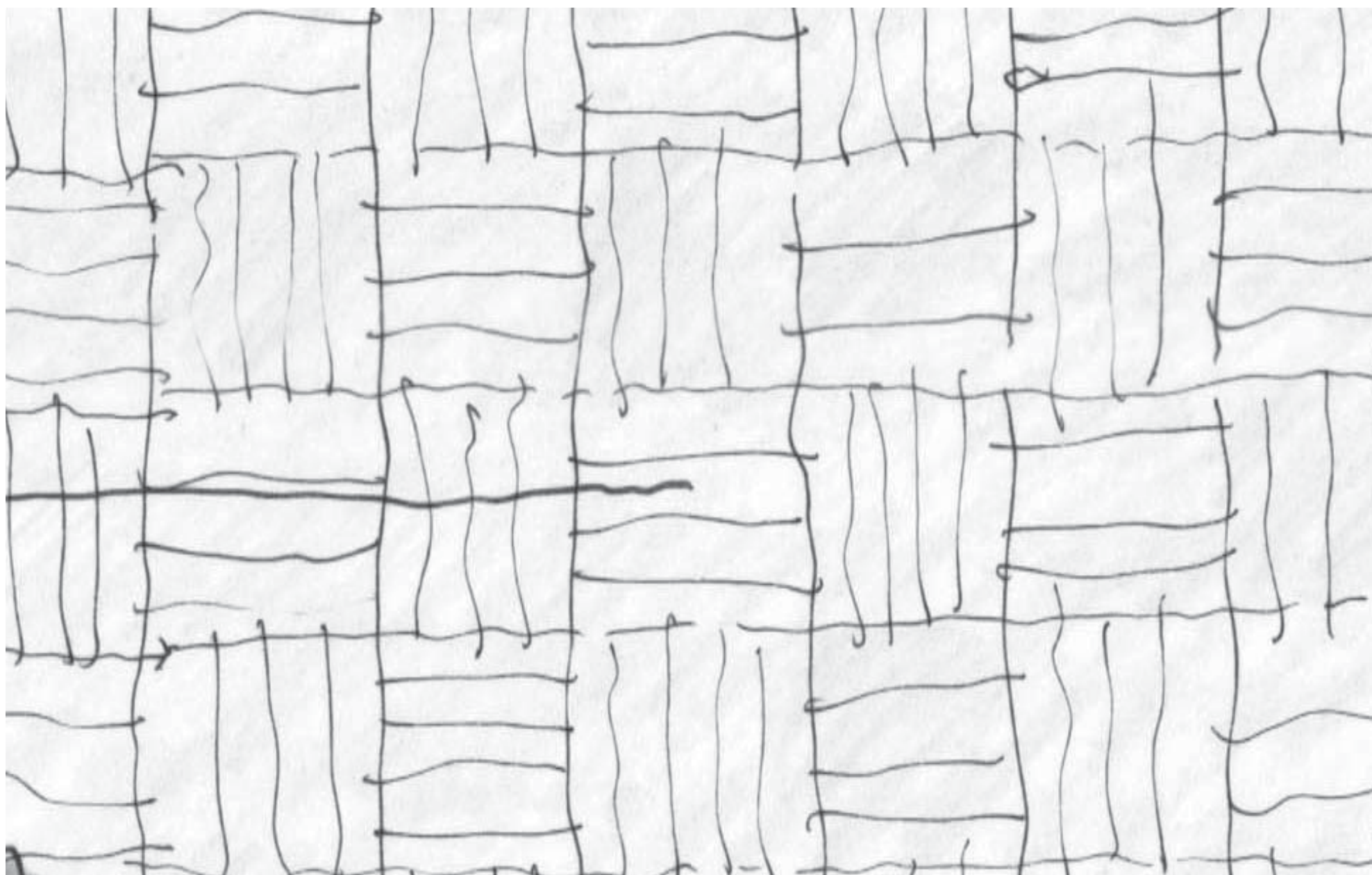




SMART ) **charlotte** 2050

# Smart Charlotte 2050 Planning Framework

December 2008



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# INTRODUCTION

# Introducing Smart Charlotte 2050

Smart Charlotte 2050 is an extensive community-based planning effort that will result in an update to the Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan. The effort known as "Smart Charlotte 2050" includes the development of the following planning tools for the County:

**1. A Planning Framework.** The final Planning Framework will include a graphically presented guide for Charlotte County growth and development based upon community consensus and specific planning principles to guide this development. The initial draft of the Smart Charlotte 2050 Planning Framework was created using the Policy Statement prepared by the Charlotte Assembly 2007 as a starting point to both describe the fundamental challenges facing the County as well as the Vision recommendations of the participants. The Smart Charlotte 2050 public participation process further refined these ideas and took the next step of translating the Vision statements into a specific Planning Framework.

**2. Comprehensive Plan Update.** The County's new Comprehensive Plan will help guide all future planning and development decisions. Once the Planning Framework is finalized it will be used to guide the creation of a set of Comprehensive Plan policies and a 2050 Future Land Use Map to implement the Framework.

Smart Charlotte 2050 Comprehensive Plan policies will be based upon the sustainability concepts of Smart Growth including: Reducing sprawl; Promoting redevelopment in existing urban areas; Promoting mixed use development; Reducing dependence on automobiles by promoting other modes of transportation; Protecting open space and rural lands; Conserving environmentally sensitive lands including wetlands and habitat; and

Involving the public at every step in the process. By committing itself to Smart Growth principles, Smart Charlotte 2050 will promote more sustainable and responsible future development.

## **2. Interactive Web-based Planning Tool.**

The interactive planning website ([www.SmartCharlotte2050.com](http://www.SmartCharlotte2050.com)) serves as a fundamental tool for community involvement and is designed to grow over time to provide a completely interactive experience that allows the citizens of Charlotte County to participate in long-range planning with a level of access and information never before available. The power of this collaborative, interactive planning tool is that the County can engage its citizenry in the planning process long before there is a development application in front of the County Commission.





## The Community Planning Process

The Smart Charlotte 2050 Planning Framework was created through a collaborative community based planning process that began during the summer of 2008 with public workshops and meetings to assess the community's issues, concerns, and goals. During this community-based process we confirmed that the Quality of Life Values that were identified during the Charlotte Assembly 2007 process were shared by a broad cross-section of citizens. These values include:

- Preserving and protecting natural resources
- Promoting economic development (including eco-tourism)
- Promoting quality infill and new development
- Improving basic infrastructure (including roads and utilities)
- Re-enforcing small town character
- Preserving waterfronts/shores/harbors and opportunities for compatible access
- Having responsive governance
- Providing mobility/transportation options
- Promoting quality education system, which include the full range of education opportunities

In addition to taking specific actions that would preserve and enhance Community Values and assets, the citizenry also wanted to see the Comprehensive Plan address some ongoing challenges including:

- 1. Economic Development.** The County's long-term desire to protect areas for industrial and employment-based use is under constant pressure by short-term commercial development and encroachment. Specific policies should be written that safeguard strategic areas of the County for industrial and employment uses, protecting their long-term availability.
- 2. Community Identity.** Establishing a clear identity and livability for the County's neighborhoods and commercial areas is a fundamental challenge. The current pattern of separated, low density commercial, residential and institutional uses results in an overall community form that is not sustainable for a changing population or attractive in an increasingly competitive economic development environment.
- 3. Aging in Place.** Current demographic trends compel us to plan for the changing needs of our aging population. The County must create policies to direct the planning, design and location of new housing, transportation systems, and community services to support this important demographic.
- 4. Urban Services Area.** The County's current development boundary, the "Urban Service Area," is simply a line drawn around all local platted lots. The County needs to create a functional and sustainable Urban Service Area boundary, which promotes efficient provision and maintenance of infrastructure to hold the line on the County's annual operating costs.
- 5. Platted Lots/Density/Urban Form.** The extensive amount, location and form of platted lands remain an issue and concern. The form is not the development pattern shown desirable to current or future markets, however individual ownership and current land development regulations make it difficult to gather and transform these areas into more desirable patterns. The form has high per capita infrastructure operating costs and slows proper land development. Some platted lands should never have been platted because of environmental constraints. A more substantive evaluation of the desirability of urbanizing various neighborhoods and more proactive measures to create both incentives and disincentives as applicable to promote the ultimate vision for future development is necessary.
- 6. East County Rural Character.** The rural and agricultural character of the eastern half of the County is under increasing pressure for change and development. New standards for development in this portion of the County need to be put in place to assure appropriate protection of rural character, natural resources, and agricultural uses while providing reasonable flexibility for change in a challenging agricultural economy.

# Planning Framework Overview

This document identifies four Framework Types that constitute the 2050 Planning Framework for Charlotte County. (See Figure 1 Process for Framework Plan on this page and Figure 2 on following page.) Each Framework Type includes a set of Guiding Principles that will be used to focus the recommended amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. These types highlight components of design that can enhance the quality and character of development in Charlotte County. The Framework Types are further broken down into specific components of design that reflect different types of communities or places within each area and serve to distinguish one place from another (a summary is provided on pages 38-39).

## Natural Resources

Charlotte County shall promote land use practices that protect natural resources within conservation lands, and target additional acquisition to close gaps in regional and state-wide wildlife corridors. The County will strive to improve the quality of water that discharges into surface waters, and educate residents about controlling the sources of pollutants. The County will seek to minimize environmental impacts within the built environment by reducing carbon emissions, minimizing water use and controlling pollution.

## Agricultural & Rural

Charlotte County shall define a future agricultural and rural landscape that recognizes agricultural uses as both an important component of our visual character and our economy. Agricultural and rural areas should be planned to protect habitat and natural resources, allow appropriately designed settlement, and support continued agricultural business activity by allowing it to adapt and change over time.

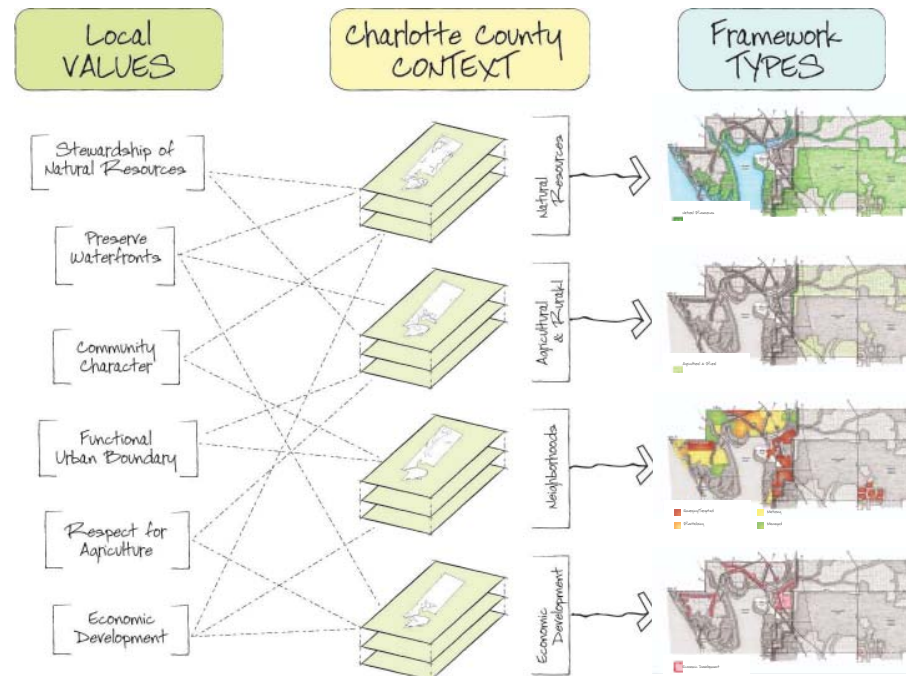
## Neighborhoods

Charlotte County shall support a diverse range of neighborhoods by protecting and enhancing our existing neighborhoods while targeting others for intensified, mixed-use redevelopment. Neighborhood development policy should promote community identity and character by creating walkable places that integrate commercial uses, have a mix of housing types, and distinguish between urban, suburban and rural areas. Old platted neighborhoods that are ill suited for such development should be discouraged.

## Economic Development

Charlotte County shall focus economic development in targeted areas that foster business creation and expansion and protect future opportunities. Economic development initiatives should align public investments, incentives, and land use policy to encourage and protect growth around our existing assets, such as the I-75 corridor and County Airport, and in redeveloping corridors, centers and districts.

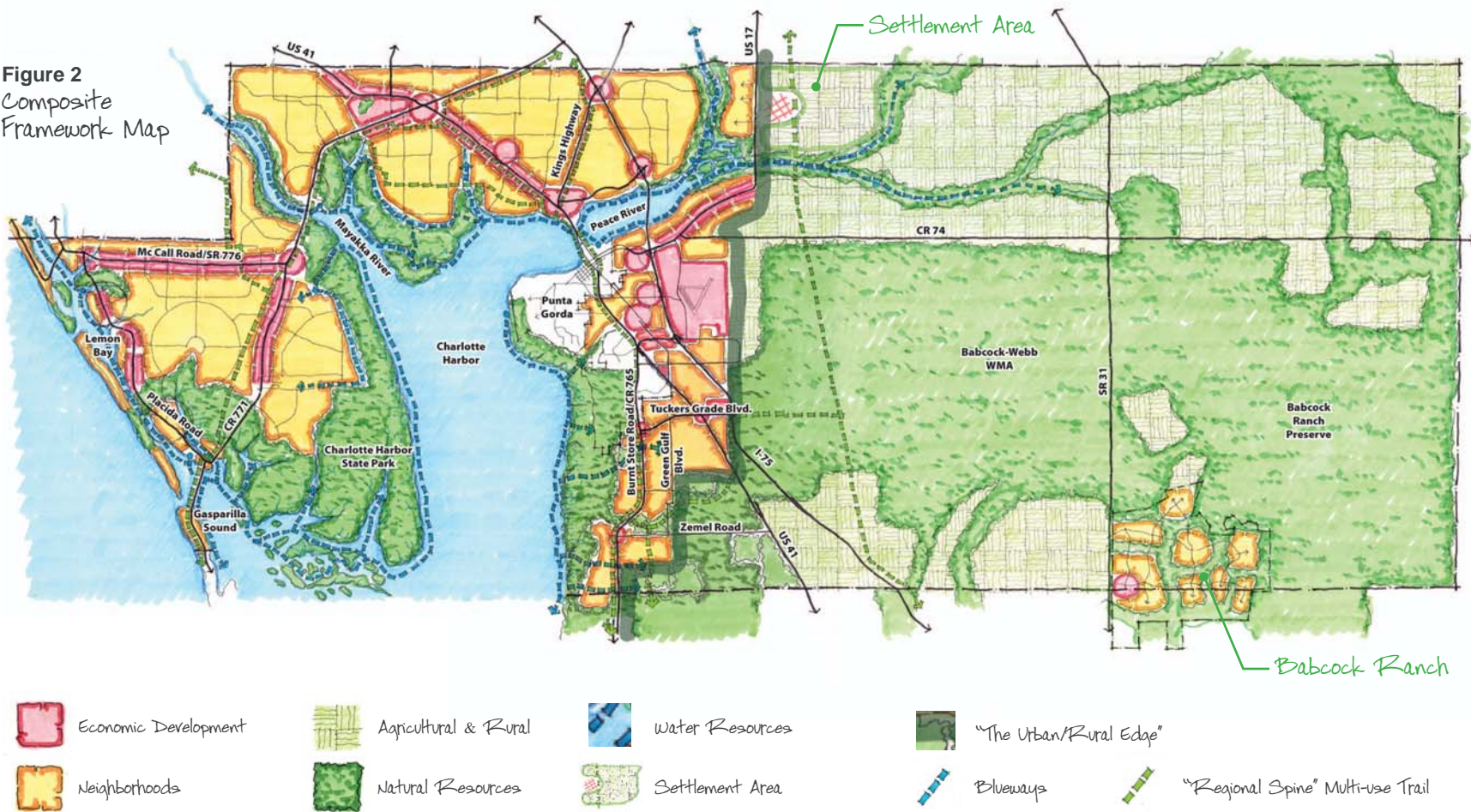
Figure 1 Process for Framework Plan





COMPOSITE FRAMEWORK MAP: SMART CHARLOTTE 2050 establishes a long-term vision for the future of Charlotte County that illustrates the land use relationships that will support a “Smart Growth” approach to resource protection and future development in a sustainable form.

