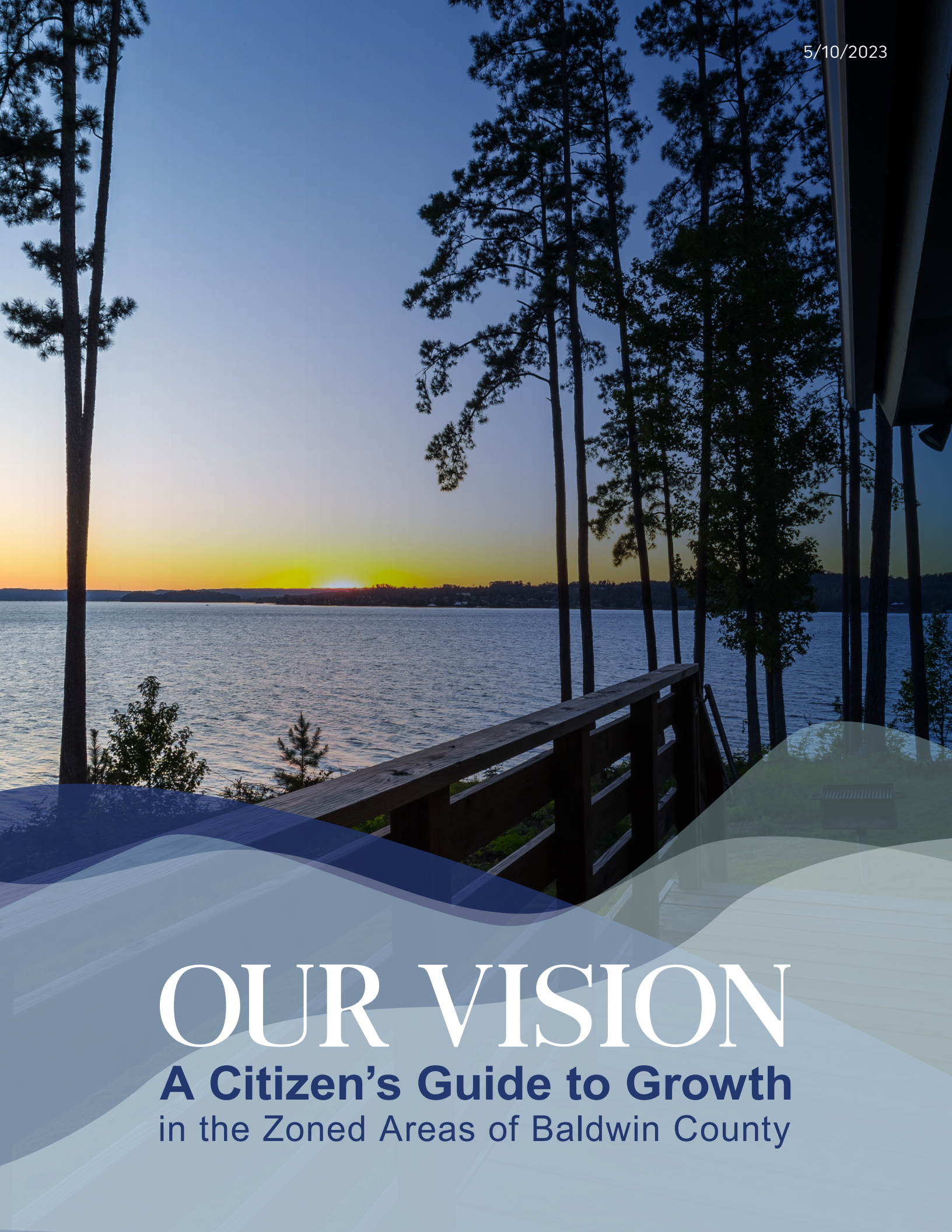


5/10/2023

OUR VISION

A Citizen's Guide to Growth

in the Zoned Areas of Baldwin County

LAST REVISED: 5/10/2023

This Guide is NOT a regulatory document. It does not create any new regulations. It does not displace, replace, or overturn any existing regulations. This Guide is a reference tool for use in reviewing rezoning requests in zoned areas.

This Guide shall NOT be used or referenced when considering approval of any development, including residential subdivisions, within the unzoned areas of unincorporated Baldwin County.

This Guide is a requirement of Alabama Statute Section 45-2-261.03.

BALDWIN
COUNTY, ALABAMA
EST. 1809

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Honorable Charles F. (Skip) Gruber

Honorable Matthew P. McKenzie

Honorable Billie Jo Underwood

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Development Strategies

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION, TIME AND CONTRIBUTION!



Image: Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Baldwin County.

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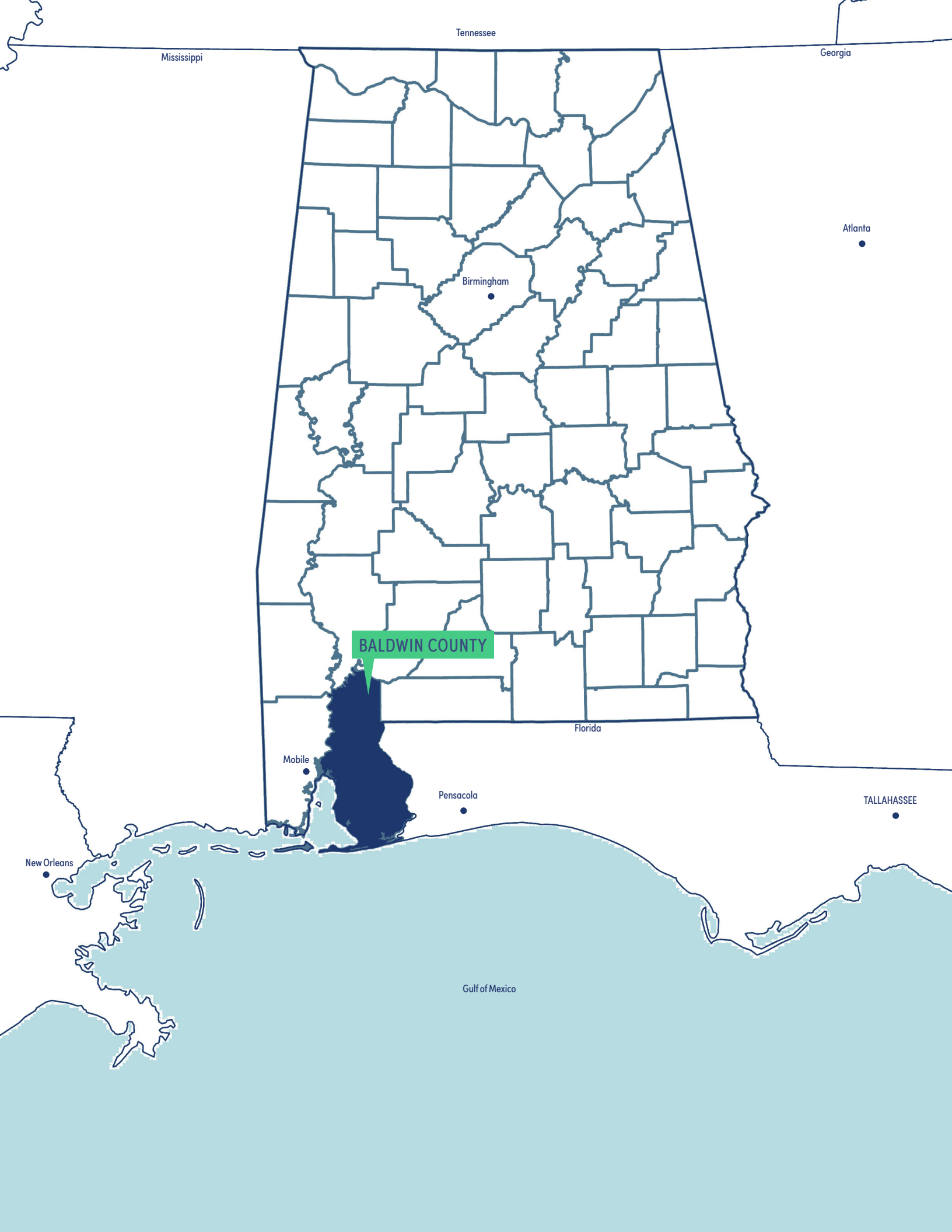
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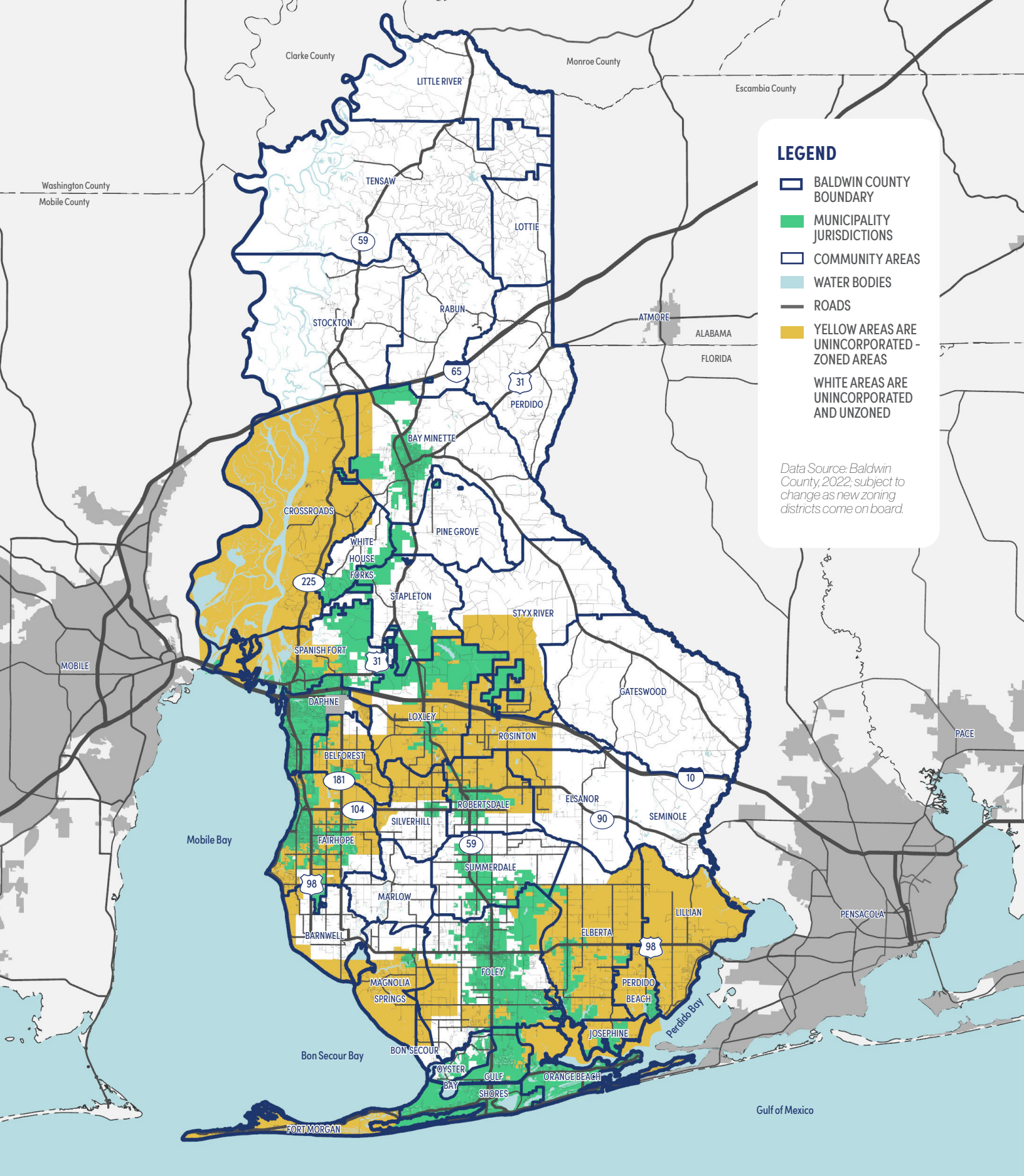
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INTRODUCTION

What type of growth should Baldwin County encourage? While this guide does not create new rules or change existing rules, it does provide a vision to aid in the review of rezoning requests and to consider how regulations may be modified in the future to help promote quality growth.


Tennessee
Mississippi
Georgia
Atlanta
Birmingham
BALDWIN COUNTY
Florida
Mobile
Pensacola
TALLAHASSEE
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico



MAP 1: STUDY AREA

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO GROWTH IN THE ZONED AREAS OF BALDWIN COUNTY

This is an exciting time for Baldwin County; a perfect time to consider the most appropriate ways that it can continue to grow, prosper, hold onto what it values most, and leverage the unique quality of life that it possesses.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Baldwin County initiated a community and stakeholder-based process, required by Alabama law, to update the County's vision for future growth.

Input from stakeholder groups and the broader community highlighted diverse priorities throughout the county. Due to the large geographic size of the unincorporated areas of Baldwin County this Guide does not attempt to address detailed, community-specific issues. Instead, the Guide seeks to define common ground that generally represents the long-term priorities of Baldwin County citizens.

The following six core themes surfaced during the stakeholder and community engagement process:

1. Promote the Protection of Agricultural Lands and Rural Communities
2. Protect Our Unique Natural Environment, Enhance Water Quality, and Mitigate Flooding
3. Improve Transportation Options and Connectivity
4. Promote the Coordinated Distribution of Public Services
5. Encourage Regional Cooperation
6. Maintain the Character of Our Communities and Quality of Life

These themes became the cornerstones for the development of the Future Land Use Map and the Action Playbook, which represent the key components of the Guide.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENCOURAGING QUALITY GROWTH

Growth in Baldwin County cannot be stopped. The important question becomes—what type of growth should Baldwin County encourage?

The citizens of Baldwin County generally agree that **quality** growth should be encouraged within the county. The guiding themes listed above help us define what quality growth will look like.

- Quality growth is growth that is well-suited to the character of the community where the growth is proposed.
- Quality growth is growth that occurs in locations where existing infrastructure can support the growth without causing long term cost burdens on public resources.
- Quality growth is growth that is situated in reasonable proximity to public services and employment rather than randomly distributed throughout the rural areas of the county.
- Quality growth is growth that does not negatively impact the County's natural resources or increase the potential for flooding.
- Quality growth is growth that supports a variety of housing options.

While this guide does not create new rules or change existing rules, it does provide a vision to aid in the review of rezoning requests and to consider how rules may be modified in the future to help promote quality growth.

PAST AND EXISTING PLANNING EFFORTS AROUND THE COUNTY

Planning is not new in Baldwin County. All municipalities in Baldwin County have initiated land use planning in the form of comprehensive plans, subdivision ordinances, land use ordinances, and area plans. While this Guide was under development, Fairhope, Daphne, and Foley initiated updates to their comprehensive plans to address unprecedented growth. A review of these efforts, along with existing municipal comprehensive plans, revealed considerable unity in high-level priorities across the county.

In 1991, a citizen-driven zoning process was introduced to the unincorporated areas of Baldwin County. The process requires a registered voter in the community to notify the County Commission of the desire to pursue zoning and then collect the signatures of ten percent of the registered voters in the community. If sufficient signatures are collected, the Judge of Probate will schedule a referendum vote in the community where local citizens decide for or against zoning by a simple majority. Since 1991, the citizens in twenty-two communities have voted to come under the Planning and Zoning jurisdiction of Baldwin County.

Since 2021, the County has seen a renewed flurry of zoning efforts with nine communities pursuing zoning in the past two years. Four of those communities have voted in favor of zoning, three have voted against zoning, and two have not yet come to a vote. While the citizen-driven process may feel cumbersome to those who are accustomed to county- or state-wide zoning; the process in Baldwin County puts the decision squarely in the hands of the local community.

The Alabama statute that opened the door for zoning in Baldwin County also introduced a requirement for the County Commission and Planning Commission to "make and maintain in an up-to-date manner, a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated

THIS GUIDE IS NOT A REGULATORY DOCUMENT. IT DOES NOT CREATE OR MANDATE POLICY.

Rather, it captures the community's vision for the future and provides guidance for updating zoning and other land development regulations based on that vision.

areas of Baldwin County." The master plan (which happens to be the document you are currently reading) is simply a guide to help the County Commission and Planning Commission make decisions about development within the zoned areas of the county. The Guide's only immediate application is in the evaluation of a rezoning application. The Guide has no application in the unzoned areas of Baldwin County, but does contemplate that communities may become zoned in the future through the citizen-driven process.

In 1993, the County Commission and Planning Commission partnered with the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission (SARPC) to prepare the "Baldwin County Long Range Development and Management Plan: Situation Analysis." In 1994, the County adopted a formal Generalized Land Use Plan map. In 2009, the guide received a major overhaul with the adoption of the Horizon 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Horizon 2025 generated considerable public criticism and was ultimately rescinded by a new County Commission in 2012.

The current Master Plan was adopted in 2013 to replace Horizon 2025. The Plan was slated to be "reviewed annually in order to determine if revisions and amendments are warranted due to changing conditions." Despite adding nearly 45,000 in population since 2013, the Master Plan has not been amended except for automatic amendments to the Master Plan Map triggered by individual rezoning cases.

In 2020, the Baldwin County Commission adopted a Strategic Plan which outline strategic actions/goals for County staff. One of those goals addresses the Master Plan stating:

> By December 31, 2022, property owners, municipalities and schools will experience a Comprehensive Land Use [Master] Plan that ensures consistency between the County and Municipalities, encourages predictability in the development process, and creates and fosters a coordinated vision and goals with cities while respecting the citizen driven zoning process.

WHAT IS THE SCALE OF THIS GUIDE?

Baldwin County's geographic area accounts for approximately 1,600 squares miles, including fourteen incorporated municipalities and dozens of unincorporated communities.

Given the county's size, this Guide works at a county-level scale to identify and address countywide issues with the help of countywide mapping data. This Guide is not necessarily designed to address specific issues and concerns at the community level.

It is understood that community level planning may be warranted at a future date in zoned, high-growth communities with significant historic, cultural, and natural resources. Examples of communities that could potentially benefit from community level planning include Fort Morgan, Point Clear, Montrose, Malbis, and Stapleton.

WILL EVERYONE BE PERFECTLY HAPPY WITH THIS GUIDE?

Understandably, no. Baldwin County is composed of diverse landscapes, historic areas, natural resources, industries, and people. This diversity makes Baldwin County a wonderful place to live but also can make it difficult to please everybody when preparing a county-level planning document.

Keeping in mind the diverse priorities throughout the county, the County Commission, Planning Commission, and Planning and Zoning staff seek to strike a reasonable balance in the development of this Guide.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This Guide provides a common vision for Baldwin County to navigate the challenges of explosive growth and development. This Guide is not a regulatory document. It does not create or mandate new policy. It does not displace, replace, or overturn any existing regulations. The Guide captures the community's vision for the future and provides guidance for possible updates to zoning and other land development regulations based on that vision.

The Guide's only immediate impact will be in the evaluation of rezoning cases within the zoned areas of Baldwin County. Section 19.6 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes eleven factors considered during the review of every rezoning application. The third factor considers whether the proposed rezoning conforms with the Master Plan (this Guide). Planning and Zoning staff will use the Future Land Use Map established in Section 4 of this document to evaluate whether a rezoning request in a zoned area conforms with this Guide.

This Guide shall NOT be used or referenced when considering approval of any development, including residential subdivisions, within the unzoned areas of unincorporated Baldwin County.

"It should be noted that an Applicant can present site-specific information to support a rezoning or use that may not be contemplated by the Place Type displayed on the Future Land Use Map. As an example, a wetland delineation may support an applicant's case to allow a business use on land that may be displayed as "Ideal Conservation/ Preservation." The Planning Commission and County Commission should consider the additional information in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map Place Type patterns and the Guide's core values, to determine whether the proposed rezoning or use is appropriate.

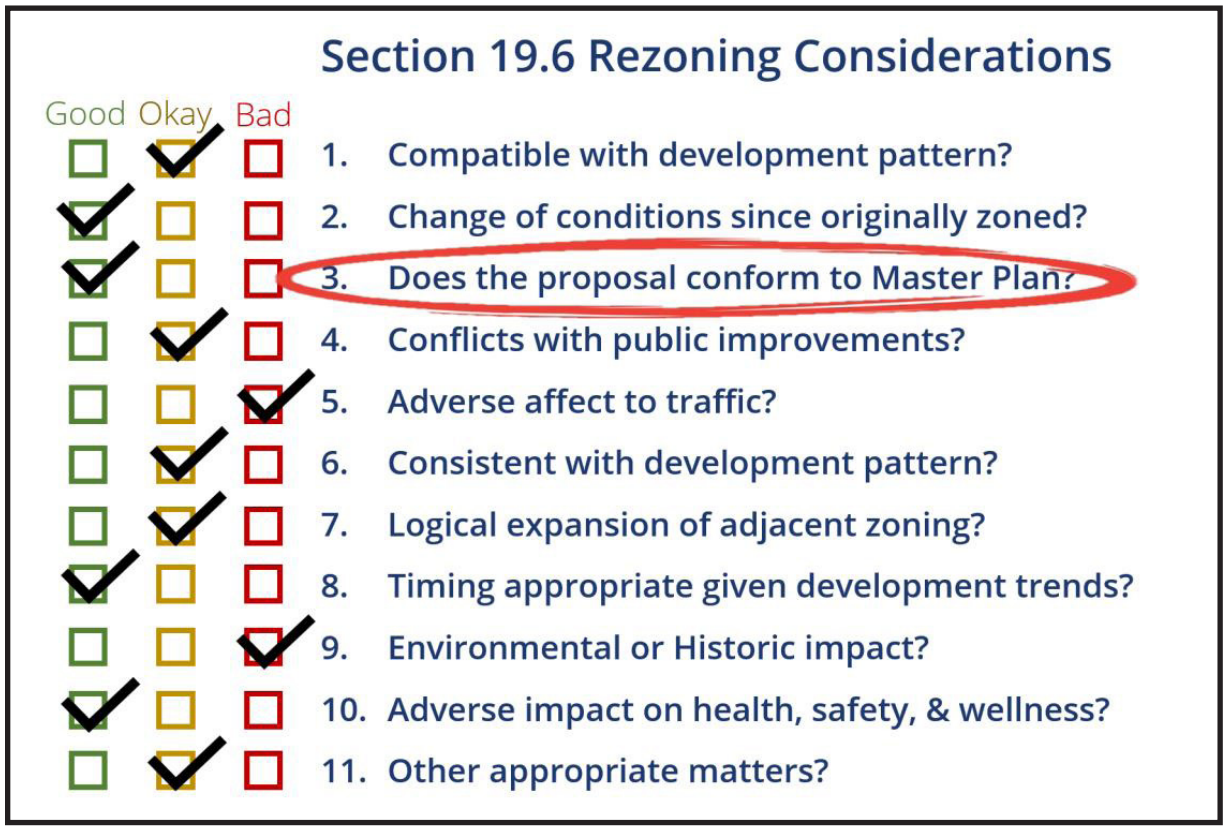


Figure 1: Example of Rezoning Evaluation from Criteria in Section 19.6 of the County Zoning Ordinance

GUIDE VISION AND THEMES

This Guide is influenced by a compelling vision that reflects what the community aspires to become. A collaborative effort between the community and planning and zoning staff produced the strategies and recommendations of this Guide organized around the following six themes:



PROMOTE THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES



PROTECT OUR UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ENHANCE WATER QUALITY, AND MITIGATE FLOODING



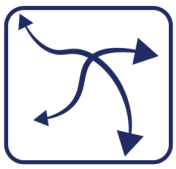
IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND CONNECTIVITY



MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE



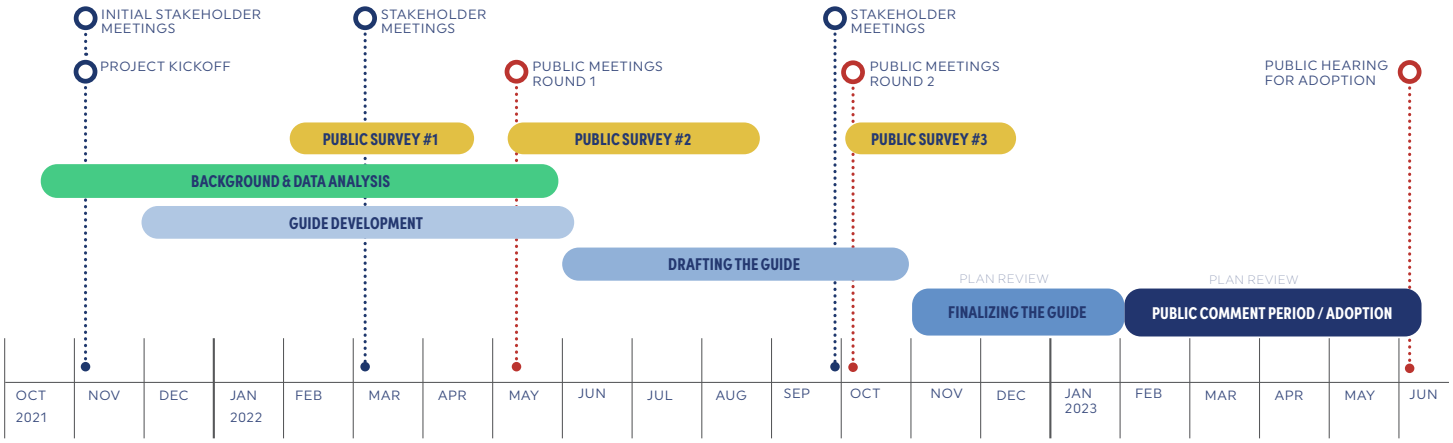
PROMOTE THE COORDINATED DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES



ENCOURAGE REGIONAL COOPERATION

In the following chapter each of these themes is supported by a vision statement to further express long-range aspirations and desired outcomes.

