

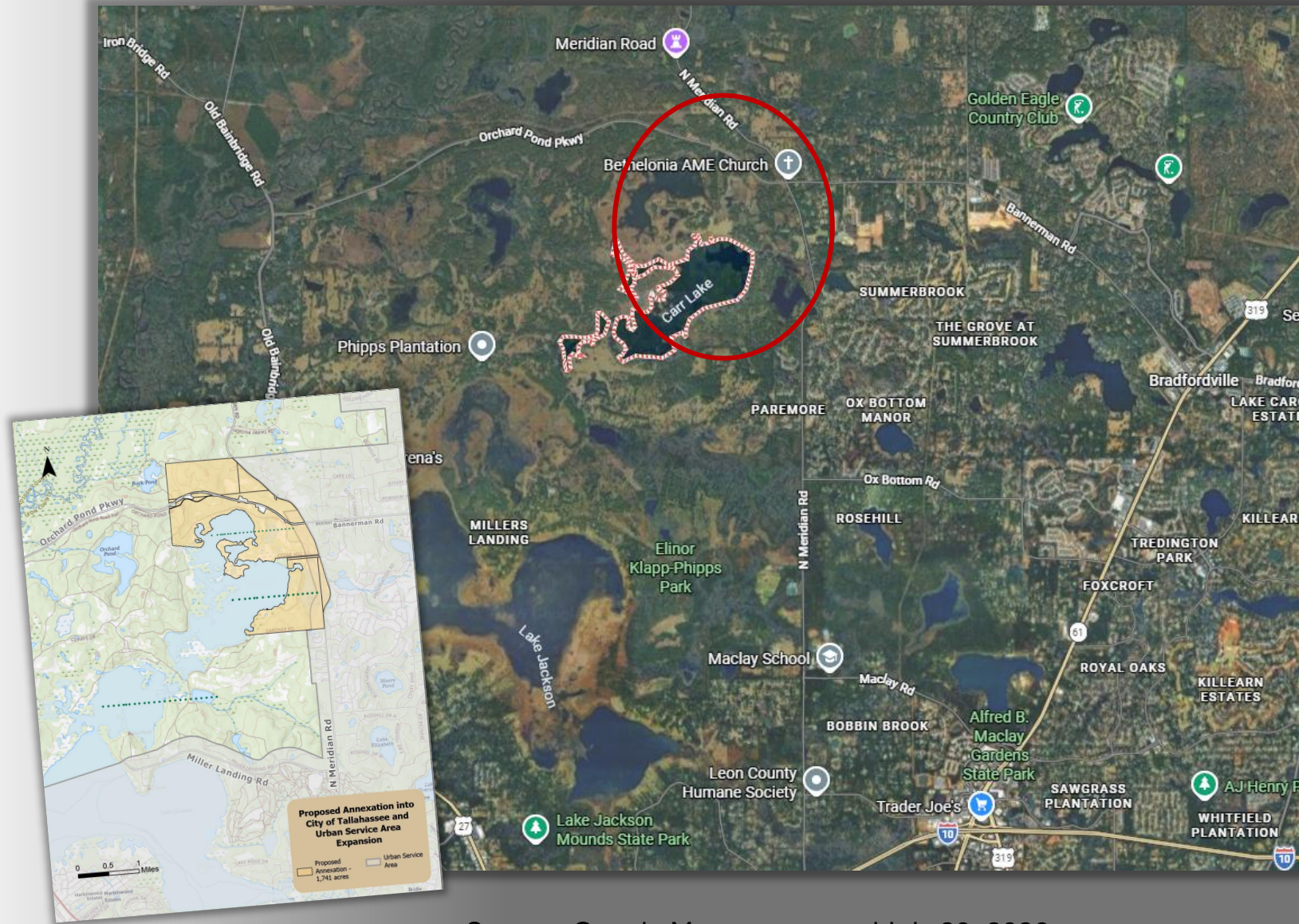
A close-up photograph of a pond surface covered with numerous lily pads. The lily pads are mostly green, with some showing signs of aging or damage, including brown spots and edges. The water is dark and reflects the light. The image is used as a background for a presentation slide.

Welcome

Sophie Wacongne-Speer
Friends of Lake Jackson

What is Proposed?

- At 6 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, the Tallahassee City Commission will hold its **only Public Hearing** on the proposed annexation of 1,742 acres of designated rural land into the City.
- It is anticipated that **the City will vote on the annexation immediately after.**
- The City is **claiming this will have minimal fiscal impact** because the land will remain rural.
- **But the ONLY reason to annex this land is to facilitate future major development**, which will have significant fiscal, environmental, traffic, and other impacts.



Source: Google Maps, accessed July 29, 2026



Leon County Update – Commissioner Rick Minor
The Property Owner Perspective – Gary Hunter
Water Quality Issues – Sophie Wacongne-Speer
Traffic Impacts – Lynne Takacs
Planning Issues & Fiscal Impacts – Vivian Young, FAICP
What Can We Do – Sophie Wacongne-Speer

Discussion



Leon County Update

Commissioner Rick Minor
Leon County Commission District 3

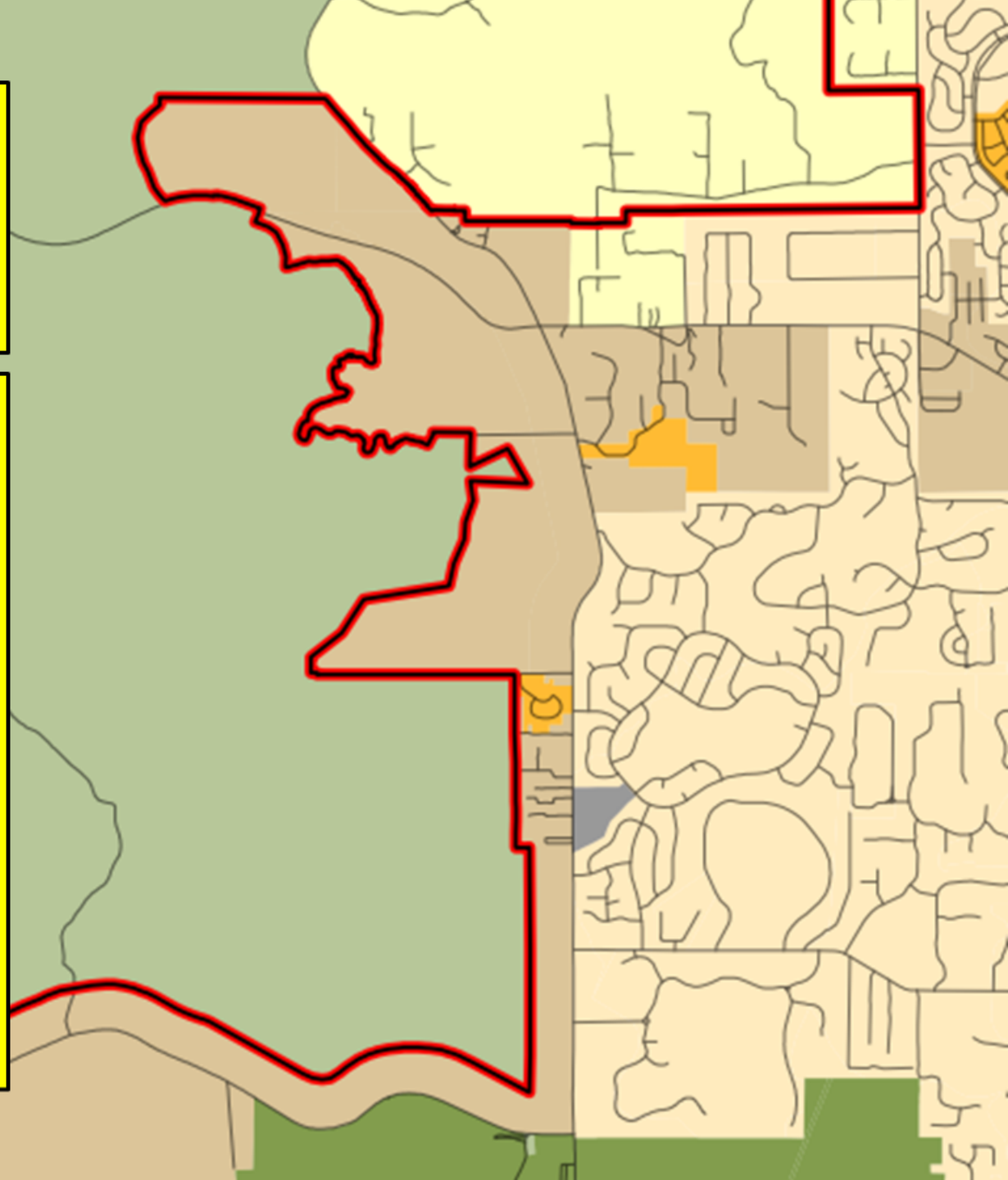
What is the Comprehensive Plan?



- Also known as the “Comp Plan”
- The **comprehensive plan** for Tallahassee and Leon County
 - It serves as a long-range policy document that guides future growth and development by establishing goals, objectives, and policies for economic, social, physical, and environmental issues.
 - **It acts as a blueprint for how the community will develop over the next 25 years**, addressing everything from land use and housing to transportation, utilities, and parks.
 - This joint County-City plan provides a unified vision and is implemented through land development codes and other regulations.

May 13, 2025 – Initial Proposal in first version of the Comp Plan Rewrite

- Would change 2,082 acres of land designated as **Rural** to **Lake Protection**
- Would **expand the Urban Services Area** to accommodate the newly designated Lake Protection land
- By some estimates, these changes could have allowed up to 20,000 housing units and millions of square feet of commercial space.



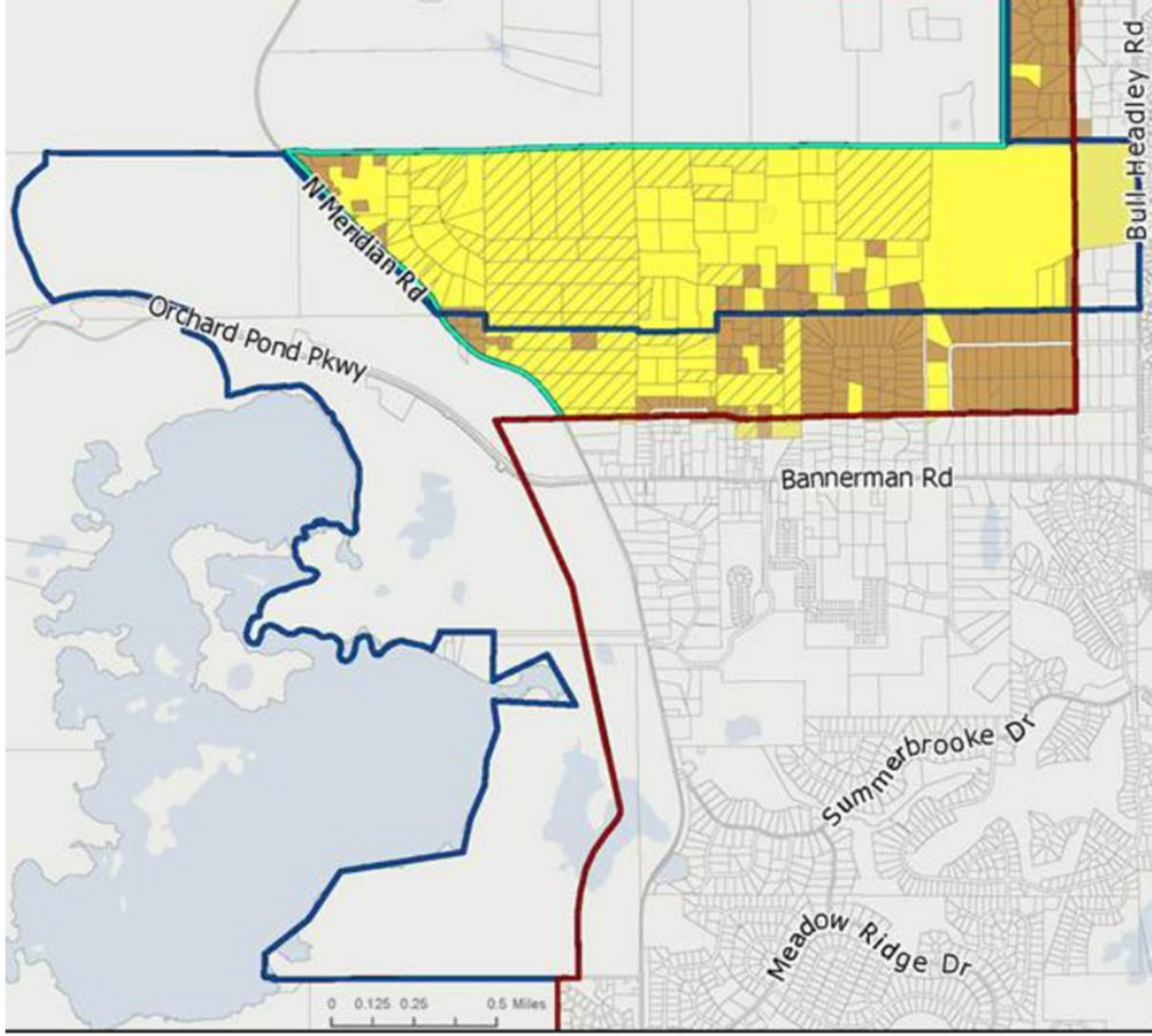
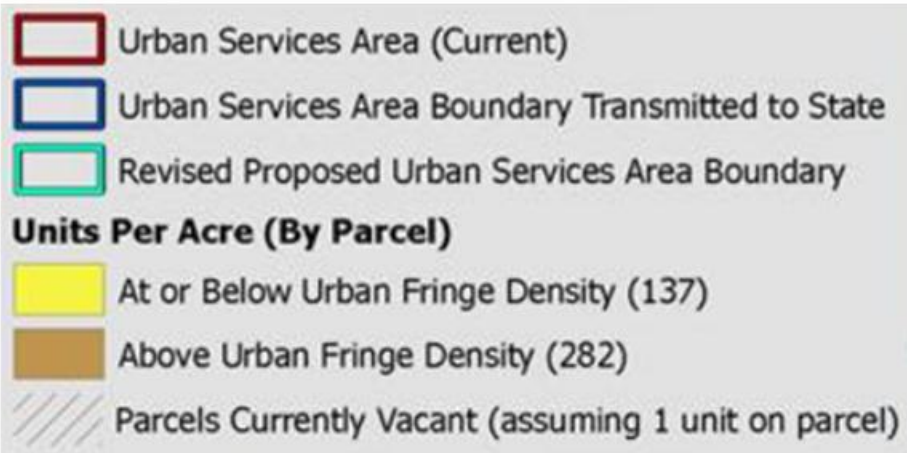
Feedback on the initial version of the Comp Plan

- Letter from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
- 1000 Friends of Florida
- Friends of Lake Jackson
- Tall Timbers

WEST of Meridian Road

Planning staff rescinded its recommendation that the Urban Services Area be expanded west of Meridian Road. This was based on:

- Public feedback
- 2 letters from FDEP
- Concerns from multiple conservation groups and environmental experts.



