

How Shall We Grow?



A Shared Vision for Central Florida

Created to help our region continue to be a great place to live, learn, work and play



To our fellow Central Floridians,

By working together we can dramatically impact our future.

We invite you to join us in a continuing journey to implement a shared vision to help Central Florida continue to be a great place to live, learn, work, and play.

Over the past 18 months, we have had the privilege of participating in a historic “community conversation” to develop a shared 50-year vision for the seven-county Central Florida Region – Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, and Volusia counties – and the 3.5 million people who live in these counties and their diverse cities and towns.

We look at the forces shaping our nation and world, and we agree that Central Florida is uniquely positioned to be one of the most dynamic regions of the 21st Century. We celebrate our history of imagination turned into action – and we believe that the people that produced Walt Disney World, the Kennedy Space Center, the University of Central Florida, the Daytona International Speedway, and many other world renowned assets can reinvent this region yet again.

We celebrate the diversity of our people, our economy, and communities as we look toward a shared future and address our common issues. From Orlando to Lakeland, Daytona Beach to Kissimmee, Titusville to Winter Springs, Groveland to Windermere, Central Florida is a single region with many facets.

We acknowledge our rich heritage, our distinctive places, and our precious environment – and we pledge to preserve the best of these resources for future generations.

We recognize that the State of Florida projects that Central Florida’s population will more than double between 2005 and 2050, to more than 7 million residents.

We have choices about how, where, and in what form our region will grow. We can continue our current pattern of development, which will cause us to consume land at a rapid pace, encroach on critical environmental resources, lose the distinctiveness of our communities, and paralyze our residents and businesses in traffic.

Or, we can boldly choose a different approach where we conserve our environment, strengthen our urban centers, and provide a variety of choices for how we live, work, travel, raise our families, and enjoy our free time.

We recognize that the decisions we make today about future growth will determine the competitiveness of our economy, the sustainability of our environment, and the

quality of life for future generations. The decisions about development made by individual communities can have impacts far beyond their boundaries. That’s why a regional, collaborative approach is imperative.

We applaud the work of numerous public, private, and civic organizations, as well as the nearly 20,000 Central Floridians who have helped answer the question “How Shall We Grow?” We believe that the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision reflects what matters most as we raise our families, grow our businesses, and build our communities.

Together, we present the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision. This Vision, and the accompanying Policy Framework and Action Plan, offers strategic direction for our future. This Vision also includes the following Regional Growth Compact -- our declaration of inter-dependence:

- We acknowledge that the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision is a community-generated guide for the future development of the region.
- We agree to enhance existing or develop new practices to continue cooperation and consensus-building at the regional level in support of the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision. These practices may include:
 - Establish a forum for continued cooperation among regional elected officials.
 - Work with the seven-county legislative delegation to establish regional legislative delegation meetings and priorities.
 - Work with the legislature to advance regional priorities consistent with this Vision.
- We agree to consider the following six regional growth principles when making future public, private, and civic investment decisions.
 - Preserve open space, recreational areas, farmland, water resources, and regionally significant natural areas.
 - Provide a variety of transportation choices.
 - Foster distinct, attractive, and safe places to live.
 - Encourage a diverse, globally competitive economy.
 - Create a range of obtainable housing opportunities and choices.
 - Build communities with educational, health care, and cultural amenities.
- We agree to coordinate regional action in these six areas by enhancing existing or developing new regional partnerships.

• We acknowledge that comprehensive plans and other regional and local plans are the critical tools for translating this Vision into action. We agree to:

- Develop or update strategic regional policy plans, community visions, local government comprehensive plans, transportation plans, resource agency plans, and economic development plans to develop more specific goals, policies, and programs to manage long range growth and guide infrastructure investments consistent with this Vision.
- Consider this Vision and the six regional growth principles in future updates of these plans.
- Coordinate local and regional plans with those of neighboring and overlapping government entities, as well as key statewide plans.

• We agree to work toward additional intergovernmental agreements when necessary to address opportunities for joint action or to resolve inconsistencies among statewide, regional, and local policies and plans.

• We agree to promote understanding and support of this Vision by public, private, and civic leaders, as well as the community.

• We agree to monitor progress toward this Vision and to develop a process for updating the Vision over time to respond to evolving regional trends.

Finally, we invite you – our family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and, ultimately our children and grandchildren, to join us as we work toward this shared regional vision.

Central Florida Joint Policy Framework Committee



Representing the Brevard County Commission
The Honorable Helen Voltz



Representing the Cities of Brevard County
The Honorable Thomas M. Eschenberg



Representing the Central Florida Public School Boards Coalition
The Honorable Candace C. Lankford



Representing the Central Florida Public School Boards Coalition
The Honorable Dede Schaffner



Representing the Lake County Commission
The Honorable Welton Cadwell



Representing the Cities of Lake County
The Honorable Sanna Henderson



Representing the Orange County Commission
The Honorable Richard Crotty



Representing the Cities of Orange County
The Honorable Gary Bruhn



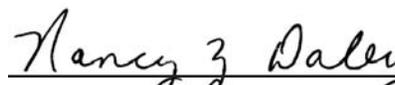
Representing the Osceola County Commission
The Honorable Ken Shipley



Representing the Cities of Osceola County
The Honorable Donna Hart



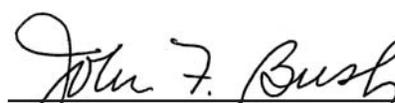
Representing the Polk County Commission
The Honorable Jack R. Myers



Representing the Cities of Polk County
The Honorable Nancy Z. Daley



Representing the Seminole County Commission
The Honorable Carlton Henley



Representing the Cities of Seminole County
The Honorable John F. Bush



Representing the Volusia County Council
The Honorable Frank T. Bruno, Jr.



Representing the Cities of Volusia County
The Honorable Roland Via

Table of Contents

Imagine the Possibilities.....	6
Looking Back.....	8
Central Florida: What We Look Like Today	10
Looking Ahead - What is Our Current Path?	11
2050: What We Will Look Like...If Current Trends Continue.....	13
2050: What We Will Look Like...If Our Vision is Realized.....	14
Central Florida's Regional Growth Vision.....	16
Looking Ahead - What Could We Look Like?	18
How Do We Get There? Six Key Principles.....	19
What Must We Do Next? Five Regional Actions	26



The Regional Growth Vision is dedicated to
the Central Florida Residents of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