VISIONING PROCESS



STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS INCLUDED:

- County Highway and Transportation Planning
- Economic Development
- Baldwin County Board of Education Administration
- Real Estate and Home Builder Community
- Development Community
- Environmental and Farming Communities
- Farmlnad Protection Subcommittee
- Elected Officials

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

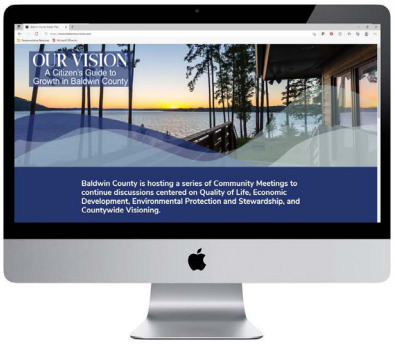
The development of this Guide was informed by a combination of in-person and virtual community workshops and three surveys. It was shaped around a continuous and multi-faceted cycle of input with stakeholders and the public, designed to aggregate feedback from a diverse group of voices within the County. Over the course of the Guide's development, there were multiple opportunities for the public to provide input, voice concerns, and comment on and shape in-progress materials.

STAKEHOLDERS, PLANNING BOARD, AND COUNCIL

The consultants and planning staff met with stakeholder groups, Planning Commission, and various members of the County Commission to solicit feedback throughout the process and during the development of the draft plan.

WEB AND MEDIA PRESENCE

The Guide was developed in parallel with a constant web presence via the County website that allowed free and open access to key plan documents and served as a platform for the public to interface with and react to the guide's development. The process was advertised and reported in a variety of local media, including press releases, email, and the County's social media platforms.



PUBLIC SURVEYS

The plan was influenced by three surveys with 5,060 responses in total collected. The first survey (community pulse survey) was distributed online (and also available by paper copy) and evaluated citizen satisfaction with existing County services and offered a glimpse into public preferences for prioritizing future investment.

The second survey was conducted as live polling during the first round of community meetings via Mentimeter technology then published in an online survey format to capture feedback from those who were unable to attend.

The third survey included feedback from the second round of community meetings hosted in rural areas of the county. Content focused on feedback on the draft vision, themes, and plan recommendations as well rural character (a primary concern revealed in the first two surveys). Presentation materials and a follow up survey were made available online.

All surveys were also made available on paper. Results from paper and electronic submissions were combined for the final results.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Two rounds of virtual and in-person public meetings were conducted in locations throughout the County.

The first round of meetings focused on framing the background of the guide, vision, document themes, and growth projections. The priorities and preferences that were revealed by the initial survey were shared and confirmed by participants.

The second round of meetings took place in more rural areas of the county. Boards were presented in an exhibit at each location with the draft vision, themes, and future land use recommendations as shaped by previous input. This round also included discussions around rural character, discussing minimum lot sizes, setbacks, and buffers.

Both virtual and in-person meetings offered the community the chance to share ideas and priorities through live polling and through live chat function.

All workshop recordings and exhibit materials were published on the project website and translated into a user-friendly format for viewers to navigate and respond to survey questions or provide comments at their own pace.



Figure 2: Images from community workshops throughout the county.

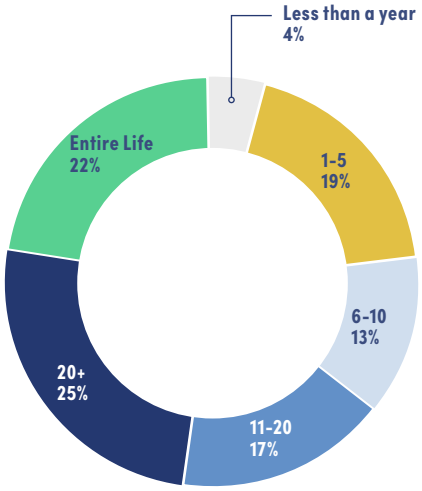
SURVEY #1 RESULTS SUMMARY

2300
Total Survey Responses

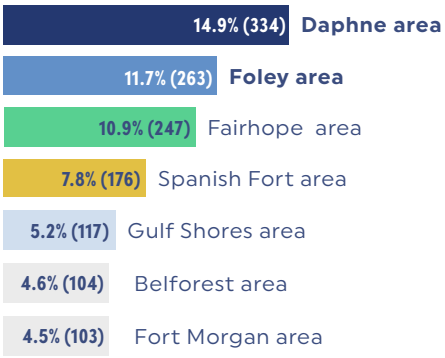
The first public survey helped to frame the plan's vision and goals and gauge priorities. This survey was live on the website from January 2022 through February 2022.

THIS SECTION SUMMARIZES SOME OF THE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEYS. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS ARE COMMUNICATED THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT. FOR THE FULL SURVEY RESPONSES, PLEASE VISIT THE PROJECT WEBSITE: BALDWINOURVISION.COM

76.9% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAVE LIVED IN BALDWIN COUNTY MORE THAN 5 YEARS



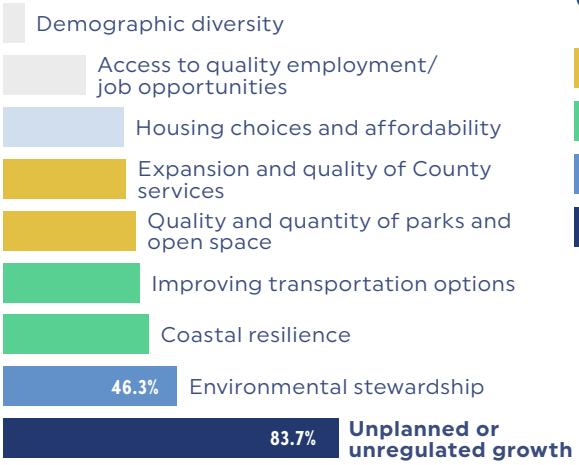
RESPONSES WERE RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY, REPRESENTING A DIVERSE CROSS-SECTION OF THE POPULATION:



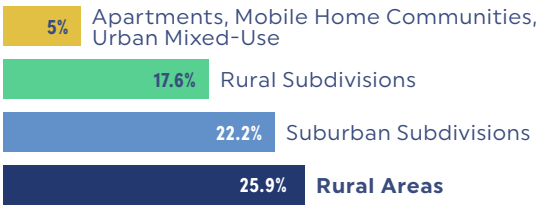
Remaining areas had fewer than 100 responses each, with the following areas having 5 or fewer responses:

Seminole area
Oyster Bay area
Little River area
Tensaw area

83.7% OF RESPONSES IDENTIFIED **UNPLANNED OR UNREGULATED GROWTH AS MOST IMPORTANT FOR BALDWIN COUNTY TO ACT ON,** FOLLOWED BY 46.3% FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



25.9% OF RESPONDENTS LIVE IN **RURAL AREAS**. ANOTHER 17.6% LIVE IN RURAL SUBDIVISIONS AND 22.2% LIVE IN SUBURBAN SUBDIVISIONS. LESS THAN 5% OF RESPONDENTS LIVE IN APARTMENTS, MOBILE HOME COMMUNITIES, OR URBAN MIXED-USE.



TOP AREAS OF SATISFACTION:

1. **Relationship to outdoors**
2. **Feeling of safety and security**
3. **Feeling of community**

TOP AREAS TO IMPROVE:

1. **Traffic/limited transportation options**
2. **Population growth**
3. **Sprawling development**

TOP AREAS OF CONCERN:

1. **Loss of rural lifestyle/agriculture**
2. **Maintaining natural resources**
3. **Unplanned or regulated growth**

CRITICAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED:

#1	**Loss of rural lifestyle/ agriculture**
#2	Equal distribution of public facilities/ services
#3	Housing affordability

GROWTH ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED:

#1	**Balance development with preservation**
#2	Less residential development
#3	Consider growth management tools

CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED:

#1	**Traffic congestion**
#2	Road connectivity
#3	More trails and greenways

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED.

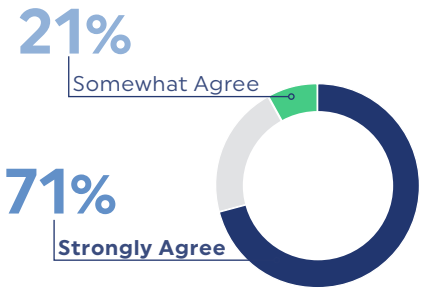
#1	**Protect our waterways & water quality**
#2	Protect native forest & tree cover
#3	Floodplain & wetland protection

SURVEY #2 RESULTS SUMMARY

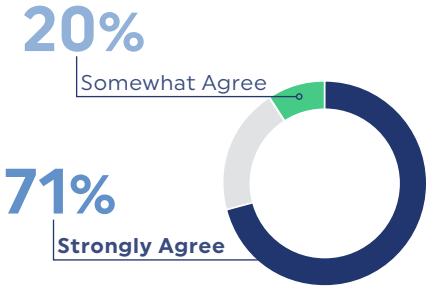
The second public survey translated the visions and goals identified in the first survey into priorities for tools, policies, and regulations, and revealed the desired spatial distribution of areas of growth and protection. This survey was captured during the first round of community meetings via live polling as well as through an online format from March 2022 through mid June 2022.

660
Total Survey Responses

92% AGREE THE COUNTY SHOULD CONSIDER TOOLS, POLICIES OR REGULATIONS THAT **PROTECT RURAL AREAS OF THE COUNTY.**



91% AGREE THERE SHOULD BE **GROWTH LIMITATIONS OR STANDARDS OF DEVELOPMENT** IN RURAL AREAS OF THE COUNTY.

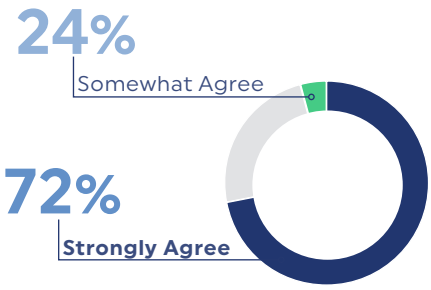


84%

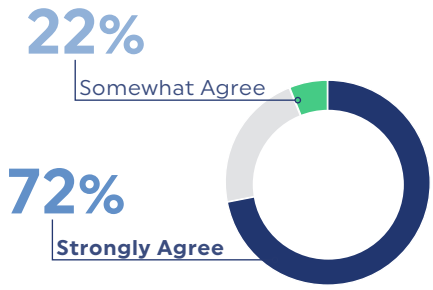
OF TOTAL SURVEY RESPONSES AGREED THAT THE DRAFT THEMES SHOULD REMAIN AS PRIORITIES FOR GUIDING THE VISION FOR FUTURE LAND USE.

These draft themes were further defined and incorporated into the organization of guide strategies and recommendations.

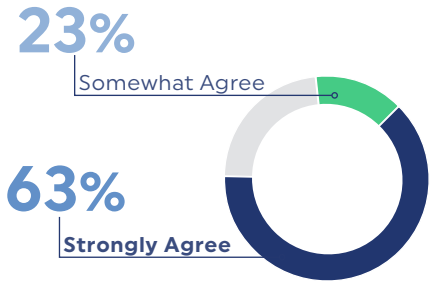
96% AGREE THE COUNTY SHOULD CONSIDER TOOLS, POLICIES OR REGULATIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE **TO NATURAL RESOURCE LAND CONSERVATION.**



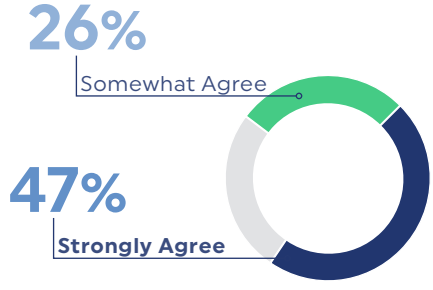
94% AGREE THE COUNTY SHOULD CONSIDER TOOLS, POLICIES OR REGULATIONS THAT **DEFINE THE CRITERIA FOR WHERE NEW DEVELOPMENT CAN OCCUR.**



86% AGREE THE COUNTY SHOULD ESTABLISH **STANDARDS FOR ROADS AND STREETS** TO ACCOMMODATE ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE WALKING AND BIKING, AND PROMOTE SENSE OF PLACE.



75% AGREE TRAILS AND CONNECTIVITY SHOULD BE COORDINATED ACROSS THE COUNTY.

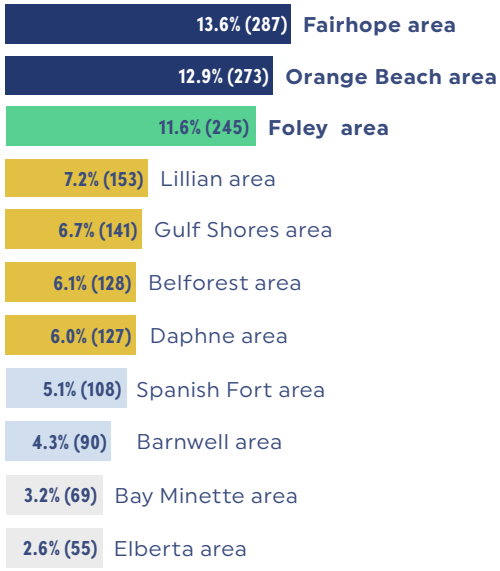


SURVEY #3 RESULTS SUMMARY

The third public survey asked participants to review another draft of the vision, themes, key strategies, future land use framework, and the consideration of standards for rural character protection. This survey was captured during the second round of community meetings during workshops located in rural communities as well as through an online format from July 2022 through August 2022.

2100
Total Survey Responses

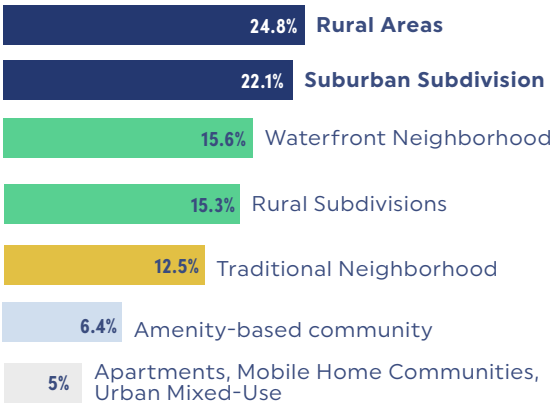
COMPARED TO THE FIRST SURVEY, MORE RESPONSES WERE RECEIVED FROM ORANGE BEACH, LILLIAN, GULF SHORES AND BELFOREST AREAS. RESPONSES DROPPED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE DAPHNE, SPANISH FORT, AND FORT MORGAN AREAS.



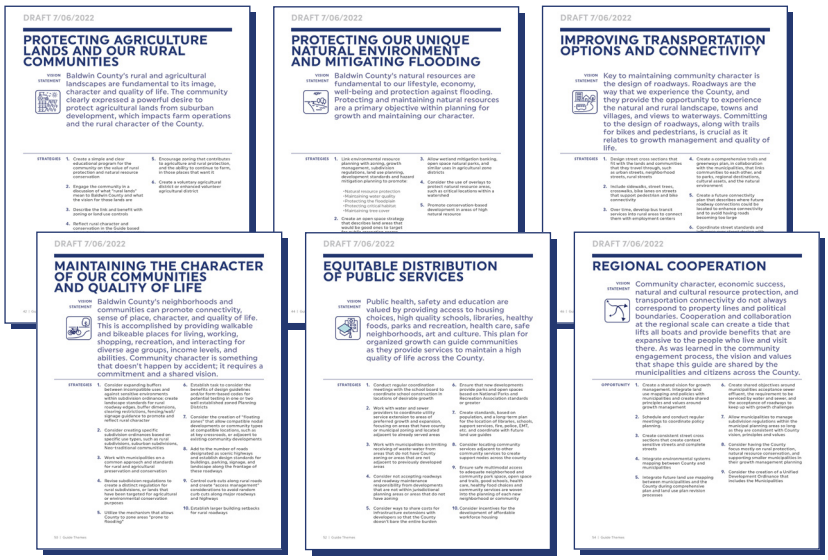
Remaining areas had fewer than 50 responses each, with the following areas having 5 or fewer responses:

Seminole area
Oyster Bay area
Little River area
Tensaw area
Magnolia area
Lottie area
Styx River area
Raburn area

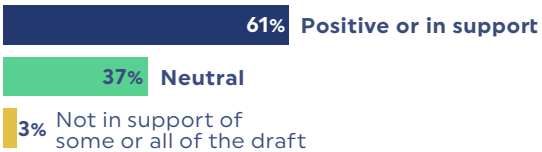
40.1% OF RESPONDENTS LIVE IN **RURAL AREAS OR RURAL SUBDIVISIONS.** ANOTHER 22.1% LIVE IN SUBURBAN SUBDIVISIONS. FEWER THAN 5% OF RESPONDENTS LIVE IN APARTMENTS, MOBILE HOME COMMUNITIES, OR URBAN MIXED-USE.



PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED TO READ THE DRAFT VISION, THEMES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROVIDE COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS.



61% OF RESPONSES WERE POSITIVE OR SUPPORTIVE OF THE DRAFT THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



All responses for this question were open-ended. Comments were coded as positive if they explicitly stated support for the draft or if comments used language that was in alignment with the draft themes and recommendations. Responses were coded neutral if suggestions were made that were different from the draft and coded negative if the response indicated lack of support for some or all of the draft language.

MOST COMMON TOPICS MENTIONED IN OPEN RESPONSES:

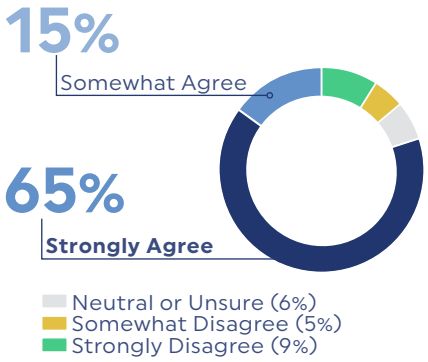


DEFINING RURAL CHARACTER

As protecting agricultural lands and rural communities from development was a top concern from the previous surveying, the community was asked to provide input on what they defined as rural character.

These results are not intended to be converted into a one-size-fits-all solution, however this input could help to support recommendations for amending future subdivision and zoning requirements in rural areas.

80% AGREED IT IS IMPORTANT TO **CONSIDER LOT SIZES** AND OTHER KEY DIMENSIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT **TO PROTECT RURAL CHARACTER.**

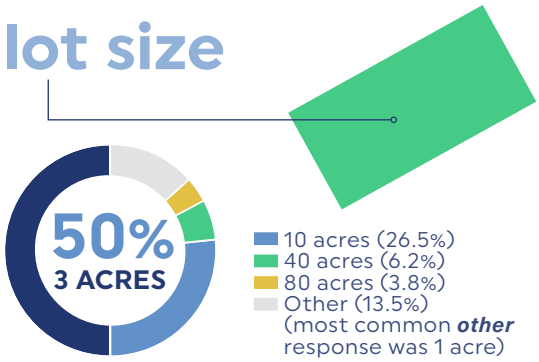


Some meeting attendees and survey respondents expressed that it was difficult to make a selection and that it depended on the context and use of the property. There were also comments that smaller lots would be acceptable if more open space was preserved. While many agreed it would be nice to have large lots, there is also a concern that requiring a large lot size will prevent affordable housing from being built and available in rural areas, making rural-living exclusive to the wealthy.

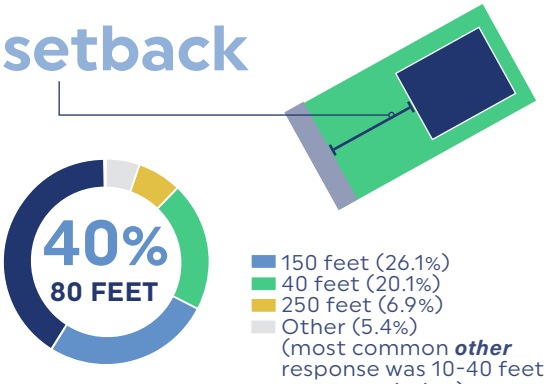
There were a few responses expressing that there should be no restrictions at all on lot size, minimum set back, or distance between homes and rather left up to the property owners. The bigger concern among those responses was the appropriate use of the land.

Others supported a minimum setback that would allow for sidewalks and/or multi-use trails to avoid needing to walk in the road.

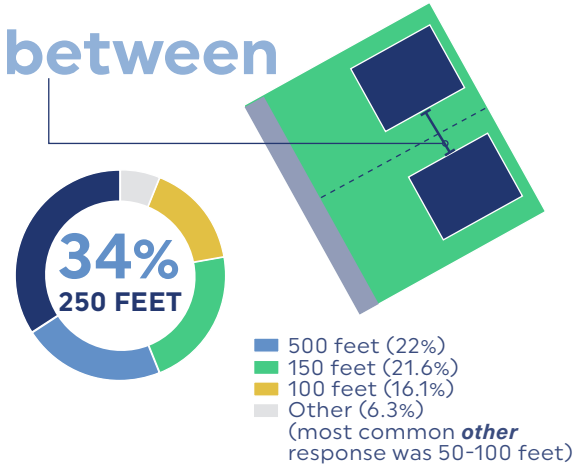
50% IDENTIFIED 3 ACRES AS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE AS A **MINIMUM STANDARD IN RURAL AREAS.**



40% IDENTIFIED 80 FEET AS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE **MINIMUM SETBACK STANDARD IN RURAL AREAS.**



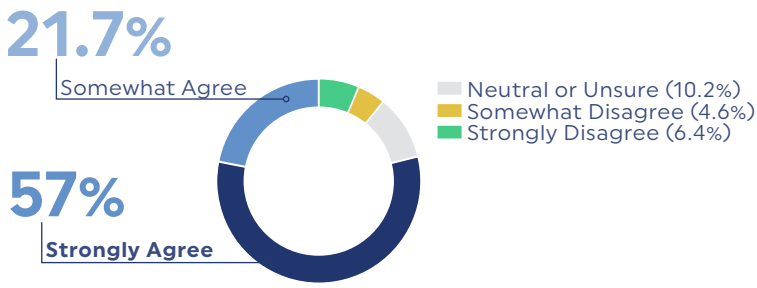
34% IDENTIFIED 250 FEET AS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE FOR A **MINIMUM DISTANCE BETWEEN HOMES IN RURAL AREAS.**



RURAL CHARACTER OF ROADS

Many times we experience places by the way we move through them. This raises a question about whether the design and engineering of roads in rural areas should respect and promote the rural character in which they are located. Design Standards and Guidelines can be created to define items like fencing, storm water management, buffer landscaping, and monument signage so that they fit with the context and character of the rural community and not a suburban community. The community was asked if they support establishing such guidelines.

78.7% AGREE THAT THE CONCEPT OF DEFINING THE CHARACTER OF ROADS AND LANDSCAPE BUFFERS IS IMPORTANT TO RURAL CHARACTER



RURAL CHARACTER OF NODES

Rural Nodes are local centers, or crossroads, that can serve as community places. These would typically include a convenience store that provides basic daily needs and can include restaurants, shops, and smaller-scale businesses, often within a 5- to 10-minute walk radius. The design of these nodes is often critical to building and retaining rural character. Design considerations might include building height and placement, active ground floor uses, block size, the amount and location of parking, and the street design. The community was asked if they support the promotion of this pattern of development.

54.9% SUPPORT PROMOTING WALKABLE DEVELOPMENT AROUND A CROSSROOADS PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

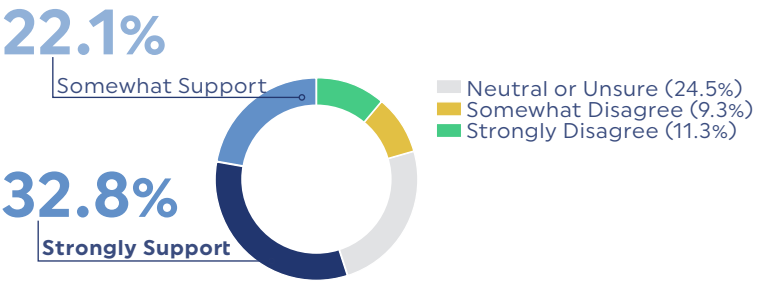




Figure 3: Aerial images showing an example of an existing rural node in Elberta, Baldwin County.

THEMES AND CORE VALUES

In this chapter, the Baldwin County's vision, values, and strategies have been organized into six themes, derived from engagement with the community and an assessment of existing conditions and emergent trends.

