



BALDWIN
— COUNTY, ALABAMA —
EST. 1809



MASTER PLAN

2026

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary and Background



Overview of Planning Schedule

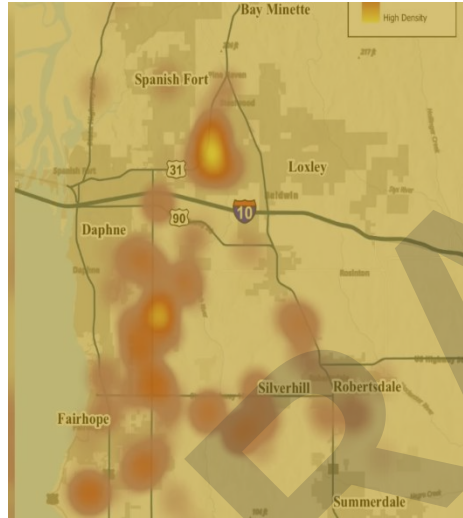
The graphic below provides an overview of the planning phases. The following pages summarize the results of each phase.

**Summer - Fall
2025**



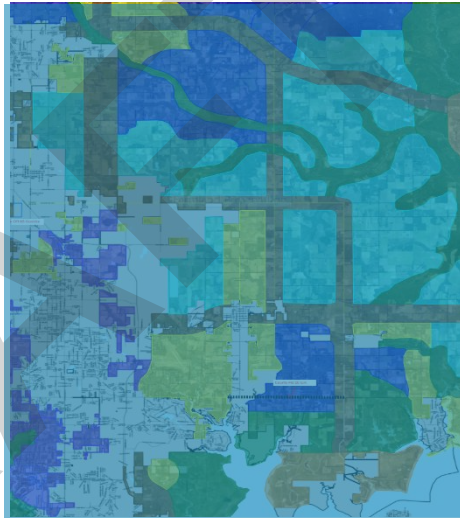
**Existing
Conditions
& Discovery**

**Winter-Spring
2025 - 2026**



**Growth Analysis
& Scenario
Planning**

**Spring-Summer
2026**



**Draft
Master
Plan**

**Fall
2026**



**Plan
Adoption**

Summary of Existing Conditions and Discovery



Baldwin County population **increased by 30% in each of the previous two census periods** adding approximately 100,000 residents since 2000.



Public comments and feedback found concerns for growth:

- increased traffic congestion
- higher cost of living
- increased flooding risk
- overcrowding of schools
- loss of farmland and natural areas
- inadequate utilities
- potential loss of the picturesque rural landscape



Residents affirmed county strengths and why it remains an excellent location to live and raise a family:

- quality of life
- natural environment
- scenic beauty
- rural/small-town atmosphere
- strong education institutions



Baldwin County has experienced the effects of sprawl seen in many other regions.

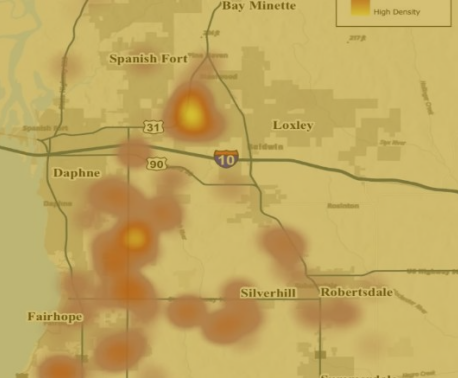
Residential densities within census designated urbanized areas have decreased over the past 25 years while the square miles of designated urbanized areas have increased by over 60% within that same period. The increase of square miles of urbanized area coupled with the decrease in urbanized area residential density is a strong indication sprawl is occurring within Baldwin County.



Public comments and feedback support the statement: **"Future growth in Baldwin County should better balance development with the preservation of quality of life, farmland, rural character, and natural areas."**

Existing Conditions & Discovery

Summer - Fall
2025

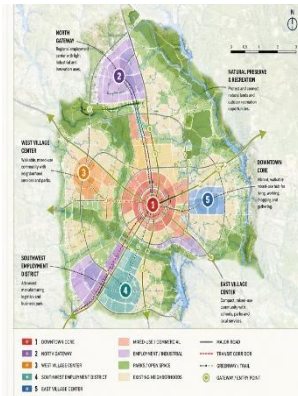


Conclusions of Growth Analysis and Scenario Planning

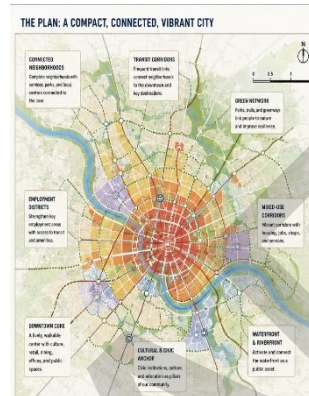
Growth Analysis & Scenario Planning Winter - Spring 2025 - 2026

Baldwin County is projected to need an **additional 87,000 housing units by 2050**. The plan evaluated **three potential growth scenarios**:

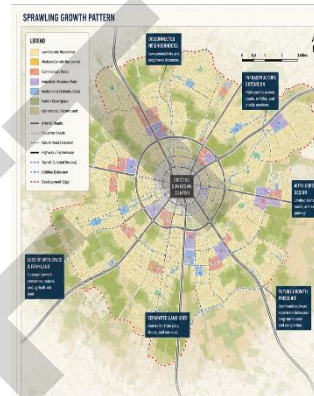
Scenario #1
Focus Growth



Scenario #2
Maximize Infill



Scenario #3
Current Trend



- **Cities in Baldwin County will have limited available land to meet total housing demand on their own.** Under all three scenarios, the cities lack sufficient existing land to accommodate future housing needs.
- **The edges of cities will be crucial for accommodating future growth.** The trend of requiring large rural residential estates (one acre or greater) near city boundaries could potentially hinder future growth of these cities. If residential densities in the edge areas match those within the existing city limits, the ability to accommodate residential growth would be significantly improved. All municipalities within Baldwin County should be encouraged to update their Comprehensive Plans and include a strategic annexation plan to increase available land within the corporate limits.
- **Summary of growth impacts with each scenario.** By 2050, the current trend would increase urban sprawl, expanding the urbanized area by 104 sq. mi. (68% expansion) while keeping urbanized area density low at 1.06 du/ac. The maximize infill scenario limits urbanized area growth to 9 sq. mi. (6% expansion) but increased urbanized densities to 1.92 du/ac. The focused growth scenario (preferred scenario) balances urbanized expansion and urbanized density by increasing urbanized area by 86 sq. mi. (56% expansion) while increasing urbanized density to 1.3 du/ac.

How were the Growth Scenarios evaluated?

Land Requirements:

Although the jurisdiction of the Master Plan is the unincorporated areas of Baldwin County, the scenario evaluations began with an analysis of existing development densities within the city limits and surrounding areas of the cities. Additionally, existing comprehensive plans and future land use plans of the communities were reviewed.

The analysis involved identifying areas with development limitations, including:

- Natural Resources (100-Year Floodplain, Floodways, Wetland Areas, Sensitive Area, and Active Agricultural Areas)
- Existing Parks and Conservation Areas
- Existing Occupied (Developed) Parcels
- Utility Availability

Key Issues:

The scenarios were also evaluated based on key issues identified during the planning process which include:

- Transportation
- Natural Resources
- Housing
- Infrastructure (Utilities)
- Economic Development
- Rural Character
- Active Farming Operations



Draft Master Plan

Spring - Summer
2026

Plan Principles and Goals

LAND USE

A Future Land Use Plan that plans for growth while balancing the preservation of the natural and agricultural heritage of Baldwin County.

GOALS

1. Respect local community land use planning and decisions.
2. Acknowledge the importance of Baldwin County's natural resources for ecosystem services, tourism, and quality of life.
3. Balance areas of growth and preservation.
4. Provide expectations of future availability of community services, sewer, and other utilities.

TRANSPORTATION

A safe, efficient transportation system that supports regional connectivity.

GOALS

1. Improve safety of the regional transportation system.
2. Improve efficiency of regional transportation system.
3. Promote a well-connected roadway network, with an emphasis on connecting cities, and other housing and employment centers throughout Baldwin County.
4. Continue fiscally responsible transportation investments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Continued growth and prosperity of the Baldwin County economy.

