NASSAU FLORIDA

VISION 2050

All Voices. One Vision.

VISION PLAN

NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA

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All Voices. One Vision.

ONE
PLAN

"All Voices. One Vision." is a plan that draws on the County's strengths, opportunities, and values to promote the long-term vitality and sustainability of our community for residents and visitors alike. It has been shaped by community engagement, data and analysis, and national trends to create a clear path forward. This plan will serve as a foundation for both long- and short-term planning, guiding policy decisions, and government actions for years to come.

Vision 2050

Building on past long-range planning efforts, including Vision 2032, Vision 2050 seeks to identify what residents want Nassau County to be in 2050. It reaffirms and expands previous priorities to meet modern-day challenges, including preserving community character and addressing growth in a way that creates a financially and environmentally sustainable future.

The plan represents the County's first large-scale visioning effort since 2007 and will guide updates to the Comprehensive Plan and other County policies, regulations, investments, and efforts. The plan and its implementation framework will ensure that decision-making is consistent with the community's vision. Monitoring the plan should be wrapped into the performance review standards and provide transparent and current information on the status of County initiatives.

The plan was broken into five overarching phases and was created over approximately 18 months, beginning in Fall 2023 and concluding in early 2025, as shown below.

VISION 2050 WILL:

BOOST COMMUNITY PRIDE by identifying and celebrating the unique history and culture of Nassau County; preserving historic landmarks and sites; and promoting arts, culture, and traditions.

ENHANCE RESILIENCY by identifying opportunities to protect our rich supply of natural resources and county assets, and developing a balanced approach to growth management.

PLAN FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY throughout the County by evaluating roadway safety and needs, envisioning future networks, and enhancing multi-modal access for residents and visitors.

FOSTER COMMUNITY BUILDING by planning for growth that enhances quality of life and community character while supporting prosperity and economic advancement.

FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024
Setting Your Foundation:
Analyze existing conditions

WINTER 2023 - FALL 2024
Creating Your Framework:
Establish the growth and opportunities framework

SPRING 2025 - SUMMER 2025
Initiating Implementation:
Adopt the final plan

PHASE TWO

PHASE FOUR

PHASE ONE

PHASE THREE

PHASE FIVE

FALL 2023 - SUMMER 2024
Building Your Vision:
Engage the public to identify community values

FALL 2024 - SPRING 2025
Drafting Your Plan:
Prepare & review the draft plan

VISION PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Vision Plan is divided into five chapters.

1 ONE PLAN
OUTLINES THE PURPOSE OF VISION 2050, EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR AN UPDATED VISION AND ITS ROLE IN GUIDING FUTURE DECISION-MAKING.

2 NASSAU TODAY
PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY MEMORANDUM, HIGHLIGHTING THE COUNTY'S CURRENT STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES.

3 ALL VOICES
ILLUSTRATES THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FACILITATED TO BUILD THE COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR TOMORROW.

4 OUR VISION
DETAILS THE PROPOSED GROWTH FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING POPULATION PROJECTIONS, GROWTH PATTERNS, AND OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE DESIRED COMMUNITY IDENTITY.

5 NASSAU TOMORROW
OFFERS THE COUNTY RECOMMENDATIONS TO REALIZE THE VISION.

BUILDING THE PLAN

The plan was developed by evaluating existing conditions, engaging the community, and evaluating trends to devise recommendations for Nassau's future. This effort provided a clear understanding of the County's present conditions and future needs. Feedback from this process helped shape the desired type and character of growth and informed the development of the plan.

Existing Conditions
A review of existing planning documents and an analysis of existing demographics, community trends, and regional factors were reviewed at the beginning of the project. This information provided a baseline understanding of Nassau's community today. The existing conditions are provided in the first volume of the report, the Community Memorandum. A summary of the existing conditions is provided in Chapter 2 , Nassau Today, of this plan.

Community Engagement
Extensive participation from the community helped direct Vision 2050's recommendations and objectives. This engagement is summarized in Chapter 3, All Voices, of this plan and an in-depth review is provided as **Appendix C**.

Community Building Blocks
Key themes and values heard from the community were used to create the Community Building Blocks. These building blocks are the vision for Nassau's future, and represent plan "goals." The eight building blocks are shown on page 7 and reviewed in more detail throughout the plan.

Growth Framework
To guide growth, a preferred growth scenario was developed to shape the character and general type of development in the future. It will inform the Future Land Use Map and Element update in the Comprehensive Plan. The growth framework is supported by plan objectives and strategies.

Implementation
The growth framework is supported by plan objectives and strategies. Utilizing the eight building blocks as the foundation for Nassau's future, objectives and outcomes with associated actions and strategies are outlined to help guide the Nassau of tomorrow.
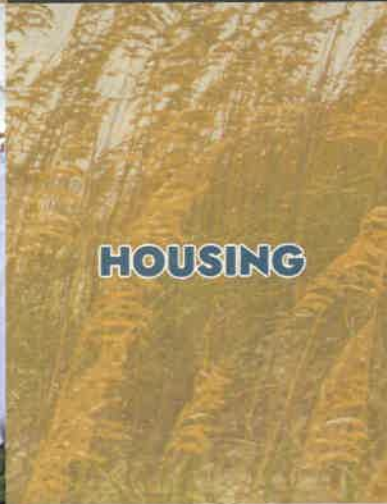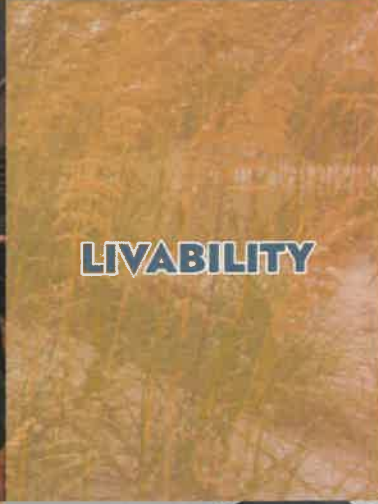
Vision 2050
Outcomes

Key data, analysis, and foundational community studies are essential for developing Vision 2050. The implementation action plan outlines crucial policies, regulations, investments, programs, and other measures necessary to realize the community's vision over the next 25 years and beyond. To ensure the plan remains effective and relevant, it is crucial to take regular actions and provide updates, preventing it from being neglected or left unused.

Vision 2050 will lead to a revision of the County's Comprehensive Plan to ensure its goals, objectives, and policies align with the community's future vision. While the Comprehensive Plan has been updated to meet state requirements, the last major revision was in 2010 following Vision 2032. In 2023, the Florida Legislature amended the statute to require all comprehensive plans to reflect a minimum planning period of at least ten years. The Nassau Comprehensive Plan in place is dated through 2030. A thorough update is necessary to comply with Florida Statute and align goals, objectives, and policies with the anticipated growth and shifting community values.

Adopting the 2050 Comprehensive Plan will ensure that Nassau's future goals, objectives, and policies reflect the key insights from the Vision 2050 process. This update will address critical challenges and opportunities, proactively plan for the future, meet current residents' needs, and support the County's long-term vitality for future generations.

Near-term plans necessary to implement Vision 2050 include the 5-Year Strategic Plan and the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The County's 5-Year Strategic Plan identifies target initiatives for the near-term, typically within the next five years. Through workshops with the Board of County Commissioners, projects and needs are prioritized for funding. The CIP is updated annually and identifies fund allocations needed over the next five years to accomplish prior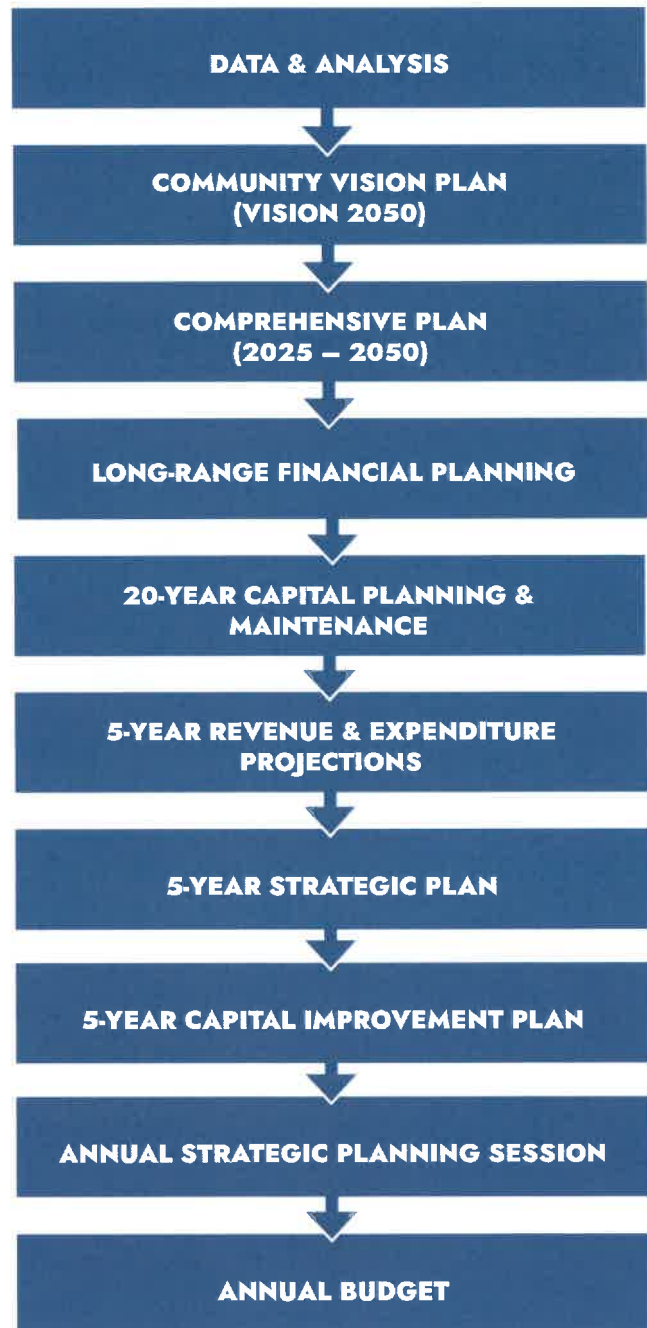ity actions and needs. The CIP includes more than just County allocations, it includes outside funding sources such as Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) funds or grants. In addition to the CIP, the annual budget is used to fund necessary programs, staffing needs, and other community priorities.

DATA & ANALYSIS

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COMMUNITY VISION PLAN (VISION 2050)

↓

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2025 – 2050)

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LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLANNING

↓

20-YEAR CAPITAL PLANNING & MAINTENANCE

↓

5-YEAR REVENUE & EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

↓

5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

↓

5-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

↓

ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

↓

ANNUAL BUDGET

Why Now

Nassau County is a growing and thriving community in northeastern Florida. Since the founding of Nassau County in 1824, the ocean, rivers, rail, and timber have played a large role in how the County has been developed. Timber and the rail line led to the creation of towns such as Callahan, Hilliard, and Yulee. The Atlantic Ocean, timber mills, the shrimping industry, and tourism influenced growth on and around Amelia Island. The rivers not only added to the serene atmosphere of the County but have also supported the movement of goods throughout the County and around the country.

The County's population grew exponentially at the turn of the century. This created challenges to mobility, quality of life, and the provision of public services. Many of these challenges are still relatable today. Understanding the community context, previous planning initiatives, and growth characteristics is important for understanding the needs for the future.

Population Growth. Nassau's population has grown by 30,000 residents over the last 13 years. It is projected that the County's population will continue to grow rapidly, with just under 200,000 residents calling Nassau home in 2050. The exponential increase in projected population isn't just a number, it brings real implications and a need for continued long-range planning for such things as schools, public safety, water and wastewater, parks and recreation, and streets and mobility.

External Factors. The growing appeal of northeast Florida has attracted new residents to Nassau, where there are great public schools, high quality of life, and efficient public safety services. Additionally, there are state preemptions that limit the local government's ability to guide and constrain development.

Recent Development Trends. While historical patterns of development represent suburban and single-use developments, recent approvals for the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA), the William Burgess District (WBD) and the SR200/A1A Corridor Master Plan (also known as Timber to Tides Design Overlay or T2TDO) signal a shift toward more fiscally and environmentally sustainable development.

These plans emphasize enhancing quality of life and reflect the County's evolving approach to development. The districts accommodate new growth in mixed-used centers through higher densities and intensities of development, thereby allowing greater opportunity to protect the cherished rural character and natural areas in other parts of the County.

View along the St. Marys River circa 1870. The St. Marys River has played a role in the transport of goods and people from inland to the coastline for centuries.

Rapid growth and suburban expansion have highlighted the need for improved planning to prevent the same patterns of development from repeating in the future.

New developments incorporate great "third spaces" for residents that provide places to relax or socially engage.

Infrastructure Needs. While the County is actively planning for roadway improvements, many of the major thoroughfares do not have parallel corridors, which leads to congestion, especially in Yulee and Callahan. As the population has continued to grow, roadway maintenance and capacity needs are ever present. The recent adoption of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP) and the Conservation Acquisition and Land Management Plan (CLAM) show the County's dedication to conserving the natural environment. The implementation of these plans will lead to thousands of acres of environmentally sensitive land conserved combined with better access to active and passive recreation opportunities. Continued growth of physical, social, and environmental infrastructure is critical to the County's future.

Housing Availability. Housing affordability and the Area Median Income (AMI) remain significant concerns in the County. There is considerable variation in median household income across Nassau, with figures exceeding $200,000 on Amelia Island and dropping below $50,000 in some areas west of I-95. Despite this income disparity, many housing policies focus on households earning up to 120% of AMI, over $90,000. Limited housing options exist for families earning less than 80% of AMI. While the County has policies to support the development of affordable housing and offers property owners the ability to construct accessory dwelling units on their property, there is still a general shortage of "missing middle" housing choices and options for those seeking to age in place.

Nassau Post Pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about fundamental changes in employment, shopping, and quality of life. Workplace flexibility has enabled people to choose homes in areas with more amenities, better school districts, and lower crime rates without the burden of long commutes. The rise in online shopping has transformed the retail landscape, resulting in a decrease in large department stores and a shift of major retailers toward online platforms. This change has led to an increase in delivery vehicles on roads, a greater need for loading zones, and other roadway considerations. Many new commercial developments are now focusing on creating unique, in-person experiences that can't be replicated online, in contrast to traditional retail approaches.

The County maintains public dirt roads, such as Bismark Road, in the more rural areas of the County.

The types of housing choice available for residents has increased in the past decade, with more townhomes and apartments offerings available.

The COVID-19 Pandemic highlighted the importance of social infrastructure within a community. Parks and places that provide experiences offer residents the opportunity to engage and socialize.

KEY THEMES FOR VISION 2050

Consistent themes from the various planning exercises that are critical to consider include:

» **CELEBRATING ARTS AND CULTURE.** Nassau has a unique and storied history that needs to be acknowledged and celebrated. Access to arts and cultural events is enriching for a community, allows the community to celebrate its heritage, provides opportunities for community building, and supports economic vitality.

» **CONNECTING COMMUNITIES.** Connecting communities means more than just roadway connections and enhancing transportation access throughout the County. Social, technological, and environmental connections should be at the forefront of planning.

» **ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITY.** Diversifying the tax base is crucial for the County's long-term financial health. Growth with target industries will attract high-paying jobs, and creating mixed-use developments around employment zones can help provide quality, attainable housing in areas where there are sufficient services.

» **FISCAL STEWARDSHIP.** Good fiscal practices can be used to guide development in a manner that is feasible and will provide the greatest return on investment. While not all areas of the County should be developed as higher intensity mixed-use developments, creating areas reflecting those development patterns can provide greater incentives to maintain working agricultural lands elsewhere, lands that may not draw as many financial resources.

» **HEALTH AND WELLNESS.** Access to quality healthcare, personal services, healthy eating options, and a healthy built environment will improve the overall health and wellness of residents. With an aging population, and new residents moving to Nassau, providing quality health services will be critical for maintaining a high quality of life.

» **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION.** The protection of the County's critical natural resources is essential for the County's sustainability for future generations. Nassau's wetlands, waterbodies, and natural environment offer residents exceptional beauty and environmental benefits.

» **QUALITY OF LIFE.** The term "quality of life" is an umbrella concept that is frequently discussed, encompassing a range of factors such as access to healthcare, housing options, environmental stewardship, recreational opportunities, economic stability, and public services. As the population continues to grow, the County can strive to maintain a high quality of life.

» **RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES.** Recreational opportunities are important to Nassau's residents. The inclusion of trails, shaded play areas, splash pads, programming opportunities, sports leagues, and access to nature are important to residents and visitors. Recreation can provide economic and social benefits.

» **RURAL LAND PROTECTION.** Rural heritage is paramount to residents of Western Nassau. There is a strong desire to maintain rural character generally west of I-95. Creating a balance with development will be important for maintaining the feeling of rural character.

» **SUSTAINABLE, MANAGED GROWTH.** The concept of sustainable or managed growth emerged as important in the Vision 2032 Plan and has remained critically important to residents. While Nassau cannot stop growth from coming, the Vision process can help guide where and how growth happens to create a future that enhances community character and reflects the building blocks.

All Voices. One Vision.

NASSAU
TODAY

Nassau Today provides an overview of its history, people, and built environment. This analysis serves as a foundation for understanding the County's present condition and lays the groundwork for addressing its future needs.

Historical Context

Nassau County was home to the Timucua people until 1562, when the French arrived, followed by the Spanish and British. By 1821, Florida became a U.S. territory, and Nassau County was established in 1824 after initially being part of Duval County. Early on, the County was rural with farming and large plantations, and over half of the population in 1830 were enslaved Africans.

Only one bridge connected Fernandina to the mainland until 1948. The expansion of railroads spurred growth throughout the County, and the road system developed in the 1920s with the advent of automobiles. US-17 became a major route in the 1930s, preceding the construction of I-95 in the 1970s. Callahan and Hilliard grew with the railroad's arrival, gaining incorporation in 1911 and 1947, respectively. Other settlements include Bryceville (established in 1871), Crandall, Kings Ferry, Lessie, and Evergreen.

Before the Civil War, Nassau County was known for its plantations and the port community of Fernandina, which had the largest natural deep water port south of Virginia. David Yulee chose Fernandina as the eastern point of his Florida Railroad, establishing Florida's first cross-state rail line. During the Civil War, Amelia Island was occupied by the Union army, while the interior supported Confederate forces. Post-war, the Freedmen's Bureau helped formerly enslaved people establish settlements like Franklintown, Lessie, and Evergreen.

In the 1870s, Fernandina emerged as an early tourism destination in Florida, while Callahan and Hilliard developed into communities, benefiting from the County's pine resources through sawmills and turpentine stills. The early 1900s were quieter, with industry focused on dairy, poultry, and the port's distribution of lumber, railroad ties, and turpentine.

By 1940, two pulp mills opened in Fernandina, and residents enlisted in World Wars I and II. World War II brought military installations to the County. Post-war, the Hilliard Air Traffic Control Center opened, and the U.S. highway expansion increased traffic. The 2000s saw major growth in Yulee with new subdivisions and shopping centers, necessitating new schools, roads, parks, and civic facilities to accommodate residents.

The Gullah Geechee people, descendants of West Africans brought to the area during slavery, continue to preserve their cultural heritage through land ownership and customs like food, music, and religion. American Beach was founded by Abraham Lewis and the Afro-American Life Insurance Company in 1935 to provide African Americans with a beach community during the time of segregation. American Beach residents still foster a strong sense of community today.

Special events are vital to community entertainment. Since 1963, the Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival has been a social focal point. Other events, such as the Callahan Christmas Parade and Northeast Florida Fair, along with newer events like Dickens On Centre, continue to bring people together. Nassau County's culture is a unique blend of rural and coastal living, allowing residents to experience both the beach and agricultural activities. For most of the last 200 years, the County has been known for its small-town life that showcases community spirit and local traditions. People enjoy fishing, boating, and access to the outdoors, reflecting the community's identity.

The Bosque Bello Cemetery on Amelia Island is estimated to be one of the oldest cemeteries in Nassau, dating back to 1798. Residents can still be buried in the cemetery today.

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The County has laid a strong foundation for planning through previous efforts related to the long-term needs of County residents. Key findings and recommendations of those plans remain valid and are incorporated into the Vision 2050 Plan recommendations. Past plans considered for this plan are listed below.

Vision 2032 is a strategic vision for Nassau County that was adopted in 2007. The plan is committed to managing growth and creating sustainable economic development in a way that maintains and improves the County's quality of life and uniqueness. The plan is used as a foundation for many plans and documents to date and has been pivotal in guiding policy and decision-making over the last nearly 20 years.

The **Nassau County Mobility Plan Report** adopted in 2021, outlines essential strategies for addressing transportation challenges within Nassau County. The report aims to enhance mobility, alleviate congestion, and improve transportation infrastructure.
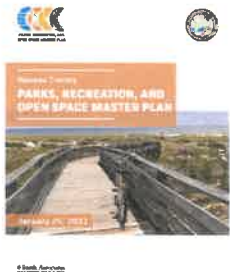
The **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP)** adopted in 2021, acknowledges the importance of parks and recreation facilities in enhancing community life, aesthetics, property values, tourism, and the overall image of the county. It provides the County with a framework for improving access to recreation facilities for all County residents, recommends policy changes to implement the vision of the PROSMP, and provides the County with administrative guidance for future park development.

The **Nassau County Vulnerability Assessments** provide critical insights for resilient planning, ensuring the County's preparedness and adaptability in the face of environmental challenges. The vulnerability assessments focused on evaluating which areas and peoples are most vulnerable to climatic events such as storm surge and flooding due to proximity to water features and floodways. It further identifies where critical public infrastructure may be susceptible to flood impacts.
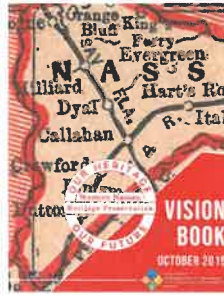
The **Western Nassau Vision Book** was adopted by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in 2019 to proactively plan for the future of western Nassau County. The plan was developed in response to the 2017 Urban Land Institute report on the impacts of growth on western Nassau County. The Vision Book is the result of a community-driven process that included extensive public outreach to gather input from residents, property and business owners, and state and local agencies. The plan's goals, objectives, and strategies center around preserving the character of western Nassau and supporting the historical and civic services to maintain the current quality of life.
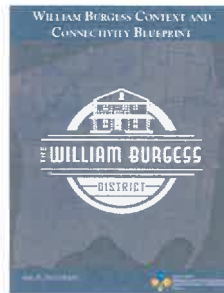
The **William Burgess Context and Connectivity Blueprint** is a district plan that reflects Nassau County's recognition of the need for more cohesive and sustainable development patterns in that part of the County. The District, which encompasses 5,400 acres in southern Nassau County, is envisioned as a hybrid form-based code district, focusing on quality, compact urbanization and multi-modal connectivity. The plan aims to facilitate the formation of an inclusive community where people can live, work, play, and stay.

The **East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA)** is a sector plan which was adopted in 2011. The plan focuses on the development of approximately 23,570 acres located near Yulee in Nassau County as a mixed-use and inclusive community. The plan incorporates conservation areas, mixed-use nodes, commercial centers, industrial areas, a comprehensive trail network, public facilities and amenities, and residential areas. Since its adoption in 2011, there has been development progress with the development of Wildlight, continued residential growth, and the approval of plans to guide the next phase of development with the Commerce Park and future growth areas.

The **SR200/ A1A Corridor Master Plan** adopted in December 2021, is a comprehensive document that outlines the future vision for the SR200/A1A Corridor from Police Lodge Road to the Shave Bridge. The plan aims to transform the corridor into a multi-functional, safe, and sustainable area that connects people to the places where they live, work, play, and stay. Many of its recommendations are applicable to other similar corridors around the County.

The **Historic Resource Survey** was conducted to identify historic structures and significant cultural spaces. The plan provided recommendations on how to support preservation efforts countywide.

In 2019, the County Commissioners adopted the 5-year **Strategic Plan** to guide County initiatives and policies over the next five years. The development of this plan draws on key initiatives and actions from foundational community studies, identifying the essential steps needed to implement various plans in the short term. The Strategic Plan outlines specific outcomes, projects, initiatives, and priorities, setting bold targets to address the challenges facing the County.

The **Nassau County Transit Study** (2024) reviewed overall transit needs from data and analysis, as well as community engagement. It highlighted access to employment, access to healthcare, tourist transportation, and improved rural area access as key factors for considering future needs and services for the transit system.

Nassau County established the **Conservation Lands Acquisition and Management (CLAM)** program in 2020 as a means to better manage its natural resources amid increasing development pressures. The CLAM program uses GIS technology to create a Resource Ranking Map, assessing potential conservation lands based on water, habitat protection, working lands, and recreation. The CLAM goals focus on water issues, species and habitat protection, recreation, open space, quality of life, working lands, and value for money. The plan identified priority properties for acquisition and was funded through a referendum and appropriation of millage from taxes.

Demographic Snapshot

Nassau County's demographic profile reflects a dynamic population that balances longstanding residents with newcomers drawn to its natural beauty, strong sense of community, and economic opportunities.

NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA

100,763
Current Population

Current Population by Age

- 0-4: 5%
- 5-17: 14%
- 18-24: 7%
- 25-54: 34%
- 55-64: 16%
- 65-79: 19%
- 80+: 5%

(axis: 0, 10,000, 20,000, 30,000)

Population By Place
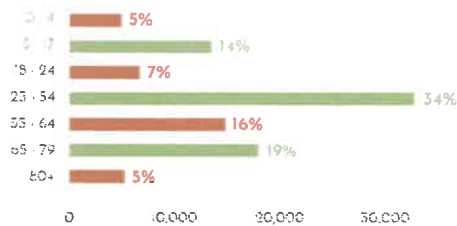
	POPULATION	% OF POP.	LAND AREA	% OF LAND AREA
NASSAU	100,763	100%	648.7 SQ. MI.	100%
CALLAHAN	1,680	2%	1.3 SQ. MI.	0.20%
HILLIARD	3,090	3%	5.5 SQ. MI.	0.85%
FERNANDINA BEACH	13,499	13%	12.6 SQ. MI.	1.92%
UNINCORPORATED NASSAU COUNTY	82,494	82%	629.3 SQ. MI.	97.03%

Source: Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Esri Business Analyst, US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2017-2022),

NASSAU COMMUNITY BREAKDOWN

People per Household

NASSAU - **2.49**
CALLAHAN - **2.40**
HILLIARD - **2.53**
FERNANDINA BEACH - **2.09**

Home Ownership

NASSAU - **83%** (OWNER) | **17%** (RENTER)
CALLAHAN - **62%** | **38%**
HILLIARD - **55%** | **45%**
FERNANDINA BEACH - **82%** | **18%**

Education

NASSAU - **32%** (BACHELORS & HIGHER)
CALLAHAN - **12%**
HILLIARD - **9%**
FERNANDINA BEACH - **49%**

Disability

NASSAU - **17.4%**
CALLAHAN - **15.5%**
HILLIARD - (DATA UNAVAILABLE)
FERNANDINA BEACH - **16.4%**

Median Household Income

NASSAU - **$84,085**
CALLAHAN - **$52,688**
HILLIARD - **$64,375**
FERNANDINA BEACH - **$86,494**

Poverty

NASSAU - **9%**
CALLAHAN - **14%**
HILLIARD - **17%**
FERNANDINA BEACH - **11%**

Source: Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Esri Business Analyst, US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2017-2022)

Below is a side-by-side comparison of demographics, starting with the smallest area, Nassau County, followed by the regional average of neighboring counties (Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns), and finally the largest area, the State of Florida.

	NASSAU	REGION	FLORIDA
Median Age	46.3	40.9	42.4
Ages under 18	19.5%	22%	19.6%
Ages 65 & up	23%	18%	21%
People per Square Mile	140	462	401
Household Size	2.5	2.6	2.5
Family Size	2.9	3.1	3.1
Median Household Income	$84,085	$79,960	$67,917
Zero Car Household	3%	4%	6%
Housing Units	42,121	695,854	9,915,957
Owner Occupied Housing	87%	77%	67%
Renter Occupied Housing	13%	23%	33%
Vacant Housing	9%	10%	16%
Poverty Rate	9%	10%	12%

Source: Bureau of Economic & Business Research, Esri Business Analyst, US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2017-2022)

Key Challenges & Opportunities

The following sections provide a summary of findings from the Community Memorandum. For more detailed information and data sources, see the full document.

LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Existing Development Patterns

Nassau County is primarily designated for low-density development, with over 78 percent of the County having future land use designations of "Agriculture" which allows for one dwelling unit per acre, and 73 percent of the County having a zoning designation "Open Rural." Where wetlands exist, densities are further restricted to one unit per five acres. For agricultural parcels over 320 acres in size, densities are intended to be limited to one unit per 20 acres. The development patterns associated with "one unit per acre" are not truly rural in nature, they cause a greater strain on County resources, have less support for commercial uses, and ultimately reduce anticipated tax revenues for the County.

In the areas generally east of I-95, the development patterns are more consistent with suburban-style development, with densities ranging from one to ten units per acre located behind strip commercial along SR-200. This pattern of development is highly dependent on the single-occupant vehicle. A lack of parallel roads to SR-200 leads to choke points at major intersections, such as Amelia Concourse and Old Nassauville Road. Generally, the existing development patterns in the unincorporated areas of Nassau County have not fostered a strong sense of place or the feeling of small town atmosphere.

Recent Development Shifts

Recently approved master plans, such as the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA) and William Burgess District (WBD) and the pending T2TDO, employ a "character-based code" framework which focuses more on the form of development rather than just land use. These areas incorporate social spaces, a mixture of uses within defined village centers, and a greater mix of housing options within the development program. They also will provide an interconnected system of roads and trails, providing multi-modal transportation options to key destinations. This shift in planning emphasizes the need to create more fiscally sustainable development patterns as opposed to the suburban sprawl development seen in the County today.

Upcoming development within the WBD and ENCPA will be a catalyst for change in the area and an example of how development can occur in a manner that protects the fiscal health of the County. It will provide an example of how roadways and trails can provide access to the community as a whole.

A Balanced Approach

The County's population is expected to roughly double over the next 25 years. While developments like the ENCPA, WBD, and T2T can accommodate much of this projected growth, additional housing, commercial and retail spaces, and employment centers will still be needed. The County's landscape and character are key factors that attract people and businesses, and to preserve these qualities, growth must be carefully managed. Achieving this balance requires proactive planning, forward-thinking policies, and strategic investments. A new future land use map can designate areas for targeted growth, with increased development entitlements to encourage investment. Public improvements, such as roads, parks, and other infrastructure, can further incentivize development in these designated areas. By focusing growth in specific locations, the County can avoid unnecessary and unwanted density increases in other areas.

Conservation Tactics

The importance of conservation to the County is reflected in the percentage of area in the County that has a FLUM designation related to natural features, including conservation, recreation, and water. Some of these areas are designated as conservation due to environmental constraints. As a result, residential development is restricted to one dwelling unit per five acres in wetlands, which is reallocated to upland areas. State parks and forests, mitigation banks, and perpetual conservation zones limit development potential while protecting properties and enhancing access to open space. In addition to density limits, there are open space requirements for parcels that develop with floodplain and wetland extents, as well as wetland buffer requirements to protect the integrity of wetlands.

Historic and Cultural Preservation

The preservation of historic and cultural resources is important for maintaining the small-town feel. The County has undergone efforts to formalize historic preservation and can continue to expand upon efforts through updates to land development regulations and comprehensive plan policies. In addition, enhancements can be made to historic neighborhoods and communities to ensure their long-term vitality.

LAND USE BY THE NUMBERS

Zoning Breakdown

Zoning districts are broken down into generalized categories below.

78.8% Agricultural
8.6% Other
5.7% Residential
5.6% Mixed-use
0.4% Commercial
0.9% Industrial

Future Land Use Breakdown

Future Land Use designations are broken down into generalized categories below.

73% Agricultural
10% Residential
9% Conseration
6% Mixed-use
1% Commercial
1% Industrial
1% Other

Much of the development in the County has "agricultural" and "residential" categories. This illustrates the County's reliance on its lower density and intensity tax base to fund infrastructure and services. It also exemplifies Nassau's standing as a bedroom community. There is an opportunity to evaluate how redevelopment and new development happens that will diversify the tax base, provide the County with additional revenue sources to support quality of life enhancing elements, and increase economic vitality for generations to come.

Infill within established areas of the County, including within its towns, can help protect rural areas by directing growth to places that already have the necessary public infrastructure.

The concept plan for development at the corner of William Burgess Boulevard and Harts Road envisions a mixed-use center, with multi-family residential and multi-story office and retail buildings.

While one-acre lot subdivisions do not require access to public utilities, their design and proximity do not reflect a sense of "rural character".

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

Future Growth And Mobility Network

The current roadway system lacks parallel corridors to major arterials, leading to longer wait times and greater traffic demands. To support the projected population growth and existing needs, the County should continue to review and assess the Future Transportation Map Series (FTMS) and long-term needs through Vision 2050. The County can continue to utilize the pavement management plan and mobility plan to address maintenance and capacity needs, respectively. Future routes will need to be redefined west of I-95 ahead of development happening to ensure there is a well-connected network that supports the overall character and type of growth anticipated. These plans can help the County acquire and protect future rights-of-way before or during development.

Context Classification

Roadway design and land use are closely interconnected. Roads should be tailored to meet the specific needs of users within a given corridor. Incorporating safety features, supporting multi-modal connections, and integrating green infrastructure can enhance both the functionality and aesthetics of roadways. By using the FDOT Context Classification Guide as a framework, the County can ensure alignment between state-maintained and County roads. Furthermore, evaluating roadways with surrounding development allows the County to optimize mobility, accessibility, and safety for all users, while also incorporating features that support the intended land uses. While context classifications have been adopted in the WBD and are present in other planned communities, these standards should be assessed and applied countywide.

The County can implement new roadway cross-section guidelines for areas experiencing urbanization, such as the WBD or other newly identified growth zones. Additionally, new cross-sections should be developed for rural roadways to maintain the County's rural character. While the construction of new roads can open up land for development, this often conflicts with the County's goal of preserving rural landscapes. To address this, new roadway designs should prioritize maintaining the rural character and safeguarding the economic resources of areas like the Town of Callahan. Strategies may include limiting access points, designating certain routes as truck bypasses, or incorporating wide landscape buffers to preserve a natural, rural feel.

Safety Considerations

Pedestrians and cyclists are vulnerable roadway users, and there is an opportunity to increase safety measures in the County. A shift in how crashes are viewed can lead to engineering, education, and other design solutions to improve safety and reduce severity of crashes. A Vision Zero Plan, or Safe Systems Approach, aims to achieve zero vehicle-related fatalities. This approach integrates behavior and roadway design to address a variety of safety concerns and improvements. The County should continue to evaluate roadway cross-sections, intersection improvements, and capacity projects to ensure there are safe and accessible routes for all roadway users.

Mobility Plan Update Considerations

When the Mobility Plan is updated in 2025, the projects will be re-evaluated to ensure they meet the needs of the County, align with growth areas, and continue to add and improve capacity countywide. Vision 2050 is an opportunity for the County to ensure roadway capacity, as well as needs and assessment of impact fees are in alignment with the projected population growth. The Mobility Plan's roadways, trails, and intersection improvements should be incorporated into the FTMS and Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) during its next update. Notable roadways to include on the mobility plan include a rural bypass around the Town of Callahan and an east/west road connecting the new I-95 interchange to Middle Road. Additional roads may be added during small area planning efforts around the Crawford Diamond or other planning areas.

Commuting Preferences

Over 67 percent of County residents travel outside of the County for work. Over 81 percent of commuters drive alone to work. The mean travel time is 30 minutes, primarily south into Jacksonville. The volume of commuters increases the number of cars on the road, which increases traffic during peak hours.

Transit for commuting purposes is not readily available today. There is one commuter bus that connects Yulee to a transit hub in Jacksonville. In 2024 the County updated their transit master plan to evaluate near- to long-term options for improving transit in the County. This includes more internal routes, additional stops on the commuter route in Jacksonville, and improved access to the VA Hospital. Long-term, there will be opportunities to partner with the TPO on commuter rail options to connect Nassau County to the greater region. Additionally, future plans may include using rail lines to link Yulee and Downtown Fernandina.

Trails can be placed adjacent to rural roadway segments to facilitate safe multi-modal access. Trails can connect through greenways and parks to enhance connectivity countywide.

Trails in the Nassau Crossing PUD are located within the powerline easement, providing for off-street connections. This approach can be considered elsewhere in the County as a means to increase pedestrian and bicycle access.

The County maintains dirt roads, primarily west of I-95. These roadways provide a rural feel but can be timely and costly to maintain, especially when there are more frequent rain and flood events.

Downtown Fernandina has a traditional grid system, which provides for more walkability to shops, restaurants, and housing. Wide sidewalks, streetlights, and street furniture enhance the pedestrian realm.

Newer planned developments, such as the Tributary and Wildlight, include multi-modal transportation options such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and trails to connect residents to parks and services.