PROMOTE THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

VISION STATEMENT



Baldwin County's rural and agricultural landscapes are fundamental to its image, character, and quality of life. There was clear community consensus to protect agricultural lands from suburban development and the resulting negative impacts on farm operations and rural character of the county. These community priorities must be balanced with long-respected property rights in the State of Alabama.

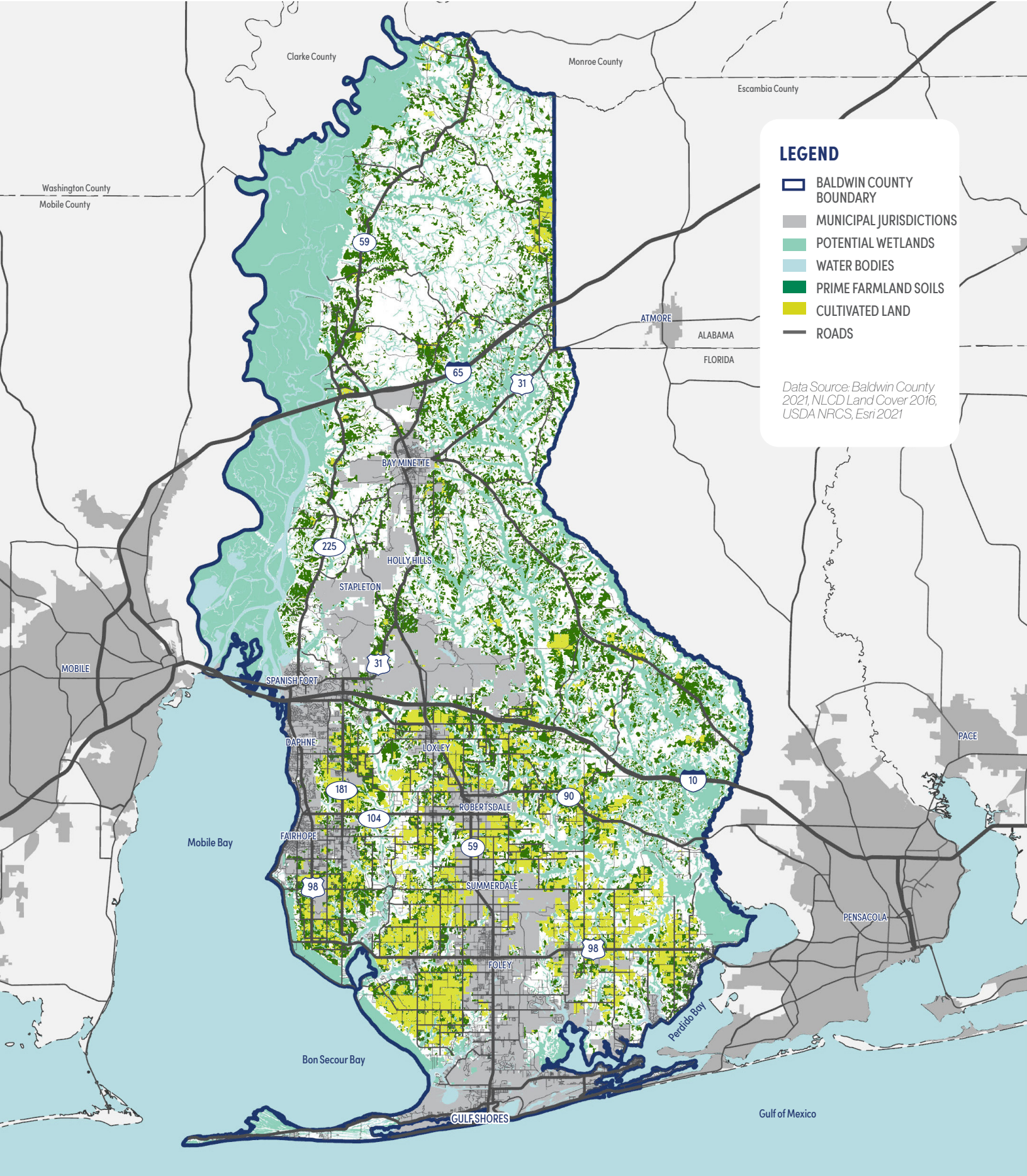
CORE VALUES

1. We value our rural and agricultural lands and lifestyle.
2. We recognize the county's attractiveness as a destination to live, work, and visit, and its consequent economic well-being, are directly related to its rural character and unique quality of life.
3. We respect private property and the ability for land-owners to profit from their land in compatible ways.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

TOP AREAS OF CONCERN FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY:

1. Loss of rural lifestyle / agriculture
2. Maintaining natural resources
3. Unplanned or unregulated growth



MAP 2: PRIME FARMLAND SOILS AND CULTIVATED LAND

0 5 10 MILES



Image: Agricultural field located in the Loxley community, Baldwin County.



PROTECT OUR UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ENHANCE WATER QUALITY, AND MITIGATE FLOODING

VISION STATEMENT



Baldwin County's natural resources are fundamental to our lifestyle, economy, well-being, water quality, and flood resilience. Protecting and maintaining natural resources are primary objectives of the County and will influence efforts to plan for growth and maintain character.

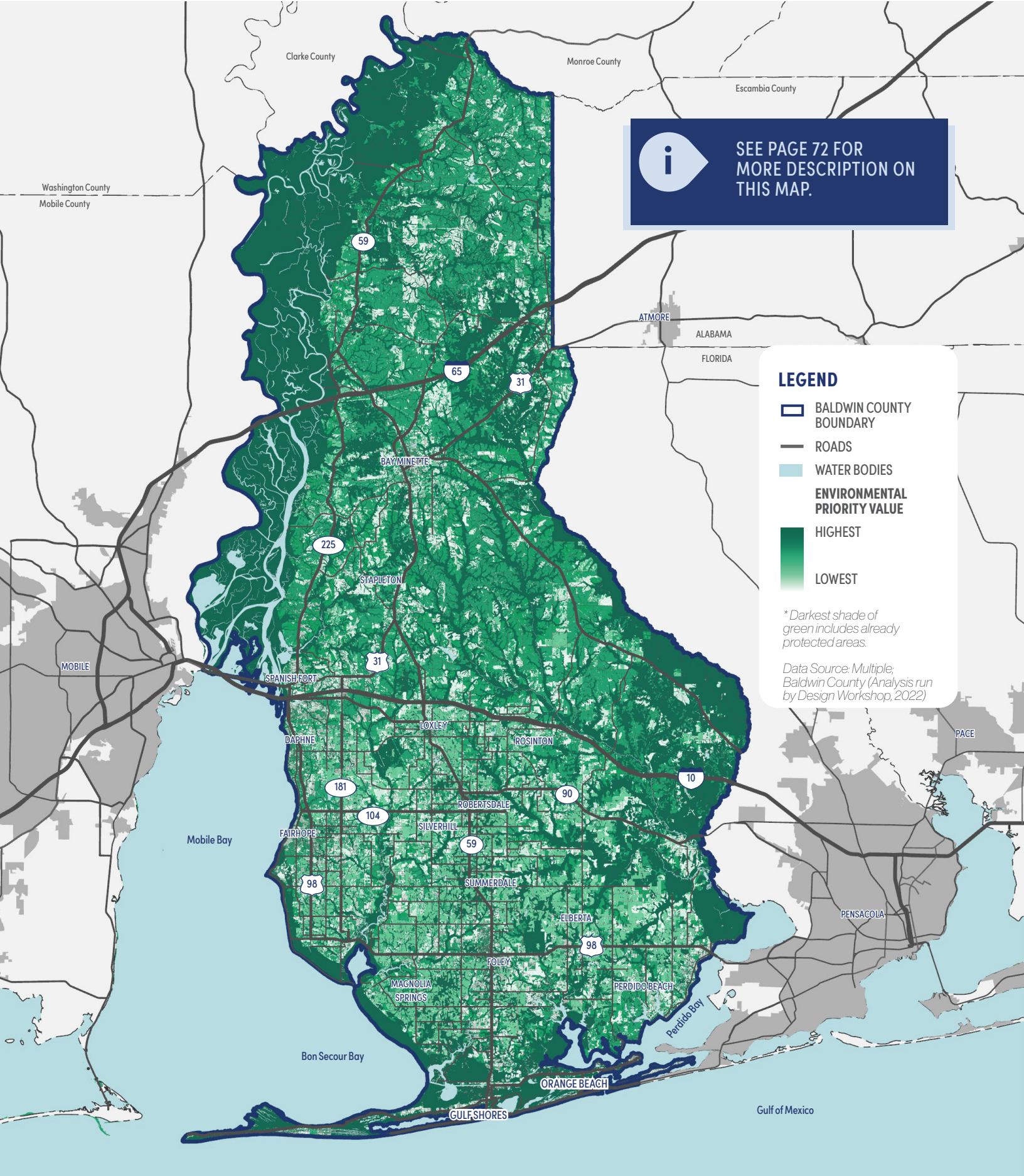
CORE VALUES

1. We value our unique natural environment as a source of life, recreation, economy, culture, and sense of place.
2. We make efforts to protect and enhance our natural environment to preserve the quality of life for future generations.
3. We balance development with the preservation of natural systems.
4. We depend on clean water quality to support our health, economy, and lifestyle.
5. We prepare for environmental hazards and changes.
6. We believe growth and development can be compatible with the natural environment.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED:

1. **Protect our waterways and water quality**
2. **Protect native forest and tree cover**
3. **Floodplain and wetland protection**

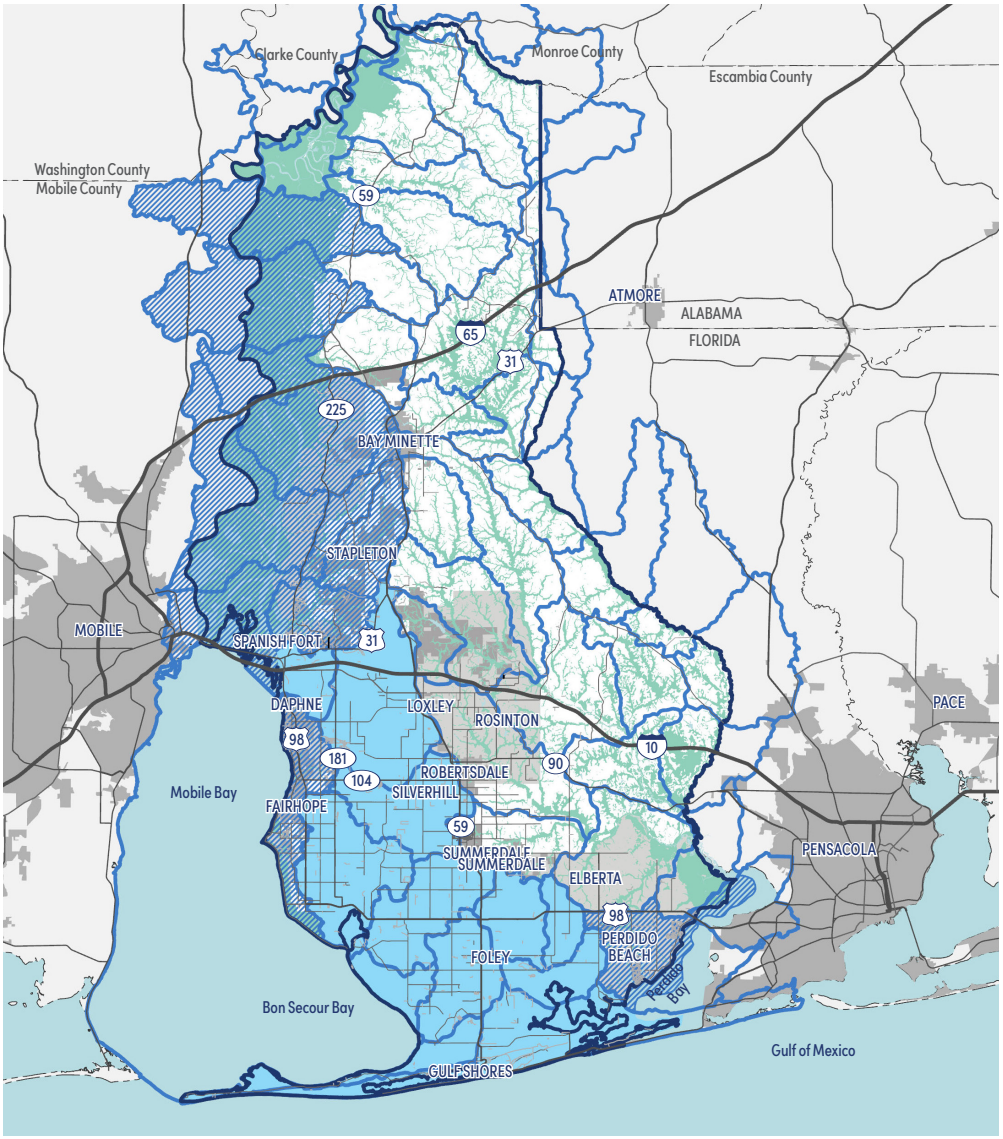


MAP 3: ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY MAP

0 5 10 MILES

MAP 4: WATERSHEDS WITH MANAGEMENT PLANS

Several subwatersheds (HUC 12) in Baldwin County, wrapping from Bridge Creek-Perdido Bay to Farris Creek-Barrow Creek to the west, have or are planning a watershed management plan.



LEGEND

- BALDWIN COUNTY BOUNDARY
- MUNICIPALITY EXTENTS
- ZONED AREAS
- WETLANDS
- WATER BODIES
- ROADS

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN STATUS

- COMPLETED
- PLANNED OR IN PROGRESS
- NONE

Data Source: Baldwin County 2021



Image: Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, Baldwin County.

IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND CONNECTIVITY

VISION STATEMENT



Roadway design is key to maintaining community character. Roadways are the way that we experience the county, and they provide the opportunity to experience the natural landscape, towns, and scenic coastal views. Committing to the thoughtful design of roadways, along with appropriate trails for bikes and pedestrians, is crucial for growth management and quality of life.

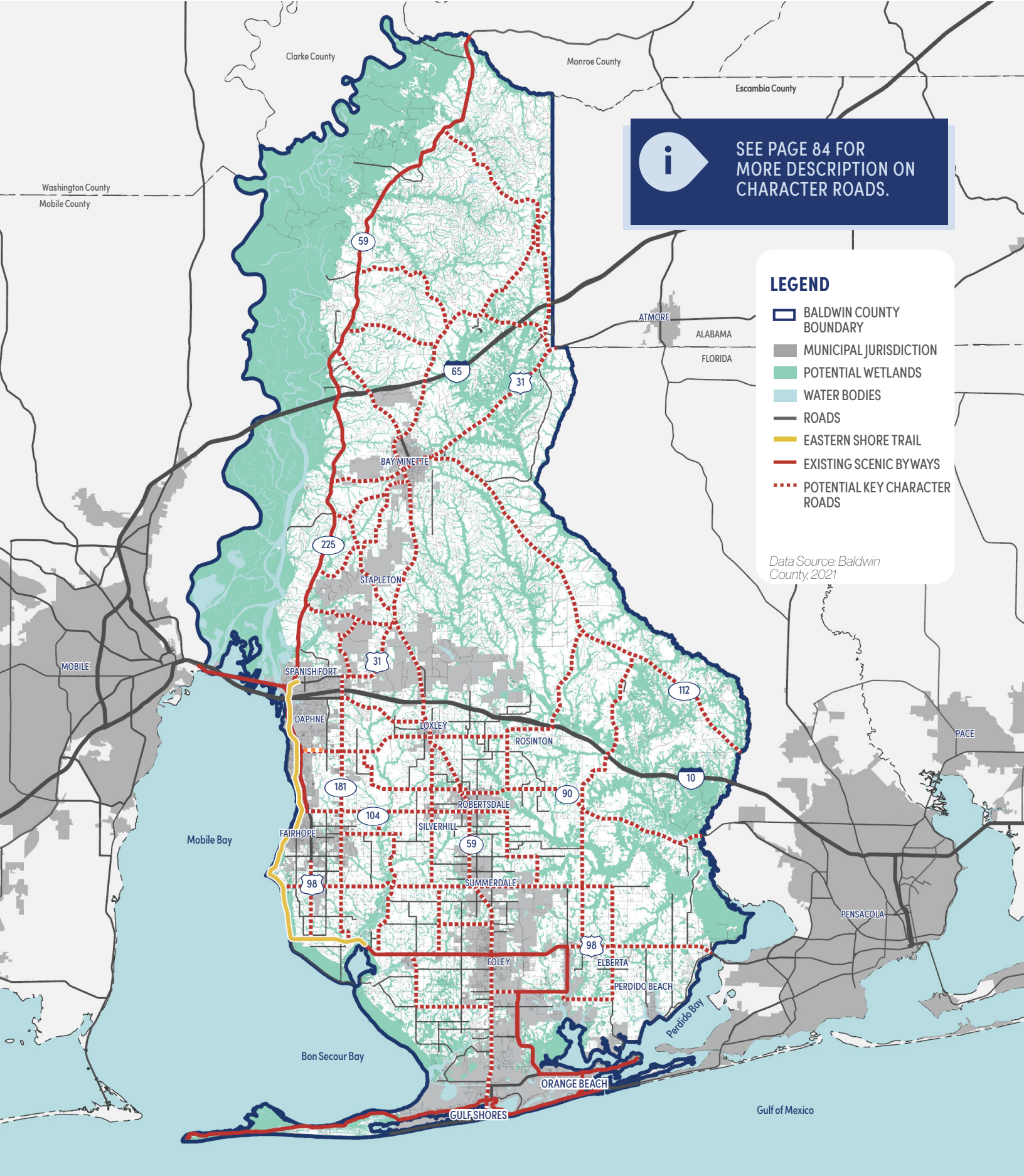
CORE VALUES

1. We value transportation improvements that balance level of service with quality and character.
2. We understand our roads and other forms of mobility support our community character and sense of place.
3. We believe that multimodal transportation options should be accessible in appropriate areas.
4. We recognize that improvements to connectivity can reduce congestion.
5. We recognize roadways and transportation networks are critical elements of economic vitality.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED:

1. Traffic congestion
2. Road connectivity
3. More trails and greenways



MAP 5: POTENTIAL CHARACTER ROADS

0 5 10 MILES

PROMOTE THE COORDINATED DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

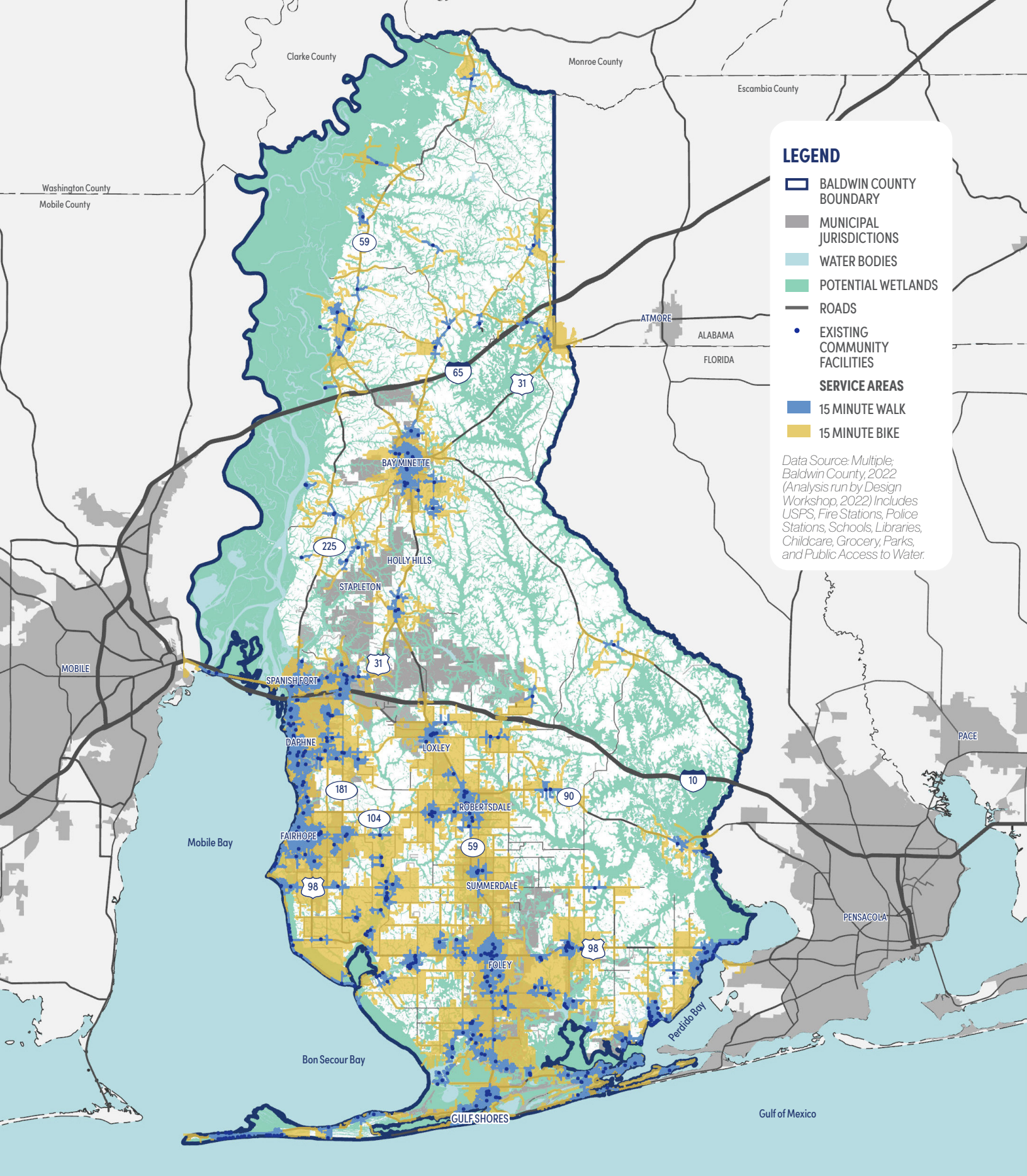
VISION STATEMENT



Public health, safety, and education are valued by providing access to housing choices, high quality schools, libraries, healthy foods, parks and recreation, health care, safe neighborhoods, art, and culture. Although County planning and zoning policies have only indirect influence on many public services, this plan for organized growth can help guide communities as they provide services to maintain a high quality of life across the county.

CORE VALUES

1. We value the efficient development and maintenance of our public infrastructure.
2. We strive to support the needs of our citizens to access a healthy, safe, and successful life.
3. We want our citizens to be served by great schools, libraries, arts and cultural facilities, health care, parks, and open spaces.
4. We value walkable and bikeable connections between suburban neighborhoods to promote a sense of community.
5. Baldwin's sense of place and quality of life are essential to our economy, and vice versa.
6. We prepare our workforce with the skills needed to meet the needs of existing and emergent opportunities.
7. We understand the need to promote the development of housing that is attainable to our workforce.
8. We support neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices and prices.