Figure 2  
Composite  
Framework Map





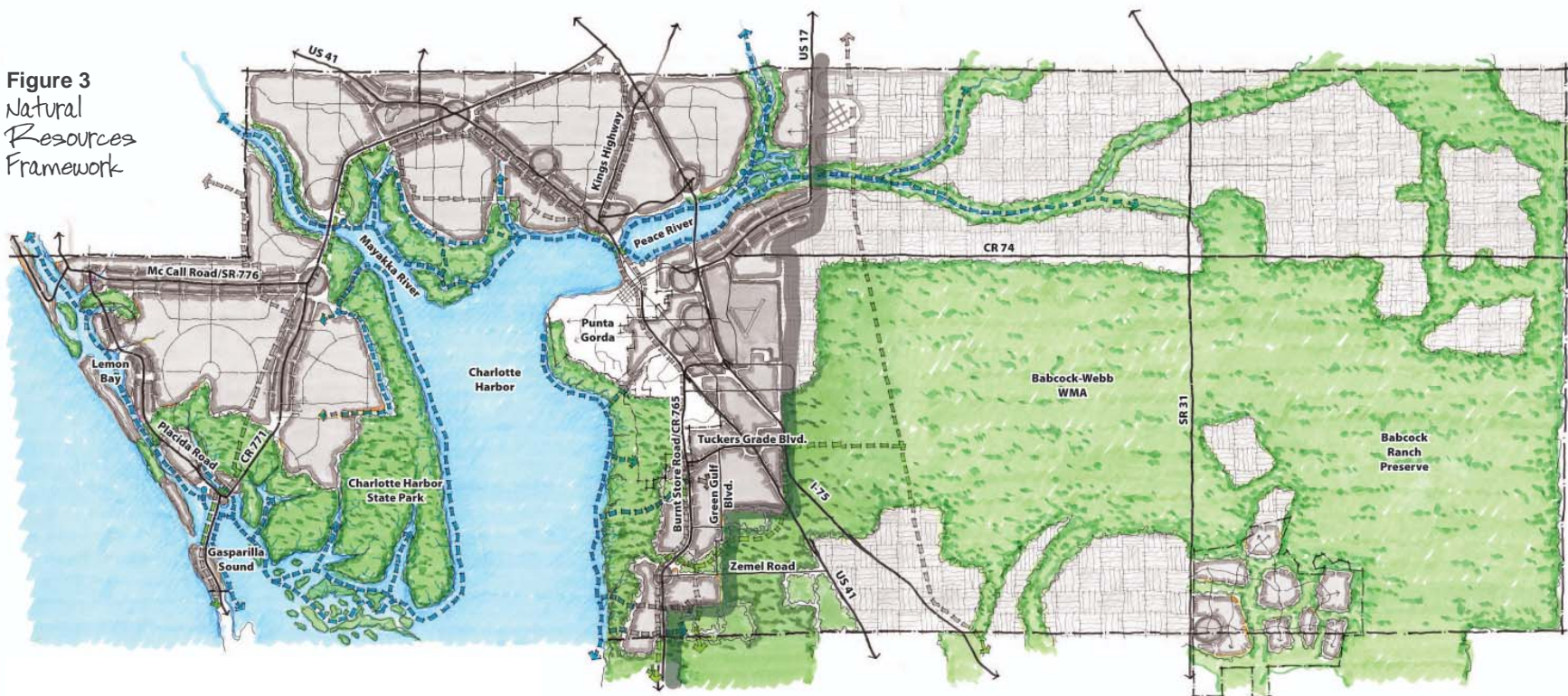
# PLANNING FRAMEWORK TYPES

# Natural Resources Framework

## Guiding Principle

Charlotte County shall promote land use practices that protect natural resources within conservation lands, and target additional acquisition to close gaps in regional and state-wide wildlife corridors. The County will strive to improve the quality of water that discharges into surface waters, and educate residents about controlling the sources of pollutants. The County will seek to minimize environmental impacts within the built environment by reducing carbon emissions, minimizing water use and controlling pollution.

Figure 3  
Natural  
Resources  
Framework



Natural Resources



Water Resources



Peace River

Charlotte County includes a range of natural resources and habitat that are special and unique including the Charlotte Harbor, the Myakka and Peace River systems and estuaries and over 173,000 acres of protected wildlife management areas.

Protecting these resources requires that land use decisions assure that these areas remain intact, connected to other state-wide conservation lands, and that they are managed for native biological diversity.

The Natural Resources Framework (Figure 3) is a general illustration of the Natural Resources Guiding Principle which can be implemented. Four distinct components are represented: conservation lands, water, future wildlife corridors, and green design for the built environment. These components form the framework for Charlotte County's resource protection goals.

## Conservation Lands

Charlotte County has over 173,000 acres of conservation lands that include large expanses of native upland and wetland habitats, extensive buffers to wetland and coastal ecosystems, and a vast freshwater and estuarine water way at the junction of the Peace and Myakka Rivers. These lands include

the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area (WMA), and the Babcock Ranch in the eastern portion of the County. These conservation lands have state-wide significance due to their contiguity with each other and with other natural lands in Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. They include resource-based activities such as eco-tourism, hunting, hiking trails, fishing, and they are managed by natural resource agencies with a focus on native biological diversity. There is also a significant acreage of natural lands adjacent to Charlotte Harbor in the parcels known as the Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Parks. The Parks include extensive areas of wetlands adjacent to Charlotte Harbor, and they provide a buffer to the harbor and coastal areas along the Gulf of Mexico. A number of additional state parks, preserves, and County parks occur in the western portion of the County in areas associated with barrier islands, coastal scrub, and the inland waterway. In addition to the many conservation lands, there are extensive areas of protected freshwater and marine habitats associated with Charlotte Harbor that are a central focus of Charlotte County's community activities.

### Planning Objectives:

*Acquire key conservation lands.* Continue to acquire targeted conservation lands through Conservation Charlotte. Continually update lands list and actively manage acquisition program to maximize the value of purchases for resource protection, and to leverage County funds with money from state and federal agencies. The network of conservation lands identified by the state's programs for the Integrated Habitat Network and the recently completed Critical Lands and Water Identification Project (CLIP) data depicting the intra-state wildlife corridors should serve as a base for targeted lands.

*Oppose incompatible land use changes.* Do not allow land use changes that would compromise the value and connection of natural lands within the County and across the state, or the ability to properly manage for natural systems over the long-term. Fragmentation by roads and allowing incompatible uses adjacent to conservation lands should be minimized or avoided.

*Improve access to Wildlife Management Areas.* Although the wildlife management areas and other natural lands in the County are extensively used by the public, there appears to be a tremendous opportunity to improve access, to encourage visitor use by residents of Charlotte County, and to engage the public in more forms of resource-based recreation.

## Water

Charlotte County holds the distinction of having a significant area of its County encompassing Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) that includes Gasparilla Sound, Charlotte Harbor, Cape Haze, and Lemon Bay. These water bodies have been the subject of extensive recreation, water quality research, and community activities for decades. Extensive residential areas have access to numerous points of entry into Charlotte Harbor, and water-based resources drive a significant economy in the County. Since much of the County's valuable real estate is tied to its natural resources and waterways; protecting these resources should be viewed as an important economic development strategy. Though water quality in Charlotte Harbor is relatively good compared with other Florida estuaries, there is some indication that runoff is effecting concentrations of dissolved oxygen; nutrients, including nitrogen and phosphorus; and turbidity.



# Natural Resources Framework (continued)

## Planning Objectives:

*Implement improved water quality protection.* The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary program produced a document that summarized the extensive effort of volunteer water quality monitoring in Charlotte Harbor in 2007. For the Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor and Cape Haze Aquatic Preserves and their watersheds, among other things they recommended focusing on:

- Identifying and reducing sources of nutrients,
- Restoring and maintaining natural surface and groundwater hydrology, and
- Identifying water quantity and quality impacts from mining and agriculture.

*Protect improved natural lands that buffer surface waters.* Protecting water quality in Charlotte Harbor could be supported by conservation of natural lands associated with the floodplains of the Myakka and Peace Rivers, and included as a part of the strategy for protecting future wildlife habitats.

*Promote measures to reduce non-point source pollution.* Urban runoff, fertilizers used in urban landscapes, and agricultural discharges have been identified as sources of nutrients and turbidity that impact water quality. Ongoing enhancement of stormwater management, fertilizer reduction and improvement of agricultural and mining practices should be implemented.

## Future Wildlife Corridors

Conservation lands in Charlotte County are so extensive that they represent a core reserve for the statewide conservation network. Existing conservation lands associated with Babcock Ranch and Babcock/ Webb WMA comprise significant hubs for the statewide network of habitat from south Florida

across the state. Likewise, the adjacent lands to the north of these expansive conservation areas are a part of the priority statewide conservation scenario in the recently completed Critical Lands & Waters Identification Project (CLIP) conducted for the Century Commission.

## Planning Objectives:

*Identify gaps in conservation networks.* The County has already identified lands targeted for conservation, and this assessment should be reviewed continually. Protecting the network of habitat that extends from the existing conservation lands associated with Charlotte Harbor State Preserve and the WMAs, and the wildlife corridors associated with the Peace River floodplain should be prioritized.

*Implement other measures to protect important natural lands.* It is not essential for all of the Priority lands to be acquired outright; the conservation network can also be protected with compatible uses such as sustainable agriculture.

*Minimize road encroachments into wildlife corridors.* Decisions related to additional roadways should consider the potential direct and indirect impacts to the conservation network.

## Green Design for the Built Environment

Protecting natural resources in the County also includes minimizing the effects from urban areas. Green design techniques in the built environment have become a part of the protocol in Charlotte County, as evidenced by the fact that the County received the first LEED certification for schools in the Southeast. Global environmental impacts related to air pollution, habitat alteration, water quality

and climate change are substantially affected by actions within the built environment. The County has the ability to influence activities within the built environment that can contribute to global change in its "environmental footprint". Implementing a more intensive mass transit program is complicated by the form of residential development, and the lack of concentrated destinations. Still, the County should continue to seek ways to effectively reduce vehicle miles travelled and encourage multi-use developments that are compact, pedestrian-friendly and well-connected to transit options.

## Planning Objectives:

*Encourage LEED, or other comparable certifications for buildings.* The County should consider a requirement for LEED certification for all new government buildings, and seek ways to encourage private developments to consider the same.

*Encourage FGBC Green Community, or other comparable certifications for communities.* The Florida Green Building Coalition has a certification process for green developments, and the County should encourage developments to meet the criteria that would allow them to be certified.

*Consider climate change in County decisions, particularly along the coast.* New developments should specify how their planning efforts are sensitive to rising sea levels associated with the most conservative projections of climate change.

