems of which more than two-thirds of these systems are located on the barrier island.
- Joined together with the Cities of Sebastian and Fellsmere to serve as a voting member on the multi-county and agency Indian River Lagoon Council to sponsor and carry out the programs of the Indian River National Estuary Program.

The wetlands policies in the Comprehensive Plan have not been implemented through enactment of amendments to the Land Development Regulations as called for in the Comprehensive Plan to further reduce pollutants entering into wetlands through buffering and limiting impacts on wetlands. (See more detailed discussion under Conservation Element). The existing wetland policies need to be reconsidered along with incorporation of policies to support the continuation of the above programs and actions.