- **November 18, 2025** - The Leon County Commission rescinded the initial proposal -- for land west of Meridian Road -- to expand the Urban Services Area and change more than 2,000 acres of Rural land to Lake Protection.
- **December 9, 2025** - the County Commission voted to formally adopt the latest version of the Comp Plan.

**June 16, 2026 –
County receives from the
City a voluntary annexation
request initiated by the
property owner**

- 1,741.9 acres in five parcels

**Ordinance No. 26-O-10
CEDAR HILL ROAD & NORTH MERIDIAN
PROPOSED ANNEXATION**

Parcel IDs:

14-18-20-206-0000 24-11-20-002-0000
24-01-20-401-0000 24-13-20-002-0000
24-02-20-401-0000

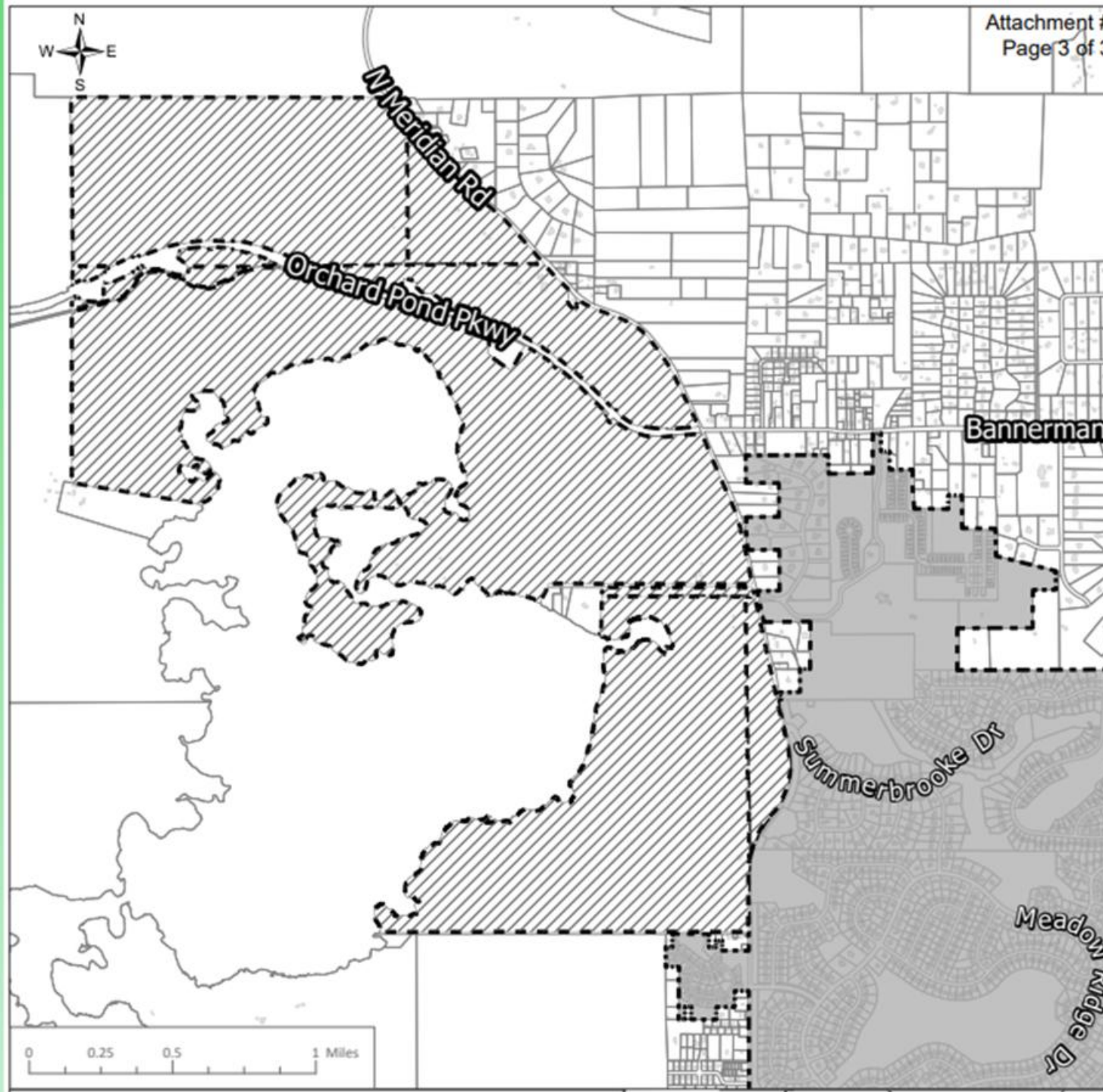
LEGEND

 **CURRENT CITY LIMITS**

 **PROPOSED CITY LIMITS**

TALLAHASSEE-LEON COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Page 799



- **July 14, 2026** – Leon County Commission reviews the annexation request.
 - The Leon County Commission can object only on narrow criteria, such as the existence of pockets/enclaves and contiguity.
 - County Attorney's office identifies **at least 4 pockets/enclaves** and raises **issues of contiguity**. Thus, the County determines that the annexation request is not compliant with Florida law.
 - County Commission votes unanimously, 7-0, to object to the annexation request.

What's the process going forward?

Per the County-City Interlocal Agreement for Annexation Procedures (IAAP):

- County and City staff have up to 30 days to **confer** and resolve the issues related to the objection.
- If no resolution, the County and City staff then proceed to **non-binding mediation** and have up to 60 days.
- If still no resolution, **the County may choose to pursue litigation.**

The latest updates

- **July 21, 2026** – County formally notifies the City of the objection.
- **July 24, 2026** – County and City staff confer on the objection but are unable to resolve the issues with pockets/enclaves and contiguity.
- **Scheduled for 1pm, August 10, 2026** – County and City will conduct a mediation session
- **Scheduled for September 9, 2026** – City Commission will decide whether to approve the annexation request.

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a pond filled with numerous green lily pads. The lily pads are mostly circular and have a vibrant green color, though some show signs of aging with yellowing or reddish-brown spots. They are densely packed in the center and right side of the frame, while the left side is mostly dark, suggesting deep water or a shadow. The water surface is dark and reflects the light, creating a shimmering effect. The overall composition is serene and natural.