The County uses roundabouts to help facilitate travel on Amelia Island, and will include them off island as well as a means of promoting safe and walkable roadway systems.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Housing Availability

Residential growth was slow from 2009 to 2014 due to the Great Recession and FDOT concurrency requirements that restricted development along SR-200, averaging only 379 building permits annually. However, following the adoption of Mobility Impact Fees, residential permits increased significantly, with an average of 1,340 permits per year from 2015 to 2022. Since 2015, an average of 143 new multi-family units have been built annually, primarily east of I-95. Currently, 550 multi-family units are permitted but not yet fully constructed within the Wildlight development, and another 500 units are being considered for the William Burgess District (WBD) in Yulee in late 2024.

The current housing stock in Nassau County is predominantly comprised of single-family detached homes and mobile home units, with multi-family housing comprising a much smaller share. There is a notable absence of "missing middle" housing options, such as townhomes, rowhomes, multi-plex developments, cottage apartments, tiny home developments, and similar housing types. These types of housing offer a variety of price points and maintenance levels, catering to a broader range of homebuyers and renters. Introducing missing middle housing could help meet diverse housing needs and stabilize the market.

27,481 **65%**

single-family detached units

1,300 **3%**

single-family attached units (townhome)

2,568 **6%**

units in small multi-family buildings (2-9 units)

2,732 **7%**

units in large multi-family buildings (10+ units)

8,040 **19%**

other units (mobile home)

Composition of existing housing units in Nassau County.
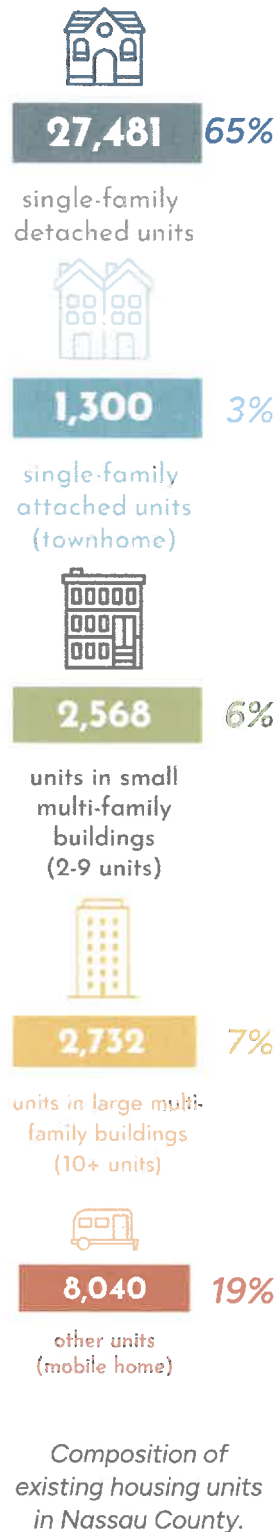
Cost of Housing

Housing costs vary throughout the County, with the average sale price on Amelia Island being double that of western NassauIn Nassau County, only 11 percent of homes sold were priced at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), which is considered "low income." Over a quarter of homes sold were affordable at 120 percent AMI, equating to an income of over $98,000. While there is an ample supply of housing at the 120 percent AMI level, options are limited for those at 80 percent AMI or lower. The income limit for 80 percent AMI is $78,400, but the median income in western Nassau communities is below $70,000. This disparity highlights a significant need for more housing options for families at or below the 80 percent AMI threshold, rather than at the higher 120 percent AMI level.

Age of Housing

Approximately 51 percent of owner-occupied housing units have been constructed since 2000. Much of the new growth has occurred in the Yulee area with the Planned Unit Developments along Amelia Concourse, on Edwards Road, and within the ENCPA. This area has also seen much of the commercial growth over the last 24 years. Renter-occupied housing is older, with only 30 percent of the available stock constructed post-2000, and 61 percent built between 1960 and 1999. As new homes are constructed in desirable areas of the County, some of the older owner-occupied housing stock will likely be converted to the rental market.

Emerging Housing Options

Over the last five years, there has been a greater diversity in housing options. New multi-family housing has been constructed in the general Yulee area including, but not limited to, Mills Creek Preserve, two apartment buildings in Wildlight, and the Vintage Amelia Island Apartments (within the limits of the City of Fernandina Beach). The Nassau County Development Review Committee is currently reviewing additional apartments in the William Burgess District and the Tributary, which will increase the stock by nearly 1,000 new dwelling units. Within the William Burgess District, there is a requirement to provide 15 percent of the housing as affordable.

In addition, there is a single-family rental complex in Wildlight, and a senior community and an assisted living/independent living facility are currently under review. These new housing developments provide a variety of housing options for county residents.

Sources: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2022), SB Friedman

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Services

One challenge Nassau County will encounter is the strain on existing public safety and utility systems unless additional facilities and capacity is added. While the County has proactively established a relationship with the Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA), continued coordination is important as much of the growth is projected in JEAs service areas. Coordination on service boundaries with municipalities will be critical in determining where growth occurs. To better ensure growth boundaries it may be appropriate for the County to create a Utility Authority.

As population growth occurs, public safety services will be strained. The County should continue to evaluate and maintain levels of service for response times and ensure cooperation between County and municipal services. New and improved roadways, technological advancements, and operational improvements will help ensure public safety and services are maintained.

School System Growth

The quality of the school system is one of the primary drivers of what attracts new residents to Nassau, therefore continued investment in the school system is important. As the population increases, the County and school district will face challenges with the substantial investment in renovation, replacement, or new construction of schools. As development areas are identified, the County and the Nassau County School Board can work together to identify appropriate sites for new schools and ensure the interlocal agreement in place accommodates the needs for anticipated population growth.

Infrastructure Vulnerability

Infrastructure can often be weakened or damaged during flood events. The County has conducted vulnerability assessments to determine which areas of the County are most vulnerable to storm surge, flooding, and other water-frequent events. This report identified parcels and areas that may pose risks to health and safety, including areas with septic systems and frequent flood areas. It will be critical for the County to consider changing water levels and its impact on infrastructure when planning for new growth areas. Nassau County has taken a crucial step in creating the Stormwater Drainage Department with the goal of reducing flooding impacts and improving water quality. This department evaluates high risk areas, maintains the CRS program, and provides the County with an avenue to evaluate flooding impacts.

Environmental Constraints

Nassau County is encumbered by floodplains, wetlands and coastal high hazard areas (CHHA), or areas within storm surge for a category 1 hurricane. Critical infrastructure is essential for evacuation and movement of goods and services during emergency events. Due to flooding events and the use of roadways as conduits for stormwater, in addition to daily use by cars and trucks, roadways may fail sooner and ultimately burden taxpayers. These challenges can increase in severity as the infrastructure use is exacerbated by populations increasing. The County should put forth the effort to ensure critical public infrastructure is located outside of frequent flood areas when possible and strengthen designs when not possible.

Within Wildlight there are available single-family homes for rent which help people find housing options in a larger service-based community.

The frequency of flooding has increased over the last decade. Studies of areas, such as along Thomas Creek, have led to the County pursuing measures to acquire repeat flood properties and evaluate options to alleviate flood risks.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Parks And Opens Spaces

Parks, trails, open spaces, and preserves are critical community infrastructure. They provide social, health, and environmental benefits. Nassau County has taken important steps to improving access to parks for the residents, with the development of new parks in coordination with developments, such as Tributary Regional Park and the Nassau Crossing Park. The County is designing a large West Side Regional Park that will provide many social and active benefits for residents that currently have to drive further distances to access similar amenities.

In conjunction with the adoption of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP), the County adopted policies to ensure that new development includes quality local parks, that trails are included within developments, that standards related to siting and amenities are met, and the parks are sufficiently maintained without the need of County resources. This step in parks development will provide access for residents to local parks within a short walk or bike ride of their homes, improving the ten-minute walk to a park standard for new development.

Preservation Techniques

The County has the opportunity to actively promote and advance open space preservation through Vision 2050 and the 2050 Comprehensive Plan. The Conservation Land Acquisition and Management Program (CLAM) provides the County with unparalleled opportunities for land acquisition for the purpose of conservation and preservation. This program and initiative, which was approved by voters, provides the County with a roadmap for priority parcels of land to acquire for the long-term environmental vitality of the County. This program, coupled with partnerships, can continue to pursue conservation of critical environmental resources. Many of the identified parcels provide environmental benefits not just for County residents, but for Florida and Georgia as well.

In addition to the CLAM, the County can work with property owners to establish conservation easements for the protection of agricultural, silvicultural, and environmental resources. Conservation easements provide environmental benefits by protecting land from development, and also monetary benefits as they may offer tax benefits to landowners or may be purchased by a governmental or charitable entity.

The native tree canopy on Amelia Island helps reduce the severity of storms, provides shade, and offers various environmental benefits. Protecting this canopy is essential for maintaining the island's ecological health and overall vitality.

Development of a new public park on Blackrock Road will provide adjacent residents with access to a park within walking distance from their home, in an area previously not serviced by a park space.

Nassau's pristine waterways provide unparalleled scenic, recreation, and environmental benefits. These areas should be protected and enhanced for long-term sustainability.

Water Quality Measures

One challenge Nassau may face is preserving the water quality while mitigating flooding. It will be important with growth to consider the incorporation of low-impact development on individual parcels, in roadway development, and other public buildings and spaces. The creation and integration of a Stormwater Management Plan can help identify regional opportunities for the collection and cleaning of runoff and water collection. The use of larger systems, when designed appropriately, can serve multiple purposes including the cleaning of run-off, recharging the aquifer with suitable water, and providing for passive recreation opportunities.

Protecting the integrity of the connected wetland system in Nassau County is crucial for maintaining the long-term environmental health and water quality of the region's natural ecosystem. Wetlands play a vital role in filtering pollutants, controlling floods, and providing habitat for a wide range of wildlife. These ecosystems also help maintain groundwater recharge and regulate water cycles, which are essential for ecological balance and the County's water supply.

MARKET & EMPLOYMENT SNAPSHOT

Jobs-to-Housing Ratio

The projected population and state of the economy are an opportunity for the County to be forward thinking in how it attracts and accommodates growth. Currently, the jobs-to-housing ratio in Nassau County is about 0.63. The County aims to achieve a minimum ratio of 0.8, with a desired target of 1.1, in order to move away from being known as a "bedroom community." This would create a more balanced relationship between local jobs and housing, supporting a more self-sustaining economy.

Hospitality has been a steadfast element of the County's economy, yet there is a strain on the local workforce and land availability for continued growth. The County should consider how to support the expansion of tourism off Amelia Island, where there are more resources and land available. For example, agri-tourism in western Nassau can be supported by the development of quality hotels, retail options, and main street character in the towns.

There is opportunity to pursue substantial industrial development in the Crawford Diamond, Wildlight Commerce Park, and ICI Villages, which provide a variety of jobs with multiple wage brackets. While retail development has lagged recently, retail development will occur near areas of new residential growth. Office space in Nassau County has low vacancy rates and high rents suggesting high demand. As the population is expected to grow and age, the need for medical offices will increase to meet demand for medical services.

FISCAL ASSESSMENT

Per Acre Value

A per acre value assessment evaluates land use and market conditions to assign dollar values for tax revenues. Generally, intensifying development patterns yields higher tax revenues. As previously discussed, preserving open space is a priority for Nassau County. By allowing certain areas to develop at higher densities and intensities, the County can balance land uses and have a better tax base to support land preservation efforts and increase access to recreation.

A fiscal audit of the County is a useful tool to understand the cost of service associated with land use and development patterns and to identify how land use patterns can support or detract from the County's available resources. This tool can be used to inform decision-making and policy directives related to growth and development patterns.

Development patterns that are mixed-use and more compact provide a greater return on investment. There are more users sharing the cost of infrastructure, due to proximity, there are typically quicker response times for emergency services, and the greater diversity of uses provides a wider tax base. This type of development is more fiscally resilient and should be a focus for the County. While it is not appropriate or marketable to encourage this type of development everywhere, there may be key areas identified as "mixed-use centers" to limit development in other areas of the County. Vision 2050 and the 2050 Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity to evaluate how and where growth occurs to ensure it produces a future that is fiscally resilient.

With its small lots and mixture of uses, Downtown Fernandina Beach is one of the most profitable areas in the County from the "value per acre" assessment.

All Voices. One Vision.

ALL
VOICES

The Vision 2050 Plan is built on a framework that leverages All Voices into One Vision for the future of Nassau County. The planning process and the resulting policies will promote and manage growth, protect and enhance key areas of importance, help the County accommodate future trends, and provide the necessary baseline information to update the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Engagement Strategy

Engaging with community members, youth, and community leaders is a crucial part of the planning process. Over the course of 18 months, engagement efforts helped to raise awareness of the plan, maintain an open and transparent process, and facilitate active and collaborative participation. The planning process employed a variety of engagement tools to reach all voices.

The Vision 2050 process used a triangulated approach to develop recommendations for Nassau's future. This approach included a review of data, analysis, and existing studies, coupled with community engagement. The three elements included:

1. A review of existing conditions in the County is summarized in Chapter 2 of this volume and provided in the Community Memorandum (Volume 1 of this Plan).
2. A statistically valid vision survey completed by a random sample of residents. And,
3. In-person and online engagement with the community through conversations, meetings, interviews, and surveys.

Community voices were heard through interviews with elected and appointed officials, meetings with dedicated plan advisory boards, conversations with stakeholders and interest groups, and discussions with citizens. Presentations to the community provided opportunities for a more in-depth understanding of planning initiatives. Paramount to the success of the visioning process was a partnership with the Bicentennial Celebration events hosted by the County. These events were well attended by residents and visitors and brought awareness to the Vision 2050 plan process and its importance.

Online engagement allowed residents to participate at a convenient time. A project website included information on pop-up events, bicentennial events, project materials, and online surveys. Throughout the visioning process, surveys provided opportunities for residents and visitors to help to shape the plan recommendations and outcomes.

"Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy—a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone."
- Sherry Arnstein

Through citizen participation and a unified vision, Nassau County residents and visitors will notice a boost in community pride through enhanced resiliency, new access and mobility routes, and social capital.

Engagement Process

Gathering input from the community was important for the development of the plan. There were various opportunities for the planning team to collect insight and recommendations from the community throughout the five phases of the planning process.

The location of in-person engagement opportunities are shown in Figure 3.1 on page 33. Engagement efforts were spread throughout the County to allow residents to participate close to home.

ENGAGEMENT TOOLBOX

In-Person Engagement

Community Voices
Meetings with the public, community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and county staff.
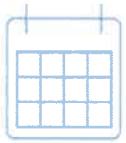
Bicentennial Events
Interactive tables at the 200-year celebration events around the County.

Public Events
Informative presentations to the community at commission and council meetings which included public comment opportunities. Open houses provided presentations and exercises to solicit feedback on plan elements.

Pop-Ups
Attendance at community events and meetings with community organizations.

Online Engagement

Project Website
The project website provided materials, meeting updates, and pertinent project information.

Surveys
Various community surveys were provided throughout the project to gain insights into community needs and desires for the future.

Virtual Presentations
Presentations to the Ambassador Club were made virtually and posted to the project website after for public viewing.

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

FALL 23'	EARLY 24'	SPRING 24'	SUMMER 24'
Project Kick-Off	Bicentennial Event 1	Presentation to the PAC, NPA, and TAC	Bicentennial Event 2
Website Launch	Pop-Ups	Ambassador Program Presentation 1	Bicentennial Event 3
Meetings with BOCC	Municipal Leader Interviews	Surveys (Vision, Tourism, Youth & Young Engagement)	Ambassador Program Presentation 2
Presentation to PAC	Focus Group Meetings	Pop-Ups	Pop-Ups
	Surveys (Vision, Tourism, Youth & Young Engagement)	Community Group Presentations	Survey (Building Blocks)

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY PROJECT PHASE

There were various engagement opportunities available for the public to learn more, provide input, and converse with the planning team throughout the process.

Engagement by each phase of the project is shown below, and at the bottom of pages 25 and 26 and shown in timeline format.

1

PHASE 1: SETTING THE FOUNDATION
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDED KICK-OFF MEETINGS WITH COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND MUNICIPALITY LEADERS, TAC, PAC, AND NPA TO UNDERSTAND THE COUNTY'S EXISTING CONDITIONS.

2

PHASE 2: BUILDING YOUR VISION
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDED: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS, POP-UP EVENTS, AND ONE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION EVENT. FOUR SURVEYS WERE SENT OUT IN THIS PHASE WITH MORE THAN 1,500 TOTAL RESPONSES.

3

PHASE 3: CREATING YOUR FRAMEWORK
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDED: TWO BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION EVENTS, THREE POP-UPS, COMMISSIONER CONVERSATIONS, COMMUNITY BUILDING BLOCKS PRESENTATIONS, SEVEN SCENARIOS PRESENTATIONS, AND AN ONLINE SURVEY.

4

PHASE 4: DRAFTING YOUR PLAN
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDED: ONE BICENTENNIAL EVENT, COMMUNITY POP-UPS, COMMISSIONER CONVERSATIONS, AND VISION PLAN PRESENTATIONS.

5

PHASE 5: INITIATING IMPLEMENTATION
ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDED: ONE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD WORKSHOP, AND BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER HEARINGS.

FALL 24'	WINTER 24' - 25'	SPRING 25'	SUMMER 25'
Presentations on the Growth Scenarios to the BOCC, Town of Hilliard, Town of Callahan, and Public	**Presentations on the Growth Scenarios to the PAC**	**Vision Plan Presentations to the BOCC, PAC, NPA Municipalities, and Public**	**Presentation to PAC**
Ambassador Program Presentation 3	**Community Group Presentations**	**Pop-Ups**	**Adoption Presentations to the BOCC**
Survey (Growth Scenarios)	**Survey (Growth Scenarios)**		
Pop-Ups	**Bicentennial Event 4**		

COMMUNITY VOICES

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

The BOCC provided direction for the community vision, reviewed and commented on the growth framework, and will consider the adoption of the vision plan. Virtual one-on-one interviews and in-person workshops were held throughout the planning process.

City and Town Elected Officials

City officials provided perspective and local context from municipalities across the County. Interviews at the onset of the project and presentations during the process provided opportunities for collaboration.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC consisted of county staff who steered the project, reviewed technical components, and guided outcomes consistent with the directives of the Board of County Commissioners. Having input from different departments throughout the process helped to ensure that the recommendations were feasible.

Plan Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Plan Advisory Committee, comprised of the Planning and Zoning Board, was responsible for providing input throughout the planning process, reviewing draft materials, and making recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. This committee ensured that the outcomes of Vision 2050 aligned with the community's vision based on public engagement and data collected.

Nassau Prosperity Alliance (NPA)

The Nassau Prosperity Alliance is a coalition of economic development leaders throughout Nassau County. This committee met virtually to provide input and feedback to ensure economic development recommendations aligned with a more resilient, sustainable, equitable, and prosperous local economic landscape in Nassau.

Focus Groups

Focus group conversations provided topical discussions related to challenges and opportunities facing the County's future. Discussions were held with those interested in development, mobility, conservation and open space, business development, and Nassau's youth. The focus group discussions were held early in the planning process to provide a baseline understanding and provide crucial information for plan recommendations.

Ambassador Program

The Ambassador Program empowered community leaders to play an active role in the visioning process by generating interest and encouraging participation. Ambassadors helped share key engagement opportunities within their organizations, ensuring broader community involvement. Online presentations kept ambassadors informed with planning updates and actionable next steps, while meeting recordings were shared afterward and uploaded to the project website to ensure everyone stayed engaged, even if they couldn't attend live. To support their outreach efforts, ambassadors received marketing kits—including text, graphics, flyers, and postcards—equipping them with the tools to spread the word about upcoming engagement events and project milestones.

Community Events and Workshops

The planning team attended a variety of community events, including those for the Bicentennial Celebrations, open houses, farmers markets, and similar events. These events allowed residents to learn about Vision 2050, participate in input opportunities when available, and obtain survey links. Community workshops conducted during the planning process featured informative presentations and display boards, offering opportunities for input on the future of Nassau.

Surveys

Surveys were used to build the vision, allow for input opportunities from the community, and provide guidance related to plan recommendations and the growth framework. A statistically valid survey was sent to a randomized sample of County residents. In addition, community-wide surveys were available online, at pop-ups, and other community events on topics related to community visioning, youth and young adult needs, tourism preferences, building block actions, and growth scenarios.

Project Video

A ten-minute video highlighted the variety of people, places, and agencies which were involved throughout the 24-month process and described the plan's purpose and function for the future of Nassau County.

Community events included opportunities for kids to color and engage with team members. Kids stations allowed parents to participate and children to provide their ideas for the future.

Presentations held throughout the process kept various planning committees and the community abreast of the status of the plan and provide opportunities to engage in the planning process.

Pop-ups outside businesses around the County captured additional input from residents.

Fliers were placed around the County ahead of events to encourage attendance at the event and provide information on the *Vision 2050* Plan.

The planning team presented to the elected officials of municipalities to gain insight into the needs and aspirations of the incorporated communities within Nassau County.

In addition to attendance at events, the County displayed historical banners for residents to learn about and celebrate Nassau's past.

Bicentennial Celebration

In honor of Nassau County turning 200, the Board of County Commissioners hosted a yearlong series of community events and activities. These gatherings provided residents with opportunities to learn more about County initiatives, participate in community-building exercises, and shape the vision for Nassau County!

County staff teamed up with local partners to host eleven events celebrating the special qualities of Nassau County. These celebrations spanned the County, from a corn maze in western Nassau to a musical arts tribute on Amelia Island. Among these memorable events, four key events played a crucial role in gathering input for the planning process. The four main events are listed below and described in more detail on page 30 (right).

- » the Kick-Off at Wildlight (January 2024)
- » Opening of the Beaches on Amelia Island (May 2024)
- » Fourth of July Fireworks in Callahan (July 2024)
- » Tree Lighting Ceremony in Yulee (December 2024)

These events united the community in celebrating Nassau's 200th anniversary while providing a valuable platform to share ideas for the future, engage with County staff, and strengthen connections among community members. Alongside the main celebrations, other events included:

Nassau Pride Night *presented by Nassau Pride* · **Healthy Kids Day** *in partnership with the YMCA at Wildlight* · **Railroad Day Fest & Classic Car Show** *presented by the West Nassau Historical Society at the Callahan Train Depot* · **Turpentine Days** *at the Yulee Branch Library by the West Nassau Historical Society and John Hendricks* · **Conner's A-maize-ing Acres County Corn Maize Grand Opening** · **Nassau County Fall 2024 Scavenger Hunt** · **Current and Tides: A Musical Tribute to Our Waters** *featuring Sonofarious and presented by Story & Song*

KICK-OFF AT WILDLIGHT

Nassau County's birthday bash kicked off in early 2024 with a celebration in Yulee. The event featured live music, a kids' zone, a farmer's market, vendors, a chili cook-off, and a cornhole tournament. This also marked the first appearance of the Vision Tent, where attendees could engage with priority sticker boards, write a 'postcard to your future self,' take part in a shark teeth guessing game, and mark up maps. Hundreds of people greeted the local pirates and enjoyed the fun Vision 2050 swag, creating an engaging and interactive introduction to the visioning process.

OPENING OF THE BEACHES

The fun continued in May at Main Beach Park with a summer soiree, alongside the 15th Annual Wild Amelia Nature Festival. Highlights included exhibits and live animals at the Wild Amelia Eco-Expo, the Isle of 8K Beach Run, a kids' zone, touch-a-truck, a skateboard competition, food trucks, and a beer garden. Visitors to the Vision Tent provided feedback on the draft Community Building Blocks through interactive boards, custom coloring sheets with Keep Nassau Beautiful, and a nature-inspired mural backdrop for photos with Wild Amelia-themed headbands and masks.

FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS

The Towns of Hilliard and Callahan hosted an Independence Day celebration to light up the sky at the Northeast Florida Fairgrounds. This event featured a pie bake-off contest, watermelon eating contest, food and drink vendors, carnival games, and the 'most patriotic' dressed contest. Many stopped by the Vision Tent to snap a photo with a custom patriotic mural backdrop and provide their thoughts on the draft Community Building Blocks. The live music, produced by local resident Rodney Mills, and the awe-inspiring fireworks perfectly wrapped up the celebration.

TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

In December 2024, the bicentennial celebration wrapped up with the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Justice Center in Yulee. The festive evening included live performances by the Nassau Community Band and the Royal Amelia Dance Academy. Attendees enjoyed the holiday vendor market, train rides, photo opportunities in Santa's Village, food trucks, County staff tree decoration contest, and a kid's zone. Visitors stayed cozy in the Winter Wonderland Vision 2050 Tent, where they used a custom map to share their input on the Vision Plan's growth scenarios and building blocks.

Check out more bicentennial photos on the following pages.

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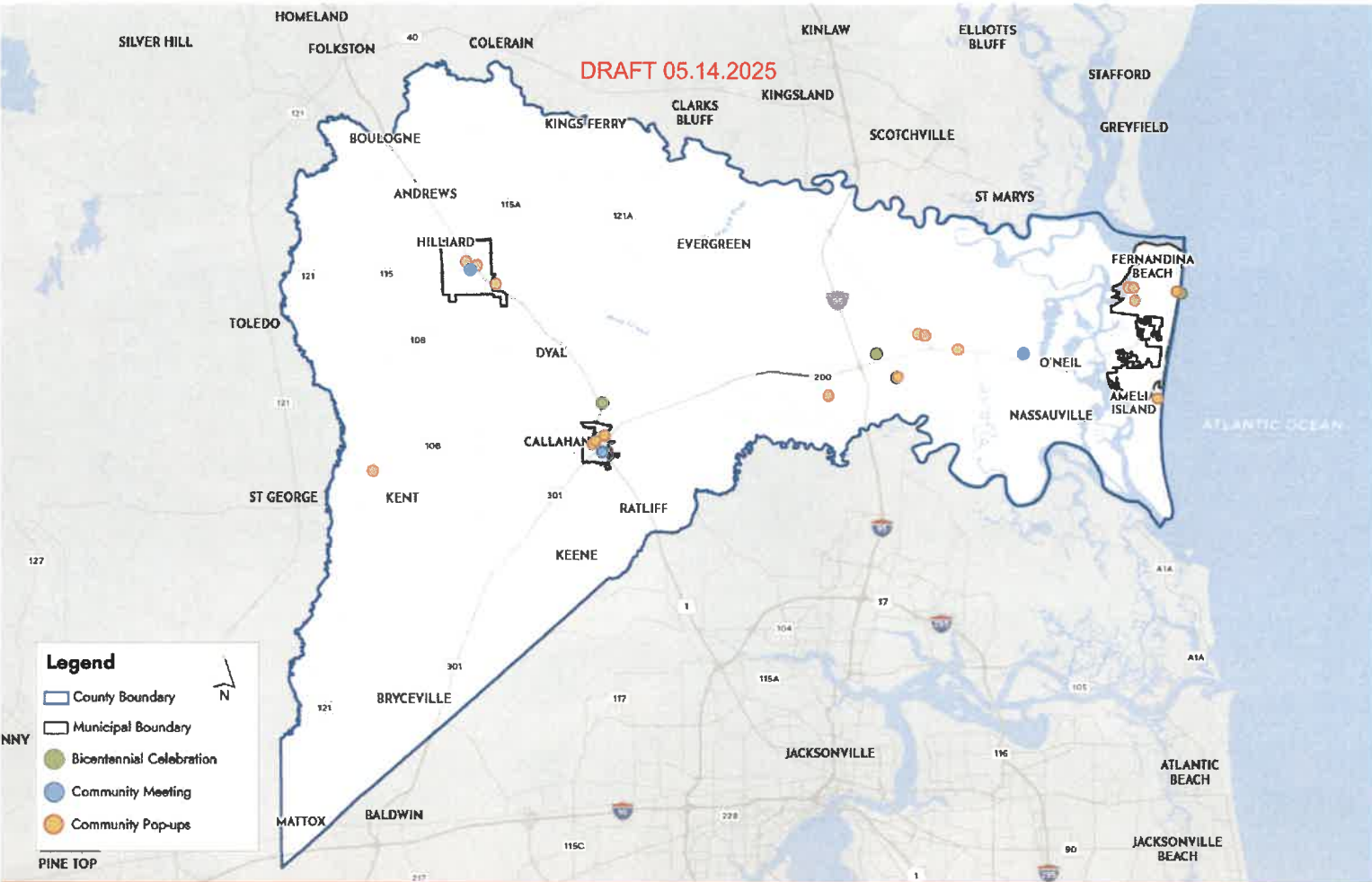
FIGURE 3.1   **Engagement Opportunities Map**

ENGAGEMENT LOCATIONS

Community engagement opportunities were provided around the County, as shown in Figure 3.1. In-person engagement opportunities included Bicentennial Celebration events, pop-ups, meetings, and presentations.

Bicentennial Celebrations

Nassau County celebrated its 200th birthday with a series of events throughout 2024. Vision 2050 tents were set up at the Bicentennial Kick-off Celebration, the Opening of the Beaches, the Annual Fourth of July Fireworks, and the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. These opportunities allowed the community to share their thoughts on the County's future, provide feedback on the draft Community Building Blocks, and provide input on the plan elements.

Community Pop-Ups

More than 1,000 people provided input at pop-up events. These small-scale events occurred across the County and allowed the community to respond to the visions, values, and recommendations established in the plan. Pop-ups were held throughout the County as impromptu stations outside popular venues and at community markets and events.

Community Meetings

Vision 2050 included community meetings (e.g., community workshops and presentations to elected officials) held around the County at public offices, including Town Halls, Commission Chambers, and similar public places.

Engagement Results

As detailed in the following community engagement section of the chapter, residents and visitors were engaged in a variety of ways. Different opportunities to provide input on Nassau's future provided the planning team with a variety of topics to consider and explore. This engagement included multiple meetings and interviews with elected and appointed officials, community organizations, groups, and residents that provided key understandings of the challenges the County faces today, and what needs to be addressed in the future. Attendance at farmers markets, community events, and pop-ups at commonly traversed spaces provided the team with the opportunity to speak candidly with residents and visitors. This type of engagement provided the opportunity for all voices to be heard.

Various surveys allowed input on key topics during the planning process. Responses to the surveys are built into summaries for the various plan elements and inform the plan recommendations. Surveys included:

- » **Visioning.** The community vision survey asked respondents to identify Nassau's strengths, challenges, and aspirations for the future.
- » **Statistically Valid.** A randomized sample of residents was selected to complete a more in-depth visioning survey.
- » **Youth and Young Adults.** Organizations and groups focused on youth and young adults were engaged to identify the needs of younger generations.
- » **Tourism.** Visitors were asked about what makes Nassau a great place to visit.
- » **Building Blocks.** This survey asked respondents to identify how the building blocks would impact daily life in Nassau.
- » **Growth Framework.** Future growth options for Nassau County were presented for feedback from the community.

A summary of community engagement responses and key themes are summarized on the following pages. This information helped shape the outcomes of this plan, including the building blocks, preferred future development patterns, and plan recommendations. Detailed engagement responses are included in **Appendix C: Community Engagement**.

Engagement by the Numbers

15 PRESENTATIONS TO ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

5+ PRESENTATIONS TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

5 PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

6 STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

24 COMMUNITY EVENTS ATTENDED

6 SURVEYS

2K+ SURVEY RESPONSES

KICK-OFF AT WILDLIGHT

In January 2024, more than 400 people participated in the Bicentennial Kick-off at Wildlight in Yulee. Respondents were given three stickers each to place into which column represented their community value priorities. The exercise was also provided at pop-ups around the County with more than 180 responses.

Based on community responses the top priorities are natural resource protection, managed growth, and experiencing the outdoors.

Bicentennial Feedback Priority Areas
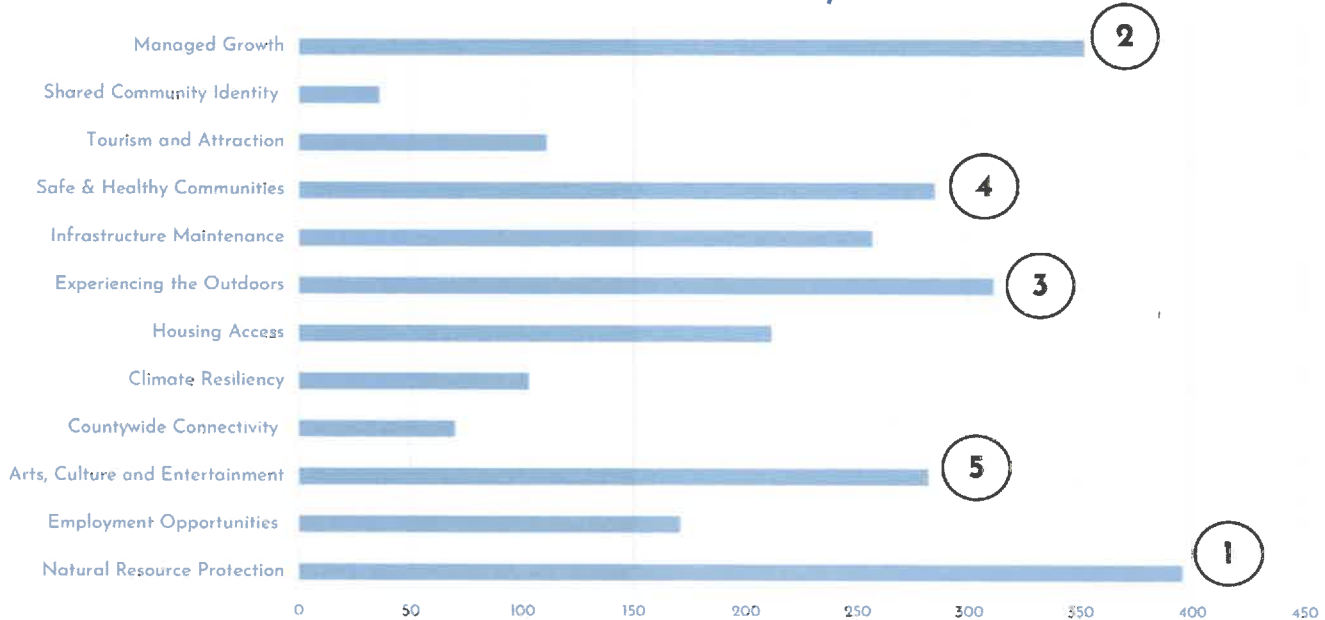
Vision 2050 Postcard Responses

As part of the Community Visioning process residents were asked to fill out postcards asking where Nassau is today, and where Nassau will be in 2050.

The team received a total of 103 postcards, and based on the responses, there is hope and optimism for the future of Nassau County.

Today, Nassau Florida is...

In 2050, I hope Nassau, Florida will be...

VISIONING SURVEY

Between January 2024 and April 2024, community members had the opportunity to share strengths, challenges, and neighborhood elements they would support. The survey was distributed at community events, advertised on the project website, and sent out to community partners. More than 900 responses were received. This section highlights the key findings from the community.

Common Themes For Nassau's Future:

Balanced	Preservation
Community-Oriented	Prosperity
Connected	Resilient
Conservation	Safe
Experiences	Sustainable
Family Friendly	Vibrant
Heritage	Welcoming

Top Three Strengths Of Nassau County Today:

Access to parks, recreation, and open space

Historic preservation

Access to services that meet the daily need of the residents (retail, medical, etc.)
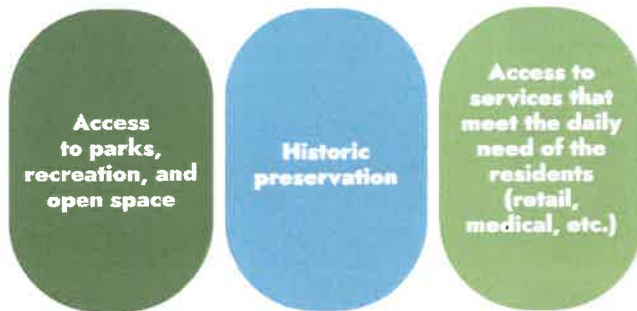
Top Three Challenges Of Nassau County Today:

Unmanaged growth

Traffic congestion

Loss of community character
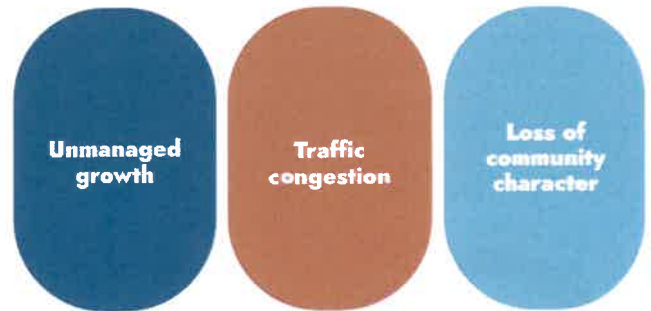
Top Three Elements You Would Support For Your Community:

Improved access to parks, open space, and conservation areas

Enhanced mobility options, including bikes, pedestrian facilities, and public transit

Flood resistant measures
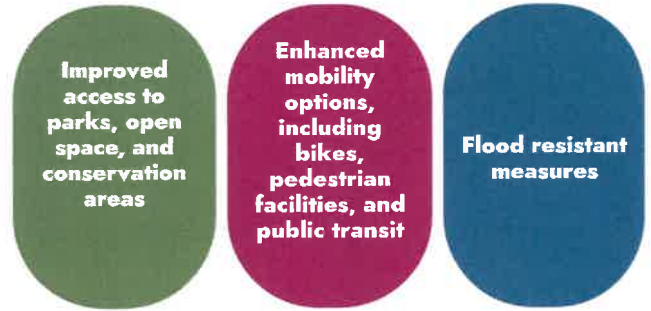
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT SURVEY

With 99 responses between February and April 2024, younger community members provided insight into what they hope to see in Nassau County's future. Key issues in Nassau County for young people are growing Arts, Culture, and Entertainment, Experiencing the Outdoors, and Cost of Renting/Buying Housing.