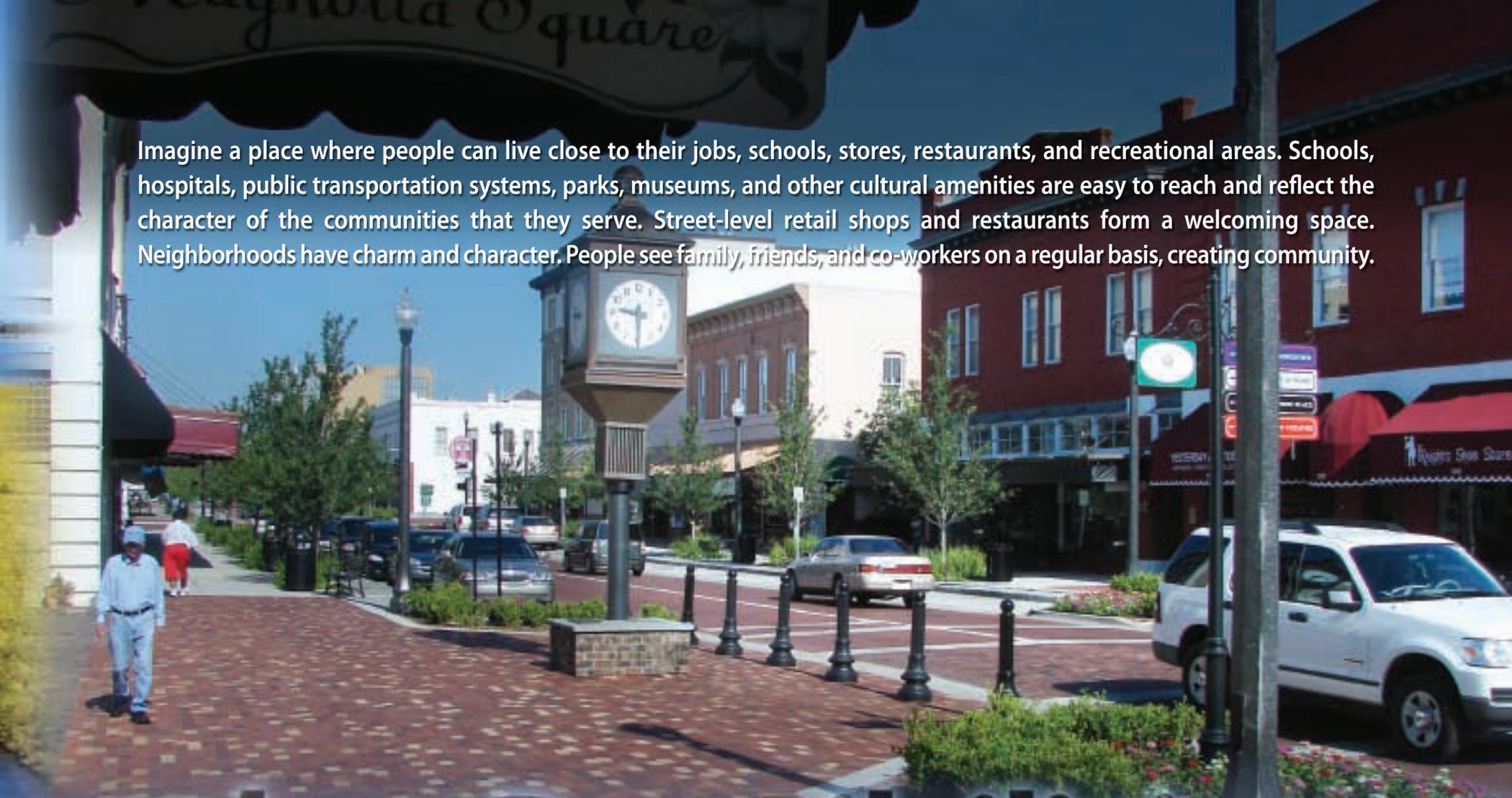


Imagine a place where natural resources are treasured. The air is sweet and clean. Lakes, rivers, and beaches are crystal clear. Unique wildlife, vegetation, and ecosystems thrive. Open space is protected and abundant. Water and land are used responsibly, so that they are preserved for future generations. Residential, commercial, and public buildings and infrastructure enhance the region's environment, respecting the value of wildlife habitats, critical waters, and other natural treasures.

Imagine...

Welcome to Central Florida, in the year 2050.

Imagine a place where "Old Florida" farms and villages exist alongside 21st century cities. Traditional rural communities maintain their character and heritage. Rural development is compact, has clear edges, and respects the important role of agriculture in the region's economy. Parts of the region still feel untouched by the rapid growth of the past 100 years.



Imagine a place where people can live close to their jobs, schools, stores, restaurants, and recreational areas. Schools, hospitals, public transportation systems, parks, museums, and other cultural amenities are easy to reach and reflect the character of the communities that they serve. Street-level retail shops and restaurants form a welcoming space. Neighborhoods have charm and character. People see family, friends, and co-workers on a regular basis, creating community.

the Possibilities

Welcome to one of the world's most inviting regions.



Imagine a place where travel within and between communities is efficient and dependable. Residents and visitors have choices for how they move within the region and to other locations. These choices save travel time, allowing people to spend more time with family and friends. Businesses can easily access national and global markets with their products and services, and are able to expand their reach worldwide.

Looking Back

Central Florida has a long history of turning dreams into reality and has reinvented itself many times.

Since the middle of the 20th century, Central Florida has transitioned from an area of small towns and citrus groves to a bustling metropolitan region. The region's growth has been a product of several factors: its climate, land, and other natural resources; its lower cost of living and business-friendly environment; and strategic investments

in education, transportation, technology, and other infrastructure.

The region's growth also has been the result of bold visions set by leaders with names like Disney or Kennedy, who have seen the potential for Central Florida to become one of the world's leading tourist destinations, genesis for the nation's space exploration program, or the site of one of the nation's leading life science research programs.

Central Florida Timeline

Mosquito County

Florida
Crackers

12,000 B.C. through 1700s

- The Paleoindians are the first known inhabitants of the Central Florida Region. A variety of Indian Tribes settled the region over the next 14,000 years, including the Apalachee, Tekesta, Calusa, Ai, Temucua and Seminole Tribes.

1800s

- Anglo settlers originally moved to the Ormond Beach and New Smyrna Beach area in the 1820s. It was not until the end of the Second Seminole War and the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 that the region was safely opened for homesteaders willing to live near military forts and serve as citizen soldiers.
- Mosquito County was originally formed in 1824 encompassing all of Central Florida. In 1844, Orange County was the first to separate into a distinct jurisdiction, followed by Volusia, Brevard, Polk, Osceola, Lake and Seminole.
- The South Florida Railroad opened with 10-miles of track stretching from Sanford to Longwood. By 1880, the route reached a full 23 miles into Orlando.
- In the 1880s, Rollins College and Florida Southern College became the first colleges and Stetson University became the first university in Central Florida.

Early 1900s

- Mary McLeod Bethune opened the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls. It became a four-year college, known as Bethune-Cookman College, in 1941.
- The Florida Sanitarium and Benevolent Association (now Florida Hospital) opened in 1908.

1920s -1930s

- The completed Dixie Highway, which ultimately ran from Miami through to the Canadian Border, served as the first interstate road to run directly through Central Florida.
- Construction of Bok Tower is completed. On February 1, 1929 President Calvin Coolidge dedicates the Bok Sanctuary in Lake Wales.

1940s -1950s

- Pine Castle Army Airfield opened in 1941 with the name later changing to McCoy Air Force Base. Central Florida's year-round climate made it a major training center for the armed services, resulting in highway and airport construction that provided the region with an up-to-date transportation network.
- Central Florida's economy was beginning to diversify. Tourism, cattle, citrus and phosphate were joined by new industries such as electronics, plastics, aviation, construction, real estate and international banking.
- The first segment of Florida's Turnpike opened from Miami to Fort Pierce in 1957. The eastern connection from Orlando to Yeehaw Junction opened six years later with Orlando connecting west to I-75 the following year.

These visions have become reality, producing one of the most vibrant regions in the United States. Central Florida's population has exploded, from 400,000 in 1950 to 1.6 million residents in 1980, and then to 3.5 million residents in 2005. The region's population is diverse, representing a broad mix of cultures, races, ethnicities, and ages. The region created one million new jobs between 1980 and

2005, one of the strongest growth rates among major urban regions nationwide. The economy blends traditional strengths in agriculture, tourism, and defense with emerging industries related to aerospace, photonics, and life sciences. The income brought into the region has nearly tripled, from \$37 billion in 1980 to \$107 billion (in 2005 dollars).



1960s -1970s

- The U.S. space program - with its historic launches from Cape Canaveral, lunar landings and the development of the space shuttle program - focused the attention of the world on Central Florida.
- Florida Technological University (later renamed the University of Central Florida) opened as the need for engineers and scientists accelerated.
- The opening of Walt Disney World in 1971 shined another global spotlight on the region and bolstered a tourism industry that already included world-class beaches and attractions such as Gatorland, Daytona International Speedway and Cypress Gardens.
- In 1976, McCoy Air Force Base was renamed the Orlando International Airport. Over the next three decades, expansion at the four International Airports in Central Florida as well as at Port Canaveral bolstered the regional economy.