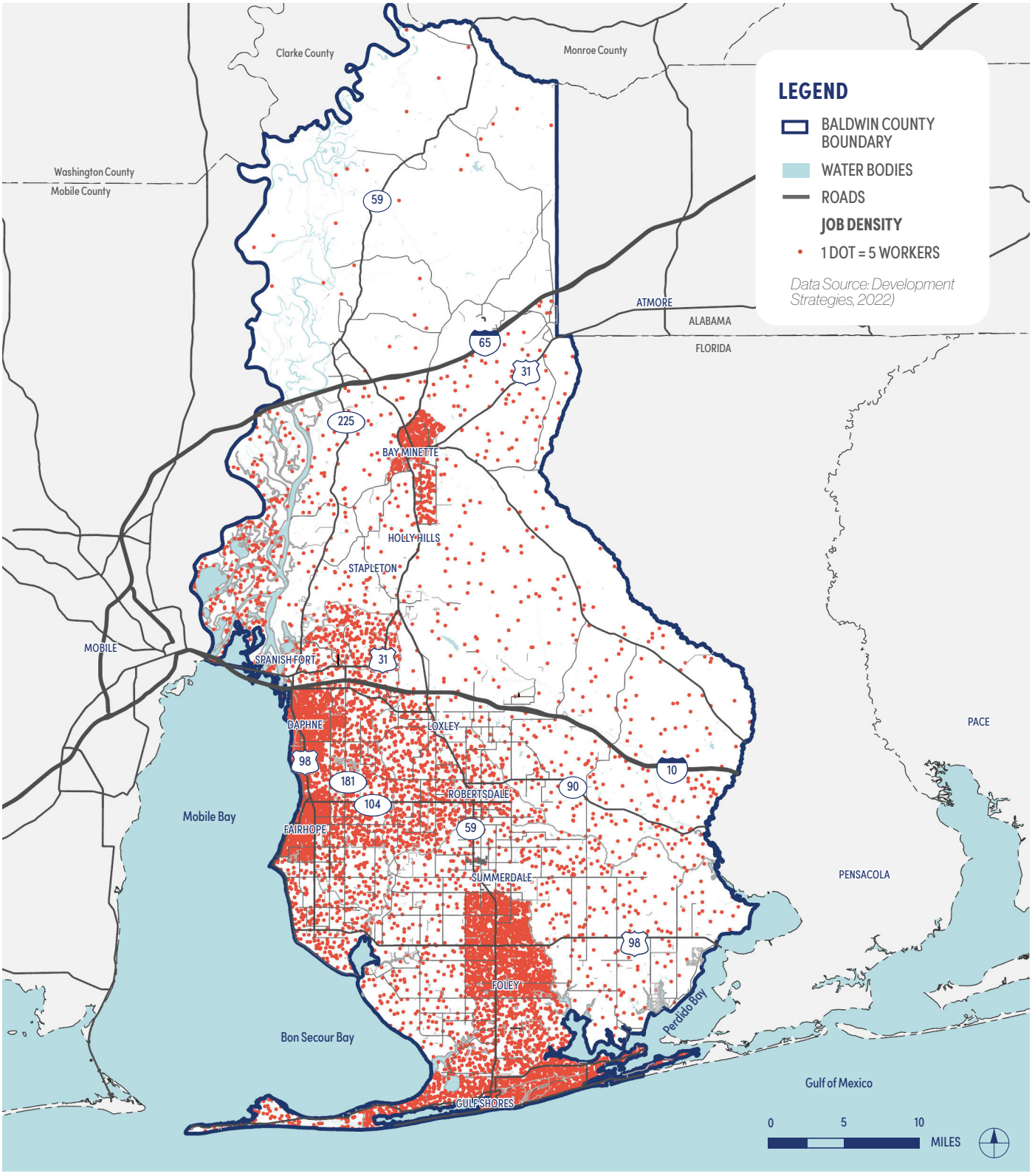


MAP 6: EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES WITH SERVICE AREAS

0 5 10 MILES

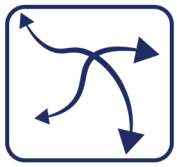
MAP 7: JOB DENSITY

Jobs are primarily located within larger municipal jurisdictions such as Daphne, Fairhope, Foley, and Bay Minette. Housing is becoming increasingly more expensive, making it more difficult to afford living close to work.



ENCOURAGE REGIONAL COOPERATION

VISION STATEMENT



Community character, economic success, natural and cultural resource protection, and transportation connectivity do not always correspond to property lines and political boundaries. Cooperation and collaboration at the regional scale can create a tide that lifts all boats and provide benefits that are expansive to the people who live, work, and visit here. The community engagement process established that the vision and values that shape this guide are shared by the municipalities and citizens across the county.

CORE VALUES

1. We strive to coordinate our growth plans with our neighbors and collaborate on shared values and visions.
2. We collaborate with our neighboring jurisdictions to create common approaches to mobility and connectivity.
3. We recognize that natural environments do not follow jurisdictional boundaries and will work with our neighbors to protect our natural resources and open space connectivity.
4. We collaborate regionally on economic development so that our collective efforts create more opportunity for all.

MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

VISION STATEMENT



Baldwin County's neighborhoods and communities can promote connectivity, sense of place, character, and quality of life. This is accomplished by providing a safe and thriving community where people of all ages, income levels, and abilities can find opportunity, recreation, and culture. Community character is something that doesn't happen by accident; it requires a commitment and a shared vision. The County's planning and zoning policies should support this vision.

CORE VALUES

1. We desire neighborhoods and development that express our identity, promote our character, and exemplify our commitment to a high quality of life.
2. We believe that development should be focused where it is best suited from an environmental, economic, infrastructure, and community service standpoint.
3. We believe small, walkable, mixed-use nodes within our neighborhoods may create places to shop, work, or start a business.
4. We recognize that a strong, growing economy is the foundation of a high quality of life and provides the freedom for a community to pursue higher character-related aspirations.


BALDWIN COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
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ACTION PLAYBOOK

The action playbook describes optional ideas to execute the vision and themes outlined within this Land Use Guide. Actions within this playbook represent ideas and are not mandates. This playbook is intended to help the County Commission, Planning Commission, and planning staff investigate and consider implementing new tools to help support the community's vision for future growth.



Image: Baldwin Beach Express Robertsdale community in Baldwin County.

PLAYBOOK OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

This Guide conveys vision, goals, and actions derived through a collaborative, community-based planning process to ensure Baldwin County maintains and promotes its high quality of life, its unique landscape and access to nature, its rural character, and expanded economic opportunities.

The Land Use Guide should be a reference tool that is referred to often and regularly, and should be the impetus for the ongoing decisions and focus of the County's internal interactions and interactions with its citizens. The playbook section should be used like a menu of ideas or a quarterback's playbook to provide possible future actions that could be taken to address different issues that may arise.

PERIODIC IMPLEMENTATION STATUS REPORTS

At a minimum of every five years the Planning Commission should perform a comprehensive review of the Land Use Guide to:

- Ensure the Land Use Guide is consistent with the development visions and goals of the County.
- Update all local, state, federal, and joint actions that have been undertaken successfully to implement the Guide.
- Update any actions that have been delayed and the reasons for the delays.
- Document any unforeseen land use issues that have arisen since adoption of the land use guide.
- Ensure consistency of existing land use and development ordinances with current land use guide policies.

ACTION TYPES AND ORGANIZATION

The actions in the playbook section are organized by the themes in this Guide. Each proposed action is categorized by one of the following action types:

- Amendment to Subdivision Regulations
- Amendment to Zoning Ordinance
- Change to Practice or Policy
- Education
- Organized Coordination Between Entities or Agencies
- Other Proposed Changes to Laws or Regulations
- Pursue or Support Grant Opportunities
- Study/Mapping

ACTION MATRIX

ACTIONS WITHIN EACH THEME ARE SORTED BY TARGET YEAR TO COMPLETE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT.



PROMOTE THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Action Type	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	**Education**	**Education**
Proposed Action	Hold a **series of meetings with representatives of the farming community,** USDA, the State of Alabama, Alabama Cooperative Extension, the Farmland Protection Subcommittee, and other appropriate entities to **evaluate options and tools for rural and agricultural preservation.**	Consider amendment to the Subdivision Regulations to **introduce land suitability standards** within the unzoned areas of the County which would establish minimum requirements for rural subdivisions.	**Create a presentation**, for both video and live delivery, **explaining the recently adopted Base Community Zoning (BCZ) District** and the benefits this minimal zoning can bring to preserving the character of the rural areas of Baldwin County.	**Create a presentation**, for both video and live delivery, **explaining the purpose of zoning generally** and the impacts that zoning can have on community character through the regulation of lot sizes, landscape buffers, etc.
Level of Investment	**Low**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Low**
Responsibility	P&Z	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z	P&Z
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**12 months**	**3 months**	**3 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 1**	**Year 1**	**Year 1**	**Year 1**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



PROMOTE THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Action Type	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**	**Study/Mapping**	**Study/Mapping**
Proposed Action	Consider draft amendment to the Subdivision Regulations which **incorporates a Farmland Overlay** and establishes minimum lot sizes, landscape buffers, open space requirements, incorporates lot clustering, and/or similar measures to ensure future subdivision developments do not negatively impact remaining viable farmland.	Consider draft amendment to Zoning Ordinance which **incorporates a Farmland Overlay** and establishes minimum lot sizes, landscape buffers, open space requirements, incorporates lot clustering, and/or similar measures to ensure future development does not negatively impact remaining viable farmland.	Coordinate with the Environmental Committee and the Farmland Protection Subcommittee to **create a non-binding Farmland Overlay Map** that identifies contiguous, productive, and viable farming areas. The Farmland Overlay Map would become the foundation for possible amendments to regulations and other initiatives.	Prepare a report **outlining the public policy implications** of the conversion of farmland in Baldwin County to other uses and possible options for the **protection of farmland** in the future.
Level of Investment	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / Environmental Committee/ Farmland Protection Subcommittee	P&Z / Environmental Committee/ Farmland Protection Subcommittee
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**12 months**	**24 months**	**12 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 2**	**Year 2**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**



PROMOTE THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Action Type	Education	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies
Proposed Action	**Create a presentation,** for both video and live delivery, regarding the cumulative findings of the Farmland Protection Subcommittee and P&Z Staff **regarding policies, programs, and tools that may be available to support the preservation of agricultural lands and rural character.**	Hold, at a minimum, **annual meetings between the Baldwin County Historic Commission and Architectural Review Board** to ensure we are **preserving historic rural and cultural resources** in the county.
Level of Investment	**Low**	**Low**
Responsibility	P&Z / Environmental Committee	P&Z
Months to Complete	**6 months**	**N/A**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 3**	**Continuous**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



PROTECT OUR UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ENHANCE WATER QUALITY, AND MITIGATE FLOODING

Action Type	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**	Other Proposed Changes to **Laws or Regulations**	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**
Proposed Action	Consider draft amendments to the **Conservation Development language** of the Zoning Ordinance to simplify the application process and **incentivize the clustering of lots** in exchange for the conservation of critical areas such as forests, natural spaces, wetlands, and floodplains.	Prepare draft legislation aimed to ensure **Family Subdivisions exemptions** are **not abused to create intense subdivisions** and to provide the County with the power to regulate divisions that will create hazards to health, safety, and welfare.	When **reviewing a subdivision application,** require P&Z staff to review and **consider whether the property is identified as a critical habitat** under the 2019 Habitat Conservation and Restoration Plan for Coastal Alabama. If so, require the applicant to provide a letter from an environmental professional certifying the non-existance of critical habitat on the property.	When **reviewing the rezoning factors** (environmental factor, specifically) in the Zoning Ordinance, require P&Z staff to review and **consider whether the property is identified as a critical habitat** under the 2019 Habitat Conservation and Restoration Plan for Coastal Alabama.
Level of Investment	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Low**
Responsibility	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / BCC / Legislation Delegation	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**1 month**	**1 month**	**1 month**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 1**	**Year 1**	**Year 1**	**Year 1**



PROTECT OUR UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ENHANCE WATER QUALITY, AND MITIGATE FLOODING

Action Type	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**	**Study/Mapping**	**Study/Mapping**
Proposed Action	Consider draft amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to include a simplified **Nature Based Solutions (LID techniques)** requirement.	Consider draft amendments to Zoning Ordinance **Article 17, Landscape and Buffers requiring native species in all landscape buffer areas** and consider recommendations from Staff and the Environmental Committee related to the preservation of native trees.	Consider **creating a non-binding, open space investment strategy or map** that proposes priority lands for conservation and passive recreation, and describes methods of protection, organization structure required, and funding sources.	Explore the viability and efficacy of **regional detention system** on water quality and natural resource protection.
Level of Investment	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**	**High**
Responsibility	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / Environmental Committee	Baldwin County Highway Dept.
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**12 months**	**6 months**	**48 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 2**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 5**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



PROTECT OUR UNIQUE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ENHANCE WATER QUALITY, AND MITIGATE FLOODING

Action Type	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies	Pursue or Support **Grant Opportunities**
Proposed Action	Hold, at a minimum, **annual meetings between P&Z Staff, the Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Mobile Bay NEP leadership** to review watershed management plans and discuss specific research that might aid in developing targeted regulatory changes.	Explore, prioritize, and apply for funding and **grant programs available for floodplain and wetland protection, restoration, and hazard mitigation** (such as RESTORE ACT or GOMESA).
Level of Investment	**Low**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z	P&Z / Environmental Committee / Grants Committee
Months to Complete	**N/A**	**N/A**
Target Year to Complete	**Continuous**	**Continuous**



IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND CONNECTIVITY

Action Type	**Study/Mapping**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**
Proposed Action	Consider creation of a non-binding **Baldwin County Roadway Character map** to identify and categorize county roadways by character type and assign site design criteria related to each type, which might include larger front setbacks, required planting of native overstory trees, restriction on privacy fences on lot-lines fronting roads, etc. This map would become a possible reference for a future zoning or subdivision amendment that would give the map effect.	Consider amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to **incorporate the street cross sections design criteria** for site plan approvals and linked with previously prepared Roadway Character Map.	Consider amendment to the Subdivision Regulations to **incorporate street cross sections design criteria for new subdivision developments** and link with previously prepared Roadway Character Map.	Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to **enhance connectivity requirements** by **requiring street stub-outs** to adjacent undeveloped land and allowing reduced lot dimensions or **density bonuses when higher connectivity criteria, such as access to two separate maintained roads, are achieved.**
Level of Investment	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / Highway	P&Z / Highway / PC / BCC	P&Z / Highway / PC / BCC	P&Z / Highway / PC / BCC
Months to Complete	**6 months**	**12 months**	**12 months**	**12 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 2**	**Year 2**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND CONNECTIVITY

Action Type	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies	**Study/Mapping**
Proposed Action	**Support the Eastern Shore MPO's efforts to create a county-wide connectivity map** that will include existing and proposed wide shoulders, separated sidewalks/multi-use paths, possible rails-to-trails, and other transportation alternative opportunities.	Create **county-wide major roadway transportation plan** with specific **emphasis on connectivity.**
Level of Investment	**Low**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z	Baldwin County Highway Dept.
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**24 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 2**	**Year 2**

COORDINATE DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Action Type	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Change to **Practice or Policy**	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**
Proposed Action	Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to **require detailed capacity reports from water and sewer providers** as part of Preliminary or Final Plat approval.	Consider an **agreement with municipalities on limiting receiving of waste-water or provision of potable water** from areas that do not have County zoning or areas that are not adjacent to previously developed areas (possibly part of future Planning Jurisdiction agreements).	Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to create **density bonuses for single family developments that meet certain attainable housing thresholds.**	Consider draft amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to create **density bonuses for single family developments that meet certain attainable housing thresholds.**
Level of Investment	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / Municipalities/ BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC
Months to Complete	**6 months**	**12 months**	**12 months**	**12 months**
Target Year to Complete	**1 year**	**1 year**	**2 years**	**2 years**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



COORDINATE DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

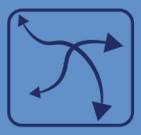
Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**	**Study/Mapping**	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies
Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to **remove the default condition for the County to take over roads for maintenance;** add a requirement for a maintenance plan incorporated into the HOA documents; add a requirement for an HOA escrow account that will pay the cost of resurfacing and drainage maintenance; and **make taking over a road for maintenance an incentive based on meeting certain attainable housing criteria.**	Consider draft amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to require, for proposed rezonings to high intensity thresholds (e.g. 50 lots/units), a higher level of data as part of the rezoning application.	**Create a presentation**, for both video and live delivery, **explaining the recently adopted Base Community Zoning (BCZ) District** and the benefits this minimal zoning can bring to preserving the character of the rural areas of Baldwin County.	Hold, at a minimum, **annual meetings between P&Z Staff and utility providers** to discuss County growth priorities and encourage limiting service expansions to areas appropriate for growth.	Hold, at a minimum, **annual meetings between local planning departments and local school representatives** to discuss County growth priorities and growth trends within the school systems.
Medium	**Medium**	**Low**	**Low**	**Low**
P&Z / Highway / PC / BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z	P&Z	P&Z
12 months	**6 months**	**6 months**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Year 3	**Year 3**	**Year 3**	**Continuous**	**Continuous**



ENCOURAGE REGIONAL COOPERATION

Action Type	Change to **Practice or Policy**	**Study/Mapping**	**Study/Mapping**	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies
Proposed Action	Support a **cooperative transition toward service delivery between the County and Municipalities that is easy for citizens to understand** while still recognizing the priorities of the various municipalities.	Pursue a **coordinated GIS effort between the County and Municipalities,** starting with the **preparation of a report outlining options** to legally achieve the desired end result.	**Integrate environmental mapping** between the County and municipalities.	Hold a **series of meetings with representatives of municipalities and P&Z Staff** to consider the possibility of creating a **coordinated development regulation** that will still contemplate the needs of the individual entities.
Level of Investment	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / Municipalities / BCC	P&Z / Revenue / Highway / CIS / E-911 / Municipalities	P&Z / Municipalities	P&Z / Municipalities
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**6 months**	**12 months**	**12 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 1**	**Year 3**	**Year 3**	**Year 3**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



ENCOURAGE REGIONAL COOPERATION

Action Type	Other Proposed Changes to **Laws or Regulations**	Organized **Coordination** Between Entities or Agencies	**Education**
Proposed Action	Prepare initial **draft coordinated development regulation** for discussion between the County and the municipalities.	Hold, at a minimum, **annual meetings between P&Z Staff and municipal planners** to discuss the planning vision of the various municipalities and potential opportunities to work together in achieving those visions.	Schedule **quarterly planning support education classes** for the County planning commission and municipal planning staff and planning commissions.
Level of Investment	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / Municipalities	P&Z	P&Z
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 4**	**Continuous**	**Continuous**



MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Action Type	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	Amendment to **Subdivision Regulations**	**Education**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**
Proposed Action	Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to create a **simplified PUD** for single-family residential developments that **incentivize the clustering of lots** in exchange for the conservation of open space and critical areas.	Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to **enhance landscape buffer requirements** between new development and sensitive environments.	**Create a presentation,** for both video and live delivery, **explaining the potential application of a form-based zoning code** to determine whether a Planning District in Baldwin County might consider testing this zoning approach.	Consider draft amendments to the Subdivision Regulations to establish **regulations based on specific subdivision types** such as rural subdivisions, suburban subdivisions, rural crossroads subdivisions, planned communities, etc.
Level of Investment	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z / PC / BCC	P&Z	P&Z / PC / BCC
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**12 months**	**3 months**	**12 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 3**

ACTIONS WITHIN THIS PLAYBOOK REPRESENT IDEAS AND ARE NOT MANDATES.



MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Action Type	**Study/Mapping**	Amendment to **Zoning Ordinance**
Proposed Action	Consider creation of a non-binding **Baldwin County Scenic Waterway map** to identify and categorize scenic waterways for safeguarding the special character of rivers and streams.	Consider draft amendments to Zoning Ordinance to specify **site design criteria along scenic waterways.**
Level of Investment	**Low**	**Medium**
Responsibility	P&Z / Environmental Committee	P&Z / PC / BCC
Months to Complete	**12 months**	**12 months**
Target Year to Complete	**Year 4**	**Year 5**

GUIDE FOR THE FUTURE

With this Future Land Use Guide, Baldwin County can continue to grow while supporting the natural environment, protecting its rural sense of place, promoting economic development, supporting efficient infrastructure development, and creating great neighborhoods.

The following chapter outlines principles and methods that will help Baldwin County achieve the community's vision.

FRAMING GROWTH IN BALDWIN COUNTY

In order to understand the potential of population growth and its impact on the community, the rural landscape, and the natural environment, this Guide sought to answer the following key questions:

1. How much population growth is Baldwin County going to absorb in the next 20 years?
2. What types of development are occurring and where?
3. How much land area would this take at various housing densities?
4. Are there locations best suited to accommodate projected growth?
5. Are there land areas that are better for natural resources and/or agricultural preservation?

HOW MUCH GROWTH IS BALDWIN COUNTY GOING TO ABSORB IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

According to the latest population projections from the University of Alabama Culverhouse College of Business, Center for Business and Economic Research, Baldwin County is projected to add just over 78,000 new residents over the next 20 years for an increase of 35 percent, making it the fastest growing county in the state. Over the next 10 years, Baldwin County's population is projected to increase by 39,000 residents for a total rate of growth of 18 percent—this includes total population growth within the municipalities and unincorporated areas. These projections indicate that moving forward, growth will be slightly slower after adding 42,000 net new residents from 2000 to 2010 and around 51,000 residents from 2010 to 2021.

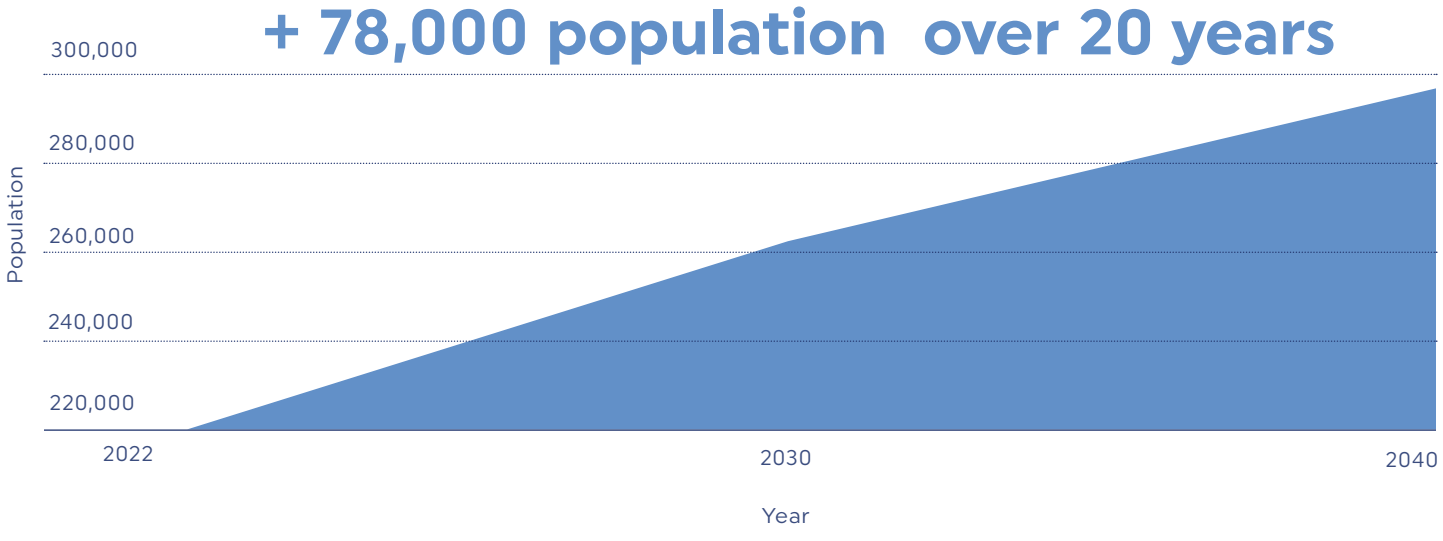
According to Esri, the average household size in Baldwin County decreased from 2.49 in 2010 to 2.46 in 2021. The 2021 average household sizes are slightly smaller in the incorporated areas (2.39) compared to the unincorporated areas (2.55) given the higher share of multi-family housing and older housing with lower-than-average sizes within the municipalities.

Since 2010, unincorporated Baldwin County has captured approximately 42 percent of countywide population growth with an average household size of 2.55 persons per household. Therefore, over a ten-year period, the unincorporated portions of the county need to accommodate demand for 6,400 new households and nearly 13,000 households over a 20-year period. For the municipalities, they would need to accommodate demand from just over 19,000 households over the next 20 years. Note that these projections reflect occupied housing growth and the overall pace of housing growth exceeding population growth due to seasonal home development along the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach communities.

+ 13,000

ASSUMING ~40% PROJECTED GROWTH WILL BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY AS OPPOSED TO WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES, THERE WILL BE A NEED FOR 13,000 NEW HOUSING UNITS OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS.

Figure 4: Population Projection in Baldwin County



WHAT TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT ARE OCCURRING AND WHERE?

As Baldwin County continues to increase in population, real estate development will be needed to accommodate new demand, most critically housing, but also retail and other supportive uses for the growing population. As the county's economy continues to grow and diversify, new employment-based uses such as office and industrial space will be needed to maintain competitiveness. Additionally, in order to support its already strong tourism economy, new hotels and recreational amenities will be needed.

There are effectively two types of real estate development:

1. For-sale residential that primarily includes single-family homes, but also duplexes, townhomes, and condominiums.
2. Commercial real estate that includes apartments (since the occupants pay rent as opposed to owning their unit), office (including professional and medical offices), retail, hotels, and industrial. In order to understand future development patterns, it is critical to document past development trends as well as key factors for marketability and feasibility.

In other words, a retail development needs to be in a highly-visible and accessible location to attract customers; hotels need to be in an area that attracts a large number of overnight visitors; and for-sale housing development is generally driven by the cost of land, availability of infrastructure, and construction costs.

Understanding where development has gone will help inform where development should go with the guidance of this document.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

RETAIL

Baldwin County has around 17.6 million square feet of retail space, of which 1.6 million square feet was built since 2010, an increase of 12 percent. Around 94 percent of this development occurred within municipal boundaries. Overall, retail development utilized just over 640 acres of land for an average of around 2,600 square feet per acre.

OFFICE

Baldwin County has a total office supply of around 4.1 million square feet; however, development has been relatively slow over the last decade with the county adding only 343,000 square feet, an increase of nine percent. Around 76 percent of this development occurred within municipal boundaries. Similar to retail development, new office development utilized an average of 2,600 square feet per acre, for a total of 131 acres.

HOTEL

Baldwin County has a total hotel supply of around 7,100 rooms with very strong development growth since 2010 adding around 2,000 new rooms, an increase of 37 percent. All of the new hotel development has occurred within municipal boundaries. On average, new hotels had a density of 23 rooms per acre, or around 87 acres.