What is Your Vision for Nassau County's Future?

Beautiful Growing Clean Nature New Schools Expanding Overcrowded Shopping Country Feel Innovative More Infrastructure Expanding Traditional Friendly Community Dog Parks Larger Community Safe connected Environmentally Friendly Affordable Social Skatepark Walkable Health Focused Equality Fun More Enterntainment Connected Big

Top Three Priorities for Nassau's Future
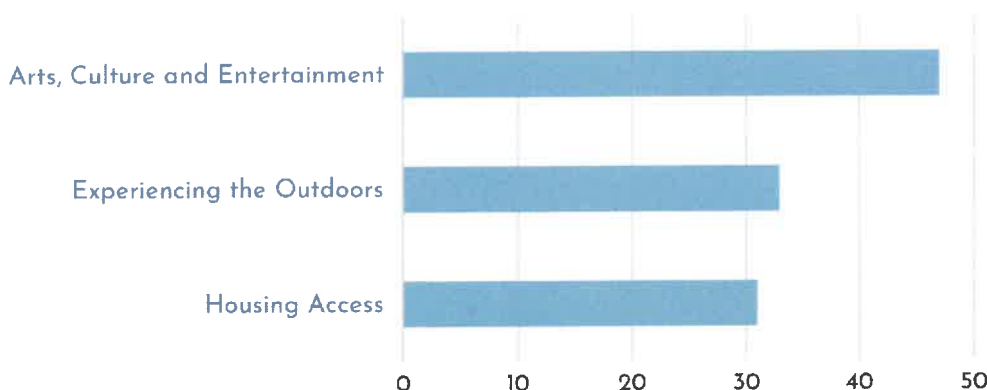
STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

The Statistically Valid Survey (SVS) is meant to identify the wants and perceptions of Nassau County from county residents. The survey was available through February 2024 and March 2024. To achieve statistical compliance and reach a 95 percent confidence interval, surveys were sent out by mail and online to a random sample of households in the County. A total of 401 County residents responded to the survey.

Residents were asked about the County's future including investments and priorities, quality of life improvements, transportation networks and systems, housing, and neighborhood infrastructure. These questions allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the community's vision and priorities as Nassau County continues to grow and progress. This section highlights some of the key takeaways from the survey.

91% "agreed" that the future of Nassau County should include historic preservation of unique places.

91% indicated that they are "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with Nassau County as a place to live.

82% were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with Nassau County as a place to raise children.

Top Priorities Over the Next 5 Years

Based on the sum of survey respondents' top three choices, participants think the County's top priorities over the next five years are:

1 Maintaining a small-town feel.

2 Housing options for all income levels.

3 Landscaping and site design to reduce heat absorption and improve air quality.

Transportation Systems and Mobility

Survey responses denote that transportation and mobility are important to Nassau County residents. In addition to the investments previously mentioned, residents agreed that the future of Nassau County should include multi-use paths and trails. Overall, residents expressed feeling safe on most roadways but identified a need for improvements in traffic flow, landscaping, and roadway maintenance.

88%
were "very supportive" or "supportive" of the County taking action to ensure streets and sidewalks are designed for safe use by people of all ages and abilities.

79%
indicated Nassau County's future should include additional multi-use paths and trails.

63%
rated travel by foot as "good" or "excellent" in Nassau County.

57%
feel "very safe" or "safe" traveling by automobile in Nassau County.

Support for Investments

Based on the survey response, transportation, and mobility are key concerns for Nassau County residents. Roadway widening and/or maintenance and technology to improve traffic flow were identified as the top two investments residents would be most willing to fund with tax dollars.
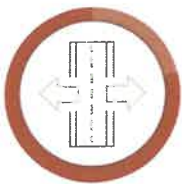
79%
indicated they are "very supportive" or "supportive" of roadway widening and/or maintenance.

82%
were "very supportive" or "supportive" of technology to improve traffic flow in the County.

Housing

Residents were asked to indicate the types of housing that they believe there is an adequate quantity of in Nassau County. Respondents indicated there needs to be more housing for those making less than $88,000 per year, first time homebuyers, and retirement housing options. As the County's population increases it is important to have a sufficient supply of housing to accommodate existing and new residents as their needs change.

69%
indicated that they believe there are an adequate number of townhomes/condominiums, including rent-to-own

Support for Neighborhoods

Respondents believed the County should help support the long-term vitality of neighborhoods. Surveys indicated that the County should do the following things to support neighborhoods:

Ensure streets and sidewalks are designed for safe use by people of all ages and abilities

Ensure new developments incorporate resilience and flood resistance measures

Ensure new or revitalized developments have adequate transportation access, including bikes and pedestrians

Develop new homes to support senior living and aging in place

Improve social services to address homelessness

Healthier Neighborhoods

Aspects of creating healthier neighborhoods include:

Less traffic/congestion/air pollution

Improved urban tree forest

Safer, more walkable streets

GREAT PLACES IN NASSAU COUNTY

At the Opening of the Beaches and Fourth of July events, people were asked to identify community locations that are currently great and places with potential.

Great Places in Nassau County
- » The Public Beaches
- » Fort Clinch
- » Community Main Streets
- » Parks/Green Spaces
- » Wildlife Areas
- » Open Spaces
- » Community Centers
- » Local Businesses

Potentially Great Places in Nassau
- » Trail Systems
- » Kings Ferry
- » Water Recreation (e.g., Splash Pad)
- » New Parks
- » Agri-tourism
- » Activities on the west side of the county
- » Tree Canopy areas
- » Historical Sites
- » New Community Spaces

Many of the community responses focused on the preservation of Nassau County's history and natural spaces. There is also a desire for new assets that use nature as the main draw such as more community parks outside of residential neighborhoods and a larger system of nature trails throughout the County. Other great places have a sense of place or sense of community, such as main street (e.g., Downtown Fernandina Beach), and local beaches. The great places in Nassau provide places for experiences and gathering and show key placemaking elements to consider with future development. Examples of great places in Nassau are shown on page 40.

A group of women shop in Downtown Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island.

Fort Clinch State Park includes the old fort, campgrounds, trails, and beach access points for exploration, activity, and learning.

Conner's A-Maise-ing Acre in Hilliard.

Trails on and off of Amelia Island connect residents to parks, beaches, and destinations. Trails are not only noted as a "great place" but were identified as important through various planning exercises.

Beaches are a great amenity for residents and visitors. Areas with authorized driving on the beach provide a unique draw for residents and visitors to the County.

The St. Marys River, a historically significant waterway, boasts scenic views and provides recreational opportunities that should be protected.

Downtown Fernandina Beach exudes charm, even after dark. The city's dedication to historic preservation has maintained its classic main street ambiance.

Historical and cultural sites and homes support the character and sense of place in the County. These places preserve Nassau's history, and can help inform its future.

Parks provide residents with spaces to play, exercise, explore, relax, and interact. The development of parks has been a priority of the County in recent years, with multiple new parks opening since 2020.

BUILDING BLOCKS

The building blocks were explored during the Opening of the Beaches, the Fourth of July Celebration, and several pop-up events, where respondents were asked to share what success with each building block would look like. A survey was conducted to assess how each building block would impact respondents' lives, with participants rating the statements from 1 to 5 (1 being adverse, 3 neutral, and 5 positive). These questions aimed to understand how strongly each statement resonated with residents and to define what success would look like for them.

In-person events received nearly 400 data points, and there were over 400 responses to the survey, which are summarized below. The full responses can be found in **Appendix C: Community Engagement.**

Based on the responses and analysis, an additional building block related to governance was created to fill gaps in the statements. Responses informed plan recommendations.

AUTHENTICITY.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 4.2 indicating an 84 percent approval of the Authenticity Building Block. When asked to provide open-ended feedback on the building block, responses generally noted the small-town character throughout the County and the desire for historic preservation. Respondents indicated that improvement and success would include more arts and culture outside of Amelia Island and place-based development regulations that complement the County's historic character.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Authenticity were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support authenticity were: support community festivals, adopt historic preservation regulations, and create opportunities for public art.

BALANCE.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 3.7 indicating a 74 percent approval of the Balance Building Block. One consistent theme in responses is the desire for growth to occur more slowly than the current rate. Other comments focus on the need for thoughtful development patterns that account for both economic and environmental resilience and sustainability.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Balance were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support balance were: preserve rural character, establish conservation standards, and coordinate the expansion of public utilities.

CONNECTIVITY.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 3.7, indicating a 74 percent approval of the Connectivity Building Block. Common responses included the desire for alternative routes or public transportation to reduce the number of vehicles on Amelia Island and an increased number of parallel roadways with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. However, other responses expressed concerns that improved connectivity will drive too much growth in western Nassau County.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Connectivity were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support connectivity were: proactively maintain roadways, create a connected trail network, and plan for new roadways.

GOVERNANCE.

This building block was created following an analysis of the survey results and recommendations.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support governance were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support governance were: maintain a people-first perspective, provide quality public services, and retain quality staff.

HOUSING.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 3.8, indicating a 76 percent approval of the Housing Building Block (which was "Stability" in the survey). Survey responses repeated the desire for more housing options at varying price points in Nassau County. Respondents' also indicated favorability of new housing to benefit teachers, firefighters, and service workers.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Housing were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support housing were: support quality neighborhoods, increase attainable housing, and incorporate safety into neighborhood design.

LIVABILITY.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 4.3, indicating an 86 percent approval of the Livability Building Block. A recurring theme in open-ended survey responses was entertainment and recreation opportunities for children. Respondents identified creating accessible parks and green spaces that are programmed for community building as an opportunity for improvement in the County.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Livability were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support livability were: increase access to parks, provide healthy food options, and incentivize entertainment options.

OPPORTUNITY.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 3.7, indicating a 74 percent approval of the Opportunity Building Block. Many respondents expressed that consumers would welcome more small businesses in the County. One notable suggestion was to consider a job training program for underserved communities.

At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Opportunity were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support opportunity were: retain and support existing businesses, strengthen existing employment areas, and concentrate economic growth in desired growth areas.

RESILIENCY.

On a scale of one to five, the average was 4.3, indicating an 86 percent approval of the Resiliency Building Block. Continuing to preserve and conserve agricultural and open spaces was a common theme in survey responses. However, several respondents acknowledged that there are often conflicting demands between economic development and resiliency objectives.
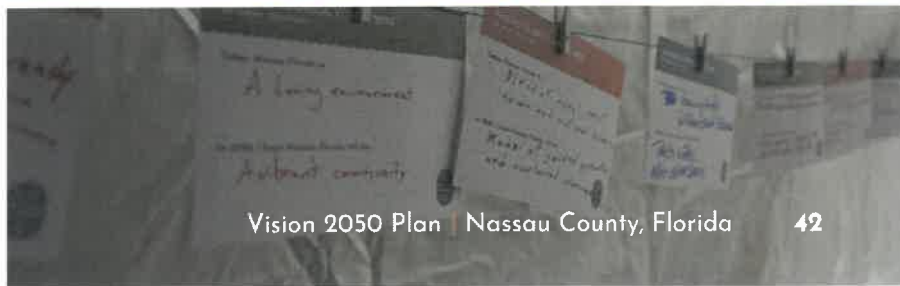
At the Tree Lighting Ceremony, elements to support Resiliency were presented and ranked by attendees. The top three elements to support resilience were: increase the amount of conservation lands, preserve the timberlands, and prepare for effects from extreme weather events.

Passion

The residents of Nassau County have a deep appreciation for their culture and heritage. This sense of pride in the community is the hidden gem of Nassau, contributing to its identity and vibrancy. They are committed to seeing Nassau continue to thrive in the future for generations to come.

Diversity of Natural Resources

Nassau's unique and diverse natural resources are fundamental to its identity. Its scenic rivers, waterways, and pristine beaches offer numerous environmental, cultural, and social benefits.

Small Town Feel

Although Nassau County is geographically large, its towns and residents maintain a strong sense of community and a small-town atmosphere. The County has a rich history, with many families having lived here for generations. Throughout the year, festivals and community events help bring people together.

Community Services

The County offers a wide range of community services, including retail and dining options in the central areas, expanding medical facilities, a growing business base, and a variety of parks and open spaces. The County prioritizes providing its residents with high-quality public services.

Safe and Family Friendly

Nassau County is family-friendly, offering a high quality of life, excellent school districts, and a wide range of services to support family living. Nassau offers high-quality public safety services, with quick response times for emergencies. The growing number of medical centers will also improve access to emergency care. With low crime rates and generally safe roadways, Nassau is a secure and desirable community to live in.

Preservation Efforts

Residents continually noted that historic and cultural preservation is something they are both proud of and desire more of in the County. It makes Downtown Fernandina and the surrounding areas charming. Nassau's cultural history is diverse and must continue to be cherished and preserved.

Availability of Resources

Residents noted that while the County offers various services, they are distributed unevenly. Winn Dixie is the only grocery store chain west of I-95, and most medical services are found in Yulee or on Amelia Island. The Department of Health is the only Medicaid dental provider in Nassau County, and there are limited medical services available. Additionally, there are fewer County parks near Callahan and Hilliard. Homeowners in unincorporated Nassau County use private waste management companies for trash and recycling pick-up, and public water and sewer services are not available throughout the entire County.

Housing Options

Single-family detached homes are the primary housing option in the County, which may present challenges for some, such as being too large, requiring extensive maintenance, or incurring high modernization costs. Alternative housing options, such as townhomes, multiplex units, cottage/tiny home neighborhoods, and senior living options, are limited. This scarcity of diverse housing options often forces individuals to purchase or rent homes that do not fully meet their needs or preferences.

Job Opportunities

Over 60 percent of County residents commute outside the County for work. Additionally, a significant portion of local employment is in the tourism sector, which tends to offer seasonal and lower-paying jobs. As a result, there is a strong demand for higher-paying job opportunities, greater upward mobility, and more stable local employment options for families considering relocation to Nassau.

Traffic

Traffic and congestion were common concerns in discussions. Key roadways in the County, including SR-200, US-1, US-17, and US-301, are often congested due to a lack of parallel routes and the need for residents to travel outside the County for work and services. With limited transit options and multi-modal networks, many people rely on single-occupant vehicles, which further worsens the traffic situation.

Existing Development Patterns

In conversations with residents, it was mentioned that Yulee is starting to feel like "anywhere USA" — lacking distinct character, with a uniform appearance and heavy traffic. Many people are concerned about this type of growth spreading to other areas of the County.

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Managing Growth

The County should safeguard its agricultural and silvicultural assets, as these resources are essential for preserving rural heritage, protecting areas with limited development, and promoting sustainable growth patterns. Targeted growth within specific areas of Nassau will enable the County to balance development with the conservation of rural areas, maintaining the rural character where needed. At the same time, this approach will diversify the tax base and create employment and housing opportunities in other areas of Nassau.

Sustainability

The County should continue improving sustainability and protecting residents from the long-term effects of flooding and environmental damage. This includes but is not limited to, designing energy-efficient buildings, exploring low-impact development methods, and strengthening protection for its waterways. Additionally, the County should expand conservation efforts through the CLAM program and partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and residents.

Community Connections

Continued planning for improvements related to connectivity is paramount for quality of life. This not only includes the mobility-related connections with new roads, roadway improvements, trails, and transit routes. It also includes broadband connections and expansion. It also incorporates social connections and interactions, such as through offering new programs and services for residents to interact.

Sense of Place

Many of the locations people identified as "great places" or potential "great places" include parks, natural features, trails, community centers, and main streets. These spaces offer gathering areas and cultural resources that foster a sense of community and contribute to the overall health, happiness, and well-being of residents. The things that draw people to places include a variety of opportunities and experiences, spaces for interaction and gathering, and a safe and welcoming environment.

Public Services

As the County grows, it will be important to continue to ensure high-quality public services are provided to residents. Public safety services should strive to maintain appropriate ratios to meet the needs of the community. There should be alternative routes to expedite response times, continued coordination with municipalities for the provision of public services, and new stations co-located with identified growth areas. Government operations and offerings should be commensurate with population growth. Additional public services, such as new parks and open spaces, public libraries, and community centers, should be activated and enhanced to ensure access to community resources.

Economic Vitality

The County relies heavily on property taxes to fund its operations, so diversifying its economic base is crucial for improving community services. Expanding the economy would create new sales tax opportunities and increase property tax revenue from non-residential uses. A strong job market with higher wages boosts residents' disposable income, supporting local businesses. When businesses cluster together, they can collaborate and drive growth. A thriving economy also provides resilience during natural disasters or economic downturns and helps fund social needs such as parks, programs, conservation efforts, stormwater management, and infrastructure development.

Green and Open Spaces

Physical infrastructure and natural spaces, like recreational facilities, trails, parks, and open areas, are vital for community well-being, environmental sustainability, and individual health. They offer spaces for exploration, socializing, and relaxation, helping to build stronger community bonds and a safer environment. Natural areas also provide a mental break from urban life and support ecological health. Well-designed parks can boost property values and stimulate economic growth. Nassau County has made significant progress in recent years with its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, new trails, and conservation funding. These efforts should be continued and expanded to ensure these vital infrastructures remain available for future generations.

Arts and Culture

Cultural assets and resources should be celebrated, including cultural spaces, organizations, art, festivals, events, heritage, and industries that shape a community's traditions and sense of place. Nassau has a rich and diverse history, from the Timucua presence in the area to Spanish and British settlements after 1562, and the County's growth over the past 200 years through its port, shrimping industry, timber processing, and the pressures of development in northeast Florida. As the County has expanded, various cultural elements have become deeply embedded in the community's identity. From the heritage and rural culture of western Nassau to the emerging performing arts scene and local artist market in Fernandina, there is a strong desire to expand access to the cultural resources that define Nassau today.

Engagement Themes

Throughout the community engagement process, a handful of key themes emerged that were important to residents, stakeholders, and community leaders. These themes are shown in Table 3.1 illustrating how they were expressed throughout the process by multiple Community Voices and across various forms of engagement. These key themes were used to inform the statements created for each building block and their associated objectives and strategies. These key themes represent a summary of the input received and are further explored on pages 47 and 48 as the strengths, challenges and opportunities that Nassau County has in implementing the Vision 2050 Plan.

Table 3.1 tabularly illustrates how the key themes were used to inform the statements for the building blocks and their associated objectives and strategies. The table also shows which method of engagement and analysis was used to appraise each theme. The engagement methods cover the various means in which the community voices were heard.

COMMUNITY VOICES

» **Community meetings and events (CM)** include public engagement events such as presentations to the Community Ambassador Program, Bicentennial Celebration events, pop-ups, and in-person community meetings.

» **Community Surveys (CS)** include all the countywide public surveys except for the statistically valid survey.

» **Data and analysis (DA)** includes the gathering of existing conditions and reviews of plans and studies relevant to Vision 2050.

» **Interviews with stakeholders and community organizations (I)** includes meetings with the Nassau Prosperity Alliance, focus group conversations, and other meetings with community organizations.

» **Municipal Leaders input (M)** includes presentations to the Board of County Commissioners and municipalities, as well as workshops with the Plan Advisory Committee. This also includes interviews with municipal leaders held throughout the planning process.

» **Statistically valid survey (SVS)** includes responses from the statistically valid survey that align with each of the key themes.

The building blocks statements are provided on page 51, and further explored through plan recommendations in Chapter 5.

Map exercises allowed residents to spatially show the planning team where opportunities exist to plan for Nassau's future.

Community events provided an opportunity for the planning team to engage with residents at events outside of "open house" style meetings gaining more input from residents who may otherwise not participate.

Youth engagement opportunities allowed the planning team to learn what kids want now, what's missing, and how the County can be improved for their needs.

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ENGAGEMENT THEME	AUTHENTICITY	BALANCE	CONNECTIVITY	GOVERNANCE	HOUSING	LIVABILITY	OPPORTUNITY	RESILIENCY
PASSION (CM, CS, I, M)	●			●		●		
DIVERSITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES (CM,CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●				●		●
SMALL TOWN FEEL (CM, CS, I, M)	●	●	●		●	●		
COMMUNITY SERVICES (CM, CS, DA, I, M)		●	●	●		●	●	●
SAFE AND FAMILY FRIENDLY (CM, CS, I, M)	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
PRESERVATION EFFORTS (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●			●			●
AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)				●		●	●	
HOUSING OPTIONS (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●			●	●		
JOB OPPORTUNITIES (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●	●	●			●	
TRAFFIC (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●	●	●				
EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS (CM, CS, DA, I, M)		●	●		●		●	●
MANAGING GROWTH (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●	●	●	●			
SUSTAINABILITY (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●		●		●		●
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS (CM, CS, DA, I, M)			●			●		
SENSE OF PLACE (CM, CS, DA, I, M)	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
PUBLIC SERVICES (CS, DA, I, M, SVS)			●	●				
ECONOMIC VITALITY (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●	●	●			●	
GREEN AND OPEN SPACES (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)		●	●	●	●	●		●
ARTS AND CULTURE (CM, CS, DA, I, M, SVS)	●			●		●		

(...) INDICATE WHERE THE KEY THEME CAME FROM: CM = COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND EVENTS; CS = COMMUNITY SURVEYS; DA = DATA AND ANALYSIS; I = INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS; M = INPUT FROM MUNICIPAL LEADERS; SVS = STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

TABLE 3.1   **Engagement Themes by Building Block**

All Voices. One Vision.

ONE
VISION

One Vision summarizes our blueprint and growth framework for Nassau County for the next 25 years and beyond. This framework includes population forecasts, growth scenarios, and preferred development patterns that define the general type and location of growth and supporting community infrastructure. This vision for growth will guide County planning efforts and investment decisions.

One Vision

Key themes and values gathered through the community engagement process, combined with insights from foundational studies, contributed to the creation of eight building blocks. These building blocks embody the community's vision for the future and will act as the structural framework for plan recommendations.

The building blocks are designed to steer the growth of Nassau County for the next 25 years and beyond. They establish clear priorities for the development and implementation of Vision 2050, offering broad direction for the future. These building blocks shape the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, while also providing a solid foundation for other public growth and development initiatives.

Our building blocks are visually represented through a "preferred growth scenario," which illustrates the overarching character of growth across the region and identifies priority areas for development.

This graphical depiction of growth serves as a clear, visual guide for understanding how the community envisions future growth, highlighting key areas of the County that should be prioritized for development while ensuring balance to achieve conservation and sustainability goals.

Additionally, our building blocks address other long-term needs identified within this chapter. These needs include improvements to the transportation network to facilitate greater connectivity and mobility, and enhancements to stormwater management systems to support sustainable development and mitigate flooding risks. The building blocks also support ongoing conservation efforts to protect natural resources and preserve green spaces, while emphasizing strategies to manage growth effectively in designated priority areas. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive framework for guiding growth and development throughout Nassau County.

BUILDING BLOCK VISION STATEMENTS

Our vision for growth and development in Nassau County is reliant on eight community building blocks. The eight building blocks were created through community engagement and a review of foundational studies and ongoing community initiatives. Building blocks are supported by the objectives and strategies for Vision 2050.

Authenticity
We envision a Nassau County that celebrates the unique character of our communities, preserves history, and recognizes cultures and traditions.

Balance
We envision a Nassau County that takes a balanced and responsible approach to growth, redevelopment, economic expansion, and protection of rural areas, active agriculture/ silviculture, and land conservation areas.

Connectivity
We envision a Nassau County that is physically connected with safe, accessible multi-modal transportation options and virtually connected by leveraging existing and emerging technologies.

Governance
We envision a Nassau County served by an effective and accountable local government that gives equitable validity to competing values and interests, expands civic capacities, pursues the greater common good, and places the long-term best interest of the whole community at the apex of decision making.

Housing
We envision a Nassau County that is intentional about creating and safeguarding attainable housing near local employment centers, public facilities, amenities, and high performance public spaces for residents of all ages and their families no matter their stage in life.

Livability
We envision a Nassau County that evolves with its citizens by providing access to healthy food, medical services, education, the arts, parks, nature, entertainment, socialization, and leisure activities.

Opportunity
We envision a Nassau County that supports retail, business, and industrial innovation, resulting in a robust local economy and variety of job opportunities for existing and future residents.

Resiliency
We envision a Nassau County that is environmentally, socially, and economically resilient which protects our rich supply of natural resources, supports conservation, fortifies community life lines, and creates a diversified, sustainable and resilient local economy.

Projected Growth

Population projections are important for future planning, as they provide a foundation for informed decision-making and strategic planning. By understanding future population trends, planners and community leaders can anticipate the needs of the community in terms of housing, infrastructure, and public services. This foresight allows for the creation of near- and long-term strategies and policies that align with expected demographic changes, ensuring that the community can accommodate growth.

Local jurisdiction's can help guide growth in addition to national, state, and regional market influences by using estimations for population growth to inform predictions and growth analysis. While these predictions are an estimate based on projections and may not always align with actual increases over time, it can support local governments in scaling long term infrastructure investments to support increasing demand as populations grow. Projections can be used to show the fiscal benefits or drawbacks of certain development patterns. Incorporating population projections into scenario modeling ensures that development strategies are rooted in realistic expectations, enhancing their feasibility and effectiveness.

Florida's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BEBR) releases population projections for counties annually. Based on historic annual releases, Nassau County's is consistently exceeding growth expectations. It will be important to continue to monitor population projections regularly to ensure planning properly considers anticipated growth. Plans can be adjusted to respond to actual population change over time.

Planning for growth involves recognizing the need for both residential expansion and the related infrastructure and services essential to support an increasing population and workforce. It is important to assess projected employment trends and the necessary commercial development to support them. This comprehensive approach ensures that the necessary commercial and employment opportunities are in place to sustain economic growth, enhance quality of life, and foster a balanced, well-supported community.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Recent growth rates, shown in Table 4.1 (right) show that Nassau County has grown rapidly over the last decade. According to the BEBR, Nassau County is the fifth fastest growing county in Florida. This growth trajectory underscores the County's dynamic evolution and the challenges and opportunities it faces in shaping its future. Although Nassau County has experienced a higher growth rate in recent years, it is not expected that this rate of growth will continue for the next 25 years.

The Plan compared BEBR growth rates to recent trends to establish a sound projection. Based on data and research, a 2.5 percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) was used to estimate the population by 2050, forecasting approximately 197,700 residents. This projection is higher than BEBR forecasts for the County. This is justifiable because Nassau County is consistently exceeding BEBR forecasts for the high projections. Forecast populations are shown tabularly in Table 4.2, and graphically in Figure 4.1, below.

TABLE 4.1 Historical Growth

	Population	Percent Change
2010	73,314	
2015	75,880	6.3%
2016	77,841	2.58%
2017	80,456	3.36%
2018	82,748	2.85%
2019	85,070	2.81%
2020	89,258	4.92%
2021	93,012	4.21%
2022	95,809	3.01%
2023	100,763	5.17%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TABLE 4.2 Population Projections

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
BEBR Medium (1.35% CAGR)	105,700	116,600	125,700	133,500	139,900	145,800
BEBR High (2.35% CAGR)	114,200	131,700	148,000	163,200	177,000	190,200
Vision 2050 (2.5% CAGR)	106,639	120,653	136,508	154,446	174,741	197,704

Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR); Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)

Source: Florida Bureau of Economics and Business Research (2023), SB Friedman

FIGURE 4.1 Forecast Population (2024 - 2050)
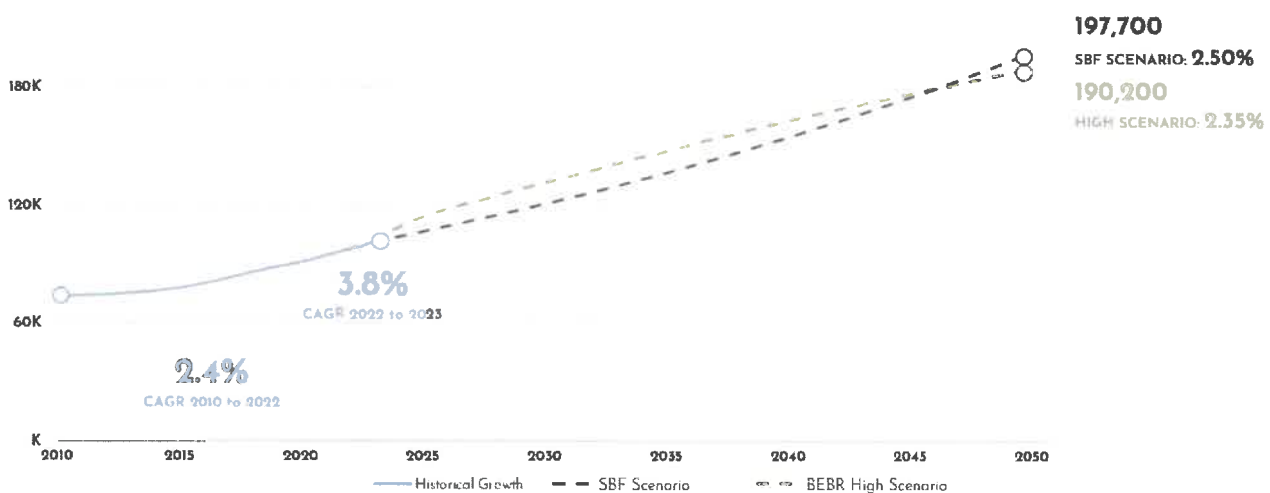
Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR); S.B. Friedman (SBF)

Source: Florida Bureau of Economics and Business Research (2023), SB Friedman

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

As the population grows, the demand for employment and services also increases. To determine employment projections, historical trends through Lightcast (a nationally recognized source of labor market analytics), regional employment growth rates, and population projections were reviewed. Consistent with the population growth, a 2.25 to 2.5 percent growth rate in employment is also assumed. This growth represents an increase in nearly 27,000 jobs countywide, which maintains a jobs-to-population ratio consistent with what exists today. The jobs-to-population ratio has increased from 25 percent in 2010 to 28 percent in 2023. An additional 27,000 jobs would maintain a 28 percent jobs-to-population ratio. Employment projections are graphically shown in Figure 4.2 (below).

A jobs-to-housing ratio provides a measure to assess whether there are sufficient employment opportunities to support the population residing within a specific geographic area. The current jobs-to-housing ratio stands at 1:0.63, which is below the County's one to one target ratio. The County has the desire to increase it's jobs-to-housing ratio to better accommodate local job opportunities and diversify the tax base.

Considering the projected addition of approximately 38,000 housing units by 2050, at least 38,000 new jobs will be needed to support a one to one jobs-to-housing ratio. Since this requirement surpasses employment projections, the County will need to take extra steps to attract more employers in key industries.

GROWTH FACTORS

The development patterns in Nassau County are influenced not only by the environmental conditions but also by the priorities of the community and the development policies that enable certain patterns of growth. An analysis of these conditions can give the County insight into why certain development outcomes have occurred.

Many factors have influenced growth in the County over the last decade, including the general inflow of residents from other states, high quality of life, the beaches and natural beauty, and the COVID-19 pandemic which allowed residents to live further from their workplaces. Factors that may affect future growth include environmental and economic conditions, such as flooding impacts, insurance rates, new larger employers located in the County, quality of life, and the continued attraction of Florida as a place to live.

Shaping where growth occurs is pivotal for guiding the local economy and directing infrastructure investments for the coming years. Growth should be concentrated in areas with existing or planned infrastructure so as to balance the County's urban growth needs with the preservation of its highly prized rural and natural landscapes. This ensures the long-term fiscal resilience and sustainability of both existing and new development and the ability to meet the needs of today without compromising the special characteristics of the County for future generations.

FIGURE 4.2   Historical and Projected Employment Growth (2001 - 2050)

Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR); S.B. Friedman (SBF)
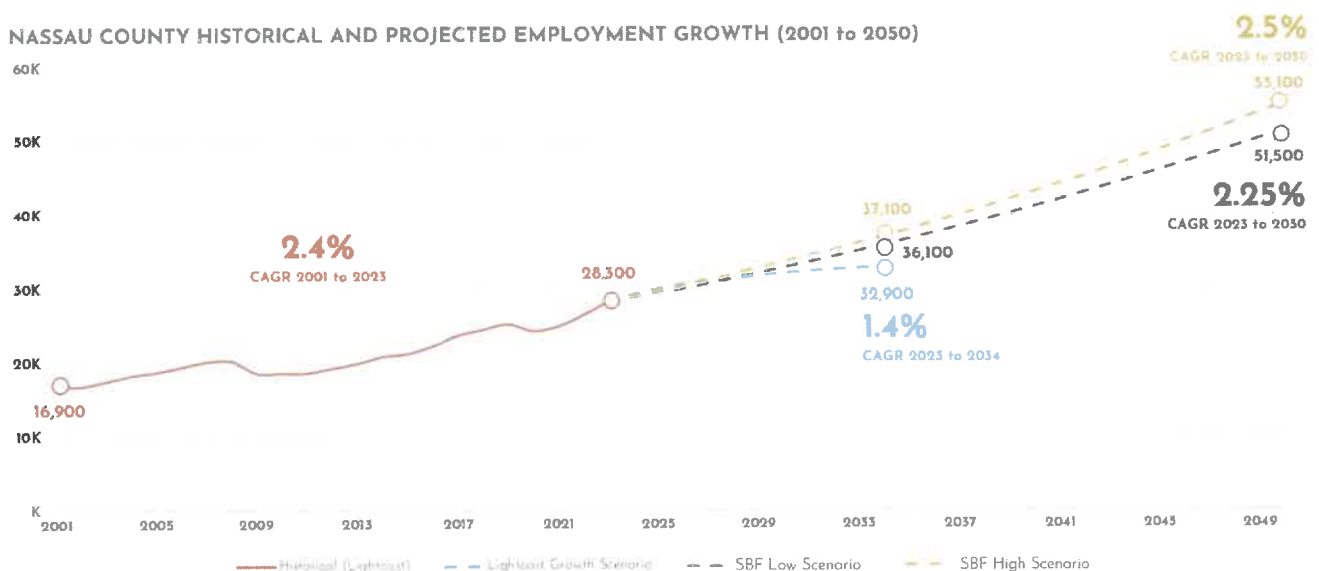
Source: Florida Bureau of Economics and Business Research (2023), SB Friedman

VISION 2050 Growth Plan Strategy

Vision 2050's recommended growth plan strategy is informed by modeling potential scenarios for how the county might grow. Scenario modeling is an essential tool for planning a community's future growth. The process explores the potential long-term fiscal outcomes of various land use and development patterns by creating and testing multiple scenarios.

Opportunities and Constraints Mapping

Nassau County's diverse landscapes present both opportunities and challenges amid projected growth and development. Opportunities and constraints mapping in ArcGIS generated a model of existing physical conditions in the County. A depiction is shown in Figure 4.3.

Layers evaluated include future land use, roadways and infrastructure, existing development patterns, wetlands, floodplains, and natural areas (parks, state owned land, waterways, conservation areas, and similar undeveloped parcels), among other available data. Opportunities included priority conservation lands for future acquisition identified in the Conservation and Land Acquisition Management (CLAM) Program (retrieved 2024), planned roadways, and future potable water and sewer stations. The resulting map provided a visualization of environmental conditions, suitable areas for development, and areas where future growth should be limited.
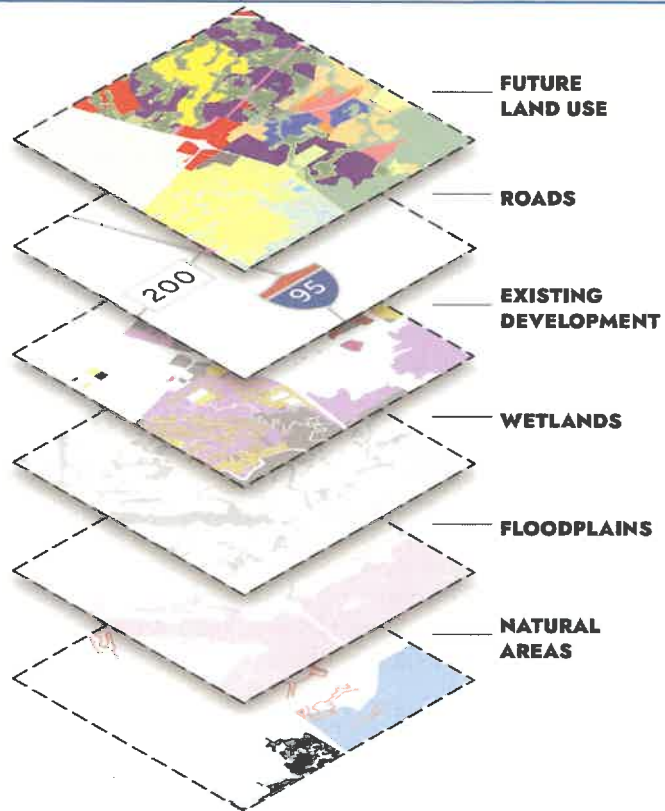
FIGURE 4.3   **Opportunities and Constraints Mapping Layers**

Development of the Scenarios and Modeling of Each

Four scenarios, described on pages 67 through 70, were created to identify potential types of growth and the associated fiscal impact on the County. The three scenarios were presented to the community during in-person presentations and through an on-line survey to gather feedback and perceptions on growth opportunities. Fiscal modeling for each scenario showed the financial implications for the identified growth patterns. Input from the processes created the final preferred growth scenario, also called the "Vision 2050 Growth Plan."

