



PROSPER 2050

COMMUNITY VISION SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction

2 Where Are We Now?

2 *Community Snapshot*

3 *Current Land Use*

4 Where Do We Want To Go?

5 How Do We Get There?

6 What's Next?



INTRODUCTION

Prosper 2050 is a community driven vision for the future of Polk County, which will ultimately be codified through an update to the County's Comprehensive Plan.

The vision began with the work of Polk Vision, which is a community-led partnership dedicated to ensuring that Polk County realizes its aspirations and full potential. Polk Vision was established to facilitate processes to achieve the objectives from the Community Vision for Polk County, which was originally adopted in 2004. In January of 2023, Polk Vision began an update to the Community Vision, and that document was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in August of 2024.

The Polk Vision update examined a wide range of topics including growth management and infrastructure, education, economic advancement, community health

and well-being, government, civic engagement, and arts, culture, and recreation.

Building off the Polk Vision effort, the Prosper 2050 team engaged the community over a five-month period with the goal of obtaining feedback on the County's historic, current, and future growth. This engagement included County-wide public workshops, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, community pop-up events, and an interactive project website. These efforts were centered around answering three primary questions, which helped develop the contents of Prosper 2050.

In **Workshop #1**, attendees engaged in a series of activities designed to answer the question "Where are we now?" The attendees opined on current development trends and the recently growth within the County. Residents provided feedback on issues that should be addressed in the Prosper 2050 update.

In **Workshops #2-6**, attendees worked collaboratively to answer the question "Where do we want to go?" by identifying vision themes based on feedback from Workshop #1 and input received from the community survey, focus groups, and stakeholder meetings. Attendees prioritized areas for future residential and commercial growth, and opined on topics directly related to each of the individual Comprehensive Plan elements.

In **Workshop #7**, attendees were asked to answer the question "How do we get there?" by collectively providing recommendations and strategies to achieve the community vision identified in the previous public engagements.

The community's feedback from the workshop series was compiled and converted into the vision themes.

WHERE ARE WE NOW? - COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

HISTORICAL POPULATION

1990



405,382

242,123 unincorporated

2000



483,924

302,797 unincorporated

2010



602,095

375,622 unincorporated

2020



725,046

444,898 unincorporated

Polk County's population has grown by 79% over the last 30 years since the last comp plan update.

ORIGINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECTED A 2020 POPULATION OF 675,408 FOR ALL OF POLK COUNTY AND 420,982 FOR THE UNINCORPORATED AREA.

TOP INDUSTRIES IN POLK CO.



Health Care & Social Assistance



Retail Trade



Accommodation & Food Services



Educational Services

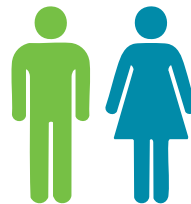
*these statistics only include the unincorporated population.

COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS



20.6%*

MEDIAN AGE



41.5*

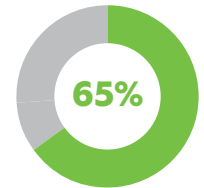
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$67,163*

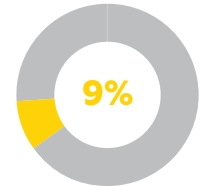
HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE



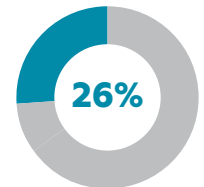
Single family (attached or detached)



Multifamily (2 or more)



