



Planning Today for a Better Tomorrow: Martin County in 2070

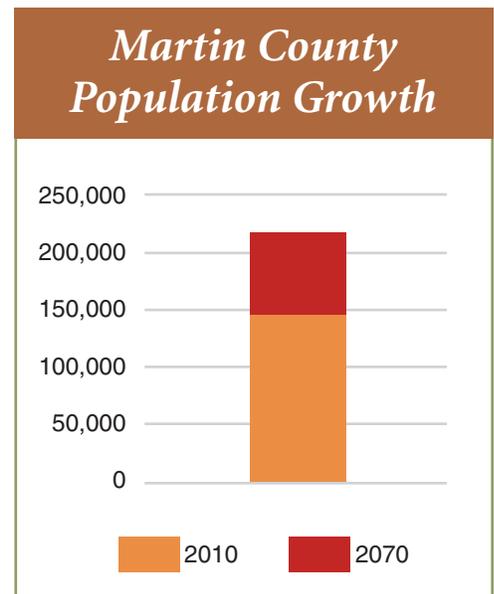
Martin County is expected to grow by about 48% during the period between 2010 and 2070, with population increasing from 146,000 to 216,000 residents. Given this projected growth, how can Martin County accommodate new residents and still maintain its quality of life, economic vitality, and natural areas? And how can it ensure sufficient land and water to meet the needs of people, agriculture and the environment?

What can we do today to plan for a better tomorrow? Florida 2070/Water 2070 offers a starting point.

What is Florida 2070/Water 2070?

In 2016, 1000 Friends of Florida partnered with the University of Florida GeoPlan Center and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to undertake two GIS-based studies to determine the impacts of population growth on Florida's lands and waters. Each study includes three scenarios, the 2010 Baseline based on actual figures, the 2070 Trend if current development patterns continue, and the 2070 Alternative reflecting the impacts of greater sustainability:

- **Florida 2070** focuses on how this state's lands could develop if current development patterns continue versus if more compact development patterns and greater land conservation are undertaken. If we keep developing the way we do now, by 2070 more than a third of Florida's lands will be developed. 2070 Alternative reveals that even modest increases in development densities can result in saving millions of acres of land.
- **Water 2070** reveals that if Florida continues with current development patterns and water use, statewide development-related water demand will more than double by 2070. As an alternative, more compact development patterns and modest increases in water conservation will reduce 2070 water demand, but even more conservation is needed.



As Martin County grows in population, one of the biggest challenges is to ensure sufficient land and water to meet the needs of people, agriculture and the environment.

1000 Friends of Florida gratefully acknowledges the support of the
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and the **Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation**

What does this mean for Martin County?

This report includes extrapolated approximate land development and water demand data for Martin County based on the statewide Florida 2070/Water 2070 figures. This data and related maps and charts offer sobering insights into the future of the county if effective planning is not undertaken.

It is important to note that this study does not incorporate current planning measures in place to prevent inappropriate development on rural lands as planning and zoning provisions are not in effect in perpetuity and can be changed by subsequent County Commissions, for better or worse. For example, the following map series does not reflect Martin County's Urban Services Boundary (USB), which delineates which areas of the county are more appropriate for urban development and which should remain more rural in character.

Let's take a closer look.