GOALS

1. Continue to retain and attract a skilled workforce.
2. Ensure availability of developable sites.
3. Continue regional coordination of Alabama Department of Commerce, Baldwin Alliance, and industry partners on defining targeted industry clusters.

FARMLAND AND RURAL CHARACTER

Preserve the agricultural and rural heritage of Baldwin County for future generations.

GOALS

1. Maintain and protect land best suited for agriculture, especially prime contiguous farmland, to remain agricultural.
2. Encourage small farmers, especially growers, of locally grown produce and products that serve local hospitality industry.
3. Help alleviate conflicts between agricultural property owners and non-agricultural neighboring properties.



Draft Master Plan

Spring - Summer
2026

Plan Principles and Goals

NATURAL RESOURCES

Conserve, protect, and restore Baldwin County's natural habitats and ecologically significant areas.

GOALS

1. Preserve and protect Baldwin County's natural habitats and ecologically significant areas.
2. Restore ecological habitats.
3. Continue to improve water quality through watershed scale planning.
4. Reduce future flood-related risks.

UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Fiscally responsible public services, utilities, and infrastructure at locations that efficiently serve the housing and development needs of Baldwin County.

GOALS

1. Encourage development to occur within areas served (or planned) by public sewer and other utilities and infrastructure.
2. Continue inter-government and utility collaboration.

Role of the Master Plan

Master Plan (Policy Document)

Regulatory Tools

- **Zoning**
- **Subdivision and Development Regulations**

Detailed Plans

- **Transportation**
 - Connectivity Plan
 - Intersection Safety Improvement Plan
 - Public Transportation Plan
 - Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
- **Natural Resources**
- **Sector Plans**
- **County Facilities**
- **Stormwater / Watersheds**

Education

Actions through voluntary change through education, advocacy, and/or incentives. Sometimes led by organizations, non-profits, and other groups in support of county objectives

Partnering

Data and information to assist the county to coordinate with communities, agencies, utilities, and organizations on future growth in the county.

The role of a master plan is often misunderstood, which is understandable given that these plans are updated infrequently.

In simple terms, the master plan is a policy document. As such, it serves as a strategic guide, shaping future actions like regulatory updates, detailed planning efforts, educational initiatives, and partnerships. The chart above highlights the role of the Master Plan in relation to other elements. It should be noted that 'detailed plans' include examples of plans that many counties may develop and included as chapters within the Comprehensive Master Plans and are not inclusive of existing or recommended plans for Baldwin County. Future updates to the Baldwin County Comprehensive Master Plan should include detailed plans listed.

It's important to note that the master plan is not a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulation, budget, capital improvement program, or other regulatory document. Instead, it provides the foundation for the creation of those tools. The plan sets forth a vision for the community's future growth and development.

At the vision and policy level, the master plan will guide county decision-making for years to come. At times the plan will need to be amended or updated. The County Commission shall approve all amendments and updates to the plan.

Proposed amendments and updates to the plan shall take into account conditions that have changed since the original adoption of the plan.

Baldwin County Trends

Baldwin County Trends Over the Last Two Decades

The graphics on the right highlight trends in Baldwin County over approximately the last two decades (various data sets have slightly different time-frames). It is important to note the data trends listed are *countywide*.

- Developed changes are based on land cover data categorized by developed intensity (open-space, low intensity, medium intensity, high intensity). Overall, all developed areas in Baldwin County grew by about 40% over the last two decades.
- Forest and active agricultural land decreased by about 21% over the last two decades.
- Overall, the population of Baldwin County grew by 91% between 2000 - 2025. However, different areas of the county grew at much different rates.
- Job growth grew significantly along with population growth. The range of job growth is because of the different sources of job data.
- Transportation volume is assessed using Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data. Roads and highways in various areas of the county have experienced different rates of increased volume.



40%



Developed,
Open-Space



Developed,
Low Intensity



Developed
Medium Intensity



Developed
High Intensity



21%



Evergreen
Forest



Agricultural
Land



91%



Population



80% -
100%



Jobs



+100%



Transportation

Why Update the Master Plan

BACKGROUND

The current Baldwin County Master Plan was adopted in 2023. Baldwin County continues to experience significant population growth. That growth has spurred demand for housing, services, and infrastructure improvements. As shown by the 2020 Census, Baldwin County is one of the fastest growing counties in United States. This update of the Baldwin County Master Plan is an opportunity to consider ways to better accommodate future population and employment growth by coordinating land use policies, transportation and infrastructure improvements, municipal and county services, and preservation of natural resources.

The State of Alabama provides the authority for Baldwin County to prepare master plans for all unincorporated areas. Section 45-2-261.03 of the Code of Alabama states, “In availing itself of the powers conferred by this subpart, the Baldwin County Commission shall appoint the planning commission to make and maintain in an up-to-date manner, a master plan for the physical development of the unincorporated areas of Baldwin County. The master plan with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive material shall show the planning commission’s recommendations for the use and development of the unincorporated areas of Baldwin County.”

BENEFITS OF AN UPDATED MASTER PLAN

Logical Land Use Decision Making

The updated Baldwin County Master Plan is a guide for the County Commission and Planning Commission when reviewing rezoning requests, conditional use permits, subdivision plats, and other land use decisions.

Strategic Guide for Future Growth and Change

While the future cannot be predicted, Baldwin County can plan and manage for growth and change. The plan examined trends in demographics, workforce, mobility, housing, and economic development to best position the county to coordinate with communities, agencies, utilities, and organizations on future growth in the county.

Shared Community Vision

Master plans are an opportunity to develop consensus on a community vision and countywide priorities that will help shape growth in the county for the next 10-20 years.

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Principles, Goals, and Recommendations

2

Chapter Overview

The master plan's recommendations are organized around six guiding principles. This chapter outlines each principle, along with the associated goals and recommendations. Each principle is grounded in core values of Baldwin County.

This master plan focuses on critical themes such as land use, transportation, and other priorities identified during the discovery phase. A key theme is balancing future growth with the county's rural character and natural resource strengths. While master plans can cover a broad range of topics, a more focused plan helps prioritize key issues.

Ultimately, this master plan serves as a policy guide, offering direction for future county initiatives, projects, and plans.

The later Chapter "Implementation," outlines the specific actions needed to achieve the goals presented in this chapter.

"Each principle of the plan is rooted in the core values of Baldwin County."

"Future growth in Baldwin County should better balance development with the preservation of farmland, rural character, and natural areas."

Vision Metrics

For each principle, a "vision metric" is provided to measure progress and track the plan's implementation. These metrics are designed to be ambitious, serving as key indicators of Baldwin County's trajectory for each principle. While not all metrics may be immediately attainable, they establish valuable benchmarks for long-term progress. Data sources and additional context for each metric are provided at the end of this chapter.

ALL PRINCIPLES

1. LAND USE

A Future Land Use Plan that plans for growth while balancing the preservation of the natural and agricultural heritage of Baldwin County.

2. TRANSPORTATION

A safe, efficient transportation system that supports multiple modes of transportation.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Continued growth and prosperity of the Baldwin County economy.

4. FARMLAND AND RURAL CHARACTER

Encourage the preservation of agricultural and rural heritage of Baldwin County for future generations.

5. NATURAL RESOURCES

Conserve, protect, and restore Baldwin County's natural habitats and ecologically significant areas.

6. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Fiscally responsible public services, utilities, and infrastructure at locations that efficiently serve the housing and development needs of Baldwin County.

PRINCIPLE #1

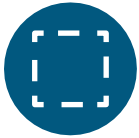
LAND USE

A Future Land Use Plan that plans for growth while balancing the preservation of the natural and agricultural heritage of Baldwin County.

VISION METRIC

The population growth rate exceeds the rate of developed land areas.

GOALS:



1. Respect local community land use planning and decisions.

- Encourage municipalities to prepare a future land use plan for areas adjacent to their city limits.
- Encourage residential growth densities within municipal limits to manage urban sprawl in unincorporated Baldwin County and increase the level of public service provided to residents.