1980s -1990s

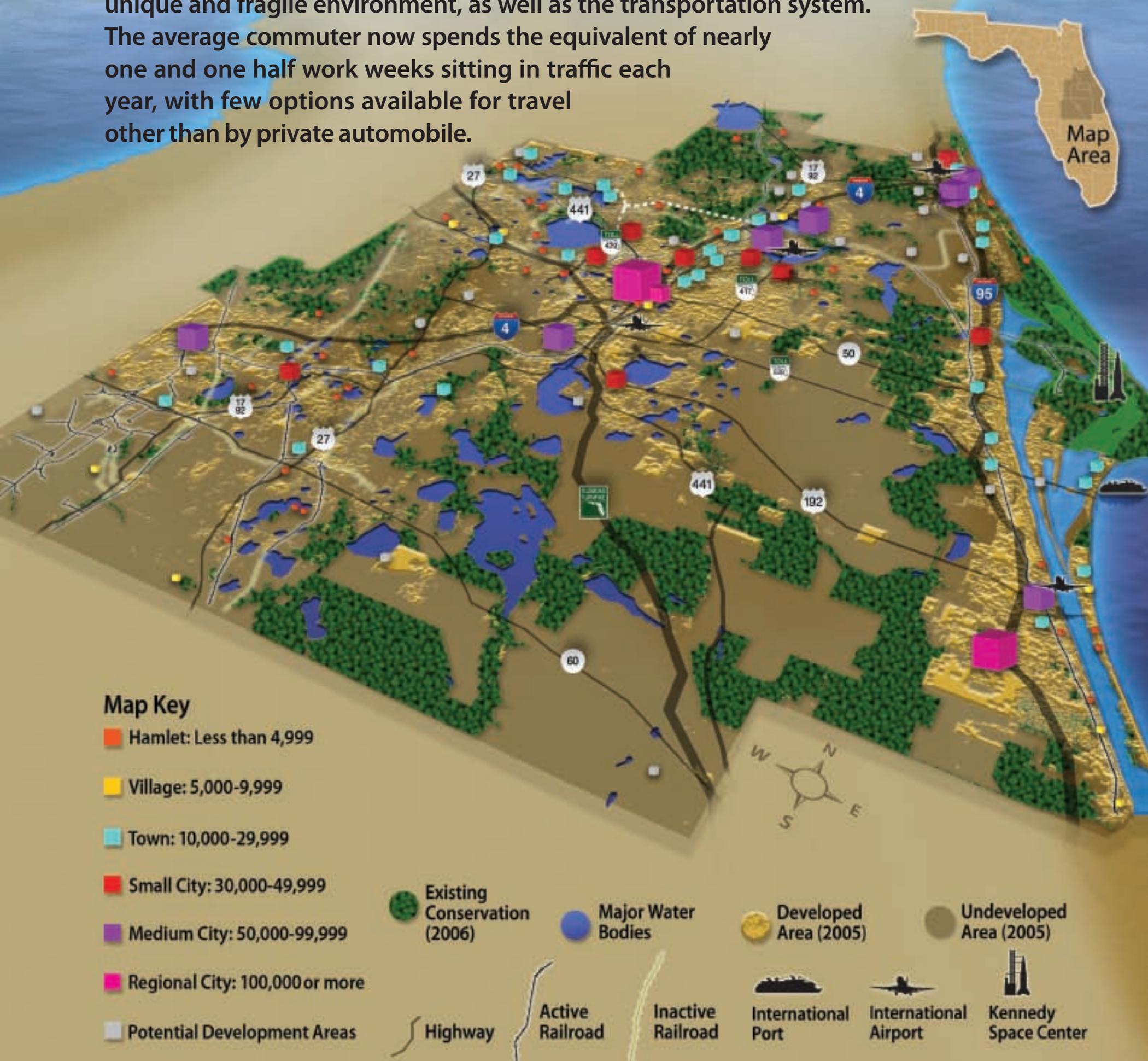
- Devasting freezes destroyed citrus groves across Central Florida. The Citrus Tower in Clermont became a symbol of the swift regional changes over 20 years, towering first over citrus groves and now over housing developments.
- By 1998, Walt Disney World welcomed its 600 millionth guest. The opening of SeaWorld and Universal Orlando provided additional entertainment opportunities and solidified Central Florida as a top tier tourism and convention destination.

2000 and beyond...

- Completion of the National Training Center in Clermont has made Central Florida a nationally recognized location for training Olympic caliber athletes.
- The University of Central Florida has grown to become the 6th largest university in the country with more than 46,000 students.
- Central Florida is poised to become a world-class destination for high-tech medical research with the addition of a veteran's hospital, the UCF medical school and the Burnham Institute.
- Imagine the Possibilities...

Central Florida: What We Look Like Today

Central Florida today is a collection of seven counties and 86 cities, with development organized in multiple centers throughout the region. In recent years, Central Florida has been developing land at an even faster pace than population growth. The region included a total of 2,618 square miles of urban development in 2006, compared to 1,675 square miles in 2000. This growth is placing increasing pressure on the region's unique and fragile environment, as well as the transportation system. The average commuter now spends the equivalent of nearly one and one half work weeks sitting in traffic each year, with few options available for travel other than by private automobile.



Looking Ahead – What Is Our Current Path?

Current development trends threaten Central Florida's livability and competitiveness. In the past few years, a series of development scenarios have been developed by the University of Pennsylvania, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and other regional planning organizations. These projections all point to similar conclusions. Using the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council's most recent scenario, if current development trends continue, by 2050:



The region will consume as much land in 45 years – 2,577 square miles – as has been developed over the last 440 years.



Residents will continue to move further away from where they work, resulting in increased commute times and less time at home. The majority of new money spent on transportation will be spent on new roads. Even so, the average person will spend more than 90 minutes per day commuting, compared to about 20 minutes today.



About 344 additional square miles of irreplaceable environmental lands and wildlife habitats will be consumed.



The volume of carbon monoxide and other green house gases produced in the region will more than triple, contributing to a decline in air quality and public health and increased contributions to global climate change.

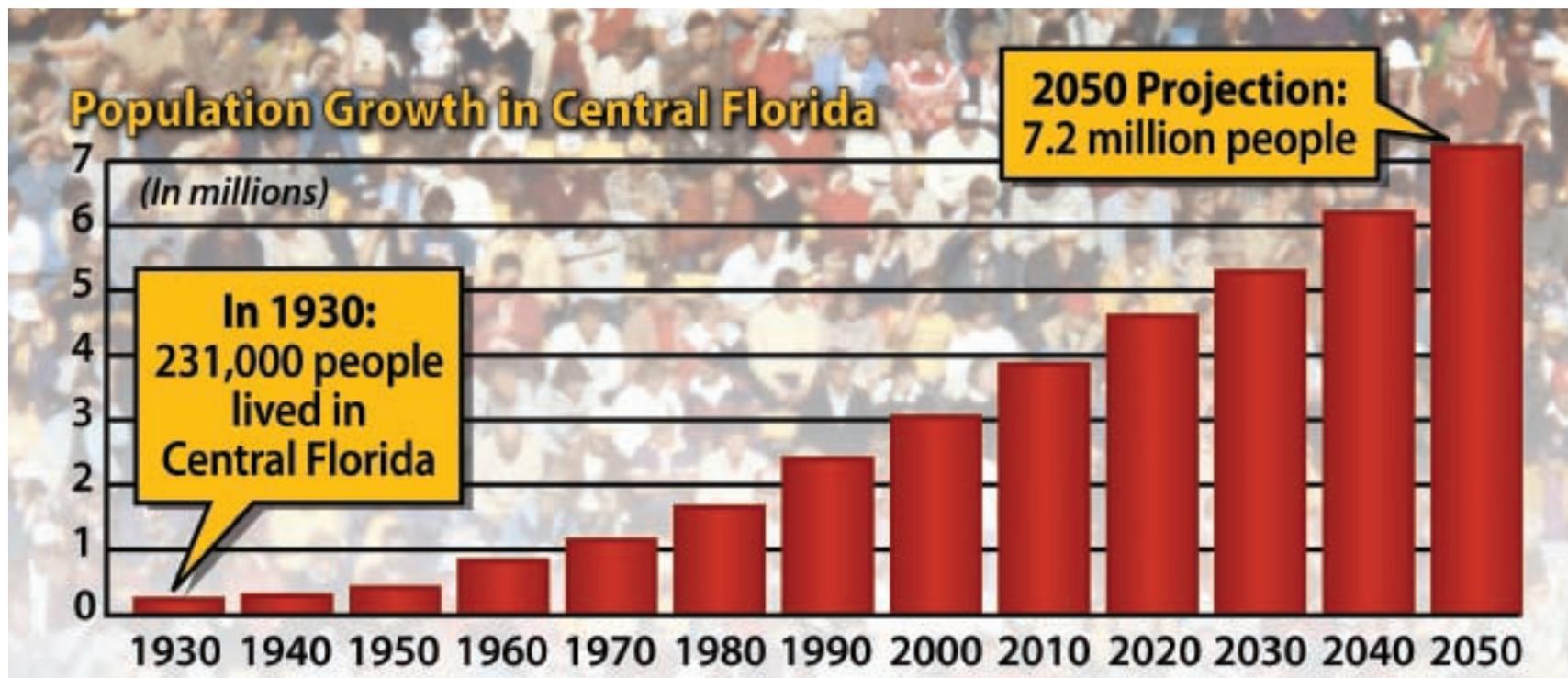


Most new buildings will be single-story, single-family homes on 1/3 to 1/2 acre lots. From the air, it will be difficult to distinguish one set of rooftops from another.



Water consumption will increase by 70 percent, depleting the Floridan aquifer and raising questions about the availability of water for future generations.

