



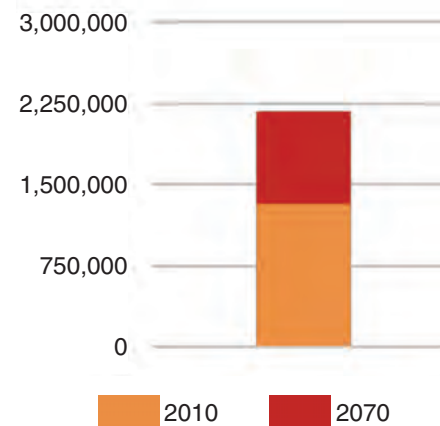
Planning Today for a Better Tomorrow: Palm Beach County in 2070

What does the future hold for Palm Beach County? Can it accommodate the more than 850,000 new residents anticipated between 2010 and 2070 and still maintain its quality of life and natural lands?

As Palm Beach 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. The appropriate balance is essential for the county's economic health, which is based heavily on agriculture, tourism, growth and a seasonal population. Of these, growth is a double-edged sword as it jeopardizes the fragile Everglades ecosystem and threatens the future of the region's water supply.

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

Palm Beach County Population Growth



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.

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and the **Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation**

What does this mean for Palm Beach County?

Based on the statewide Florida 2070/Water 2070 figures, this report includes extrapolated approximate land development and water demand data for Palm Beach County. 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 Palm Beach County's Managed Growth Tier System, which delineates five distinct geographic regions with appropriate development and densities for each: Urban/Suburban, Exurban, Rural, Agriculture Reserve, and the Glades.

Let's take a closer look.

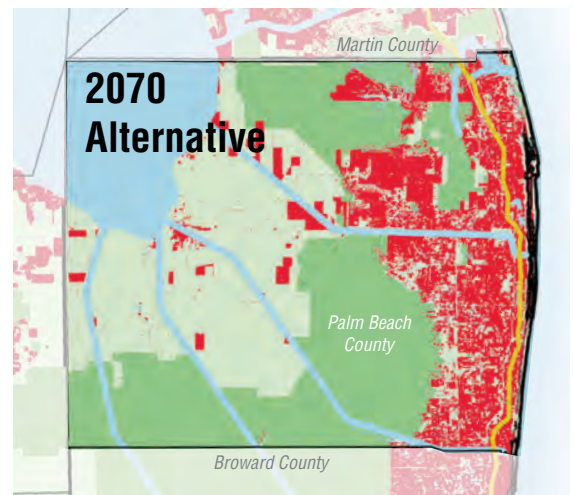
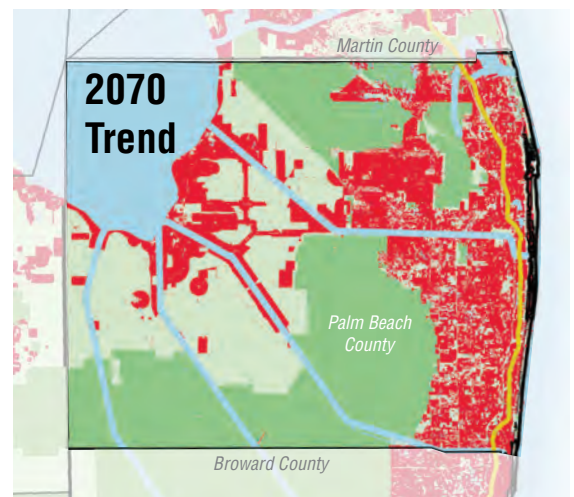
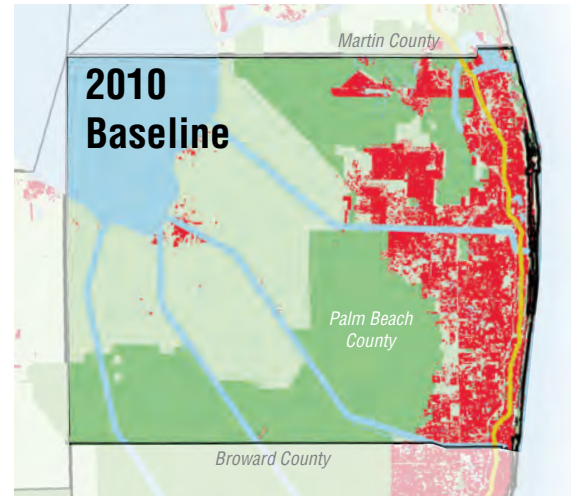
Palm Beach County 2070 – The maps to the right show existing developed and conservation lands in 2010 (Baseline), what will happen in 2070 if current development practices are continued (Trend), and an alternative vision if development is more compact, and more lands are protected (Alternative).