2. Acknowledge the importance of Baldwin County's natural resources for ecosystem services, tourism, and quality of life.

- Utilize a 'Conservation Buffer' land use to buffer and transition existing conservation and park areas from other land uses.



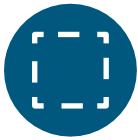
3. Balance areas of growth and preservation.

- Use the future land use plan to identify priority farmland and rural preservation areas.
- Use the future land use plan to identify economic development areas of regional importance that require larger sites and can leverage Baldwin County's unique transportation assets.
- Use the future land use plan to identify priority growth areas where increased densities can help ensure efficient utilities and infrastructure.
- Enhance the current point rating system to include the future land use category as one of the quantitative tools to evaluate rezoning, development, and subdivision requests for suitability.



4. Provide expectations of future availability of community services, sewer, and other utilities.

- Use the future land use plan and growth projections to coordinate with state, local, and private entities to plan for and invest in infrastructure, including roads, sewer, and other utilities, in anticipation of growth.
- Acknowledge that some land uses may not have the same level of community services and utility access.
- Continue to utilize the 'smart growth scorecard' as baseline criteria for rezonings.



Goal 1.1

Respect local community land use planning and decisions.

1.1. A: Encourage communities to prepare a future land use plan for areas adjacent to their city limits

A policy of inter-government coordination of future land use planning should be prioritized in Baldwin County.

Baldwin County should respect the need for local communities to plan for future land use adjacent to their areas. This acknowledges the efforts that many communities are already undertaking. Future land use decisions should be made in accordance with community goals and priorities.

Future land use planning adjacent to municipalities should plan for and anticipate efficient annexation. The municipality provides services and infrastructure more efficiently, leading to improved quality and reliability. The areas would gain access to municipal services such as water and sewer utilities, garbage collection, street maintenance, and emergency response services.

The community may prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Code of Alabama for all or part of the areas allowed by state law. Baldwin County should coordinate with each municipality to incorporate recommendations from the municipal comprehensive plan into the County's future land use plan. If a community chooses not to prepare a comprehensive plan for areas outside of the municipal limits, then Baldwin County shall designate the future land use.

Until annexation, Baldwin County's zoning and other development regulations shall remain in effect.



Goal 1.2

Acknowledge the importance of Baldwin County's natural resources for ecosystem services, tourism, and quality of life.

1.2. A: Utilize a 'Conservation Buffer' land use to buffer and transition existing conservation and park areas from other land uses.

Baldwin County has over 215,000 acres of parks and conservation areas in unincorporated areas. Baldwin County residents and visitors treasure these parks and conservation areas for their beauty and ecological importance. 'Conservation Buffer' areas recognize the importance of park and conservation areas and serve as a transition zone between the park and conservation areas and other nearby land uses.



Goal 1.3

Balance areas of growth and preservation.

1.3.A: Use the future land use plan to identify priority farmland and rural preservation areas.

Baldwin County has a rich agricultural heritage. Preserving farmland maintains this tradition for future generations while enhancing food security and contributing to the economy of Baldwin County. Preserving farmland helps to maintain the rural character of Baldwin County. Many residents value the open spaces, scenic landscapes, and cultural identity associated with agriculture. Preserving farmland contributes to the county's overall quality of life and attractiveness as a place to live and visit. 'Farmland Preservation' areas are likely to include a mix of natural habitats and open space in addition to agricultural areas.

Residents value the rural character of Baldwin County, including open spaces, scenic landscapes, natural habitats, and farmland. 'Rural Preservation' areas are areas with strong rural character with a mix of natural habitats, open space, agricultural areas and limited residential. While 'Rural Preservation' areas are like that of 'Agricultural Preservation' areas, it should be noted that they are distinct differences. 'Rural Preservation' areas may include agricultural uses, however, they will be smaller, disconnected farming operations and have a more rural living character verses the large contiguous acreage of row crops found in 'Farmland Preservation' areas.

Residential uses are low-density, primarily single-family, and typically are located along existing rural roadways rather than in multi-lot subdivisions.

1.3.B: Use the land use plan to identify economic development areas of regional importance that require larger sites and can leverage Baldwin County's unique transportation assets.

While communities in Baldwin County have many available areas for job and employment growth, some of these areas include smaller parcels that limit the opportunity for large scale facilities or multiple facilities as part of campus-style or industrial park settings. The 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas anticipate economic development of regional importance, requiring larger sites that can capitalize on Baldwin County's unique transportation assets.

1.3.C: Use the land use plan to identify priority growth areas where increased densities can help ensure efficient utilities and infrastructure.

Encourage growth in areas like 'Urban Growth,' 'Unincorporated Village Nodes,' and 'Regional Economic Opportunity' zones at densities that support fiscally responsible costs of public services and facilities. These areas are more likely to be served by public sewer, water, and other utilities, allowing development to make efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure, rather than spreading low-density development over large areas, which requires more expense per capita to provide services and infrastructure. As part of the review of zoning, subdivision, and development regulations, Baldwin County should evaluate tools to direct development to the planned density for the area.

1.3.D: Enhance the current point rating system to include the future land use category as one of the quantitative tools to evaluate rezoning, development, and subdivision requests for suitability.

Currently, Baldwin County utilizes a 'Smart Growth Scorecard' point rating system to evaluate rezoning proposals. The current rating system evaluates properties based on four factors: conformity with surrounding land use, conformity with master plan, proximity to transportation and utility infrastructure, and environmental conditions and historic resources.

Baldwin County should update the 'smart growth scorecard' point system and utilize it as an evaluation tool for site suitability of all development application reviews including zoning, subdivision, and major land development projects. The updated point rating system should consider the goals of each future land use category. For example, a proposed development of prime farmland (based on soil types) in the 'Farmland Preservation' land use area would likely score very low for suitability for development since preserving prime farmland is a key goal of the 'Farmland Preservation' land use category.



Goal 1.4

Provide expectations of future availability of community services, sewer, and other utilities.

1.4. A: Use the future land use plan and growth projections to coordinate with state, local, and private entities to plan for and invest in infrastructure, including roads, sewer, and other utilities, in anticipation of growth.

There are multiple state, local, and private entities that provide infrastructure and services in Baldwin County. One of the most effective ways for Baldwin County to continue inter-government and utility coordination is to regularly update growth projections and the future land use plan and share the updates with the local and regional partners. The growth projections allow partners to help anticipate future needs and plan accordingly. By using the future land use plan as a guide, partners can ensure that infrastructure investments are made in the right places at the right times, avoiding reactive, piecemeal development that may be more costly and less effective.

By aligning investments with anticipated growth, partners can focus on areas where infrastructure can be efficiently extended, avoiding sprawl and preserving open spaces and agricultural lands. Regular future land use plan updates are also an essential economic development tool. When businesses know that a community has a clear plan for future growth and the infrastructure to support it, they are more likely to invest in those areas, leading to economic development and job creation.

1.4. B: Acknowledge that some land uses may not have the same level of community services and utility access.

New residents in rural areas, especially if they have moved from a community, often expect the same level of services and utilities as living in a community. Residents should be aware of the potential challenges associated with living in rural areas, such as higher utility connection costs and longer emergency response times.

Residents should also be aware of potential additional long-term costs in areas not readily served by public infrastructure and services, such as the maintenance of private drives and private sewer systems, as well as higher homeowner insurance costs.

On-going awareness could include a "new resident" tab on the Baldwin County Commission website.

1.4. C: Continue to utilize the "smart growth scorecard" as baseline criteria for rezonings.

Rezoning requests are currently evaluated to ensure adequate utility, transportation, and public safety infrastructure is in place to support the zoning change. This resource evaluation should continue.

PRINCIPLE #2

TRANSPORTATION

A safe, efficient transportation system that supports regional connectivity.

VISION METRIC

Maintain county road LOS to D or better and volume-to-capacity below 0.85

GOALS:



1. Improve safety of the regional transportation system.

- a. Advance targeted intersection and corridor improvements that address conflict points.
- b. Support multimodal enhancements that improve safety for all users.
- c. Coordinate with state, municipal, and regional partners to apply consistent safety practices.
- d. Develop a countywide safety plan through collaboration with the Eastern Shore MPO to guide future safety investments.