The Property Owner Perspective

Gary Hunter
Holtzman Vogel

Water Quality Impacts

Sophie Wacongne-Speer
Friends of Lake Jackson

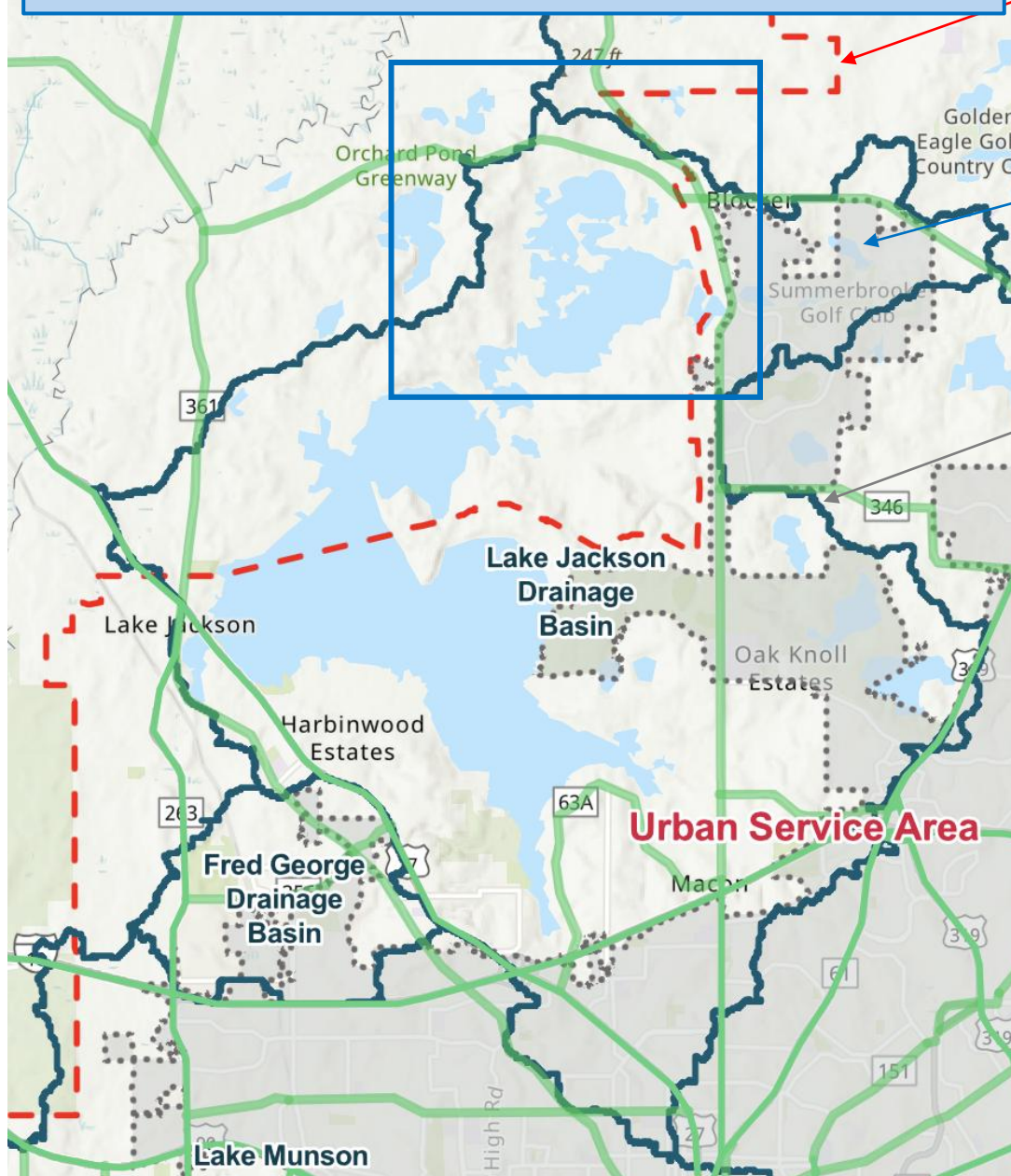


Carr Lake and Annexation



July 30th Community Meeting – Northside Community Center

Lake Jackson Aquatic Preserve since 1973
Outstanding Florida Water since 1979

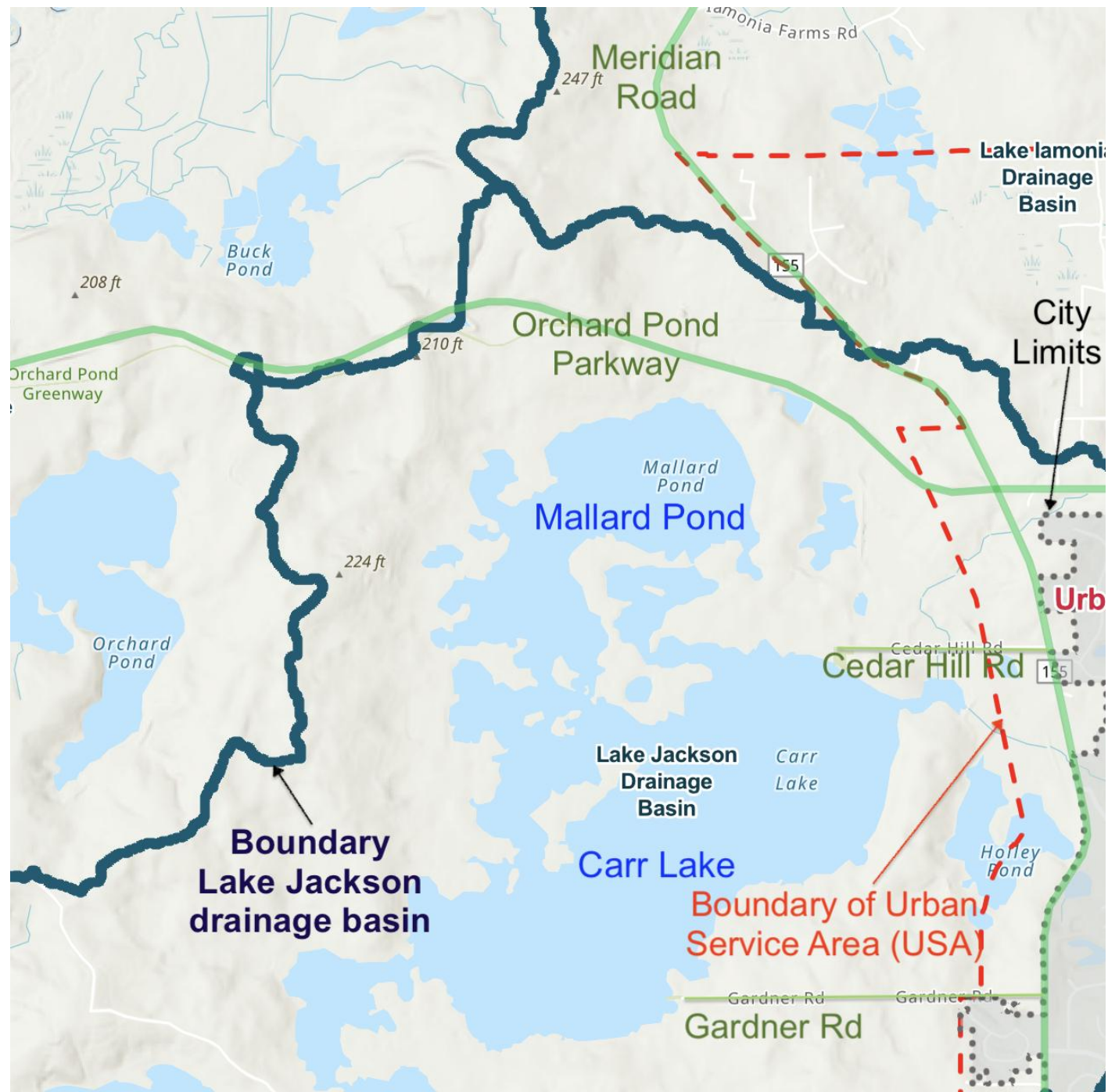


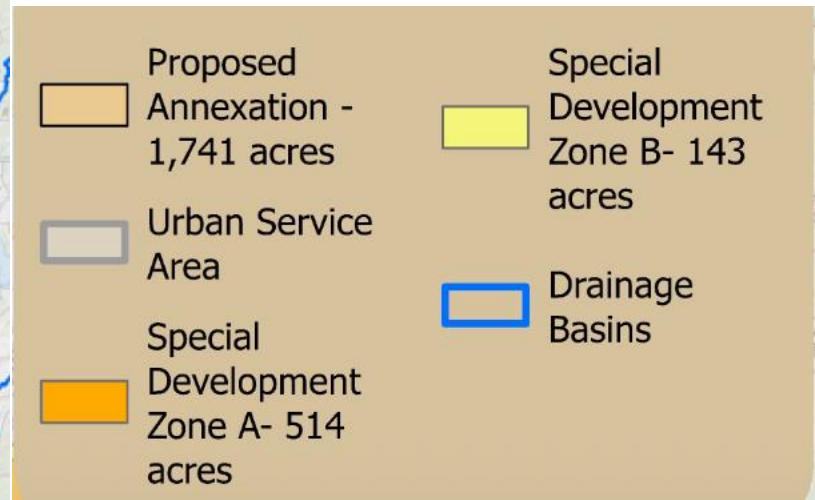
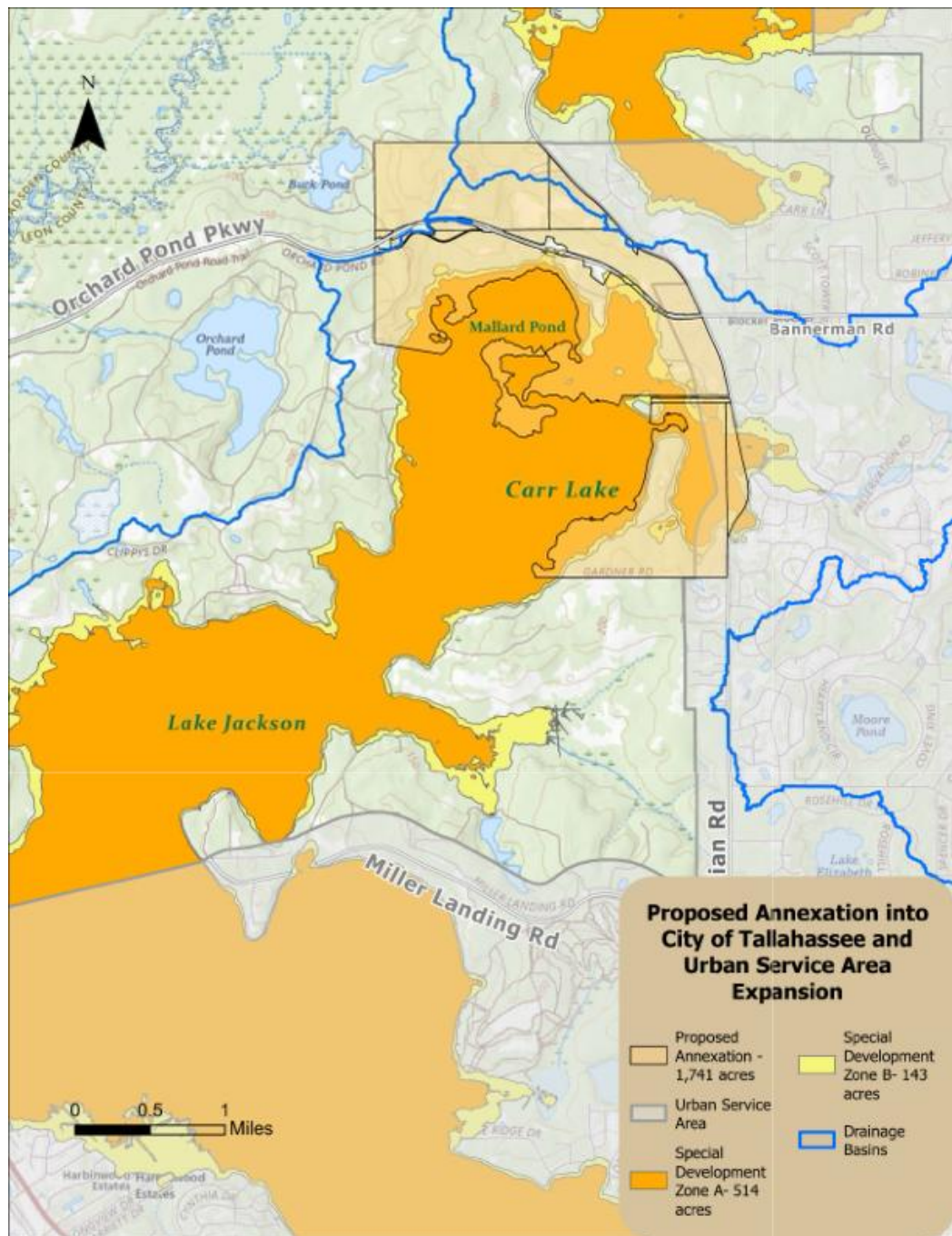
Urban Service Area

Boundary of the Lake Jackson drainage basin

City Limit

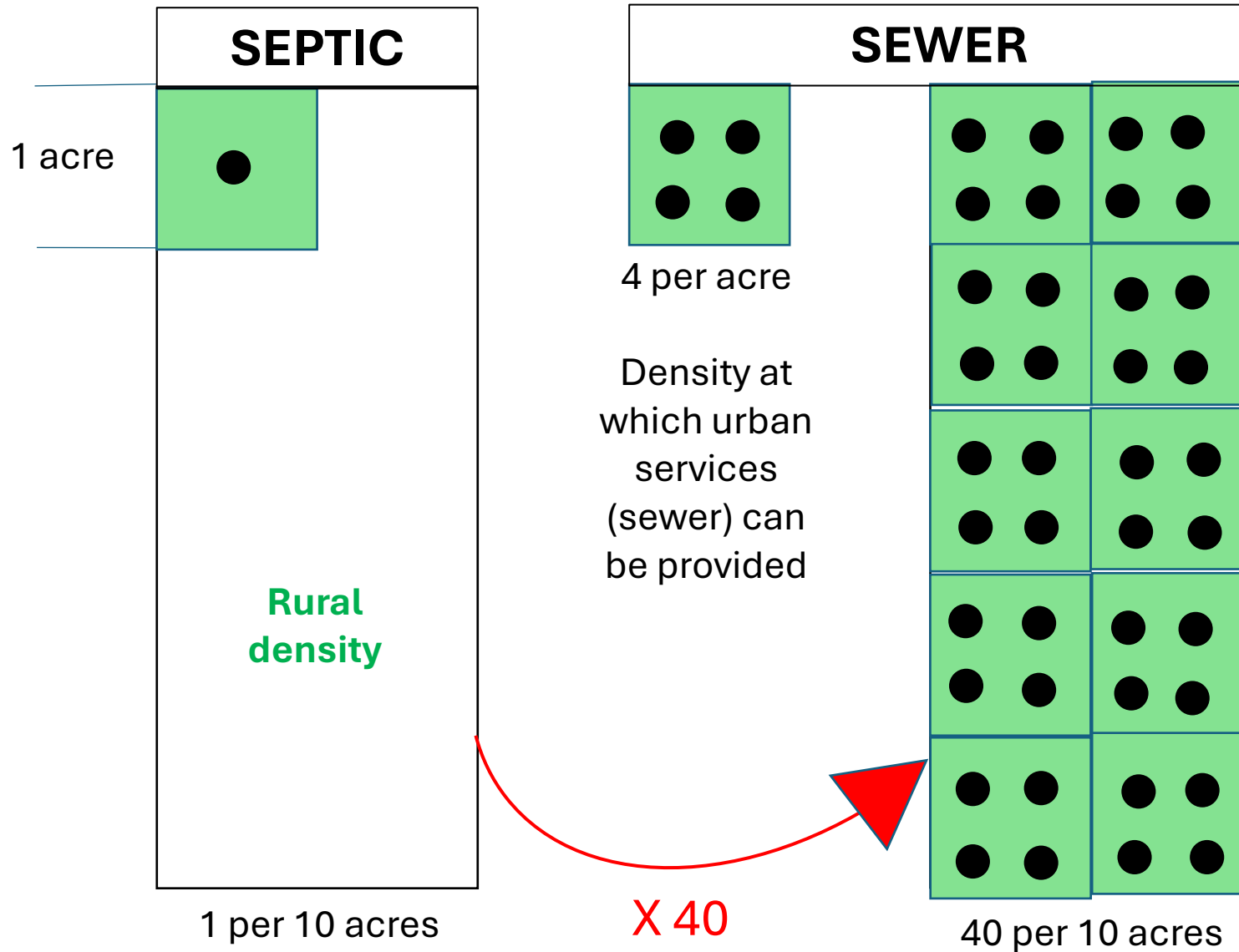
Urban Services Area
It is to be developed at urban levels of density and can expect urban infrastructure and services





Zone A:
89 ft or water edge
to 100 ft msl

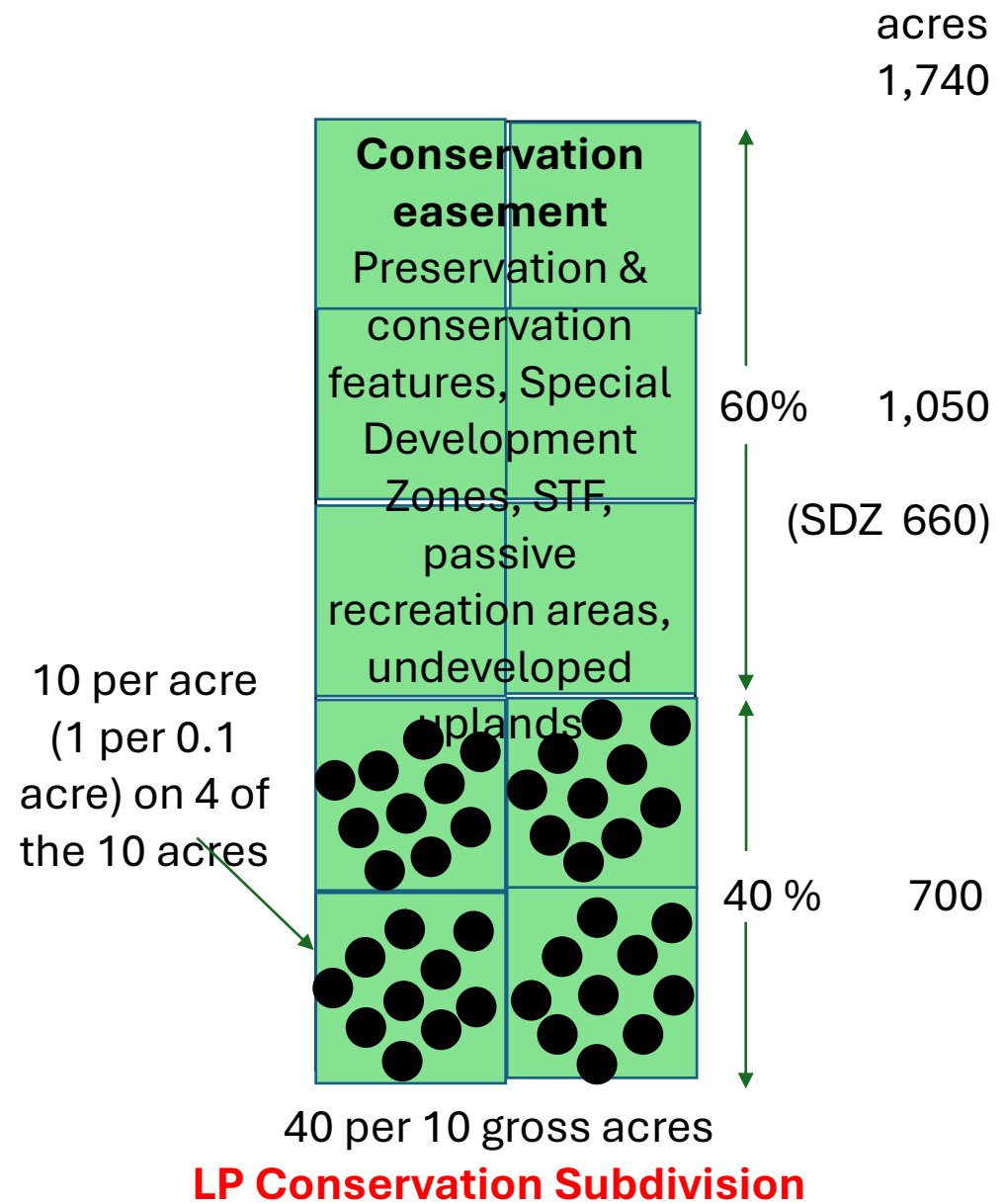
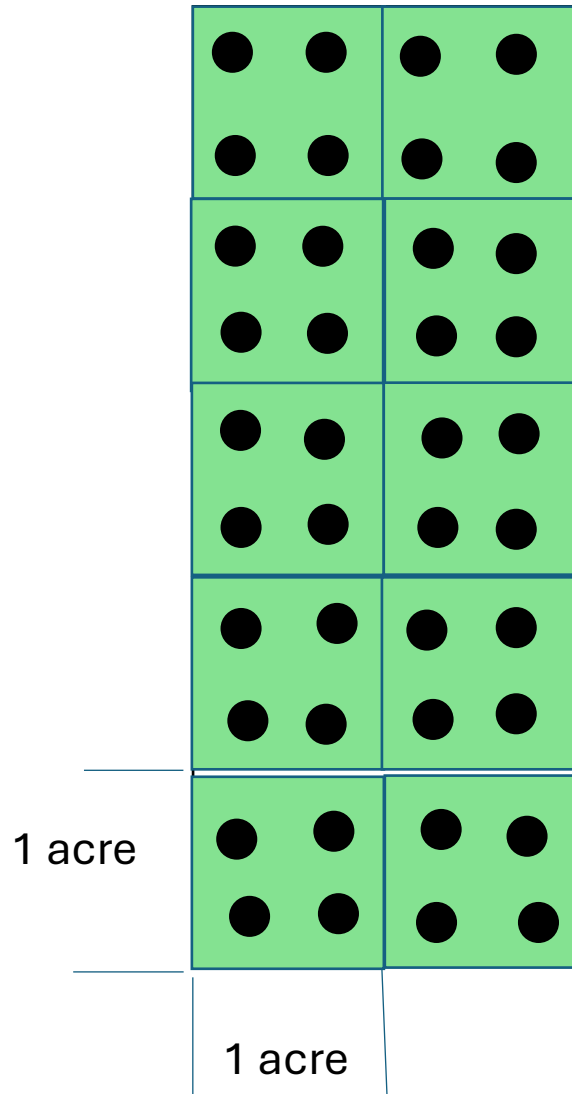
Zone B:
100 ft to 110 ft msl