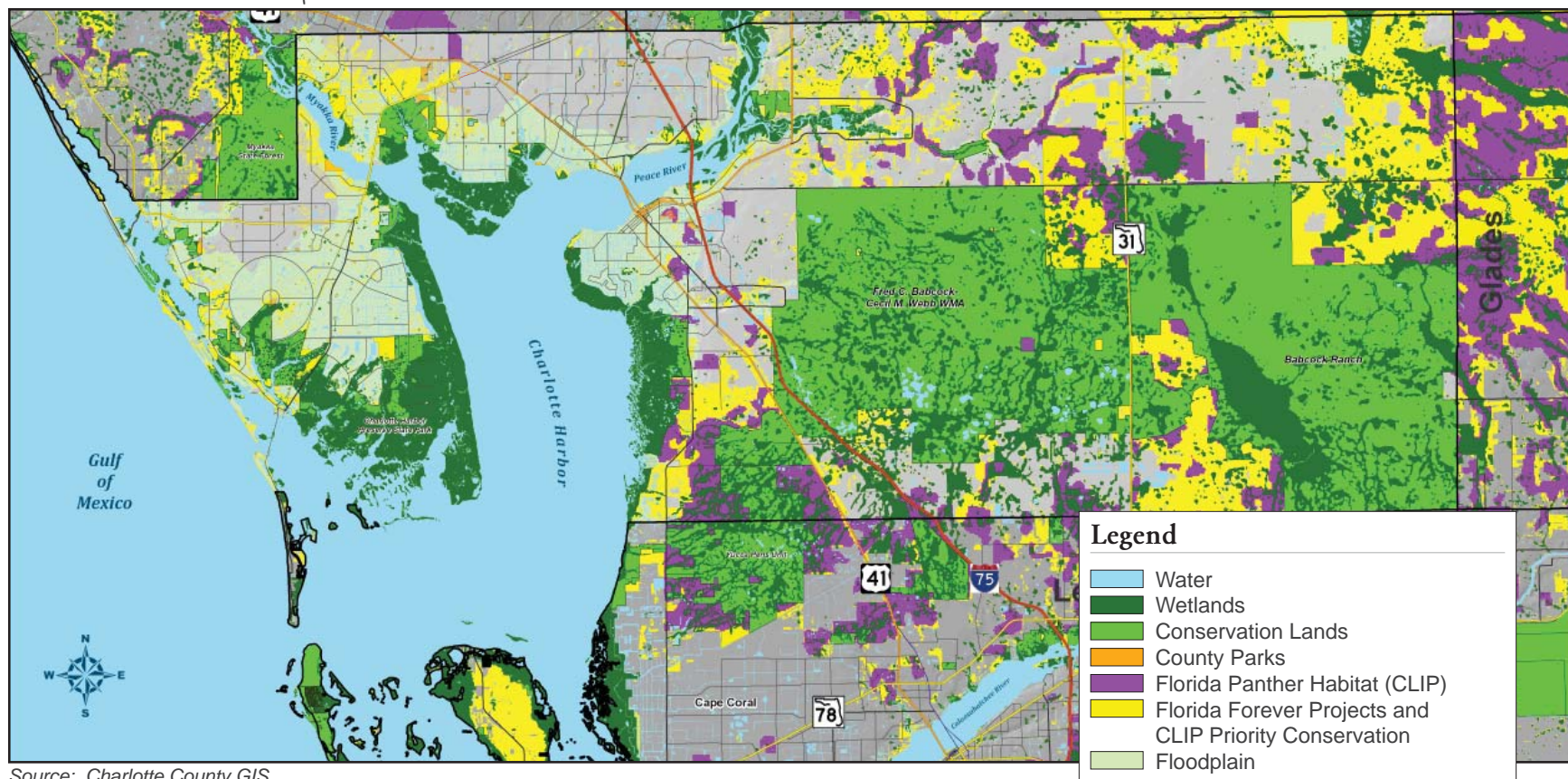
*Identify ways to reduce vehicle miles travelled.* The County should maximize efforts to implement a transportation system that is more effectively networked, encourage communities to be more pedestrian friendly, and encourage alternative modes of transportation.



## Area Background

The Natural Resources Framework includes natural areas associated with conservation lands, CLIP Priority 1 Areas, wetlands, and floodplain and Outstanding Florida Waters. In Charlotte County this includes the beaches and barrier islands, Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park, Charlotte Harbor, Myakka and Peace River systems and estuaries, and the Babcock-Webb Ranch Wildlife Management Area and Babcock Ranch Preserve.

Figure 4 Environmental Systems

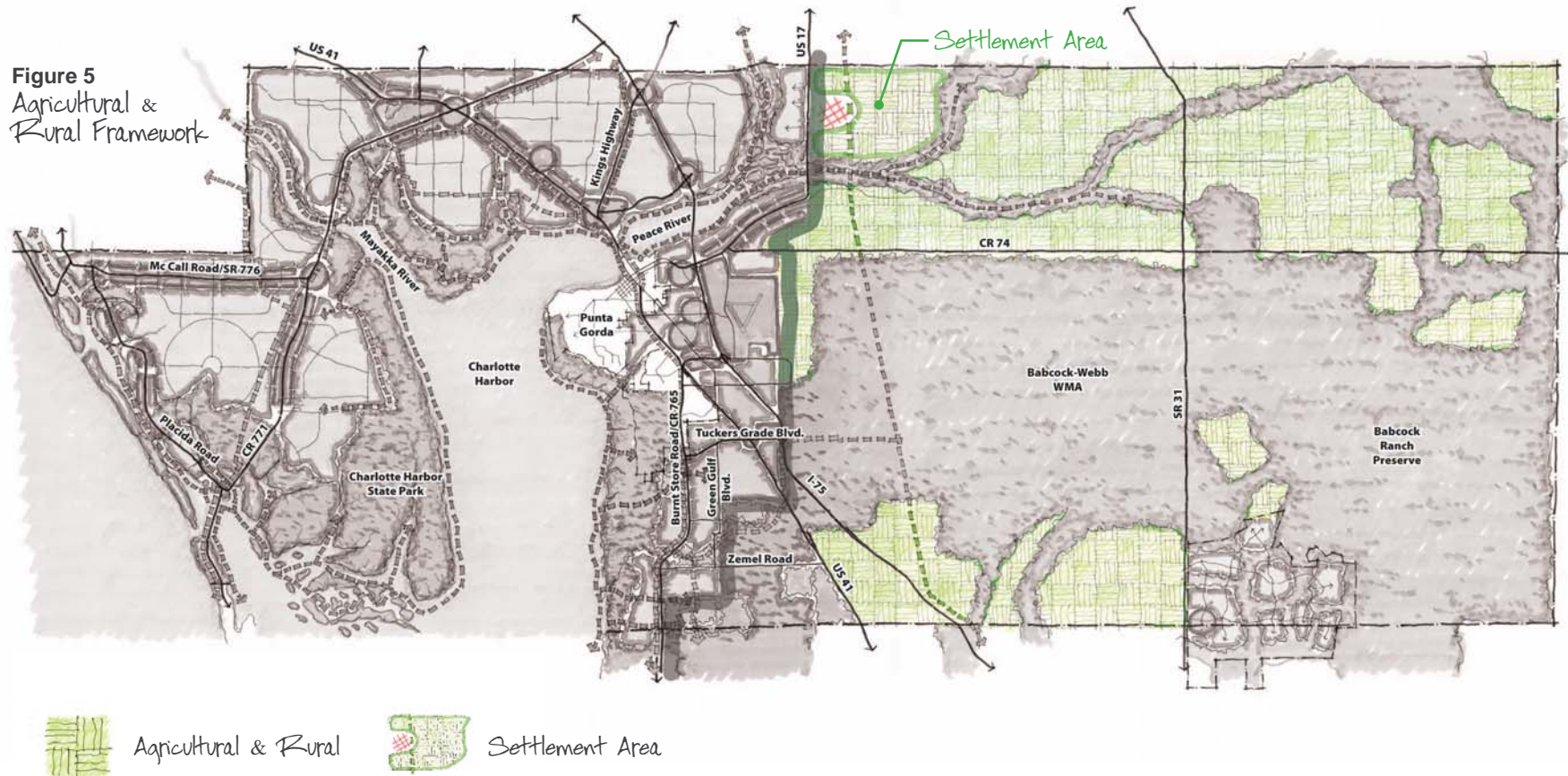


Source: Charlotte County GIS

# Agricultural & Rural Framework

## Guiding Principle

Charlotte County shall define a future agricultural and rural landscape that recognizes agricultural uses as both an important component of our visual character and our economy. Agricultural and rural areas should be planned to protect habitat and natural resources, allow appropriately designed settlement, and support continued agricultural business activity by allowing it to adapt and change over time.





East Charlotte County

Supporting a sustainable agricultural future will require flexibility and strategies that are adaptable to changing conditions and economies. Managing this change will require a long-term plan for the County's existing agricultural areas that sustains agriculture, protects natural resources and provides the potential for appropriately scaled new development.

The Agricultural and Rural Framework (Figure 5) recognizes the agricultural and rural character of East Charlotte County and organizes the key planning objectives for the area into four components: rural character, agriculture, mining and resource extraction and a "Settlement Area".

## Rural Character

Rural Character is determined by the extent to which certain fundamental elements of rural character are present in a community. The Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan identifies the East Charlotte County Planning Area as the area east of range line 23E/24E and I-75 and which includes approximately 277,546 acres. Although this area is characterized by its rural and agricultural areas, this planning area alone does not reflect the extent of agricultural and rural lands in the County as further described by the County's Urban Service Area overlay. For the

Agricultural & Rural Framework, we have re-defined the area based upon a more specific evaluation of the presence of the elements of rural character to include all of the areas shown in Figure 5 which include approximately 300,000 acres.

The fundamental elements of community character that support and reinforce rural character provide insight into both the perception of rural areas and the actual pattern of development. Areas of residential development on large lots that are 5 acres or greater are often seen as part of the rural pattern of development; however, this low density pattern of residential expansion will, over time, consume large areas of agricultural land and will change the character and function of these rural areas. In addition, this low density pattern of development places an increasing burden on our transportation infrastructure.

### Planning Objectives:

**Protect Scenic Views.** The viewshed of the roadway provides a visual reinforcement of the rural character of the area. That viewshed can include forested lands, pasture, other agricultural uses or rural scale residential housing. The lack of symmetry and homogeneity of uses also reinforce the rural character of the roadway and the areas. Protection of scenic views within rural areas need to acknowledge and accommodate the fundamental agricultural uses within the rural area and provide for both "open views" of agricultural lands as well as "closed views" of roadside landscaping.

**Protect Open Spaces.** There is a long history of agricultural lands and agricultural production within East Charlotte County. The presence of continuing agricultural uses in the rural area is an integral and fundamental component of the rural lifestyle. The current geographic location of these agricultural lands

can also reinforce and support the environmental preservation strategy of the County.

**Provide alternative rural residential development options.** There will be continued pressure for residential development in rural areas and in some locations this development may be appropriate. In order to support the protection of rural character, regulations that promote conservation subdivision design will allow continued residential development in the rural area while continuing to protect natural areas, critical vistas and open spaces.

**Support context sensitive design for infrastructure.** Rural roadways function as a fundamental physical element of rural community character. They can reinforce the character of a community by providing entranceways and scenic views or they can provide expectations for changes in land use. Context sensitive design is a way "to think beyond the pavement" about the impact that roadways and other public infrastructure facilities will have on the community.

**Continued protection of water supply.** There will continue to be a need for the protection of the water supply within Charlotte County including the protection of both water quantity and quality. Future planning for this area should acknowledge and provide adequate protection for water supply. Central water services should be limited within the Rural Area.

## Agriculture

Agriculture areas in Charlotte County include a significant amount of lands, roughly equal in scale to the amount of urban development in the County. These areas of agricultural activity and use include a range of citrus groves, cattle ranches, and sod



# Agricultural & Rural Framework (continued)



and other crop production. The dynamic nature and viability of certain types of agricultural production continues to be a concern for agricultural landowners concerned about future opportunities and uses for the area.

Although there is a mix of ownership patterns in east Charlotte County that include some areas that are platted into large lots with many owners, there are still some significant areas where there is family/corporate ownership of large tracts of land.

## **Planning Objective:**

*Define Opportunities.* The County should continue to support agricultural areas by providing for a range of long-term opportunities within agricultural lands that respects the agricultural landowner. A set of standards that address the range of uses within these areas; the relationship of agricultural lands to the adjacent natural resource protection areas; and residential opportunities that focus on protecting the rural character of this area through new standards for the development of larger Rural Estates and the newly identified Settlement Area. In addition, the County's economic development policies should be focused to promote new agricultural opportunities and find ways to incentivize continued agricultural production.

## **Mining & Resource Extraction**

Mining & Resource Extraction uses are located throughout the eastern portion of the County and include a range of mining and resource extraction activity such as aggregate and fill extraction.

## **Planning Objective:**

*Protect Natural Resources.* There is substantive economic pressure for these activities and there can be a place for these uses in the rural areas. In order

to protect the sensitive natural systems in this area as well as the character of the rural area, strict guidelines should be implemented focusing on the location, scale and adjacency requirements for mining activities.

## **Settlement Area**

Settlement Area is intended to recognize the limitations of the existing urban services boundary that currently relies upon a roadway to define the existing edge of urban development along SR 17. The pressure for growth within a rural area often occurs along the "edges" of the area, where adjacent development and/or other influences generate the perception of an opportunity for different uses in an area. The central issue to the protection of most rural areas is the need to establish appropriate transitioning from the existing rural communities to the urbanizing areas along the urban/rural boundary. For much of the urban/rural edge identified in Figure 5, there are substantive environmental systems that serve as an extensive natural buffer and which function as a permanent geographic limit to additional urban development to the east. In an effort to create a more sustainable urban/rural edge along northern SR 17, a "Settlement Area" was identified as one tool that could provide an opportunity for an alternative pattern of growth along an urban growth corridor in a manner that would allow development in this rural area. New development would have specific limitations including a sustainable mixed-use pattern that protects significant open space, a site design for the entire Settlement Area that serves to create a permanent transition and edge to existing urban development, and that is timed consistent with the limitations of urban expansion as provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

## **Planning Objectives:**

*Mixed use development that provides for the logical extension of urban development in a more sustainable form.* New comprehensive plan policies and development standards should be crafted to require a sustainable mixed-use development form within the Settlement Area that is planned at a large scale, where development is located within the area to create a permanent edge to urban development and define the limit of urban services, protect significant amounts of open space and critical habitat corridors, facilitate the transfer of development rights, and establish "green" design practices.

*Create a permanent transition and edge from existing urban development to the rural area.* Reinforce the delineation of urban from rural uses through the creation of adequate transitions and the use of permanently protected open space to establish physical edges and separations between urban and rural uses.