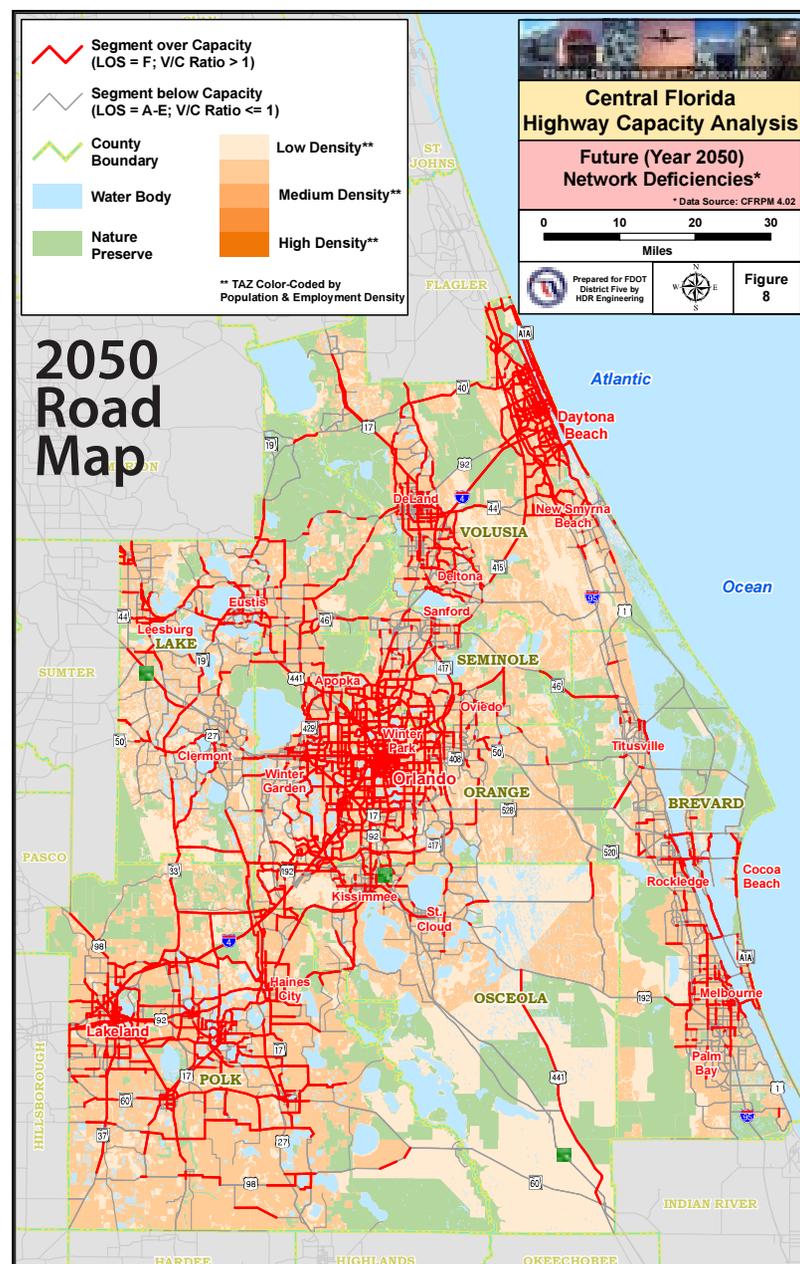
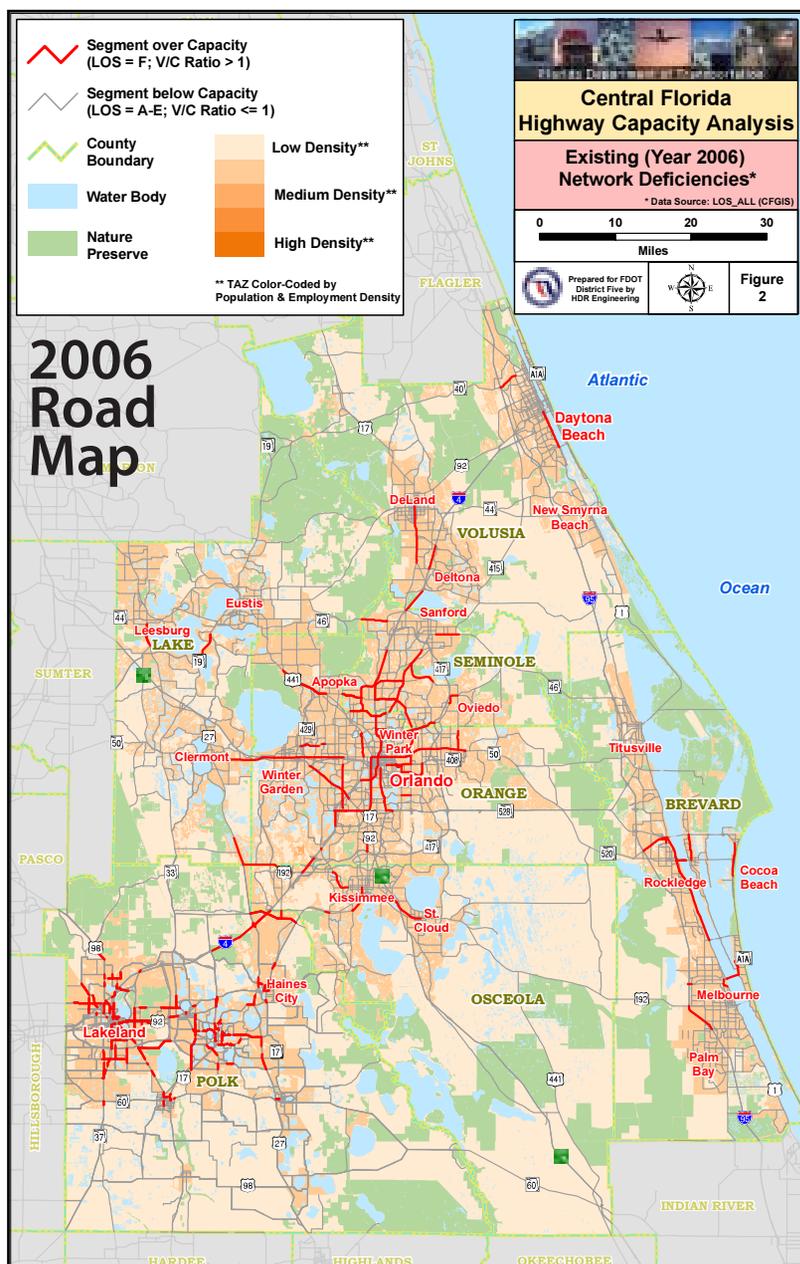
How Are We Growing?



Source: University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research

How We Will Go As We Grow?

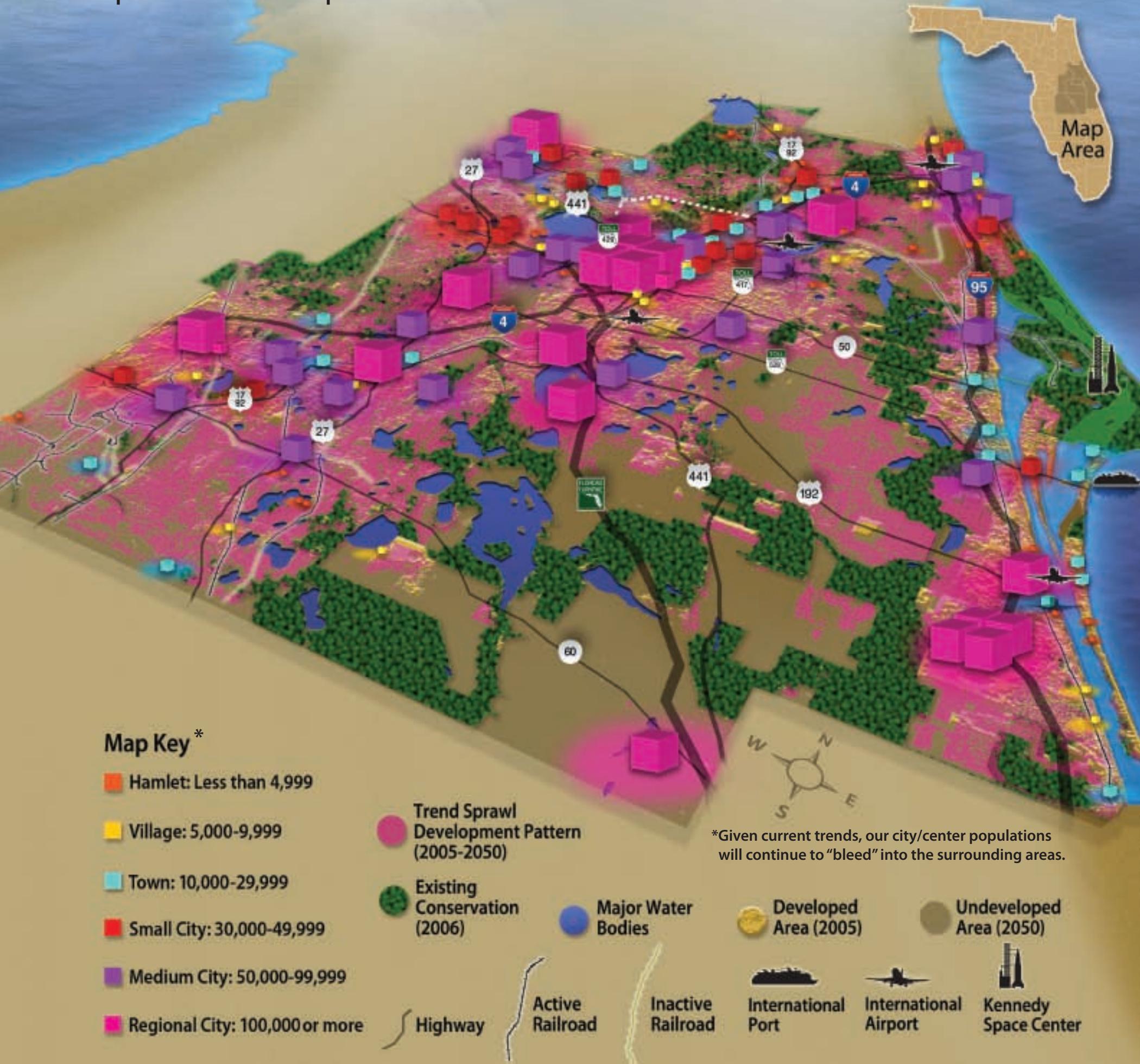
Continued reliance on the automobile is resulting in a growing strain on the road network. The map on the left shows in red the roads currently failing (Level of Service "F"). The map on the right shows the roads that are projected to fail by year 2050 based on population projections and projected future road projects.