2. Improve efficiency of regional transportation system.

- a. Advance connections that shorten travel distances and distribute traffic more evenly.
- b. Prioritize improvements based on data-driven analysis of current and projected traffic conditions.
- c. Implement projects that enhance the movement of commuters, visitors, and freight.
- d. Use traffic analytics and the County's travel demand model to identify and validate improvements that reduce congestion.



3. Promote a well-connected roadway network, with an emphasis on connecting cities, and other housing and employment centers.

- a. Advance key corridors such as the Baldwin Beach Express II and County Road 65 to strengthen countywide connectivity.
- b. Improve east-west and north-south links to provide more route options and reduce reliance on major state routes.
- c. Coordinate planned improvements with expected development patterns and regional mobility needs.
- d. Support local and regional planning efforts to ensure roadway connections align with long-term growth.



4. Identifies targeted areas of need for both public and private sector contributions.

- a. Prioritize projects based on need, feasibility, and long-term benefit using the implementation framework.
- b. Utilize cost-effective solutions, including minor intersection improvements, to address operational needs.
- c. Apply data-driven evaluation tools to ensure efficient and responsible use of resources.
- d. Pursue grants and partnerships to support major projects and reduce local funding requirements.



Goal 2.1

Improve safety of the regional transportation system

Baldwin County places the highest importance on safety when planning, designing, operating, and maintaining its transportation network. Strengthening safety across all modes requires targeted improvements, coordinated planning, and data-driven decision making.

2.1.A: Advance intersection and corridor improvements that address conflict points

Roadway safety is improved by addressing locations where turning movements, congestion, and roadway geometry create higher crash potential. Targeted upgrades to intersections and key corridors support safer and more efficient travel.

2.1.B: Support multimodal enhancements that improve safety for all users

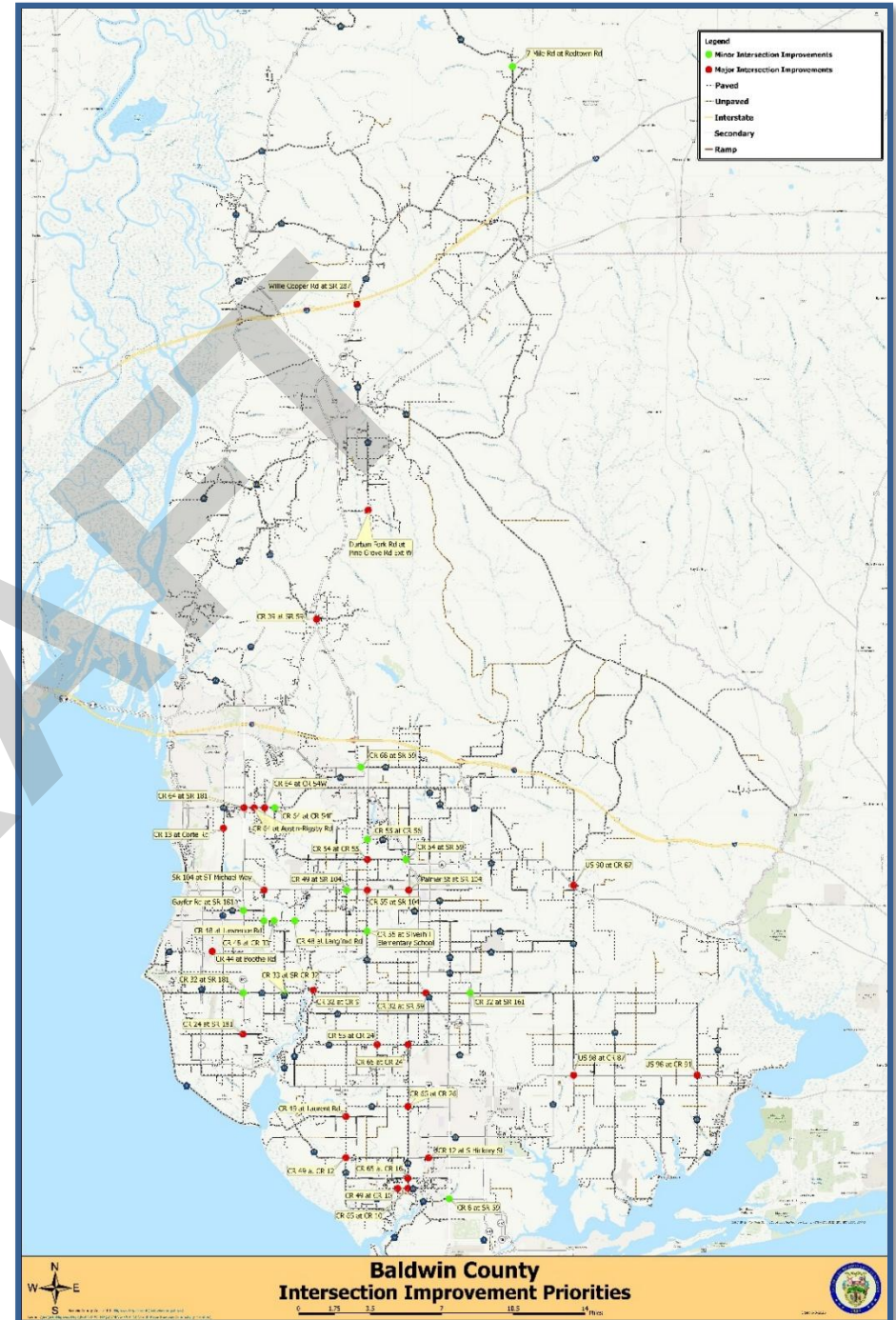
Infrastructure and enforcement are important, but safe travel also depends on providing appropriate facilities for walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized travel. Improving these facilities strengthens safety across the system.

2.1.C: Identify and address safety issues along high-crash corridors and intersections.

Although safety is a priority on every roadway, certain locations experience more crashes and delays. These corridors will be evaluated and prioritized as part of the County's enhanced safety planning and project development processes.

2.1.D: Develop a countywide safety plan in coordination with the Eastern Shore MPO.

A collaboratively developed safety plan will guide future safety investments, support data-based prioritization, and increase eligibility for federal safety funding.



Intersection Improvement Plan



Goal 2.2 Improve efficiency of regional transportation system.

Efficient movement of residents, visitors, and freight is essential for Baldwin County. Improving system performance requires a combination of better connections, strategic investments, and the use of advanced traffic analysis tools.

2.2.A: Advance roadway connections that shorten travel distances and distribute traffic more evenly.

Strengthening north-south and east-west links reduces delays, provides more route choices, and decreases congestion on major state routes.

2.2.B: Prioritize improvements based on data-driven evaluation of current and projected traffic conditions.