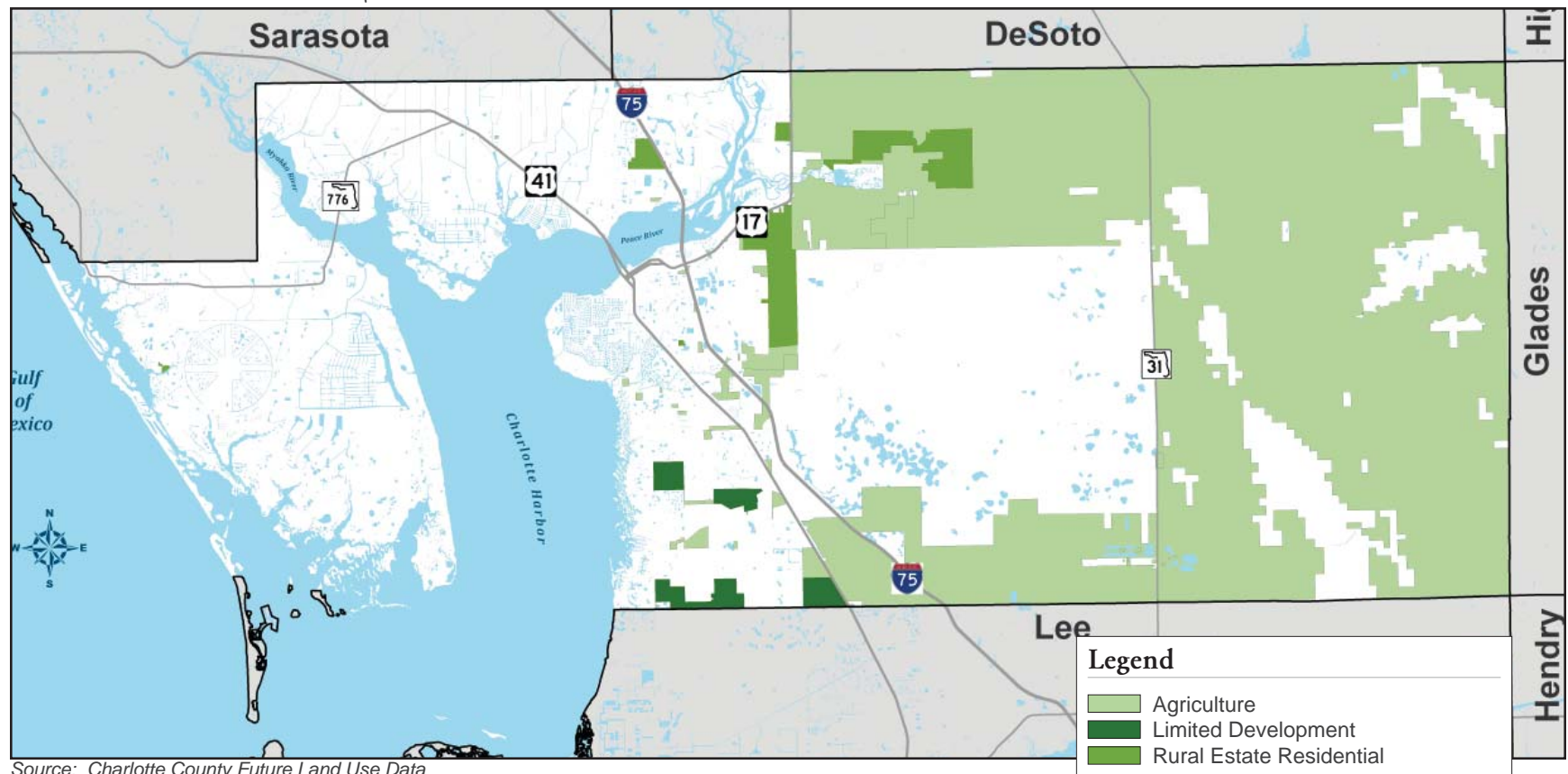
*Standards for Timing of Development.* The Comprehensive Plan will need to introduce standards that define a relationship between development within the Settlement Area and meet the statutory requirement for demonstrating the need for additional urban development over the 2050 planning horizon (Chapter 163, F.S.).



## Area Background

The eastern portion of Charlotte County is primarily agricultural land and includes large areas of agricultural production and low density rural residential dwellings.

Figure 6 East Charlotte County



# Sample Opportunity: Conservation Subdivision Design

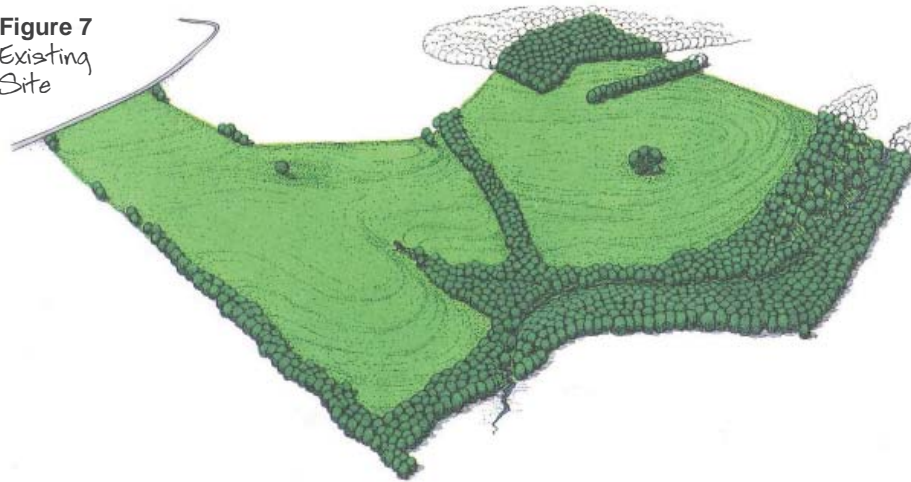
## “A Picture of the Vision”

Establishing a viable and sustainable alternative to 5-acre “rural estate” development in the county’s agricultural areas is critical to protecting rural character and agricultural resources. Conservation subdivision design practices provide an alternative that allows residential development while maintaining sensitive natural areas, preserving habitat corridors, and protecting rural viewsheds. (See Figures 7, 8, & 9)

As illustrated, the conventional 5-acre or large lot residential development pattern completely subdivides the landscape into private development lots with little attention to the land’s natural features. This pattern destroys viewsheds, eliminates the potential for common open space, and compromises sensitive natural areas and habitat corridors.

The alternative conservation design pattern identifies the important and sensitive features of the site, designating them for protection and conservation. Based on this site conservation analysis, potential development areas are identified for residential development. Roads to serve the development areas are designed to minimize infrastructure need and impact on the natural areas. Residential lots are then platted within the development areas to achieve the same overall density that would be allowed under the existing zoning but in smaller lots, creating a “density neutral” result. The resulting conservation lands can be planned to create an interconnected network of permanent open space and to help protect identified county-wide habitat corridors.

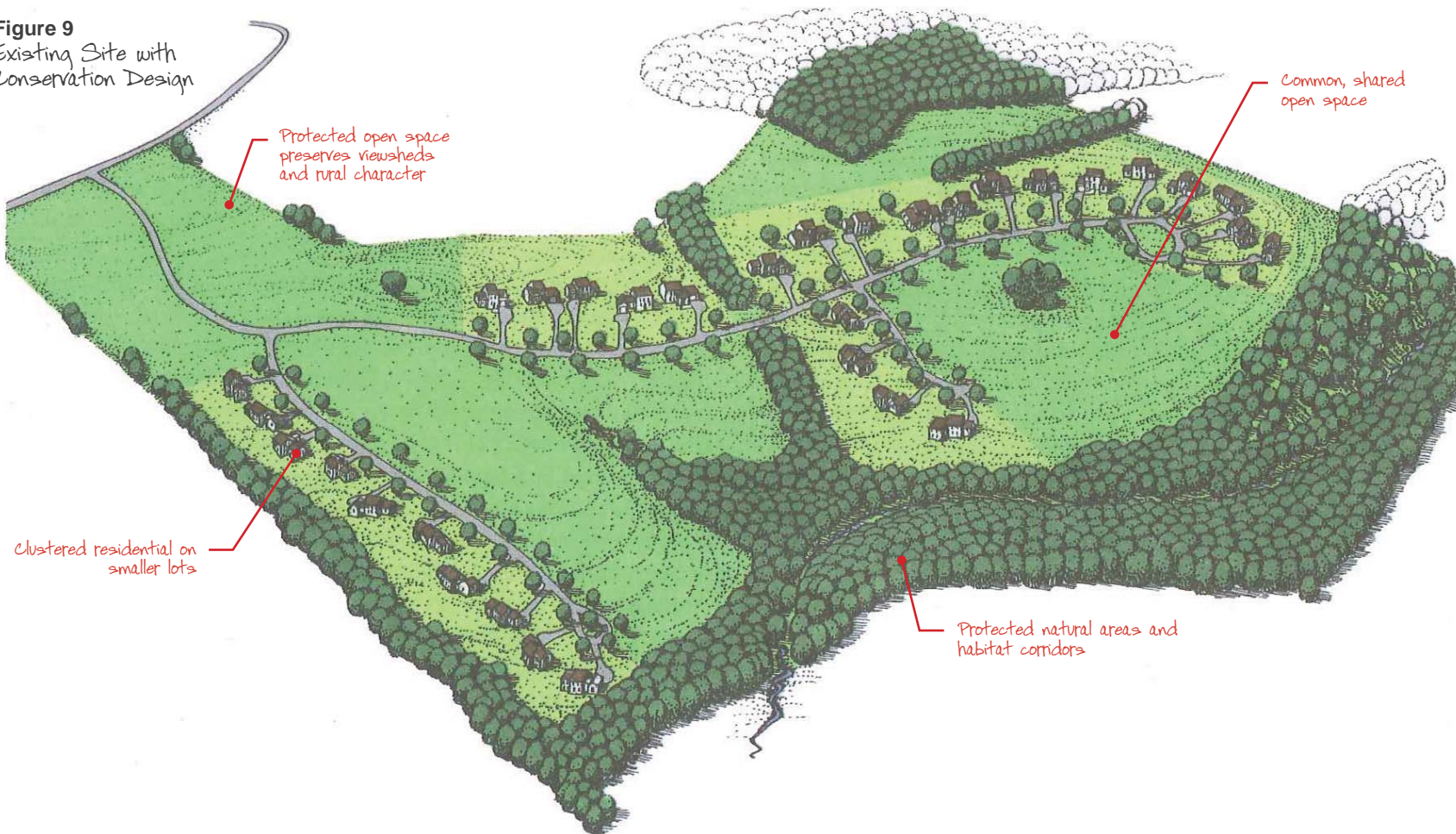
**Figure 7**  
Existing Site



**Figure 8**  
Existing Site  
with Conventional  
Development



**Figure 9**  
Existing Site with  
Conservation Design



Figures 7, 8, and 9 are used by permission from: *Conservation Design for Subdivisions, A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks*, Randall G. Arendt, Island Press.

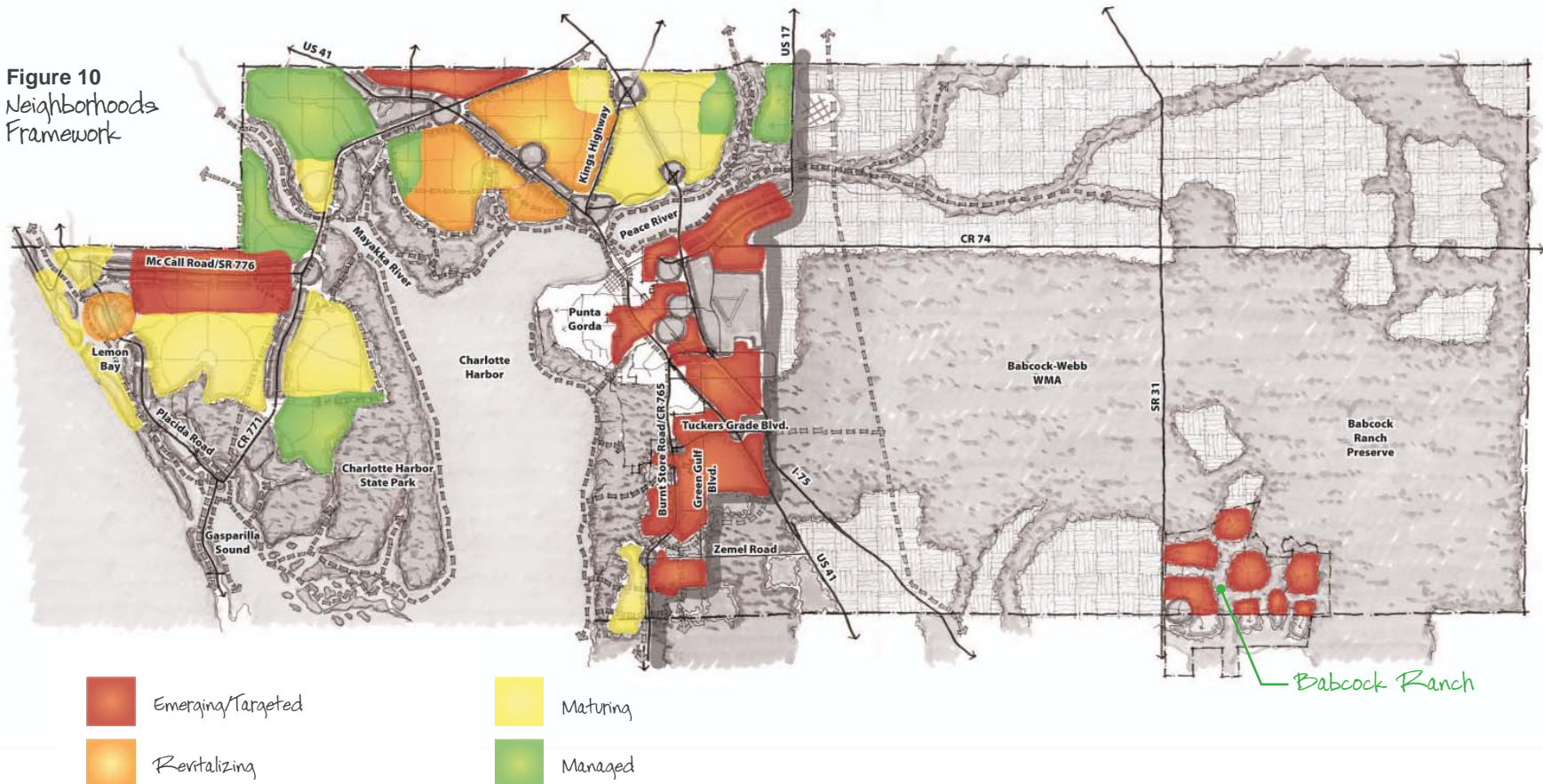


# Neighborhoods Framework

## Guiding Principle

Charlotte County shall support a diverse range of neighborhoods by protecting and enhancing our existing neighborhoods while targeting others for intensified, mixed-use redevelopment. Neighborhood development policy should promote community identity and character by creating walkable places that integrate commercial uses, have a mix of housing types, and distinguish between urban, suburban and rural areas. Old platted neighborhoods that are ill suited for such development should be discouraged.

Figure 10  
Neighborhoods Framework





West Charlotte County

There are vast areas of undeveloped platted residential lots in Charlotte County that include 134,070 vacant residential lots within the three urban areas described in the adopted Charlotte County Comprehensive Plan. Although the acres are described as urban, many of these lands do not have access to urban infrastructure including water and sewer. Even for those neighborhoods that do have access to central water and/or sewer, the County Utility is often building and providing infrastructure to subdivisions that are substantially vacant. Most neighborhoods lack a range of housing options beyond single-family dwelling units and lack amenities such as neighborhood parks, sidewalks, and near-by support retail services.

The provision and availability of water and sewer utilities has a significant influence on the viability of developing platted lands. The future development of platted lands should be focused where utilities exist or where they can be readily provided. (See Figures 11 & 12) Platted lands currently without utility service should be discouraged from further development.