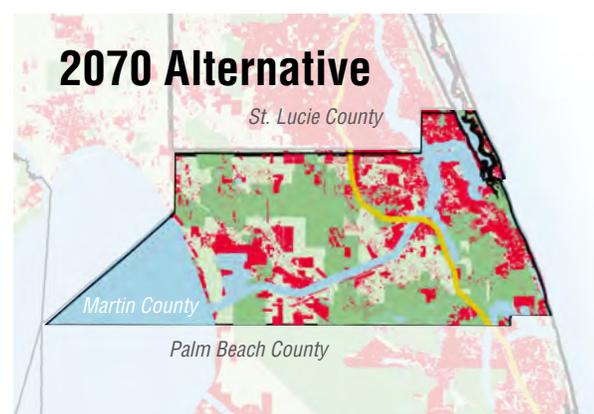
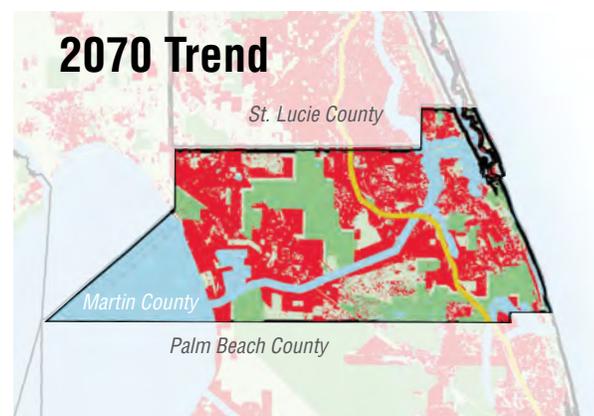
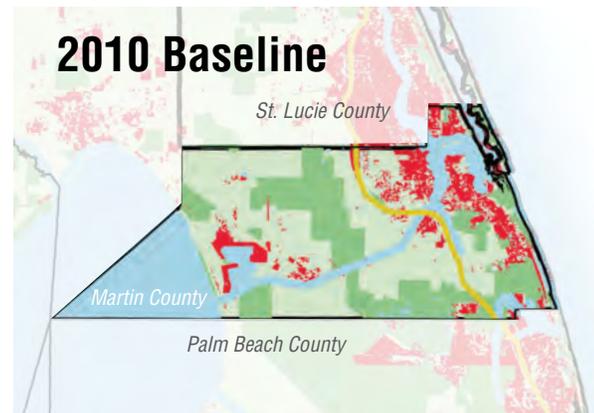
Martin County 2070 – The maps show existing developed and conservation lands in 2010 (Baseline), what will happen in 2070 if current development practices are continued (Trend), and an alternative vision if development is more compact, and more lands are protected (Alternative).

Based on the **2070 Trend** scenario, if patterns of growth and development in Martin County remain the same as in 2010, by 2070:

- **The amount of developed land in Martin County will almost quadruple**, from 14% to 52%, with close to 130,000 additional acres of land developed by 2070.
- **Agricultural lands will be hardest hit.** While in 2010 approximately 36% of Martin County lands were agricultural, by 2070 only 4% will be, a decrease of almost 110,000 acres or 89%. The balance of development will occur on lands used for mining, timber and miscellaneous uses

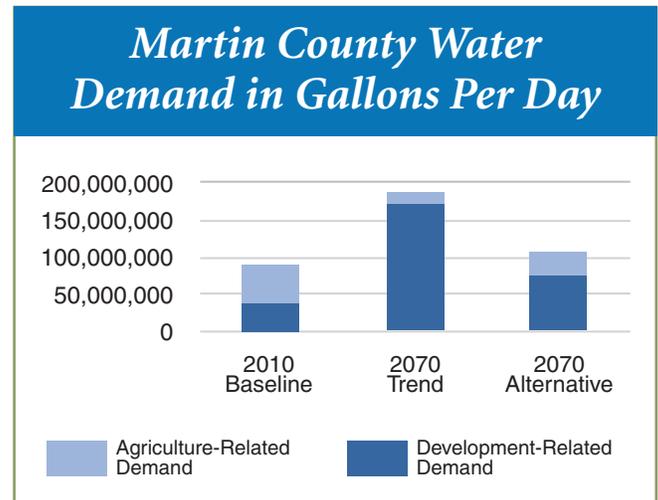
Alternative 2070 shows that if more compact development patterns and a modest increase in land conservation are implemented:

- **The amount of developed land will still almost double, from 14% in 2010 to 27% in 2070.** This further reinforces the importance of maintaining the USB and promoting more compact development in Martin County.
- **Once again, agricultural lands will be hardest hit.** Even with more compact development and land conservation, agricultural lands are projected to take a significant hit.



Martin County Water 2070 – What happens to water demand associated with population growth in Martin County if current patterns of development remain the same as shown in the **2070 Trend** scenario?

- **Development-related water demand increases by a whopping 378% between 2010 and 2070**, due to a combination of more residents and sprawling development patterns which are associated with greater landscape irrigation.
- **Agriculture-related water demand decreases by 72% over the same period**, primarily because of the significant loss of agricultural lands due to encroaching development.