Source: Florida Department of Transportation

2050: What We Will Look Like... If Current Trends Continue

If current growth policies continue, the amount of developed land in Central Florida will double by 2050. More development will occur in places that once were distinctly rural or in sensitive environmental areas. City boundaries will meld into one another, with little distinction or "green space" between developed areas.



2050:

Central Florida's residents and leaders are choosing a different path.

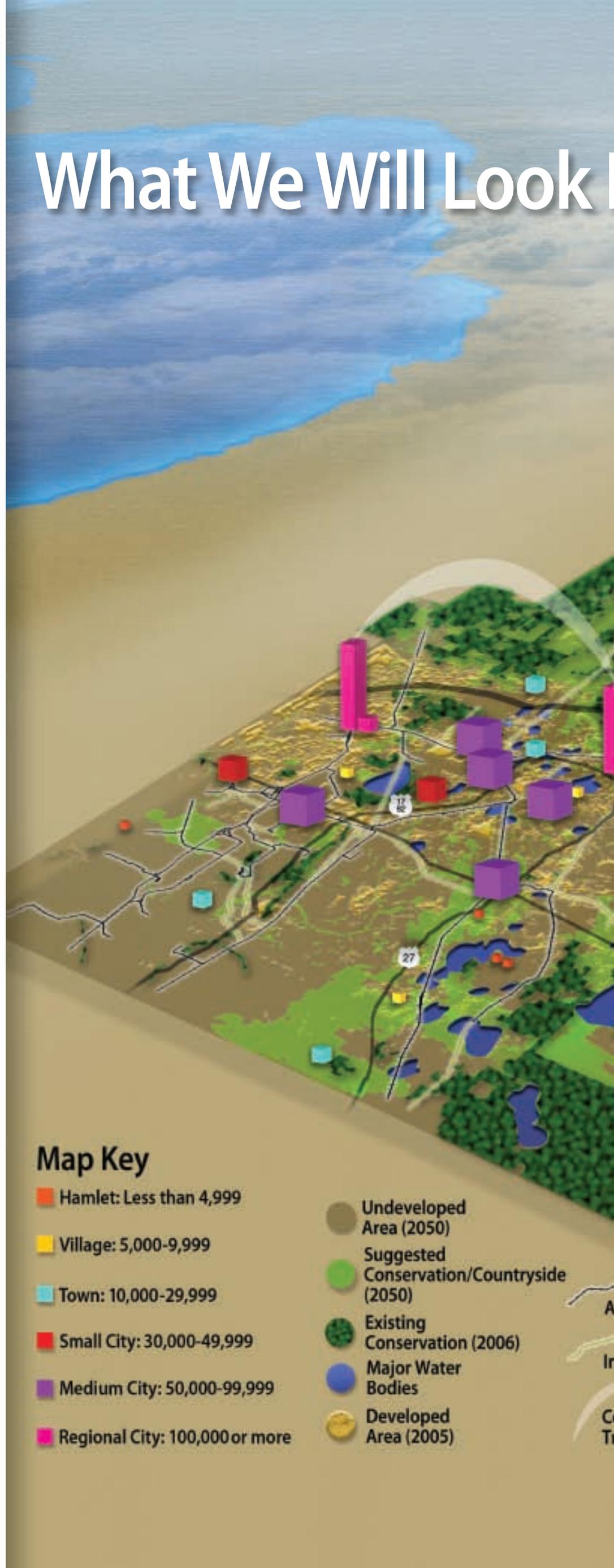
From March 2006 to August 2007, nearly 20,000 Central Floridians participated in a historic "community conversation" to answer the question "How Shall We Grow?" People from all walks of life attended roundtable meetings, shared their hopes and fears, and compared alternative scenarios for what Central Florida could look like in the year 2050. Elected officials and other public, private, and civic leaders from all 7 counties and many of the region's 86 cities met as part of councils, task forces, and technical committees to review policy options and develop future projections.

So, how shall we grow?

The answer is clear: more than 86 percent of Central Floridians surveyed indicated that continuing on the current path of development was their least preferred option of four future scenarios. Instead, they have pointed toward a different approach to growth, in which the region preserves its most precious environmental and agricultural lands, focuses development in urban centers, and connects these centers with transportation corridors that provide choices for how people travel.

This vision illustrates what the region can look like if we focus on the 4 C's – Conservation, Countryside, Centers and Corridors. It illustrates a "snap shot" of the current cities and unincorporated population centers that are anticipated as of 2007. If cities and centers grow as anticipated, our community will need to make decisions about the best ways to connect regional cities and the villages and towns that surround them. If our history is an indicator, the region will continue to reinvent itself and other population centers will likely emerge. The centers may shift and rearrange, but what should stay constant are the core themes and principles underlying the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision.

What We Will Look Like



Like... If Our Vision is Realized



Active Railroad
Conceptual Railroad
Highway
Conceptual Multi-Modal Regional
Transportation Connections (2050)

Kennedy
Space Center
International
Airport
International Port

Central Florida's

Through surveys, meetings, blogs, and other conversations, Central Florida's residents, business leaders, and elected officials overwhelmingly embrace a future that is different than our current path. A future in which the Central Florida region is recognized as a world-class place to live, learn, work, and play. A future where people with diverse backgrounds and talents come together to enhance a global economy that rivals the greatest cities in the world. A future where the natural beauty and other amenities that are

Conservation

Enjoying Central Florida's most precious resources – lands, waters, air, and wildlife

Central Florida's natural setting is world-renowned and precious to all of us. Within an hour's drive, Central Floridians can enjoy swimming at the beach, canoeing or hiking at a natural spring or trail, or riding a bike on the most challenging trails in the state.

Central Floridians seek to ensure that our natural resources are available to our children and grandchildren. We want them to be able to access and enjoy our beaches, parks, trails, and recreation areas. We want them to see how irreplaceable wildlife, plants, and ecosystems can thrive alongside a dynamic economy. We also never want them to worry about whether they will have clean air to breathe

and clean water to drink.

We will significantly expand the amount of land preserved for posterity, including our critical lands and waters. These additional conservation lands will create many new spaces for recreation, wildlife, and groundwater recharge. Conservation lands will be connected in a necklace of "green" corridors throughout the region that preserve natural ecosystems and provide better mobility for wildlife and recreational travelers. Growth in water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced, so that even as we add 3.5 million residents, our overall "footprint" on the environment can be limited.

Countryside

Maintaining Central Florida's heritage of agriculture and small villages

Agriculture will remain a viable option for large swaths of the region's land. Local farms will continue to provide a significant portion of our food supply, as well as valuable exports to other states and nations.

Farms, hamlets, small towns, and undeveloped countryside will remain a key element of Central Florida's landscape. They will provide choices for where people live and wide open spaces for people to enjoy. They also will provide soft edges to the major urban areas, rather than

having a seemingly unending string of development.

Rural communities will enjoy a renaissance among retirees, visitors, and families. Central Florida's small towns will combine a relaxed quality of life with easy access to world-class urban centers throughout the region. They also will have easy access to markets in other regions, states, and nations through our modern transportation and communications systems.



Regional Growth Vision

unique to our region are enjoyed by all. A future in which Central Florida consumes less land, preserves more precious environmental resources, creates more distinctive places to live in both rural and urban areas, and provides more choices for how people travel.