Mobile home



2024 POPULATION



Total

812,640



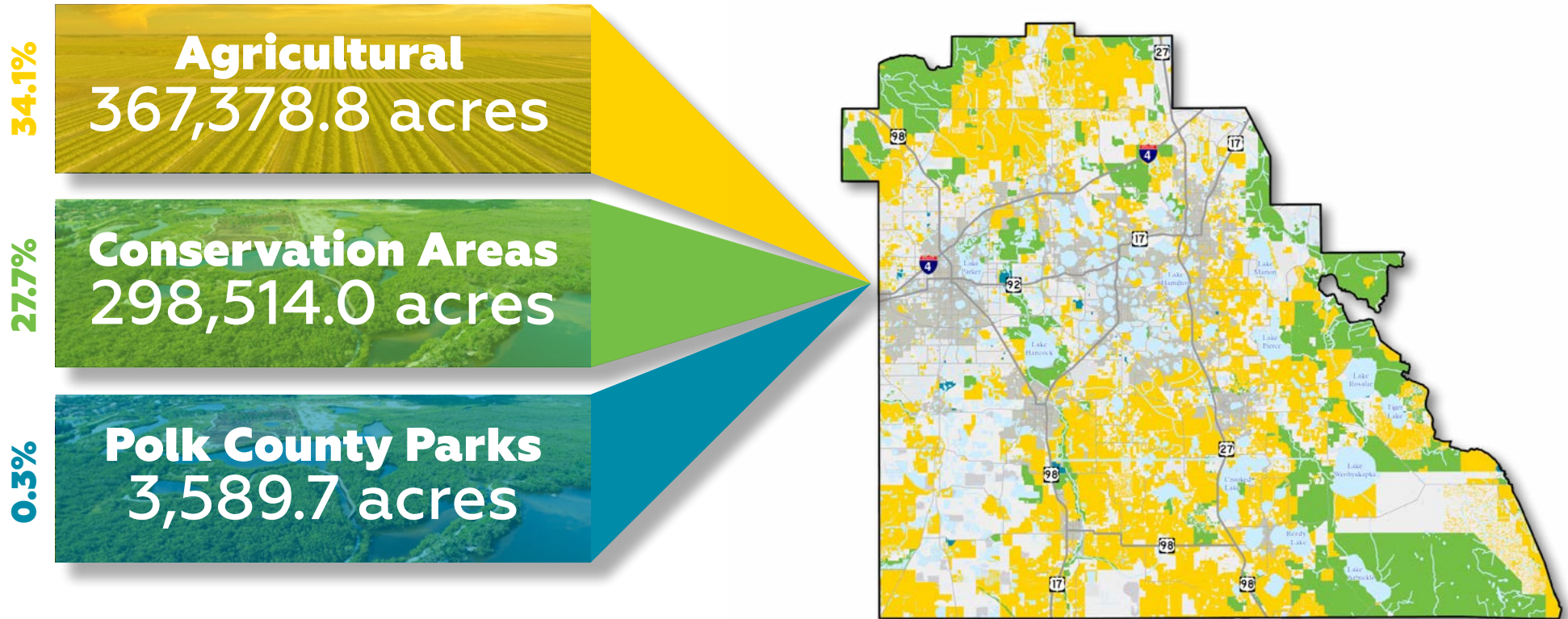
Daytime

773,388

39,252 PEOPLE TRAVEL TO OTHER COUNTIES FOR WORK

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Current Land Use in Polk County



62.1% of unincorporated Polk County's existing land use is considered conservation, recreational, or agricultural.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?



5,027
WEBSITE VISITS

105
WORKSHOP
PARTICIPANTS



11 GROUP
STAKEHOLDER
INTERVIEWS

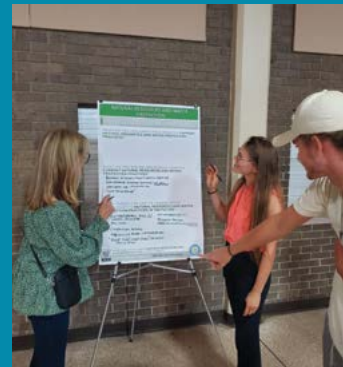


944
WEBSITE
CONTRIBUTIONS



574 SURVEYS
TAKEN

3 COMMUNITY
EVENTS



✓4,542
VISION
PREFERENCES
TALLIED

7 COUNTY-WIDE
WORKSHOPS

- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Health & Human Services
- Central Florida Development Council
- Roads & Drainage
- Polk County Public Schools
- Polk County Farm Bureau
- Polk County IFAS
- Environmental Community
- Development Community
- Utilities
- Parks & Recreation

HOW DO WE GET THERE? - COMMUNITY VISION

Throughout the public engagement process, the recurring themes of increased environmental conservation and infrastructure improvements emerged as top priorities. These themes, along with others, present the community's key priorities for the evolution and growth of the County through the year 2050.

Preserve and Conserve the Natural Environment



- Bring back recycling or provide alternative for deposit of recyclable materials
- Incentivize the use of Dark Sky criteria for outdoor lighting
- Create nature preserves throughout the County
- Increase protection of environmentally sensitive lands such as the Green Swamp, Lake Wales Ridge, and surface waters
- Prioritize acquisition of areas near

environmentally-sensitive lands

- Provide ecotourism opportunities to increase opportunities and increase value of agricultural or environmental land

Maintain and Improve Existing Infrastructure

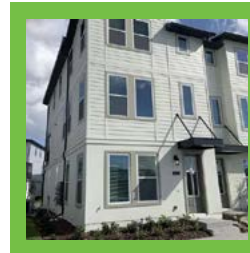


- Expand the sidewalk and bike facility network
- Expand transit routes to accommodate Brightline and SunRail expansion
- Establish or expand alternative corridors to Interstate 4
- Increase funding for identifying and repairing dilapidated roadways
- Encourage new development to use a gridded transportation network to provide multiple routes

of travel

- Ensure Future Water Supply
- Support the efforts of the Polk Regional Water Cooperative to increase water supply from the Lower Floridan Aquifer
- Incorporate green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) practices
- Incentivize Florida-Friendly landscaping for new developments
- Increase protections for the Green Swamp and high-recharge areas

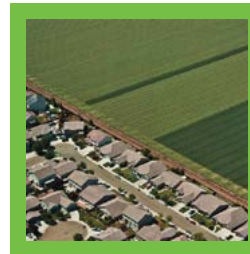
Provide Affordable Housing Opportunities



- Require a mixture of housing types for large developments
- Strategically reduce minimum lot sizes and increase height maximums in select residential future land use categories and zoning districts
- Explore opportunities for permitting additional housing types (e.g., accessory dwelling units, duplexes, etc.) within low density future land use categories

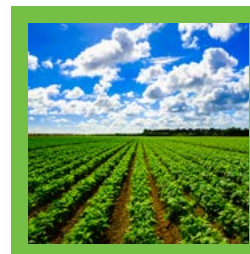
- Encourage multifamily housing in transit corridors
- Provide opportunities and options for aging in place and senior housing

Concentrate Future Growth to Existing Urban Areas



- Increase density in appropriate urban areas
- Increase height maximums in developed areas to preserve remaining green and open space
- Encourage the use of accessory housing and infill development
- Encourage redevelopment or adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial areas

Preserve Rural Areas



- Create a farmland conservation program to maintain agricultural lands
- Collaborate with municipalities to have consistent policies regarding wetlands and floodplains
- Implement and protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor

WHAT'S NEXT

The content of Prosper 2050 is intended to act as the foundation for the current update to the Polk County Comprehensive Plan.

The vision laid out herein will be utilized as a framework for reviewing and revising each Element of the Plan. Additionally, many of the community-driven strategies will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, where appropriate, to ensure the vision can be achieved by 2050.

For additional information regarding the community vision and the public engagement process, please visit inspire-engagement.com/polk-county-comp-plan or contact the **Polk County Land Development Department** - Email: PolkProsper2050@polk-county.net