INDUSTRIAL

Baldwin County has a total supply of 9.5 million square feet of leasable industrial space, although development since 2010 has been relatively slow adding just over 400,000 square feet, an increase of five percent. While around half of this new supply occurred in unincorporated areas, future industrial development will co-locate proximate to other industrial uses and major arterial roadways. Most of this development has consisted of smaller-scale properties with less than 100,000 square feet, averaging around 4,400 square feet per acre. However, larger-scale industrial development—those with more than 150,000 square feet—typically have slightly higher

densities of around 5,500 square feet per acre.

MULTI-FAMILY

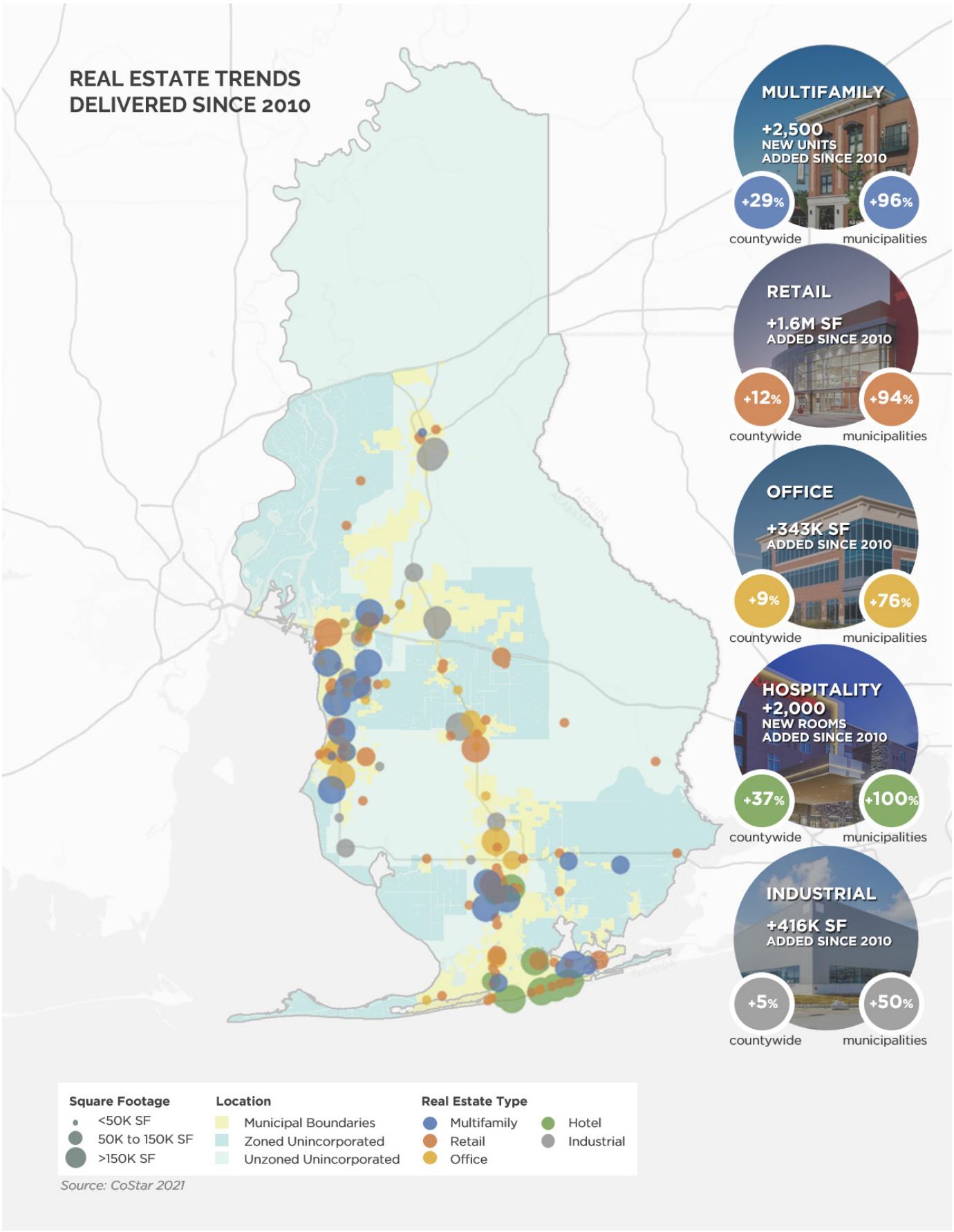
Baldwin County has a total multi-family supply of 11,100 units, of which 2,500 units were added since 2010. Nearly all of the new multi-family development (2,400 units) has occurred within municipal boundaries. Overall, new multi-family development has had an average density of nine units per acre utilizing a total of around 278 acres.

Table 1: Commercial Real Estate Development Trends

USE	TOTAL SUPPLY	DELIVERED 2010-2021	SHARE BUILT WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES	AVERAGE DENSITY FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL ESTIMATED LAND
Retail	17.6 mil SF	1.6 mil SF	94%	2,600 SF per acre	640 acres
Office	4.1 mil SF	343K SF	76%	2,600 SF per acre	131 acres
Hotel	7,100 Rooms	2,000 Rooms	100%	23 Room per acre	87 acres
Industrial	9.5 million SF	400k SF	50%	4,440 SF per acre	91 acres
Multi-Family	11,100 Units	2,500 Units	96%	9 Units per acre	278 acres
				Total Estimated Development Area	**1,227 acres**

Source: CoStar, 2021





Source: CoStar 2021

FUTURE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Using various demand analysis methodologies, including projected occupational growth and real estate utilization per worker, population trends, supply trends, and stakeholder feedback, a commercial development program was established to estimate the amount of land needed to accommodate new supply. This analysis is not without limitations—the development program represents baseline demand based on current market conditions and spending patterns. For example, if a major corporation decided to build a headquarters in Baldwin County, this would have a major impact on the County's economic trajectory and development patterns. However, this type of economic development activity is highly variable and unpredictable and should not be the basis for a growth strategy.

RETAIL

Though the county is generally oversupplied with retail, there will still be growth pressures for 1.5 to 2.0 million square feet of new supply over the next 10 years to accommodate population growth and increased tourism/visitation, as well as replacement of aging or obsolete retail space. It will be critical for municipalities to accommodate new development, but also devise strategies for the redevelopment of obsolete commercial strip centers or outlot parcels.

OFFICE

The office market has been relatively soft in Baldwin County over the last 10 years, and, due to the impacts of COVID-19, there are even fewer development opportunities; however, based on projected job growth by sector and continued diversification of the Baldwin County economy, there will be demand for 400,000 to 600,000 square feet of office space over the next 10 years. A large portion of this demand could be accommodated within the proposed Daphne Innovation & Science Complex, in addition to smaller-scale opportunities within mixed-use commercial districts.

HOTEL

While the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach and countywide tourism economy was impacted by COVID-19, the market is projected to be stable moving forward, with the projected delivery of between 1,300 to 1,800 hotel rooms over the next 10 years. The majority of this development will occur in the southern portion of the county, although continued economic development activity closer to Interstate 10 will allow for more accommodations to support business travelers.

INDUSTRIAL

While industrial development activity was relatively slow over the last decade, the South Alabama Mega Site and other pipeline projects will position the county to deliver between 2.5 and 3.5 million square feet over the next 10 years. While there may be some development pressure in unincorporated areas, industrial site selection criteria will primarily impact the areas near the Mega Site and Interstate 10 corridor.

It is assumed that the projected new supply will consist of light industrial space for logistics, warehousing, and light manufacturing uses. This development typology generally consists of a "white box" with minimal environmental externalities beyond truck traffic (e.g., Amazon fulfillment center). It is assumed that heavy industrial uses would be best positioned within the Mega Site, although projecting this development type is challenging since it is less market driven and generally supported by significant economic development efforts.

The City of Loxley continues to experience substantial growth in the industrial and warehousing space. The City is home to a recently completed Aldi Grocery Stores distribution center and regional headquarters. Most recently, The Home Depot announces plans to locate a last-mile delivery facility in the City of Loxley.

MULTI-FAMILY

Based on projected population growth and multi-family development trends, there is demand to support between 2,300 and 2,600 new multi-family units over the next 10 years. Growing the multi-family supply will be critical to accommodate the growing workforce, including professional, blue collar, and service workers, as well as aging households that are looking to downsize. Most of the development pressures will be on the municipalities,



Table 2: Future Land Area for Growth

USE	PROJECTED FUTURE DEVELOPMENT	AVERAGE DENSITY FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL ESTIMATED LAND UTILIZATION
Retail	1.5-2 million SF	2,600 SF per acre	580-770 acres
Office	400K - 600K SF	2,600 SF per acre	150-230 acres
Hotel	1,300 - 1,800 rooms	23 Room per acre	60-80 acres
Industrial	2.5 - 3.5 million SF	4,440 SF per acre	560-790 acres
Multi-Family	2,300 - 2,600 units	9 Units per acre	260-290 acres
		Total Estimated Development Area Needed	**1,610-2,160 acres**

Source: CoStar, 2021

which will need to provide the land and regulatory flexibility for higher-density housing.

These projections are based on development patterns over the last 10 years to provide order-of-magnitude estimates for future land utilization by use. The Total Estimated Land Utilization range should be considered an as-is scenario assuming no changes to future land use policy. Increasing development density in any capacity above the averages presented in the table will reduce the overall development pressure on vacant and/or agricultural land. These projections also assume that the majority of new commercial development will gravitate towards incorporated areas given the value of visibility and co-location with other amenities to enhance site marketability.

In instances of proposed office, retail, and hotels within unincorporated areas, Baldwin County should consider whether the sites are within a reasonable distance to a commercial node or located along a commercial corridor.

Multi-family housing should be within a reasonable distance to commercial nodes, employment centers, recreational amenities, and/or schools. Larger-scale industrial development such as logistics, warehousing or light manufacturing should be proximate to major arterial access points and interchanges, while smaller-scale uses, such as sheds and agricultural storage should be positioned near commercial uses.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

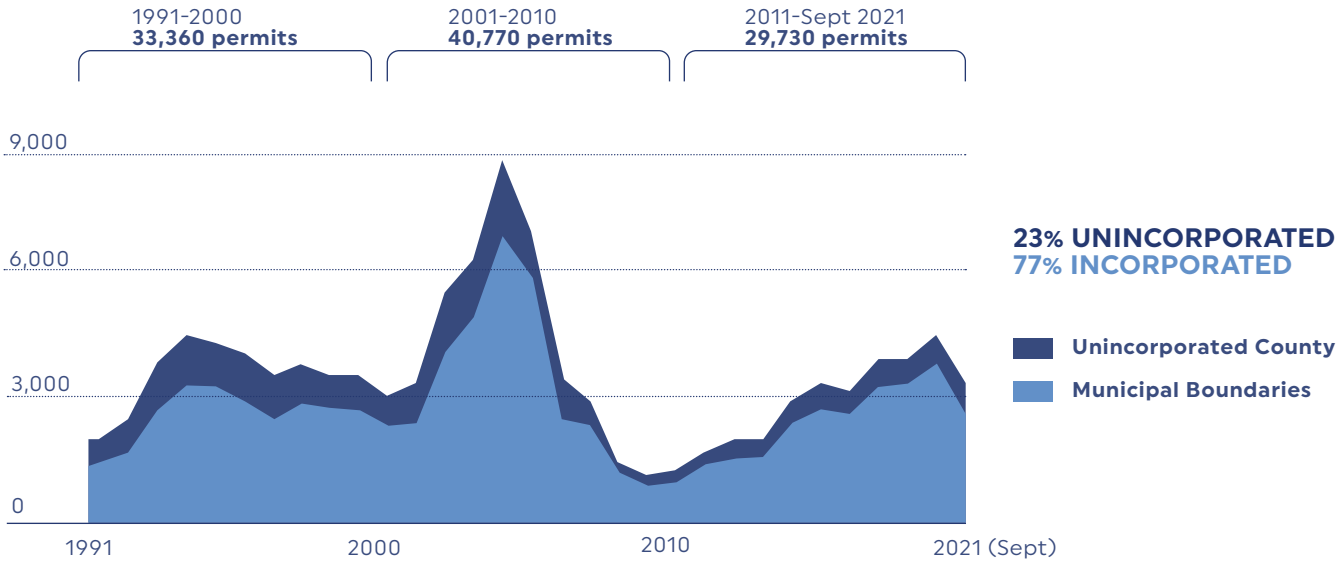
SALES AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

According to the U.S. Census, from 2010 to 2020, housing stock within Baldwin County increased from around 104,000 total units to 124,100 total housing units. However, given the high vacancy rate of 29 percent due to the large stock of seasonal and second homes in and around Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, the net increase in occupied units was 15,000. While Gulf Shores/Orange Beach and neighboring communities will continue to experience market pressures for seasonal homes, trends in occupied housing have more implications for future land use and development patterns in unincorporated parts of the county since these households generally represent year-round residents. Of the 15,000 net new occupied housing units, around 13,000 units were single-family homes representing 89 percent of new residential development. Housing development has slowed over the last decade, although similar to other suburban markets, there was significant overbuilding in the mid-2000s and it took the first half of the 2010s for demand to catch up with supply. Over that last five or six years, residential permitting activity has been consistent with activity in the 1990s.

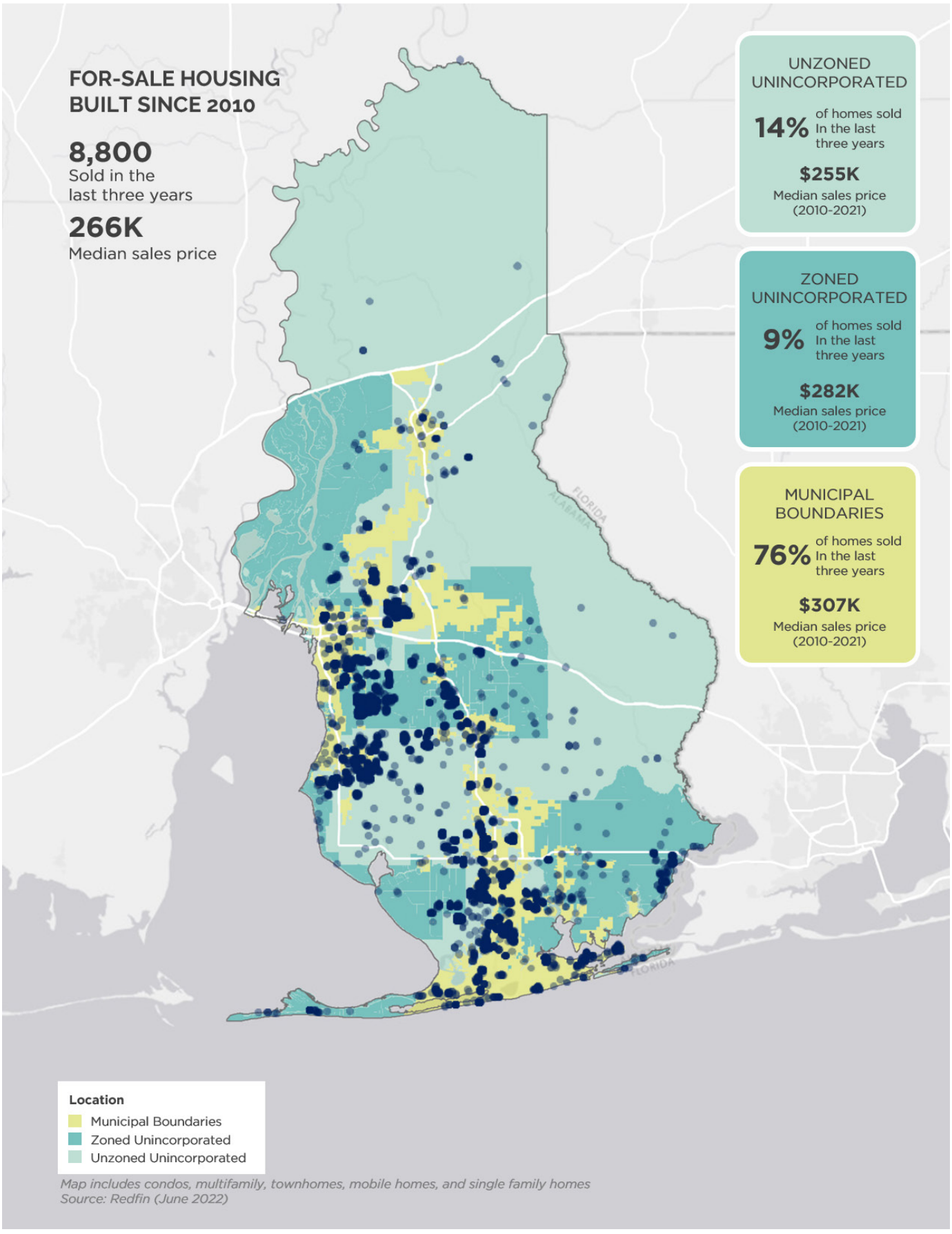
There is no centralized source of permitting data to understand geospatial residential development patterns in Baldwin County; therefore, several publicly-available sources were utilized. Based on a sample of sales records from Redfin of properties built since 2010 and sold in the last three years, there were just under 8,800 total sales, of which 76 percent were in municipal areas. Of the remaining sales in unincorporated areas, around 60 percent were in unzoned areas. Among sales with square footage data available, more than half of newer single-family construction (56 percent), averaged less than 2,000 square feet per home and less than six percent of these homes containing more than 3,000 square feet.

There is less market pressure for large-lot subdivisions and development patterns have been driven by affordability. On average, recently built homes in municipal areas have sold for around $307,000 compared to $266,000 in unincorporated areas, indicating a premium of more than $40,000 for homes within municipal areas given their better access to amenities and services. Unincorporated unzoned areas had average sale prices of $255,000, with 72 percent of these homes containing less than 2,000 square feet.

Figure 5: Building Permits Issued in Baldwin County Since 1991



Source: HUD SOCDS Building Permits Database, 2022



Map includes condos, multifamily, townhomes, mobile homes, and single family homes
Source: Redfin (June 2022)

FUTURE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

SALES AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Understanding past development patterns can inform future development in incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. A much larger share of the housing stock in unincorporated areas consists of single-family homes, duplexes, and manufactured housing representing 91 percent of the total housing stock. Conversely, the incorporated areas have a much larger share of multi-family housing representing nearly a third of the total housing stock.

Over the next 20 years, the incorporated areas will capture nearly all of the demand for multi-family housing, with single-family homes and duplexes representing around 70 percent of new housing development in these areas. While the cost of land will limit demand pressures for manufactured housing, the incorporated areas will face some demand pressure for this typology. Conversely, future development in the unincorporated areas will primarily consist of single-family homes and duplexes with limited development pressures for multi-family housing.

Table 3: Projected Distribution of Housing by Typology, 10-Year Demand

TYPOLOGY	INCORPORATED AREAS		UNINCORPORATED AREAS	
	Homes/Units	Distribution	Homes/Units	Distribution
Single-Family/Duplex	6,700	70%	5,500	86%
Small Multi-Family (<10 units)	100	1%	0	0%
Large Multi-Family (10+ units)	2,400	25%	100	2%
Manufactured Housing	400	4%	800	13%
	9,600 units		**6,400 units**	

Source: Esri, ACS, Development Strategies

Table 4: Projected Distribution of Housing by Typology, 20-Year demand

TYPOLOGY	INCORPORATED AREAS		UNINCORPORATED AREAS	
	Homes/Units	Distribution	Homes/Units	Distribution
Single-Family/Duplex	13,400	70%	11,000	86%
Small Multi-Family (<10 units)	200	1%	0	0%
Large Multi-Family (10+ units)	4,800	25%	200	2%
Manufactured Housing	800	4%	1,700	13%
	19,200 units		**12,800 units**	

Source: Esri, ACS, Development Strategies

MUNICIPALITIES	BALDWIN COUNTY	UNINCORPORATED
20-Year Projection **+19,000**	20-year projection **+32,000** units	20-Year Projection **+13,000**
10-Year Projection **+9,500**	10-year projection **+15,900** units	10-Year Projection **+6,400**

MUNICIPALITIES	TYPOLOGY	UNINCORPORATED
20-Year Projection **+13,400 (70%)** 10-Year Projection **+6,700**	 SINGLE-FAMILY/DUPLEX	20-Year Projection **+11,000 (86%)** 10-Year Projection **+5,500**
20-Year Projection **+200 (1%)** 10-Year Projection **+100**	 SMALL MULTIFAMILY (<10 UNITS)	20-Year Projection **0 (0%)** 10-Year Projection **0**
20-Year Projection **+4,800 (25%)** 10-Year Projection **+2,400**	 LARGE MULTIFAMILY (10+ UNITS)	20-Year Projection **+300 (2%)** 10-Year Projection **+100**
20-Year Projection **+800 (4%)** 10-Year Projection **+400**	 MANUFACTURED HOUSING	20-Year Projection **+1,700 (13%)** 10-Year Projection **+800**

Source: Development Strategies, 2022

High

Single-Family Development Density

Low

New Urbanist
6+ units per acre



Lenox Village
Nashville, TN

6.7 units per acre
1,400 units in 208 acres
1,500-3,000 SF
$400k - $600k

Mixed residential and retail
Parks, walking trails, athletic club, & restaurants

TND
3+ units per acre



I'on
Charleston, SC

3.1 units per acre
762 units in 243 acres
2,000-4,500 SF
$550k - $3.5M

Single-family residential and retail
Village square, retail, civic buildings, green spaces, and trails

Medium Density
1.5-2.5+ units per acre



Fairhope Falls
Fairhope, AL

2.4 units per acre
116 units in 49 acres
1,700-3,100 SF
$200k - $450k

Single-family residential
Swimming pool, community playground

Traditional
0.5-1.5+ units per acre



Stonebridge
Spanish Fort, AL

0.7 unit per acre
1,000+ units in 1,437 acres
2,400-3,000 SF
$200k - $600k

Single-family residential
Pool, clubhouse, tennis & baseball court, playground, walking trails

Rural/Hamlet
<0.5 per acre



Silverhill
Baldwin County, AL

0.4 unit per acre
1,600-3,000 SF
$60k - $460k

Rural cluster with some retail
Typically is small township, hamlet, or community nestled in rural areas

Source: Development Strategies, 2022

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES

Over the last decade, single-family development patterns in Baldwin County have generally followed three densities:

- Medium with an average density of around 1.5 to 2.5 homes per acre;
- Traditional with an average density of 0.5 to 1.5 homes per acre; and
- Rural/Hamlet with an average density of less than 0.5 homes per acre.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and New Urbanist/Town Center development models have higher densities and should be considered for promoting rural land preservation. TND typically has development densities of at least three homes per acre, while New Urbanist/Town Center development has much higher densities of six or more units per acre, and typically has a mix of uses and typologies, including retail, commercial, attached single-family, small lot detached homes, and multifamily. Applying these various densities to the projected future housing demand can inform how much land needs to be available to accommodate growth.

WHERE SHOULD COUNTY GROWTH GO?

Based on community input, and in keeping with smarter management, growth should be mostly encouraged within the municipalities and within the Jurisdictional Planning Areas that have zoning.

The least favorable scenario would be to continue to allow it to spread and sprawl across the county.

Accommodating projected growth should be prioritized as follows:

1. Within the Municipalities where there is zoning, infrastructure services, and community services.
2. Within Jurisdictional Planning Areas that have zoning, infrastructure and community services.
3. Within areas of the county that are already or planned to be served by water and sewer, that have adequate roads and community services, and that are not prone to flooding.

PUTTING ANTICIPATED GROWTH INTO PERSPECTIVE

Figure 6: Depending on the density of future development, between (14) and (52) 500-acre developments would be needed to accommodate projected population growth for 2040.