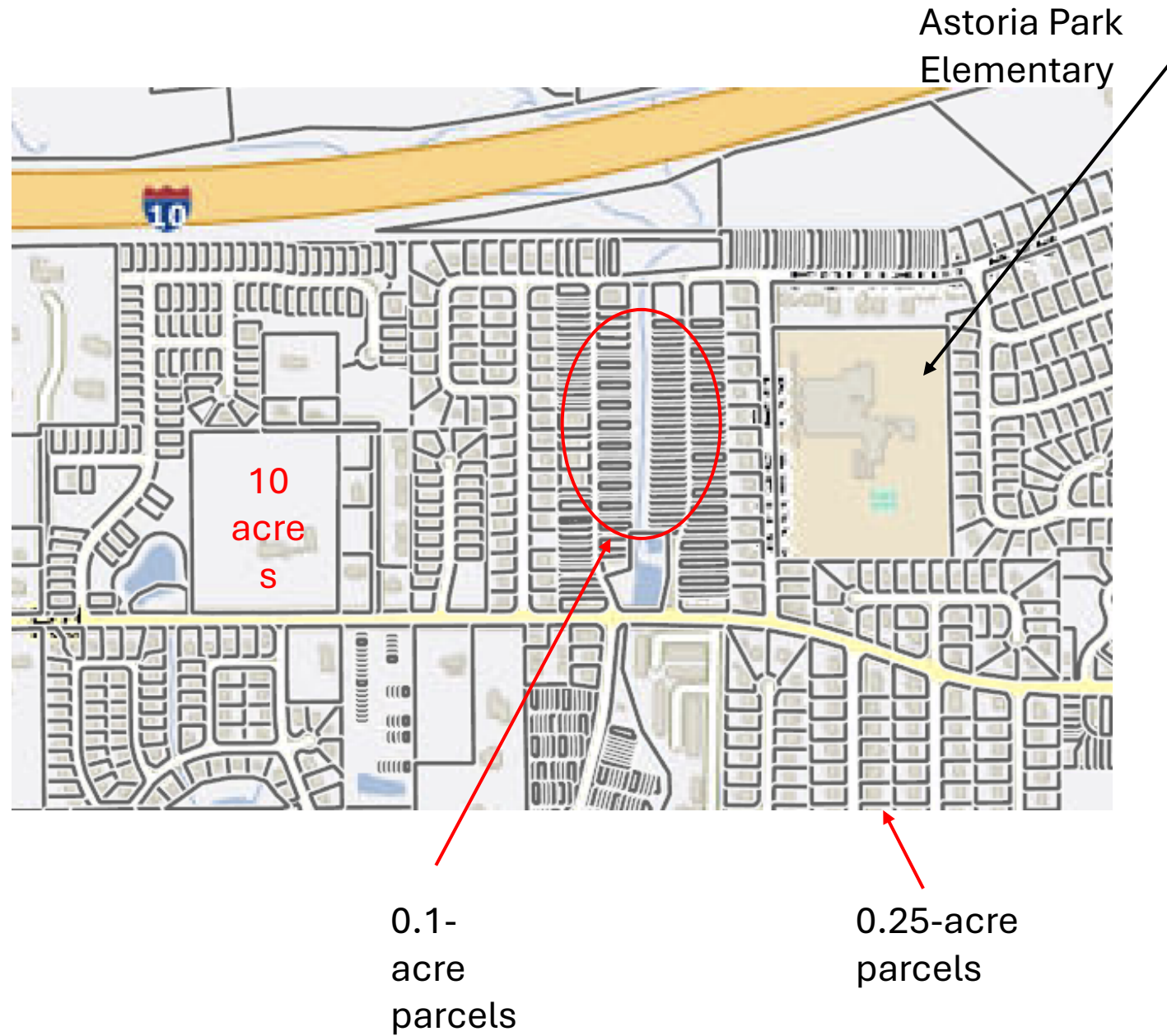


Nutrient Loading from wastewater (WW) and stormwater (SW)

1 WW + 1 SW

0 WW + 40 SW







Creator: Picasa

The background of the slide is a photograph of a pond filled with lily pads. The lily pads are mostly green and oval-shaped, floating on dark water. Some lily pads show signs of aging or damage, with some having brown spots or edges. The lighting is soft, creating a calm and natural atmosphere.

Traffic Impacts

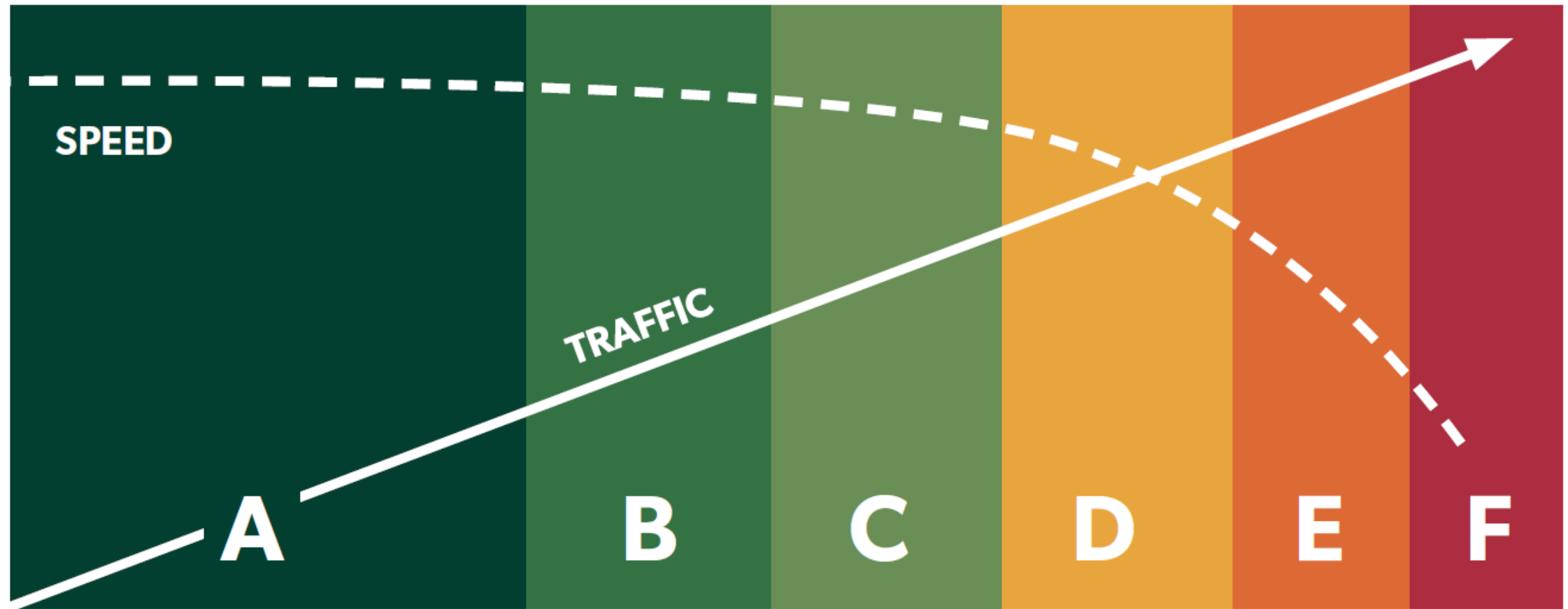
Lynne Takacs
Before We Build TLH

WE KNOW

Meridian Road was not
built for urban-scale
development.



Levels of Service Ratings



Meridian is a Level of Service D Road



Only Two Lanes



Limited Access to North-South Alternatives



Limited Turn Lanes & Shoulders



Three Schools in 11 Miles



10
Soccer
Fields



19
Tennis
Courts



11
Baseball
Fields

LEON COUNTY PLANNING
DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Meridian Road
Between Ox Bottom
& Bannerman
Roads is
ONLY

40

CARS AWAY FROM

100%

CAPACITY

WE KNOW

If this development is built, the traffic it generates will cause the road to fail and require a major expansion.



“The corridor already experiences significant peak-hour congestion. Without major capacity improvements... additional development in the surrounding area would likely push the roadway to experience heavier congestion and longer travel times during commute periods. Such conditions would impact the local transportation network, increasing congestion at nearby intersections.

– Status Report on the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan
Land Use and Mobility Element Update, Nov. 18, 2025

WE KNOW

Road expansions
don't happen
overnight.



CASE STUDY:

Bannerman Road Expansion Project



21
YEARS



\$165
MILLION



4.6
MILES

WE KNOW

Road projects
are incredibly
expensive.



THE COST OF THREE BLUEPRINT ROAD EXPANSION PROJECTS

Exceed Half a Billion Dollars

and Will Add or Improve Less than 15 Miles of Roadway

Project	Length	Initial Estimate	Current Estimate	Increase	Increase Percentage
Bannerman Road	4.6 Miles	\$33.3 M	\$164.7 M	+\$131.4 M	395%
Airport Gateway	4 Miles	\$58.7 M	\$138.6 M	+ \$79.9 M	136%
Welaunee Boulevard	6 Miles	\$78 M	\$202.3 M	+ \$124.3 M	159%
TOTAL	14.6 Miles	\$170 M	\$505.6 M	+\$335.6 M	197%

WE KNOW

The people on the hook for paying for roadway expansions is every person in this room.



How it Works:



WE KNOW

This is not the
only cost.



Tharpe Street		Bannerman Road
Study Calls for Road Expansion + Sidewalks	2005	
Design Stalled – Out of Money	2009	
	2012	Study Calls for Road Expansion
Becomes a Blueprint Project ESTIMATED COST: \$53.2 MILLION	2014	Becomes a Blueprint Project ESTIMATED COST: \$33.3 MILLION
	2020	Scope Increased NEW ESTIMATE: \$165M
Scope Reduced, Road Expansion Nixed	2023	
	Today	Construction set to begin

A close-up photograph of a pond filled with numerous green lily pads. The lily pads are mostly circular and have a vibrant green color, though some show signs of aging with yellowing or reddish-brown spots. They are densely packed in the center and right side of the frame, while the left side is mostly dark, suggesting deep water or a shadow. The water surface is dark and reflects the light, creating a shimmering effect.

Planning Issues

Vivian Young, FAICP
1000 Friends of Florida

It Would Create a Domino Effect

If the land is not annexed, the property owner is allowed to develop approximately **170 residential units** on this 1,742-acre parcel of rural land.

But annexation is the first step toward allowing significant additional development on this land, potentially allowing thousands of homes and commercial development.



Future Development Options

Incorporation into the Urban Services Area

- Would require a demonstration of need
- Zoning would need to change from Rural to Lake Protection, which allows much greater density

Large-Scale Amendment

- Would require demonstration of need and more detailed data and analysis
- If added to the USA, zoning would need to change from Rural to Lake Protection, which allows much greater density

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

- Allows clustered development
- Requires PUD Concept Plan & PUD Final Development Plan

Why give the green light to develop this property with so many unknowns?



The City Has the Legal Right to Deny the Annexation

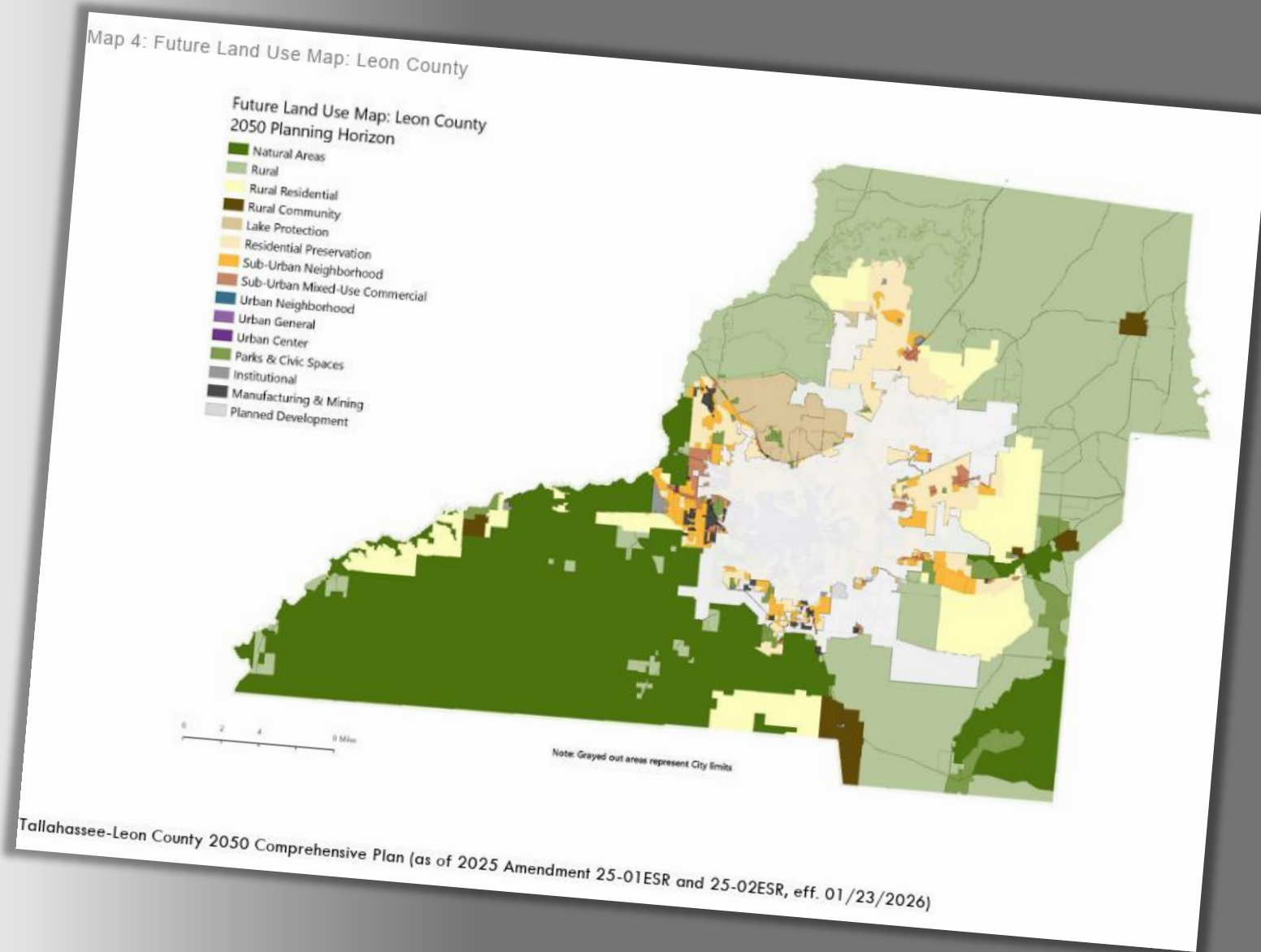
- This is a voluntary annexation, meaning it was initiated by the property owner.
- Florida case law confirms that local governments have the legal right to deny voluntary annexations outright.
- Denying annexation does not take away the owner's "property rights," as about 1 unit per 10 acres of land is still allowed.