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

- **The amount of developed land in Palm Beach County will almost double**, from 17% to 30%, with more than 150,000 additional acres of land developed.
- **Agricultural lands will be hardest hit.** While in 2010 approximately 35% of Palm Beach County lands were agricultural, by 2070 only 23% will be, a decrease of almost 144,000 acres or 34%. The balance of development will occur on lands used for mining, timber and miscellaneous uses

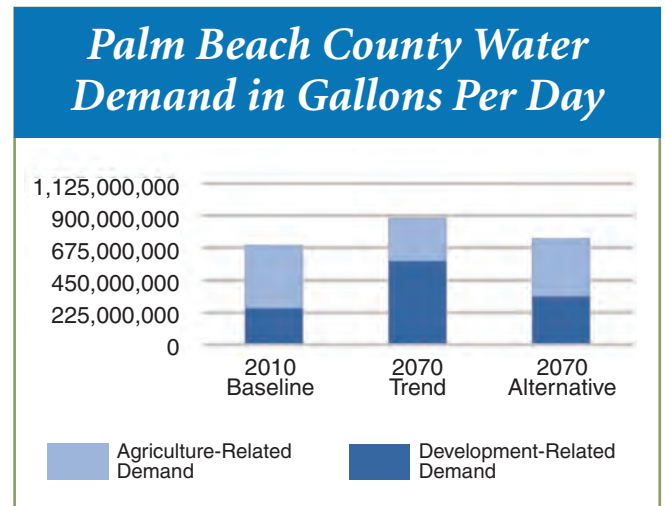
Alternative 2070 shows that if more compact development patterns and a modest increase in land conservation are implemented:

- **The amount of developed land will increase by a more modest 43,340 acres, from 17% in 2010 to 21% in 2070.** This contrasts with the more than 150,000 acres of lands projected for development under the above trend scenario.
- **About 107,000 more acres of mostly agricultural lands will remain in agricultural use** when compared to the 2070 Trend scenario.



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

- **Development-related water demand more than doubles, increasing by a whopping 131% 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 30% over the same period**, primarily because of the significant loss of agricultural lands due to encroaching development.



What happens if Palm Beach 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 is 42% less** than under the 2070 Trend scenario. Demand would increase by 33% instead of 131%.
- **Greater water conservation measures would make the reduction in demand even more significant.**
- **Agriculture water demand is reduced by 7%** when compared with 2010, with most of the water reduction attributable to the loss of agricultural lands.

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

Continue to maintain, enhance and implement the Managed Growth Tier System – As noted, the Palm Beach County 2070 studies do not reflect the existing Managed Growth Tier System. However, the 2070 maps clearly reveal that the Tier System 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 Tier System approach.

Build better communities – Promoting development that is more compact in design is essential to accommodate Palm Beach 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. 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 Palm Beach County unique. Care should be taken to protect significant historic and natural resources as development occurs.

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 Palm Beach County for better or worse.

Save special places – To protect the region’s fragile water supply, support Everglades restoration and enhance the quality of life in Palm Beach 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 Palm Beach 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. Fortunately, available strategies can help all of us reduce the amount of water we use.

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.

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 also should 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 Palm Beach County. Developing and implementing additional meaningful planning strategies that keep urban lands urban and rural lands rural are paramount, including the Tiered Growth System, more compact development patterns, increased protection of sensitive natural lands, and significant water conservation measures. This is essential to protect Palm Beach 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!

Now is the time to start planning for a more sustainable future to protect Palm Beach County's lands and waters – and the people, wildlife and farms so dependent on these resources.

1000 Friends of Florida

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