A future that reflects four key themes: Conservation, Countryside, Centers, and Corridors.

Centers

Hamlets, villages, towns and cities – a variety of places to live, work, and play

Distinctive cities and towns will provide choices for how Central Floridians live. Communities will meet the needs of residents, from those who want to live in a downtown high rise to those who desire a five-acre lot in the country.

The region's most vibrant centers will provide a mix of residential and commercial development. These will include traditional cities like Daytona Beach, Mount Dora, Lakeland, Sanford, and Orlando, as well as new urban developments including Dundee, Palm Bay, Altamonte Springs, and Deltona. Other centers will be more focused on economic drivers, such as the areas surrounding Orlando International

Airport, the University of Central Florida, Cape Canaveral, and the region's world-renowned attractions.

Rich architectural details, urban parks, and commercial and cultural amenities will create a unique feel for each center. Most urban areas will have fewer single-family homes and an increased mix of apartments and condominiums. Schools, jobs, shopping, health care facilities, and cultural amenities will be located in close proximity to residential areas. Residents will feel safe and secure and will see Central Florida as a place where they can both raise families and retire.

Corridors

Connecting our region with more choices for how people and freight move

Transportation corridors will provide the glue that links Central Florida's diverse centers to each other, and to the rest of the world.

Central Florida will shift from a region that overwhelmingly depends on cars and trucks to offering its residents, businesses, and visitors a wide range of travel options.

Many people in the most compact urban centers will be able to walk, bicycle, or take a bus or streetcar to school or work. People moving between centers will be able to

drive or use transit or passenger rail systems. And people and freight moving between Central Florida and other parts of the world will have a full range of choices – from high-speed expressways and rail systems to some of the world's most efficient airports, one of the nation's largest cruise passenger ports, and the nation's largest and most capable commercial spaceport.

Greater choices and shorter trips will help reduce congestion on the region's key highways, saving time, money, and stress for residents and businesses.



Looking Ahead – What Could We Look Like?

Development decisions oriented toward conservation, countryside, centers, and corridors could result in a very different future for Central Florida than continuing on the current trend. Projections developed by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council suggest that implementing the shared regional vision could result in these outcomes by 2050:



The region could consume less than 1,000 additional square miles of land over the next 45 years – a significant amount, but much less than the amount consumed over the past five decades.



Residents will have many choices for how to commute to work: walking, bicycling, driving, taking a streetcar, bus, or train. The amount of time spent commuting each day to work could double from today's levels, but would remain below the 90 minutes anticipated if current trends continue.



Only a small amount of sensitive environmental lands and wildlife habitats will be consumed. The amount of land conserved for future generations could increase by 75 percent or more, reaching a level where more land in the region is conserved than developed.



The growth in carbon monoxide and other greenhouse gases produced in the region will slow, maintaining better air quality and public health.



Homes, offices, and other buildings will reflect the diversity of Central Florida's population and economy. From multi-story lofts to working farms, Central Florida will offer choices for everyone.



The growth in water consumption also will slow, helping sustain the availability of water for future generations.

How Do We Get There?

6 PRINCIPLES

Central Florida's elected officials and government, business, and community leaders have been working together to determine how the region can begin implementing this shared regional vision. Through a series of regional councils, working groups, and committees, our county commissioners, mayors and city councilors, school board members, public agency directors, business and civic leaders have begun tackling the tough questions about

which policies and processes should change to enable the region to move toward this shared vision. These leaders have reviewed citizen input, analyzed growth projections and scenarios, and studied "best practices" both within the region and elsewhere in Florida, the nation, and the world.

Together, they have identified six principles that can guide future growth decisions regionwide, as well as the actions necessary to begin implementing each principle:

- 1 PRESERVE...**
open space, recreational areas, farmland, water resources, and regionally significant natural areas.
- 2 PROVIDE...**
a variety of transportation choices.
- 3 FOSTER...**
distinct, attractive, and save places to live.
- 4 ENCOURAGE...**
a diverse, globally competitive economy.
- 5 CREATE...**
a range of obtainable housing opportunities and choices.
- 6 BUILD...**
communities with educational, health care, and cultural amenities.



Preserve open space, recreational areas, farmland, water resources and regionally significant natural areas

Preserving and enjoying our natural resources is what matters most to our citizens. This is the foundation of our shared regional vision – the principle that above all we must follow if our region is to become the place where our children and grandchildren would want to live in 2050.

1. **Identify the “must save” lands.** The centerpiece of the regional vision is a “greenprint,” which is a plan for an inter-connected network of conservation lands, open space, and recreational areas. The greenprint will include the “seven jewels” already identified through the Naturally Central Florida initiative, other habitats for threatened and endangered species, key recreational areas, and the corridors that connect these lands.
2. **Invest in preserving these critical lands.** Dedicated public funding will be one way to purchase lands for this “greenprint.” However, conservation also can occur through private investment. Incentives can encourage landowners to conserve greenprint lands and other open space, and to set aside lands for preservation as part of major development projects.
3. **Ensure that residents can easily access recreational areas.** It is not enough to conserve lands; we also must make sure we can access and enjoy nature. Communities will be designed so that the vast majority of Central Floridians are within a short walk or bike ride from a green space. Appropriate transportation access also will be needed to recreational areas located outside of the urban areas.
4. **Develop in a sensitive manner.** The environment will be a critical factor in future decisions about public and private investment in our region. Development should focus in existing centers and other areas that do not pose significant risk to environmental

resources and that reduce the overall land required to support future

growth. Transportation corridors should impact sensitive lands only when absolutely necessary to connect centers, and then only when access to these corridors can be restricted to avoid drawing even more growth into the area. The design of buildings and infrastructure also should help reduce the region’s water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and other “footprints” on the environment.

5. **Encourage sustainable agriculture.** Agriculture should remain a viable option for our land to provide part of our food supply and to serve export markets. Local governments, land owners, and farmers should work together to promote the importance of agriculture, to retain suitable lands in agriculture, and to ensure that farming remains economically and environmentally viable.
6. **Plan for future water needs.** The region also should develop strategies for providing sufficient water and ensuring that water supply is in place to support new development. A regional water resources plan should include strategies for reducing consumption, sharing available water sources, and developing alternative water sources.

The “Seven Jewels” of Central Florida

1. St. Johns Mosaic and Econlockhatchee
2. Indian River Lagoon
3. Greater Kissimmee Prairie
4. Volusia Conservation Corridor
5. Green Swamp
6. Wekiva-Ocala Greenway
7. Lake Wales Ridge

Source: *Naturally Central Florida*

WORKING TOGETHER: A REGIONAL GREENPRINT

Voters in six of the seven counties in Central Florida have enacted some form of environmental acquisition program. The seventh county (Orange) has set aside money for environmental land purchases. All seven counties are now working together to develop criteria and policies for defining a regional “greenprint” that will include the most critical lands and waters in the region, particularly those whose impacts spill across county lines.

WHAT ARE OTHER REGIONS DOING?

- Austin, Texas initiated in 1990 the first major urban-regional multi-species habitat preservation plan in the United States, a coordinated system of preserves to support a threatened ecosystem.
- Florida’s Rural Lands Stewardship program –pioneered with Babcock Ranch in Southwest Florida – preserves rural lands while also providing opportunities for development.
- California’s climate change program includes an initiative to reduce on-road emissions through community planning, increasing transit ridership, and increasing vehicle occupancy.

Provide a variety of transportation choices

Transportation is the key factor that will shape urban and rural development around the greenprint. The region's transportation investments will support the shared regional vision by providing:

1. Connectivity between centers and to other regions.

Existing or new corridors will connect the major city centers within Central Florida. Where possible, the preference should be to enhance existing corridors, but new corridors may be needed where there are "gaps" in this system. It also will be important to work with the state to enhance the corridors that connect Central Florida to other parts of Florida, other states, and other nations, using a mix of road, rail, water, and air. These corridors should reinforce the "mega-region" linking Central Florida to Tampa Bay, Southeast Florida, and Northeast Florida.

2. Congestion relief.

Central Florida's residents desire to spend less time traveling, and our businesses are looking for ways to reduce the cost and improve the reliability of moving goods. Our regional transportation strategy will include ways to reduce traffic delays, such as eliminating bottlenecks and creating more travel options.

WORKING TOGETHER: CENTRAL FLORIDA MPO ALLIANCE

In the late 1990s, METROPLAN ORLANDO, the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) responsible for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties, and the Volusia County MPO began meeting regularly to discuss transportation issues that crossed jurisdictional boundaries. Today, six MPOs representing 10 counties coordinate plans as part of the Central Florida MPO Alliance. The Alliance has been critical to progress on key regional priorities such as the new St. John's River bridge, Interstate 4 widening, and the planned Central Florida Commuter Rail System. The Alliance now provides the structure for developing a long-range, regional transportation plan that encompasses all modes.