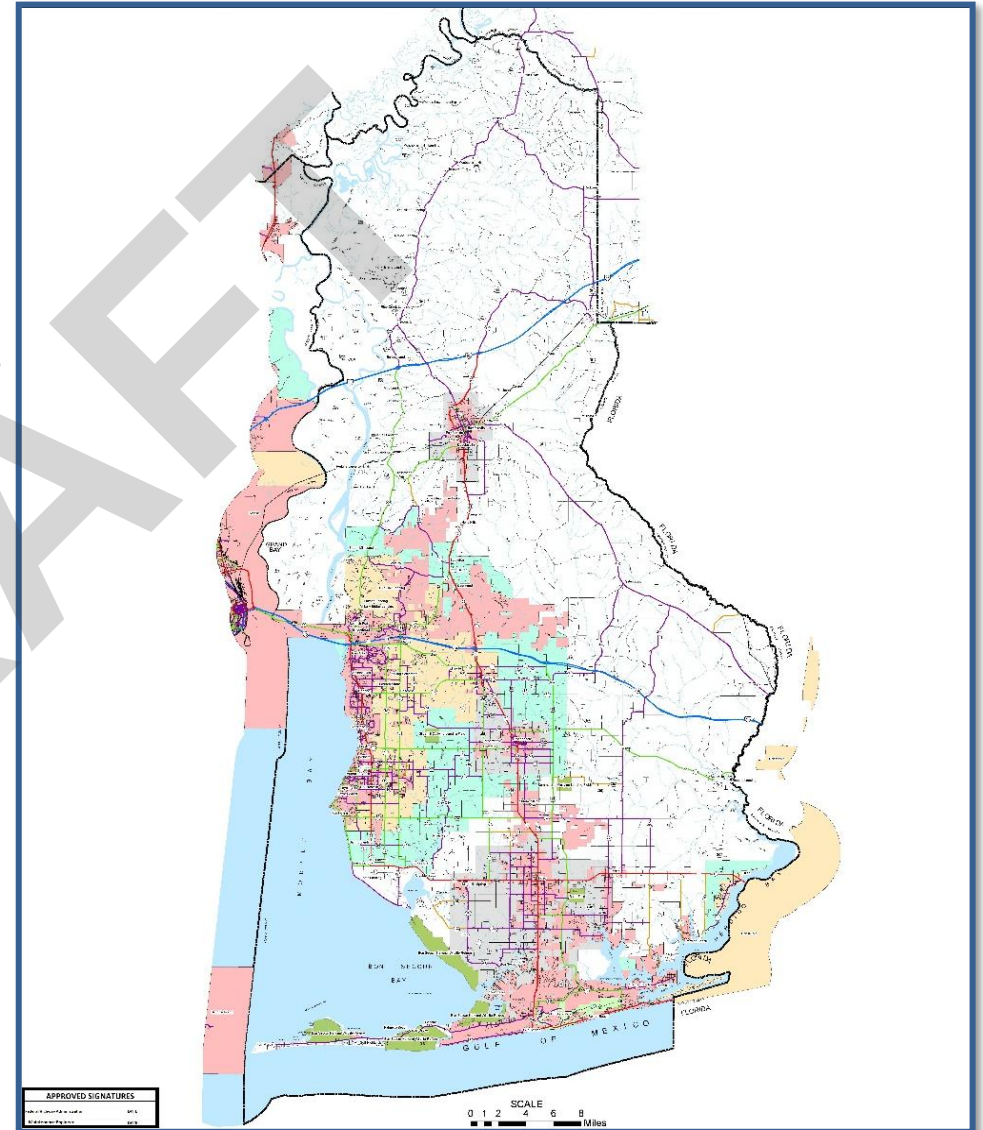
Using traffic analytics to assess volumes, speeds, and level of service provides a clearer understanding of system needs and helps identify where improvements will have the greatest benefit.

2.2.C: Implement projects that enhance movement of commuters, visitors, and freight.

Roadway improvements will focus on advancing capacity projects, operational upgrades, and corridor enhancements that support the regional economy and daily travel needs.

2.2.D: Integrate real-time traffic data with the County's travel demand model to validate proposed capacity projects.

Testing improvements through the model ensures that planned projects will effectively reduce congestion and improve overall performance.



Functional Classification Map



Goal 2.3

Promote a well-connected regional transportation system, with an emphasis on connecting cities, and other housing and employment centers.

Traffic congestion remains a key concern for Baldwin County residents. A well-connected roadway network expands travel choices, supports economic development, and improves access to population centers.

2.3.A: Advance key corridors such as the Baldwin Beach Express II and County Road 65.

These corridors strengthen connections between major communities, support long-term growth, and provide alternatives to heavily traveled state routes.

2.3.B: Improve east-west and north-south links to expand travel choices.

Enhancing strategic connections reduces reliance on a small number of major corridors, distributes traffic more evenly, and improves access between cities and employment areas.

2.3.C: Coordinate planned improvements with development patterns and regional mobility needs.

Roadway improvements will be coordinated with municipal plans, growth trends, and regional priorities to ensure that investments support long-term connectivity.

2.3.D: Support local and regional planning efforts that strengthen connectivity.

Partnerships with ALDOT, municipalities, and regional agencies will guide the development of a coordinated long-range transportation network.



2.4.A: Prioritize projects based on need, feasibility, and long-term benefit.

2.4.B: Review subdivision regulations to ensure roadway improvements meet County standards.

2.4.C: Invest in roadway maintenance and preservation to avoid costly reconstruction.

2.4.D: Coordinate transportation investments with state, regional, municipal, and private sector partners.

Using the Future Land Use Plan as a guide, the County will work with ALDOT, the Eastern Shore MPO, local governments, and private sector partners to align funding and project development.



PRINCIPLE #3

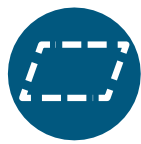
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Continued growth and prosperity of the
Baldwin County economy.*

VISION METRIC	Reserved
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GOALS:

- 

1. Reserved.
- 

2. Reserved
- 

3. Reserved

PRINCIPLE #4

FARMLAND AND RURAL CHARACTER

Preserve the agricultural and rural heritage of Baldwin County for future generations.

VISION METRIC

Preserve large contiguous tracts of active farmland

GOALS:



1. Maintain and protect land best suited for agriculture, especially large contiguous areas of active farmland, to remain agricultural.

- a. Minimize non-agricultural residential development in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' land use areas.
- b. Encourage voluntary conservation easements for farmland.
- c. Promote cluster residential development.



2. Encourage small farmers, especially growers, of locally grown produce and products that serve local outlets.

- a. Allow for transitional farming with appropriate parcel size in all zoning districts to promote small-scale transitional farming operations.



3. Evaluate visitor and tourism uses and activities in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farm Preservation' land use areas that provide property owners additional income and promote quality of life in the County while respecting rural character and neighboring property owners.

- a. Review and evaluate existing tourism policies in agriculture and rural areas.



4. Help alleviate conflicts between agricultural property owners and non-agricultural neighboring properties.

- a. Consider "good neighbor" education guidance for residential properties in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farm Preservation' land use areas, where agricultural sounds, smells, and general operations are expected.
- b. Recognize the importance of agricultural equipment to travel safely on county roads.



Goal 4.1

Maintain and protect land best suited for agriculture, especially large contiguous areas of active farmland, to remain agricultural.

4.1.A: Minimize non-agricultural residential development in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' land use areas.

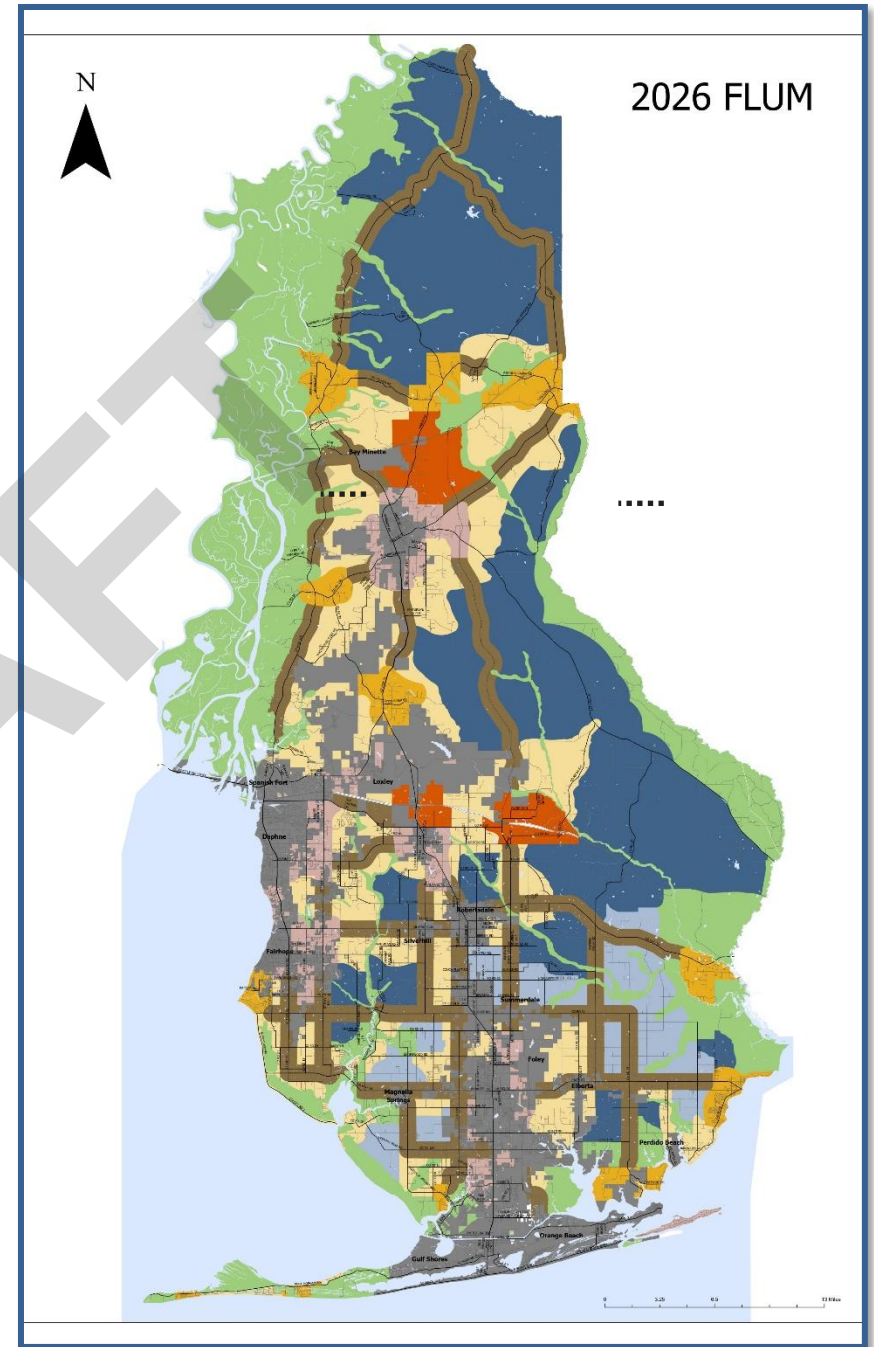
Baldwin County has nearly 180,000 acres of active farmland, which constitutes almost one-fifth of the county's total land area.