The City of Tallahassee does not have to "justify" denying the annexation. However, the City's own adopted planning documents provide a clear rationale why this annexation is inappropriate:

Photo by Russell Grace

The Property Has Not Been Included in Adopted Future Development Plans

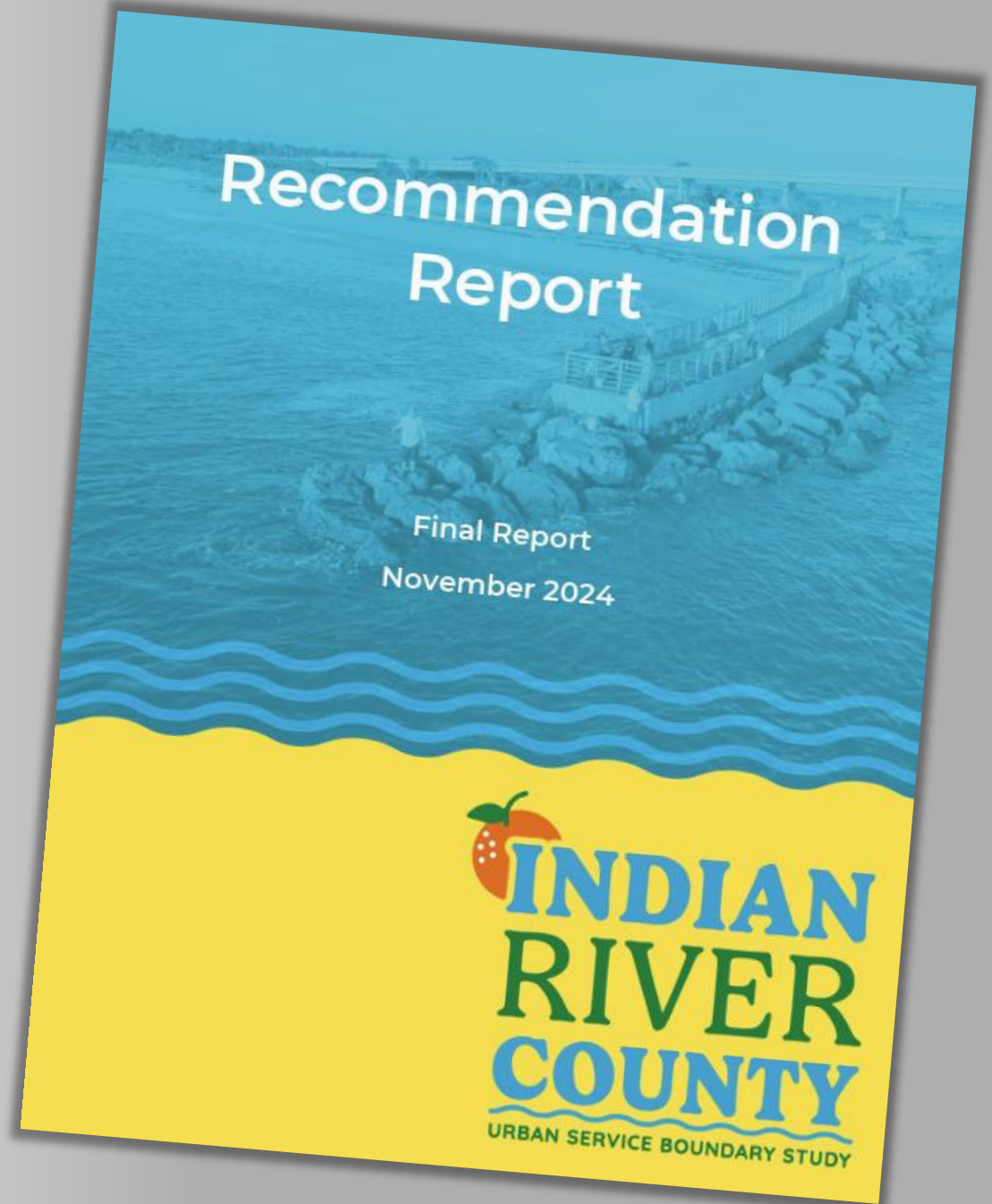
- The December 2025 Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan update did not incorporate this area into the **Urban Services Area**
- It is not included in the City's **annexation plan or annexation map**
- It is not designated a “**Rural Community**” in the comprehensive plan
- It was not previously designated as “**Urban Fringe**,” the area that used to be intended for future development.



There Has Been No Demonstration of Need for Development

- Undertaking a detailed needs analysis is a hallmark of sound planning.
- We have been raising concerns about the lack of such a study since public engagement for the comp plan update first commenced in spring 2025.
- Planning staff has shared that our community needs 23,000 more housing units by 2050.
- According to local government data, 21,610 new residential units are in one phase of development or another, meaning our community is close to meeting 2050 needs without the annexation.

If there is no demonstrated need, this constitutes a premature conversion of rural land, contrary to numerous provisions in the comprehensive plan.



1. Comp Plan Adopted December 2025: Avoid Premature Conversion of Rural Land

Objective 2.2 – Efficient Growth (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): To support the projected population growth, infrastructure shall be provided economically and efficiently while protecting surrounding forestry uses and agricultural lands from unwarranted and premature conversion to urban land uses. Growth and development shall be directed toward areas with existing or planned infrastructure in a manner that maintains distinct natural, rural, sub-urban, and urban areas.

Policy 2.2.5 [LM]– ...New growth shall be directed to areas within the Urban Services Area....

Policy 2.2.8 [LM]– Adaptive Reuse, Infill Development, and Redevelopment (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) ...These measures will support efficient growth, preserve historic buildings, protect natural resources, maintain affordable housing, and prevent the premature conversion of rural and agricultural land into suburban and urban development.

Objective 2.4 [LM]– Preservation of Rural Areas (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) Protect and create agricultural and silvicultural uses, natural resource-based activities, ecosystems, scenic vistas, and pastoral landscapes by preserving rural areas of the community and preventing the premature conversion of rural lands into low density, single-use districts.

2. Comp Plan Adopted December 2025: “Rural Future Land Use” is intended to maintain rural character

Policy 2.8.4 [LM]– Rural Future Land Use Category (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) The intent of the Rural land use category is to maintain and promote agriculture, silviculture, and natural resource-based activities, to preserve natural systems and ecosystem functions, and to protect the scenic vistas and pastoral development patterns that typify Leon County’s rural areas.

Typical land uses within this category shall include agriculture, silviculture, and natural resource-based activities. Due to the very low intensity development pattern that is intended for the category, urban services are not planned or programmed for the area.

The Rural land use category shall allow single family residential uses at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres. ...

Community services, light infrastructure, and recreational uses may be permitted provided they are compatible with the natural and rural surroundings....

The following special conditions shall apply to the Rural Land Use category: 1. Development proposals within the Rural Land Use category shall be evaluated for compatibility with adjacent agricultural and silvicultural uses and shall consider the land management activities associated with such uses, including prescribed fires which result in smoke. Development that is incompatible with agricultural uses, or has the potential to fragment, encroach upon, or displace such uses, shall not be permitted.

3. Comp Plan Adopted December 2025: Urbanized areas should be prioritized for new development to reduce sprawl and protect rural resources

Goal 2 [LM] (Eff. 1/23/26) – Distinct Urban and Rural Areas:

Our community will provide residents with diverse options for where they live or visit by maintaining a distinction between rural, sub-urban, and urban areas. By maintaining a distinction between these areas, our community will:

- Provide a variety of lifestyle and housing choices while reducing sprawl.
- Foster economic development in urban areas and identified activity centers.
- Promote efficient development patterns.
- Support revitalization and redevelopment efforts within the Urban Services Area.
- Reduce infrastructure costs.
- Protect agricultural and forest management uses.
- Preserve and create natural resource-based activities, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services, and scenic vistas and pastoral landscapes.

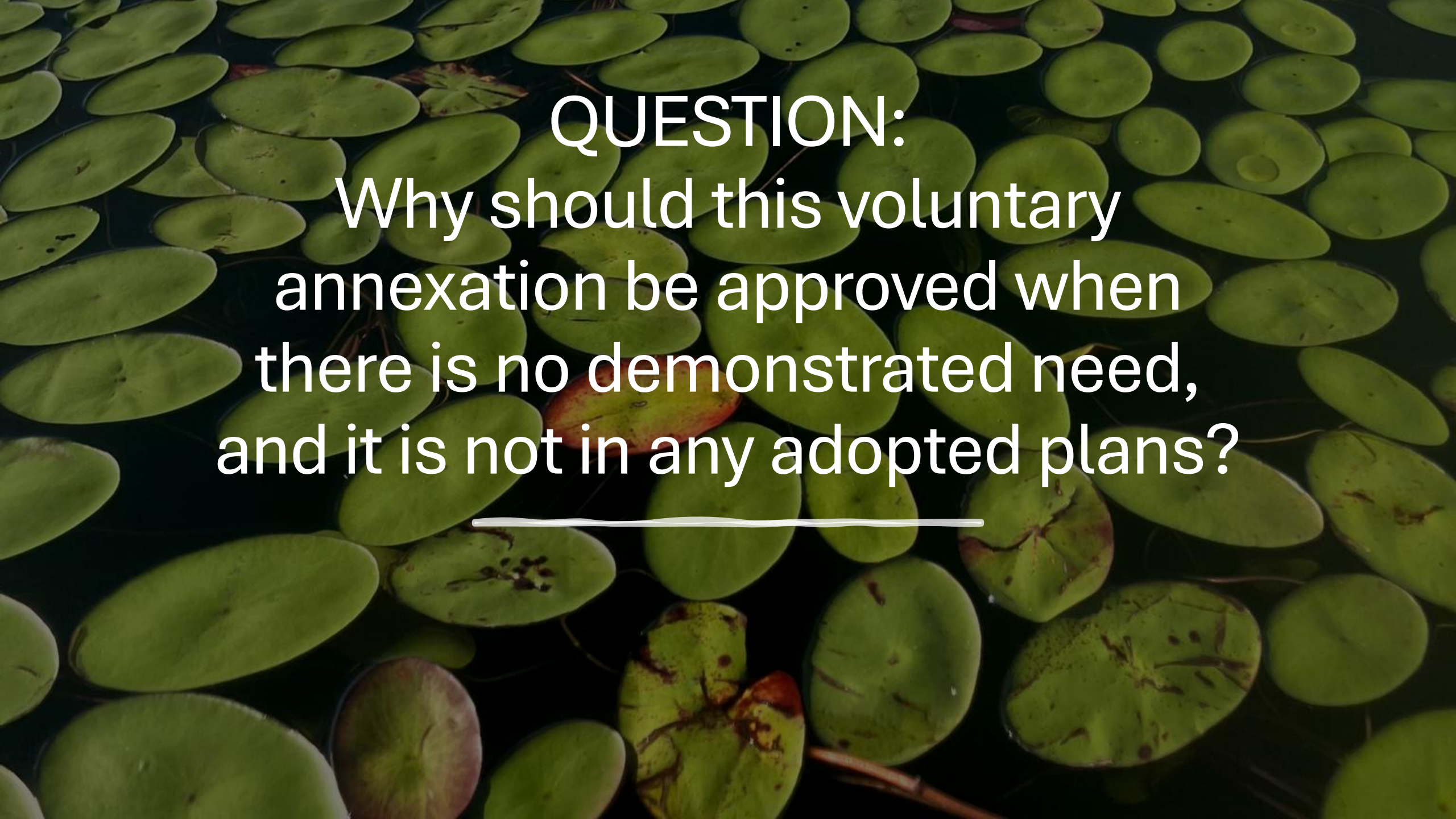
4. Comp Plan Adopted December 2025: Gives Precedence to Environmental Protection

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

We are fortunate to have retained the natural beauty that inspired the sitting [sic] of Florida's state capital. The community relies upon the comprehensive plan to protect the natural resources and scenic beauty while encouraging the responsible, healthy growth of Tallahassee and Leon County. The comprehensive plan seeks to balance the management of growth with environmental protection **but gives precedence to environmental protection** (emphasis added).