The Neighborhood Framework (Figure 10) organizes the County's neighborhoods into four components: revitalizing, targeted and emerging, maturing, and managed. These components provide a way to differentiate the County's approach and priorities for neighborhood development, recognizing that we cannot treat every neighborhood in the County the same way.

### Revitalizing

Revitalizing neighborhoods include those areas that are predominately built-out where the housing stock is generally in need of reinvestment and revitalization. These neighborhoods include those areas which exhibit an aging housing stock with declining reinvestment. Strengthening these neighborhoods is critical for maintaining long-term neighborhood stability and economic value.

#### Planning Objective:

*Promote and Intensify.* The stability and future viability of these neighborhoods could benefit from new investment, both public and private. County initiatives to support this reinvestment could come in the form of incentives for new infill development, new "redevelopment" use opportunities, or supportive public infrastructure investment such as water and sewer service, new streetscapes, enhance existing streetscapes with additional tree plantings and/or neighborhood amenities such as parks. Proactive neighborhood planning for these areas can help to identify specific redevelopment goals for each neighborhood.

### Targeted & Emerging

Targeted & Emerging neighborhoods have large areas of undeveloped platted lots or other undeveloped lands in locations that are appropriate for neighborhood development and that are well positioned for new and infill development. These neighborhoods are generally near regional transportation corridors, typically have central water and sewer infrastructure, and are in the path of future urban development. These neighborhoods have the opportunity to create a sense of identity for the community and to introduce smart growth planning tools that can support more sustainable neighborhoods.

#### Planning Objective:

*Redefine.* These platted subdivisions can be redefined to function as sustainable neighborhoods that help to establish a real sense of community identity. Key focal points within these neighborhoods can be targeted for new residential infill that is defined by new street connections that create smaller blocks, neighborhood parks, streetscape and sidewalks, and utility infrastructure. Platted lots within these neighborhoods could be targeted for consolidation to create new development opportunities for neighborhood serving commercial or higher density residential while respecting the existing built residential areas.



# Neighborhoods Framework (continued)

## Maturing

Maturing neighborhoods are defined by subdivisions of platted lots that are not fully developed but where stable growth is occurring. There are four historic neighborhoods within these areas including: Charlotte Harbor, El Jobean, Grove City, and Placida. Residential infill continues to occur based on neighborhood and home builder marketing and amenities such as golf courses and water access. The identity of these neighborhoods is established and these areas will infill over time with low density suburban residential.

### Planning Objective:

*Maintain.* These established neighborhoods will continue to develop over time. Existing commercial centers should be strengthened and redeveloped to serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

## Managed

Managed neighborhoods are those areas of platted lots that are only sparsely developed, are located in or adjacent to sensitive environmental resources and lack urban services and utilities. While some development has occurred within these areas, further infill and intensification of these neighborhoods should be discouraged.

### Planning Objective:

*Limit and Constrain.* These neighborhoods should be discouraged from further development. Urban services should be limited and utilities should not be extended into these neighborhoods.

Figure 11

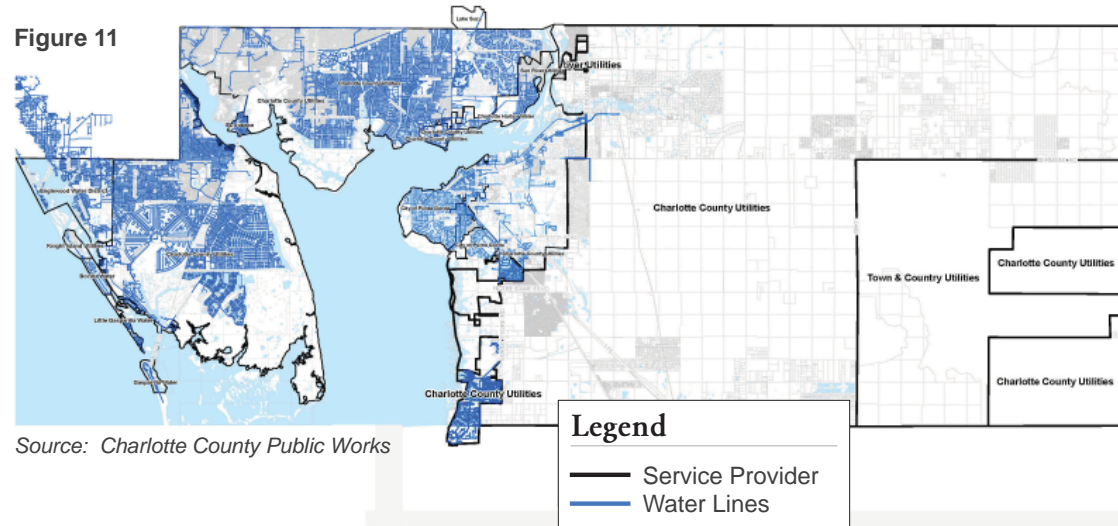
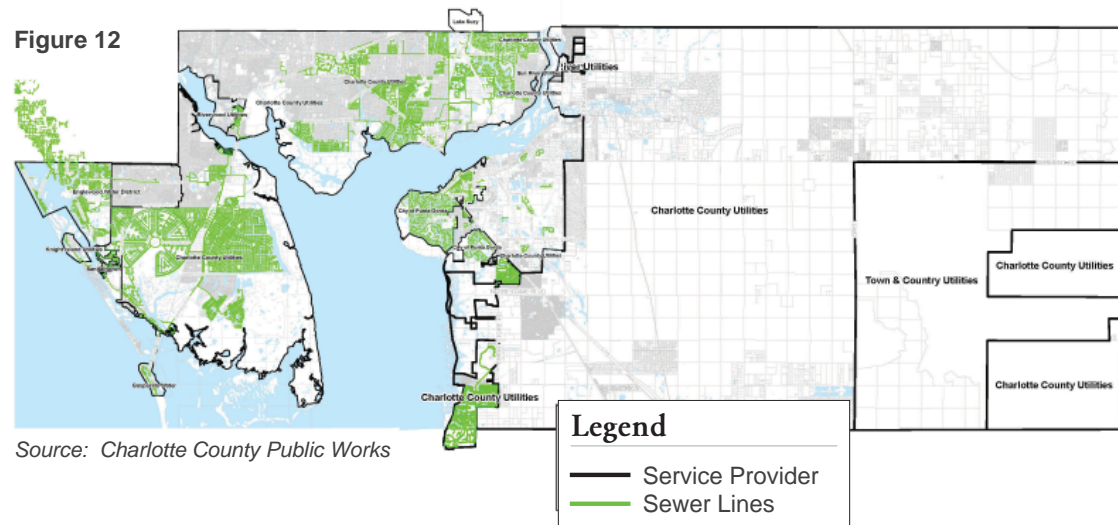


Figure 12

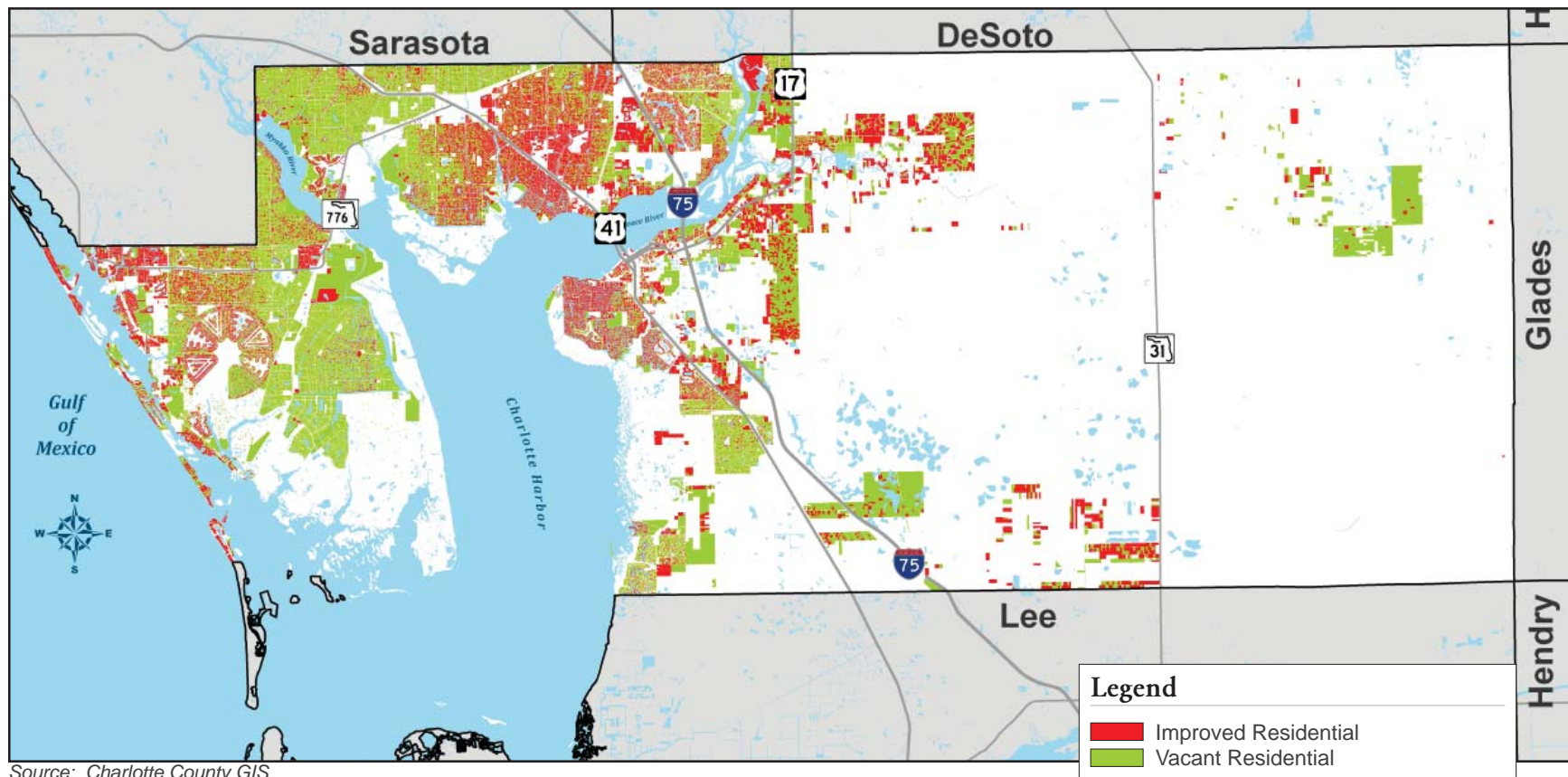




## Area Background

Subdivisions are areas of mainly residential uses and may include single-family and multi-family residential along with neighborhood support retail, civic uses, and parks. The western portion of Charlotte County is made up primarily of these types of residential subdivisions.

Figure 13 Existing Subdivisions/Platted Lands



Source: Charlotte County GIS



# Sample Opportunity: Emerging/Targeted Neighborhood

## “A Picture of the Vision”

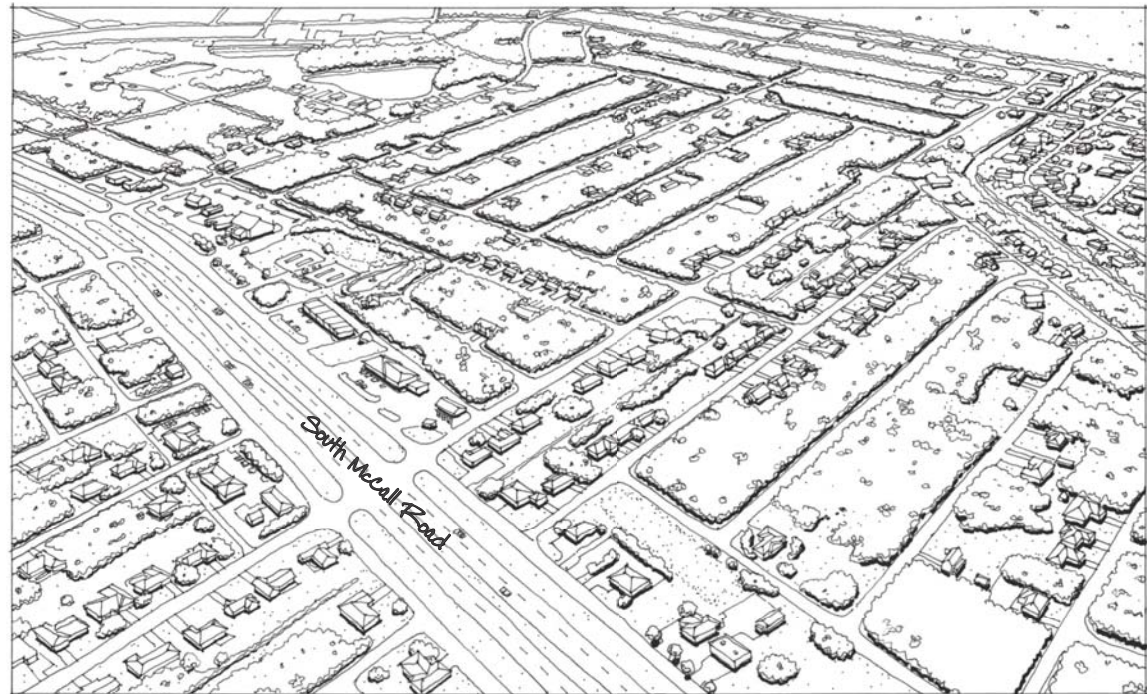
A “targeted” neighborhood development program is envisioned in select locations throughout the County based on their access to regional transportation corridors, support infrastructure and services, the ability to accommodate residential infill at a range of types and densities, and development interest.

This targeted neighborhood development program is intended to be a package of development incentives that would be available to developers to encourage developers who are interested in infill development.

The key to “evolving” these neighborhoods is to create identifiable “neighborhood centers” with infill housing that is located within the “centers” proximate to new public space amenities. These new neighborhood centers are intended to serve as catalysts for surrounding infill development, creating neighborhood identity and visible amenities for new housing investment. These should be locations with denser housing options with a focus on pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, street trees and street-oriented architecture transitioning to the surrounding suburban residential density and pattern. More intense housing options and neighborhood-serving commercial uses can be located and oriented along the major transportation corridors for visibility and access while creating walkable nodes that serve the surrounding neighborhoods. This intensified development along major corridors support the potential for future transit and puts land use intensity where existing transportation infrastructure is best positioned to support it.

Figures 14 & 15 is a before and after example of an opportunity which was identified as a potential target during the vision process.

