

Interview Sessions Summary

December 2, 2025

Overview

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a summary of the interview sessions conducted for the Citrus County 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update. The interviews took place during four stakeholder sessions that occurred on Tuesday December 2, 2025. These stakeholder meetings were held throughout the day at the Lecanto Government Building (3600 West Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL 34461). As part of the discovery phase of the project, the stakeholder meetings are intended to generate candid discussions regarding issues and opportunities facing Citrus County within the 2050 planning horizon of the Comprehensive Plan. A list of participating stakeholders is detailed in **Appendix A**.

Discussion

The meeting included a short presentation (**Appendix B**) that provided a brief overview of the Comprehensive Plan update, and a discussion based on specific questions. These questions were focused on identifying projects and issues that will be referenced and addressed during the Comprehensive plan Update. The following is a recap of the discussion that ensued.

Best Quality & Aspects of the County

1. **Community Character and Feel.** Stakeholders agreed that one of the best aspects of living in Citrus County is the community character and neighborly feel of the community.
2. **Natural Resources.** With a large amount of conservation and vast wildlife many stakeholders appreciate the continued focus to preserve land, green space, water, and natural resources throughout the County.
3. **Small Businesses & Entrepreneurial Spirit.** Stakeholders pointed out one of the positives is the small businesses that make up the community.
4. **Current Comprehensive Plan.** A few stakeholders pointed out that there are some existing good policies within the comprehensive plan specifically when dealing with the coastal area.

Biggest Challenges

1. **Public Education.** General misconceptions and lack of understanding of the issues in the comprehensive plan and the requirements to approve changes are a significant challenge.

2. **Manage Expectations.** The County has a history of low taxation and neglecting improvements until necessary. Many roadways, parks, and wastewater and potable water infrastructure are deficient in areas which will require improvements in the next 25 years.
3. **Funding.** To fix the deficiencies, many improvements will be necessary and funding that has been scarce in the past will be critically needed to meet the basic level of service standards. Loss of revenue from power plant (48% of the County's tax revenue) has been a challenge.
4. **Roadway Deficiencies.** Neglected roadway maintenance, a lack of future vision corridors and east west connections have resulted in significant congestion along the major thoroughfares in the County. As growth and development occurs increasing connectivity and addressing the roadway conditions will need to be addressed.
5. **Commercial & Industrial Investment.** The County has a limited supply of land available for future commercial and industrial development opportunities. Directing users to areas with existing water and sewer infrastructure can expand the property tax base and help offset the cost of necessary public investments for residents. Stakeholders also identified the availability of high-speed internet, including fiber-optic service, as a critical factor in attracting and supporting these employment-generating uses.
6. **Historic Aversion to Density, Height, and Housing Variety.** Historically, the County has been cautious about increasing density, building height, or housing diversity. However, as growth continues, maintaining a predominantly rural and suburban development pattern across the entire County will become increasingly challenging, and targeted changes in select areas may be necessary. Additionally, development absorption rates in Citrus County tend to be slower than in other parts of the region, which has implications for how and where future growth can be accommodated.

Additional Items and Considerations Needed to Be Addressed In the Comprehensive Plan Update

1. **Housing Affordability.** The County currently has an incredibly low percentage of multifamily, medium density, attached housing units for young and older residents. Adding more workforce and low income housing units in the next 25 years will be key to attracting families and young working adults to the County. The County has large amount of ALICE households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed).
2. **Right of Way Conveyance.** Ensuring that new projects and developments provide adequate right of way to accommodate the need for roadway connectivity and infrastructure.
3. **Sense of Place and Placemaking.** Ensure that new development has architectural standards and is compatible with the existing community fabric and character.