The map on this page shows areas of active farmland in Baldwin County, overlaid with the preservation land use categories: 'Farmland Preservation,' 'Rural Preservation,' and 'Conservation Buffer.' While large expanses of prime farmland near Foley, Summerdale, and Fairhope overlap with growth areas, the 'Farmland Preservation' land use category includes significant stretches of prime farmland east of Foley and Robertsedale in the Lillian area. Limiting non-agricultural residential development in the 'Farmland Preservation' and 'Rural Preservation' areas will help protect farmland in these regions.

4.1.B: Encourage voluntary conservation easements for farmland.

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that permanently limit the uses of the land to protect its conservation values. The primary goals of conservation easements include maintaining the land's agricultural productivity or preserving the open space and natural habitats of the property. Conservation easements are flexible and can be tailored to meet the needs of the landowner while achieving conservation goals. They can allow for specific uses such as farming, ranching, or forestry under sustainable practices.

Voluntary conservation easements for farmland should be encouraged in 'Farmland Preservation,' 'Rural Preservation,' and 'Conservation Buffer' areas.



Areas of Prime Farmland with Future Land Use Plan

4.1.C: Promote cluster residential development.

Cluster residential development (also referred to as cluster subdivisions) is a form of residential development that emphasizes the preservation of natural landscapes and open space. Unlike traditional subdivisions, which often maximize the number of lots on a piece of land, conservation subdivisions cluster homes in a smaller portion of the property, leaving a significant portion of the land as preserved open space. Typically, a minimum of 50% of the tract is preserved as open space.

Benefits of conservation subdivision include preserved open space (farmland, natural habitats, or other open space), the potential for reduced development costs due to fewer infrastructure needs like roads, and the preservation of rural and scenic views.

However, there are several considerations that may limit the widespread use of conservation subdivisions. Clustered residential development will likely require a new public sewer system rather than individual private systems for each parcel. Additionally, proximity between farmland and residential areas could create conflicts related to agricultural noise and dust.

Market and zoning incentives for clustering must be carefully evaluated. For example, existing zoning that allows for smaller parcel sizes (especially one acre or less) may not provide sufficient incentive for developers to pursue clustering. In contrast, zoning that requires larger minimum parcel sizes (two acres or more) is likely to create a stronger incentive for clustering.

Conservation subdivisions should also allow for future connections to adjacent developments. Many existing examples of conservation subdivisions often feature cul-de-sacs, which can limit connectivity.



Existing Farmland



Typical Large Lot Rural Residential



Conservation Subdivision with Clustering of Residential Lots

Baldwin County should promote the use of conservation subdivisions not only in 'Farmland Preservation' areas but also within 'Rural Neighborhood' areas. For example, Foley, Fairhope, and Robertsedale have significant areas of prime farmland adjacent to their municipal boundaries. Conservation subdivisions could serve as a tool to accommodate growth near these communities while still preserving farmland.

In 'Farmland Preservation' areas, the use of conservation subdivisions should be evaluated to avoid the loss of prime farmland.

4.1.D: Evaluate conservation precedents for feasibility in Baldwin County, including supplemental conservation easement funding.

The intent of this master plan is not to recommend specific conservation tools for implementation. Instead, it aims to provide a broader understanding of potential tools and share lessons learned from precedent counties. Following the master plan, Baldwin County should assess the feasibility of these conservation tools for Baldwin County.



Goal 4.2

Encourage small farmers, especially growers, of locally grown produce and products that serve local outlets.

There are many ways to encourage small farmers of locally grown produce, including ensuring land availability, improving access to markets, strengthening distribution networks, providing technical assistance, and offering policy support. In the context of land use policy, this master plan focuses on recommendations that promote access to land.

4.2.A: Allow for transitional farming in all zoning districts with appropriate parcel size to promote small-scale transitional farming operations.

Prime farmland soils are widespread throughout Baldwin County including many areas that are experiencing growth and planned for future growth. While these areas will transition away from agricultural uses over time, Baldwin County zoning ordinance should allow small scale agriculture operations as a transitional use until the property develops. These allowances would help retain the character of the community while supporting small-scale transitional farming operations to assist local farmers who supply the community.

4.2.B: Encourage all public entities to explore leasing public land to prospective farmers and market gardeners.

Small farmers often cite access to available land as a significant business barrier. A small farmer growing locally produced goods may need only a few acres or less. However, typical farm leases for large tracts of land may not be practical for their needs. Baldwin County should encourage public entities to explore leasing land to prospective farmers and market gardeners, helping increase the available land supply.



Goal 4.3

Evaluate visitor and tourism uses and activities in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farm Preservation' land use areas that provide property owners additional income and promote quality of life in the county while respecting rural character and neighboring property owners.

4.3.A: Review and evaluate existing tourism policies in agriculture and rural areas.

Agriculture-related tourism can offer multiple benefits, including additional income for rural property owners and farmers. For both visitors and local residents, activities in rural areas can enhance the overall quality of life and raise awareness of the importance of preserving these areas.

However, it is essential to consider the impact on neighboring property owners and the overall rural character. Increased traffic, noise, and differing views on what constitutes beneficial visitor and tourism uses are nuanced topics that require careful consideration. In addition, potential tourism in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farm Preservation' areas should be dependent on the rural nature of those areas.

The intent of this master plan is not to recommend or evaluate tourism policies. Following the master plan, Baldwin County should conduct a thorough review and evaluation of existing tourism policies.



Goal 4.4

Help alleviate conflicts between agricultural property owners and non-agricultural neighboring properties.

4.4.A: Consider “good neighbor” education guidance for residential properties in ‘Rural Preservation’ and ‘Farm Preservation’ land use areas, where agricultural sounds, smells, and general operations are expected.

Often, residents may move to rural areas from existing towns and may not be accustomed to living next to active agriculture operations. "Good Neighbor" education can help residents better understand agriculture operations and improve communications and expectations between farmers and non-farmer residents.

Many university agriculture extension services, ag in the classroom programs, and Farm Bureaus offer examples of improving education and awareness of agriculture activities.

4.4.B: Recognize the importance of agricultural equipment to travel safely on county roads.

Recognizing the importance of agricultural equipment on county roads involves ensuring both safety and respect for the vital role that farming plays in Baldwin County. In addition to policy support, measures could include public education, improved road signage, design considerations like widened shoulders, and law enforcement support.