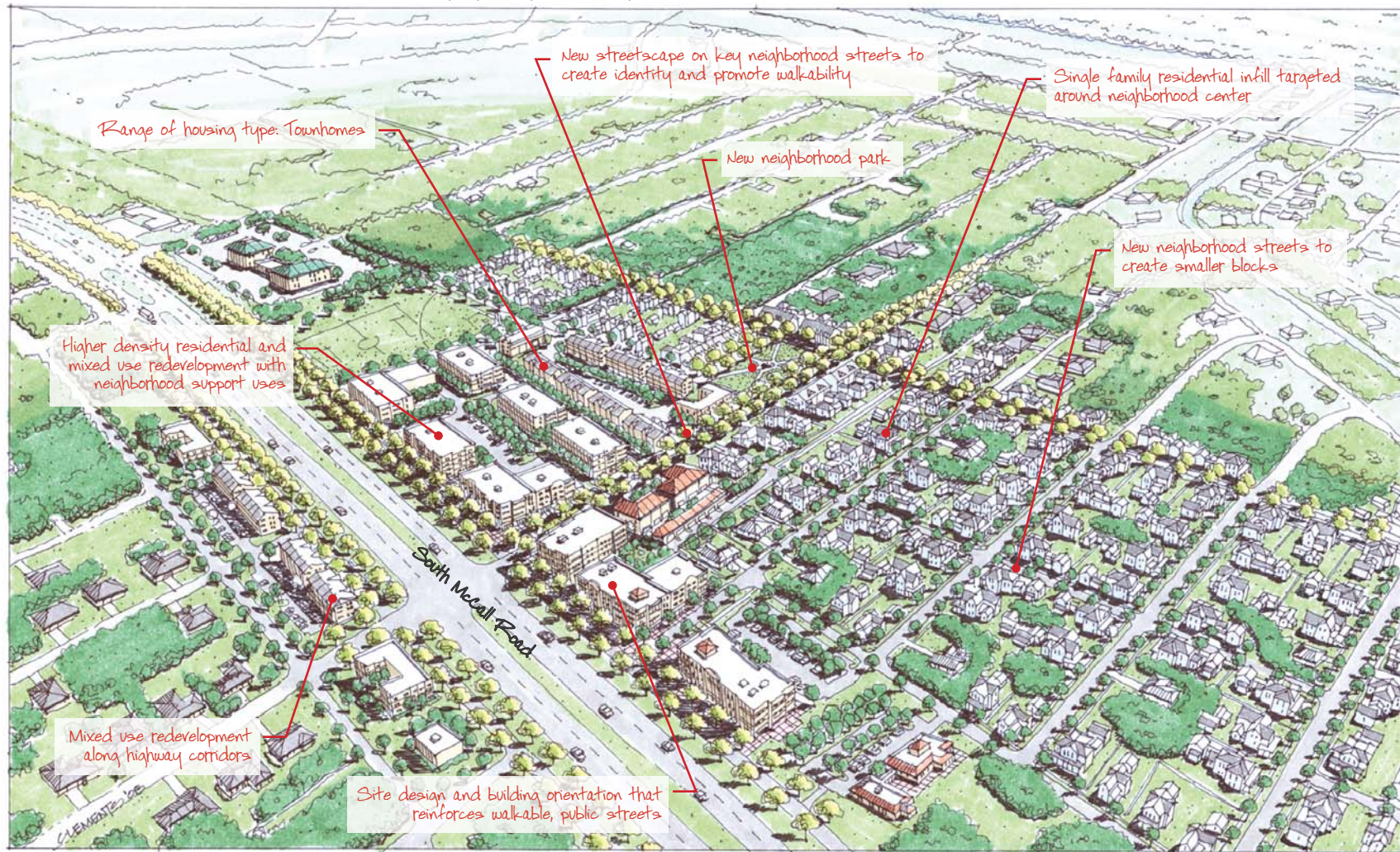
**Figure 14**  
*Before Sketch of Emerging/Targeted Neighborhood*



*Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin*



**Figure 15** Sample After Sketch of Emerging/Targeted Neighborhood



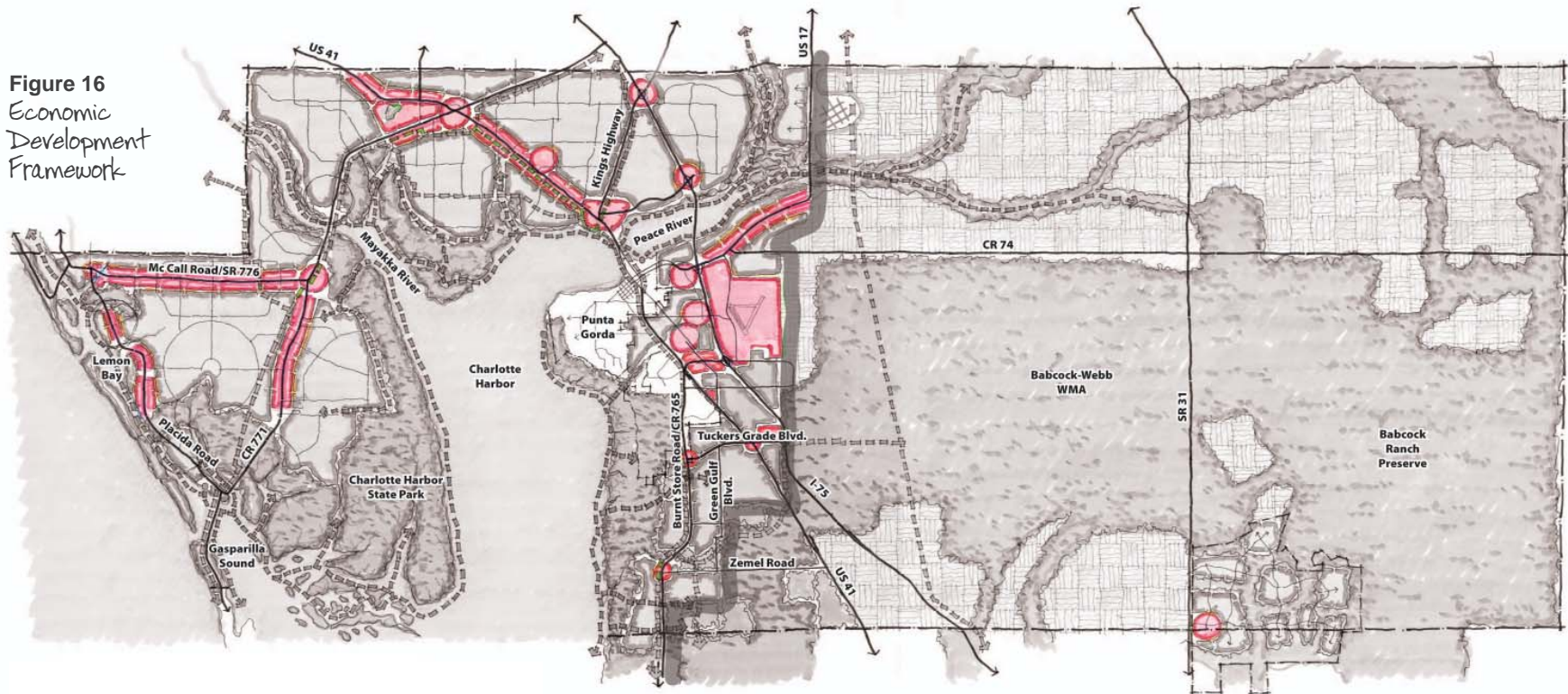
Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin

# Economic Development Framework

## Guiding Principle

Charlotte County shall focus economic development in targeted areas that foster business creation and expansion and protect future opportunities. Economic development initiatives should align public investments, incentives, and land use policy to encourage and protect growth around our existing assets, such as the I-75 corridor and County Airport, and in redeveloping corridors, centers and districts.

Figure 16  
Economic  
Development  
Framework



Economic Development



US 41

Charlotte County's future land use pattern includes a range of commercial, high density residential and mixed use categories that currently regulate the use and intensity of these centers which could be updated to reflect a more focused planning effort to invigorate these areas.

The Economic Development Framework (Figure 16) reflects the Economic Development Guiding Principle which can be implemented through planning policies that focus on three distinctive components: corridors, centers, and districts. Each of these components represents different opportunities and challenges for focusing and fostering economic development.

## Corridors

Corridors are the arterial transportation links that support and promote commercial development, including newly developing and redeveloping areas. Corridors like US 41 are where much of the County's commercial development exists today and they define much of the County's visual character.

### Planning Objectives:

**Strengthen Character.** The County's commercial corridors establish the first visual impression of Charlotte County for most visitors and the daily

visual reality of all residents. Development standards should be created and adopted that establish a "community character" that is not simply defined by commercial strip architecture, parking lots, and highway signs. These standards should look at building placement, parking lot design and access, site and corridor landscaping, and signage requirements to guide future development in a manner more consistent with the desired character of the County.

**Encourage Residential.** Many opportunities exist along the County's corridors for residential development that provides a range of higher density housing choices adjacent to existing neighborhoods and near commercial services. This focus on housing should consider options for the aging population that will need to be near transportation and commercial services, and the amenities of surrounding neighborhoods.

**Limit Expansion of Strip Commercial.** There is still a significant amount of undeveloped land along the County's commercial corridors and a limited market available to fill this land. The County should focus new commercial development and redevelopment in existing corridors and toward centers.

## Centers

Centers are the focused locations of regional commercial and employment uses and should offer a range of uses including housing, employment, retail, and institutional. Charlotte County includes a wide range of potential Centers of differing age, size, density, use and character including Charlotte Harbor CRA, Murdock CRA, the Fawcett Memorial Hospital & Peace River Regional Medical Center, and the future Babcock Town Center. Many of these existing

Centers have yet to fully develop and currently lack the intensity and mix of use that would maximize their economic benefit and create more walkable and transit supportive places. Because these places are primarily auto-oriented with limited pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks or street trees, they lack a distinctive character and identity. These areas should be encouraged to change and redevelop over time into economically vibrant, walkable, mixed-use centers with unique and identifiable character.

### Planning Objectives:

**Sustainable Mixed-Use Development.** Centers should have the highest intensity and widest range of uses in the County so that their future density can more easily be served by a variety of transportation alternatives. Centers should be identified in locations that can accommodate concentrations of employment, commerce and housing that can intensify and redevelop over time. Clear standards should be developed that reward and support higher density, mixed-use development while managing their impacts to surrounding areas.

**Walkable Design.** Centers should be designed to be the County's most walkable and pedestrian-oriented places. The size of individual centers should be limited to support a 10-minute walk from the edge to the center to ensure that its uses are all within walking distance of each other and its activity is concentrated. Development standards should address the planning and design of public spaces such as streets and parks to create a walkable public infrastructure and define rules for private development that specify the design, placement and ground-floor use of buildings to create active streets.

# Economic Development Framework (continued)

## Districts

Districts are larger scale economic development and employment areas that are typically served and supported by regional facilities. These areas can serve to leverage the return on public investment in large-scale infrastructure by focusing economic uses in areas with regional transportation accessibility and visibility. Districts in Charlotte County could be designed to take advantage of existing economic support uses and catalyst sites including the Charlotte County Airport, the Charlotte County Airport Commerce Park and the Edison State College Campus.

### Planning Objectives:

**Preserve Employment Locations.** Districts should be viewed as the long-term locations for employment uses. Regulations should focus on providing incentives and removing disincentives for targeted businesses.

**Prioritize Support Infrastructure.** Sustained development and promotion of economic districts require that the County protect the integrity of existing infrastructure and promote the development of appropriate, new infrastructure within targeted economic development areas.



*Example of the lack of multi-modal options along US 41, Tamiami Trail*

*Signage and other roadway clutter can affect the aesthetics along corridors as shown along this segment of US 41*



*The Charlotte County Airport and its nearby Charlotte County Airport Commerce Park are conveniently located near I-75, making for a prime District location*

*Fawcett Memorial Hospital in Port Charlotte*

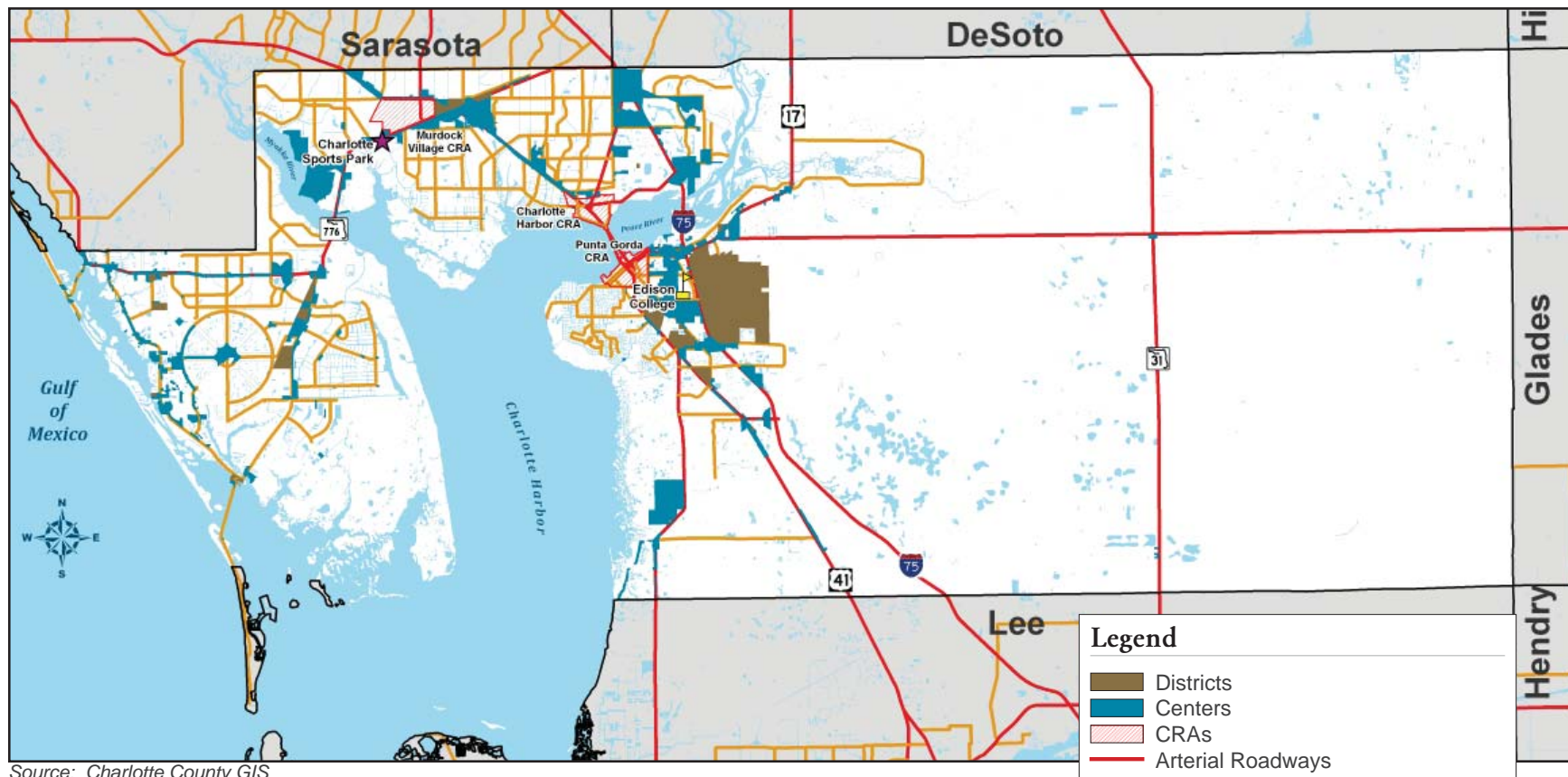




## Area Background

Corridors in Charlotte County include US 41, US 17 and SR 776. Examples of existing and potential Centers in Charlotte County include places like the Murdock CRA, Charlotte Harbor and the Fawcett Memorial Hospital/Peace River Regional Medical Center. Districts in Charlotte County could be designed to take advantage of existing economic drivers including the Charlotte County Airport, the Charlotte County Airport Commerce Park and the Edison State College Campus.