3. Choices for moving people and goods.

Central Florida residents envision a regional transit system that connects existing and future urban centers in all parts of the region. They also envision local light rail, street car, or bus rapid transit systems that connect neighborhoods with the regional transit service. They seek to expand the use of freight rail, high-speed passenger rail, and coastal shipping to move people and freight between Central Florida and other regions. They also desire a system of greenways and trails for walking or bicycling. A regional transportation plan should identify where these choices are most feasible, and set priorities to implement these investments.

4. Concurrency with new development.

Local governments should work with developers to implement needed roads and transit systems in parallel with anticipated growth. This balancing of growth and infrastructure should occur at both local and regional levels to better address impacts of growth that spill over city or county lines. Regional standards can help ensure that development in one county or municipality does not adversely impact other counties or municipalities.

WHAT ARE OTHER REGIONS DOING?

- Denver's MetroVision led to implementation of FasTracks, an ambitious regional transit expansion that is coordinated with land use planning.
- Chicago's Metropolis 2020 vision led to a stronger linkage between transportation and land use planning, including a merger of the agencies responsible for these two functions.
- The Netherlands' Randstad region is driving growth through strategic investments in and marketing of the Port of Rotterdam – the world's largest seaport – and Schiphol International Airport – the world's 9th busiest airport.

In 2010 commuter rail service is planned with the first segment running from DeBary to Orlando, connecting Volusia, Seminole, and Orange Counties. Funding partnerships with the Florida Department of Transportation and the federal government as well as planned connecting service with Amtrak and local bus services including Lynx and VoTran will significantly decrease commute times and increase accessibility.



Foster distinctive, attractive and safe places to live

Centers ranging from villages to towns to cities will be the region's focal point for future development. Our region already offers many choices for where and how we live. How can we expand these options and create new ones in the future?

- 1. Enhance existing communities.** Each community should develop according to the size and character envisioned by its residents, consistent with the shared regional vision. Some communities may choose to create compact developments that can accommodate more residents; others may redevelop and redesign downtowns and central business districts to be more inviting; still others may remain much the same as they are today, whether they are rural communities or urban centers.
- 2. Create new centers.** A small number of new centers may be created at locations that are suitable for compact development. These locations should reflect market demand, avoid critical environmental lands, and be connected to existing or planned transportation corridors.

WORKING TOGETHER: COMMUNITY VISIONING AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING

While Central Florida is working to create a shared vision for all 7 counties and 86 cities, individual areas are trying to gain an understanding of what impact growth will have on their specific community. All counties and many cities in the region are involved in some type of long-range planning and visioning. From Orange and Osceola counties to the City of Tavares, local governments are committing to use the *How Shall We Grow?* principles as a guidepost for future visioning, planning, and land use decisions.

- 3. Encourage creativity.** The development of our cities, towns, and other centers should reflect the diversity of our people and our economy. Incentives could be provided for creative design practices; developing mixed-use, more compact centers located close to regional transit stations and expressway interchanges; and implementing "green" community designs that support a reduced urban and environmental footprint.
- 4. Meet the unique needs of key population groups.** The region should develop centers that appeal to people of all ages and walks of life. Some centers may be family friendly with good schools and child care; other may appeal to active retiree populations by providing accessible health care and recreational and cultural amenities.
- 5. Provide peace of mind.** From the smallest neighborhood to the largest city, residents of each community seek to feel safe and secure. The public and private sectors will consider public safety, public health, and emergency evacuation needs in community design decisions.

WHAT ARE OTHER REGIONS DOING?

- Denver area cities and counties have signed onto a voluntary agreement, the "Mile High Compact," to direct growth according to the principles outlined in the region's long-range Metro Vision.
- The Sacramento Region's 2050 Blueprint promotes compact, mixed-use development, more transit choices, and design standards to influence the attractiveness of the living environment.
- Melbourne, Australia's 2030 plan seeks to protect the region's livability by concentrating future growth in strategic redevelopment sites such as activity centers and underdeveloped land.



The city of Tavares has used the concepts from the Central Florida Regional Growth Vision to help envision their future.

Encourage a diverse, globally competitive economy

Central Florida is positioned to be one of the Western Hemisphere's leading economic regions over the next 50 years. The region's economic vision focuses on building an innovative economy and creating higher-wage jobs to complement its historic strengths in tourism, agriculture, construction, and defense.

The region's built environment will support this economic vision through efforts to:

- 1. Develop centers** that will function as hubs of economic activity. Jobs and housing can be spread throughout the region, enabling people to live close to their jobs. Our plans will ensure that sufficient land is designated for economic centers with appropriate transportation and other infrastructure already in place.
- 2. Provide connectivity to global markets.** The regional transportation plan should set priorities for investing in the highway, rail, water, aviation, and communication systems that link Central Florida businesses to customers in other states and nations.

3. Ensure access to key economics assets. The regional transportation plan also should identify needs for efficient transportation access to key economic assets such as:

- International gateways for commerce and visitors, including the Orlando International Airport and other commercial service airports, Port Canaveral, and the Cape Canaveral Spaceport;
- "Idea factories" that generate new research and products, including the University of Central Florida and other public and private universities, federal and private research laboratories, and major high-tech employers; and
- Key gathering places for business people and creative leaders, from the small executive retreat centers to the massive Orlando-Orange County Convention Center.

4. Develop creative communities. Our communities should provide a stimulating mix of educational, cultural, and environmental resources that will attract and retain highly skilled workers.

WORKING TOGETHER: FLORIDA'S HIGH TECH CORRIDOR

Florida's High Tech Corridor Council was created in 1996 to attract, retain, and grow high-tech industry within Central Florida. The Council now includes the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida, the University of Florida, 20 economic development organizations, 14 community colleges, and numerous other partners in a region that runs from the Space Coast west to St. Petersburg and north to Gainesville. The High Tech Corridor Council and its partners have played critical roles in attracting new technology investment to the region, including the region's successes with the new UCF medical school, the Burnham Institute for Medical Research, and the final assembly of the new Orion space vehicle.

WHAT ARE OTHER REGIONS DOING?

- San Diego is emerging as one of the world's leading biotechnology centers through growth in existing and new companies, supported by coordinated investments in research, training, and infrastructure.
- Seattle's "Prosperity Partnership" is creating a unified, four-county economic agenda to target growth in five industries: aerospace, green technology, information technology, life sciences, and trade/logistics.
- Toronto, Ontario's economic development strategy includes investment in infrastructure and communities to help attract knowledge workers and new firms to the region.

The Central Florida Research Park is a campus-like environment for business, located adjacent to the University of Central Florida and with easy access to the regional expressway system and Orlando International Airport. Businesses can purchase land in the Research Park on which to construct a facility or can lease space for office, laboratory or light manufacturing uses.

Create a range of obtainable housing opportunities and choices

The region's housing stock is becoming less affordable due to rapid price increases and limited wage gains. The median sales price of a single-family home is now seven times the average wage in the region. Housing is increasingly out of reach not just for the working poor, but also for the teachers, nurses, police, firefighters, and other public servants who are so essential to our communities.

Obtainable housing for residents from every walk of life is integral to Central Florida's future. We will work together to:

1. **Set regional goals** for how to make housing more obtainable in the region for both owners and renters and how to maintain this affordability over time.
2. **Educate citizens about obtainable housing.** Better understanding about affordable housing will help debunk

myths, relieve fears, and otherwise reduce opposition to placing more obtainable housing in communities.

3. **Balance the geographic distribution of obtainable housing.** All types of communities, not just urban centers, should provide an appropriate share of the region's obtainable housing. Where possible, the design of obtainable housing should be integrated with market-rate housing in the communities in which it is located. Without a diverse array of suitable housing locations, workers will be forced to live further from their jobs.
4. **Provide incentives for obtainable housing.** Dedicated public funding will continue to be one source of investment in obtainable housing. Creative solutions can help leverage public funding, such as community land trusts, developer incentives, and co-location of housing for essential service workers on school properties and other public lands.

WORKING TOGETHER: WORKFORCE HOUSING INITIATIVES

Many counties and cities in Central Florida are grappling with the challenge of how to provide high-quality housing that is within the price range of essential workers like teachers, nurses, police, firefighters, and hospitality workers. From Brevard to Orange to Polk counties, public agencies and private companies are collaborating on summits, studies, and other efforts to better understand this issue and potential solutions. These local initiatives are now providing best practices, pilot projects, and new tools that can be shared across the region.

WHAT ARE OTHER REGIONS DOING?