Resulting in the Vision 2050 Growth Plan

The Vision 2050 Growth Plan is the final consensus growth scenario for the County. The growth plan identifies areas of the County that are suitable for future development of variable intensities and character. It emphasizes improving access to jobs and housing options locally, while thinking regionally about improving conservation. The Vision 2050 Growth Plan will be used to inform updates to the Future Land Use Map and Future Transportation Map Series.

Character Mapping and Context Areas

In addition to the opportunities and constraints mapping described on the preceding page, character mapping is an essential component of the growth scenario planning process. Character mapping allows us to understand and illustrate the distinct attributes and qualities of different areas within Nassau County.

This process organizes the unique features that define rural, suburban, and urban settings, such as the patterns of land use, extent of natural open space, mobility infrastructure, and built environment. There should be a mixture of character areas and built environment to support the different residential areas and businesses that call Nassau County "home."

Community character goes beyond the typical classification of land uses to also account for the physical traits visible in different areas of the community. Typical land use classifications such as residential, commercial, office, and industrial indicate the general functional use of land. However, a community character approach also encompasses such factors as:

- » development density (generally determined by lot and building size);
- » intensity (floor area or building coverage);
- » ratios of open space and impervious cover; and,
- » the amount of vegetation or volume of landscaping.

It is this combination of basic land use and physical design standards (e.g., the proportional balance of green, brown, and gray spaces) that creates different and identifiable areas of the community. Consequently, importance of the interrelationship between land use, character, and design cannot be overstated.

The Vision 2050 Growth Plan is comprised of eight character areas which are a further subdivision of the rural, suburban, urban, and special context zones. An introduction to the Vision 2050 character areas can be found on page 57.

Nassau County contains a variety of land use and development characteristics that range from rural (farming and countryside found throughout western Nassau), to suburban (growth patterns found along SR-200 and in Yulee), to urban (proximate to downtown Fernandina Beach).

Rural Context Areas

Rural context areas include lightly developed areas, agricultural lands, conservation lands, and open spaces throughout the County. Future development in these areas should concentrate around existing infrastructure and roadways to preserve open space and character.

Suburban Context Areas

Suburban context areas include most of the developed areas of the County. The character of development is primarily auto-oriented residential and non-residential development. It is anticipated that over the next 20 years, some redevelopment and reinvestment in areas currently exhibiting suburban characteristics may begin to incorporate some urban development patterns in targeted locations.

Urban Context Areas

Urban context areas provide a more connected roadway system, have a greater mixture of uses, and exhibit more of a traditional development pattern. The urban character provides buildings closer to the street, alley access, wider pedestrian-oriented sidewalks, and similar characteristics.

Special Context Areas

Special context areas contain unique land uses that are difficult to classify according to typical rural, suburban, or urban characteristics. special context areas may include rural towns and large employment centers, such as business or industrial parks, government facilities, or institutional campuses.

Context Area descriptions can be inferred to represent existing land use and development conditions in Nassau County. For purposes of the Vision 2050 growth scenario modeling and mapping exercise however, Context Areas represent intended future development patterns.

Character Areas

Character areas provide a high-level organizational structure to define Nassau County's growth vision. The eight character areas defined in this Plan are organized by rural to urban context areas.

The creation of the character areas did not occur in a vacuum. Their creation was informed by a review of existing land uses, including the William Burgess District, Timber to Tides Design Overlay, and the East Nassau Community Planning Area, as well as the County and municipal Future Land Use Maps (FLUM). This, coupled with a review of existing development patterns, informed the development considerations that are presented for each character area described on pages 57 through 64.

Within Vision 2050, character areas are illustrated in Figure 4.10. Character areas will be further refined into place types, and will be subsequently implemented through revisions to the County's zoning districts and regulations. Updates to the FLUM and zoning map will be provided with the 2050 Comprehensive Plan and subsequent implementation measures through updates to the zoning regulations.

Each character area overview includes:

- » **Character Area Name.** Also references the associated context area.

- » **Description.** A statement of intent defining the long-term growth and development vision for each character area.

- » **Development Considerations.** Essential, use, and site features within each character area, which may be further augmented through the creation of subsequent "place types."

- » **Representative Land Uses.** High level classifications which are not exclusive and may be further refined through the creation of subsequent "place types."

- » **Example Imagery.** Local and non-local images.

Vision 2050's character area descriptions and development considerations are largely focused on the design and use of improvements on public and private lands. Full realization of the growth vision which they represent requires investments in public road rights-of-way that are not only the backbone of an efficient transportation system, but that also support the function and aesthetic of adjacent lands. Roadway design considerations which complement this Plan's proposed character areas are provided on pages 88 through 90.

VISION 2050 GROWTH PLAN

The character area mapping process evaluates the current and desired development patterns at a high level. While this helps Vision 2050 describe the type of growth in different areas of the County based on the desired character, it does not provide prescriptive and/or quantitative information on factors such as densities, intensities, specific land uses, or other development aspects, which are addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.

VISION 2050

FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND TRANSPORTATION MAP SERIES

Character areas will be further refined into "place types" when creating the 2050 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM). They will define more detailed development parameters including densities, intensities, land uses, and other development elements required within the comprehensive plan. The corresponding future transportation map series (FTMS) will be updated to align with the FLUM.

The FLUM and FTMS are statutorily required maps that define formal policy for growth and development. These legal maps are critical in identifying a full and clear growth framework for Nassau County.

2050 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ZONING MAP

Future land use categories are implemented through zoning. Zoning regulations control lot sizes, building heights, setbacks, access standards, open space requirements, landscaping, among other things. Nassau's zoning districts should be updated to better align with future land use categories and character areas once the comprehensive plan is complete.

LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Nassau County's Character Areas

The rural-to-urban character context is an organizing philosophy within which the **Vision 2050** Growth Plan was prepared. This philosophy was tested through a series of growth framework exercises, whereby participants could envision potential future growth patterns in Nassau through the application of more detailed character areas.

Eight overarching character areas were identified as part of the character mapping exercise. The areas are introduced below and are described in more detail on pages 57-64

Rural Context Character Areas

NATURAL & CONSERVATION AREAS

Areas to remain natural and open

RURAL AREAS

Areas that support large lot and agricultural uses.

Suburban Context Character Areas

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL AREAS

Areas that reflect auto-dominant development patterns in commercial or office centers.

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Areas that reflect low to moderate density residential, auto-oriented neighborhoods.

Urban Context Character Areas

URBAN GENERAL AREAS

Areas with a mixture of uses designed at the pedestrian scale, such as a main street.

URBAN CENTER AREAS

Areas that have higher concentrations of mixed-use development, typically at identified nodes or intersections.

Special Context Character Areas

RURAL TOWN AREAS

Expansions of existing towns for joint planning.

EMPLOYMENT CENTER AREAS

Areas that provide large-scale job opportunities and include a variety of uses that support each other.

NATURAL AND CONSERVATION CHARACTER AREA
RURAL CONTEXT

Natural and Conservation character areas promote the preservation of natural and ecologically significant areas of the County including state forests, Florida-managed areas, conservation lands, wetlands, and mitigation banks. Most development is not appropriate for these areas due to potential environmental impacts, higher costs, and engineering challenges. There may be cases where accessory and context-sensitive development may be suitable within Natural and Conservation character areas when directly related to each property's resource conservation objective (i.e., passive park development, learning centers, etc.).

Development Considerations

Natural and Conservation character area development should adhere to clearly defined safeguards to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, especially in environmentally sensitive areas. General considerations for Natural and Conservation character areas include:

» Limit development types and scale within environmentally sensitive areas through updates to the Land Development Code.

» Consider context-sensitive development projects on a case-by-case basis. Suitable development may include learning centers, passive recreation, investments in research, monitoring, education and learning (MEL).

» Expand the St. Mary's Overlay District to incorporate other major aquifers and waterways.

» Integrate passive and active recreation sites and facilities within open spaces and natural areas.

» Apply robust buffer requirements adjacent to wetlands to ensure there are barriers between development and essential natural resources.

» Pursue comprehensive plan land use amendments and zoning changes for land designated for conservation or outdoor recreation to allow for accessory uses of limited scale (i.e. educational structures, administrative offices, outfitter facilities, concession stands, etc.). Apply complementary building and site design parameters which minimize physical and aesthetic impacts to the property.

Representative Land Uses*

» Wetlands
» Floodplains
» Parks
» Open space
» Preserves

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

RURAL CHARACTER AREA
RURAL CONTEXT

Rural character areas promote the rustic heritage of the County and facilitate the productive use of natural resources. These areas support agricultural uses, farmsteads, woodlands, and large-lot residential estates. Small-scale commercial and civic uses may be appropriate along major roadways to support pastoral lifestyles and the use of surrounding natural areas. The provision of public water and waste water infrastructure is not anticipated for these areas.

Development Considerations

Rural character areas are crucial not only for maintaining the County's heritage over the long term but also for supporting self-sufficiency and resiliency. General considerations for these areas include:

- » Review and update land uses allowed within the desired rural areas.

- » Evaluate development standards to support agriculture, farming, and other uses. Examples may be minimum lot sizes for certain uses, deep setbacks, driveway spacing requirements, cluster development options, and other building and site design standards to promote rural character.

- » Minimize non-residential or non-agricultural uses to limit strip commercial development. Closely manage development scale, size, and type where non-residential uses are allowed with a focus on commercial services.

- » Limit the availability of public utilities in these areas to discourage suburban-style development.

- » Adopt roadway standards that support rural character for new roads (such as the Callahan Bypass). Roadway features may include limited access standards, large landscape buffers, drainage swales, and trails to enhance off-street connections through rural areas.

Representative Land Uses*

- » Agriculture
- » Silviculture
- » Ranching
- » Large-lot residential
- » Open space
- » Public facilities

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA
SUBURBAN CONTEXT

Suburban Residential character areas provide for low- to moderate-density residential development in areas with reasonable access to existing infrastructure and mobility networks. Other supporting uses include commercial services, schools, parks, and places of worship. Detached single-family dwellings are the predominant housing type but other housing options are promoted in transitional areas between major roadways, non-residential development and single-family residences.

Development Considerations
The Suburban Residential character area reflects a predominant development pattern in eastern Nassau. General considerations for future development in these areas include:

- » Evaluate opportunities to enhance public services proximate to existing and future residential developments, such as new public parks, siting for schools, fire stations, roadways, trails, etc.

- » Identify development standards that help increase the availability of "missing middle" housing options within larger developments.

- » Apply aesthetic design standards to promote a consistent "sense of community" within and adjacent to subdivisions.

- » Allow for non-residential uses along major roadway corridors.

- » Arrange development sites to provide transitions between land use types and intensities.

- » Require stormwater ponds to serve multiple purposes and explore opportunities to include "low-impact development" techniques.

- » Apply open space and landscaping requirements to reduce the "heat island effect".

Representatives Land Uses*

- » Single-family (detached, attached, large lot) and similar housing options
- » Multi-family housing
- » Public facilities
- » Limited small-scale commercial

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREA
SUBURBAN CONTEXT

Suburban Commercial character areas support auto-dependent development patterns including multi-tenant shopping centers and office buildings, hotels, restaurants, small-scale offices, and light industrial uses. This character area is primarily situated along roadway corridors or proximate to major intersections and may also support limited multi-family residential development where it serves as a transition between non-residential and other low- to medium-density residential land uses. Retail and service-oriented land uses are of a scale and mix to cumulatively provide for the daily needs of large segments of the community.

Representative Land Uses*

- » Commercial
- » Office
- » Multi-family and attached housing
- » Light industrial
- » Public facilities

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Development Considerations

Suburban Commercial character areas are designed to serve the predominant and surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods. While auto-dominated in nature, general considerations for these areas include:

- » Evaluate opportunities to redevelop old commercial centers with new commercial, residential, or park spaces.

- » Ensure transitions between commercial and adjacent residential areas.

- » Require stormwater ponds to serve multiple purposes and explore opportunities to include "low impact development" techniques.

- » Minimize parking area impervious surface requirements to better support sustainability and the uses of the property.

- » Evaluate open space and landscaping requirements to mitigate impervious and reflective surfaces within development and reduce "heat island" effects.

- » Require consolidated access, rear access, frontage roads, or other types of connections to promote access management and maintain or improve traffic flow on adjacent thoroughfares.

- » Accommodate a wide range of uses, but ensure compatibility with surrounding areas and consistency in the character and scale of development.

Example Imagery

URBAN GENERAL CHARACTER AREA
URBAN CONTEXT

Urban General character areas promote traditional development patterns with a concentration of mixed land uses and a high degree of connectivity between residences and community destinations. Multiple land uses and development intensities are included in this character area, providing diverse housing choices, retail options, and convenient access to professional and medical services. These areas are designed at a pedestrian scale, with shallow setbacks, street-front activation, multi-modal mobility options, and aesthetic features that promote shared outdoor activity.

Development Considerations

Urban General character areas provide opportunities to develop new mixed-use areas in the County. General considerations for these areas include:

- » Permit a diverse mix of single-family detached housing types including variations in lot sizes, build-to lines, and other spatial characteristics.

- » Promote higher development intensities along major thoroughfares.

- » Limit drive-through and other auto-oriented uses to arterial roadways.

- » Provide transitions in development scale between the major thoroughfares and surrounding neighborhoods.

- » Transition between land uses at intersecting streets and alleys and avoid incompatible uses facing each other.

- » Place institutional facilities such as places of assembly, schools, and community buildings on urban street types that promote walkability.

- » Incorporate neighborhood/civic parks to provide access from all residential areas within a 1/4-mile walkshed.

- » Conceal non-residential and multi-family parking areas behind buildings.

- » Design roadways with large active roadsides for pedestrian activity.

- » Maintain and promote street grid interconnectivity and small block sizes.

Example imagery includes images from outside Nassau County.

Representative Land Uses*

- » Single-family (attached and detached) and similar housing options
- » Multi-family housing
- » Commercial
- » Office
- » Mixed-use
- » Public facilities

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

URBAN CENTER CHARACTER AREA
URBAN CONTEXT

Urban Center character areas promote the strategic placement of development nodes where the conveniences of daily life are accessible within close proximity to residences. A readily-accessible mix of residential options, retail spaces, and professional and medical services provide many of the amenities necessary to live, work, play and stay. This character area is designed at a pedestrian scale, with shallow or no setbacks, street-front activation, and a connected mobility network. Urban centers incorporate aesthetic and energy efficient design considerations for green infrastructure, plazas, and placemaking, and are generally of higher density than Urban General character areas.

Development Considerations

Urban Center character areas are high-intensity nodes that serve both as active neighborhoods and regional destinations. General considerations for this character area include:

» Permit a mix of civic, commercial (including professional office space), lodging, recreational, residential, and retail land uses.

» Construct mixed-use buildings with upper-floor residential and ground floor flex space for residential and non-residential uses.

» Promote street grid interconnectivity and a functional system of alleys.

» Design roadways with large active roadsides for pedestrian activity.

» Provide maximum tree cover along pedestrian corridors and in association with public gathering spaces.

» Conceal parking areas behind buildings and within structures.

» Establish minimum building frontage requirements to frame the street and public spaces.

» Orient buildings to provide direct pedestrian access from street-facing facades.

Representative Land Uses*

» Single-family (attached) and similar housing options

» Multi-family housing

» Commercial

» Office

» Mixed-use

» Public facilities

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

Example imagery includes images from outside Nassau County.

RURAL TOWN CHARACTER AREA
SPECIAL CONTEXT

Rural Town character areas represent preferred growth areas for the towns of Hilliard and Callahan. These character areas support residential development and neighborhood commercial land uses that are contextually appropriate to the scale and needs of existing neighborhoods. Land use types and intensities are strategically mixed in a manner to promote a distinct community identity.

Rural Town Successional Area:
Ruture rural town with commercial edge, to be developed contemporaneously with the availability of water and sewer. Development of this area and new roadway corridors connecting US-1 to Old Dixie Highway will likely occur outside of the 2050 plan horizon.

Development Considerations
Rural Town character areas should support the expansion of municipal boundaries to seamlessly promote compatible growth around existing town sites. General considerations for these areas include:

» Review and update land uses allowed within the rural town delineation to align with how each town envisions the growth around their municipal limits and allow for seamless annexations consistent with the desired growth character.

» Create annexation/joint planning policies for growth within the Rural Town boundary.

» Ensure transitions from lower density to higher density and mixed-use areas within the rural town.

» Evaluate development regulations to allow for a mixture of housing types, non-residential land uses, and diverse lot sizes to promote compatible infill development.

Representative Land Uses*

» Single-family (attached and detached) and similar housing options

» Multi-family housing

» Commercial

» Office

» Mixed-use

» Public facilities

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

EMPLOYMENT CENTER CHARACTER AREA
SPECIAL CONTEXT

Employment Center character areas accommodate large land uses of regional significance including business or industrial parks, government and institutional campuses, and transportation and utility facilities. These character areas provide space to attract new business development and create direct jobs that support the long-term economic vitality of the County. While the use and scale of some types of Employment Centers may not support pedestrian activity, all should promote efficient transportation connectivity and access, incorporate green infrastructure, and respect and connect to surrounding natural areas.

Development Considerations

Employment Center design will vary based on the type of industry classifications they provide and the necessary scale and arrangement of applicable uses. It will be important to ensure the Employment Center design provides for compatibility and transitional scale to protect surrounding property values. General considerations for this character area include:

» Ensure appropriate siting, buffers, and scale standards for more intensive employment centers (e.g., industrial uses).

» Evaluate access, parking, and other standards to create multiple ways to access employment areas to distribute traffic and deter from creating a "sea of parking."

» Work with large employers to evaluate opportunities for accessory services or residential development within or adjacent to institutional or business campuses.

» Require stormwater ponds to serve multiple purposes and explore opportunities to include low impact development techniques within developments.

» Evaluate open space and landscaping requirements to provide places to walk and be outside during breaks, and to also help soften the impact of more intense buildings and facilities.

Representative Land Uses*

- » Commercial
- » Office
- » Industrial
- » Warehousing
- » Civic and institutional
- » Transportation
- » Public facilities

*List of land use categories not exclusive.

Example Imagery

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Why Use Growth Scenario Modeling?

Growth scenario modeling encourages transparent and inclusive decision-making. It involves residents, businesses, and policymakers to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered. Overall, scenario modeling helps the community plan for development while aiming to improve quality of life, economic health, and environmental sustainability. It leads to more comprehensive and widely supported growth strategies and frameworks.

The growth scenario models were created by conducting community conversations and reviewing existing data to analyze potential development patterns. The process used opportunity and constraint variables to identify which areas of the County may be most suitable for future development. Three scenarios were created to display different levels of growth:

» Trend Scenario which models replicating existing development patterns;

» Incremental Scenario which models growth by utilizing infill and existing development patterns; and

» Think Big Scenario which models how growth happens though concentrating growth around employment centers.

The three growth scenarios were then evaluated using public feedback and a fiscal analysis to evaluate the economic impact of various land use choices. Pages 67-70 describe each scenario based on its:

» Development parameters used to create the scenario;

» A map identifying the context areas to highlight programmed development areas;

» The scenario rating from the Growth Scenarios Survey;

» Anticipated alignment with the community's Building Blocks; and,

» Pros and cons derived from data and analysis, planning practice, and community input.

SCENARIO FEEDBACK

The three scenarios (Trend, Incremental, and Think Big) were presented to the Nassau Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), municipal leaders, the Plan Advisory Committee (PAC), and to the public at an open house event. Corresponding scenario maps were available for input at the Tree Lighting Ceremony. An online survey included the maps and short videos describing each scenario to solicit and collect additional public feedback.

The growth scenario survey ran from November 2024 to early January 2025, receiving 116 responses. Each survey asked respondents to react to each of the scenarios and rate each on a scale from 1 (strong dislike) to 5 (strong like). The average rating is presented for each scenario on subsequent pages.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

strong dislike   **strong like**

GROWTH SCENARIO 1: TREND

The Trend Scenario assumes a reactive approach to planning. It represents a potential future where growth within the William Burgess District (WBD), Timber to Tides Overlay District (T2T), and the infill parcels around Yulee do not achieve their full potential. In this scenario, most development west of I-95 is concentrated along major roadways.

Key Parameters:

- » Growth is decentralized, spreading westward along major roadway corridors
- » Single-family residential and large lot residential are the primary housing types
- » Strip commercial development is prominent
- » Conservation efforts along major roadways are limited

Legend

Municipal/Development Area Boundary
County Boundary
Waterways
Wetlands
Potential Roadway Corridor Areas
Mobility Plan Roads
New Interchange
Railroad

Vision 2050 Character Areas
Natural & Conservation Areas
Rural
Rural Town
Suburban Residential
Suburban Commercial
Urban General
Urban Center
Employment Center

FIGURE 4.4 **Growth Scenario 1 — Trend**

GROWTH SCENARIO 1 ALIGNMENT WITH BUILDING BLOCKS[2]

TABLE 4.5 **Trend Scenario Building Block Matrix[2]**

BUILDING BLOCK	REDUCED ALIGNMENT	NO CHANGE	IMPROVED ALIGNMENT
AUTHENTICITY	●		
BALANCE	●		
CONNECTIVITY	●		
GOVERNANCE		●	
HOUSING		●	
LIVABILITY	●		
OPPORTUNITY	●		
RESILIENCY	●		

This scenario generally reflects a lack of alignment with the County's building blocks. Pros and cons associated with the scenario are listed to the right.

2.2 ★
AVERAGE RATING FROM GROWTH SCENARIOS SURVEY[1]

Pros:
- » Consistent with existing development patterns
- » Places less development pressure east of I-95

Cons:
- » Loss of community identity/small-town feel
- » Less incentive to conserve additional open space
- » Reduced ability for multi-modal travel
- » More land consumed for development, requiring much higher infrastructure investment
- » Reduction in agricultural land
- » More development westward resulting in loss of rural and conservation lands

[1]. The growth scenarios were presented during community meetings and an online survey for input. The rating indicates the average score for how favorable the scenario is on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. Survey responses can be found in **Appendix C: Community Engagement**.
[2]. Building block descriptions can be found on page 49.

GROWTH SCENARIO 2: INCREMENTAL

The Incremental Scenario focuses first on infill within Yulee, the WBD, and T2T. There is still a westward expansion of growth, especially along I-95, near Jacksonville, and around Nassau's emerging employment centers. Smaller commercial centers are accessible throughout the County to provide services to residents.

Key Parameters:

» Infill and redevelopment proximate to Yulee at various scales and densities consistent with T2T and WBD transects

» Commercial and large-lot residential are decentralized west of I-95

» Employment centers with developed housing and services in close proximity

Legend

Municipal/Development Area Boundary
County Boundary
Waterways
Wetlands
:::::: Potential Roadway Corridor Areas
- - - Mobility Plan Roads
● New Interchange
+++ Railroad

Vision 2050 Character Areas
Natural & Conservation Areas
Rural
Rural Town
Suburban Residential
Suburban Commercial
Urban General
Urban Center
Employment Center
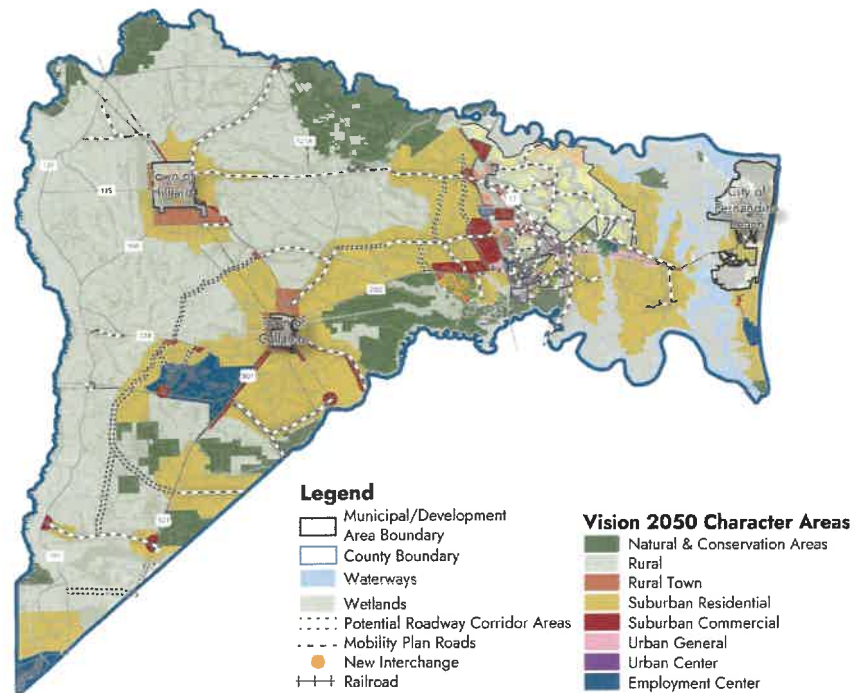
FIGURE 4.5 **Growth Scenario 2 - Incremental**

GROWTH SCENARIO 2 ALIGNMENT WITH BUILDING BLOCKS[2]

TABLE 4.6 **Incremental Scenario Building Block Matrix[2]**

BUILDING BLOCK	REDUCED ALIGNMENT	NO CHANGE	IMPROVED ALIGNMENT
AUTHENTICITY	●		
BALANCE			●
CONNECTIVITY		●	
GOVERNANCE		●	
HOUSING		●	
LIVABILITY			●
OPPORTUNITY			●
RESILIENCY			●

The scenario generally reflects no change and improved alignment with the County's building blocks. Pros and cons associated with the scenario are listed to the right.

2.2 ★
AVERAGE RATING FROM GROWTH SCENARIOS SURVEY[1]

Pros:

» Implements key County plans

» Encourages growth in defined areas

» Facilitates multi-modal transportation east of I-95

» Mixture of housing types near employment centers

Cons:

» Loss of community identity/ small-town feel west of I-95

» Less incentive to conserve additional open space

» More land consumed for development west of I-95

» Reduction in agricultural land

» More development in Yulee increases traffic on SR-200

[1]. The growth scenarios were presented during community meetings and an online survey for input. The rating indicates the average score for how favorable the scenario is on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. Survey responses can be found in **Appendix C: Community Engagement**.
[2]. Building block descriptions can be found on page 49.

GROWTH SCENARIO 3: THINK BIG

The Think Big Scenario consolidates development around the planned I-95 interchange, near Crawford Diamond, around the towns, and within the WBD. Small-scale commercial centers would be strategically placed at key intersections throughout the County to support nearby residential neighborhoods.

Key Parameters:

- » Growth is concentrated within specified context areas
- » Conservation-focused areas are clearly established
- » Encourages development where live, work, play and stay land uses are built in

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Legend

Municipal/Development Area Boundary
County Boundary
Waterways
Wetlands
::::: Potential Roadway Corridor Areas
- - - Mobility Plan Roads
● New Interchange
╆╋╆ Railroad

Vision 2050 Character Areas
Natural & Conservation Areas
Rural
Rural Town
Suburban Residential
Suburban Commercial
Urban General
Urban Center
Employment Center
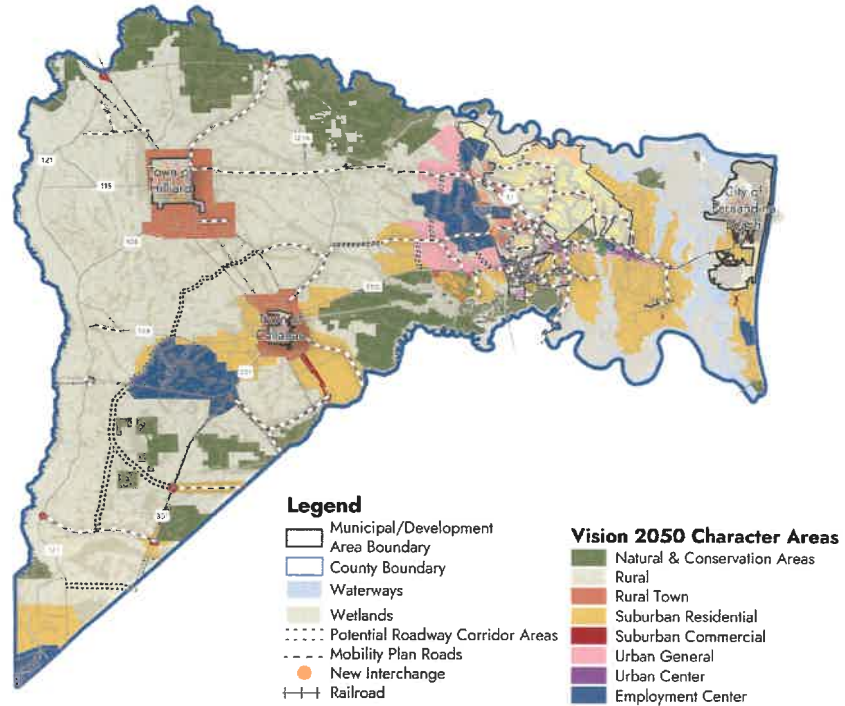
FIGURE 4.6   **Growth Scenario 3 - Think Big**

GROWTH SCENARIO 3 ALIGNMENT WITH BUILDING BLOCKS[2]

TABLE 4.7   **Think Big Scenario Building Block Matrix[2]**

BUILDING BLOCK	REDUCED ALIGNMENT	NO CHANGE	IMPROVED ALIGNMENT
AUTHENTICITY			●
BALANCE			●
CONNECTIVITY			●
GOVERNANCE		●	
HOUSING			●
LIVABILITY			●
OPPORTUNITY			●
RESILIENCY			●

The scenario generally reflects improved alignment with the County's building blocks. Pros and cons associated with the scenario are listed to the right.

2.8 ★

AVERAGE RATING
FROM GROWTH
SCENARIOS SURVEY[1]

Pros:

- » Implements key County plans
- » Encourages growth in defined areas
- » With closer proximity between developed areas, facilitates multi-modal transportation in many areas of the County
- » Mixture of housing types near employment centers
- » Employment/business hubs with a variety of services support

Cons:

- » Greater intensity development is not appealing in western Nassau
- » Less open space within the more developed areas

[1]. The growth scenarios were presented during community meetings and an online survey for input. The rating indicates the average score for how favorable the scenario is on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. Survey responses can be found in **Appendix C: Community Engagement**.
[2]. Building block descriptions can be found on page 49.

Vision 2050 Growth Plan

The Vision 2050 Growth Plan represents the preferred growth scenario for Nassau County. Development is focused in areas with planned or existing public infrastructure, incorporates additional conservation areas, and includes small commercial centers around Nassau County to improve access to services.

Key Parameters:

» Focused growth within the identified growth areas

» Additional conservation land established

» More urban development patterns with a mixture of uses to encourage live, work, play, and stay options

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Legend
Municipal/Development Area Boundary
County Boundary
Waterways
Wetlands
Potential Roadway Corridor Areas
Mobility Plan Roads
● New Interchange
╀╀╀ Railroad

Vision 2050 Character Areas
Natural & Conservation Areas
Rural
Rural Town
Suburban Residential
Suburban Commercial
Urban General
Urban Center
Employment Center
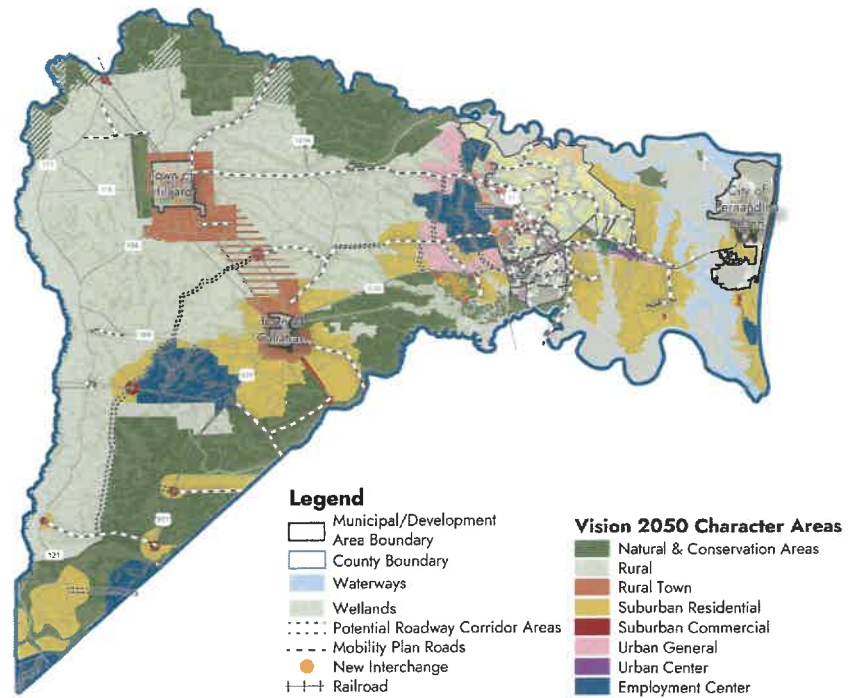
FIGURE 4.7   **Preferred Growth Scenario**

PREFERRED SCENARIO ALIGNMENT WITH BUILDING BLOCKS[2]

TABLE 4.8   **Preferred Scenario Building Block Matrix[2]**

BUILDING BLOCK	REDUCED ALIGNMENT	NO CHANGE	IMPROVED ALIGNMENT
AUTHENTICITY			●
BALANCE			●
CONNECTIVITY			●
GOVERNANCE		●	
HOUSING			●
LIVABILITY			●
OPPORTUNITY			●
RESILIENCY			●

The scenario generally reflects improved alignments with the County's building blocks. Pros and cons associated with the scenario are listed to the right.

Pros:

» Implements key County plans

» Encourages growth in defined areas

» Facilitates multi-modal transportation

» Mixture of housing types near employment centers

» Employment/business hubs with a variety of services support

» Greater areas of conservation west of I-95

» Maintains rural areas and agricultural lands

Cons:

» Greater intensity development is not appealing in western Nassau

» Less open space within the more developed areas

---

1. The growth scenarios were presented to the community in the form of community meetings and an on-line survey. The rating represents a neutral response to the scenario.