Figure 17 Economic Development Opportunities



Source: Charlotte County GIS

# Sample Opportunity: Fawcett Memorial Hospital/Peace River Regional Medical Center

## “A Picture of the Vision” - Center

The vital employment and health care services that this medical center provides represents one of Charlotte County's strongest foundations for future development and growth. The Economic Development Framework envisions this Center as an expanded and intensified location for healthcare, employment, and housing development, and as a catalyst for investment in the adjacent single-family neighborhoods in need of revitalization.

This is an attractive location for new housing choices in the County as a growing aging population looks for housing options other than the traditional single-family home. Options that are close to healthcare facilities and retail services, are not dependent solely on the automobile for transportation, and are mixed-use and walkable places that can be served by future transit.

The adjacency and access to US 41 positions this intensified center on a transportation corridor best positioned for future regional transit service. In addition, by putting employment, housing and services together, this center can provide efficient internal transit service to link uses and reduce auto dependency on short daily trips.

Implementation steps should set in place appropriate development standards and incentives. Development standards will ensure the creation of a vibrant pedestrian and transit friendly place. These standards will put emphasis on the design of the public space of streets to include; sidewalks, street tree canopies and traffic calming. They will also guide the orientation and intensity of development into street-oriented buildings with active ground-floor uses, higher intensity multi-story development, and a smaller, walkable block structure. Potential incentives for development should encourage intensification

by providing public investment in streetscape, tree canopies, new public open spaces and/or other needed infrastructure, streamlining the development review process, and creating density bonuses for exceeding development standards.

Figures 18 & 19 is a before and after example of an opportunity which was identified as a potential target during the vision process.

**Figure 18**

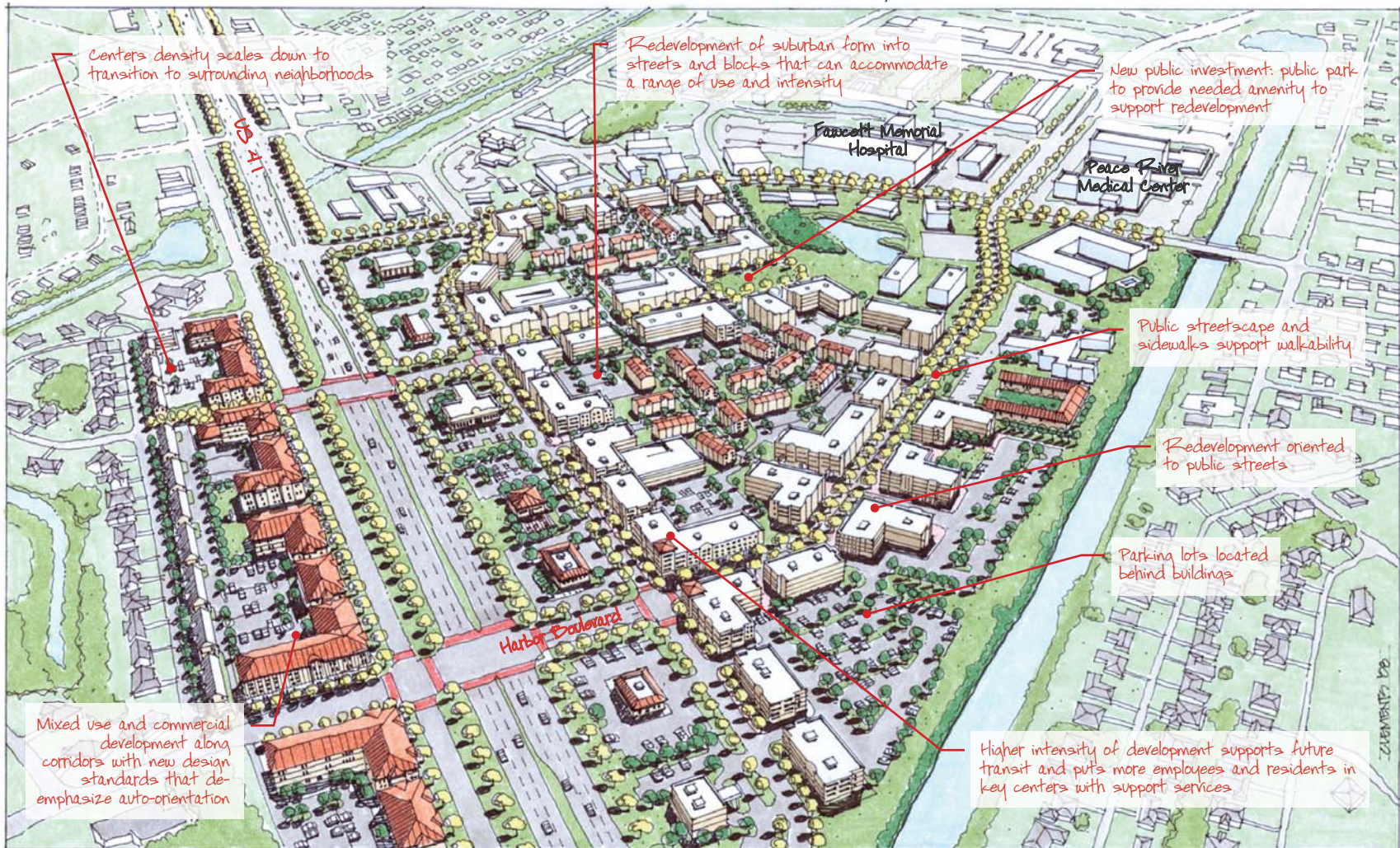
*Before Sketch of Fawcett Memorial Hospital/Peace River Regional Medical Center*



*Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin*



Figure 19 Sample After Sketch of Fawcett Memorial Hospital/Peace River Regional Medical Center



Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin

# Sample Opportunity: Charlotte County Airport and Commerce Park

## “A Picture of the Vision”- District

The Charlotte County Airport and the Interstate 75 corridor are important economic development drivers for the County. The Economic Development Framework envisions the opportunity to create a dynamic employment district built around these assets. This District would focus on employment-oriented uses such as light industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, and office development that could capitalize on airport and interstate access.

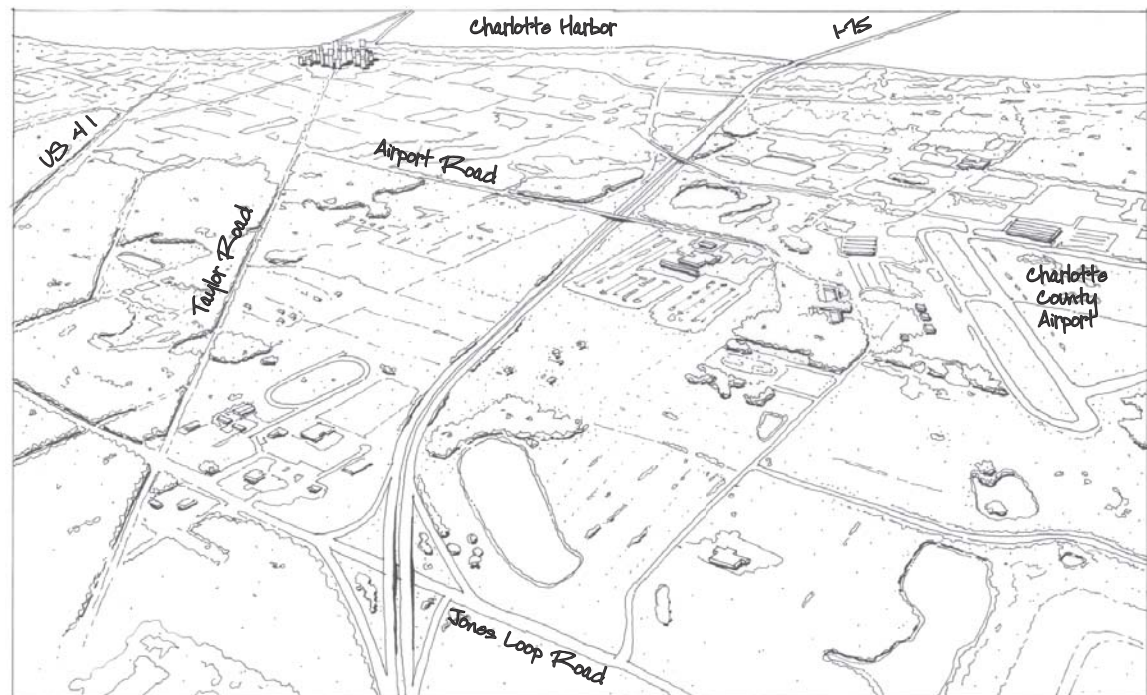
This vital economic development district could also serve as a catalyst for adjacent development opportunities including new mixed use centers, and support housing developments. The resulting multi-functional district would be designed to build upon the area's existing assets such as downtown Punta Gorda, Edison State College, I-75 visibility and access and the Charlotte County Airport.

These new centers should be connected to this growing employment district and establish locations for a range of housing options and commercial services in an urban, walkable and mixed-use form interconnected to the district's employment opportunities. One example of these centers would build around the Edison State College with new housing and supportive institutional uses.

An expanded transportation network that creates new east-west connections across I-75 and links Punta Gorda with this growing employment district would be a critical part of completing the infrastructure necessary to maximize accessibility and catalyze new economic development.

Figures 20 & 21 is a before and after example of an opportunity which was identified as a potential target during the vision process.

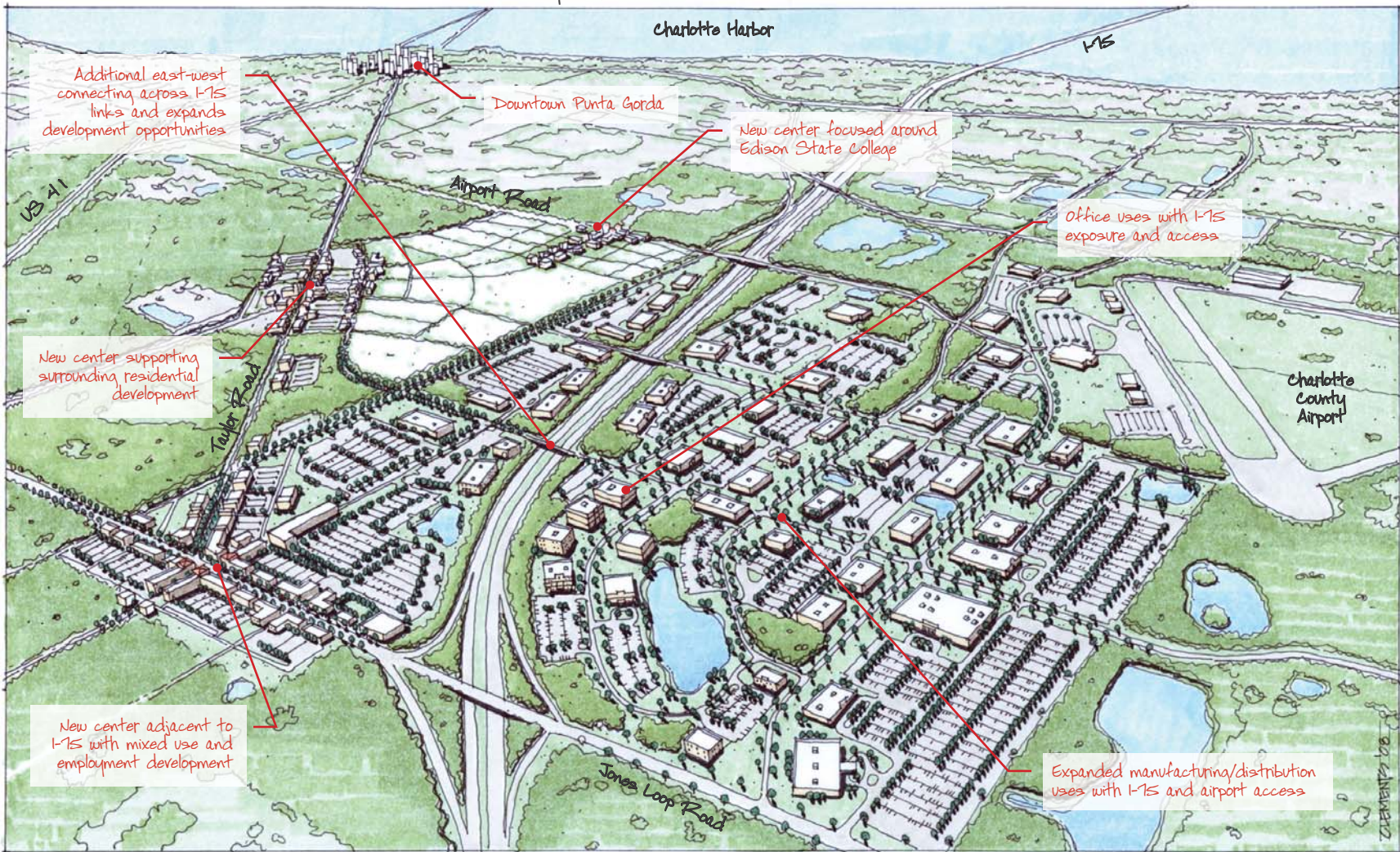
**Figure 20**  
*Before Sketch of Charlotte County Airport and Commerce Park*



*Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin*



**Figure 21** Sample After Sketch of Charlotte County Airport and Commerce Park



Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin



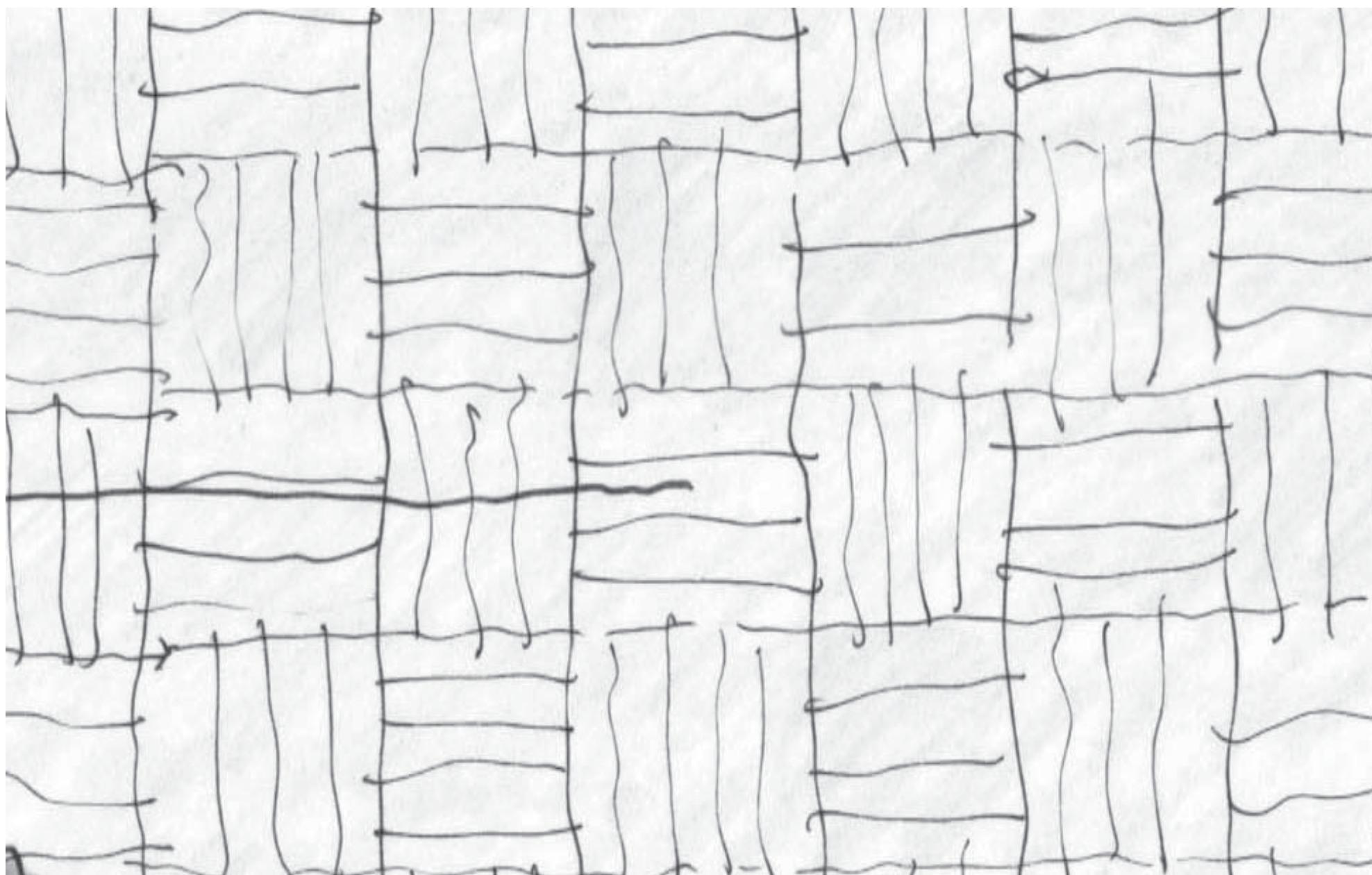
# PLANNING FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

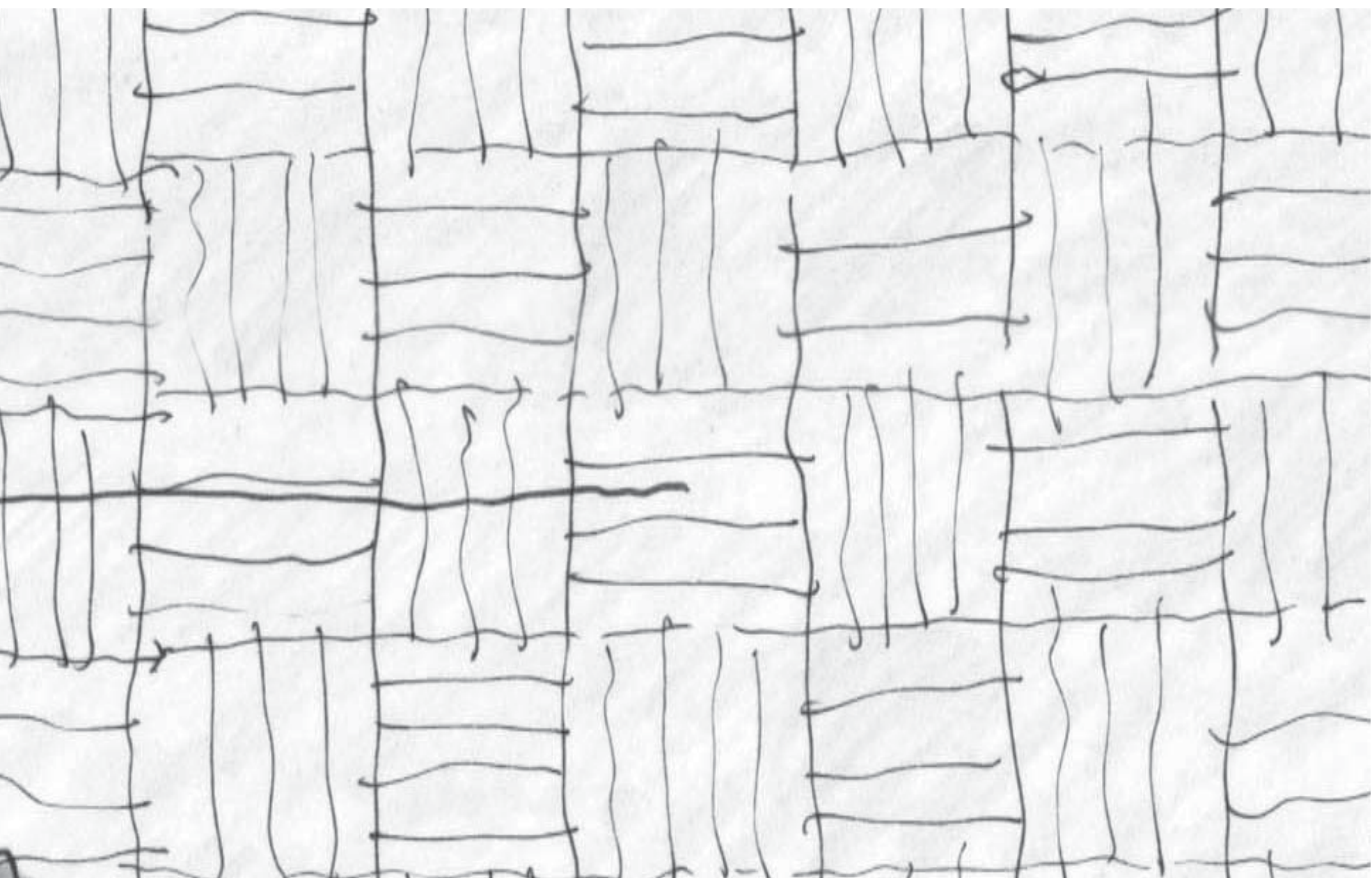
# Summary

	Geographic Focus	Guiding Principle	Planning Policy & Components	Approach
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future Land Use (resource conservation, preservation)</li> <li>Existing Conservation</li> <li>Wetlands</li> <li>Waterways, canals, rivers, etc.</li> <li>Floodplains</li> <li>Potential State-wide, regional connections</li> </ul>	<p><b>Context:</b> The County includes significant protected natural lands and sensitive and valuable water resources.</p> <p><b>Guiding Principle:</b> Charlotte County shall promote land use practices that protect natural resources within conservation lands, and target additional acquisition to close gaps in regional and state-wide corridors. The County will strive to improve the quality of water that discharges into surface waters, and educate residents about controlling the sources of pollutants. The County will seek to minimize environmental impacts within the built environment by reducing carbon emissions, minimizing water use and controlling pollution.</p>	a. <i>Conservation Lands</i> – Existing protected areas and wildlife management areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire Key Tracts of Conservation Land</li> <li>Oppose Incompatible Land Use Changes</li> <li>Improve Access to Wildlife Management Areas</li> </ul>
			b. <i>Water</i> – The waterways, canals, estuaries and harbor, and the wetlands, floodplain and buffers that protect them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Water Quality Protection Measures</li> <li>Protect Natural Lands that Buffer surface Waters</li> <li>Promote Measures to Reduce Non-point Source Pollution</li> </ul>
			c. <i>Future Wildlife Corridors</i> – Natural areas that can provide a future linkage with regionally-significant conservation lands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Gaps in Conservation Networks</li> <li>Implement Other Measures to Protect Important Natural Lands</li> <li>Minimize Road Encroachments into Wildlife Corridors</li> </ul>
			d. <i>“Green” Design for the Built Environment</i> – Sustainable design practices that protect habitat, air and water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage LEED, or Other Comparable Certifications for Buildings</li> <li>Encourage FGBC Green Community, or Other Comparable Certifications for Communities</li> <li>Consider Climate Change in County Decisions Particularly Along the Coast</li> <li>Identify Ways to Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled</li> </ul>
Agricultural & Rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future Land Use (Agriculture, Rural estate residential, Limited development)</li> <li>Mining/Extraction</li> </ul>	<p><b>Context:</b> East County is a predominantly rural and agricultural landscape that is facing the pressure of development activity and mining.</p> <p><b>Guiding Principle:</b> Charlotte County shall define a future agricultural and rural landscape that recognizes agricultural uses as both an important component of our visual character and our economy. Agricultural and rural areas should be planned to protect habitat and natural resources, allow appropriately designed settlement, and support continued agricultural business activity by allowing it to adapt and change over time.</p>	a. <i>Rural Character</i> – Areas the exhibit fundamental rural character elements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect Scenic Views</li> <li>Protect Open Spaces</li> <li>Provide Alternative Rural Residential Development Options</li> <li>Support Context Sensitive Design for Infrastructure</li> </ul>
			b. <i>Agriculture</i> – Areas of agricultural activity and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed Use Development that Provides Logical Extension of Vision Development</li> <li>Create a Permanent Transition and Edge</li> <li>Standards for Timing</li> </ul>
			c. <i>Mining &amp; Resource Extraction</i> – Mining in agriculture areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define Long-term Opportunities for the use of Agricultural Lands</li> </ul>
			d. <i>Settlement Areas</i> – Sustainable development form that protects significant open space while serving as a transition and edge to existing urban development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect Natural Resources</li> </ul>



	Geographic Focus	Guiding Principle	Planning Policy & Components	Approach
Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Future Land Use (low density residential)</li><li>• Community Plans: Burnt Store Area Plan, Placida Community Plan, South Gulf Cove, Manasota &amp; Sandpiper Key, Harbor Heights, Boca Grande, Don Pedro Island, Knight Island &amp; Thornton Key, Little Gasparilla Island, Grove City</li><li>• Babcock Ranch</li><li>• Potential Future areas?</li></ul>	<b>Context:</b> There are vast areas of undeveloped platted residential lots stretching the County's resources, leaving a fragmented pattern of under built "neighborhoods".  <b>Guiding Principle:</b> Charlotte County shall support a diverse range of neighborhoods by protecting and enhancing our existing neighborhoods while targeting others for intensified, mixed use redevelopment. Neighborhood development policy should promote community identity and character by creating walkable places that integrate commercial uses, have a mix of housing types, and distinguish between urban, suburban and rural areas. Old platted neighborhoods that are ill-suited for such development should be discouraged.	a. <i>Revitalizing</i> – Developed neighborhoods with a range of housing types in need of reinvestment and revitalization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote &amp; Intensify</li></ul>
			b. <i>Emerging</i> – Areas of undeveloped platted lots and other undeveloped lands where neighborhood development is desired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Redefine through the creation of new key focal points</li></ul>
			c. <i>Maturing</i> – Areas of platted lots that are not fully developed but where growth is occurring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain</li></ul>
			d. <i>Managed</i> – Areas of platted lots that are only sparsely developed and where for environmental and urban service reasons, further development is discouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limit and Constrain</li></ul>
Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Future Land Use (commercial, mixed use, high density res.)</li><li>• Murdock Village CRA</li><li>• Charlotte Harbor CRA</li><li>• Charlotte Airport Park</li><li>• SR 776 Corridor Study</li><li>• US 41 Overlay District</li><li>• Potential Future areas?</li></ul>	<b>Context:</b> There are key areas in the County where we need to protect & promote employment and economic growth.  <b>Guiding Principle:</b> Charlotte County shall focus economic development in targeted areas that foster business creation and expansion and protect future opportunities. Economic development initiatives should align public investments, incentives, and land use policy to encourage and protect growth around our existing assets, such as the I-75 corridor and County Airport, and in redeveloping corridors, centers and districts.	a. <i>Corridors</i> – The arterial transportation links that support and promote commercial development, including newly developing and redeveloping areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen Character</li><li>• Encourage Residential</li><li>• Limit Expansion of Strip Commercial</li></ul>
			b. <i>Centers</i> – The focused destinations of regional commercial and/or employment, including new and redeveloping areas (e.g. Murdock Village, Charlotte Harbor CRA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustainable Mixed Use Development</li><li>• Walkable Design</li></ul>
			c. <i>Districts</i> – Employment areas dominated by a single use with regional transportation access (e.g. Charlotte Airport Park).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preserve Employment Locations</li><li>• Priority Support Infrastructure</li></ul>







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