- Greater Louisville's downtown housing fund has helped to produce 1,400 new housing units.
- Los Angeles' Gateway Cities Partnership is converting formerly abandoned homes into affordable housing.
- Montgomery County, Maryland's "moderately priced dwelling unit" ordinance provides a density bonus to builders in exchange for the provision of affordable housing.
- The Santa Clara County, California school district and community college have provided land to a developer to build obtainable rental units for teachers.

Through financing by the Orange County Housing Finance Authority and a municipal tax-increment rebate from the City of Orlando, GDC Properties plans to launch a 484-unit pair of 36-story apartment towers. Sixty percent of units will be set aside for low-income and essential service workers in the middle of the downtown urban core.

Build communities with educational, health care, and cultural amenities

Central Florida's people are its most significant asset. Today's society is the most mobile in history, and education, health care, and cultural amenities all play a critical role in attracting and retaining workers, retirees, and visitors. In implementing the shared regional vision, Central Florida will strive to:

1. **Encourage development standards** that promote walkable neighborhoods.
2. **Coordinate the location of school sites** with the location of new residential development, as well as the location of

parks, recreational areas, and transportation services. Create safe routes for students to walk and ride bicycles to schools.

3. **Provide access to healthcare**, social services, child care, elder care, and other family support services at locations throughout the region.
4. **Create, preserve, and provide access** to museums, performing arts, public art, historic properties, and other cultural amenities at locations throughout the region.

WORKING TOGETHER: CENTRAL FLORIDA PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS COALITION

The seven Central Florida counties, together with Hillsborough, Manatee, and Marion Counties – established the Central Florida Public School Boards Coalition to provide a forum for coordination on educational issues. Initial work has targeted science and math education. The Coalition works together to address many other issues including funding, legislation, and growth.

WHAT ARE OTHER REGIONS DOING?

- From South Beach to Ybor City, from Old Naples to Pensacola's Seville Square, Florida cities are rediscovering the potential for historic neighborhoods to attract residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs.
- Barcelona, Spain is developing a system of urban squares and designating "creative areas" that combine museums, education, leisure, hospitality, and retail activities.

As a new community in Osceola County, Harmony has integrated several neighborhood-scale amenities including recreational facilities, pedestrian trails, a vibrant town center, and most importantly, a K-8 elementary school and nearby high school. Harmony plans to expand with community-friendly retail development in the near future.

What Must We Do Next?

5 Regional Actions

The decisions we make today about growth will shape Central Florida's future over the next 50 years. The public and private organizations who have participated in "How Shall We Grow?" commit to the following five actions to initiate implementation of the shared regional growth vision.

1 KEEP WORKING TOGETHER

We will continue to meet as regional leaders to review progress toward the regional vision, and to begin the hard work of carrying out the key actions. The Central Florida Regional Leadership Council, comprising the seven county chairs, and the Central Florida Mayors Council, representing the 86 municipal governments, will continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss growth issues and policies. We also will establish a forum for public, private, and civic organizations representing all disciplines – environment, transportation, land use, economic development, housing, education, health, safety, and others – to meet on a periodic basis.

2 DEVELOP A REGIONAL "GREENPRINT"

In painting the canvas of our region for the next 50 years, the first colors we will use are green and blue, for our critical lands and waters. We will develop a strategy to effectively weave together Central Florida's environmental and urban systems to sustain, protect, and provide access to our exceptional natural resources. State and local governments, landowners, and environmental interests will define the "greenprint" of critical lands and waters, and use public funding and private incentives to set aside these lands, waters, other open space, and recreational areas. In doing so, we will preserve the best of our region for our children and grandchildren.

3 DEVELOP REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

We next will paint our region gray, as we develop the transportation and other infrastructure that connect our city centers to each other and to other regions, states, and nations. Our transportation corridors will link our centers into a region, and, together



with the greenprint, will establish the broad framework for where future growth will occur. We will develop a comprehensive, long-range regional transportation plan that will enhance connectivity, relieve congestion, and expand travel choices. We will give particular emphasis to developing regional transit corridors that can serve as the future backbone for travel, much like the major highways do today. To do so, we will expand the structure of the Central Florida MPO Alliance to better coordinate planning activities across all jurisdictions and across all modes—highway, rail, water, air, and space.

4 UNLEASH CREATIVITY

We then will use the complete palette of colors to paint our region with distinctive neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities. Through market forces and incentives, we will encourage our local governments and developers to imagine and then implement creative solutions for reducing sprawl, promoting compact development, designing distinctive places, making housing more affordable, and growing economic centers of excellence. We will begin the detailed process of revising regional and local plans, regulations, and processes to convert these dreams into reality.

5 MEASURE, INSPECT, AND IMPROVE

Finally, we will regularly monitor the progress of the region toward implementing the shared regional vision, determine where we are falling short, and make the midcourse corrections necessary to keep us on track. *myregion.org* will work with other partners to develop an annual regional progress report, and periodically convene regional leaders to make adjustments to the vision and related plans.



HOW SHALL WE GROW? FUNDING PARTNERS

Brevard County Metropolitan Planning Organization
East Central Florida Regional Planning Council
Florida Department of Community Affairs
Florida Department of Transportation
Lake-Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization

METROPLAN ORLANDO
myregion.org
Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce
Polk County Transportation Planning Organization
Volusia County Metropolitan Planning Organization

HOW SHALL WE GROW? PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

Central Florida Regional Planning Council
MSCW
Progress Energy

UCF Metropolitan Center for Regional Studies
WKMG-TV
WMFE-TV

HOW SHALL WE GROW? COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERS

African American Chamber of Commerce of
Central Florida
American Society of Landscape Architects –
Florida Chapter
Asociación Borinqueña
Brevard County Board of County Commissioners
Brevard County Library System
Bright House Networks
Chuluota Community Association
City of Orlando
City of St. Cloud
City of Tavares
City of Winter Springs
Cocoa Civic Center
Community Vision
Daytona Beach Community College
Daytona Beach Community College Television
Downtown Development Board, City of Orlando
El Nuevo Dia
Embarq
Envision Seminole
Equinox Documentaries, Inc.
Eustis Community Center
Fifth Third Bank
Florida Chamber Foundation
Florida High Tech Corridor Council
Florida Hospital
Florida Institute of Technology
Florida Today

Florida Yards and Neighbors
Gosselin Realty
Groveland-Puryear Community Center
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro
Orlando
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Hope Community Fellowship
Hunter's Creek Community Television
JHT, Inc.
Lake County Board of County Commissioners
Lake Front Television
Lakeland Ledger
Lake-Sumter Community College
Lake-Sumter Community College Television
Lead Brevard
Leadership Orlando
Leadership Orlando Alumni Association
Leadership Seminole
Leesburg Daily Commercial
Longwood Community Center
LYNX
Maitland Library System
Metro Orlando Economic Development
Commission
Metropolitan Orlando Urban League
Orange County Board of County Commissioners
Orange County League of Women Voters
Orange County Library System
Orange TV

Orlando-Orange County Health Department
Orlando Sentinel Communications
Osceola County Board of County Commissioners
Osceola Heritage Park
Polk Community College
Polk County Board of County Commissioners
Polk County Library System
Polk County Museum of Art
Polk Government Television
Polk Vision
RE/MAX 200
Rollins College Office of Community
Engagement
Sandrift Community College
Seminole County Board of County
Commissioners
Seminole Government Television
Space Coast Government Television
The Hope Church
The Nature Conservancy
ULI-Orlando
UCF Alumni Center
UCF University Relations Department
Valencia Community College
Volusia County Association for Responsible
Development
Volusia County Council
Walt Disney World Co.
WMFE-FM

HOW SHALL WE GROW? NATIONAL EXPERTS

Dee Allsop, Harris-Wirthlin Brand and Strategy
Consulting
Christine Chadwick, Focus St. Louis
Robert Grow, Envision Utah
Doug Henton, Collaborative Economics
John Kaliski, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

John Melville, Collaborative Economics
John Parr, Center for Regional &
Neighborhood Action
Katherine Perez, Southern California
Transportation & Land Use Coalition

Joan Riehm, Louisville Metro Government
Steve Seibert, Century Commission for a
Sustainable Florida
George Vradenburg, Vradenburg Foundation

HOW SHALL WE GROW? RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Avid Neo Geo
Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
Central Florida Geographic Information
Systems Initiative
Central Florida MPO Alliance

Central Florida Smart Growth Alliance
Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium
HNTB Corporation
How Shall We Grow? Technical Committee
Knight

Renaissance Planning Group
Rent-A-PC
Shargaa Illustration & Design
Technetium Creative, LLP
University of Florida Geo Plan Center

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to the 20,000 Central Floridians who provided input and insight to craft a Shared Growth Vision for Central Florida.