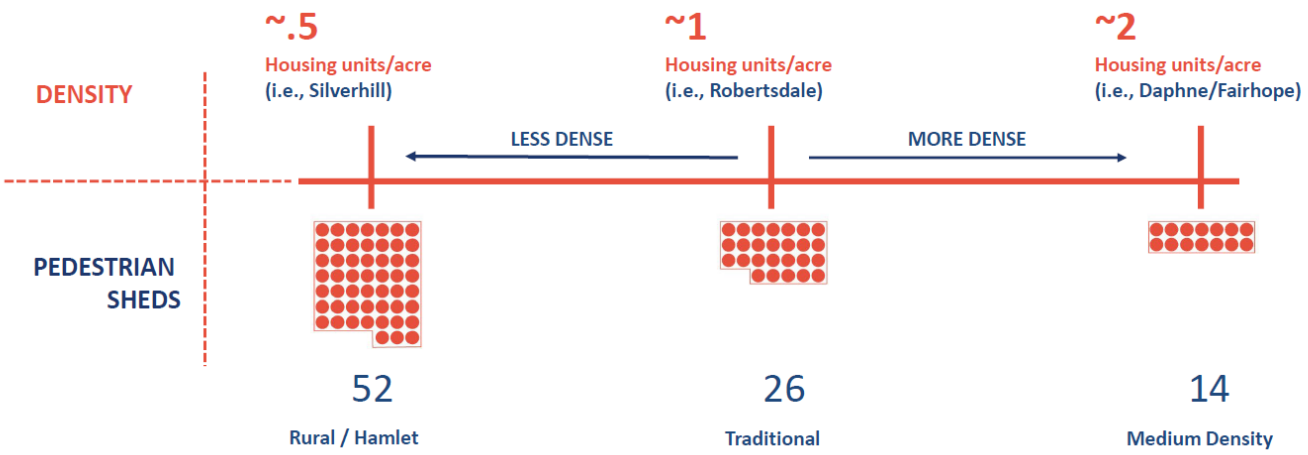
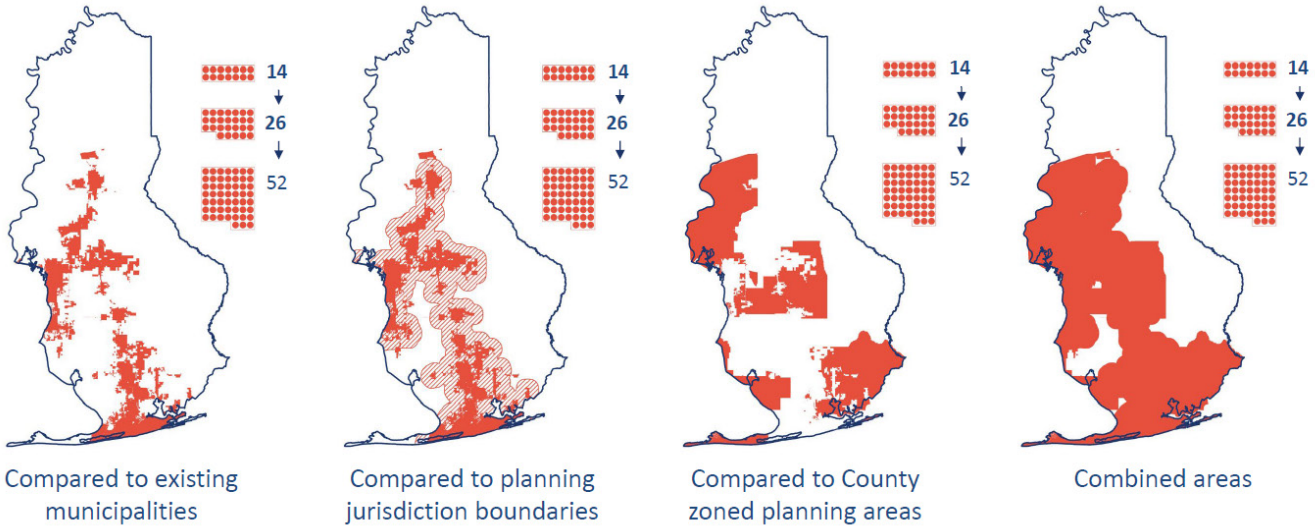


Figure 7: The graphic below scales these 500-acre developments to municipal jurisdiction boundaries and zoned areas to give a sense of the relative land area needed to accommodate growth in the unincorporated parts of the county based on density of development.



KEY FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING FUTURE GROWTH

Baldwin County seeks to balance growth with the protection of natural resources, preservation of the scenic character of our roadways, reducing impacts to farming operations, and establishing compact and walkable nodes made of great neighborhoods. This balance comes with the need to ensure regulatory practices provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate the broad range of future housing needs.

GROWTH CHALLENGES

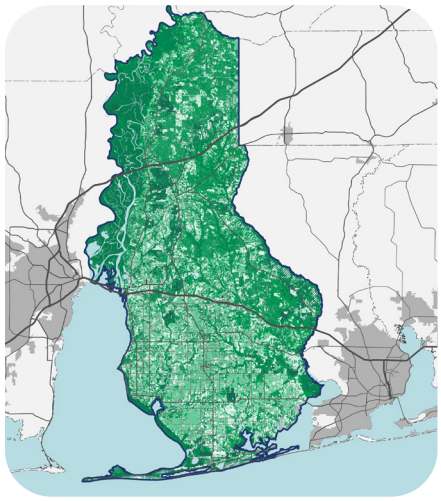
As Baldwin County continues to grow, this Guide can help navigate community concerns, such as:

- Continued accelerated growth will continue to put pressure on roadways, agricultural lands, sense of place and character.
- The lack of collaboration between the local governments (county and fourteen municipalities) related to zoning, land use, development, and growth management practices.
- The rural landscape and agricultural industry are being impacted related to farm operations, community character, and way of life as new subdivisions move into the rural areas.
- Development in low lying areas and upstream from floodprone areas, along with changes in storm events, is causing more and increased flood damage.
- Water quality concerns associated with pesticide pollution and surface run-off threaten key watersheds that support fisheries and oyster beds.
- Housing affordability within municipal areas is pushing development outward seeking lower land prices.
- Increased traffic on major roadways is changing the character of the roads, increasing commuting times, and causing congestion.

FUTURE LAND USE FRAMEWORK

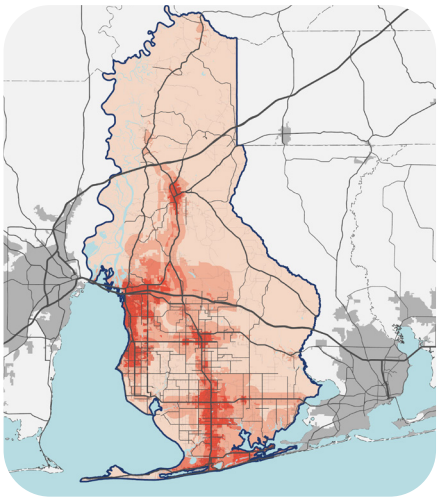
This Guide will help preserve and promote the character and quality of Baldwin County for generations. It describes, in concept, how the County can manage anticipated growth over the next 20 years.

The following pages break down the framework for the recommended Future Land Use Map (FLUM), place type categories, and node type categories.

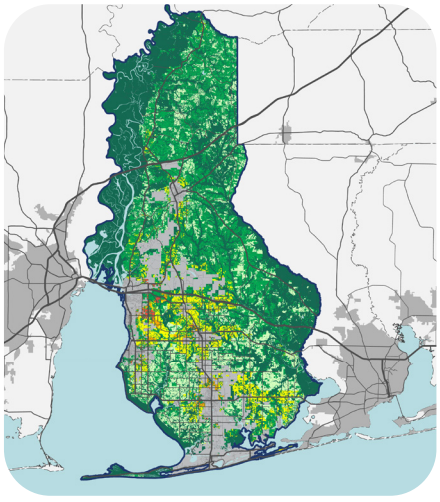


ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY COMPOSITE

+



DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY COMPOSITE



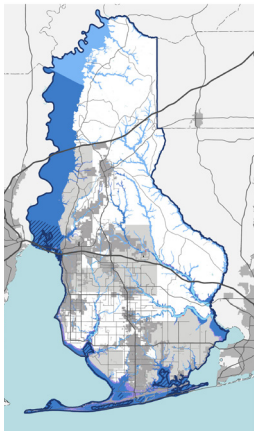
FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY COMPOSITE LAYERS

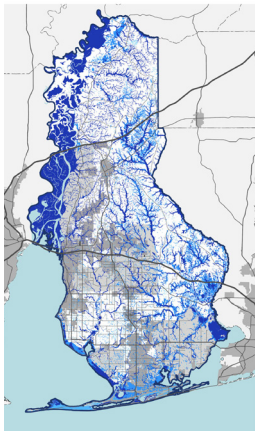
Environmental suitability criteria were mapped and prioritized based on the framework below to determine areas with the most need for environmental protection.

Table 5: Environmental Suitability Framework

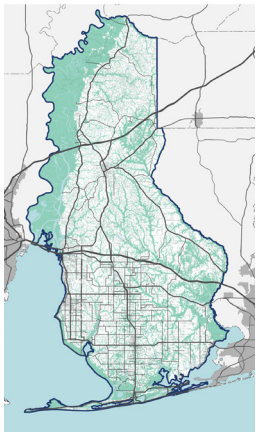
INPUT CATEGORIES/LAYERS	VALUE
FLOOD HAZARD ZONES *Source: FEMA, BALDWIN COUNTY*	
Zone VE/A/AE/Floodway/ Repetitive Loss Parcels	10
.2% Annual Chance	5
Zone X	0
HYDRIC SOILS *Source: BALDWIN COUNTY*	
(51-96%) and All Hydric	10
(26-50%)	5
(>25%)	1
Not Hydric/0-1% Hydric	0
WETLANDS *Source: BALDWIN COUNTY*	
Potential Wetlands	10
STORM SURGE AND HIGH TIDE FLOODING SCENARIOS *Source: SLOSH MODEL, NOAA*	
Category 1, 2, and 3	10
Potential High Tide Flooding Areas (NOAA sea level rise scenario)	7
HABITAT *Source: HABITAT PRIORITY TARGET AREAS FROM THE 2019 HABITAT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION PLAN FOR COASTAL ALABAMA (MOBILE BAY NEP).*	
Priority Habitat Areas	10
TREE CANOPY COVER *Source: 2019 HABITAT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION PLAN FOR COASTAL ALABAMA (MOBILE BAY NEP)*	
Long Leaf Pine Habitat	10
75% or greater tree canopy cover	5
AGRICULTURAL LANDS *Source: NLCD, USDA, 2019*	
Cultivated Cropland	10
Prime Farmland Soils	5



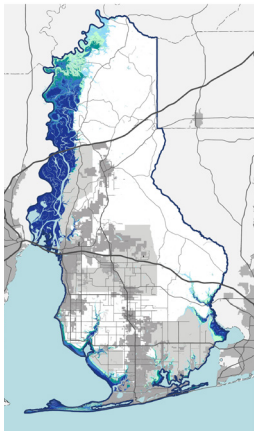
FLOOD ZONES



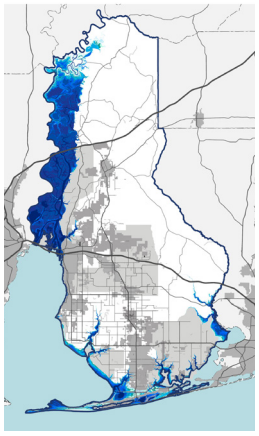
HYDRIC SOILS



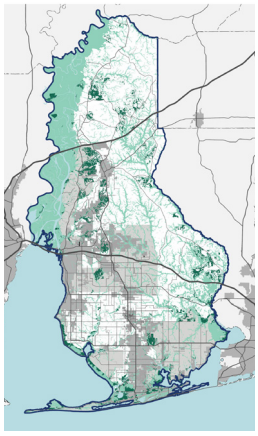
WETLANDS



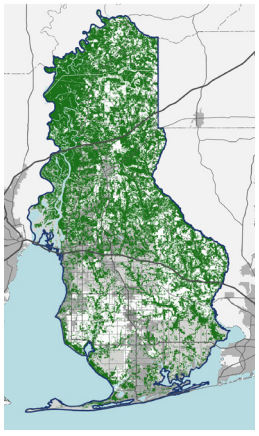
HURRICANE SURGE



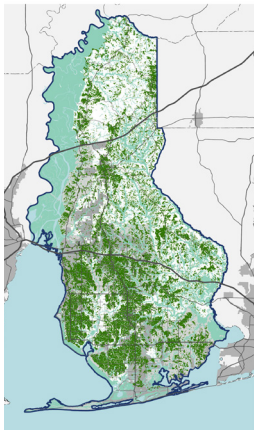
HIGH TIDE FLOODING



PRIORITY HABITAT AREAS



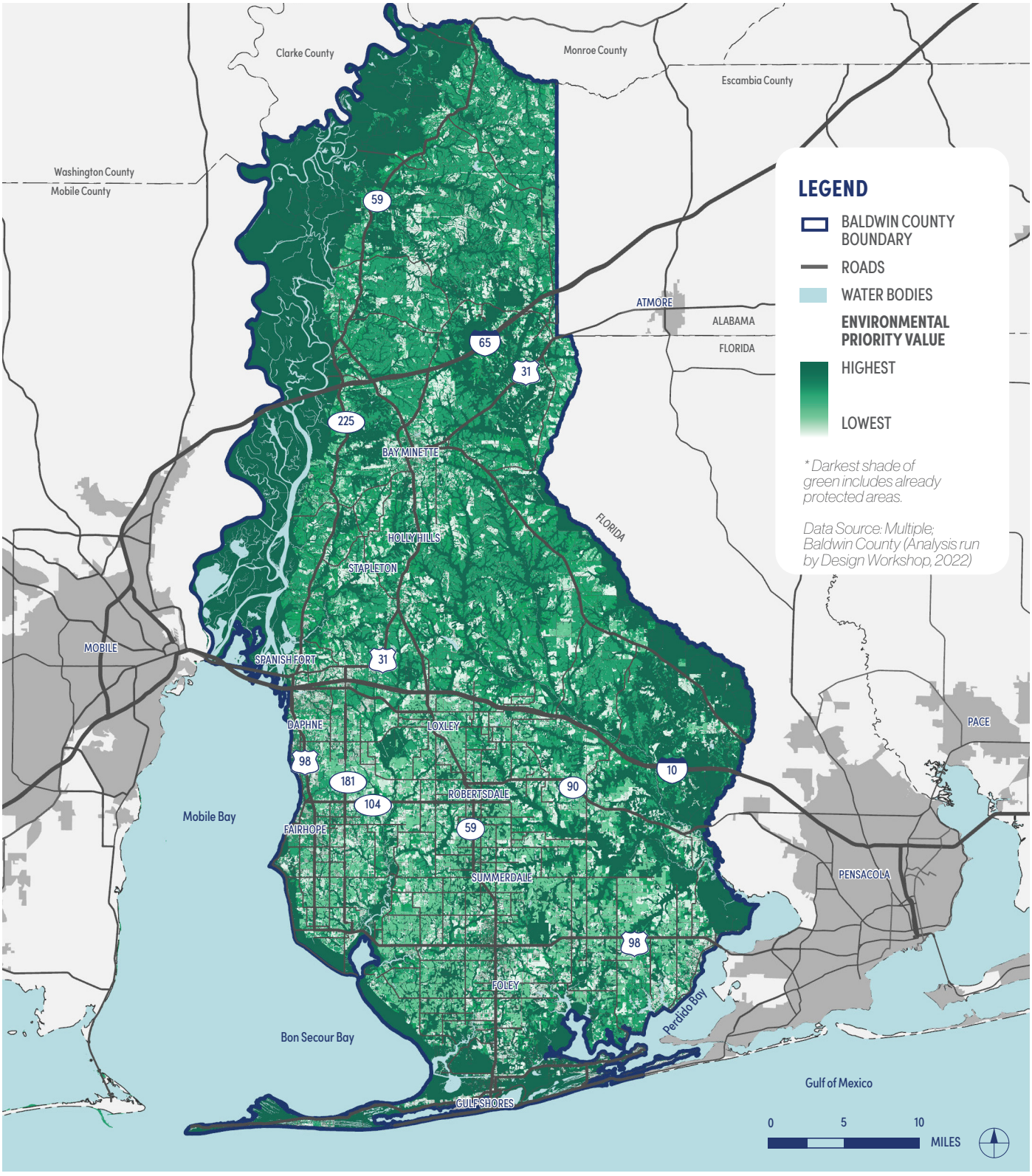
TREE CANOPY COVER & LONG LEAF PINE HABITAT



CULTIVATED CROPLAND/ PRIME FARMLAND

MAP 8: ENVIRONMENTAL SUITABILITY COMPOSITE

This map overlays the data outlined in the Environmental Suitability Framework to combine in a composite"map that describes areas with more overlapping environmental factors. This map does not suggest that lighter or white areas have no environmental considerations, rather it suggests they have fewer than the darker areas.

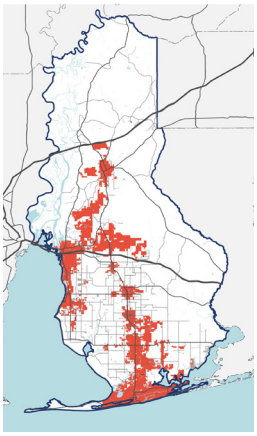


DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY COMPOSITE LAYERS

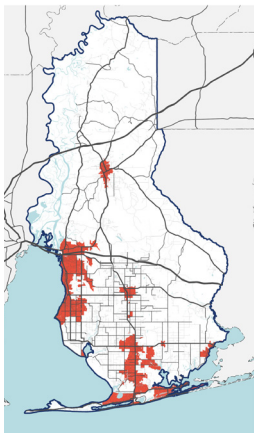
Development suitability criteria were mapped and prioritized based on the framework below to determine areas with the most potential for development.

Table 6: Development Suitability Framework

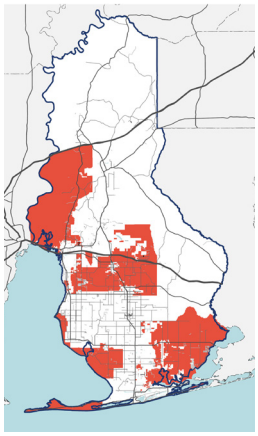
INPUT CATEGORIES/LAYERS	VALUE
EXISTING MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES *Source: BALDWIN COUNTY, 2022*	
Within	5
Outside	1
URBAN AREAS *Source: BALDWIN COUNTY, 2022*	
Within	5
Outside	1
ZONED COUNTY PLANNING DISTRICTS *Source: BALDWIN COUNTY, 2022*	
Within zoned planning districts	3
Within unzoned planning districts	1
PROXIMITY TO EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES *Source: DW; ESRI NETWORK ANALYSIS, 2022*	
Within 15-minute walk	5
Within 15-minute bike ride	3
Within 15-minute drive	1
PROXIMITY TO PRIMARY GROWTH CORRIDORS *Source: BUFFERS GENERATED BY DW WITH ROAD DATA PROVIDED BY BALDWIN COUNTY, 2022*	
Within 1 mile buffer	4
Outside of 1 mile buffer	1
PROXIMITY TO JOB DENSITY *Source: WORKER COUNT FROM ONTHEMAP, 2019 PROVIDED BY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES*	
Areas of highest job density	5
Areas of medium job density	3
Areas of lowest job density	1



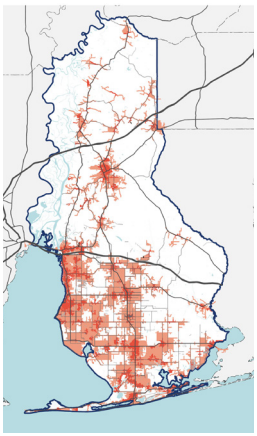
MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES



URBAN AREAS



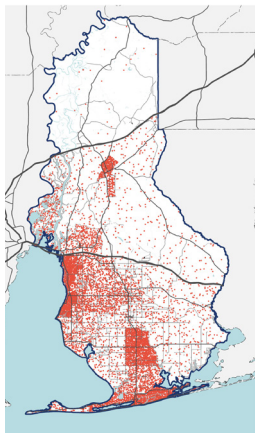
ZONED COUNTY PLANNING DISTRICTS



PROXIMITY TO EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES



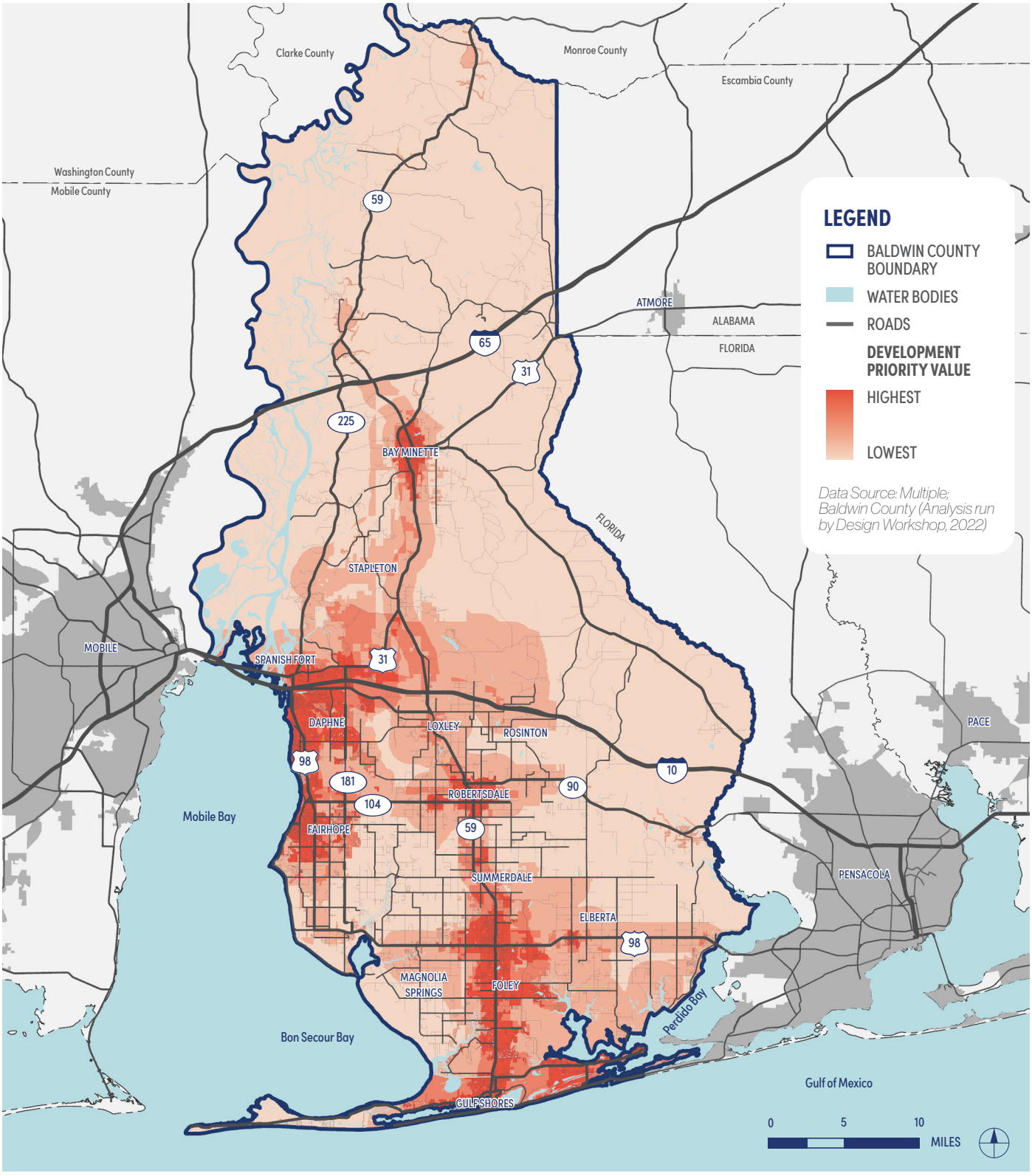
PROXIMITY TO GROWTH CORRIDORS (1 MILE)



PROXIMITY TO JOBS

MAP 9: DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY COMPOSITE

This map overlays the data outlined in the Development Suitability Framework to combine in a composite map that describes areas with more overlapping factors suitable for development. Overlapping this development suitability with the environmental suitability provides a framework for guiding future development in Baldwin County.



FUTURE LAND USE MAP, PLACE TYPES, AND NODES

The Future Land Use Map will help preserve and promote the character and quality of Baldwin County for generations. It describes, in concept, how the County can manage anticipated growth over the next 20 years.

FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

The Future Land Use Map represents a combination of the development suitability composite and the environmental suitability composite to envision a future development pattern reflective of the priorities of the citizens of Baldwin County. This desired future land use pattern is intended to be a guide for the next 20 years as the county evolves. It directs growth and conservation patterns for the unincorporated areas of the county.

Each color on the Future Land Use Map represents one of several place types, describing and conveying the scale and density of development desired, or the potential for conservation (agricultural, rural, or natural).

Place types are further described in the following pages.