PRINCIPLE #5

NATURAL RESOURCES

Conserve, protect, and restore Baldwin County's natural habitats and ecologically significant areas.

VISION METRIC

Increase the amount of preserved land in unincorporated Baldwin County through public acquisition and voluntary conservation

GOALS:



1. Preserve and protect Baldwin County's natural habitats and ecologically significant areas.

- Consider the creation of a countywide Conservation and Parks Master Plan.
- Utilize habitat cores and hub analysis to prioritize voluntary conservation easement locations.
- Evaluate conservation precedents for feasibility in Baldwin County, including supplemental conservation easement funding.
- Encourage the expansion of park and conservation area boundaries through local and state partners and agencies.
- Evaluate a Sensitive Area zoning overlay in 'Conservation Buffer' land use areas to supplement existing stream buffer, land disturbance, wetland, and sinkhole protections.



2. Restore ecological habitats.

- Regularly review site development standards for current best practices regarding vegetation preservation and landscaping requirements.
- Encourage residential property owners, especially on parcels greater than one acre, to restore or preserve natural habitats instead of having lawns or mono-cultures.
- Evaluate operational strategies for areas maintained by Baldwin County.



3. Continue to improve water quality through watershed scale planning.

- Continue the ongoing AGWA watershed management initiatives and modeling.
- Develop adaptive stormwater management requirements based upon project location within each watershed.
- Evaluate other watersheds for planning initiatives as part of a countywide Stormwater Management Plan.



4. Reduce future flood-related risks.

- Regularly review and update the stormwater and floodplain ordinances and stormwater design manual in the context of the increasingly changing intensity of rainfall events.
- Develop a countywide Stormwater Management Plan to identify flood hazard areas and mitigation strategies (with an emphasis on areas outside of designated regulatory (FEMA) flood hazard maps).



Goal 5.1

Preserve and protect Baldwin County's natural habitats and ecologically significant areas.

5.1.A: Consider the creation of a countywide Conservation and Parks Master Plan.

A countywide Conservation and Parks Master Plan would create a countywide vision to prioritize land preservation efforts and efficiently use limited resources. Any Conservation and Parks Master Plan will require a careful evaluation of potential funding mechanisms.

5.1.B: Utilize habitat cores and hub analysis to prioritize voluntary conservation easement locations.

Habitat cores are large, unfragmented areas of natural land that provide critical environments for wildlife and plant materials. Prioritizing these areas helps conserve essential ecosystems, ensuring the survival of native species and maintaining ecological balance. Connecting various habitat cores can ensure greater landscape connectivity, promoting biodiversity and allowing species to adapt to environmental changes.

5.1.C: Evaluate conservation precedents for feasibility in Baldwin County, including supplemental conservation easement funding.

Voluntary conservation easements should be encouraged in 'Farmland Preservation,' 'Rural Preservation,' and 'Conservation Buffer' areas.

The intent of this master plan is not to recommend specific conservation tools for implementation. Instead, it aims to provide a broader understanding of potential tools and share lessons learned from precedent counties. Following the master plan, Baldwin County should assess the feasibility of these conservation tools for Baldwin County.

5.1.D: Encourage the expansion of park and conservation area boundaries through local and state partners and agencies.

Baldwin County already benefits from over 215,000 acres of parks and conservation areas in its unincorporated areas. Expanding these parks and conservation lands brings numerous benefits, including increased biodiversity, enhanced watershed protection, and greater public access to nature. Local and state partners are well-positioned to lead this expansion, leveraging their experience in stewardship and maintaining existing lands to maximize these advantages.

5.1.E: Evaluate a Sensitive Area zoning overlay in 'Conservation Buffer' land use areas to supplement existing stream buffer, land disturbance, wetland, and sinkhole protections.

In 2021, Baldwin County adopted land disturbance ordinance for flood prone areas. The land disturbance ordinance included enhanced criteria for development near environmentally sensitive flood prone areas. In future reviews of existing ordinances, Baldwin County should evaluate revisions to the ordinance to align with the goals of the master plan and 'Conservation Buffer' land use areas to supplement existing stream buffer, land disturbance, and wetland protections. This will allow Baldwin County to evaluate current best practices and new data that may be applicable.



Goal 5.2

Restore ecological habitats.

5.2.A: Regularly review site development standards for current best practices regarding vegetation preservation and landscaping requirements.

Site development standards can help ensure best practices for preserving or restoring habitats by encouraging strategies such as placing new open spaces adjacent to existing ones rather than in isolated locations. As part of the regular review of zoning, subdivision, and development regulations, consider incorporating best practices for vegetation preservation and landscaping requirements.

5.2.B: Encourage residential property owners, especially on parcels greater than one acre, to restore or preserve natural habitats instead of having lawns or mono-cultures.

Large expanses of residential lawns can be expensive for homeowners to maintain and create a mono-culture with limited ecological benefits. Restoring (or preserving) natural habitats instead of lawns can have multiple benefits, including increased biodiversity and better stormwater management.

5.2.C: Evaluate operational strategies for areas maintained by Baldwin County.

In addition to policy initiatives, Baldwin County can enhance ecological habitats through operational improvements. Maintenance strategies, including adjusting mowing schedules, can be applied to areas maintained by the county.



Goal 5.3

Continue to improve water quality through watershed scale planning.

Watersheds provide an essential framework for planning water quality improvements. However, because watershed boundaries often cross multiple jurisdictions, a coordinated effort is necessary to ensure that local decisions consider the broader watershed context. Baldwin County is already engaged in several watershed initiatives.

5.3.A: Continue the ongoing AGWA Watershed Initiative.

Continue to utilize watershed level stormwater planning and modeling using the AGWA system. Update existing watershed models at least every five years and expand the use of the watershed models to review each development at a watershed level to reduce impacts to the overall watershed.

5.3.B: Develop adaptive stormwater management requirements based upon project location within each watershed.

Consider updating stormwater requirements for land development to adapt development requirements to fit the context and stormwater patterns of the watershed subarea in which the project is located.

5.3.C: Evaluate other watersheds for planning initiatives as part of a countywide Stormwater Management Plan.

Managing stormwater presents numerous opportunities for partnerships aimed at improving water quality. The collaborative planning efforts for the Fish River Watershed and Magnolia River Watershed serve as a model for watershed planning across Baldwin County. Incorporating watershed planning into a countywide Stormwater Management Plan can effectively mitigate flooding impacts and improve water quality.



Goal 5.4 Reduce future flood-related risks.

5.4.A: Regularly review and update the stormwater and floodplain ordinances and stormwater design manual in the context of the increasingly changing intensity of rainfall events.

Regularly reviewing and updating stormwater and floodplain ordinances and the stormwater design manual is essential to address the increasing intensity of rainfall events. As climate patterns shift, existing regulations and requirements in the stormwater design manual may become outdated.

5.4.B: Develop a countywide Stormwater Management Plan to identify flood hazard areas and mitigation strategies (with an emphasis on areas outside of designated regulatory (FEMA) flood hazard maps).

A countywide Stormwater Management Plan is important to identify flood hazard areas and implement effective mitigation strategies, especially in areas not covered by FEMA's regulatory flood hazard maps. These unmapped areas may still be prone to flooding due to localized conditions (especially with increasingly flashy, high intensity storm events).



Above: Road closure in Baldwin County caused by flooding.

PRINCIPLE #6

UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Fiscally responsible public services, utilities, and infrastructure at locations that efficiently serve the housing and development needs of Baldwin County.

VISION METRIC

Regular updates (every five to ten years) of the Baldwin County Future Land Use Plan for coordination with utility and transportation planning in the County.

GOALS:



1. Encourage development to occur within areas served (or planned) by public sewer and other utilities and infrastructure.

- Encourage growth in 'Urban Growth' 'Unincorporated Village Nodes,' and 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas at densities that support fiscally responsible costs of public services and facilities.
- Raise awareness for residents in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' land use areas that, because of low-density development patterns and distance from population centers, utilities may require higher connection costs and there may be longer service times for emergency responders.



2. Continue inter-government and utility collaboration.

- Use the future land use plan and growth projections to coordinate with state, local, and private entities to plan for and invest in infrastructure, including roads, sewer, schools, and other utilities in anticipation of growth.
- Encourage the use of state and federal funding programs to upgrade or construct new transportation and utility infrastructure.