4. **Parks.** The County has not constructed a new park in over 20 years, and the existing park facilities are nearing their lifecycle. Improving the existing park areas and creating new parks will be an important part of the community's overall health and wellness in the next 25 years.
5. **Establish Greenbelts.** With a third of the County being conservation lands, establishing a connected greenbelt system and adding additional areas to the conservation corridors should be prioritized.
6. **Protect Farmland.** Using state and local resources to protect working agricultural land to remain agricultural. The County started a farmlands conservation program similar to the state's Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.
7. **Issues With The Existing Comprehensive Plan.** Stakeholders pointed out issues with compatibility, open space, interchange management areas, and the manatee protection plan. Additionally, stakeholders pointed out that the plan should be simplified and followed. There appeared to be a legacy of disdain for the initial plan due to the states involvement.
8. **Dashboard Metrics.** Create a dashboard outlining metrics to ensure that policies are being implemented.
9. **Conservation Land.** To get a better picture of the conservation lands throughout the county, categorize lands as either dry or submerged.
10. **Water Quantity & Quality.** Ensure water quality is not being affected by runoff and that there is enough potable water for current and future residents.
11. **Concentrate Growth.** The current plan has a planned service area. Ensuring growth remains in the planned service area (or similar growth strategy) was a high priority for many stakeholders.
12. **Concurrency.** When the County does decide to enact concurrency again establishing the parameters when concurrency applies will be important.
13. **Redevelopment.** Stakeholders emphasized the importance of prioritizing redevelopment by concentrating density within already developed areas and encouraging reinvestment and infill rather than continued outward expansion.
14. **Sidewalk Gaps.** Many areas of the County do not have sidewalks or have significant sidewalk gaps causing an unsafe pedestrian condition.
15. **Evacuation Routes.** With the new growth in the area and region, ensure that there are sufficient evacuation routes and that time is being met.
16. **Historic Preservation and Cultural Heritage.** Utilize heritage tourism to drive economic development while preserving the County's history for future generations.
17. **Suncoast Parkway.** The new parkway will attract development at the interchanges and promote growth.

Appendix

Appendix A Stakeholder Meeting Attendees

Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
Richard Barmes	Bob Esposito	Jenette Collins	Chuck Dixon
Karen Esty	Gaston Hall	James Dicks	Jeff Wells
Nathan Bullian	Katrina Leturno	Dixie Hollins	Tim Gilbert
Ronald Daly	Stacey Worthington	Paul Gibbs	Maxine Connor
Clark Stillwell	Melissa Sutherland	Avis Marie Craig	Frank DiGiovanni
Robin Orlandi	Kayla Carroll	Rob Batsel	
		Kathy Turner	
		Curtiss Bryant	
		Mike Facemyer	
		Bob Sharra	

Appendix B Stakeholder Presentation



AGENDA

Meet the Team
The Plan Update
Project Timeline & Outreach
Community Snapshot
Discussion



INTRODUCTIONS



Citrus County

Comprehensive Plan

MEET THE TEAM



Steve Howard
 County Administrator

Eric Landon
 Growth Management Director

Gina Eason
 Permitting Ombudsman



Chris Dougherty
 Project Manager



Gaby Castro
 Deputy Project Manager



Haiden Lewis
 Planner/GIS Lead



Jose Fernandez
 Planner

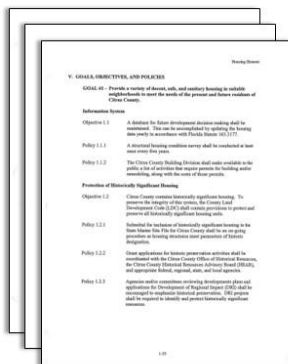
THE PLAN UPDATE



Citrus County

Comprehensive Plan

THE PLAN UPDATE



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A document designed to guide the future actions of a jurisdiction. It presents a **vision** for a community's future through long range goals, objectives, and policies.

The Comprehensive Plan also serves to:

- View the "big picture"
- Coordinate local decision making
- Give guidance to landowners and developers
- Establish a factual basis for policy decisions
- Involve a broad array of interests in a discussion about the long-range future
- Build an informed community

Citrus County

Comprehensive Plan

MAIN COMPONENTS



Data & Analysis



Goals, Objectives, & Policies

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CURRENT PLAN ELEMENTS



1. Housing



5. Infrastructure
(Solid Waste,
Sanitary Sewer,
Potable Water,
Drainage)



9. Utility



13. Manatee



2. Recreation
& Open
Space



6. Multimodal
Transportation



10. Land Use



14. Library



3. Conservation



7. Private
Property Rights



11. Intergovernmental
Coordination



15. Economic
Development



4. Coastal, Lakes, &
River Management



8. Aviation



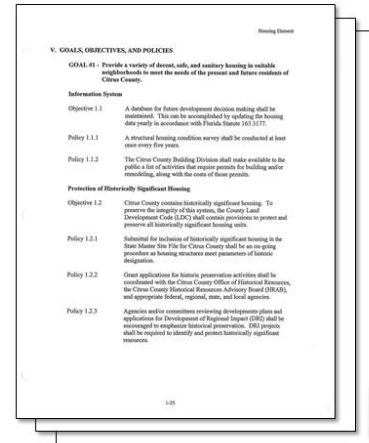
12. Capital
Improvements



16. Port

WHY UPDATE?