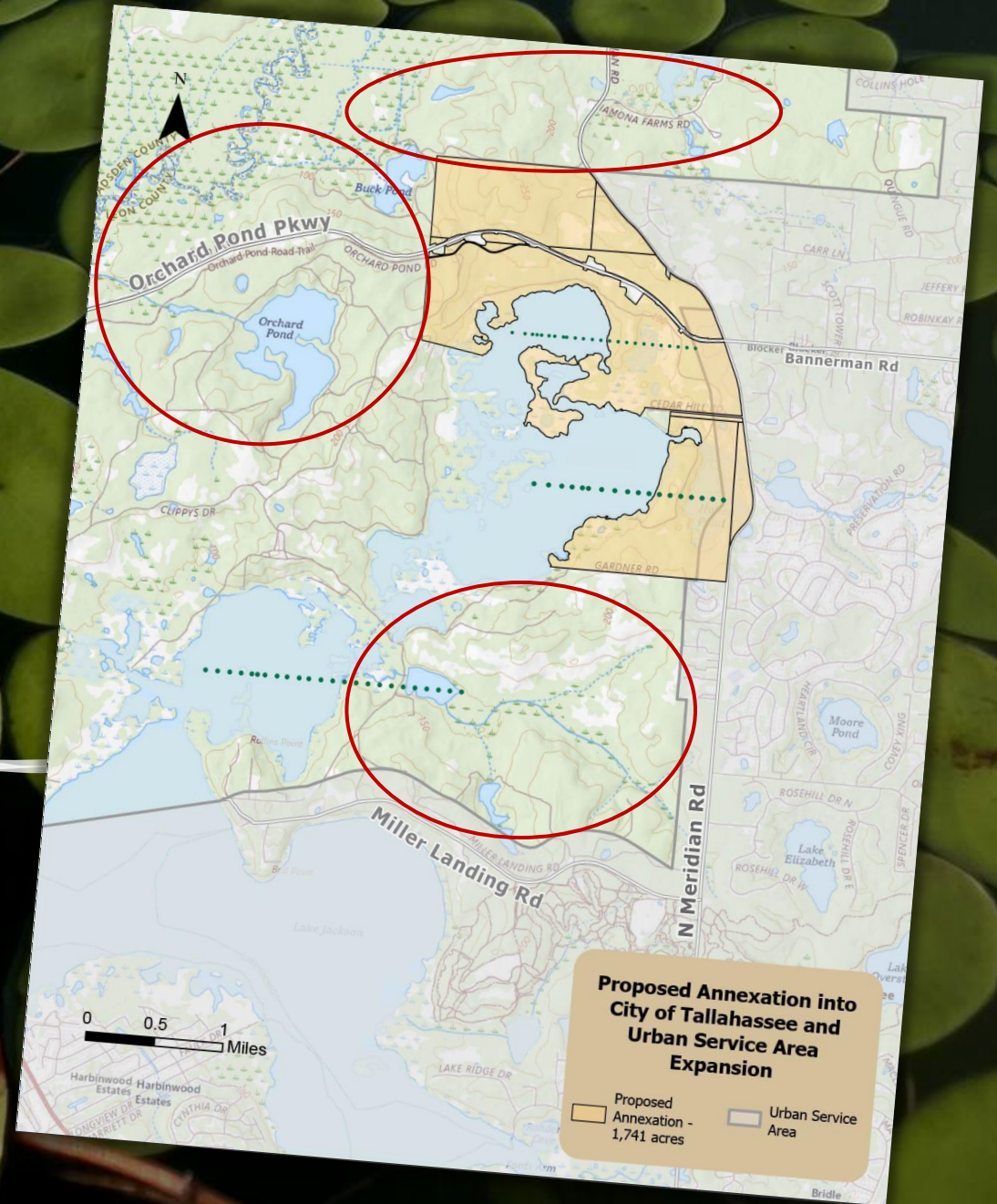
Evolving land use patterns within the County have exhibited sprawl characteristics. Sprawl is, perhaps, the most inefficient pattern of land use. Costs associated with the provision of both capital and social infrastructure are higher than more compact patterns. This must be taken into consideration when local government is faced with limited fiscal resources and increasing demand for services.

Sprawl encourages degradation of the County's natural resources by prematurely committing vast areas to the impact of urbanization. Phased, orderly growth mitigates this situation by comprehensively addressing development impacts to our natural systems.



QUESTION:
Why should this voluntary
annexation be approved when
there is no demonstrated need,
and it is not in any adopted plans?

QUESTION:
Does this also set
a planning
precedent to
develop adjoining
rural land?



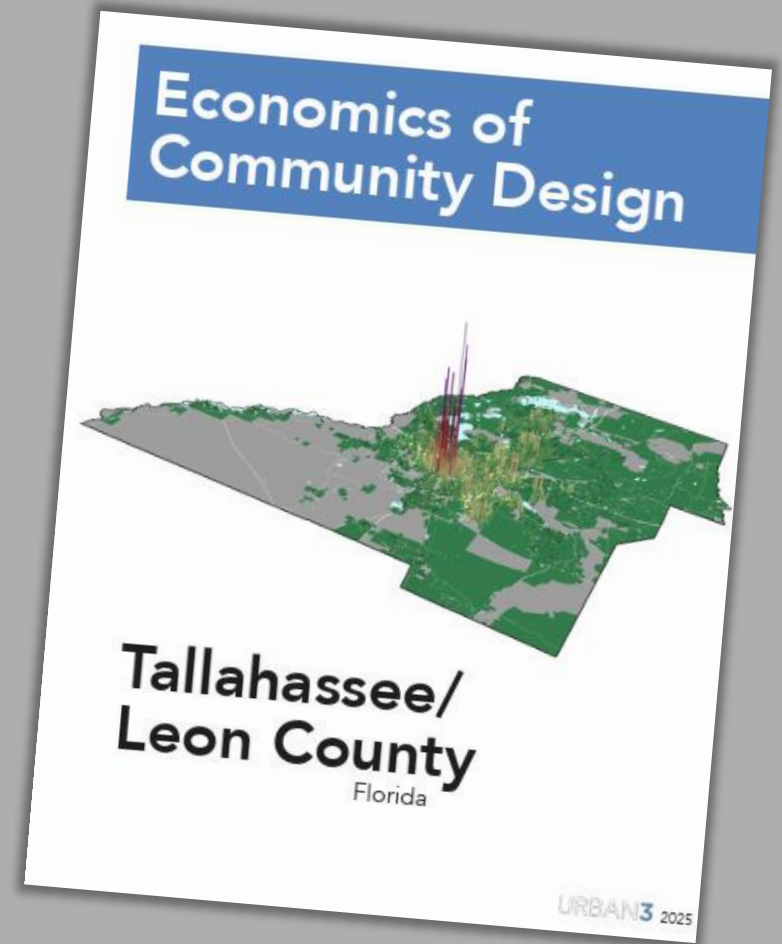
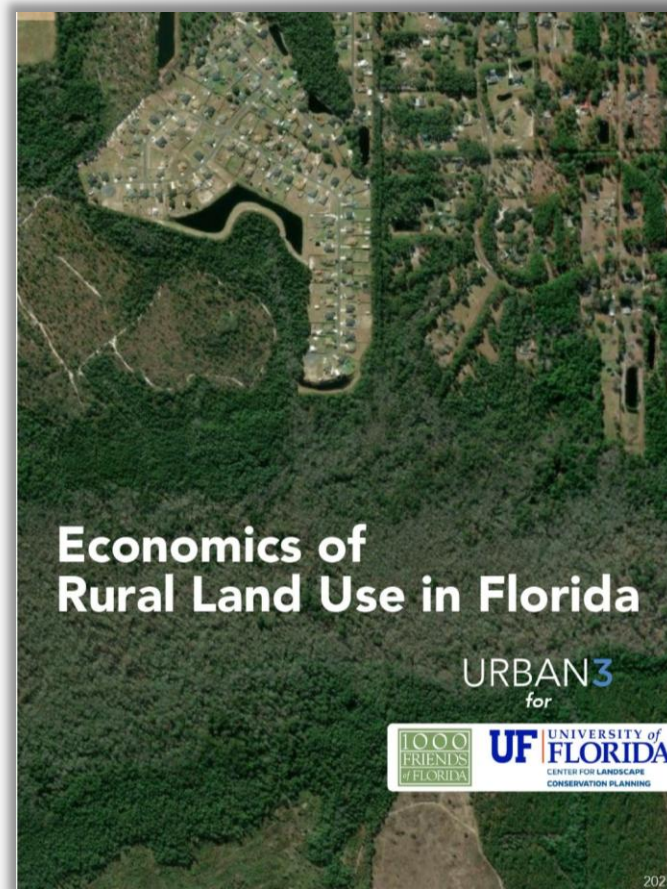
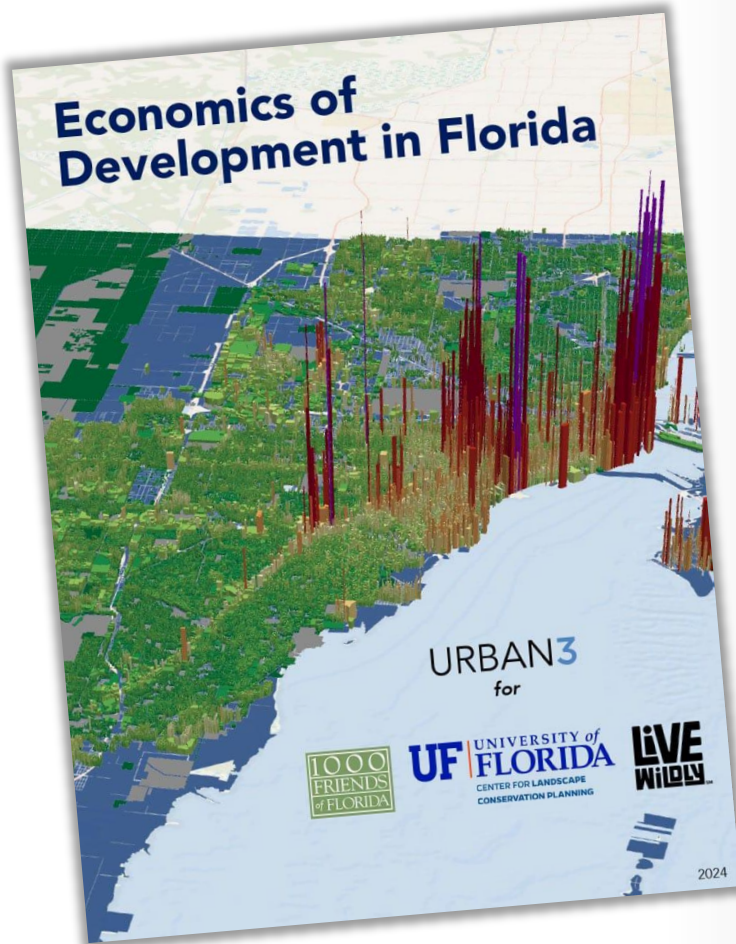


Who Will Pay?

Vivian Young, FAICP
1000 Friends of Florida

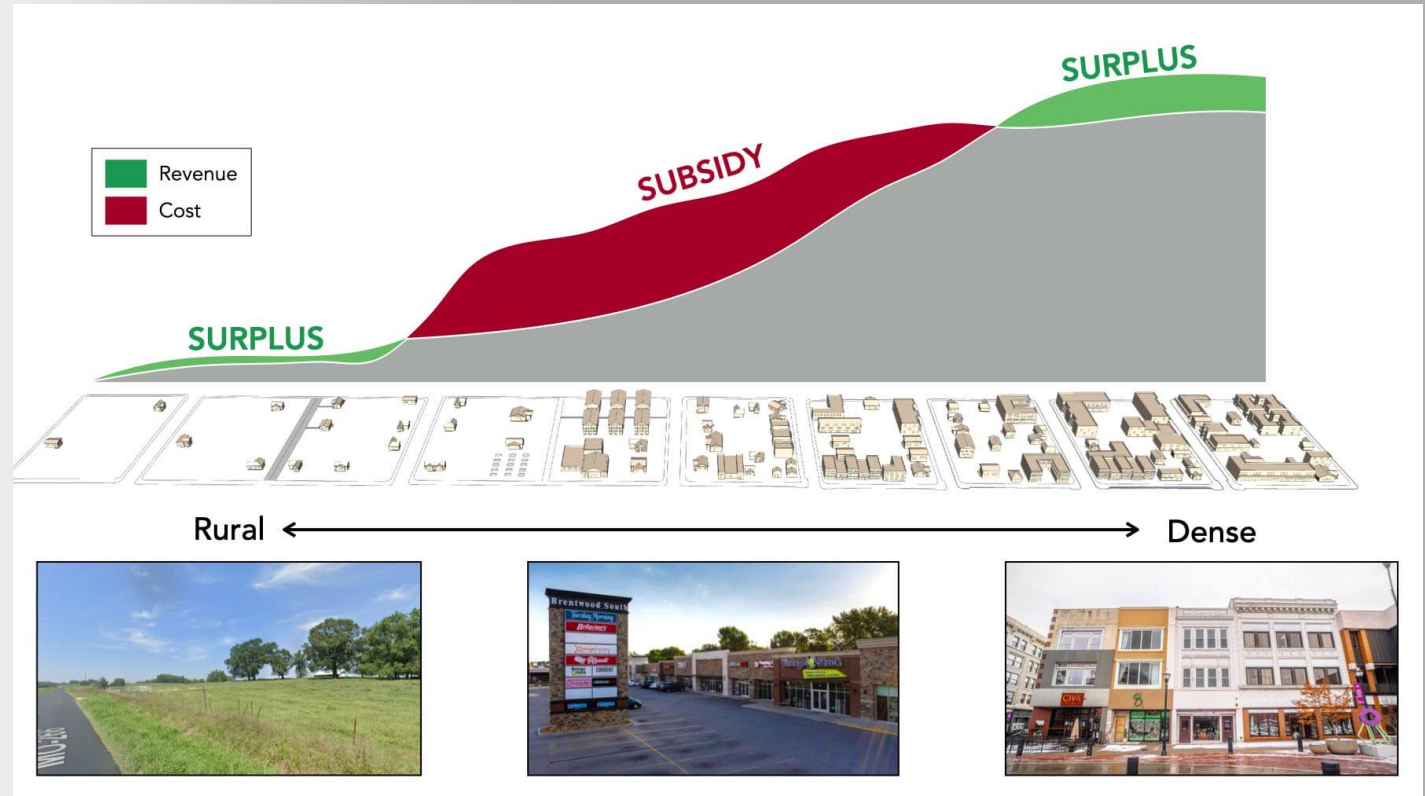
Urban3 & Geo-Accounting:

“We demystify tax codes, government jargon, and municipal finance data, allowing communities to clearly understand the economic impact of development.”