PLACE TYPE CATEGORIES

IDEAL CONSERVATION/ PRESERVATION

- Environmental Conservation
- Protected/Open Space

CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- Environmental Conservation
- Protected/Open Space
- Conservation-based Communities

RURAL/AGRICULTURE/ LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- Rural Subdivisions
- Active Farmland
- Agri-hoods
- Rural Crossroad Center/Node
- Clustered Manufactured Home Communities

MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- Single Family Neighborhoods (suburban)
- Amenity-based Communities
- Neighborhood Center/Node

MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- New Urban Communities
- Village Center/Node

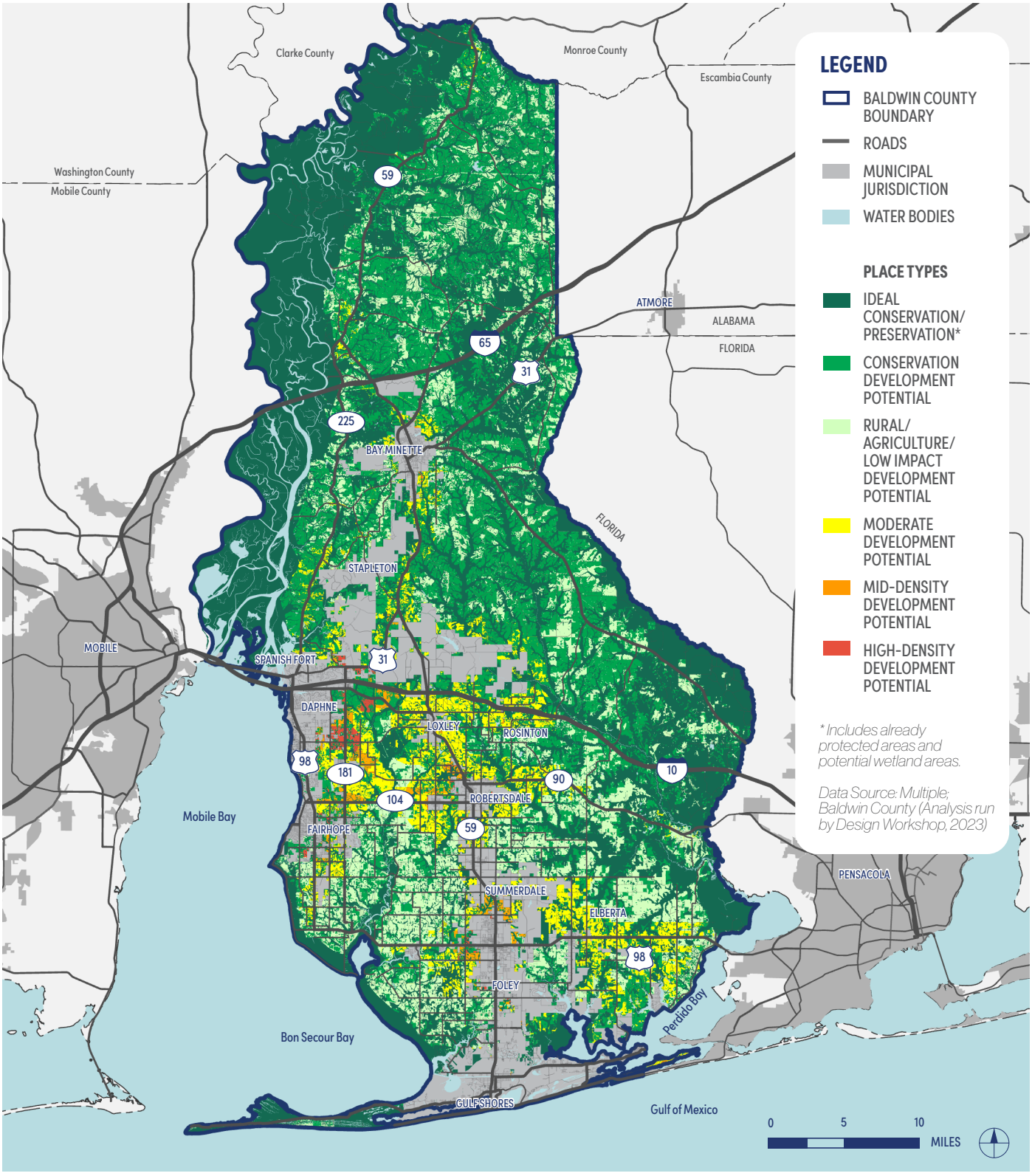
HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- Mixed-Use Communities
- Apartment Communities
- Urban Mixed-Use Center/Node

MAP 10: FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) PLACE TYPES

The following pages describe the place type categories in greater detail.

SEE PAGE 91 FOR ZOOM IN MAPS.



IDEAL CONSERVATION/ PRESERVATION AREAS

Ideal Conservation or Preservation Areas would include land that is undeveloped, or minimally developed, and protected by local, state, and federal agencies or by public, private, and nonprofit organizations. This could include areas conserved for the protection of critical habitat, clean water, open space, or cultural heritage.

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Natural areas that are publicly and privately owned and managed
- Permanently protected lands such as conservation easements, parks, cemeteries
- Parks and open spaces devoted primarily to passive recreation and trails
- Lands with important cultural landmarks or assets
- Scenic view corridors

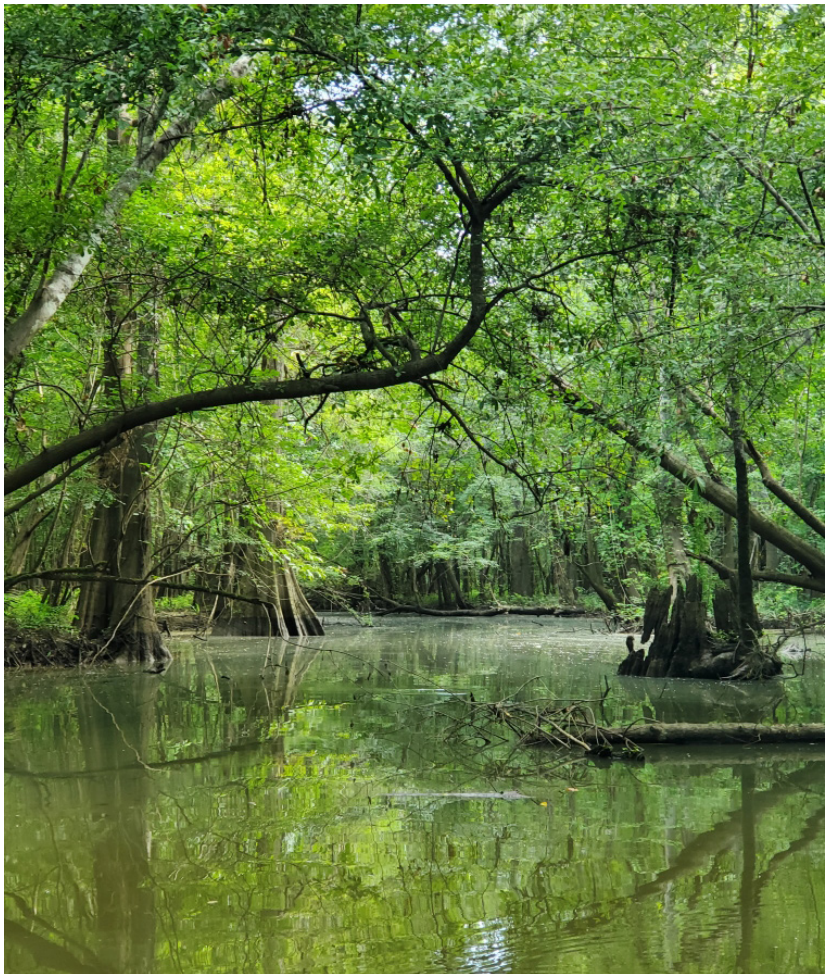
RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- Environmental Conservation

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Greenways and trails





CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Conservation Development Potential Areas are suitable for all of the land uses described in the Ideal Conservation/ Preservation Areas place type but would allow for limited development based on low-impact design principles. Allowing conservation-based subdivisions in these areas could help to balance the pressure of residential development with environmental preservation and rural character. Conservation-based subdivisions allow for the clustering of residential dwellings to protect open space that is valued for natural resource protection—such as stream buffers, mature forest habitat, or wetlands—working farmland, or recreational amenities.





PRIMARY LAND USES

- Conservation-based or cluster development with high levels of Low Impact Design (LID) and sustainable development practices
- Natural areas that are publicly and privately owned and managed
- Permanently protected lands such as conservation easements, parks, cemeteries
- Parks and open spaces devoted primarily to passive recreation and trails
- Lands with important cultural landmarks or assets
- Scenic view protection

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- Environmental Conservation
- CR Conservation Resource District
- OR Outdoor Recreation District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Rural streets with paved shoulders, bike lanes, or side paths
- Greenways and trails along environmental buffers

RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AREAS

Rural Development Potential Areas include large lots, open space views, and a large buffer distance between buildings. Residential homes may be on large tracts and could include estate homes and working farmland. The development pattern may also include conservation-based subdivisions to allow for the clustering of residential dwellings to protect open space that is valued for natural resource protection—such as stream buffers, mature forest habitat, or wetlands—working farmland, or recreational amenities. Lands within these areas should be developed with additional Low Impact Development (LID) standards and buffers to limit the impact to adjacent critical environments. At key rural crossroads, rural centers or nodes could allow for a combination of retail and service uses to meet the needs of the community.







PRIMARY LAND USES

- Single-family detached homes
- Hobby farms
- Agri-hoods
- Cultivated farmland, timber/ managed forest, pastureland
- Clustered manufactured housing communities
- Rural crossroads center/node

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- RR Rural District
- RA Rural Agricultural District
- RSF-E Residential Single Family Estate

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Rural streets with sidewalks, paved shoulders, bike lanes, and/or side paths based on local character and context
- Rural greenways and trails along environmental buffers

MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AREAS

Moderate Development Potential Areas are suitable for all of the land uses described in the previous place types but may also include a variety of home types from large and medium-lot single-family detached homes to single-family attached homes such as duplexes and townhomes. Subdivision patterns may be amenity-based communities with small gardens, parks and playgrounds within private lots or part of a community space. Neighborhood centers or nodes at key intersections would allow for a combination of retail, office, and service uses to meet the needs of the community.

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Single-family neighborhoods (suburban)
- Amenity-based communities
- Neighborhood center/node

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- RSF-1 Single Family District
- RSF-2 Single Family District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Suburban street networks/ limited use cul-de-sacs
- Open space, parks and amenities provided within neighborhoods
- Streets with sidewalks, bike lanes, and/or side paths based on local character and context
- Suburban greenways and trails





MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AREAS

Mid-density Development Potential Areas are suitable for all of the land uses described in the previous place types but may also include more traditional neighborhoods with a mix of housing and price points with smaller lot sizes to include patio homes, cottage homes, townhouses and multifamily. Neighborhoods have a connected and grid street network with narrow traffic lanes, sidewalks, and walkable block sizes. Village centers or nodes at key intersections would allow for a combination of retail, office, parks, schools, institution and service uses to meet the needs of the community.





PRIMARY LAND USES

- Traditional neighborhood designs
- Village center/node

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- RSF-3 Single Family District
- RSF-4 Single Family District
- RTF-4 Two Family District
- RSF-6 Single Family District
- RTF-6 Two Family District
- LB Limited Business District
- B-1 Professional Business District
- B-2 Neighborhood Business District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Suburban and urban block patterns and sizes
- Multimodal—supports vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians—streets with narrow traffic lanes, sidewalks, and bike lanes
- Suburban greenways and trails

HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL AREAS

High-density Development Potential Areas are suitable for all of the land uses described in the previous place types but have the highest potential for mixed-use communities with a variety of densities including apartment communities, and urban mixed-use centers. Commercial uses are oriented to pedestrian- and bicycle- friendly streets in a connected grid pattern.

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Mixed-use buildings
- Higher density/range of densities
- Townhouses, multifamily apartment communities
- Urban mixed-use center/node
- Allocation of land for employment uses of all types including incubator spaces, entrepreneur's space, office, and commercial businesses

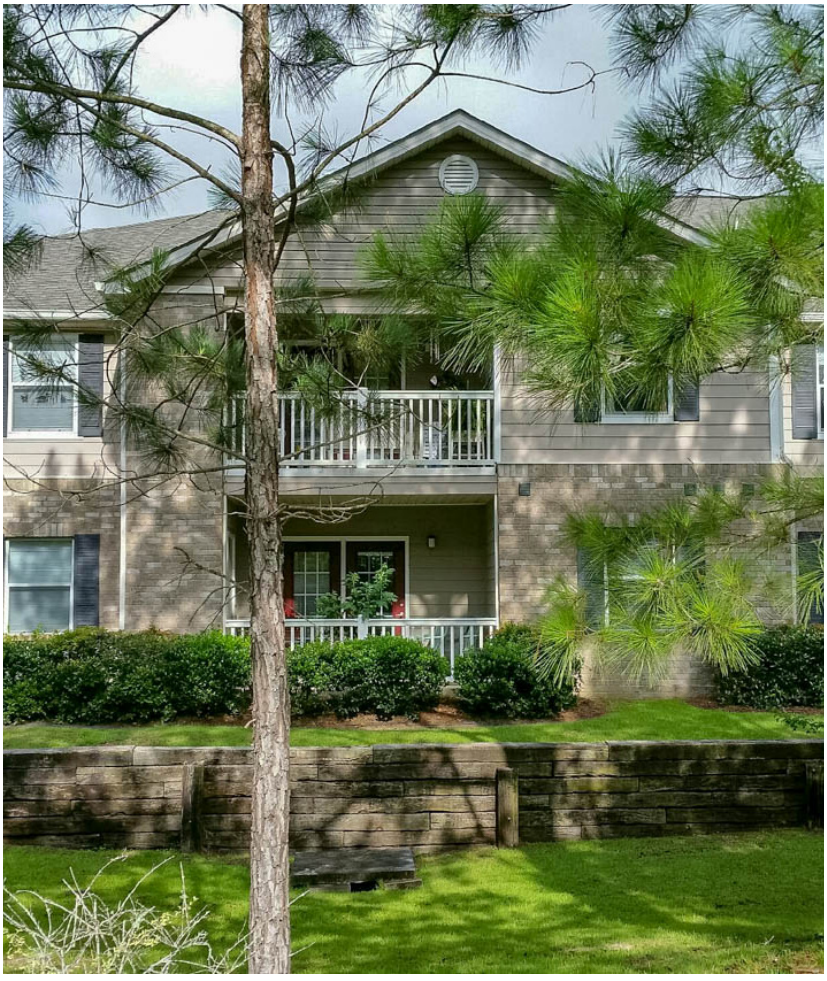
RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- RMF-6 Residential Multifamily District
- HDR High Density Residential District
- RMH Residential Manufactured Housing Park DIstrict
- B-3 General Business District
- B-4 Major Commercial District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Urban block patterns and sizes—highly pedestrian
- Multimodal—supports vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians—streets with narrow traffic lanes, sidewalks, and bike lanes
- Suburban greenways and multi-use paths





ROADS, NODES, AND NEIGHBORHOODS: AN ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE FOR GROWTH

The Future Land Use Guide is organized around the concept that great roadways, community types, and the promotion of walkable nodes at key intersections will create a pattern of growth that will support the goals of the community. This is a first step in articulating the importance of key place-making elements that will contribute to long term sense of place and quality.

ROADS OF HIGH SCENIC CHARACTER

Preserving rural character is a visual experience as well as a lifestyle. We often experience the landscape from our cars, as we go place to place. We appreciate the feeling of openness, the working landscape, and the natural landscape. Protecting this scenic asset will help Baldwin County remain rural in feel and character.

Protecting the scenic quality of key rural Character Roads will be accomplished by:

- Determining which roads are key to protect and mapping them so that they are known to be important assets to the county.
- Working with ALDOT and County Highway on roadway standards that support the preservation of character.
- Creating access management strategies that limit and organize curb cuts.
- Creating landscape standards, that include fencing, tree planting, and signage that promote rural landscape designs along the frontage of new development.
- Creating setbacks from the road that retain sufficient area for landscape expression.

COMPACT AND WALKABLE NODES

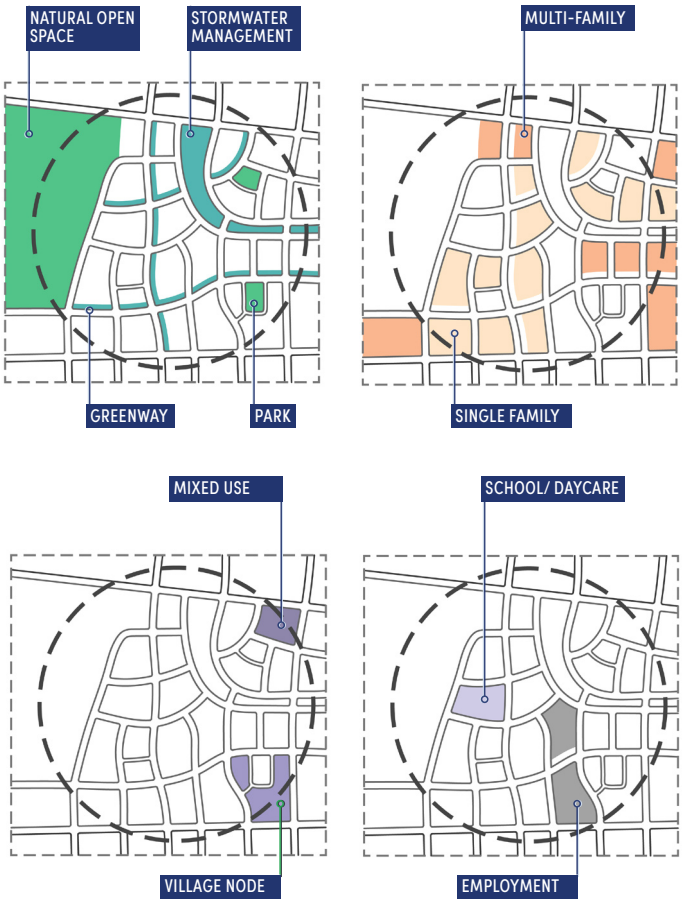
Baldwin County historically grew around crossroads. Places like Silverhill, Robertsdale, Loxley, Magnolia Springs, Summerdale, and Elberta are examples of places that grew as compact nodes that supported gathering places, neighborhoods on a grid of walkable streets, parks, and places to shop or get the mail.

While it is recognized that the actual housing types and density of these places may not fit with our current lifestyles and costs of development, the patterns of streets and having something to walk to in the center can certainly inspire new development patterns. Communities across the country are being patterned after these principles and are offering a quality of life that people are seeking —safe, walkable streets in a connected community.

Principles associated with these patterns include:

- Creating connectivity through the use of a grid pattern of streets.
- Using walking distance criteria to define areas of density and the location of community uses such as parks, shopping, post office, etc. A rule of thumb is a 5 minute walk radius equals 1/4 mile, which is a comfortable distance to organize communities around.
- Planning for parks, schools, churches, and post offices to be located within the node.
- Should the nodes be big enough, with sufficient roof tops, locating neighborhood commercial uses to serve everyday needs.
- The design of complete streets that include sidewalks, street trees, on-street parking, crosswalks and slow design speeds.
- A variety of housing types and affordability.
- Fronting homes and businesses onto streets and open spaces, reducing the visual impact of garages and parking lots, and framing the street with buildings.





PRINCIPLES OF NODAL GROWTH

Smart growth looks different from place to place, but in essense, it is an overall approach to development that encourages a mix of building types and uses, diverse housing options, and walkable development within existing neighborhoods.

The Smart Growth Network has developed a set of 10 basic principles based on communities around the nation:

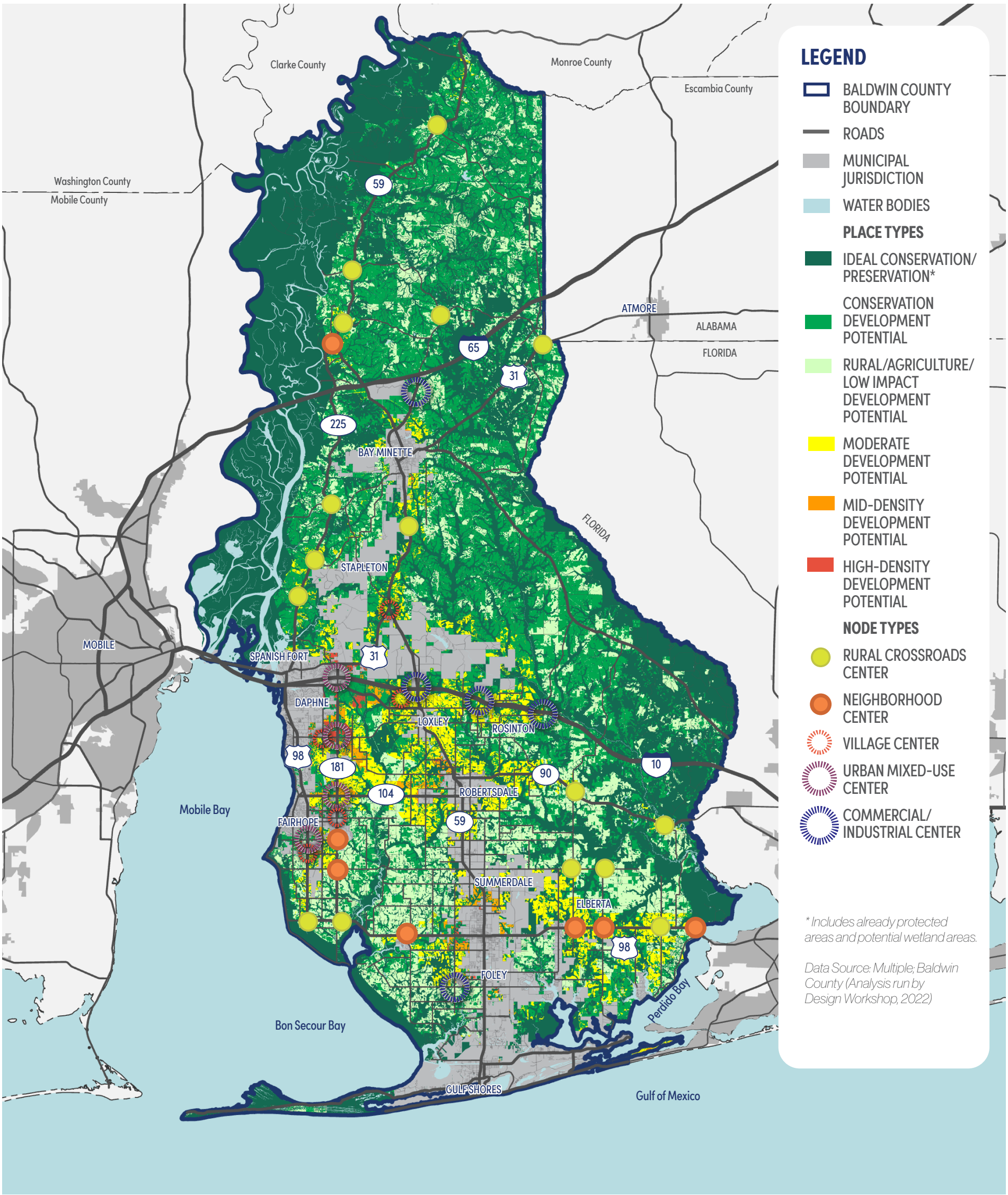
1. Mix land uses
2. Take advantage of compact design
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
4. Create walkable neighborhoods
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
7. Direct development towards existing communities
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

Source: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2017-06/documents/sm_growth_guide.pdf

MAP 11: FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) WITH NODES

This map layers recommended node types over the recommended place types. The following pages describe these node types in greater detail.

SEE PAGE 91 FOR ZOOM IN MAPS.



RECOMMENDED NODE TYPES

From rural crossroads to mixed-use commercial centers serving the larger region, nodes can help meet the needs of the community with a mix of retail and service uses scaled to the appropriate context of the place type they are located within. These nodes may allow for a greater density than the surrounding areas, with a more walkable compact design.

RURAL CROSSROADS CENTER

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Small-scale shops, restaurants and local-serving businesses—neighborhood-scaled retail, gas station, convenience grocery, farm stand, hardware store, etc.

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- RR Rural District
- RA Rural Agricultural District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Gridded walkable streets
- Parking in rear of buildings
- Rural greenway and trail access, small informal open space or gardens



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Small-scale shops, restaurants and local-serving businesses—neighborhood-scaled retail, gas station, convenience grocery store, farm stand, hardware store.
- Agriculture-support businesses, services
- Public safety and services
- Small parks, playgrounds, and open spaces

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- B-2 Neighborhood Business District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Gridded walkable streets
- Parking in rear of buildings
- Bus stop locations
- Greenway and trail access



VILLAGE CENTER

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Grocery-anchored retail, including small-scale shops, sit-down restaurants, and local serving businesses—e.g. drug stores, dry cleaners, and banks
- Small office and other employment uses
- Civic uses—e.g. libraries and schools
- Churches
- Small traditional neighborhoods, townhomes and duplexes
- Small parks and playgrounds



RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- B-2 Neighborhood Business District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Urban block pattern and sizes
- Parking in rear of buildings
- Multimodal—supports vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians—streets with narrow traffic lanes, sidewalks, and bike lanes
- Suburban greenways and trail connections

URBAN MIXED-USE CENTER

PRIMARY LAND USES

- High-density mixed use—lofts and studio units above commercial space
- Multi-family homes—apartments, condominiums
- Regional and small scaled retail shops and sit-down restaurants
- Commercial centers, office and other employment uses
- Civic uses—government offices, courthouses, libraries, schools, etc.
- Churches
- Hotel
- Small parks and playgrounds



RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

- B-1 Professional Business District
- B-2 Neighborhood Business District
- B-3 General Business District
- RMF-6 Residential Multifamily District
- HDR High Density Residential District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Urban block patterns and sizes—highly pedestrian
- Parking management solutions
- Parking in rear of buildings
- Multimodal—supports vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians—streets with narrow traffic lanes, sidewalks, and bike lanes
- Suburban greenways and multi-use path connections

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CENTER

The mix of uses in this center may include light industrial, office, and/or institutional uses as well as supporting businesses, retail, restaurants, services, and recreation. Some portions may also be suitable for residential uses.