- Required by Florida Statutes every **7 years**
- Reflect **changes** in state law
- Update **Future Land Use Map Series**
- Reflect **current conditions**
- Plan proactively for **new development**
- Reassess **decision-making practices**
- Evaluate **public facility** levels of service standards
- Address existing and future **opportunities**
- Update the community's **vision** and **2050 priorities**



Citrus County

Comprehensive Plan

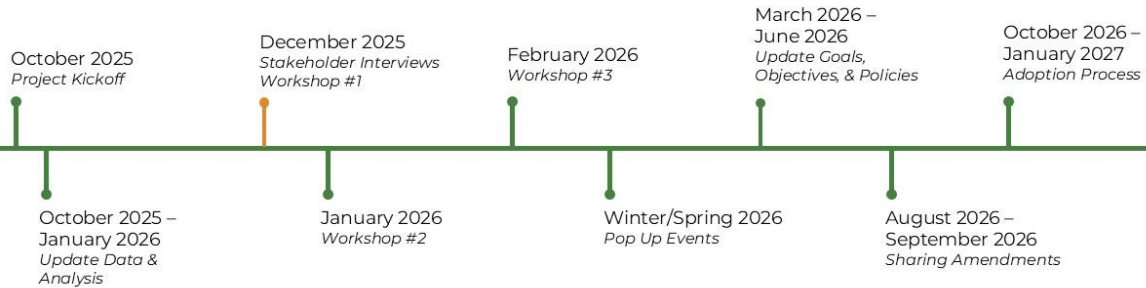
PROJECT TIMELINE & OUTREACH



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PROJECT TIMELINE



PROJECT WEBSITE



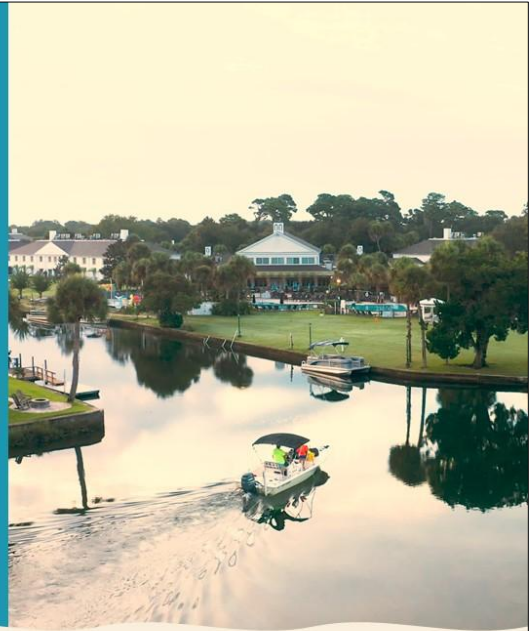
- ✓ Take the **survey**
- ✓ Share your vision on the **idea wall**
- ✓ Stay **informed!**



SCAN ME!

bit.ly/plancitrus

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



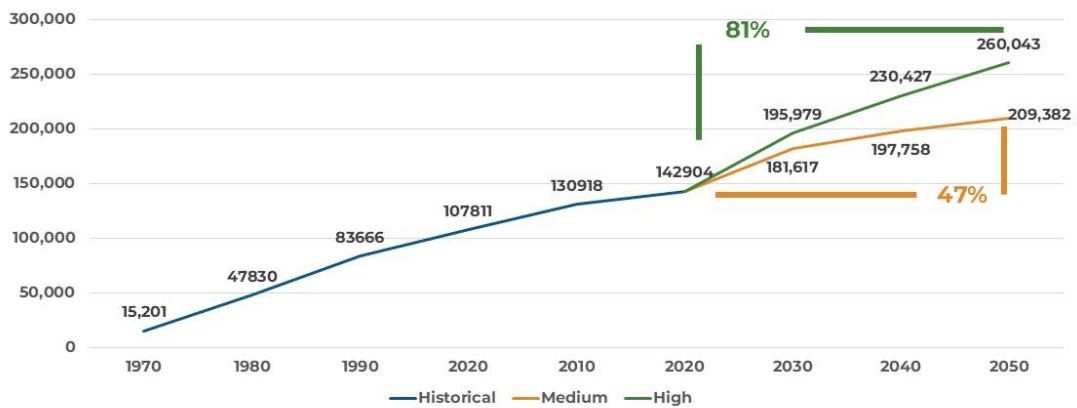
Citrus County

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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