What happens if Martin County follows more compact development patterns, protects more conservation lands, and conserves a modest 20% more water as shown in the **2070 Alternative** scenario?

- **Development-related water demand still more than doubles under the alternative scenario but is close to 60% less than under the 2070 Trend scenario.** Demand would increase by 102% instead of 378%.
- **Greater water conservation measures for new and existing development are essential.**

What can be done to ensure a more sustainable future for Martin County?

Continue to maintain, enhance and implement the Urban Services Boundary – As noted, the Martin County 2070 studies do not reflect the existing Urban Services Boundary (USB). However, the 2070 maps clearly reveal that the USB and its appropriate implementation are essential to protect the county’s rural and agricultural lands from inappropriate development. Following are some measures that further support the USB approach.

Build better communities – Promoting development that is more compact in design is essential to accommodate Martin County’s projected growth in a sustainable manner. Compact development not only saves land but also makes communities more livable and walkable. Strategies include supporting infill and redevelopment in a manner that is sensitive to existing communities. When new areas are developed, they should be near existing communities and infrastructure.

Even modest increases in development density can result in a substantial savings of land . . . The cumulative effect of multiple small land use changes will, over time, shape the future landscape of Martin County for better or worse.

New development and the retrofit of existing development should promote a mixture of homes, shops, schools and offices within close proximity and include a range of housing choices to ensure affordability. It is essential to design for multiple transportation options, including walking, biking and public transportation. Finally, it is important not to destroy the very qualities that make Martin County unique. Care should be taken to protect significant historic and natural resources as development occurs.

Save special places – To protect the region’s fragile water supply, support Everglades restoration and enhance the quality of life in Martin County, it is important to protect vital conservation, agricultural and other working lands like those on Florida Forever and Florida Greenways lists. Strategies include supporting funding for greenways and corridors that protect wildlife habitat and provide recreational opportunities, establishing incentives and increasing funding to help landowners conserve important agricultural lands and other working landscapes, and working to significantly lessen the impact of new development on Florida’s lands and waters.

Reduce personal water use – The Martin County Water Demand chart provides dramatic evidence of the impacts of sprawling development on the county’s water supply. Water 2070 makes it clear that the single most effective strategy to reduce water demand is for individuals to significantly reduce the amount of water used for landscape irrigation. The best option is to select plantings that require little to no irrigation. Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ offers valuable guidance and you may seek formal recognition through this program. Automated irrigation systems place a tremendous and increasing burden on Florida’s water supply. If an automated irrigation system is used, ensure that it is designed and operated to meet strict water conservation criteria. To reduce indoor water consumption, select Florida Water Star certified properties when purchasing a new home, follow Water Star guidelines when remodeling an existing home, and use Water-Sense-labeled high-efficiency appliances.

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Expand public water conservation efforts – While individual action is essential, much also needs to be done by the public sector through education, incentives and requirements to protect the water supply. Local governments can require Florida Friendly Landscaping™ or comparable water conservation strategies for all new development and require permitted water users to monitor the amount of groundwater used. Additionally, local governments can partner with developers to establish conservation goals, water budgets and water use monitoring strategies prior to the approval of new development. Public utilities should explore establishing conservation rate structures that incentivize lower levels of water consumption and constructing and incentivizing the use of reclaimed water facilities. Local governments and citizens should also urge the state to increase funding and outreach for the Florida Water Star and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ programs, update the Florida Building Code to require indoor and outdoor water efficiency standards for new construction and major remodeling, and adopt registration and training standards for irrigation professionals.

What’s next?

Now is the time to start planning for a more sustainable future for Martin County. Developing and implementing additional meaningful planning strategies that keep urban lands urban and rural lands rural are paramount, including more compact development patterns, increased protection of sensitive natural lands, and significant water conservation measures. This is essential to protect Martin County’s lands and waters – and the people, wildlife and farms so dependent on these resources.

To help do your part, stay engaged, help shape and participate in critical planning processes, attend hearings, meet with elected officials and staff, talk with your neighbors, share your knowledge on why planning matters. And remember to conserve water!

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1000 Friends of Florida

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