2. Building block descriptions can be found on page 49.

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FIGURE 4.8 Vision 2050 Growth Plan Opportunities and Constraints Map

PINE TOP

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Legend

Municipal Boundary

Waterways
- Aquatic Preserves
- Outstanding Florida Waters
- Florida Managed Waters
- State Parks & Forests
- Conservation Areas
- White Oak Plantation
- Mitigation Banks
- Local Government Owned Land

Floodplain
- Floodplain

Wetlands
- Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
- Estuarine and Marine Wetland
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine

Development
- Existing Residential Development
- Entitled Development
- Industrial FLUM
- 2-Mile Municipal Buffer
- 5-Mile Municipal Buffer

Opportunities
- Florida Forever Projects
- Atlantic to Okefenokee Corridor
- CLAM Properties
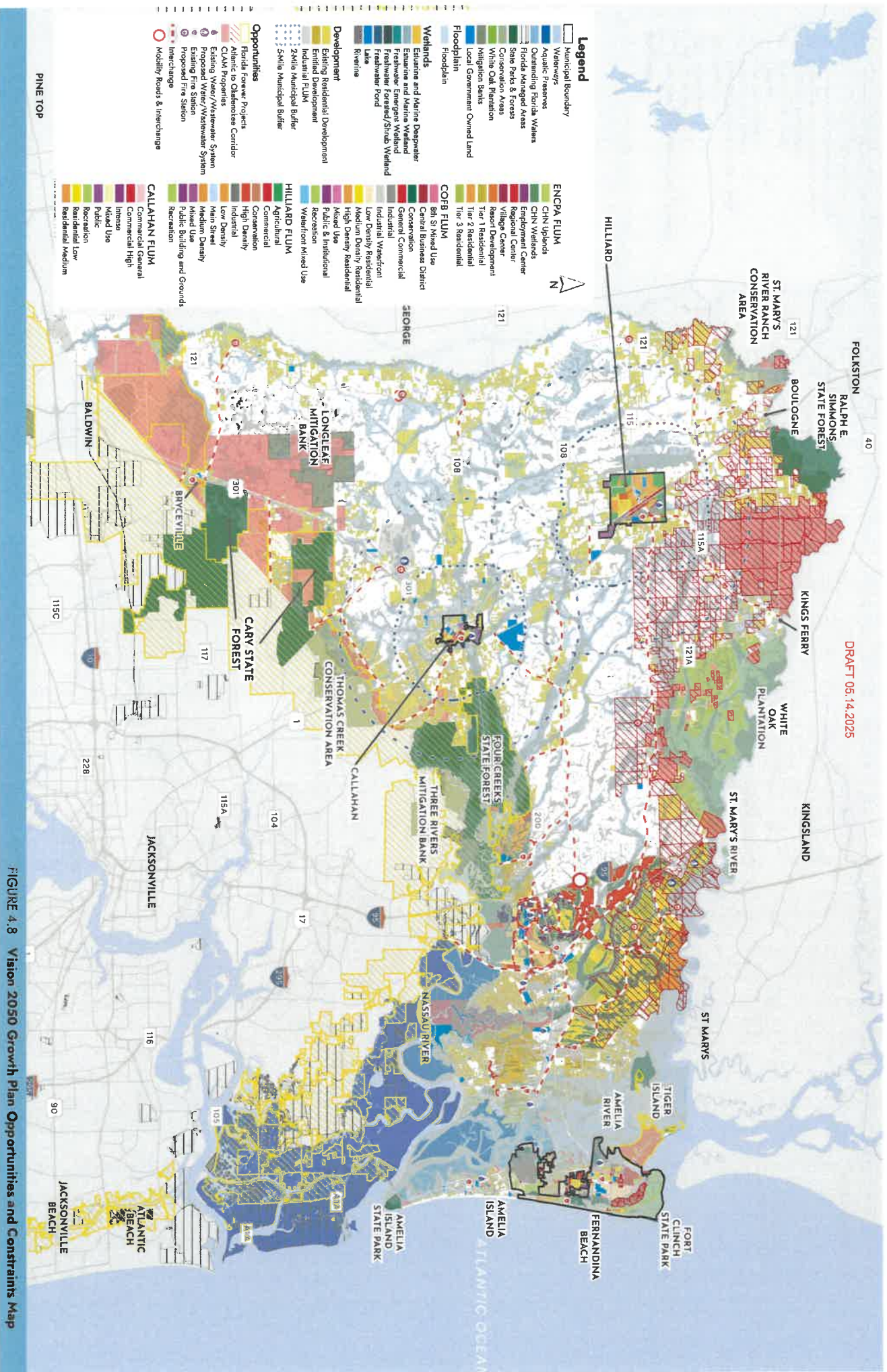- Existing Water/Wastewater System
- Proposed Water/Wastewater System
- Existing Fire Station
- Proposed Fire Station
- Interchange
- Mobility Roads & Interchange

ENCPA FLUM
- CHN Uplands
- CHN Wetlands
- Employment Center
- Regional Center
- Village Center
- Resort Development
- Tier 1 Residential
- Tier 2 Residential
- Tier 3 Residential

COFB FLUM
- 8th St Mixed Use
- Central Business District
- Conservation
- General Commercial
- Industrial
- Industrial Waterfront
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Public & Institutional
- Recreation
- Waterfront Mixed Use

HILLIARD FLUM
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Conservation
- High Density
- Industrial
- Low Density
- Main Street
- Medium Density
- Mixed Use
- Public Building and Grounds
- Recreation

CALLAHAN FLUM
- Commercial General
- Commercial High
- Intense
- Mixed Use
- Public
- Recreation
- Residential Low
- Residential Medium

Labels

FOLKSTON
RALPH E. SIMMONS STATE FOREST
ST. MARY'S RIVER RANCH CONSERVATION AREA
BOULOGNE
KINGS FERRY
WHITE OAK PLANTATION
ST. MARY'S RIVER
KINGSLAND
ST MARYS
AMELIA RIVER
TIGER ISLAND
FORT CLINCH STATE PARK
FERNANDINA BEACH
AMELIA ISLAND
AMELIA ISLAND STATE PARK
NASSAU RIVER
HILLIARD
GEORGE
BALDWIN
BRYCEVILLE
LONGLEAF MITIGATION BANK
CARY STATE FOREST
THOMAS CREEK CONSERVATION AREA
CALLAHAN
FOUR CREEKS STATE FOREST
THREE RIVERS MITIGATION BANK
JACKSONVILLE
JACKSONVILLE BEACH
ATLANTIC BEACH
ATLANTIC OCEAN

N

FIGURE 4.9 Vision 2050 Growth Plan Public Infrastructure Map

Legend

- Municipal/Development Area Boundary
- County Boundary
- Waterways
- Wetlands
- Potential Roadway Corridor Areas
- Mobility Plan Roads
- New Interchange
- Railroad
- Existing Fire Station
- Proposed Fire Station
- Existing Water/Wastewater facility
- Propose Water/Wastewater facility

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ST GEORGE

HILLIARD

BOULOGNE

KINGS FERRY

KINGSLAND

BALDWIN

BRYCEVILLE

CALLAHAN

JACKSONVILLE

ST MARYS

FERNANDINA BEACH

ATLANTIC BEACH

JACKSONVILLE BEACH

ATLANTIC OCEAN

127

121

121

115

108

108

115A

121A

200

40

1

117

115C

228

115A

104

17

95

116

105

A1A

A1A

90

301

301

40

Legend

- Municipal/Development Area Boundary
- County Boundary
- Waterways
- Wetlands
- Potential Roadway Corridor Areas
- Mobility Plan Roads
- New Interchange
- Railroad
- Existing Fire Station
- Proposed Fire Station
- Existing Water/Wastewater facility
- Propose Water/Wastewater facility

Vision 2050 Character Areas

- Natural & Conservation Areas
- Future Natural & Conservation Areas
- Rural
- Rural Town
- Rural Town Successional Area
- Suburban Residential
- Suburban Commercial
- Urban General
- Urban Center
- Employment Center

FIGURE 4.10 Vision 2050 Growth Plan Map

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HILLIARD

BOULOGNE

BALDWIN

BRYCEVILLE

CALLAHAN

KINGS FERRY

KINGSLAND

ST MARYS

FERNANDINA BEACH

JACKSONVILLE

ATLANTIC BEACH

JACKSONVILLE BEACH

ATLANTIC OCEAN

ICI VILLAGES EC

TOWN OF HILLIARD JOINT PLANNING AREA

CRAWFORD DIAMOND EC

TOWN OF CALLAHAN JOINT PLANNING AREA

NEW I-95 INTERCHANGE EC

YULEE

HILLIARD

BOULOGNE

KINGS FERRY

KINGSLAND

ST MARYS

ST GEORGE

BRYCEVILLE

CALLAHAN

BALDWIN

JACKSONVILLE

FERNANDINA BEACH

ATLANTIC OCEAN

JACKSONVILLE BEACH

ATLANTIC BEACH

FIGURE 4.11 Growth Areas

Special Planning Areas

The overarching purpose of the vision plan process is to create a blueprint or framework for the growth of the community. This plan aims to improve the quality of life for all county residents and balance social, environmental, and economic needs to create a vital and sustainable community for generations to come. The vision plan uses high-level character areas that cannot provide all of the refined details needed to guide implementation. Many of these details should be fleshed out during subsequent processes such as developing the comprehensive plan, strategic planning, land development code updates, and sub-area planning efforts.

This section identifies the overarching community direction for the major employment centers and growth areas. These areas provide the County with the greatest opportunity to direct growth through land use policies, zoning regulations, strategies, infrastructure investments, and considerations for environmental conservation. They also incorporate economic development initiatives and cultural and recreational enhancement considerations. As shown on Figure 4.13 (page 77, left) and as discussed below, these special planning areas include:

- » Yulee
- » New I-95 Interchange
- » Joint Planning Areas
- » Crawford Diamond Employment Center
- » ICI Villages Employment Center
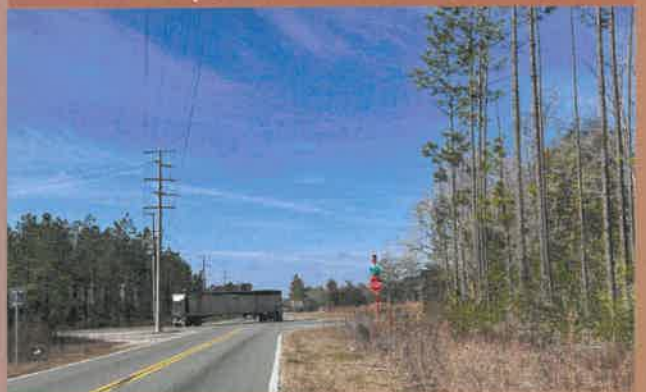

Existing development in the Town of Callahan
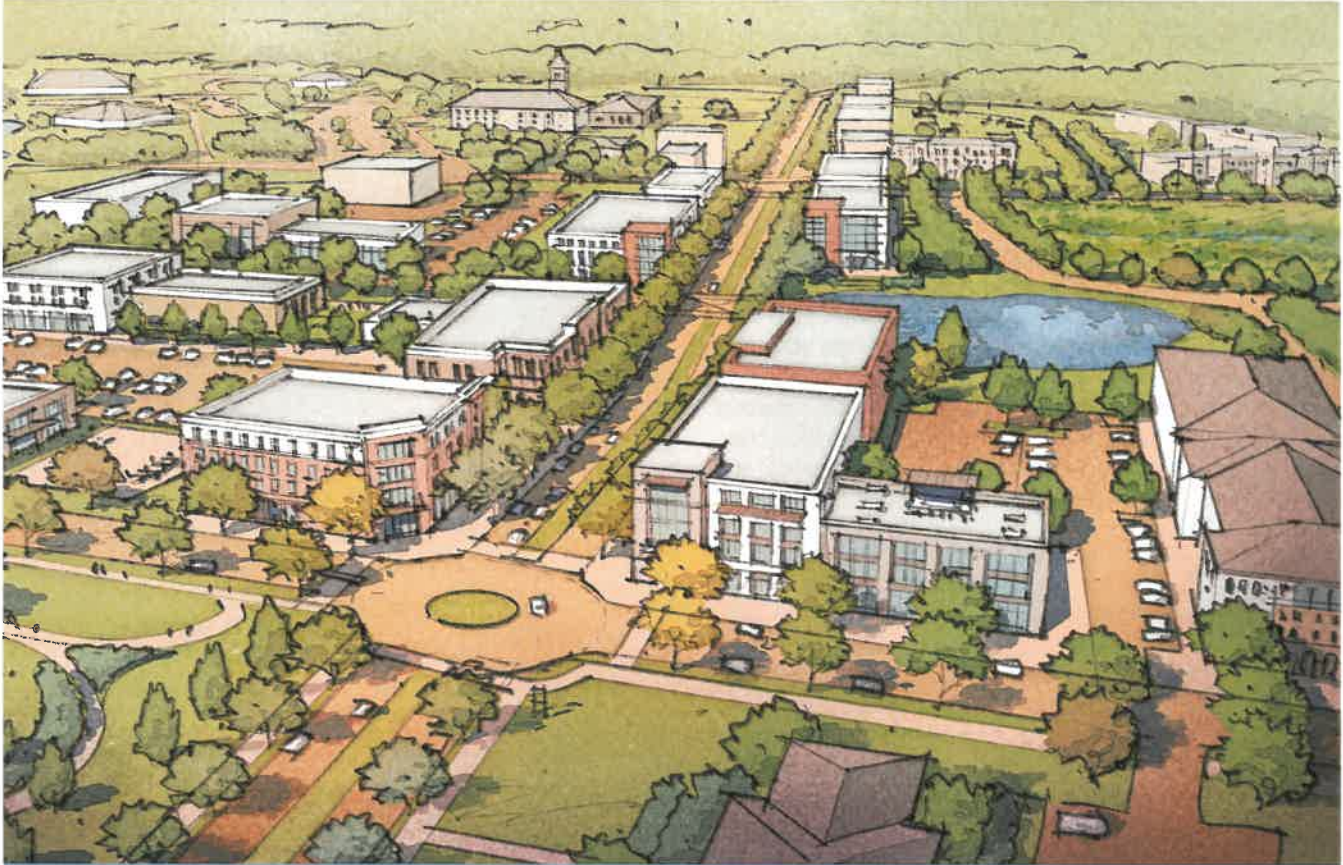

Green space in the Town of Hilliard

Large commercial centers in Yulee

Undeveloped area of Crawford Diamond

FIGURE 4.12 **William Burgess District Rendering**

FIGURE 4.13 **Sheriff's Office Redevelopment Rendering**

*(Figure 4.15 Rendering Source: SR-200/A1A Corridor Master Plan)*

YULEE

The Yulee Area includes several small area planning efforts including the William Burgess District (WBD), the Timber to Tides Master Plan (T2T), and the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA). These areas are regulated by development programs and are intended to create new districts with a true "sense of place" and "sense of community". The future of these areas includes connected roadways, trail and bicycle connections, a diversity of uses, and interconnected social spaces.

Figure 4.14 (left, page 77) is an example rendering of new development along William Burgess Boulevard. Within the WBD, the regulations require development to interact with the pedestrian realm, creating a safe and walkable environment. Mixed-use buildings provide a range of services and establishments within close distance of homes. A system of parks and trails create a connected network of public spaces for playing, exploring, and socializing. The WBD is envisioned as a complete community, offering a high quality of life and opportunities to live, work, play, and stay.

Redevelopment and infill of existing shopping centers along the SR-200 corridor can be explored at different scales, depending on the preferred development type. The example graphics on the right side of the page illustrate various scales of suburban retrofitting.

» Small-scale infill may include outparcel development and standard residential development. Activation of the stormwater pond with trails provides access to passive recreation.

» Medium-scale infill may include the redevelopment of the shopping center with pedestrian scale buildings, tree-lined streets, and more diverse housing options. Additional recreational enhancements to the stormwater pond provide recreation and passive spaces for residents and visitors.

» Large-scale infill illustrates the redevelopment of the shopping center to a mixed-use node with higher density residential, office, institutional, and commercial spaces fronting along tree-lined streets. Open spaces are built into the fabric of the center, with parks, plazas, and other public spaces.
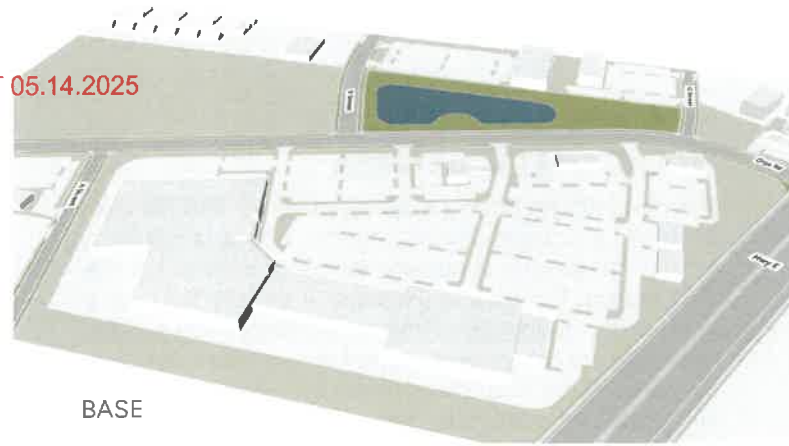
BASE
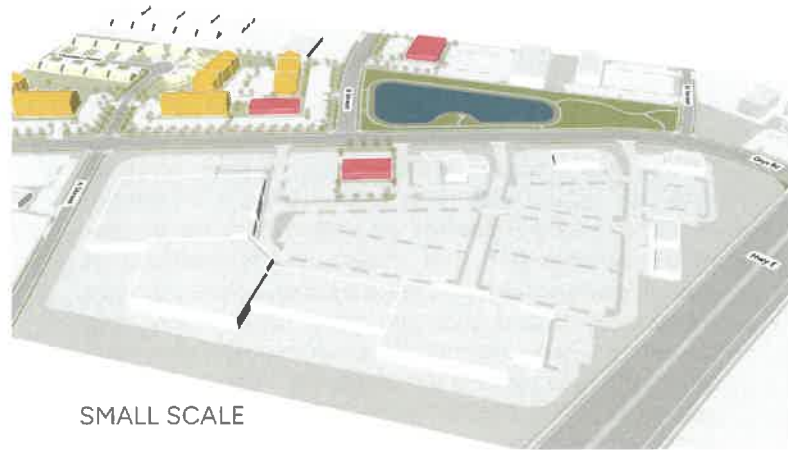
SMALL SCALE
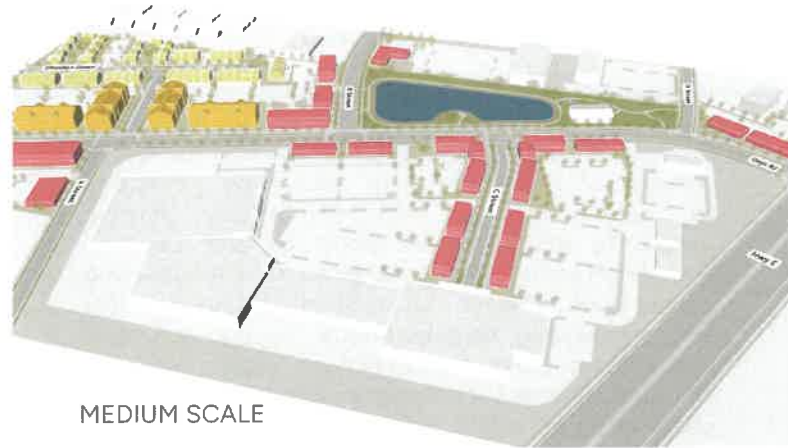
MEDIUM SCALE

LARGE SCALE

FIGURE 4.14 **Suburban Infill**

NEW I-95 INTERCHANGE EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The new I-95 interchange between US-17 and SR-200 presents a unique opportunity to create a regional activity center that complements the growth within the East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA). As a greenfield development, this area is essentially a blank slate with the potential to shape Nassau County's future for generations. With plans for expanded potable water and sewer infrastructure, the area can support large-scale development. Its strategic location along I-95, combined with planned roadway connections to Callahan and Yulee, further enhances its growth potential.

The vision for the I-95 interchange is a high-intensity and high-density regional employment and activity center that provides a wide range of jobs, housing, retail, dining and hospitality-related uses. It is intended that this area will provide an opportunity for diverse retail, employment, and mixed-use destinations at critical intersections to create denser, value-intensive development. In a changing retail environment, this center should be designed as a community destination with activities, amenities, shopping, restaurants and places to gather, live and work. Missing middle housing options should be available within the area and along its periphery. This will allow for greater access to housing close to employment areas.

Internal circulation will be critical to the long-term success of the area. Managing access and traffic will require planning and coordination. An interconnected network of roads and trails should be developed to create a "park and walk" environment, allowing people to easily access amenities and services. Special attention should be given to strengthening connections between non-residential developments and surrounding neighborhoods. Roadways should utilize more urban cross-sections within the core employment area but may have more suburban design characteristics where appropriate outside of core development areas.

The area should be developed with forward-thinking policies and practices that allow for the adaptability of buildings, low-impact development techniques, and other principles that help to protect the area for future generations. Wetlands and floodplains can provide natural delineation of development and provide extensive buffers between uses. Open spaces should serve multiple purposes, including stormwater management, green spaces, places for exploration and social interaction, and enhanced connectivity. Activated spaces should blend the urban environment with nature and provide for the enjoyment and use of the outdoor spaces as buffers between uses.

Example of how to create a walkable built environment, with streets fronting the roadways, a mixture of uses, a connected mobility network, and tree lined streets with programmed open space.

Large-scale developments such as corporate offices, office parks, service/repair, light industry, lean assembly facilities, and similar uses can be the dominant activities in this area. Retail, restaurant, and residential uses serving the campus industrial uses could also be included.

Large-scale uses serving a regional market, such as corporate offices, office parks, hotels and resorts, retail, entertainment, restaurants, and similar uses will help create a central business district.

CRAWFORD DIAMOND EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The Crawford Diamond Employment Center offers an opportunity to provide the County with a range of industry-related jobs. Its strategic proximity to rail infrastructure should be leveraged to promote industrial development. Additionally, the area will require supporting services, such as commercial, office, and other related uses, to ensure a well-rounded environment that can grow in a sustainable manner. Small area planning around the Crawford Diamond can be used to accommodate growth and development in an area experiencing great development pressure from northwest Jacksonville. Focused growth in this area can help support the preservation of rural character elsewhere.

As the central area is designated for industrial uses, it is assumed that the area will support a range of employers. Aside from the area already designated as industrial, there will be additional uses to support employment in this area. This may include commercial nodes with a variety of services, as well as residential areas with appropriate buffers and distances between the industrial uses. Surrounding the industrial center there may be other non-commercial uses to support employment needs.

Located along the CSX and Norfolk Southern rail lines and US-301, the area offers access to national shipping networks. Circulation will be crucial for successful movement around the area and should provide access not only within the employment center but to other areas of the County. A mixture of roadways and trails should be used to facilitate multi-modal access. Trails along roadways and through greenways should provide enhanced regional access to employment areas. To protect the rural nature of surrounding areas, new roadways providing regional access should be designed with access management and desired rural character in mind.

The natural environment should be preserved wherever possible. Given the extensive network of wetlands and floodplains within the area, the long-term environmental health of the county must protect these vital ecosystems. Additionally, connected parks and open spaces should be integrated throughout the entire Crawford Diamond Employment Center to enhance both environmental sustainability and quality of life. Low-impact development should be included in all development within the employment center.

Shipping and distribution centers are employment options that provide a range of job opportunities.

Environmental features can be preserved within developments to improve open spaces and enhance aesthetics..

Commercial and residential uses near the Crawford Diamond industrial complex will complement and support larger employers.

ICI VILLAGES

The ICI villages is an industrial and mixed-use development area along US-90 and near I-10. With its proximity to the interstate and along the border with Duval County, it is a logical location for industrial development. Supporting services, such as commercial and retail, should be provided near the industrial complex to provide resources for employees.

The development has the opportunity to be another gateway to Nassau County mimicking the way Yulee has grown off the I-95 and A1A corridors. With the expansion of water and sewer to the area, the employment center should be buffered from residential development at varying scales and intensities. Providing a range of services and including affordable multi-generational housing would create opportunities for families to relocate to the area for work in the employment centers while also maintaining a high quality of life.

While this area provides unique growth potential for the County, the natural environment should be preserved wherever possible to allow for habitat corridor connectivity and buffer zones between land uses. Given the extensive network of wetlands and floodplains within the area, the long-term environmental health of the County is reliant on areas like this to provide critical recharge and conservation benefits. Developing the area with adequate conservation areas can also create the opportunity for trail systems to be created to enhance walkability and recreation. Waterwise plantings and low-impact development design should be included when developing properties in this area of the County.

Furthermore, engaging local communities and stakeholders in the planning process is essential to ensure that the development meets the needs of both current and future residents. Collaborative efforts can help identify areas requiring protection and enhancement, ensuring a balance between growth and conservation. Public consultations and regular updates can foster transparency and trust, making the development a model of sustainable progress. Additionally, adopting green building standards and investing in renewable energy sources can set a precedent for environmentally-conscious growth, attracting like-minded businesses and contributing to the overall well-being of the region.

Retention ponds can help manage stormwater runoff by collecting and storing excess rainwater, reducing the risk of flooding. It also improves water quality by allowing sediments and pollutants to settle before the water is released into the environment.

Surface parking areas allow parking for a mix of utility trucks, workers and visitors alike. They also allow for the use of more pervious materials and other low-impact development techniques.

Deep setbacks and large buffers can separate the more developed areas from surrounding properties in industrial-based areas.

JOINT PLANNING AREAS

Three municipalities lie within Nassau County - the City of Fernandina Beach, the Town of Callahan, and the Town of Hilliard. Development and policies for the unincorporated areas surrounding the municipalities should be congruent with the needs and plans for each individual area.

Amelia Island Joint Planning Area

Currently, the municipal limits on Amelia Island create enclaves of City and County lands that do not always seamlessly flow together. For example, the County maintains some roadways that are fully within the jurisdiction of the City. A joint planning area between unincorporated Nassau County and the City of Fernandina Beach should be established to allow for the cohesive annexation of parcels and infrastructure into the City.

Callahan Joint Planning Area

Callahan is experiencing growth pressure from industrial and employment areas in northwest Jacksonville. Much of the development in the unincorporated areas around the town includes single-family on large lots, agriculture, and silviculture. As development pressure continue to increase, alternative growth patterns will need to be considered to better support the daily needs of residents, including a diversity of housing options, more services, and employment opportunities. There are environmental challenges around the town with flooding, low-lying areas, and wetlands. Through the comprehensive planning process, the County and the Town of Callahan can plan out future land uses and design policies.

Hilliard Joint Planning Area

The Town of Hilliard lies in the northwest portion of Nassau County. The northern extent of the County is bordered by the Saint Mary's River. Much of the land along the river has been identified as the "Atlantic to Okefenokee Corridor" (A2O) and is important for long-term conservation efforts. To best support conservation efforts around the Town, the County will need to identify opportunities to support growth near the town and discourage growth towards environmentally sensitive areas. With its distance from Callahan and Yulee, additional utility and infrastructure services would support future growth and development around Hilliard. With the comprehensive planning process, the County will need to work with Hilliard to determine how growth within the unincorporated areas should occur to support the long-term vitality of the Town and County.

Roadway Elements

MOBILITY VERSUS ACCESS

A transportation system has a direct impact on the quality of life and economic potential of a community. There are two main functions of a transportation system; the first is to provide mobility and the second is to provide access. Mobility is best defined as the ability for people and goods to be moved efficiently, while access allows people and goods the ability to enter or exit the system or property. These are competing functions that must be balanced depending on the unique needs of an area. A well-designed and coordinated transportation system provides multiple modes of mobility to ensure residents and visitors can move in and through a city safely and with ease.

As shown in Figure 4.17, each thoroughfare provides differing levels of mobility and access (arterials, collectors, and local streets). Mobility and access have an inverse relationship, where streets that have greater mobility typically have less access, and vice versa. Streets that prioritize mobility (e.g., major collectors and arterials) are designed for faster speeds and greater traffic volumes. Conversely, streets that prioritize access (e.g., local streets) maximize ingress and egress to the network over mobility.

When the mobility system works well, movements go largely unnoticed and enhance the area's economic appeal and quality of life. When the system fails, even simple movement leads to frustration and a perceived lower quality of life. This not only applies to vehicles, but also to walking, biking, transit, and other non-vehicular mobility options. There is an understanding that the visual quality and type of development along roadway corridors also contributes to the overall aesthetics of an area. Visual appeal may have a direct impact on whether a business or person may want to locate in an area. As a result, there is increased attention to the design of roadways so that it either A.) minimizes the impact on, or B.) enhances the character of, the adjacent properties. When a mobility system meets the needs of all users, improves efficiency, and feels safe, it is oftentimes called a Complete Street.
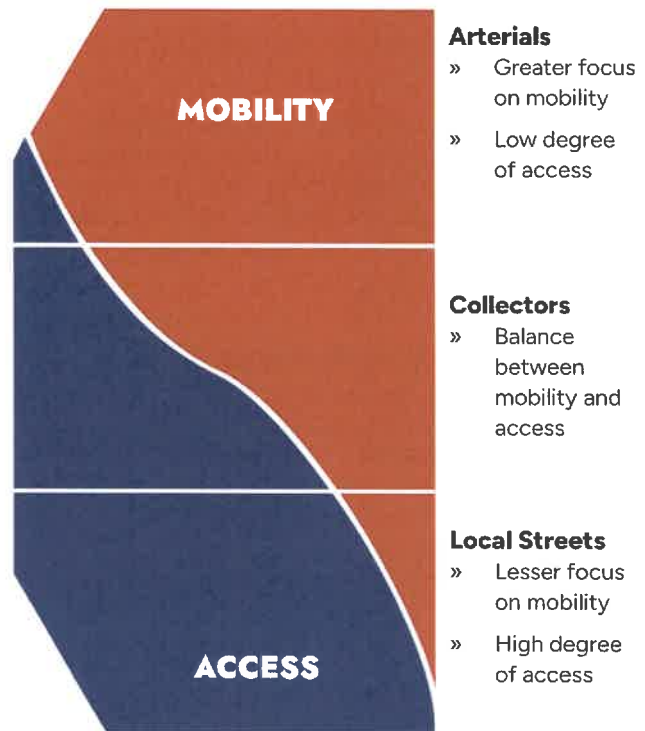

Arterials
» Greater focus on mobility
» Low degree of access

Collectors
» Balance between mobility and access

Local Streets
» Lesser focus on mobility
» High degree of access

FIGURE 4.15 **Mobility Versus Access**

County Road 108 is a major collector in the northern part of the County. It provides access to Hilliard for vehicular mobility but currently lacks pedestrian infrastructure.

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets embody a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of their mode of transportation. Complete Streets allow for safe travel by those walking, bicycling, driving automobiles, riding public transportation, or delivering goods. From FDOT's Context Classification Guide, "Complete Streets means putting the right road in the right place."

The design of Complete Streets is comprised of elements that accommodate the diverse needs of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and, when applicable, public transit users. The specific design elements of a Complete Street include:

Sidewalks. Wide and accessible sidewalks, buffered from the roadway provide a safe and comfortable space for pedestrians.

Bike Accommodations. Dedicated on street bike lanes or sidepaths create a safer environment for biking and other alternative modes of transportation.

Crosswalks. Clearly marked and well-designed crosswalks enhance pedestrian safety when crossing streets.

Traffic Calming Measures. Features such as curb extensions, roundabouts, and narrowed lanes slow down vehicle speeds and improve safety.

Street Amenities. Benches, trash bins, lighting, and other amenities contribute to a more comfortable and inviting urban environment.

Accessible Design. Curb ramps, tactile paving, and other features ensure that the street is accessible to people with disabilities.

Green Infrastructure. Trees and natural landscaping contribute to aesthetics, reduce the urban heat island effect, and improve environmental sustainability.

Smart Street Technology. Integration of technology for traffic management, pedestrian signals, and other smart features enhance safety and efficiency.

Complete Intersections. Intersection designs, such as roundabouts prioritize the safety and efficiency of all modes of transportation.

ROADWAY CONTEXT

Consistent with the Vision 2050 Growth Plan Strategy, roadway context serves as the basis upon which Nassau may build a transportation network that compliments development of varying character and intensity. Roadway design features should be determined by the context of an area. The three roadway context configurations include rural roadways, suburban roadways, and urban roadways and are illustrated in Figure 4.18.

Rural roadways are designed for mobility in areas with low development densities that do not rely on urban services (e.g. water, sewer), and that have limited access to nearby commercial or industrial uses. The roadways in these areas should be designed with low-impact design (LID) standards in mind.

Suburban roadways typically prioritize higher traffic volumes and have historically favored motor-vehicle travel with little accommodation for alternative modes of transportation. However, as suburban areas develop, more focus should be put to designing for safe speeds and access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Urban roadways provide comfortable and aesthetically pleasing environments for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists. Roadways in urban areas should include targeted locations where activated roadsides serve as a public gathering space, in addition to their inherent transportation purposes.

Tables 4.9 through 4.11, on pages 88 through 90, provide additional design guidance for each of these roadway context types. Guidance is informed by FDOT Roadway Design Standards.

FIGURE 4.16 **Example of Roadway Configurations**

TABLE 4.9   Rural Context Areas: Roadway Features

Street Design Element	Local Road	Collector Road	Arterial Road
FUNCTION			
Functional Role	Rural property access	Connects arterials and local streets	Connects to major arterials
Streetway Continuity	Generally discontinuous, connects to rural (C2) collectors	Continuous between arterials	Cross-city connectivity
Right-of-Way	60 ft min	60 ft min	60 -100 ft
Maximum Speed Limit	25 - 30 mph	30- 40 mph	40- 45 mph
Traffic Volume (Average Daily Trips)	<1,000	1,000-5,000	1,000-10,000
STREETWAY			
Travel Lanes	2 lane, 10 ft	2 lane, 10 ft	2 lane, 11 ft
Turn Lanes	None	None	Optional
Decel Lanes	None	None	Optional
On-Street Parking	No	No	No
Curb and Gutter	No	No	No
Stormwater	Swale	Swale	Swale
Median	No	No	No
Bikeway	Not designated	Not designated	No
Traffic Calming	Not recommended	Not recommended	Optional
Designed for Transit	No	No	No
STREETSIDE			
Sidewalk/Path	6 ft min/ 10 ft preferred	6 ft min / 10 ft preferred	6 ft min/ 10 ft preferred
Edge Zone	Natural	Natural	Natural
Street Trees/Landscaping	None	None	None
Residential Driveways	Permitted	Permitted	Permitted

TABLE 4.10   Suburban Context Areas: Roadway Features

Street Design Element	Local Road	Collector Road	Arterial Road
FUNCTION			
Functional Role	Property access	Connects arterials and local streets	Cross-city mobility
Streetway Continuity	Generally discontinuous, connects to rural (C3) collectors	Continuous between arterials	Cross-city connectivity
Right-of-Way	50 ft min	60 ft min	80 ft min
Maximum Speed Limit	25 mph	30 - 35 mph	35 - 40 mph
Traffic Volume (Average Daily Trips)	<1000	1,000-20,000	1,000-30,000
STREETWAY			
Travel Lanes	2 lane, 9 ft	2 - 4 lanes, 10 ft	2 - 4 lanes, 10 ft
Turn Lanes	None	Optional	Yes
Decel Lanes	None	Optional	Yes
On-Street Parking	Permitted	Typically restricted but may be appropriate in certain areas	No
Curb and Gutter	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stormwater	Subsurface storm drain	Subsurface storm drain	Subsurface storm drain
Median	Not recommended	Medians may be appropriate to improve aesthetics and traffic calming	Medians are intended to manage turning movements and access to provide refuge for pedestrian and landscaping
Bikeway	Not designated (Shared Lanes at ≤ 25mph)	On-street 4 ft bike lane or shared-use paths	Shared -use paths
Traffic Calming	Optional	Yes	Yes
Designed for Transit	Optional	Yes	Yes
STREETSIDE			
Sidewalk/Path	6 ft min/ 10 ft Preferred	6 ft min/ 10 ft Preferred	6 ft min/ 10 ft Preferred
Edge Zone	Yes, 3 - 5 ft	Yes, 3 - 5 ft	Yes, 4 - 5 ft
Street Trees/Landscaping	Shade trees in edge zones	Shade trees and/ or ornamental trees in median and edge zones, as appropriate	Shade trees and/ or ornamental trees in median and edge zones, as appropriate
Residential Driveways	Permitted	Infill/redevelopment appropriate; prohibited for new development	Infill/redevelopment appropriate; prohibited for new development

TABLE 4.11 **Urban Context Areas: Roadway Features**

Street Design Element	Local Road	Collector Road	Arterial Road
FUNCTION			
Functional Role	Provides access to traditional residential areas	Provides access from traditional residential areas to downtown	Cross-city mobility
Streetway Continuity	Interconnected urban grid; alley access	Interconnected urban grid; alley access	Cross-city connectivity
Right-of-Way	50 ft min	60 ft min	80 ft min
Maximum Speed Limit	25 mph	25 - 30 mph	30 - 35 mph
Traffic Volume (Average Daily Trips)	<1000	1,000-20,000	1,000-30,000
STREETWAY			
Travel Lanes	2 lane, 9 ft	2 - 4 lanes, 9 ft	2 - 4 lanes, 10 ft
Turn Lanes	None	Optional	Yes
Decel Lanes	None	Optional	Yes
On-Street Parking	Permitted; both sides of street with parallel parking	Permitted; limited by presence of bike and pedestrian facilities and available ROW	No
Curb and Gutter	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stormwater	Subsurface storm drain	Subsurface storm drain	Subsurface storm drain
Median	Optional	Medians may be appropriate to improve aesthetics and traffic calming	Medians are intended to manage turning movements and access to provide refuge for pedestrian and landscaping
Bikeway	Not designated (shared lanes at ≤ 25mph)	Separate lanes	Separate lanes
Traffic Calming	Optional	Optional	Typically restricted, but may be appropriate in certain areas
Designed for Transit	Preferred	Yes	Yes
STREETSIDE			
Sidewalk/Path	6 ft min/ 10 ft Preferred	6 ft min/ 10 ft preferred	6 ft min/ 10 ft preferred
Edge Zone	Yes, 4 - 6 ft	Yes, 4 - 10 ft	Yes, 4 - 10 ft
Street Trees/Landscaping	Shade trees in edge zones	Shade trees and/ or ornamental trees in median and edge zones, as appropriate	Shade trees and/ or ornamental trees in median and edge zones, as appropriate
Residential Driveways	Permitted	Prohibited	Prohibited

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIONS

To address growing concerns related to mobility within the region, it is essential to plan and develop new roadway corridors and mobility connections. This includes the creation of east/west connections that run parallel to SR-200, the construction of a Callahan bypass to alleviate congestion, multi-modal connections to provide alternative mobility options, and substantial improvements to the railway infrastructure. In addition, enhancing regional access will be a key priority to ensure smoother travel across different areas of the County. These proposed transportation options are designed to provide alternative routes and improve the flow of traffic and connectivity between various communities. By expanding the network of roads and increasing transit options, residents and visitors will have greater flexibility and efficiency in accessing community destinations, ultimately supporting regional growth and improving quality of life.

Figure 4.19 on page 92 graphically depicts a roadway network to enhance mobility connections for vehicular and rail options in the County for future considerations with growth and development. This includes key parallel corridors, the Callahan by-pass, and future rail corridors to connect to the region and provide alternative access to Amelia Island.

Parallel Routes

The development of alternative routes to SR-200 is essential for alleviating the traffic congestion that currently impacts this vital corridor. SR-200 serves as the primary connection between Western Nassau and the services in Yulee and Amelia Island, making it one of the most heavily traveled roadways in the area. While US-1, US-301/SR-200, US-17, and I-95 provide key north-south access throughout the County, they each face challenges. Aside from I-95, these routes pass through towns, encounter railroad crossings, and in the case of US-17, may not be able to accommodate future capacity demands. As the population continues to grow and new developments are planned, it will become increasingly critical to identify and implement alternative routes to relieve pressure on major roadways. Proper planning for these alternative routes will support both current and future transportation needs, promoting long-term sustainability and economic vitality.