Population Growth for Unincorporated Citrus County

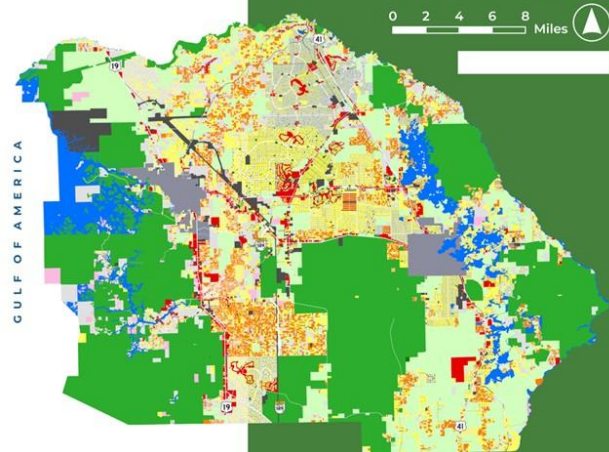


COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



EXISTING LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
Agriculture	65,412	16.2%
Commercial	10,521	2.6%
Conservation	145,813	36.2%
High Density Housing	168	0.04%
Industrial	3,851	0.1%
Institutional	13,712	3.4%
Low Density Residential	52,782	13.1%
Manufactured Housing	20,518	5.1%
Mixed Use	440	0.1%
Recreation and Open Space	201	0.1%
Vacant	58,359	14.5%
Water	31,069	7.7%

EXISTING LAND USE



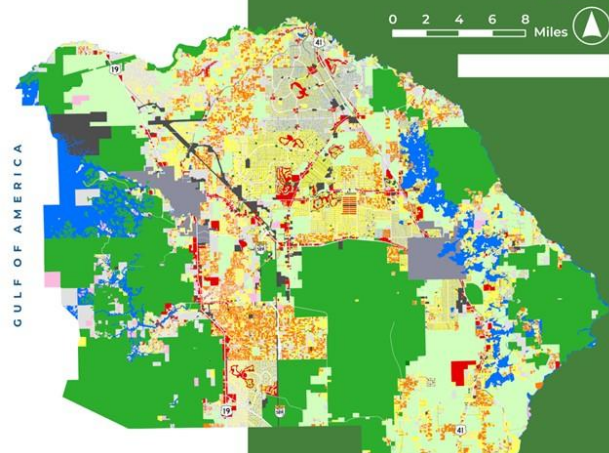
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



Top 4 Existing Land Uses

1. Conservation - 36.2%
2. Agricultural - 16.2%
3. Vacant - 14.5%
4. Low Density Residential - 13.1%

EXISTING LAND USE

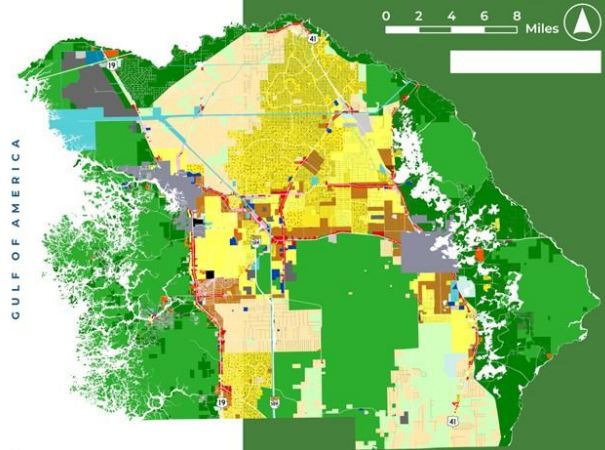


COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



FUTURE LAND USE	ACRES	PERCENTAGE
AGRICULTURE	22,339	6.4%
CENTRAL RIDGE RESIDENTIAL	1,795	0.5%
COASTAL AND LAKES COMMERCIAL	1,890	0.1%
CONSERVATION	125,220	35.8%
EXTRACTIVE	6,956	2.0%
GENERAL COMMERCIAL	4,442	1.3%
HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	199	0.1%
INDUSTRIAL	2,237	0.6%
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	25,616	7.3%
LOW INTENSITY COASTAL LAKES	54,330	15.5%
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	13,217	3.8%
MOBILE HOME PARK	4,812	0.1%
PORT DISTRICT USE	512	0.2%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & OFFICE	842	0.2%
PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC INSTITUTION	1,466	0.4%
RECREATION	2,536	0.7%
RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK	919	0.3%
RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE	35,498	10.1%
RURAL ACTIVITY CENTER	143.92	0.04%
RURAL RESIDENTIAL	42,790	12.2%
TRANSP./COMMUNIC./UTILITIES	8,250	2.4%