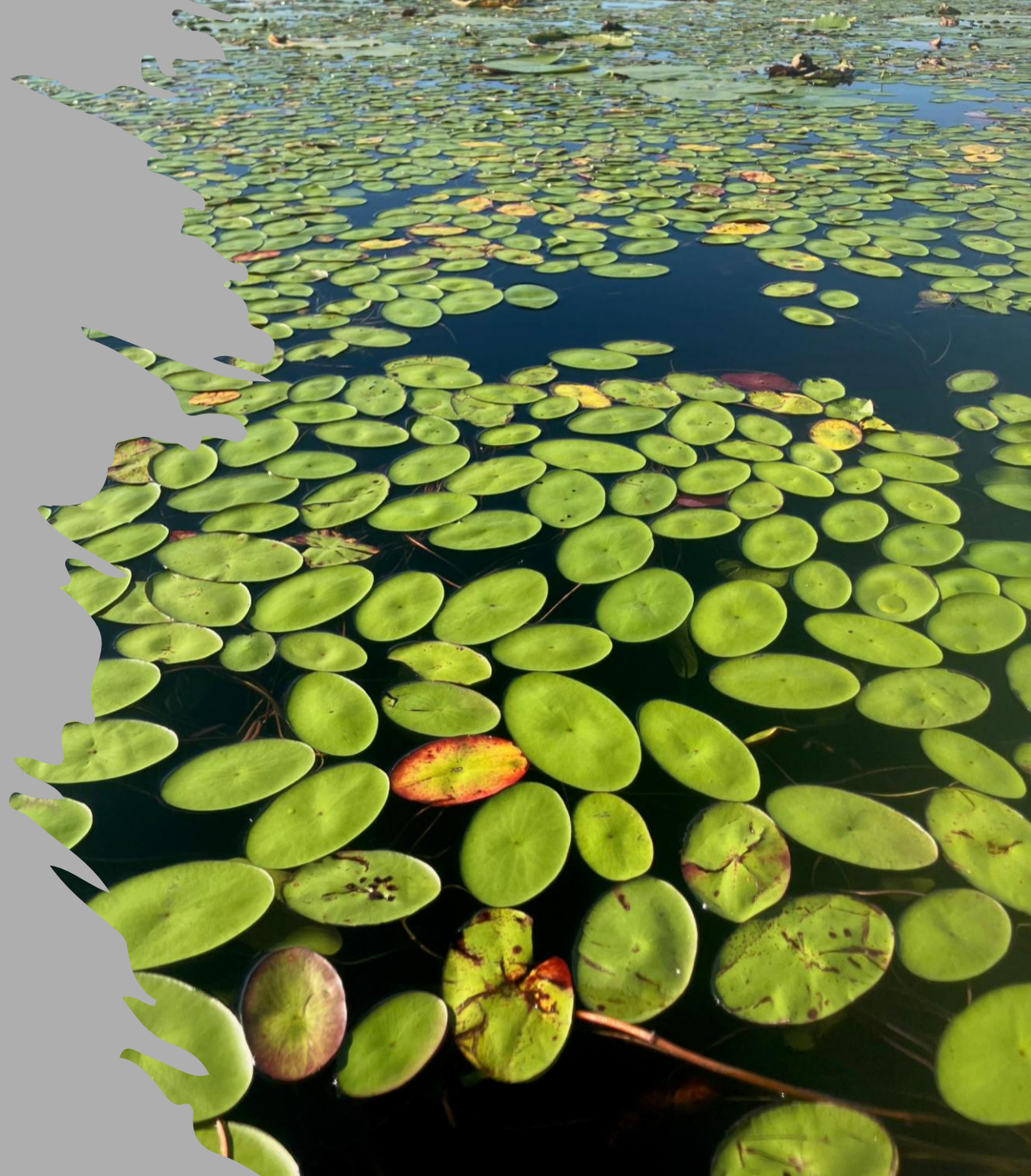
URBAN3

- **Low-density suburban development** does not produce enough tax revenue per acre to pay for its infrastructure liabilities. This form of development is **fiscally insolvent over the long term**.
- Denser, walkable, mixed-use development patterns produce far more tax revenue per acre than is needed to pay for their associated infrastructure.
- Natural and agricultural land, in turn, creates far less public burden (including roads, water, sewer, stormwater, schools, and other services) compared to suburban areas.



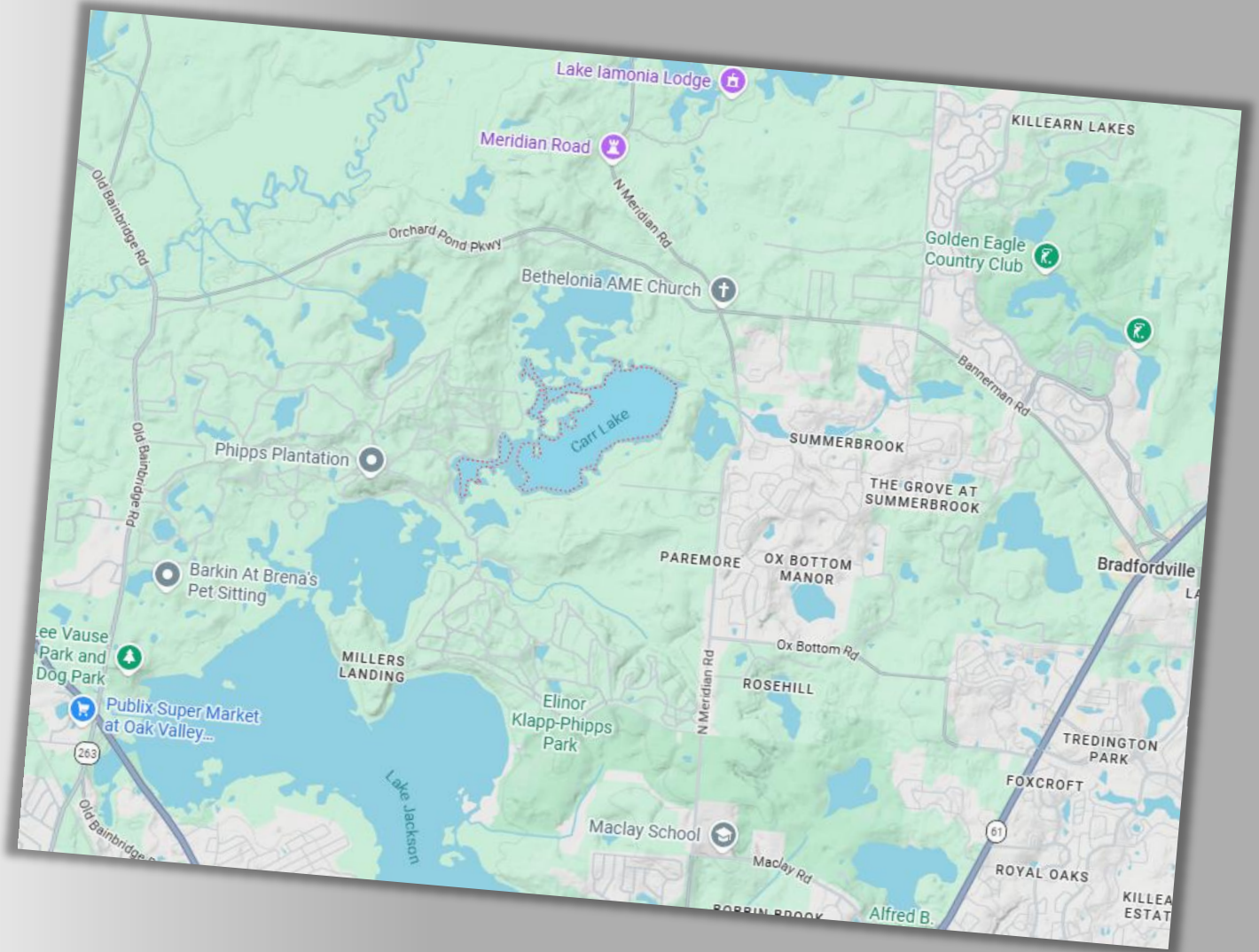
Source: *Economics of Development in Florida*, Urban3, 2023

Developer Costs



Developers Pay For:

- **Infrastructure within the development**, including roads, water, sewer, drainage, etc.
- **“Proportionate fair share”** of costs for community infrastructure and services outside the development needed to support the development.
- In the case of public roads, for example, **only the portion of costs directly related to the additional traffic** resulting from the new development.
- **NOTE:** Property owners within the development pay property taxes but, in the case of lower density development, as shown by URBAN3, this usually does not cover the costs of infrastructure and services



Source: Google Maps, accessed July 29, 2026

Local Government Costs

(This Means Taxpayers)

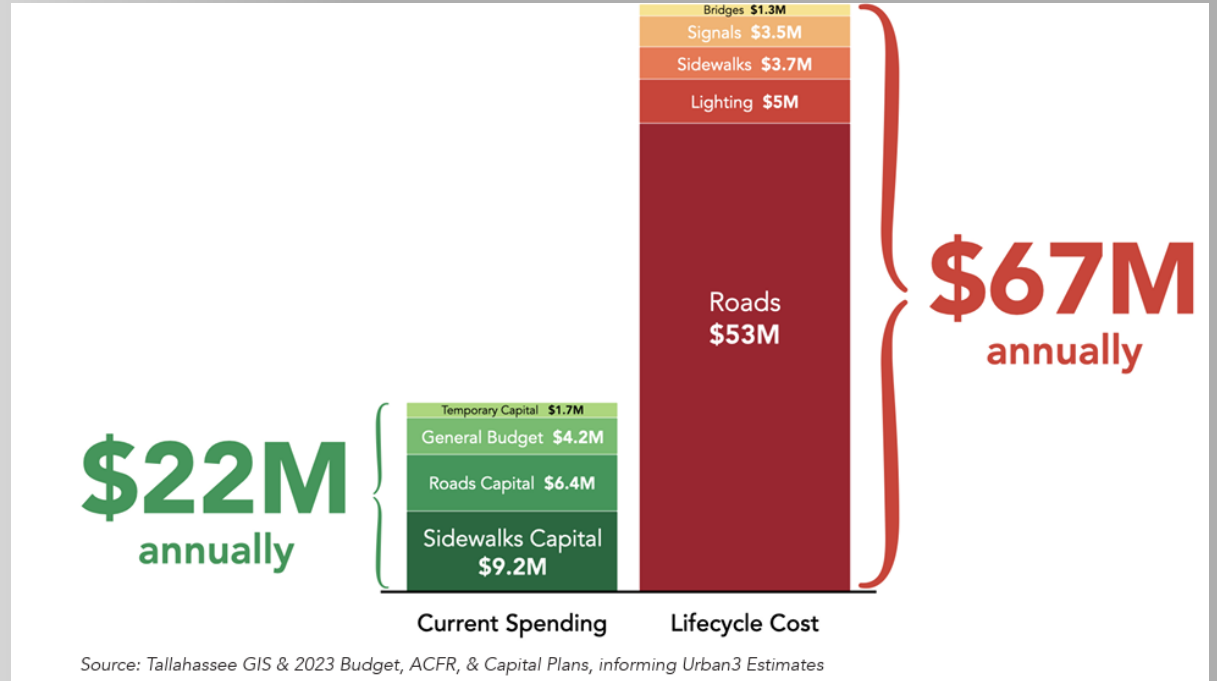


Community Infrastructure & Lifecycle Costs

- **Community infrastructure and services costs except for those directly related to the increased need generated by the new development.** These can include roads, water treatment, schools, emergency services, etc.
- **Lifecycle – or long-term maintenance – costs** for public infrastructure outside the development. For roads, this includes road repairs and eventual replacement.

City of Tallahassee Estimated Life-Cycle Costs

Source: *Economics of Community Design: Tallahassee-Leon County, Urban3, 2025*



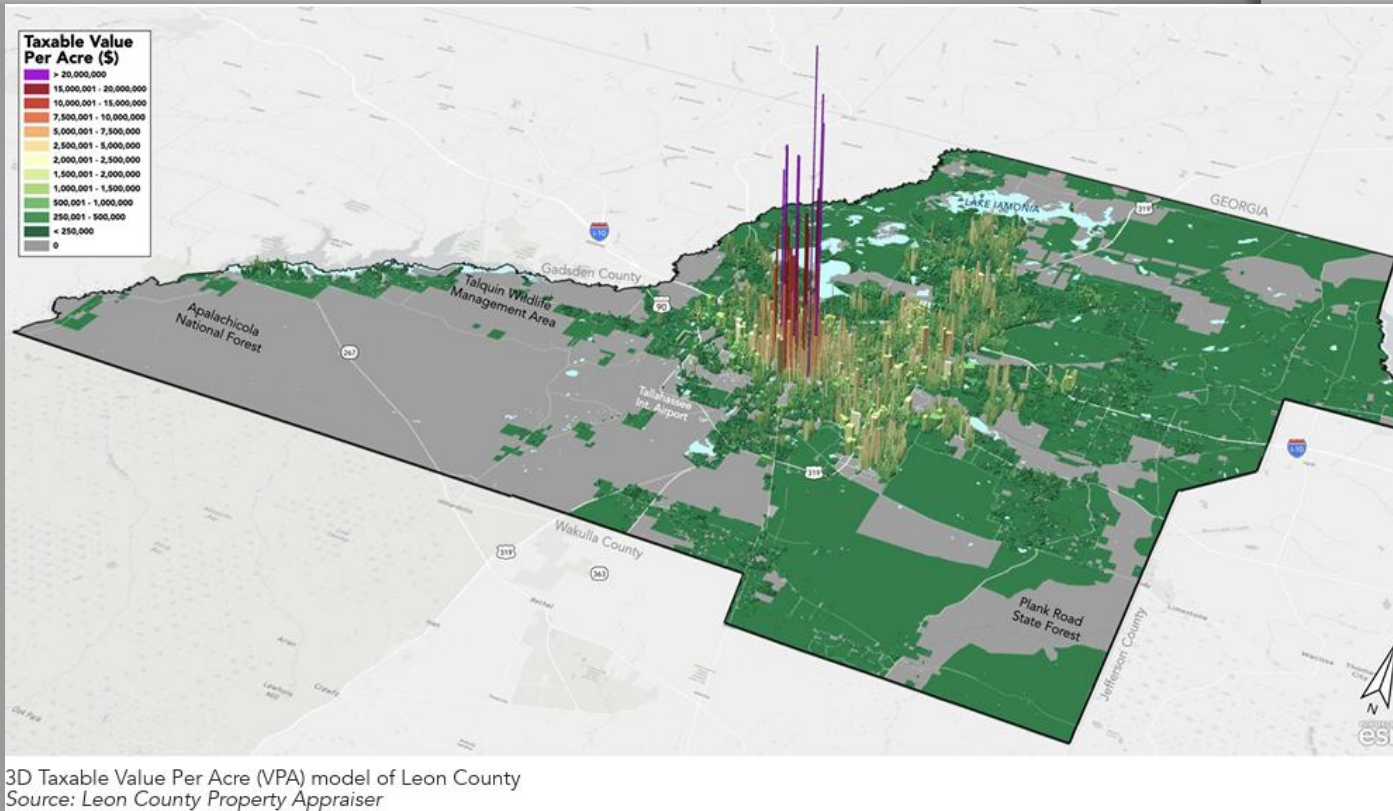
Local Government Revenue: Property Taxes & Blueprint

(This Means Taxpayers)



Property Tax Revenue:

Taxable Value Per Acre in Tallahassee-Leon County



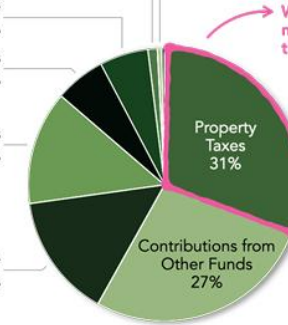
Sources: *Economics of Community Design: Tallahassee-Leon County Urban3, 2025*

City of Tallahassee Revenue & Expenses

Revenues: **\$184M**

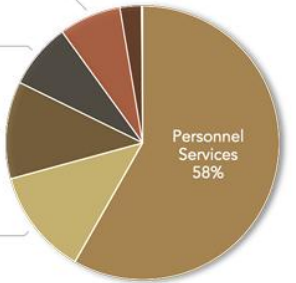
Expenditures: **\$184M**

Transfer from Other Funds
Licenses & Permits
Miscellaneous Revenue
Charges for Services
Other Taxes
Mental Revenue



We are mapping this.