Notable parallel corridors to SR-200 include the 108 Extension, a new I-95 interchange, and an I-95 overpass. The CR-108 extension will run through the ENCPA, connecting the existing roadway to Chester Road. This major roadway is planned to include multi-modal facilities and will provide access to other roadways within the ENCPA. A new I-95 interchange will connect to the CR-108 extension within the ENCPA and will also connect west to Middle Road. To the south of SR-200, an overpass from William Burgess Boulevard to Semper Fi will help to reduce congestion at critical intersections, enhance overall traffic flow, and improve access for residents and commuters alike.

West of I-95, a network of north-south and east-west roads will be developed to form a larger "grid" of roadways, improving connections and addressing mobility concerns before they arise. This plan includes the road extending from the new I-95 interchange, as well as north-south roads linking SR-200 to CR-108. For the new roads planned west of I-95, it will be essential to design them in a way that reflects the area's character, incorporating rural road designs where appropriate and urban designs where necessary.
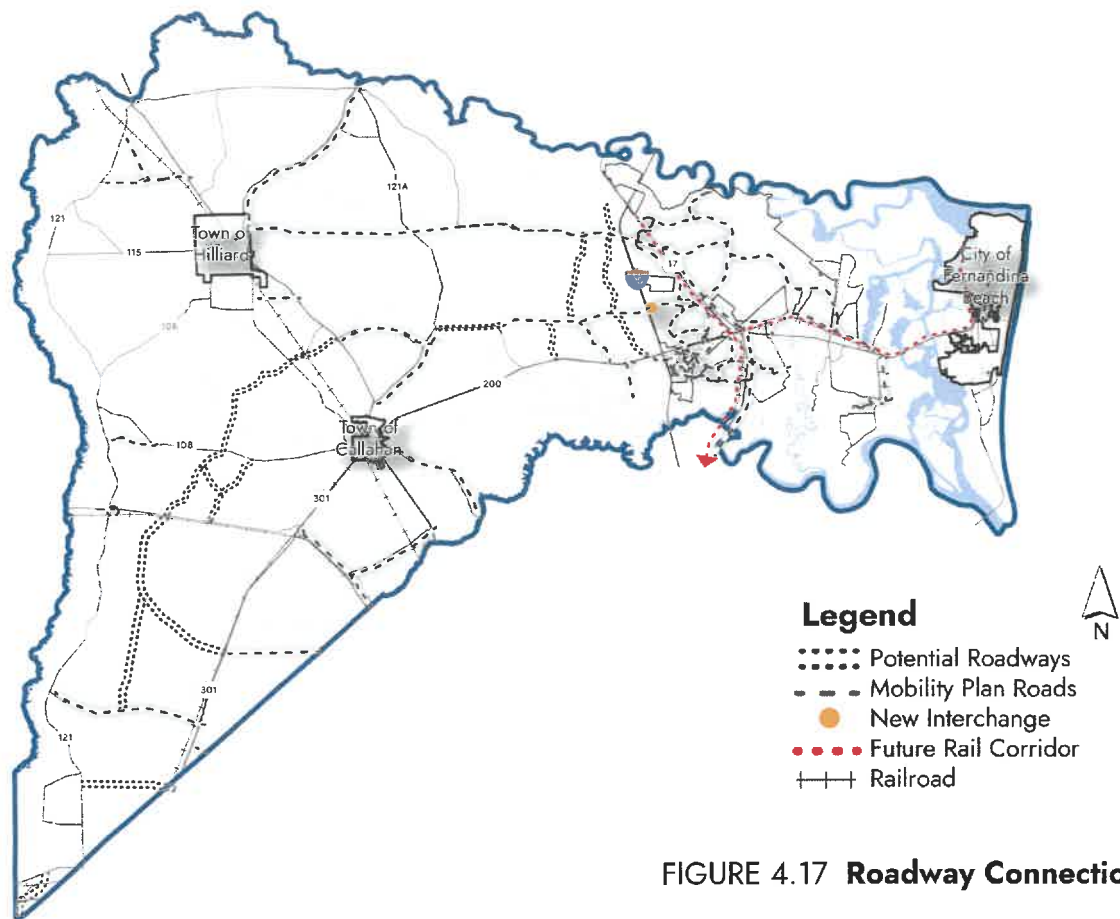
Legend

::::: Potential Roadways
- - - Mobility Plan Roads
● New Interchange
● ● ● ● Future Rail Corridor
+++++ Railroad

N

FIGURE 4.17 **Roadway Connections**

Callahan By-Pass

SR-200/US-301 and US-1 converge in Callahan, where the town's main shopping area is located. US-301 serves as a key route connecting I-10 to I-95 and is frequently used by cargo and logging trucks as an alternative to I-295. The combination of truck traffic and residential vehicles creates significant traffic congestion during peak hours. The creation of a truck bypass around Callahan would improve accessibility to local shopping centers and community services, while also enhancing safety for non-motorized users. However, a bypass could result in reduced revenue for businesses that rely on pass-through traffic. It will be important to carefully consider these potential impacts.

The bypass must be designed to facilitate efficient vehicle movement while limiting access to adjacent properties. An access-controlled roadway will support ongoing economic development around Callahan. The design should prioritize environmental protection and incorporate wide buffers with native vegetation to reduce stormwater runoff pollution. To safeguard the vitality of Callahan's business district, additional incentives, marketing efforts, and enhanced visibility may be necessary. Diverting truck traffic away from Callahan will enable roadway design to prioritize users in the business district.

Railway Connections

The railroad has played a significant role in the establishment of Nassau County, and its impact remains substantial today, with several active and abandoned rail lines across the region. Norfolk Southern, CSX, and Florida East Coast Railway continue to operate rail lines throughout the County. These rail lines offer various benefits, starting with economic opportunities, which are ideal for industrial development, particularly around the Crawford Diamond and Wildlight Commerce Park. Through regional coordination, there is the potential to connect commuter rail services to Jacksonville, enabling transit-oriented development at key points along the rail corridor. This would also provide an alternative transportation option to major business centers in Jacksonville and the broader region.

Although the development of commuter rail may be years away, it is essential to plan and reserve land for future stations before it is developed. Additionally, a rail line already connects Yulee to Amelia Island, running over an Outstanding Florida Water (waters designated for special protection through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection) and primarily serving mills near of downtown Fernandina Beach. This existing rail line could be expanded to support passenger service, improving transit access to Fernandina Beach and enhancing connectivity to the island's major business district. Expanding transit options on Amelia Island could further reduce dependence on personal vehicles for both area employees and visitors, providing connections from the rail station to other key business areas and beaches.

Abandoned rail lines could be repurposed into "rails-to-trails" projects, creating safe, off-road trail systems that connect different parts of the community. One such abandoned rail line, located on the north side of SR-200, links Callahan to Wildlight. The new growth areas identified in the preferred development plan would greatly benefit from a multi-use trail connecting these two locations. Additionally, a diagonal rail line extending from Callahan to CR-108 could connect to the river and the new I-95 interchange. A comprehensive off-road trail system would not only serve as a valuable multi-modal asset but could also help attract tourism and sporting events, such as races, to the area.

While the railway presents opportunities for economic growth, it is important to recognize the challenges it brings. Primarily, the rail lines cut through key areas of the County, obstructing traffic flow and contributing to congestion. A notable example is the rail line crossing SR-200 at US-17, a critical intersection in Yulee. This intersection is planned to become an Urban Center in the future, therefore it is crucial to consider the railway's alignment in this area when planning redevelopment. Modifying this intersection to eliminate the rail/vehicular conflicts would be highly beneficial. By separating rail and vehicle traffic, the intersection could operate more efficiently, enhancing mobility for both residents and visitors. To facilitate smooth traffic movement, future roadway designs, where feasible, should incorporate overpasses and underpasses for vehicular traffic to prevent delays caused by train crossings.

An existing rail line that runs from Yulee onto Amelia Island facilitates the delivery of goods to the mills operating outside of Downtown Fernandina Beach. There may be an opportunity to explore connecting Yulee to Fernandina through a rail-based commuter by partnering with existing rail lines in the future. This could alleviate some of the traffic from SR-200 while offering parking-free options to access Downtown Fernandina.

Transit oriented development (TOD) is centered around a major transit hub, such as a rail station or bus station. Generally, the area within a 15-minute walk to the station can be designed as a walkable, mixed-use district to support the use of the major transit network. Through vertically integrated buildings, TOD's can achieve a greater amount of residential units while supporting diverse shopping, dining, and personal experiences. The design of a TOD node should include public spaces, interconnected roadways, a variety of housing options, and design that incorporates sustainable and resilient design practices.

Environmental Measures

The conservation of natural resources is critical for the long-term vitality and sustainability of Nassau County. The natural environment has played a significant role in Nassau's history, community development, and economy. Not only do natural spaces provide for parks and recreation opportunities, they serve as spaces to refill water aquifers, support biodiversity, and enhance the overall sustainability of the environment. The continued support of parks and open spaces, conservation efforts, and enhanced stormwater management is an important element of Vision 2050.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks offer unique opportunities for social interaction, health and recreation, developing a sense of place, and environmental conservation. The County has established a strong foundation for a comprehensive and connected parks and recreation system. To ensure the ongoing success of the parks system, it is essential to prioritize parks planning and support implementation. The County's current Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, adopted in 2021, should guide park actions and be updated on a regular basis.

Given the County's access to water resources, continued efforts to enhance water-based recreational opportunities, as noted in the County's Parks Plan, should be prioritized throughout the parks system. Improvements to existing County-maintained parks should also be a focus, as these spaces are already valued by the community but may have outdated structures and amenities. Additionally, new regional parks should be designed to accommodate both local activities and larger-scale sports and eco-tourism events, providing diverse recreational options for residents and visitors alike.

Sports tourism may be promoted through the development of baseball and soccer parks that attract league play, with a focus on regional and multi-state competitions. With its proximity to Jacksonville, Georgia, and Alabama, Nassau is well positioned to attract multi-state regional tournaments. Event centers, racket courts, all-inclusive facilities, and multi-use centers provide for a range of activities. These types of parks and centers can also spur adjacent private investment including hotel development, commercial centers, and complementary activity-based uses. This type of economic development vehicle can be utilized as Nassau County continues to grow and develop.

COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

The EPIC Center, a playground in Grand Prairie, Texas is a multi-use center and major community attraction. The facility includes a multi-generational center, hotels, restaurants, and an all-inclusive park and trail system. The Center provides opportunities for recreation for users of all ages and abilities. It also encourages play and provides over ten amenities and programmed areas.

Bonnet Springs Park in Lakeland, Florida is a large park that provides a variety of educational, exploratory, and playful experiences. It includes a Children's Museum, a Nature Center, an Event Center, gardens, miles of trails, playgrounds, and hosts a variety of events. Venue rentals, camps, and admissions to the Museum create revenue sources for Lakeland.

Lakes and stormwater ponds should be used to serve multiple purposes, including recreation, play, and stormwater management.

Parks within urban areas may be designed as plazas and pocket parks to create open spaces and a reprieve from surrounding built spaces.

LAND CONSERVATION

Nassau County is nestled between the St. Mary's River to the north, Nassau River to the south, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, and acres of forest and agricultural lands to the west. As a coastal and riverine County, it is highly vulnerable to coastal weather events and flooding due to heavy rain events. The prevalence of wetlands underscores its topography and susceptibility to these occurrences. The impacts of storms and recurrent flooding are already being felt, with significant consequences for community health, safety, and welfare, as well as impacts to County infrastructure. Beyond the immediate effects on public health and safety, the County must address long-term resiliency needs to ensure the community can adapt to future changing conditions. Land conservation efforts, particularly in key ecological corridors, can be used to mitigate flooding impacts and preserve the County's environmental fabric.

With increasing growth pressures, it will be critical to support land conservation and restore native vegetation and forests where possible. These efforts can be done through:

- » Continuing to implement and expand the Conservation Land Acquisition and Management Program (CLAM);
- » Working with property owners and partners on establishing conservation easements;
- » Ensuring mitigation efforts to reconnect critical ecological systems; and,
- » Continuing to expand policies and standards that protect environmental resources.

Figure 4.20 on page 98 illustrates key natural and conservation areas identified on the 2050 Growth Plan, which include some properties identified in the CLAM program, state and locally protected lands, floodplains, wetlands, and other conservation opportunities. The following sections describe how these elements continue to further conservation efforts in the County.

CLAM

The Conservation Land Acquisition and Management Program (CLAM) has established primary and secondary goals for land conservation, while also identifying priority areas for focused acquisition efforts. The CLAM was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in 2021, and in 2022 the citizens of Nassau County voted to issue $30 million in general obligation bonds to fund the CLAM Program. Properties are ranked on a GIS-based plan and evaluated annually. Priority projects support the primary and secondary goals, including addressing water issues, protecting habitats and species, supporting working lands, and improving outdoor recreation opportunities and quality of life.

As the County continues to grow, preserving its ecological resources will be crucial. To maintain the connectivity of wetlands, protect property values, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the county's natural assets, it is essential to continue the CLAM program. This program offers vital funding to identify and acquire properties that provide high-quality environmental resources and long-term ecological connections.

Conservation Easements and Partnerships

Given the rising cost of properties in a growing County, it is unrealistic to expect the CLAM Program to acquire all environmentally significant land. To address this challenge, the County must collaborate with community organizations and engage property owners to explore opportunities for additional conservation efforts. These efforts can include private conservation easements, partnership acquisitions, and other strategies to protect and preserve environmental resources. Conservation easements can safeguard land in perpetuity for uses such as agriculture, silviculture, and other low-intensity activities, like hunting, while limiting residential development. Continued collaboration with organizations such as the North Florida Land Trust will help identify and acquire properties that enhance the connectivity of critical environmental resources, particularly those linking the Atlantic Ocean to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, known as the A2O Conservation Corridor.

Long leaf pine forests are a significant environmental feature of the County and provide timber to the mills and other companies throughout the region.
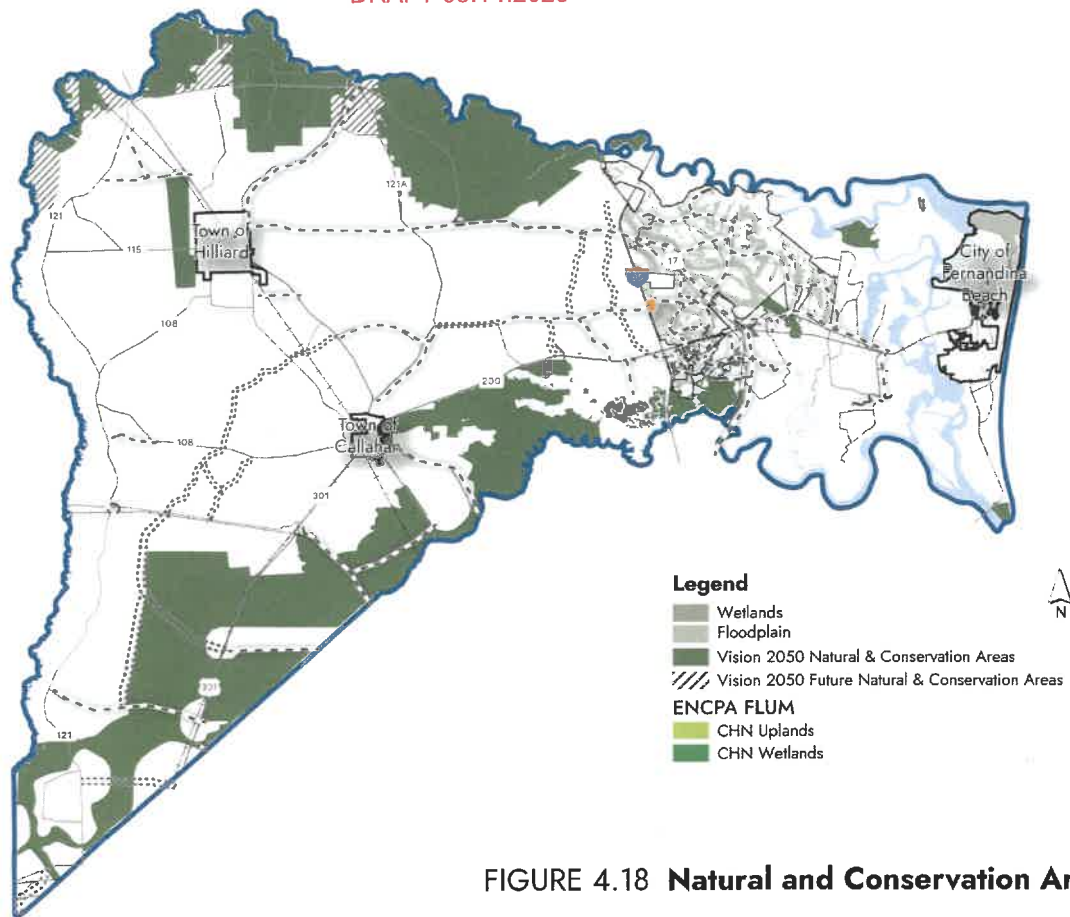
Legend
- Wetlands
- Floodplain
- Vision 2050 Natural & Conservation Areas
- /// Vision 2050 Future Natural & Conservation Areas

ENCPA FLUM
- CHN Uplands
- CHN Wetlands

FIGURE 4.18 **Natural and Conservation Areas**

Mitigation Banks

Mitigation banks are designated wetland areas preserved by public or private entities to offset unavoidable wetland impacts within a specific region. These areas generate impact credits, which can be used to meet regulatory requirements for impacting wetlands. Mitigation banks help protect large, environmentally sensitive lands while enabling development in areas where growth is desired. They can also serve to establish growth boundaries or limit development in particular regions. However, mitigation credits can sometimes be expensive or difficult to obtain. This can limit the ability of public entities to build critical infrastructure, such as roads, due to the inability to obtain mitigation credits.

There are areas within Nassau County that would be suitable for the creation of a regional off-site mitigation area (ROMA), or mitigation bank. A ROMA serves as off-site mitigation for multiple projects and is governed by Chapter 373 of the Florida State Statutes. Nassau County could utilize ROMAs to pursue joint goals of conservation and building infrastructure where needed. This tool presents a way to deter growth in environmentally sensitive areas and use the resulting mitigation credits to build public infrastructure in other areas of growth. To establish the ROMA, conservation and restoration efforts may be needed to better connect larger environmentally sensitive areas and protect the long-term vitality of the environment.

"Mitigation banking" is the creation, restoration, enhancement, and preservation of natural habitats, such as wetlands and streams.
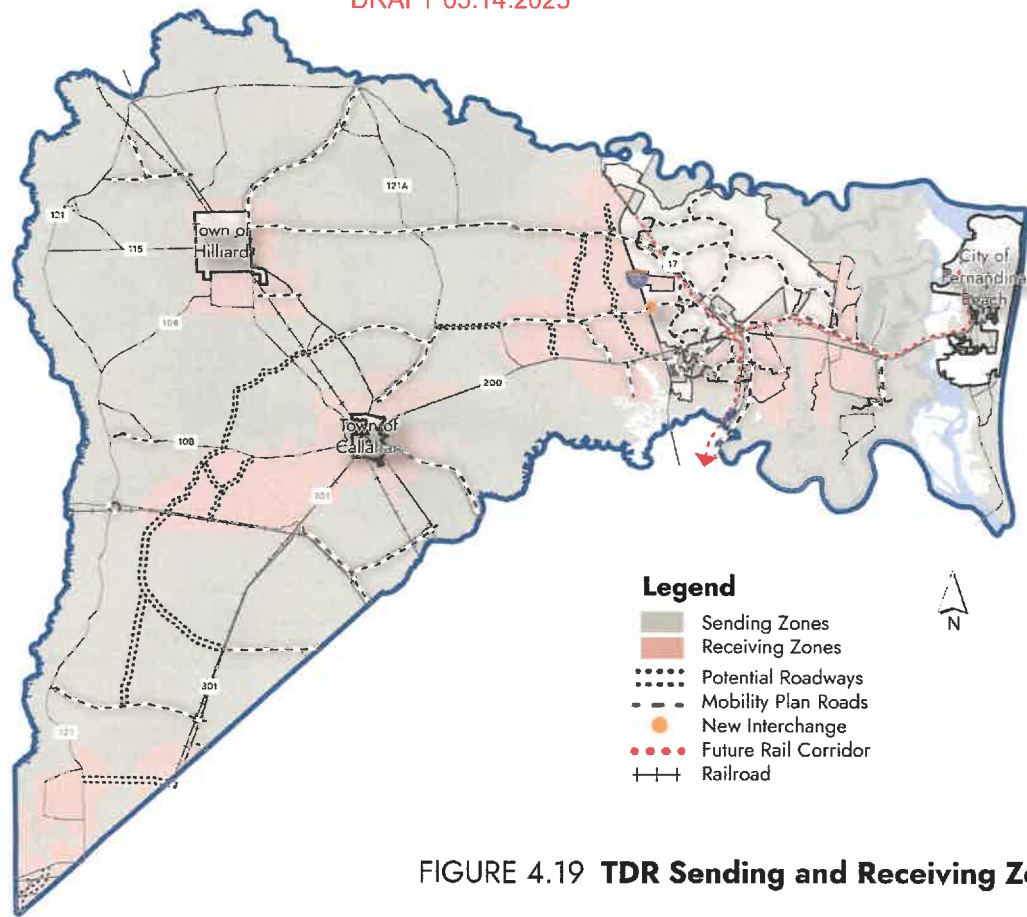
FIGURE 4.19 **TDR Sending and Receiving Zones**

Legend

- Sending Zones
- Receiving Zones
- Potential Roadways
- Mobility Plan Roads
- New Interchange
- Future Rail Corridor
- Railroad

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program is a tool used to help a property owner to transfer development entitlements from their property when it is within an area desired for rural development or conservation (sending zone), to an area desired for development (receiving zone), as represented in Figure 4.22. Desired growth areas could be identified as receiving zones, shown in rusty orange in Figure 4.21. These areas are primarily those areas intended for public infrastructure and have been identified for more development in the Vision 2050 Growth Plan. Properties in sending zones could place conservation easements on their land to transfer their development rights in perpetuity. These tools would allow the County to preserve important agricultural and conservation lands while maintaining the rural character of Western Nassau.

For a TDR program to be successful, incentives may be needed to encourage property owners and developers to participate. This may also be done through the creation of an urban growth boundary. If a TDR program were implemented, a tracking system would be necessary to monitor compliance and to manage parcels within the designated areas.
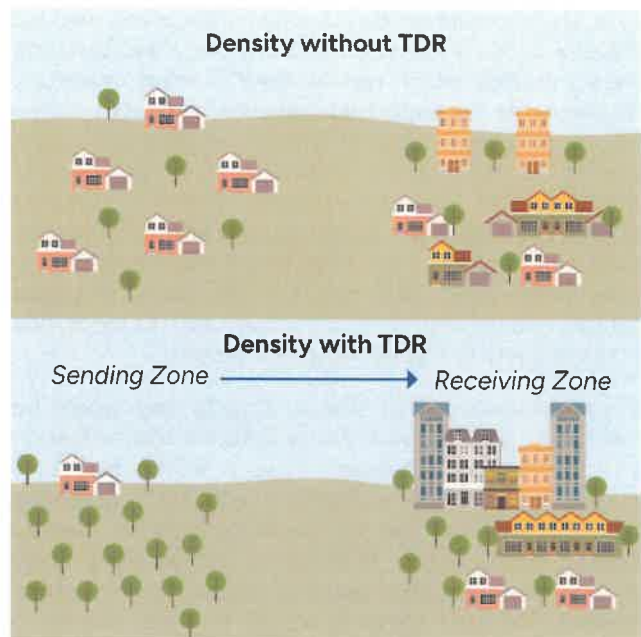

FIGURE 4.20 **Example TDR Development**

Policies and Regulations for Conservation

The County should maintain and expand policies and regulations that protect the rich supply of natural resources in the area. For example, the Overlay District, which was created to protect the natural resources along the St. Mary's River, reduces the impacts of development and population growth on the watershed. Key features of the Overly District include requirements for larger buffers between the banks of the river and nearby development. Moving forward, the County should consider expanding the existing Overlay District to include other major rivers and primary tributaries within Nassau County.

There are existing requirements in the County Land Development Code for adequate landscape buffers to protect the quality of contiguous wetlands. The requirements could be strengthened to establish a minimum buffer for wetlands, which would enable the native vegetation to act as a filtration system for contaminants and further protect the natural areas and water resources. The St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD) serves as the principal regulatory authority for establishing wetland buffers, and all development must adhere to their standards. However, the County has the authority to enforce additional buffer requirements that may exceed those established by the SJRWMD for highly sensitive areas.

Additional preservation measures may be necessary on Amelia Island, as a barrier island that protects mainland Nassau County and is the most densely populated portion of the County with critical tourism and economic development. It has a unique ecosystem that should continue to be protected through tree canopy preservation measures and by reducing impacts to the critical wetlands and dune systems.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater runoff occurs when rain falls on impervious surfaces like roads, parking lots, and rooftops preventing water from soaking into the ground. This runoff collects pollutants such as oils, chemicals, trash, fertilizers, pesticides, and debris from streets and parking lots. It then flows into a network of pipes, channels, and ditches known as the County's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), which transports it away from developed areas, often carrying pollutants. The stormwater eventually reaches rivers, lakes, and coastal waters, impacting vital habitats for plants and wildlife. Heavy rain can cause excessive runoff, leading to riverine and urban flooding.

The pollutants in stormwater runoff can degrade water quality, disrupt ecosystems, and harm properties. This runoff is a major contributor to water pollution, particularly in urban and suburban areas where impervious surfaces are more common. Protecting water quality requires managing stormwater runoff more effectively and reducing the pollutants that enter our natural water systems.

Nassau has actively worked to address stormwater management, flooding, and other water-related challenges. Given the county's abundance of wetlands, floodplains, creeks, and low-lying areas, flooding is a primary concern frequently raised by residents. Assessing stormwater management and resilience measures will better equip the county to handle weather-related natural hazards. **Vision 2050** offers a valuable opportunity to establish a framework for creating a sustainable and resilient Nassau for future generations.

Stormwater Master Plan

A Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP) guides the safe and effective management of stormwater runoff to protect people and property. SWMPs are used to:

» Address concerns related to the health and safety of stormwater;

» Identify financial needs and funding opportunities for stormwater management;

» Assess drainage issues and provide recommendations to address needs;

» Prioritize and schedule improvements; and,

» Create a holistic approach to resilient and sustainable stormwater management.

As Nassau County updates its SWMP, it will be important to develop a plan of best practices and techniques that can be implemented throughout the County. Within the SWMP, the opportunity for regional stormwater ponds should be evaluated to help capture stormwater runoff for development that can be utilized for multiple purposes and mitigate flooding.

By planning for the future, communities can comprehensively document issues and consider solutions and better position themselves to compete for funding. With the flooding issues around the County as a coastal and riverine community, a SWMP would help identify which areas need additional planning and resources to support infrastructure and acquisition.

Flooding

Flooding in Nassau County can be attributed to tidal influences, storm surge, riverine and stormwater flooding, or a mixture of the different flooding types depending on the weather event. The County's stormwater management system moves this water through drains, swales, creeks, rivers, ponds, and similar infrastructure. When heavy water events occur, a build-up of water due to undersized pipes, blocked culverts, or inadequate drainage areas can cause flooding.

Most homeowner insurance policies exclude flood-related property losses. However, flood insurance is available for various structures, including homes, condos, mobile homes, and commercial and agricultural buildings. It can provide coverage even without a federal disaster declaration, offering financial protection from flood events through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for homeowners and business owners. The NFIP includes minimum standards a property must meet to have flood insurance, such as where a building can be located on a property and the structural design of a building, depending on whether or not the building is located within a flood zone.

The NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. This includes enhanced mapping, community engagement, and building code evaluations. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk culminating from community actions meeting the three goals of the CRS:

» Reduce flood damage to insurable property.

» Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP.

» Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

FLOOD EVENT
PROGRESSION GRAPHIC

12' WIDE TRAIL

1-2 YEARS

0-1 YEAR

1-2 YEARS

2-5 YEARS

The use of native vegetation should be used along creek beds to help absorb and mitigate stormwater.

FIGURE 4.21 **Floodway Design**

Low Impact Development

Low-impact development (LID) is an approach to mitigate stormwater runoff through the utilization of green infrastructure. LID uses on-site features to improve water quality to replicate the pre-development hydrologic regime through infiltrating, filtering, storing, evaporating, and detaining runoff close to its source, before it enters the watershed. There are best practice guides provided by the Environmental Protection Agency that can help guide green infrastructure design. LID practices include, but are not limited to, the examples provided below.

Rain gardens represent a bioretention technique which filters runoff in a shallow detention area. They are most appropriate in suburban and rural character areas.

Curb extensions with vegetation are another type of bioretention which captures and filters water from roadways. They are most appropriate in urban to suburban character areas.

Bioswales retain and filter water from roadways and parking areas. They are appropriate in any character area.

Soil amendments during a site's development can improve filtration and reduce runoff due to compaction.

Living walls can be used to slow down and absorb runoff from building roofs.

Green roofs offer numerous environmental and social benefits including stormwater management, heat reduction, and improved air quality.

Street trees and vegetative buffers can be used to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff through absorption and transpiration; while facilitating filtration to the aquifer.

Parks and open spaces can be designed as "sponge parks," to reduce the impact of flooding while improving water quality and providing usable green space.


Rain barrels and cisterns can be used to store runoff from roofs for watering vegetation. Collected water can feed into storage container or flower bed.

Streets for Environmental Improvements

Street design improvements can enhance safety and accessibility by providing bike lanes, enhanced sidewalks, and roadway crossing improvements. Stormwater management can be improved through the use of green infrastructure including: bioswales, landscape buffers, and street trees to help absorb and filter stormwater. A better drainage and piping system can move water from roads to off-site retention systems. Vegetation, such as canopy trees, and using lighter color pavement, such as concrete, can reduce surface temperatures and provide shade. These factors coupled together can create a more pleasant roadway environment.

These types of design guidelines can be used for the redevelopment of streets or the design of new streets. By including these types of elements, the County can evaluate and improve the quality of run-off before it re-enters the waterways. It can also be used to help support resiliency and sustainability measures in an urban environment.
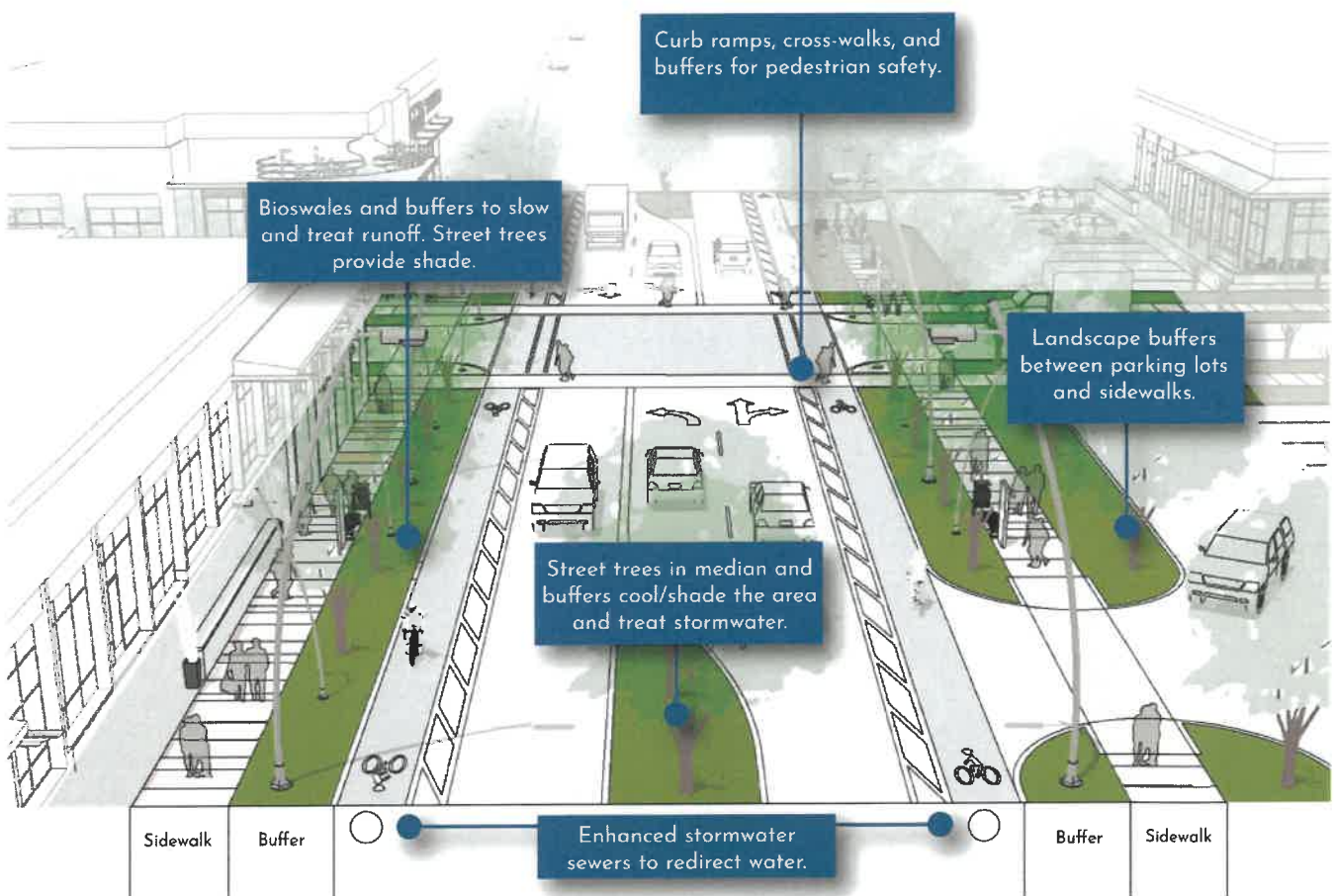
FIGURE 4.22 **Roadway Environmental and Safety Considerations**
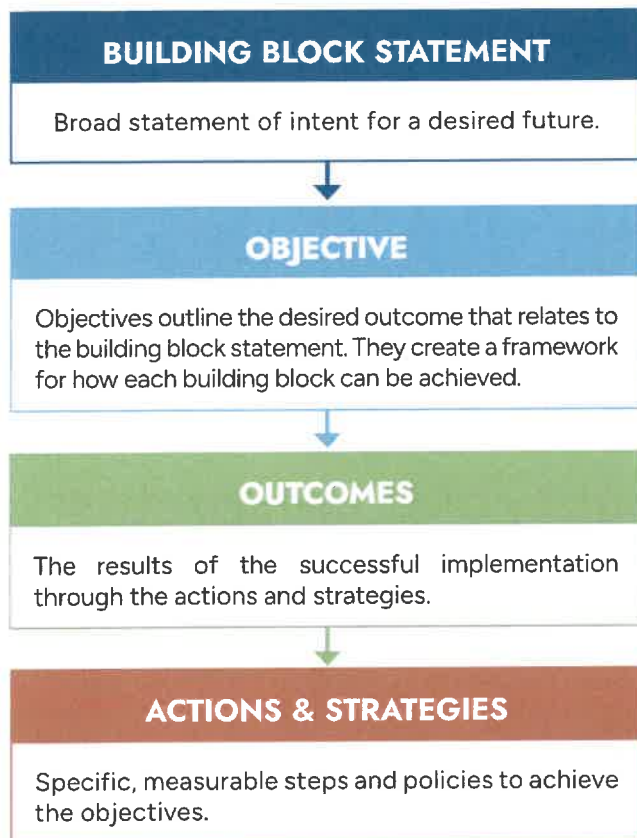
All Voices. One Vision.

NASSAU
TOMORROW

The final chapter, Nassau Tomorrow, outlines the objectives and strategies of the plan necessary to achieve the community's vision. Based on the eight building blocks, this chapter provides insight into critical components of each topic to ensure the long-term vitality of the County.

OVERVIEW

The **Vision 2050** Implementation Program is organized around the eight building blocks, described in Chapter 4, which were developed to reflect the community's values and desires for the future. The building blocks serve as the foundation for Nassau Tomorrow. To guide implementation, each building block is accompanied by objectives and a series of strategies to support the objectives.

BUILDING BLOCK STATEMENT

Broad statement of intent for a desired future.

OBJECTIVE

Objectives outline the desired outcome that relates to the building block statement. They create a framework for how each building block can be achieved.

OUTCOMES

The results of the successful implementation through the actions and strategies.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

Specific, measurable steps and policies to achieve the objectives.

NASSAU'S BUILDING BLOCKS

Authenticity
Arts, culture, and traditions
Page 105-108

Balance
Growth and development, fiscal resilience
Page 109-114

Connectivity
Mobility and access
Page 115-118

Governance
Government operations
Page 119-124

Housing
Housing options and availability
Page 125-128

Livability
Healthy living, built environment, and parks
Page 129-134

Opportunity
Economic development and vitality
Page 135-140

Resiliency
Conservation, preservation, stormwater management
Page 141-146

AUTHENTICITY

We envision a Nassau County that celebrates the unique character of our communities, preserves history, and recognizes cultures and traditions.