FUTURE LAND USE



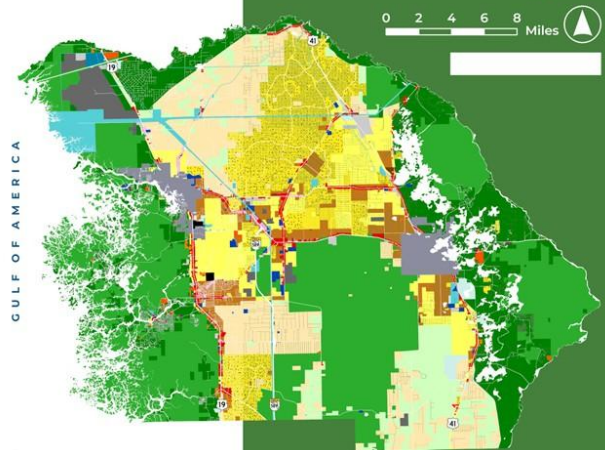
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



Top 6 Future Land Uses

1. Conservation - 35.8%
2. Low Intensity Coastal Lakes - 15.5%
3. Rural Residential - 12.2%
4. Residential Mixed Use - 10.1%
5. Low Density Residential - 7.3%
6. Agricultural - 6.4%

FUTURE LAND USE



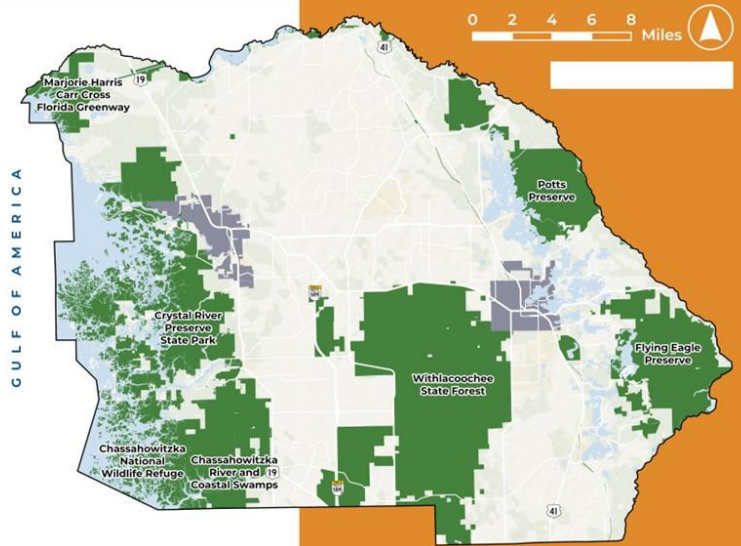
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



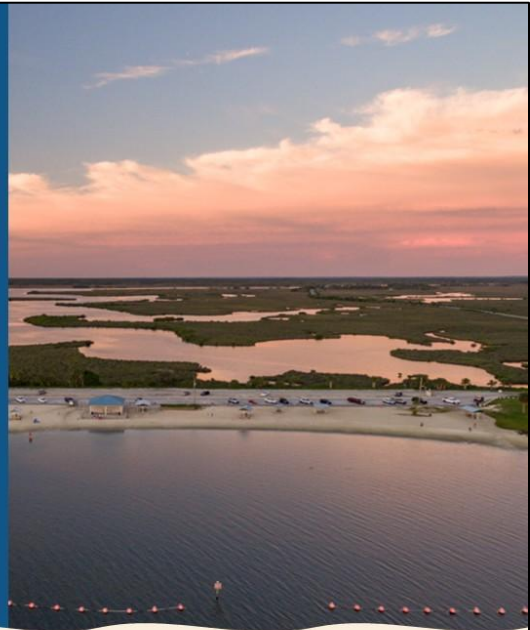
Conservation Areas

145,813 acres

- Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway
- Crystal River Preserve State Park
- Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge
- Chassahowitzka River and Coastal Swamps
- Withlacoochee State Forest
- Potts Preserve
- Flying Eagle Preserve



DISCUSSION



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