Utilities
Contribution to Other Funds
Operating Expenses
Transfers to Other Funds
Allocated Accounts



Overview for City of Tallahassee
Annual operating budget

Average Value Per Acre in Tallahassee-Leon County



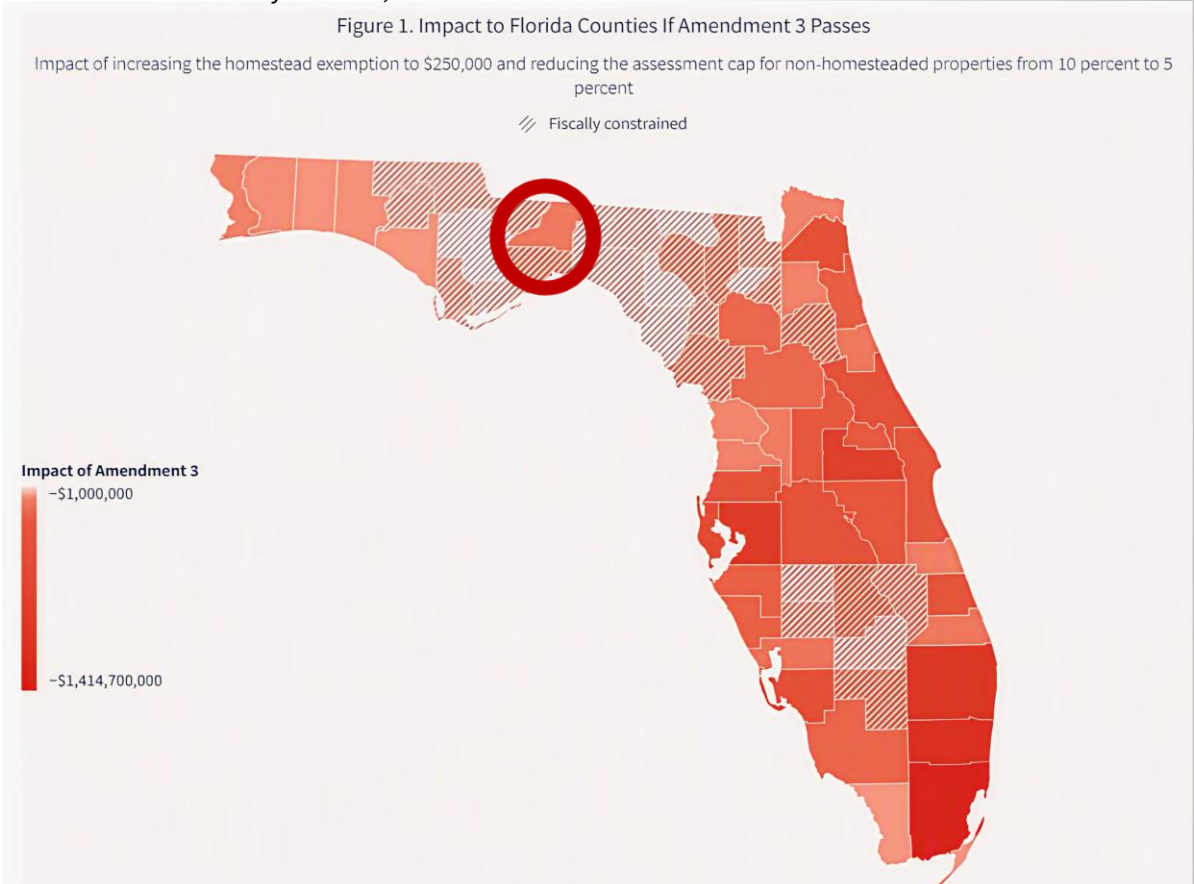
	Downtown	Midtown	Southwood	Bannerman Crossing	Frenchtown	Woodville
Total Value	\$322M	\$60M	\$125M	\$105M	\$36M	\$16M
Total Acres	400	80	190	200	130	270
Average Value Per Acre	\$810K	\$721K	\$644K	\$530K	\$247K	\$58K

Tallahassee by the numbers: Analysis of selected neighborhoods
Source: Leon County Property Appraiser, Google Maps

The Property Tax Wild Card: Amendment 3

Impact to Florida Counties if Amendment 3 Passes

Source: Florida Policy Institute, 2026



Understanding Local [Leon County] Impact of the November Property Tax Amendment

Source: Leon County Online Tax Sheet

Total Property Tax Revenue	\$235,449,214
Less: Mandatory Funding Obligations	-\$161,263,240
County Services Funded Exclusively by Property Taxes	\$74,185,974
Less: Estimated Property Tax Revenue Loss	-\$70,694,200
Remaining to Fund All County Services	\$3,491,774

Municipality ▲	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29	FY 2029-30	FY 2030-31	FY 2031-32
Tallahassee	-\$11,303,012	-\$18,473,929	-\$18,982,230	-\$19,405,916	-\$19,697,467

What About Blueprint \$?

- **Local one-cent sales tax** – Originally intended to preserve environmental spaces, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance economic vitality
- **Background – Numerous proposals to widen Meridian Road** to the Georgia border in the 1990s. The Environmental and Economic Consensus Committee ultimately agreed that widening Meridian Road would result in continued urban sprawl.
- **Supporting new development** – Funds increasingly used to provide roads to support major new development.
- **Equity concerns** – Major roads to support new development are moving forward with increased funding. Tarpe Street is still waiting for sidewalks to replace the ditch that residents and students must currently use
- **Significant cost overruns** – It is unclear how many more projects can be taken on

Cost breakdown of gateway projects

Airport Gateway

Initial estimate: \$58,698,138

2025 estimate: \$133,600,000

2026 estimate: \$138,600,000

Difference: About 2.4 times initial estimate

Northeast Gateway: Welaunee Boulevard

Initial estimate: \$77,990,000

2025 estimate: \$198,400,000

2026 estimate: \$202,325,000

Difference: About 2.6 times initial estimate

Northeast Corridor Connector: Bannerman Road

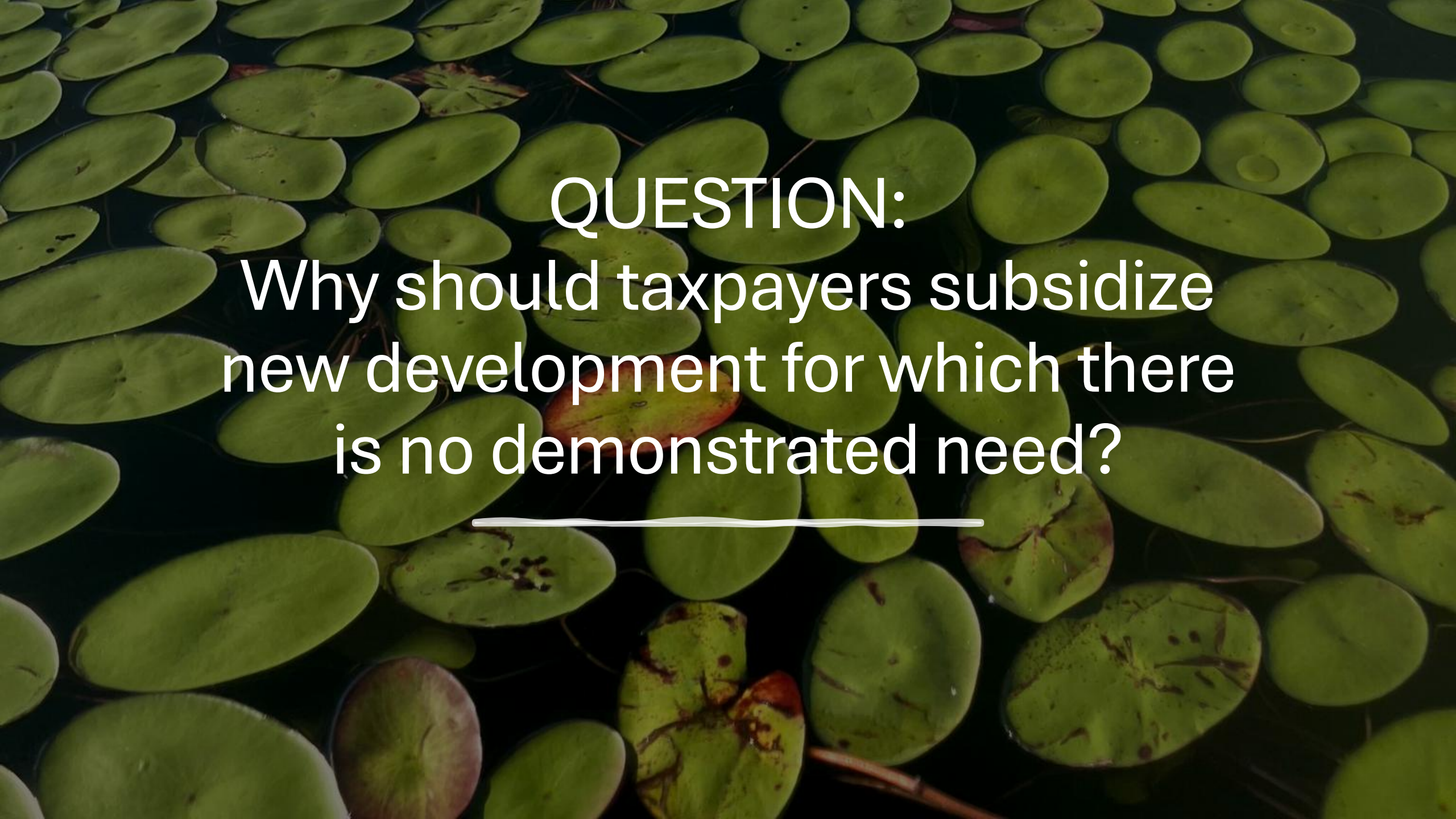
Initial estimate: \$33,300,000

2025 estimate: \$159,700,000

2026 estimate: \$164,700,000

Difference: Approximately five times initial estimate

Source: *Blueprint board members alarmed over massive road cost hikes*, Tallahassee Democrat, June 12, 2026



QUESTION:
Why should taxpayers subsidize
new development for which there
is no demonstrated need?

A photograph of a pond filled with numerous green lily pads. The lily pads are mostly circular and have a vibrant green color, though some show signs of aging with yellow and brown spots. They are densely packed in the center and right side of the frame, while the left side is mostly dark, suggesting deep water or a shadow. The water surface is calm, reflecting the light.

What Can We Do?

Sophie Wacongne-Speer
Friends of Lake Jackson

Contact the Tallahassee City Commissioners

- The public hearing is currently scheduled for **6 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9**, with the commission vote to follow.
- Call the Commissioners now and ask to meet with them or discuss the issue on the phone.
- Send them emails or letters outlining your concerns.
- Speak out at the September 9 hearing, or show up in solidarity.

Photo by Russell Grace

Share the Word

- Discuss the issue with friends and associates and ask them to contact the Commissioners as well.
- Share information on social media.
- Urge your neighborhood association to discuss this issue at an upcoming meeting and engage.
- If appropriate, ask the association to send a formal letter to the City and send alerts to residents
- Gather a group of friends to attend the September 9 meeting together.

Photo by Russell Grace

Find Out More

Friends of Lake Jackson

Facebook: facebook.com/FriendsofLakeJackson

1000 Friends of Florida

Web: 1000fof.org/priorities/lake-Jackson

Facebook: facebook.com/1000fof

Alerts: 1000fof.org/alerts

Before We Build TLH

Web: beforewebuildtlh.org/

Photo by Russell Grace

Find Out What
the Candidates
Think

Big Bend Environmental Forum

August 4th 6-8pm

For Primary
Election
Candidates

City
Commission
Seats 3,
4/Mayor, and 5

LeRoy Collins Leon County Library
Rooms A&B downstairs
200 W. Park Ave

**30TH
ANNIVERSARY**

Questions covering
environmental, energy,
sustainability, and
growth management
issues.

5:15-6pm -
Refreshments & meet
the candidates &
nonprofits tabling.
Learn how you can get
involved locally!

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE
PUBLIC HEARING/VOTE

on

Wednesday, September 9 at 6 p.m.

Share Your Input!



FINAL REMINDER:
The City of Tallahassee has the
legal right to
JUST VOTE NO!

Discussion



CITY OF TALLAHASSEE
PUBLIC HEARING/VOTE

on

Wednesday, September 9 at 6 p.m.

Share Your Input!