Authenticity is vital because it ensures that the County's unique character and heritage is preserved and celebrated. Creating a strong sense of belonging and pride among residents, authenticity blends the community's rich history, traditions, and values to shape its identity. Moreover, authenticity in community planning honors the past while thoughtfully integrating contemporary needs and forward-thinking aspirations. It protects cultural landmarks and historical sites, ensuring future generations can experience and learn from their heritage. Ultimately, authenticity is not just about preserving the past; it is about creating a future that respects and builds upon the unique identities of Nassau's communities.

OBJECTIVE A.1 - Protect historic sites, landmarks, and cultural assets, ensuring the county's unique heritage is preserved and celebrated for future generations.

A.1. Outcome: Historic resources and cultural assets are protected.

Nassau's residents take great pride in the small-town atmosphere and character of their communities. In recent years, the County has taken significant steps to support and safeguard its culture and heritage through initiatives like the Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Plan and the Historic Resource Survey. These efforts have helped to identify key cultural assets throughout the County and highlight opportunities to preserve historic and cultural sites. Continuing these programs, policies, and initiatives is vital to celebrating and protecting the County's rich heritage.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

A.1.1. Consider adoption of a Historic Preservation Ordinance to locally designate and protect historic districts, communities and structures that contribute to sense-of-place and Nassau's unique cultural heritage.

A.1.2. Consider the utilization of Conservation and Resiliency funding to identify and acquire culturally significant lands and structures.

A.1.3. Consider public policy that allows flexibility in the adaptive reuse of historic structures.

A.1.4. Support access to 4-H and FFA programs.

OBJECTIVE A.2 - Utilize placemaking to enhance community character and sense of place.

A.2. Outcome: Community character and sense of place is strengthened.

Preserving the unique character of Nassau's communities will be essential for maintaining the integrity and identity of an area as it grows. As development increases, it will be crucial to implement thoughtful policies and regulations that guide the scale, type, and location of new projects.

Through development policies, Nassau can foster growth that enhances a distinct feel and atmosphere, ensuring that new developments contribute positively to the overall sense of place and align with the values and aspirations of local residents. This approach will help maintain the balance between progress and preservation, creating a community that evolves without losing the qualities that make it unique.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

A.2.1. Adopt public policy that requires the utilization of placemaking techniques to celebrate the uniqueness of our diverse communities by capturing and preserving identity.

A.2.2. Utilize placemaking techniques to create wayfinding systems, community landmarks, and streetscape elements that are representative of the communities in which they are integrated and reinforce community pride and local identity.

A.2.3. Encourage the inclusion of public art in public spaces.

A.2.4. Consistent with the four qualities of 'great places' as defined by the Project for Public Space, strive to create public spaces that (1) are accessible; (2) people are engaged in activities there; (3) the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, (4) it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit.

A.2.5. Support private, nonprofit and citizen-based efforts to increase placemaking in neighborhoods.

A.2.6. Protect Nassau's remaining rural aesthetic and small town character.

OBJECTIVE A.3 - Expand access to arts, culture, and entertainment.

A.3. Outcome: Access to arts, culture, and entertainment is available to all residents.

Access to arts, culture, and entertainment offers residents and visitors valuable opportunities to engage socially, while also deepening their connection to the historic significance of the area. These activities play a crucial role in enhancing overall quality of life by fostering a sense of belonging and community and providing spaces for people to come together and share experiences.

Supporting local artists, musicians, performers, and cultural organizations ensures that the area's creative talents are nurtured and showcased, contributing to the local economy and the community's identity. Expanding access to arts, culture, and entertainment will not only broaden the range of experiences available to both residents and visitors, but it will also celebrate and preserve Nassau County's unique history.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

A.3.1. Work with the designated countywide arts council to establish design guidelines for the review, approval, and placement of public art.

A.3. 2. Continue to support and expand community attractions and amenities that celebrate Nassau's unique natural and cultural heritage.

A.3. 3. Create areas in public spaces for local artists to display their work.

A.3. 4. Continue to organize and support community events, festivals, and educational programs.

A.3. 5. Support organizations and partners that utilize public events to highlight local arts, cultures, and traditions and celebrate the unique character of different communities within the county.

A.3. 6. Consider public policy that creates flexibility to allow opportunities for live-work housing and workspace, temporary occupancy permits for pop-up galleries/entertainment venues, and rooftop cultural spaces.

OBJECTIVE A.4 - Form partnerships that celebrate and promote Nassau County's history.

A.4. Outcome: Nassau's history is widely recognized, celebrated and promoted.

Historic communities should be deeply valued and actively supported to ensure that the essence of their heritage is preserved for future generations. With a history that spans more than 200 years, there are several communities and landmarks that hold immense cultural and historical value. These areas must be safeguarded through a combination of cultural preservation initiatives, responsible development practices, and community

engagement. By prioritizing the protection of these sites, Nassau can maintain its unique historical narrative, ensuring that the stories, traditions, and architectural landmarks that define the County's character are passed down to future generations. Preserving these historic communities not only honors the past but also builds a strong foundation for a sustainable and culturally enriched future.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

A.4.1. Coordinate with partners to develop walking tours, create interactive museum exhibits, and host cultural festivals.

A.4.2. Create a historical marker program to highlight each community's heritage and encourage interest in local history.

A.4.3. Encourage Heritage Trail Markers in key areas identifying Nassau history and culture.

A.4.4. Support the Nassau County School District in the creation of local history curriculum and interactive opportunities to educate students on the cultural and historical significance of Nassau and the importance of preserving and understanding the unique character of the community.

BALANCE

We envision a Nassau County that takes a balanced and responsible approach to growth, redevelopment, economic expansion, and protection of rural areas, active agriculture/silviculture, and land conservation areas.

Nassau County acknowledges that there needs to be a balance between growth and preservation. While the population will roughly double over the next 25 years, there is a need to shape that growth in a way that preserves the community feel of the County. The needs and desires of residents vary around the County.

The County is comprised of different, and often competing, interests. Ultimately, a balanced community not only caters to the immediate needs of its inhabitants but also paves the way for a sustainable future, ensuring that the resources and beauty of the region are preserved for generations to come while building opportunities for prosperity for all Nassau residents.

OBJECTIVE B.1 - Establish public policy and adopt land development regulations that produce development patterns and uses which consider long-term fiscal impacts.

B.1. Outcome: Growth will consider the long-term fiscal impacts of development.

By considering the long-term fiscal implications of where and how growth occurs, the County can guide development in a way that preserves quality of life and strikes a balance between progress and sustainability. Land development regulations, policies, and investments can direct growth patterns, helping the government manage fiscal resources, plan infrastructure needs, and maximize public benefits while minimizing negative consequences. Evaluating the long-term fiscal effects of development ensures growth is sustainable and financially viable, enhancing the financial capacity to provide public services.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

B.1.1. Local governments may consider utilizing the countywide Vision 2050 to update local comprehensive plans. Nassau will use the Vision 2050 to create the countywide 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

B.1.2. Nassau, based on the adopted 2050 Comprehensive Plan, will create and adopt modernized unified land development regulations that improve ease of use.

B.1.3. Support reinvestment and redevelopment of underutilized retail/service centers and commercial corridors.

B.1.4. Establish areas for high-wage and skilled-labor job creating uses.

B.1.5. Where appropriate, local governments could consider implementation of form based land development regulations to facilitate mixed use development patterns that result in authentic live, work, play and stay communities.

OBJECTIVE B.2 - As counter-weights,

(1) Designate areas for intense urbanization and economic expansion strategically located in Nassau County;

(2) Designate Rural Areas, Natural & Conservation Areas, agricultural/silviculture lands, and working lands that will be protected from development through the planning horizon of 2050; and

(3) Designate areas for perpetual conservation.

B.2. Outcome: Growth and protection of rural lands are balanced.

As the County prepares for future growth, it is crucial to establish policies, programs, and mechanisms that guide development to desired locations. A balanced approach identifies areas for future vitality and economic growth, recognizes where rural lifestyles should be preserved, and determines priority areas for conservation. Establishing areas for growth and areas for conservation can promote a more resilient development strategy that is easier to sustain over time.

To ensure the long-term well-being of residents, it's crucial to focus on strategies that guide development in a way that aligns with the community's long-term vision. Preserving small-town character, rural areas, and natural spaces are key aspects of this vision. Designating high-growth areas alongside low- and no-growth areas helps support these important goals.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

B.2.1. Utilize the Preferred Growth Scenario adopted with the Vision 2050 Plan as the foundation for creating the countywide Future Land Use Map adopted with the 2050 Comprehensive Plan.

B.2.2. Adopt public policy and land development regulations that discourage development in Rural Areas, Natural & Conservation Areas, agricultural/silviculture lands, and working lands consistent with the Preferred Growth Scenario adopted with the Vision 2050 Plan.

B.2.3. Adopt public policy and land development regulations that encourage the transfer of residential density from Rural Areas, Natural & Conservation Areas, agricultural/silviculture lands, and working lands consistent with the Vision 2050 Preferred Growth Scenario.

B.2.4. Explore the creation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to transfer residential density from Rural Areas, Natural & Conservation Areas, agricultural/silviculture lands, and working lands to areas designated to support development in the Employment Center, Urban Center, Urban General, and Rural Town Character Areas consistent with the Vision 2050 Preferred Growth Scenario.

B.2.5. Explore the use of tools such as Urban Growth Boundaries to delineate growth areas from areas discouraged from development.

OBJECTIVE B.3 - Pursue aggressive land and natural resource conservation efforts.

B.3. Outcome: Nassau's natural resources are conserved for future generations.

The County has prioritized conservation efforts through various planning initiatives over the last decade. The continuation and strengthening of these efforts is critical for natural resource protection and long-term environmental sustainability for the County.

The County's diverse and lush ecological landscape provides invaluable resources, both financially and environmentally. The vitality of Nassau is dependent on the preservation of the critical resources that make Nassau one of the most beautiful places in Florida.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

B.3.1. Leverage federal, state, local and private funding to acquire conservation lands.

B.3.2. Explore both fee simple and less-than-fee simple acquisitions to conserve land including purchase of development rights in exchange for the continuation of sustainable forestry practices and the protection of working lands.

B.3.3. Leverage partnerships to effectively manage conservation lands and resources.

B.3.4. Create a public awareness campaign to educate landowners about tax incentives for conservation easements.

B.3.5. Continue to pursue efforts to obtain a State of Florida Acquisition and Restoration Council priority ranking of High for the Atlantic to Okefenokee Conservation Corridor.

Vision 2050 | Nassau County, Florida   112
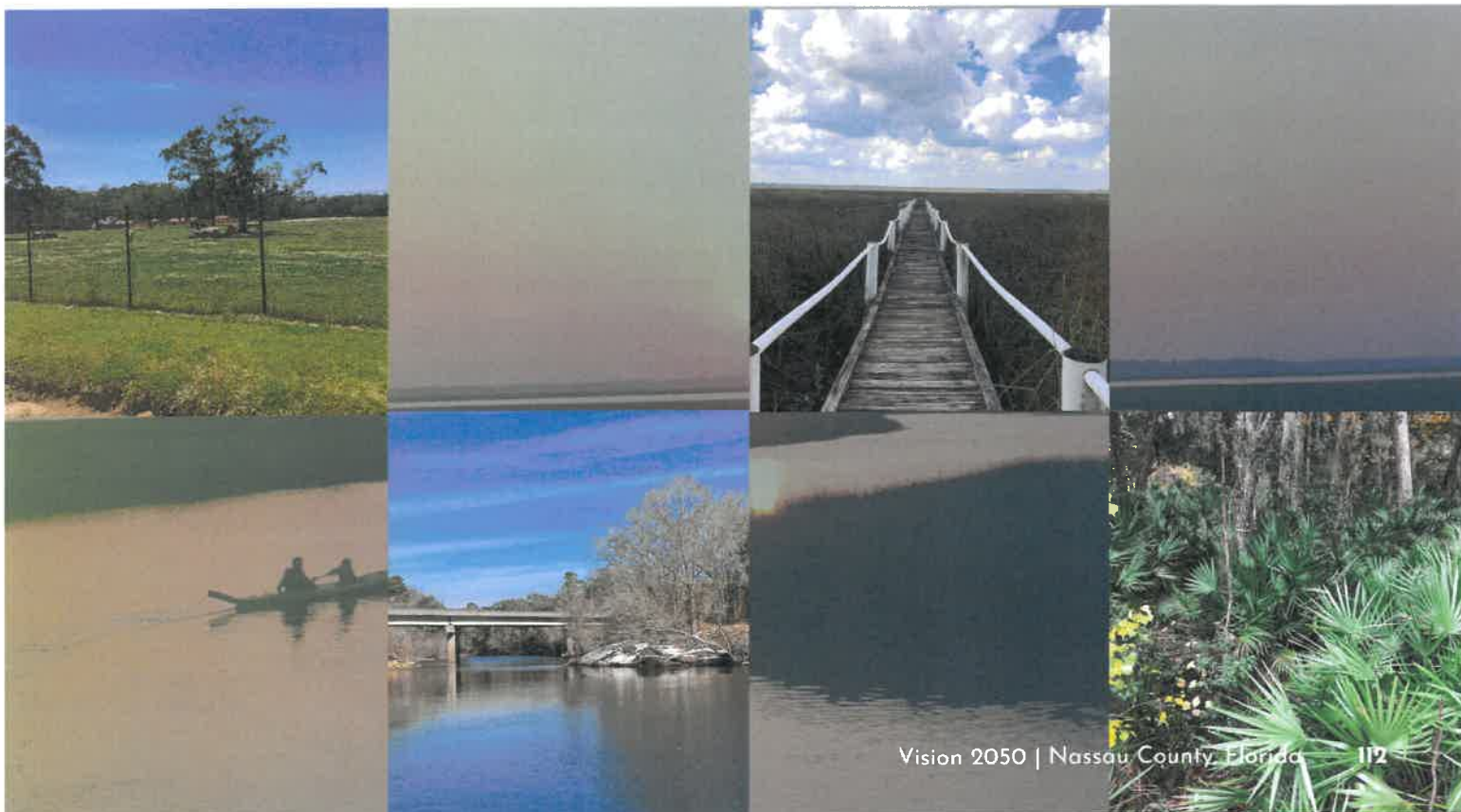
OBJECTIVE B.4 - Continue to prioritize civic engagement, community-based planning, and best practices to ensure a 'people first agenda' that:

1. Informs community planning initiatives;

2. Promotes high levels of Quality-of-Place and Quality-of-Life;

3. Balances the delivery of quality infrastructure with growth;

4. Promotes sense of place and sense of community in new neighborhoods and development;

5. Ensures existing neighborhoods and activity centers are supported and enhanced; and,

6. Creates jobs, expands the economy, spurs private investment and conserves natural resources.

B.4. Outcome: Nassau ensures active participation and community engagement to shape community-based plans that reflect residents' needs and priorities.

Community-based planning is an important approach to take when considering the future of Nassau County as it ensures that development and decisions reflect local needs, fosters participation, and leads to more sustainable and successful outcomes. Community-based planning incorporates opportunities for public involvement, builds transparency, and builds on a community's knowledge and understanding.

By allowing all voices to be heard in the planning process, there is more buy-in and ownership in a community's future, ensuring a plan's outcomes address the needs and priorities of the community. Community-based planning can incorporate the unique identities of neighborhoods and districts, incorporate placemaking and build social capital.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

B.4.1. Continue to implement the adopted Western Nassau Heritage Preservation Project adopted in December of 2019.

B.4.2. Continue to implement the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and Conservation Land Acquisition and Management program.

B.4.3. Create public policy that couples increased development densities and intensities with higher standards of development.

B.4.4. Create public policy that couples development in rural areas with protections from urban sprawl and potential degradation of Natural & Conservation Areas, Rural Areas, agricultural, silvicultural, and working lands.

B.4.5. When warranted, explore financing mechanisms and revenue generation models that reinvest in designated areas for Quality-of-Life and Quality-of-Place improvements, e.g. Tax Increment Financing, Community Redevelopment Area, Municipal Service Benefit Unit, Municipal Service Taxing Unit, Stewardship Districts, etc.

B.4.6. Create the Nassau County Utility Authority for the purpose of coordinating and facilitating the timely, efficient, and effective delivery of critical utility infrastructure as needed.

B.4.7. Create public policy that facilitates infill and redevelopment that is served by existing and planned public infrastructure.

B.4.8. Continue to collaborate with local municipalities and the Nassau County School District in regards to community and infrastructure planning.

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CONNECTIVITY

We envision a Nassau County that is physically connected with safe, accessible multi-modal transportation options and virtually connected by leveraging existing and emerging technologies.

Mobility is crucial for economic development and improving connections between people and places and enhancing public health, safety, and quality of life. Proper planning for new development must prioritize connected roadways, alternative corridors, and emerging technologies to improve traffic flow and accessibility countywide.

Nassau should continue to evaluate opportunities to better connect its residents to services, amenities, and spaces. This can be done through improving existing infrastructure, planning for new transportation options in priority development areas, updating cross-sections and policies related to transportation, new technologies, and efficiency.

## OBJECTIVE C.1 - Create a safe, connected multi-modal transportation network.

C.1. Outcome: Nassau has a transportation network that enhances public safety and supports sustainable mobility options for all users.

Roadways should be designed for safe travel by all users, as their design can influence user safety, functionality, and intended use. Roadway strategies to promote safety can vary based on the surrounding development context. Safety measures include ensuring pedestrians are visible when crossing the street, providing pedestrian refuge islands or medians at identified crossings, incorporating bicycle lanes, wide shoulders, shared-use paths, or the use of rumble strips. Employing safer travel speeds along corridors to mitigate run-offs, collisions, and similar crashes can be a strategy used on lesser traveled roads. These types of elements can be used to ensure there are safeguards in place to protect all roadway users.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

C.1.1. Implement Complete Streets policies and practices that prioritize the safety and comfort of all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.

C.1.2. Continue to install, or facilitate installation of, bicycle and pedestrian mobility facilities with new development, redevelopment, and government-sponsored capital projects.

C.1.3. Require cross sections that support context-sensitive roadway designs.

C.1.4. Consider utilizing floodplains and greenways for multi-use trail corridors.

C.1.5. Continue to coordinate with regional partners to identify and construct multi-use trail projects of State and regional significance.

C.1.6. Create new roadway cross-sections for rural scenic byways and limited access rural roadways.

C.1.7. Continue to partner with citizen groups, nonprofits, and other governmental agencies to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
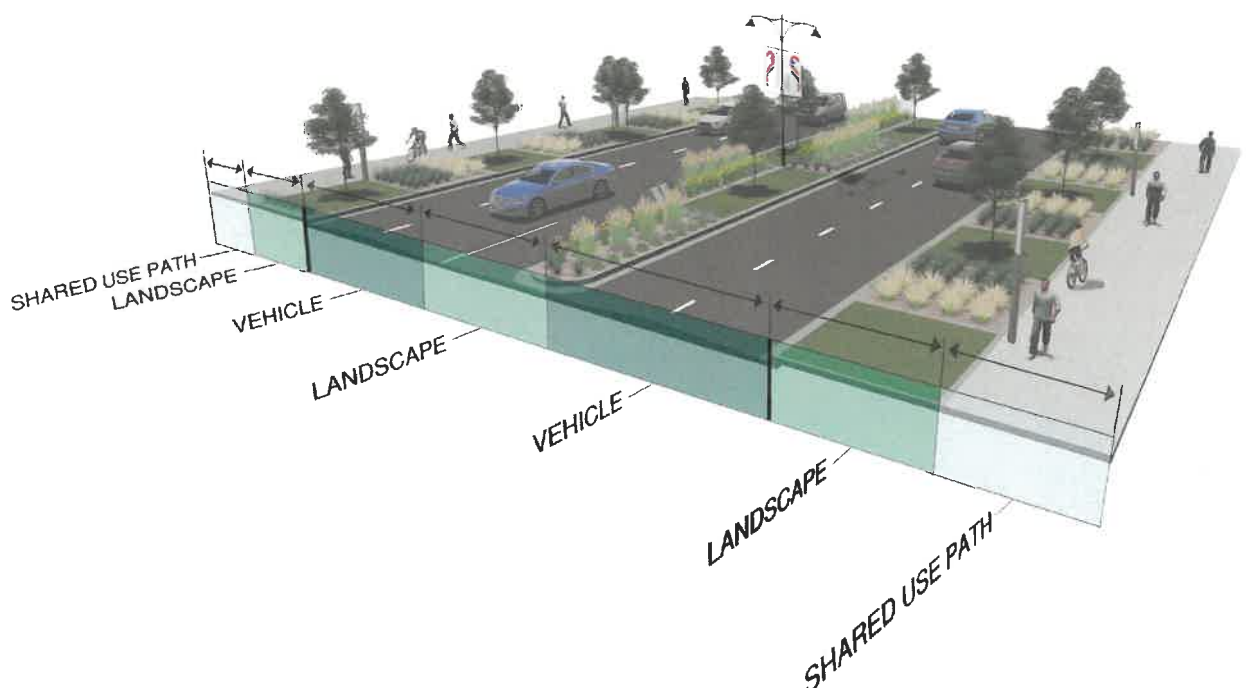
OBJECTIVE C.2 - Collaborate with public and private partners to expand reliable and affordable high-speed internet access throughout the County and access to virtual services.

C.2. Outcome: All Nassau residents have reliable, affordable, and equitable internet access.

Ensuring access to the internet is important for the vitality of residents and visitors. In a world that relies on digital technology for communication and services, the continued expansion of reliable access to broadband should be a forefront priority.

The County has made strides recently to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure in western Nassau County. These efforts should be continued and expanded to ensure all residents have predictable internet coverage.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

C.2.1. Implement "dig-once" policies to coordinate broadband infrastructure into road, utility, and public works projects.

C.2.2. Utilize federal and state funding programs to support broadband expansion projects in unserved and underserved areas.

C.2.3. Create and maintain maps of broadband availability to inform decision-making and target investments effectively.

C.2.4. Expand availability of free public Wi-Fi in parks, libraries, and community centers.

C.2.5. Coordinate with the Nassau County Department of Health and local/regional partners to increase access to virtual medicine, virtual learning, and social interactions through technology.

OBJECTIVE C.3 - Strategically invest in an efficient and well maintained system of mobility infrastructure that maximizes economic growth, quality of life, fiscal sustainability, and long-term resilience.

C.3. Outcome: Nassau has a funded infrastructure improvement program to accommodate projected growth through the planning period.

A major challenge of growth is ensuring the community infrastructure needed to maintain a high quality of life is in place. Often, development occurs before the necessary infrastructure is ready to support a growing population. For Nassau County's future, it's crucial to ensure that adequate roads, water systems, and other public facilities are in place before developing greenfield areas, as well as making improvements to the existing infrastructure to enhance mobility and accessibility. The County has utilized mobility fees, grants, and other public resources to fund infrastructure, and it will be essential to continue using various funding mechanisms to ensure a quality transportation system for future generations.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

C.3.1. Continue to implement and fund the Pavement Management Plan and Chip Seal Program.

C.3.2. Utilize alternative sources such as Municipal Service Taxing Unit/Municipal Service Benefit Unit, Tax Increment Financing, grants, industrial bonds, special districts, etc. to reduce strain on local countywide ad valorum property taxes to fund critical mobility infrastructure improvements.

C.3.3. Incorporate the recommendations of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority Transit Study - 2024 Update to expand public transit options and reduce congestion and wear and tear on major roadways.

C.3.4. Identify new strategic roadway corridors and begin to secure the necessary right-of-way to execute future construction.

C.3.5. Continue to actively participate in the decision making process of the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization and Technical Advisory Committee.

C.3.6. Continue to proactively manage the countywide Mobility Plan, Mobility Fees, and Long Range Transportation Plan.

C.3.7. Create a parallel road network to reduce congestion on major roadways and distribute traffic across alternative routes.

C.3.8. Utilize intelligent traffic systems, smart transit apps, and real-time travel displays to improve transportation efficiency.

C.3.9. Continue to fund and implement a proactive maintenance program to keep roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure in good condition.

C.3. 10. Evaluate railroad crossings and work with railroad operators to improve mobility, provide bicycle and pedestrian crossings, and cost share in maintenance responsibilities.

GOVERNANCE

We envision a Nassau County served by an effective and accountable local government that gives equitable validity to competing values and interests, expands civic capacities, pursues the greater common good, and places the long-term best interest of the whole community at the apex of decision making.

Good governance involves striking a balance by fairly weighing competing values and interests. When community values conflict, public officials must make decisions that serve the greater public good. No single organization can address complex issues alone; local governments must collaborate to find shared solutions. A collaborative approach to public policy is key to ensuring effectiveness, efficiency, and fiscal stability when delivering services. Elected and appointed leaders must demonstrate strong leadership and promote genuine collaboration while avoiding divisive actions. Decision-making must be transparent to foster public trust and acceptance. Ultimately, working together for the long-term benefit of the community is vital.

OBJECTIVE G.1 - Create a more efficient, effective, and transparent local government.

G.1. Outcome: Nassau enhances public trust and ensures responsive and accountable governance.

Trust in local government leads to better outcomes for all residents. It's essential for residents to hold governing bodies accountable for how they use resources, create policies, and implement practices to support the community. A well-run government contributes to a higher quality of life and ensures long-term vitality and resilience.

When trust is present, residents are more likely to support policies and spending that address community needs. Trust extends beyond growth and development decisions to include public safety, emergency responses, crisis management, and social stability. While the community may not always agree with every decision, there should be transparency and trust in the decision-making process.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

G.1.1. Where appropriate, local governments should implement automated platforms to streamline services, decrease human error, provide more predictability and make obtaining information easier, e.g. permitting, development review, citizen requests, work orders, agenda publication, etc.

G.1.2. After adoption of the 2050 Comprehensive Plan, the Board of County Commissioners should create a new five-year organizational strategic plan.

G.1.3. Local governments should evaluate existing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), create new KPIs, and publish real-time performance dashboards accessible to the public.

G.1.4. Local governments should create simplified budget and financial reports that citizens can utilize to easily obtain information related to resource allocations, e.g. Citizens Guide to the Budget.

G.1.5. Follow through on implementation of Vision 2050.

G.1.6. Continually review and, as appropriate, adopt new technologies that improve operational efficiencies and effectiveness, result in better decision making, and reduce long-term liabilities, e.g. Artificial Intelligence, 'Code Review' programs, etc.

OBJECTIVE G.2 - Reduce dependency on residential property ad valorem tax revenue and diversify the local economy through job creation, nonresidential development, and alternative revenues.

G.2. Outcome: Nassau reduces reliance on residential property ad valorem tax revenue through expanded commercial investment.

Nassau County's current revenue is primarily dependent on ad valorem taxes. Expanding the County's tax base is important because it will boost revenue, providing more funding for public services. This expansion will also help reduce the tax burden on residents by offering alternative sources of funding. A larger tax base can improve public infrastructure by increasing available funds for road repairs and development, parks, conservation efforts, public services, and other community needs. Ultimately, additional revenue helps the community become more fiscally resilient over the long term and provides greater flexibility in spending to enhance quality of life.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

G.2.1. Identify, designate and support strategic locations for the creation of high-wage and skilled labor jobs in proximity to major infrastructure installations.

G.2.2. Create opportunities for mixed-use developments that integrate commercial and retail spaces with residential units. [Create 'Live, Work, Play, Stay' communities.]

G.2.3. Actively pursue and support public-private partnerships, that are demonstrated to be in the long-term best interests of the citizens, to fund necessary infrastructure in or near designated employment centers to create shovel-ready project sites and 'spec' buildings.

G.2.4. Leverage existing publicly owned lands and facilities to create recurring revenue streams to support government services, programs and economic expansion.

G.2.5. Leverage alternative funding and financing mechanisms to incentivize nonresidential development and job creation, e.g. Industrial Bonds, State and Federal grants, Tax Increment Financing districts, Municipal Service Benefit Unit/Municipal Service Taxing Unit, etc.

G.2.6. Protect job creating land-uses from intrusion by residential uses.

OBJECTIVE G.3 - Facilitate authentic civic engagement, expand civic capacities, nurture the collaborative pursuit of the common good.

G.3. Outcome: Nassau residents inform decision-making, and a shared commitment to the common good.

Civic engagement is essential for a place's success as it builds social capital, strengthens community ties, and fosters trust among residents. It also creates opportunities for collaboration and discussion about the community's needs and priorities. Local governments must cultivate relationships with the community to enhance decision-making, follow through with implementing plans, and ensure projects and policies benefit the community. Engaged citizens hold governing bodies accountable for their actions and decisions, resulting in more responsive public services. Education and involvement ensures the government is acting in the pursuit of the common good.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

G.3.1. Local governments should consider the creation of 'Citizens Academies' to educate citizens, nurture positive public-government relationships, increase meaningful communication between local government officials and citizens, and inspire future civic leaders and public officials.

G.3.2. Proactively engage with communities through targeted outreach, accessible meeting locations [go to the citizens], and use of multiple communication mediums.

G.3.3. Find, encourage, and support community champions.

G.3.4. Provide monthly updates to the community on government activities and initiatives.

G.3.5. Local governments should consider requiring community engagement plans for all major community planning initiatives and capital projects.

G.3.6. Consider public policy that requires large private development projects to hold community meetings.

G.3.7. Local governments should push back against NIMBYism [Not In My Back Yard] when projects are in the long-term best interest of the greater community.

OBJECTIVE G.4 - Prioritize intergovernmental coordination for the betterment of the community.

G.4. Outcome: Local, state and federal organizations and agencies regularly coordinate, collaborate, and partner for the betterment of the community.

Nassau County cannot operate in isolation; it must collaborate with its municipalities, infrastructure providers, and regional partners to shape a better future. Regular coordination is essential to ensure the County's actions align with the needs of its partners. Through open communication, the County can plan for the future while addressing current needs, ensuring that infrastructure, land use, and policies are in place to support both present and future residents. The County's long-term success depends on effective coordination with partners, which includes pursuing funding opportunities, planning infrastructure development, and addressing community needs for today and in the future.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

G.4.1. Local governments, Nassau staff, and officials should proactively and regularly collaborate, partner and pursue joint efforts that are in the long-term best interest of the greater community.

G.4.2. Regular meetings between leadership of all three municipalities and Nassau should take place regularly.

G.4.3. Local governments should coordinate, collaborate, and partner with other local, state and federal agencies and organizations for the betterment of the community.

G.4.4. Nassau should explore joint planning and annexation agreements with each municipality to align the countywide comprehensive plan and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Series with municipal comprehensive plans and FLUMs for lands within designated joint planning and annexation areas.

G.4.5. Nassau should continue to provide grant programs and partnerships to deliver community events and public infrastructure in collaboration with municipalities.

G.4.6. Through the creation of the Nassau County Utility Authority, begin to coordinate and leverage the resources of the various public utility providers operating in Nassau County.

G.4.7. Continue proactive coordination between the Nassau County School District, local governments, and Nassau County to provide best-in-class public schools.

G.4.8. Continue effective coordination between the five local Constitutional Officers and the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners.

OBJECTIVE G.5 - Make policy, financial, and design decisions that are in the long-term best interests of the citizens as a whole and with the expectation that Nassau County will exist in perpetuity.

G.5. Outcome: Nassau ensures the sustainable growth, prosperity, and well-being of its citizens, safeguarding its vitality for future generations.

Effective planning evaluates the needs of today and in the future. In order to ensure fiscal resilience, near- and long-term programming is needed for infrastructure, projects, and investments. Managing projects, costs, and funding will help plan where additional funding resources are needed, prioritize projects, and ensure fiscal responsibility.

This ensures the County stays on track with the needs of today while considering those in the future. Creating a capital improvements plan that encompasses 20 years allows the County to map out infrastructure to best support the community's vision for the future, while offering flexibility if desires change.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

G.5.1. Long-term fiscal sustainability should be a priority in the decision making process of local governments.

G.5.2. Local governments should proactively cure and prevent deferred capital maintenance through the allocation of resources, sound financial policies, asset inventory management systems, and forward-looking budget practices.

G.5.3. Local governments should create short-term (5-year) and long-term (20-year) capital improvement plans to anticipate future expenses and revenue trends, operations and maintenance costs, explore funding mechanisms, and prioritize essential infrastructure projects.

G.5.4. Protect the uniqueness of place, protect job creating land uses, diversify the economic base of the County, and create an environment that facilitates prosperity on a generational scale that balances short-term success with long-term viability.

HOUSING

We envision a Nassau County that is intentional about creating and safeguarding attainable housing near local employment centers, public facilities, amenities, and high performance public spaces for residents of all ages and their families no matter their stage in life.

A diversity of housing options, at various price points, should be available throughout Nassau County. The County has taken initiatives to increase the types of housing available countywide, such as establishing an affordable housing committee, participating in state housing programs, adopting ordinances to permit accessory dwelling units and tiny home developments, and creating overlay districts that promote higher density to diversify housing options within developments. These efforts, along with planned developments offering a mix of housing types, have led to an increase in the availability of townhomes and rental units over the past five years. It will be important to incorporate housing types in the future to meet the needs of residents.

OBJECTIVE H.1 - Create incentives that increase the availability of quality, affordable housing options for residents across income levels [based on Nassau County income levels].

H.1. Outcome: Nassau has quality, affordable housing to accommodate residents from all income levels.

Creating incentives that increase the availability of quality, affordable housing options for residents across income levels is critical. The County can explore inclusionary zoning, expand the tiny home development ordinance, and create revenue streams to support affordability options. Incomes vary widely across the County; as such, there should be a wide range of housing options incorporated into new developments.

Additionally, leveraging public-private partnerships can help to pool resources and expertise to create more innovative and sustainable housing solutions. The County could also consider implementing measures in certain areas to ensure that lower-income residents are not priced out of their neighborhoods. By adopting these strategies, Nassau can work towards a more inclusive and equitable housing market where everyone has access to a safe and affordable place to live.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

H.1.1. Consider expanding the Tiny Home Development ordinance to include "for-sale" options.

H.1.2. Consider public policy similar to inclusionary zoning/pay-in-lieu requirements for multifamily residential and mixed use projects in exchange for increased density and intensity levels that produce affordable housing at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income.

H.1.3. Consider public policy that establishes linkage fees for new development as a revenue stream for affordable housing.

OBJECTIVE H.2 - Promote quality infill development along primary corridors and in areas with a focus on proximity to transit (existing and future), employment hubs, activity centers (existing and future) and essential services.

H.2. Outcome: Nassau provides housing opportunities near jobs, transit, and essential services.

The current housing stock consists mainly of low- to medium-density single-family homes, typically separated from commercial areas within a traditional Euclidean zoning framework. Changing policies to allow for a wider range of densities around emerging and existing centers will create more diverse housing options. Providing housing near employment, services, activities, and transit promotes "live, work, play, stay" opportunities,

reducing reliance on automobiles. Reusing and adapting existing buildings can revitalize areas, reduce greenfield development, and create more livable communities. As the County develops new employment and activity centers, incorporating higher-density housing will expand housing options and offer residences closer to essential services.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

H.2.1. Consider a flexible density bonus/Transfer of Development Rights program for residential and mixed-use developments near transit hubs, employment centers, and essential services.

H.2.2. Adopt regulations to increase minimum density, minimum lot size requirements and increase building heights to encourage smaller-scale, infill housing developments.

H.2.3. Consider an adaptive reuse ordinance to convert existing nonresidential structures for residential use.

H.2.4. Encourage infill development of vacant land and reuse of existing and underutilized buildings to address housing needs.

H.2.5. Protect existing neighborhoods from encroachment of high density/intensity development.

OBJECTIVE H.3 - Develop and maintain partnerships with private sector and nonprofit entities to promote housing for all ages and stages of life.

H.3. Outcome: Nassau ensures that housing is available for all ages and stages of life.

The County can partner with non-profit and private developers to diversify housing options in the County. The County should address the needs of its aging population and increase the stock of affordable and accessible housing for seniors by working with developers and using housing tax credits to facilitate new seniors housing development. Options to "age in place" will provide residents with the flexibility to stay where they are comfortable.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

H.3.1. Work with area agencies that focus on aging and disability advocacy groups to promote accessory dwelling units and residential care facilities to support older adults, caregivers, and their families.

H.3.2. Work with the development community to adopt incentives for master planned communities that offer age-in-place housing options.

H.3.3. Work with area business owners to explore an incentive program for employers who invest in workforce housing.

H.3.4. Implement programs and partnerships to create a range of housing options that cater to the needs of individuals and families at different life stages and affordability levels [based on Nassau County income levels].

OBJECTIVE H.4 - Ensure adequate residential entitlements to ensure that a variety of housing types are in place to meet population demands projected over the planning horizon of 2050.

H.4. Outcome: Nassau satisfies the demand for housing through the 2050 planning period.

Nassau County's population is expected to nearly double over the next 25 years. While much of the housing needed to accommodate this growth could be built within existing development areas, new development areas will still need to be identified to prevent the low- to medium-density development pattern from encroaching on the County's desired rural areas. By designating areas for higher-density, context-appropriate infill and redevelopment, the County can better direct where new residential development takes place. Additionally, developing mixed-use, walkable, and vibrant centers will not only support the tax base, generating more revenue for public services, but also offer residents healthier living options.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

H.4.1. Create public policy that requires a mixture of housing types and affordability ranges in new development, redevelopment, and infill development in exchange for increased density and intensity standards.

H.4.2. Promote mixed-use developments near current and future public transit facilities, employment opportunities, and amenities to create vibrant, walkable communities that enhance residents' quality of life and reduce transportation costs.