PRIMARY LAND USES

- Corporate office campus
- Research and Development
- Light manufacturing
- Single- and multi-tenant professional office
- Medical office
- Warehouse
- Large-scale shopping center
- Call center

SECONDARY LAND USES

- Multi-family homes, apartments, condominiums

RELATED ZONING DISTRICTS

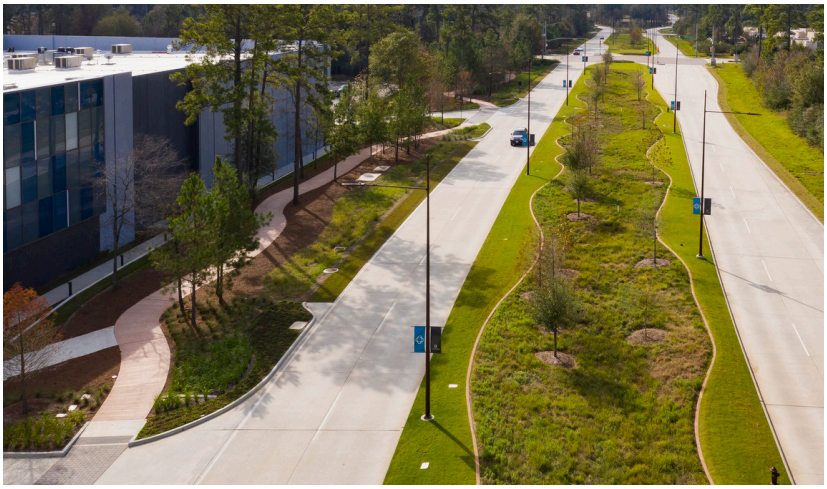
- B-4 Major Commercial District
- M-1 Light Industrial District
- M-2 General Industrial District
- PID Planned Industrial Development District

CONNECTIVITY NETWORK

- Primarily auto-dependent with bike and pedestrian travel by sidewalks and trails

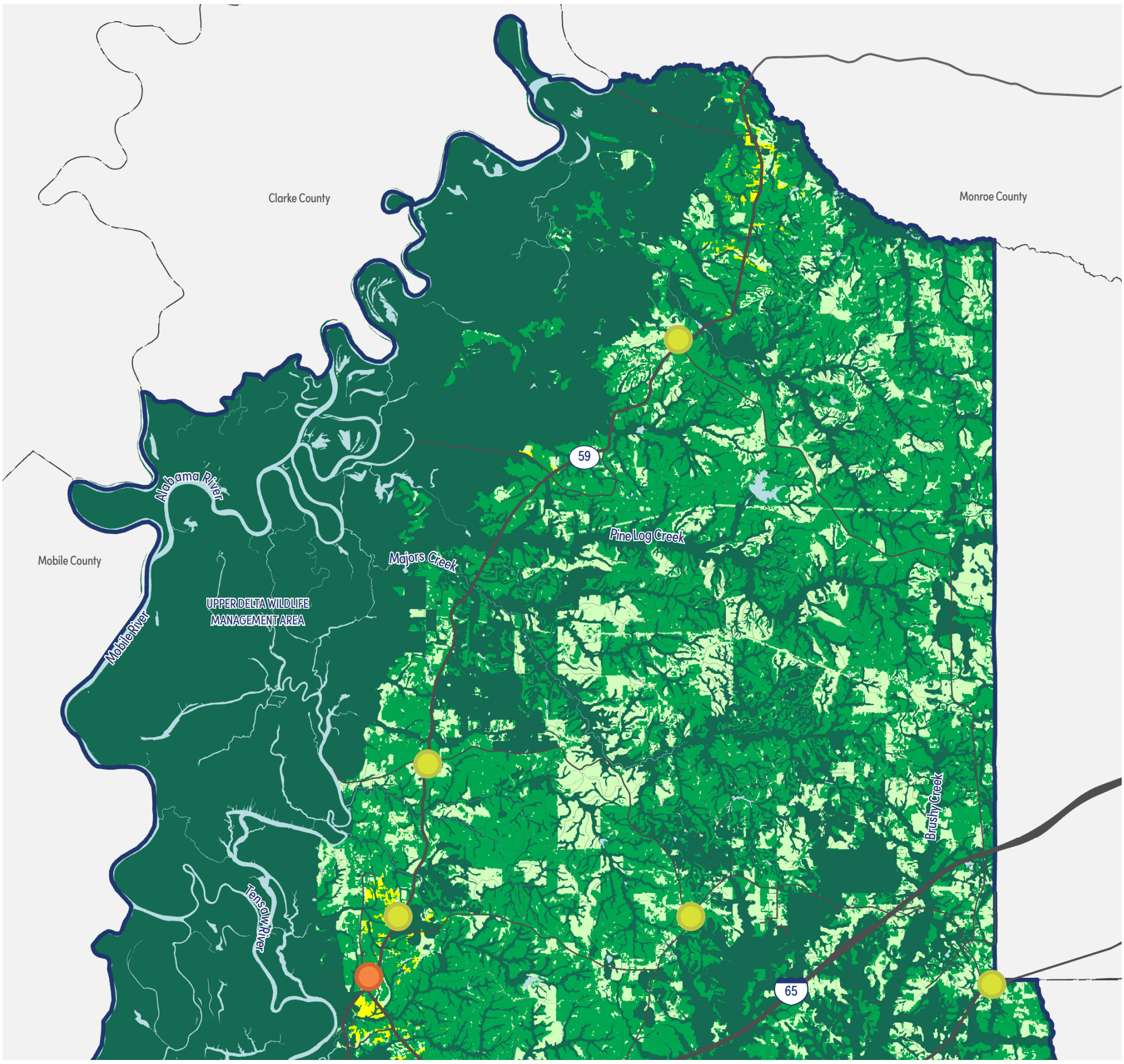






MAP 12: FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) ZONE A

0 2.5 5 MILES



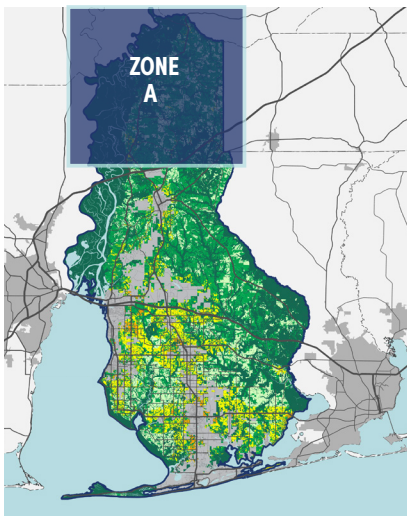
LEGEND

PLACE TYPES

- IDEAL CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION
- CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LID POTENTIAL
- MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS

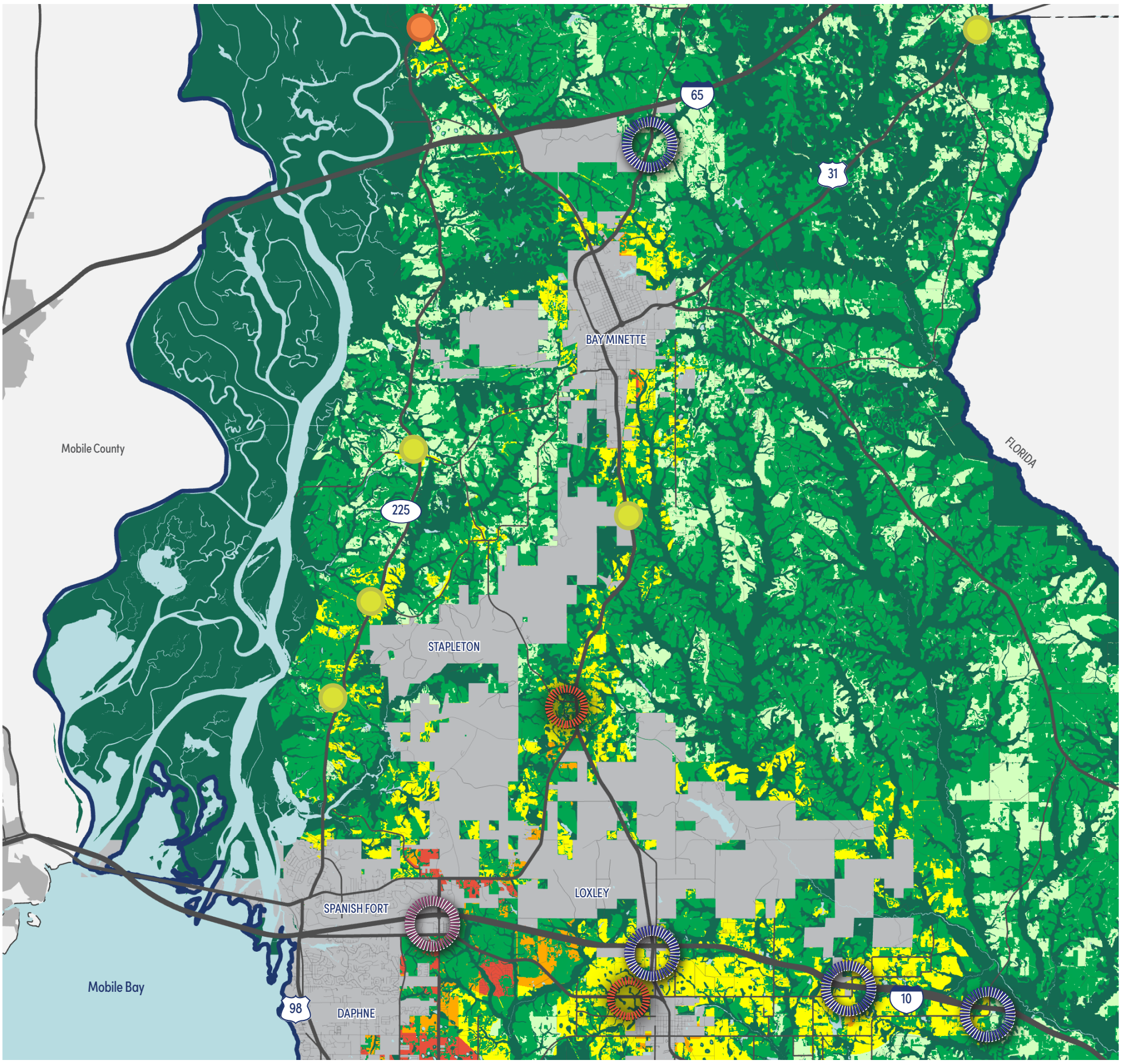
NODE TYPES

- RURAL CROSSROADS CENTER
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



MAP 13: FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) ZONE B

0 2.5 5 MILES



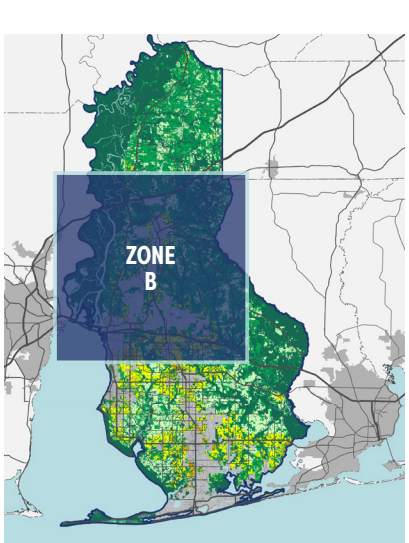
LEGEND

PLACE TYPES

- IDEAL CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION
- CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LID POTENTIAL
- MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS

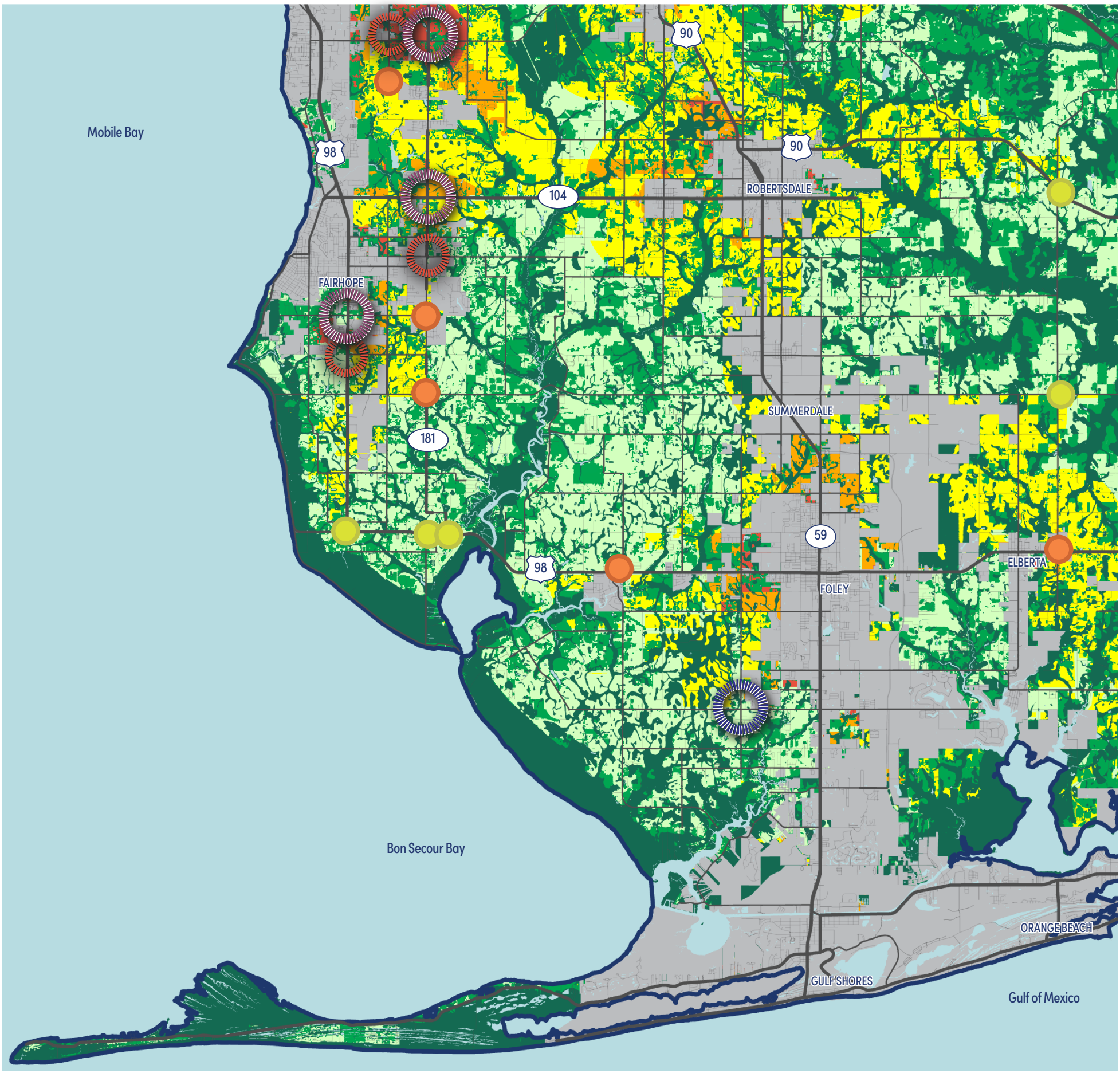
NODE TYPES

- RURAL CROSSROADS CENTER
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- VILLAGE CENTER
- URBAN MIXED-USE CENTER
- COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CENTER



MAP 14: FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM) ZONE C

0 2.5 5 MILES



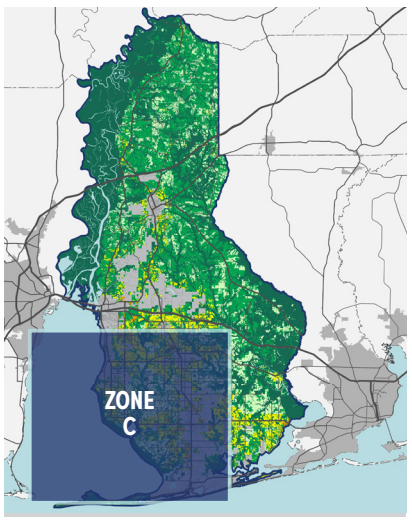
LEGEND

PLACE TYPES

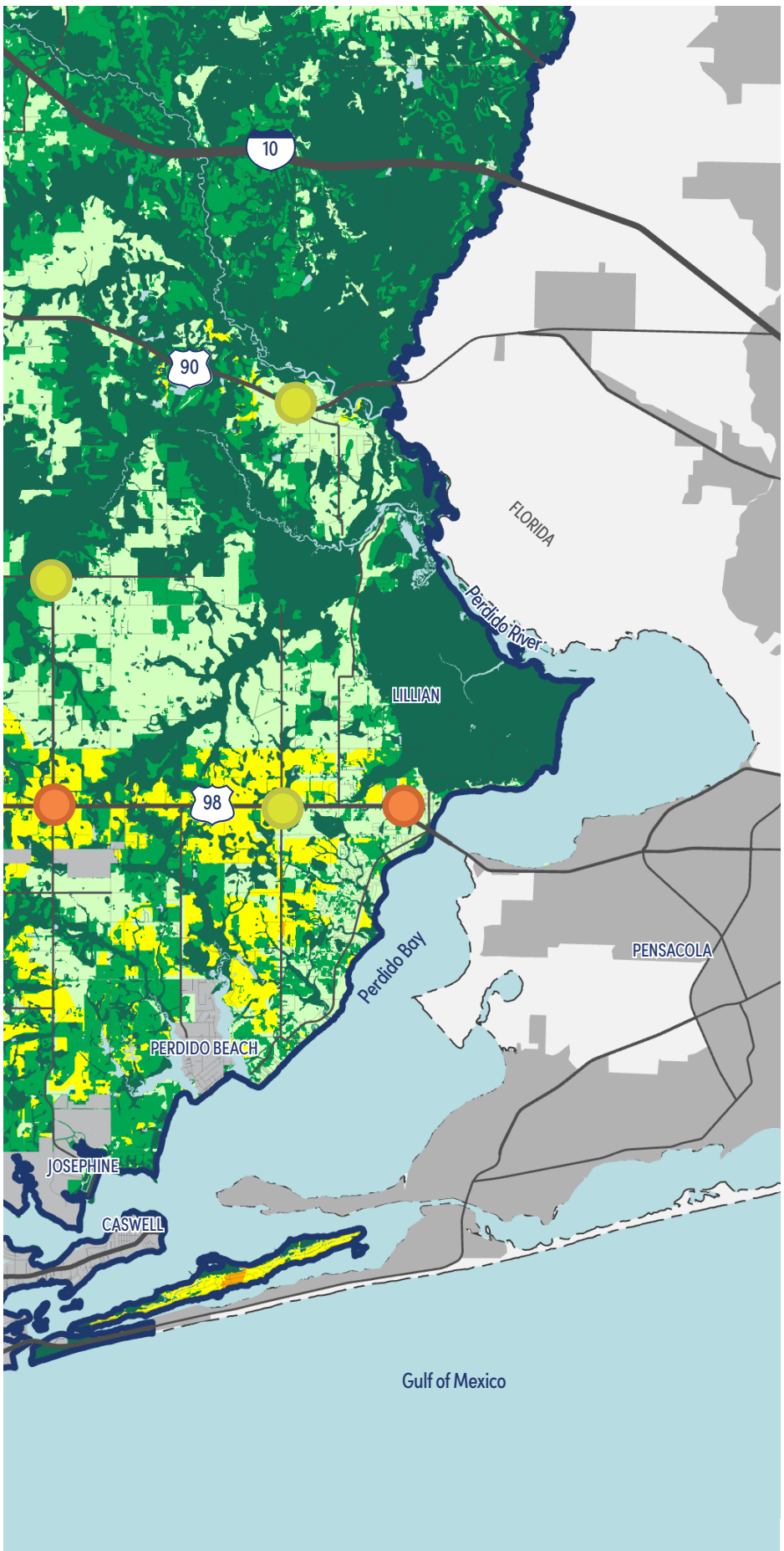
- IDEAL CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION
- CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LID POTENTIAL
- MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS

NODE TYPES

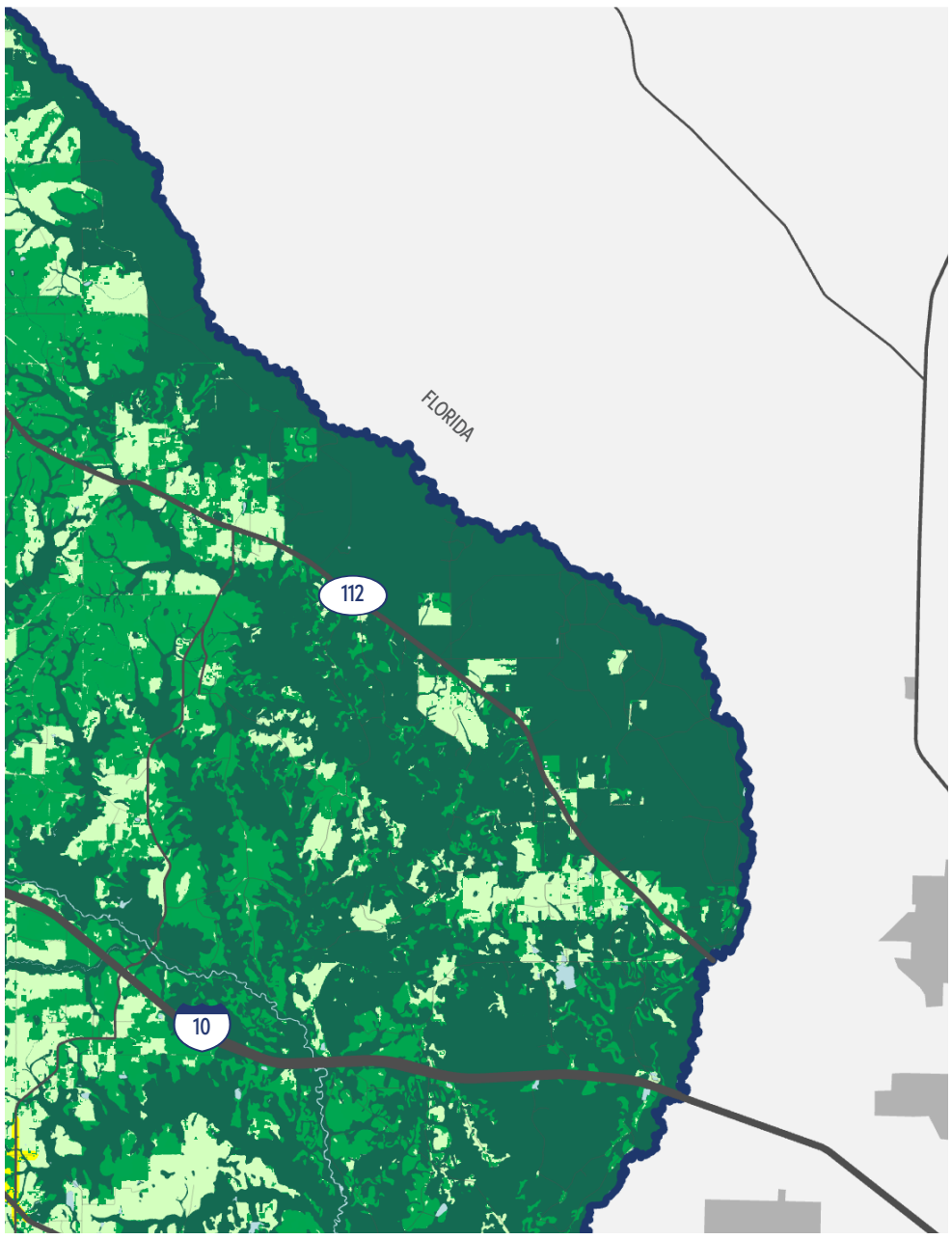
- RURAL CROSSROADS CENTER
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
- VILLAGE CENTER
- URBAN MIXED-USE CENTER
- COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CENTER

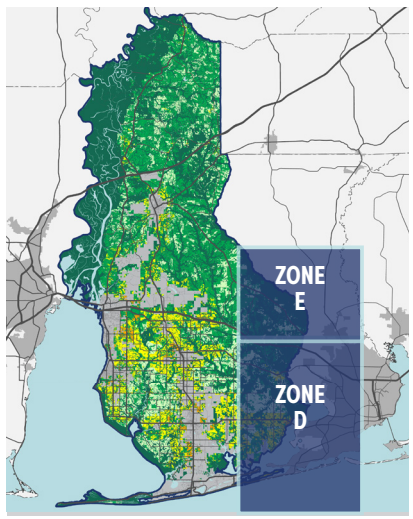


MAP 15: FLUM ZONE D



MAP 16: FLUM ZONE E





0 2.5 5 MILES

LEGEND

PLACE TYPES

- IDEAL CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION
- CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- RURAL/AGRICULTURE/LID POTENTIAL
- MODERATE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MID-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- HIGH-DENSITY DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL
- MUNICIPAL JURISDICTIONS

NODE TYPES

- RURAL CROSSROADS CENTER
- NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

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OUR VISION

A Citizen's Guide to Growth
in the Zoned Areas of Baldwin County

prepared by
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