H.4.3. Promote mixed use developments that create places where citizens can live, work, play and stay.

OBJECTIVE H.5 - Identify opportunities to allow the impact fee system to accommodate desired development types.

H.5. Outcome: Nassau provides incentives to encourage the development of affordable housing.

Impact fees are a method used to fund public infrastructure by charging a reasonable fee on new development. These fees, assessed periodically by the community, are used to support roads, parks, services, and other public needs. The County's current fee structure applies to all new commercial and residential

development, without flexibility for accessory dwelling units or affordable housing. Introducing a more flexible system that reduces fees for certain types of attainable housing could help incentivize the development of these housing options.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

H.5.1. Amend the impact fee ordinance to allow reduced fee levels for accessory dwelling units as defined by Nassau.

H.5.2. Establish a yearly impact fee subsidy allocation for affordable housing units.

H.5.3. Amend the impact fee ordinance to calculate the fee on square feet of living space.

OBJECTIVE H.6 - Ensure the availability of affordable housing options for essential workers, public employees, first responders, educators, and support staff.

H.6. Outcome: Nassau has ample housing options to accommodate its workforce.

Another type of housing that would benefit the County is workforce housing. The County's Area Median Income (AMI) varies significantly across the region. While the overall AMI for the County is around $84,000[1] annually, it drops to below $65,000[1] on the western side. Many of the essential workers, such as public employees, teachers, and first responders, are not paid high wages.

Using the 100 to 120 percent AMI calculation commonly used by many communities, the "affordable" units may still be unaffordable for many residents. To address this, the County can increase the availability of employer-assisted housing by offering financial incentives or encouraging collaboration between companies and non-profit organizations to support workforce housing initiatives.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

H.6.1. Continue to work with the Nassau County School District to provide affordable housing options for School District employees.

H.6.2. Continue to work with major employers and the hospitality industry to provide affordable housing options for employees.

H.6.3. Continue to expand the allocation of local State Housing Initiative Partnership funds to facilitate the creation of new affordable units at or below 80 percent Area Median Income based on Nassau County income levels.

[1] Source: US Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates (2017 - 2022)

LIVABILITY

We envision a Nassau County that evolves with its citizens by providing access to healthy food, medical services, education, the arts, parks, nature, entertainment, socialization, and leisure activities.

Livability plays a crucial role in determining the quality of life for all residents. While what is considered "livable" may vary slightly from person to person, it generally refers to a community where everyone has access to the essential services and amenities that make daily life not just possible, but enjoyable. This includes access to public transportation, healthcare, education, parks, arts, entertainment, and open spaces. By promoting a high standard of livability, Nassau County can attract and retain residents, support local businesses, and create a vibrant environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

OBJECTIVE L.1 - Maintain, expand and create new parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, and social spaces across the County that embrace the principles and standards of the adopted Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

L.1. Outcome: Residents have a quality parks, recreation, open space, and trails system that embraces the "Power of 10."

A critical component of a healthy community is its parks, recreation, and open space system. Implementing the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, along with the trails system, has improved access to recreational activities throughout the County since its adoption in 2021. Expanding the parks system and incorporating various elements within each park will offer additional play and social opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities. With its proximity to rivers, estuaries, and the ocean, public access to waterways should be enhanced. Educational components can be incorporated into parks and greenways through signage and public art. A connected network of trails, both on-street and through greenways, will ensure safe and alternative transportation to parks and other destinations. Offering diverse programs through the Parks Department or in partnership with private entities will provide residents with a variety of classes, programs, and activities at lower costs.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

L.1.1. Implement the Nassau Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

L.1.2. Require that all new parks incorporate Integrated Public Realm, High Performance Public Spaces, 10-Minute Walk, and Power of 10 principles.

L.1.3. Create public policy that requires implementation of High Performance Public Spaces standards when creating public and quasi-public social spaces.

L.1.4. Take all actions necessary to protect and preserve the public's customary use of the beaches of Amelia Island including beach driving and parking.

L.1.5. Aggressively protect existing, and pursue new, public access points to rivers, creeks and the beaches of Amelia Island. This includes protecting publicly accessible roadways and public rights-of-way, whether open or not, that provide access to bodies of water or marshlands.

L.1.6. Consider new revenue streams to offset the cost of managing parks, recreation, open space and social spaces, e.g. beach park parking fees for non-county residents and property owners.

L.1.7. Establish a formal blueway system (paddling trails) and public access to Nassau's waterways.

L.1.8. Make investments to connect people with nature.

OBJECTIVE L.2 - Incorporate quality of life amenities into all new development and redevelopment.

L.2. Outcome: Quality of life amenities are incorporated into all residential and mixed-use areas.

Quality of life amenities include parks and recreation services, healthcare options, schools, arts and culture, entertainment, transportation options, social services, and similar opportunities to meet daily needs. While the composition of these amenities may vary throughout the County, it is important to determine how public and private developments can ensure that quality of life amenities are included in the future. These amenities not only improve offerings for existing residents, but can play a role in new businesses locating to the County, people moving to Nassau County, or the continued support of tourism in the County.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

L.2.1. Implement the standards of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan for design of parks, recreation, open space and social spaces within private developments.

L.2.2. Ensure new developments have a well-connected network of streets, sidewalks, and trails.

L.2.3. Consider public policy that requires stormwater facilities be designed as a recreation and social space that is meaningfully integrated into the adjacent community.

L.2.4. Ensure natural amenities, historic resources and sense of place are protected and prioritized.

L.2.5. Adopt public policy that requires a built environment that is engaging, vibrant, and contains a mix of use designed at a human scale, intended to promote social interactions, and facilitate a sense of community.

L.2.6. Consistent with the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, strive for a built environment that results in every resident being within a 10-minute walk of an accessible park.

L.2.7. Encourage leisure programming and the arts in public parks and social spaces.

L.2.8. As new development occurs and new public infrastructure and amenities are provided, ensure that existing communities receive investments. Celebrate existing assets while maintaining and pursuing a future orientation.

L.2.9. Be nimble and open to exploring new and emerging opportunities to improve quality of life.

OBJECTIVE L.3 - Support public and private educational institutions, vocational training, and career development.

L.3. Outcome: Nassau's education system is the best in the state.

A quality education system is fundamental to the success and prosperity of a community. Access to educational opportunities often influences the decisions of young families when choosing where to reside. Furthermore, education provides valuable social and cultural experiences, contributing to greater cohesion within communities. An educated population is also more likely to make informed decisions about their health and lifestyle choices.

Additionally, education plays a critical role in economic development, as businesses are more inclined to establish themselves in areas with a skilled workforce. Offering higher education opportunities within the community can foster upward mobility and provide individuals with the ability to advance in their careers or pursue new professional paths, all while remaining within their home community.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

L.3.1. Assist the Nassau County School District in creating affordable housing for district employees.

L.3.2. Create a vibrant, engaging, and walkable mixed use development pattern around the Florida State College at Jacksonville Nassau Center campus with the intent of creating an integrated campus that mimics the social, housing, and amenity offerings of larger universities.

L.3.3. Support expanded transportation opportunities to educational institutions.

L.3.4. Support programs that develop skilled-labor and the trades.

L.3.5. Continue to implement and expand trade related apprenticeship programs, professional development of planners, engineers, plans examiners, etc., and equipment operators training program.

L.3.6. Ensure implementation of Nassau's Interlocal Agreement for Public School Facility Planning.

L.3.7. Continue to assist the Nassau County School District with (1) installation of critical infrastructure to expand existing and build new schools and (2) negotiating and securing new school sites.

L.3.8. Partner with nonprofits and community organizations to identify opportunities to enhance the education system.

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OBJECTIVE L.4 - Support expanded access to medical services, fresh foods, and recreation/social programming and amenities.

L.4. Outcome: There are opportunities to access medical services, fresh foods, and recreation/social programming and amenities.

An emerging medical hub at the SR-200 and I-95 interchange offers a wide range of medical services; offerings that are more sparse west of I-95. Much of western Nassau is also located in a food dessert and recreation programming is limited countywide.

As a growing community there are opportunities to enhance access to medical services, fresh food, and recreation programs through funding resources, incentives, and partnerships. Mobile services can allow providers to be more responsive to the community's needs and provide for better coverage.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

L.4.1. Consider converting a portion of the Department of Health brick and mortar rural clinics to mobile clinics that can serve residents throughout the community.

L.4.2. Encourage and support partnerships that provide recreation, social programing, and wellness events in public spaces to support healthy lives.

L.4.3. Continue to support nonprofit entities that provide services and programming that promote access to medical services, fresh foods, and recreation/social programing and amenities.

L.4.4. Protect existing working lands and agricultural operations, and the potential for future working lands and agricultural operations, by enforcing agricultural land use densities of one dwelling unit per twenty acres of land as defined in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

L.4.5. Adopt land development regulations that promote agri-hood developments, clustering of residential units, and conservation communities.

L.4.6. Continue to work with the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board and the Nassau Community Transportation Coordinator to provide transit access to medical services.

OBJECTIVE L.5 - Provide public safety services that meet the needs of the County.

L.5. Outcome: Public safety services meet the needs of the County.

Ensuring public safety is critical to fostering a thriving community where residents feel secure and protected in addressing both the immediate and long-term needs. By investing in trainings and partnership opportunities for fire and safety personnel, services can be tailored to effectively respond to the unique challenges faced by different neighborhoods. Continuous assessment and improvement of emergency response protocols, crime prevention programs, and disaster preparedness plans are essential to maintain a robust safety infrastructure that adapts to evolving threats and circumstances.

Collaborative efforts between governmental agencies, local organizations, and community leaders can facilitate a more integrated approach to public safety, fostering trust and cooperation among diverse groups. Through these partnerships and investments, Nassau County can build a resilient public safety framework that not only safeguards the well-being of its residents but also enhances their quality of life.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

L.5.1. Continue to prepare for and respond to natural and manmade disasters and severe events.

L.5.2. Expand the effectiveness of the Local Mitigation Strategy to support the public safety and resiliency needs of the community.

L.5.3. Continue to examine interlocal agreements for delivery of Fire and Rescue services and implementation of primary and secondary responders.

L.5.4. Continue to explore opportunities to improve evacuation routes and options.

L.5.5. Continue to evolve and adapt the Nassau Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

L.5.6. Continue to provide disaster response and recovery training to essential personnel and partners.

OPPORTUNITY

We envision a Nassau County that supports retail, business, and industrial innovation, resulting in a robust local economy and variety of job opportunities for existing and future residents.

Economic growth is essential for the future of Nassau County, affecting every aspect of residents' lives. About 67 percent of workers residing in Nassau County currently commute outside the County for work, a trend likely to grow without efforts to attract new employers. As residents shop while commuting, local spending declines. Nassau's budget relies heavily on ad valorem taxes, but residential taxes do not generate as much revenue as non-residential property taxes. To maintain a high quality of life and provide services, the County needs to expand its tax base. Economic growth drives innovation, offering new opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship, which attracts more residents and businesses. By diversifying industries like agri-tourism, boutique hotels, nature activities, and sports tourism, the County can boost prosperity. Economic vitality depends on a skilled workforce, which is essential for attracting industries and ensuring sustainable growth. Ultimately, opportunity is key to community development and prosperity for all.

OBJECTIVE O.1 - Create a sufficient amount of new high wage and skilled jobs to support the local economy and expanding population.

O.1. Outcome: Nassau has ample high-wage and skilled jobs to support the local economy and expanding population.

Industries driving Nassau County's economy include Paper and Packaging (largely fueled by timber production), Hospitality and Tourism, Healthcare, and Transportation and Logistics. To attract continued growth in these specialized industries, the County should prioritize workforce development initiatives that create and maintain jobs and secure a strong talent pipeline for target employers. The County should ensure its land use plan is aligned to protect and promote these industries and preserve space to support new development and expansion for existing and potential target industry users. In addition, incentives such as direct assistance, accelerated permitting processes and/or dedicated staff to manage applications for target industry users can help to facilitate growth.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

O.1.1. Strive to maintain or exceed the current jobs to housing ratio by expanding areas to accommodate high-wage job generating uses in strategic locations adjacent to existing or planned infrastructure.

O.1.2. Amend the Future Land Use Map to designate future employment centers consistent with the 2050 Vision Preferred Growth Scenario and protect the areas from encroachment of incompatible uses.

O.1.3. Invest in infrastructure to support target industries and stimulate economic growth in designated employment centers.

O.1.4. In areas designated for growth, encourage mixed-use activity centers at residential densities that can support and sustain retail and service businesses while also providing job opportunities in proximity to housing and leisure activities.

O.1.5. Consider funding mechanisms to support economic expansion.

O.1.6. Accelerate the permitting process for target industries and/or dedicate staff to managing applications for target industries.

OBJECTIVE O.2 - Build and sustain a strong talent pipeline by attracting, supporting, and retaining the County's workforce.

O.2. Outcome: Nassau successfully cultivates a robust talent pipeline of skilled and ready professionals and tradesmen/craftsmen.

To attract new employers and improve the jobs to housing ratio, the County should explore ways to support workforce development and training opportunities. The County can partner with the School District, private schools, trade programs, and higher education institutions to evaluate the types of programs that would be beneficial for target industries.

Building a workforce can bring new employers to the region. Furthering education or workforce skills can also provide opportunities for upward mobility, higher paying jobs, and greater stability in a job market. As the County focuses on bringing in target industries, new local businesses, and supporting existing employers in the County, a reputable workforce is key to maintaining a stable economy.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

O.2.1. Partner with the Nassau County School District and other educational institutions, vocational programs, and businesses to equip a workforce for today and the coming decades.

O.2.2. Consider the creation of a workforce council comprised of industry leaders and educational institutions to develop workforce training priorities and curriculum development.

O.2.3. Support certification programs that address high-demand skills in the healthcare, technology, skilled trades, and manufacturing sectors.

O.2.4. Invest in amenities and services that enhance the quality of life for entry-level workforce residents (parks, recreation, cultural venues, public transportation).

O.2.5. Create vibrant, active, and engaging communities that attract the creative class, remote workers, dual professional income households, and upwardly mobile professionals.

O.2.6. Create opportunities for talented locals to professionally and financially prosper and experience a vibrant, socially engaged life in Nassau as means to prevent their relocation and loss of skill-set and to stimulate future contributions; prevent 'brain drain'.

OBJECTIVE O.3 - Businesses and target industries are recruited, retained, expanded and supported.

O.3. Outcome: Target industries and local businesses in Nassau flourish creating an adaptive and resilient business environment.

By focusing on target industries, the County can make the necessary infrastructure improvements to incentivize and attract businesses to Nassau County. To plan for economic development and growth, an economic development plan should be created to outline steps government officials and staff can take to build a more diverse tax base and support employment growth within Nassau County.

Policy and land use planning can be used to direct employment growth to desired areas and best support the vision for the community. The attraction and support of businesses does not fall solely on the County. Maintaining partnerships with economic development entities and non-profits are vital to economic success.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

O.3.1. Adopt a comprehensive economic development strategy, including communications and marketing plan, in concert with economic development and business partners.

O.3.2. Partner with Nassau Prosperity Alliance members, nonprofit partners, and the private sector to actively promote Nassau and aggressively recruit target industries and business expansion/relocation into the Nassau market.

O.3.3. Consider public policy that allows flexibility in the adaptive reuse of blighted areas, underperforming retail centers, and infill areas to support job creation, small business expansion and entrepreneurship.

O.3.4. Accelerate the permitting process for target industries and/or dedicate staff to managing applications for target industries.

O.3.5. Maintain dedicated staff members to serve as liaisons between Nassau and existing businesses to assist with expansion efforts (site plan review process, permitting, land use, zoning).

O.3.6. Coordinate with the local chambers of commerce, Nassau County Economic Development Board, Fernandina Beach Main Street, and other business advocacy groups to support local business initiatives.

O.3.7. Encourage the co-location of small entrepreneurial firms with similarly focused industry clusters to share technology, skills, knowledge, and innovations.

O.3.8. Support agricultural businesses and evaluate opportunities to expand financial stability for agricultural/silvicultural operations and activities.

O.3.9. Ensure County regulations are consistent with Right to Farm statutes and support the long-term vitality of farming.
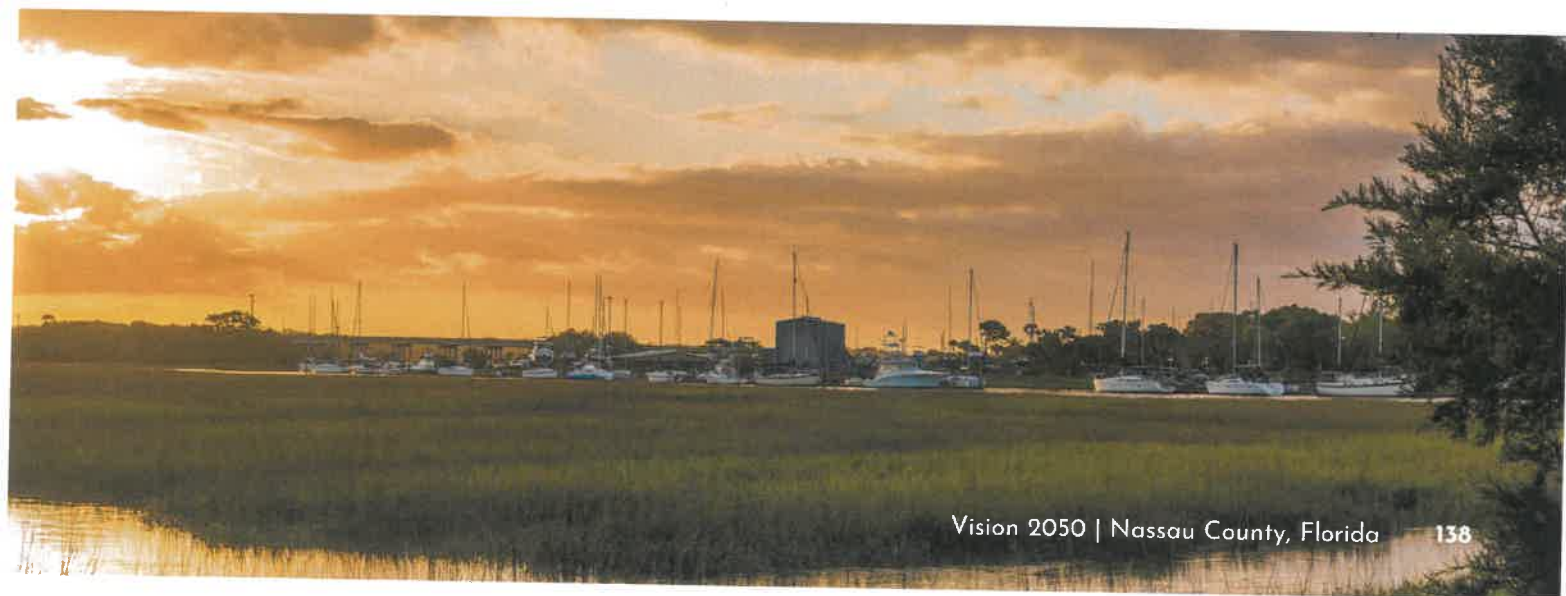
OBJECTIVE O.4 - Tourism continues to be an important economic base for Nassau County.

O.4. Outcome: Tourism maintains its vital role in sustaining Nassau's economic prosperity.

Tourism plays a major role in Nassau County's economy. Every year more than 1.2 million people visit Amelia Island and surrounding areas, contributing significant revenues to the County. A majority of visitors spend their time on Amelia Island but there are opportunities to expand tourism revenues outside of Amelia Island by applying hotel and tourism taxes off the island, marketing eco-tourism and agri-tourism events, and building a sports tourism network. With new parks planned for development with sports fields, access to hunting and fishing, open spaces, and miles of trails, the County has unparalleled potential to build a comprehensive sports tourism network. Eco-, Agri-, and sports tourism can also drive private development. The County and its municipal partners can support the development of boutique hotels and motels through policies, investments, and programs. This will help drive hotel occupancy taxes off Amelia Island.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

O.4.1. Augment, grow, and strategically evolve the tourism economy to expand the value-adding benefits of tourism to the community by creating new products and revenue streams that will create jobs, expand the economy, and improve quality-of-place/life for visitors and residents.

O.4.2. Expand the Tourist Development Tax District to include all of Nassau County.

O.4.3. Explore sports-tourism, agri-tourism, eco-tourism and similar opportunities that have potential to result in new product development and off-island revenue generation.

O.4.4. Execute and implement the Amelia Island Beach Front Park Harmonization and Visitor Experience Enhancement Initiative.

O.4.5. Create a countywide blueway plan and secure land for public access to rivers and creeks.

O.4.6. Prioritize tourism strategies that promote fewer visitors that stay in market longer and spend more money; a value vs. volume model.

O.4.7. Prioritize tourism strategies that encourage the preservation of historic places and structures, natural resources, rural lifestyle, and quality-of-place; a quality vs. quantity model.

OBJECTIVE O.5 - Protect and promote agricultural operations, silvicultural operations, manufacturing, and working waterfronts to ensure they remain a foundational element of Nassau's economic base.

O.5. Outcome: Agriculture, silviculture, manufacturing, and working waterfront, continue to be foundational elements of Nassau's economic base.

Agriculture and silviculture are important for Nassau's economy and self sufficiency in the future. These areas contribute to flood control, provide habitats for local flora and fauna, are critical for flood control, carbon sequestration, and a reduced heat island effect. The operation of these economies should be protected through policies, incentives, and partnerships.

Manufacturing and working waterfront areas are another important element of Nassau's economy. While less focused on the environmental benefits, these areas support job creation and a diversified and high-yield tax base. Existing manufacturing operations should be supported and expanded where appropriate.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

O.5.1. Protect agriculture and silviculture industries from intrusion by incompatible uses.

O.5.2. Support the financial viability of bonafide agricultural and silvicultural operations through the purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights and alternative revenue streams for dude ranches, event venues, recreational operations, etc.

O.5.3. Protect working waterfronts from conversion to residential uses.

O.5.4. Protect and support existing manufacturing operations.

RESILIENCY

We envision a Nassau County that is environmentally, socially, and economically resilient which protects our rich supply of natural resources, supports conservation, and creates a diversified, sustainable and resilient local economy.

The County is committed to environmental protection through initiatives like increasing conservation lands, improving stormwater management, and supporting development that prioritizes environmental care. By participating in the Community Rating System (CRS), the County exceeds floodplain management and building standards. Its many floodplains, wetlands, and waterways offer opportunities for sustainable development, green spaces, improved access to nature, and environmental education, while also protecting vital natural resources. Resiliency is key to helping the community adapt to economic, environmental, and social changes. It is a proactive strategy that ensures long-term sustainability, enabling the County to prepare for and respond to challenges while safeguarding property, investments, and people.

OBJECTIVE R.1 - Protect natural resources, scenic views, and ecosystems from impending development.

R.1. Outcome: Growth is directed away from environmentally sensitive lands, ecological corridors, natural floodplains, and working lands.

Nassau County should continue prioritizing the protection of natural resources and the conservation of environmentally sensitive lands. Approximately 40 percent of the County lies within a floodplain, and 32 percent is designated as potential wetlands. Additionally, there are conservation areas and active agricultural lands that offer significant benefits to both the community and the environment. While growth is expected to persist in the County and the broader Jacksonville region, the County can implement policies and initiatives to guide development away from these vital areas. Continued political and financial support for the Conservation Land Acquisition and Management (CLAM) Program will be essential for sustaining conservation efforts and acquiring critical environmental resources. Collaborations with local, nongovernmental, nonprofit, and other governmental organizations can also help identify additional funding sources and incentives for conservation initiatives.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.1.1. Explore creating a Transfer of Development Rights program that incentivizes the transfer of residential densities away from vulnerable areas, Rural Areas, Natural & Conservation Areas, agricultural/silviculture lands, and working lands consistent with the Vision 2050 Preferred Growth Scenario.

R.1.2. Explore local regulations that require the clustering of residential units on development parcels away from environmentally sensitive areas and to create a network of interconnected ecological corridors (greenways).

R.1.3. Aggressively pursue implementation of land conservation initiatives in Nassau through both fee simple and less than fee acquisitions to execute the Conservation Land Acquisition and Management program, Atlantic to Okefenokee Conservation Corridor, protect agricultural lands/working lands, provide access to bodies of water, and other conservation efforts.

R.1.4. Prohibit the increase of residential density in the Coastal High Hazard Area.

R.1.5. Maintain the minimum 60 percent Open Space requirement for all lands in a Special Flood Hazard Area and consider more effectively defining Open Space in local regulations.

R.1.6. Acquire identified viewshed properties within the Timber to Tides Design Overlay.

R.1.7. Consider the creation of a regional off-site mitigation area to conserve land and provide the County with mitigation credits for public infrastructure improvements.

R.1.8. Consider public policy that prohibits the use of septic tanks in Special Flood Hazard Areas.

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OBJECTIVE R.2 - Increase the total acreage of land held in permanent conservation and maintain local character.

R.2. Outcome: Nassau ensures the preservation of its natural resources and cultural heritage.

Conservation and preservation of the natural and cultural environment was noted as paramount for Nassau's residents. Through continuing to support the Conservation Land Acquisition and Management (CLAM) program, partnerships with nonprofit organizations, and public policies, the County can continue to improve the total acreage of land held in conservation. This effort can help protect long-term sustainability and environmental resilience for generations to come. These lands support biodiversity, can help mitigate flooding impacts, and provide opportunities for exploration, learning, and economic development.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.2.1. Leverage federal, state, local, and private funding to acquire lands within the Atlantic to Okefenokee Conservation Corridor.

R.2.2. Actively pursue Conservation Land Acquisition and Management (CLAM) program priority projects and other conservation opportunities outside of the CLAM program.

R.2.3. Coordinate and partner with local municipalities, state and federal agencies, and local, regional and national conservation entities to maximize conservation land acquisition funding and management.

R.2.4. Consider local incentives, such as a Transfer of Development Rights density bonus to encourage agricultural scale conveyance of land, extension of ecological corridors, and reduction of suburban scale development patterns in rural and natural areas.

OBJECTIVE R.3 - Prepare Nassau for natural disasters.

R.3. Outcome: Nassau is prepared for natural disasters.

As a riverine, estuary, and beach county, Nassau is susceptible to natural disasters, especially those that are water related, such as heavy rainfall, tropical storms, and hurricanes. These events can cause major damage related to flooding and wind damage. With its timber industry, there are also susceptibilities to wildfires. Proper planning and hazard mitigation is necessary to ensure there is limited loss of life and property when a hazardous event occurs. Through having strong building codes, leadership, and emergency management policies, the County can better prepare for, and respond to, severe weather events.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.3.1. Utilizing the recommendations of the Vulnerability Assessment, create a long-term adaptation plan and implementation strategy to prioritize and fund projects.

R.3.2. Continue to participate in the Community Rating System.

R.3.3. Continue to implement and support the Local Mitigation Strategy.

R.3.4. Continue to implement, and update as necessary, the Continuity of Operations Plan to minimize disruption and facilitate rapid restoration of essential services.

R.3.5. Hire a Communications Manager to disseminate information and engage with the community regarding emergency preparedness and response.

R.3.6. Implement increased standards for development in defined Volume Sensitive Areas and explore the identification of additional Volume Sensitive Areas.

OBJECTIVE R.4 - Create opportunities for healthy social interactions and networks to maintain a strong sense of community well-being and stability.

R.4. Outcome: Nassau fosters a vibrant, connected community where residents have ample opportunities to build meaningful relationships, strengthen social networks, and feel supported, valued and engaged.

Social interactions help to create strong community ties, build sense of place and sense of belonging, and can help neighborhoods and groups thrive. By fostering and building better relationships amongst the community, the County can continue to support the creation of social capital. Strong community ties support long-term social resilience and create a network people can lean on in times of need. Nassau County can help facilitate social gathering by continuing to implement the parks master plan, creating and offering programs that bring community members together, and partnering with community organizations for events, programs, and services available to residents.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.4.1. Require that the design of all parks and recreation facilities incorporate principles of High Performance Public Spaces as defined in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.

R.4.2. Support neighborhood scale events, social engagements, and programs such as farmer's markets, craft fairs, book clubs, seniors' night out, movies in the park, food truck rallies, etc.

R.4.3. Create and maintain a calendar of events across the county to facilitate consistent and equal opportunities for social gathering and interpersonal interactions; facilitate the 'sense of community'.

OBJECTIVE R.5 - Maintain a Nassau County that is safe and family-friendly.

R.5. Outcome: Nassau is safe and family-friendly.

Public safety is a key driver in quality of life. Ensuring the County has safe roadways, quick response times, adequate staffing, and proper site design all contribute to a community's sense of safety. The County can employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques when designing new public places.

As the population continues to expand, it will be important to maintain a safe and family friendly community through investments in infrastructure, expand community-oriented events, improve recreation programming opportunities, and encourage social cohesion in the community. A community can feel safer when there are more connections and cohesion among its inhabitants.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.5.1. Continue to invest in public safety.

R.5.2. Continue to support and promote affordable family-friendly events and activities.

R.5.3. Expand access to free County sponsored family-friendly activities and events.

R.5.4. Provide safe and walkable streets.

R.5.5. Increase access to public parks and recreational programing.

R.5.6. Support local schools and nonprofits who provide afterschool and summer care.

OBJECTIVE R.6 - Create economic resiliency by diversifying the tax base; equipping the workforce with the skills and education needed to thrive in a changing economy; and strengthening public infrastructure as a means to attract private investment.

R.6. Outcome: Nassau secures long-term economic prosperity and resilience for its residents and businesses.

Creating economic resiliency necessitates a multifaceted approach, beginning with diversifying the tax base to ensure a stable and robust revenue stream that can weather economic changes. This diversification can be achieved by attracting emerging industries, supporting small businesses, and fostering innovation through tax incentives and grants. Equipping the workforce with the skills and education needed to thrive in a changing economy is another essential component of creating economic resiliency. As industries evolve and new technologies emerge it is important to have training programs and vocational education opportunities to empower residents to adapt and excel. Additionally, strengthening public infrastructure, such as transportation networks, utilities, and digital connectivity, can attract private investment and stimulate economic growth while also enhancing the quality of life for residents.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.6.1. Nassau County will adopt a 2050 Comprehensive Plan that identifies and entitles future employment centers consistent with the Vision 2050 Preferred Growth Scenario.

R.6.2. Strengthen partnerships with educational institutions, trade groups, nonprofits, and the business community to expand vocational programs, development of skilled trades, and to create a workforce pipeline that supports target industries.

R.6.3. Invest in infrastructure in or near designated employment centers to create shovel-ready sites.

OBJECTIVE R.7 - Improve stormwater management systems, water quality, and support sustainable development techniques.

R.7. Outcome: Stormwater management adequately protects the natural and built environments and promotes sustainable growth.

Effective stormwater management helps prevent flooding and pollution, and improves water quality. Nassau County's new Stormwater Drainage Department is creating an inventory of the current stormwater system, including drainage easements and culverts. Once the system is fully understood, the County can implement best practices for stormwater management to promote sustainable growth and reduce the effects of rain events. Stormwater ponds, which have been required in Florida for new developments for years, are designed to manage runoff but can also serve multiple purposes, such as providing open space and protecting local biodiversity.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.7.1. Consider creating new and expanding Volume Sensitive Areas.

R.7.2. Maintain the existing 60 percent Open Space requirement for lands in a Special Flood Hazard Area.

R.7.3. Update the 2012 countywide stormwater management plan.

R.7.4. Consider master stormwater plans for specific areas, e.g. Timber to Tides Design Overlay.

R.7.5. Continue to partner with the City of Fernandina Beach to create a master stormwater plan for Amelia Island.

R.7.6. Support the restoration of degraded wetlands and promote the establishment of aquifer recharge areas.

R.7.7. Stewardship of water resources (potable, sewer, reuse, and stormwater) is managed to promote business and job growth.

R.7.8. Stewardship of water resources (potable, sewer, reuse, and stormwater) is managed to protect environmentally sensitive areas.

OBJECTIVE R.8 - Implement landscaping and site design standards to reduce heat absorption and improve air quality.

R.8. Outcome: Nassau mitigates the urban heat island effect, allowing for cleaner air to breathe, and creating a more comfortable environment for residents.

Nassau County is home to state parks, forests, a national preserve, wildlife management areas, and local parks. In addition to these natural areas, the tree canopy and landscaped spaces contribute to the environment. While development has removed some of the native vegetation, County code requirements ensure vegetation, landscape buffers, and open space are included in new developments.

The County can take steps to further improve the natural environment. A tree canopy assessment involves inventorying the trees in the community, including their number, species, age, and health. This data helps determine the environmental and economic benefits of the tree canopy and identifies areas where new native trees could be planted to improve coverage.

ACTIONS & STRATEGIES

R.8.1. Maintain and expand partnerships to plant trees and native landscapes on public lands and rights-of-way.

R.8.2. Consider expanded funding for the Amelia Island Tree Planting Program.

R.8.3. Consider amendments to local land development regulations to increase the number of trees required in asphalt and concrete parking areas.

R.8.4. Consider public policy that provides incentives and flexible land development regulations for maintaining native landscapes and tree cover.

R.8.5. Through conservation programs, secure native landscapes and mature forests in perpetuity.

Implementation

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The success of the Vision Plan will be measured through the implementation actions. The planing process ensures that future development can occur in an organized and consolidated fashion. The future of Nassau County will be shaped by the policies and recommendations laid out in this plan.

Vision 2050's directives will often require interpretation, adaptability, and flexibility. The recommendations should be thoughtfully approached and evaluated based on compliance and implementation with the goals and initiatives set forth within this plan.

County representatives, staff, and dedicated citizens make up the "champions" of the plan. Their roles are crucial to the effective implementation of the plan. On the right is a sidebar to discuss the roles and responsibilities of various groups in correlation with the plan.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Implementation will need coordination from a host of community leaders, including individual citizens, appointed and elected officials, and outside agencies. Recognizing that the County has a responsibility to partner with all local, state, and federal public and private organizations that can assist in bettering Nassau County is essential for its growth and development. At a minimum, this includes cooperation with:

- » Nassau County elected and appointed officials;
- » County administration and staff
- » Nassau County Prosperity Alliance
- » Municipalities (Callahan, Hilliard, Fernandina Beach)
- » Florida Department of Transportation
- » North Florida Transportation Planning Organization
- » North Florida Land Trust
- » Nassau County School Board

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

County Commission, County staff, and the Planning and Zoning Board should assess all decision-making and recommendations for consistency with the Vision Plan as outlined below.

County Commission (BOCC)

- » Adopting amendments to the Plan by ordinance
- » Adopting new or amended land development regulations to implement the plan
- » Approving inter-local agreements
- » Establishing the overall action priorities and timeframes for initiation and completion
- » Considering and approving funding commitments
- » Approving projects, activities and budgets in a manner consistent with this plan
- » Providing policy direction to the Planning & Zoning Board, other boards, and County staff

County Staff

- » Managing day-to-day implementation of the plan, including ongoing coordination
- » Supporting and carrying out capital improvement planning efforts
- » Managing drafting of new or amended land development regulations
- » Conducting studies and developing additional plans
- » Reviewing development, zoning, and other land use applications for consistency with this plan

Planning and Zoning Board (PZB)

- » Making recommendations related to development and redevelopment
- » Ensuring that development is consistent with the vision, guiding principles, objectives, actions, and policies of this plan.

BENCHMARKING AND MONITORING

The County will monitor the plan implementation activities and the corresponding effects on the community environment, prosperity, and livability. Creating a benchmarking and monitoring system will keep a record of the accomplishments and measure the successes within the County. It will also reveal any opportunities that arise to modify or amend Vision 2050.

As part of the ongoing implementation process, benchmarking and monitoring should take place regularly and be summarized in a succinct report. These reports should include a status update on the implementation, important actions and accomplishments occurring over the past year, and identification and recommendation of needed actions and programs to be created and implemented in the coming year. This report should be presented with other County performance reports.

PLAN UPDATE

As the County evolves, the plan has the flexibility to change to maintain community support and relevancy. In order to remain consistent with the community's vision and growth expectations, implementation must allow for adjustments over time. It is recommended that the Plan be revisited at five-year intervals, with a comprehensive update in ten-years, unless otherwise identified as not needed due to the continual benchmarking and monitoring process.

FIVE-YEAR UPDATE

The purpose of the update is to evaluate the original assumptions from the plan regarding growth and development trends, emerging issues, and to determine if remaining proposed action strategies are still relevant. The five year update should include the following:

» A summary of plan amendments and accomplishments to date;

» Changes in trends and issues since the previous plan adoption (e.g., changes in the predicted growth rate and the corporate boundaries; demographic composition; community attitudes; or other social, environmental, or political issues which may affect the feasibility of implementation);

» Conflicts between decisions made and implementation actions yet to be undertaken;

» Changes in law, procedures, or programs which will affect identified implementation actions; and

» A comprehensive re-evaluation of the Implementation Action Plan.

TEN-YEAR UPDATE

The plan should be taken through a full update process every ten years. The ten-year update should include the following:

» Comprehensive re-evaluation of the community's vision for the future;

» Evaluation of action items from this plan that are yet to be considered;

» Re-engagement of the public;

» Re-analysis of the issues and trends related to community growth, transportation, land use, parks and recreation, public facilities and services, and infrastructure; and

» A new plan of action reflective of the refined vision for the future.