3. Increase access to High-Speed Internet.

- Support continuing state and regional programs to expand broadband internet access to all areas of the county.



Goal 6.1:
Encourage development to occur within areas served (or planned) by public sewer and other utilities and infrastructure.

6.1.A: Encourage growth in 'Urban Growth,' 'Unincorporated Village Nodes,' and 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas at densities that support fiscally responsible costs of public services and facilities.

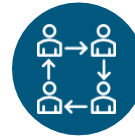
Encourage growth in 'Urban Growth,' 'Unincorporated Village Nodes,' and 'Regional Economic Opportunity' zones at densities that support fiscally responsible costs of public services and facilities. These areas are more likely to be served by public sewer, water, and other utilities, allowing development to make efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure rather than spreading low-density development over large areas, which requires more expense per capita to provide services and infrastructure.

6.1.B: Raise awareness for residents in 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' land use areas that, because of low-density development patterns and distance from population centers, utilities may require higher connection costs, and there may be longer service times for emergency responders.

New residents in rural areas, especially if they have moved from a community, often expect the same level of services and utilities as living in a community. Residents should be aware of the potential challenges associated with living in rural areas, such as higher utility connection costs and longer emergency response times.

Residents should also be aware of potential additional long-term costs in areas not readily served by public infrastructure and services, such as the maintenance of private drives and private sewer systems, as well as higher homeowner insurance costs.

On-going awareness could include a "new resident" tab on the Baldwin County government website.



Goal 6.2:
Continue inter-government and utility collaboration.

6.2.A: Use the future land use plan and growth projections to coordinate with state, local, and private entities to plan for and invest in infrastructure, including roads, sewer, schools, and other utilities in anticipation of growth.

Multiple state, local, and private entities provide infrastructure and services in Baldwin County. One of the most effective ways for Baldwin County to continue inter-government and utility coordination is to regularly update growth projections and the future land use plan and share the updates with the local and regional partners. The growth projections enable partners to anticipate future needs and plan accordingly, including coordinating potential joint agreements and achieving efficiencies in common design and maintenance standards. Using the future land use plan as a guide, partners can ensure that infrastructure investments are made in the right places at the right times, avoiding reactive, piecemeal development that may be more costly and less effective.

By aligning investments with anticipated growth, partners can focus on areas where infrastructure can be efficiently extended, avoiding sprawl and preserving open spaces and agricultural lands. Regular updates of the future land use plan are also an important economic development tool. When businesses know that a community has a clear plan for future growth and the infrastructure to support it, they are more likely to invest in those areas, leading to economic development and job creation.

6.2.B: Encourage the use of state and federal funding programs to upgrade or construct new transportation and utility infrastructure.

Encourage collaboration between property owners, utility providers, municipalities and Baldwin County to utilize new and established state and federal funding programs to upgrade or construct new transportation and utility infrastructure. Baldwin County should develop a long range transportation and infrastructure plan with established regional priorities to focus infrastructure investments in areas with the highest demand and need.



Goal 6.3
Increase access to High-Speed Internet.

6.3.A: Support continuing state and regional programs to expand broadband internet access to all areas of the county.

Residents frequently cited the lack of high-speed internet in some areas of Baldwin County as a top concern and priority. While Baldwin County has limited ability to expand broadband internet on its own, the county should support and advocate for continued state and regional programs to expand broadband access until all areas of the county are served.

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Future Land Use Plan

3

Future Land Use Plan

THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN IS A GUIDE

The Future Land Use Plan is an essential component of this master plan. This chapter outlines the anticipated pattern and character of land use in Baldwin County. The map is intended to guide future land use decisions, with each land use category reflecting a range of place characteristics that can be achieved through the Baldwin County Zoning Ordinance.

It is important to remember the difference between the Future Land Use Plan and zoning (and other development regulations). The future land use plan is a policy guide for planning future growth, shaping policies, and informing decision-making. Zoning, on the other hand, is a regulatory tool that defines current legal uses.

While zoning is very specific in terms of permitted uses and development standards, such as lot sizes, setbacks, and density, the Future Land Use Plan is intentionally more generalized in its descriptions. It serves as a goal-oriented document that outlines expectations for each land use category. The Future Land Use Plan broadly identifies the types of land use patterns anticipated throughout the county and their preferred locations.

Through local legislation, the Alabama Legislature has granted the Baldwin County Commission limited authority to enforce zoning laws within unincorporated Baldwin County. The Code of Alabama requires that for an area of unincorporated Baldwin County to be subject to zoning laws, the registered voters residing within the planning district must hold a referendum vote and elect, by majority vote, to come under zoning laws. This enabling legislation creates differing strategies for implementing the Future Land Use Plan. Within planning districts that remain unzoned and have not elected to come under zoning laws, the Future Land Use Plan does not apply to land use and development review decisions. It is only used for transportation and infrastructure planning and to guide the initial zoning map once the district votes to come under zoning laws. However, in zoned districts of Baldwin County there are two strategies for implementing the Future Land Use Plan. One approach is updating the zoning ordinance and development regulations to align with the plan's recommendations. Another strategy is to use the Land Use Plan as a reference when reviewing rezoning requests.

When updating the zoning ordinance or evaluating rezoning applications, the Planning and Zoning Commission and Baldwin County Commission should consider the context in which the Land Use Plan was adopted. If conditions have changed since adoption, adjusting the land use vision may be appropriate. However, if conditions remain consistent, strong preference should be given to adhering to the recommendations of the Land Use Plan.

THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN SHOULD BE REGULARLY UPDATED

The Future Land Use Plan should not be considered a static document, especially in a fast-growing county like Baldwin County. The plan and growth projections should be updated at least every five (5) years, and the full master plan should be updated every ten (10) years.

BENEFITS OF THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

While the Future Land Use Plan is a policy guide, it does have multiple benefits.

- ***Planning for Growth***

It provides a long-term framework for how the county should develop, ensuring that land use decisions align with the community's goals for the future.

- ***Coordination of Public Services and Infrastructure***

The plan helps the county, utilities, and other partners efficiently allocate resources for infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, schools, and public services, ensuring that these investments support future growth.

- ***Consistency in Decision-Making***

The plan helps ensure consistency, reducing uncertainty for developers, property owners, and residents. It helps avoid incompatible land uses.

- ***Protection of Baldwin County Character***

The rural and agricultural character of Baldwin County is a core value for many residents. The plan helps identify key areas of the county where rural landscapes, natural habitats, and farmland should be prioritized.

- ***Attraction of Investment***

A well-articulated land use plan gives investors confidence that the county is prepared for growth, reducing risks and fostering economic development.

- ***Guide for Zoning and Development Regulations***

While the plan is a policy guide, it does provide a foundation for updating zoning ordinances and making rezoning decisions, ensuring they align with the community's long-term goals.

Future Land Use Plan Categories

The Baldwin County Future Land Use Plan is organized into eight land use categories.

PRESERVATION AREAS

Characteristics

- **Priority areas for preserving rural character, farmland, and natural habitats.**
- **Low development density.**
- **Recognition that community services and utilities may be more limited than growth areas.**

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

RURAL PRESERVATION

CONSERVATION BUFFER

TRANSITION AREAS

Characteristics

- **Transitional areas from higher intensity growth areas to more rural areas of Baldwin County.**
- **Important characteristics of 'Highway Corridor' include access management and preserving rural viewsheds.**

RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD

HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

GROWTH AREAS

Characteristics

- **Priority areas for growth and development.**
- **Recognition that these areas will incur significant man-made development.**
- **Community services and utilities should be available or planned.**

URBAN GROWTH

UNINCORPORATED VILLAGE NODE

REGIONAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREA

Future Land Use Plan

The map on this page shows the future land use map. As outlined under the Chapter "Principles and Goals," the goals of the land use plan include:

Encourage regional cooperation.

- Encourage communities to prepare a future land use plan for areas adjacent to their city limits likely to be annexed (Urban Growth Areas).

Protect our unique natural environment, enhance water quality, and mitigate flooding

Maintain the character of our communities and quality of life

Balance areas of growth and preservation.

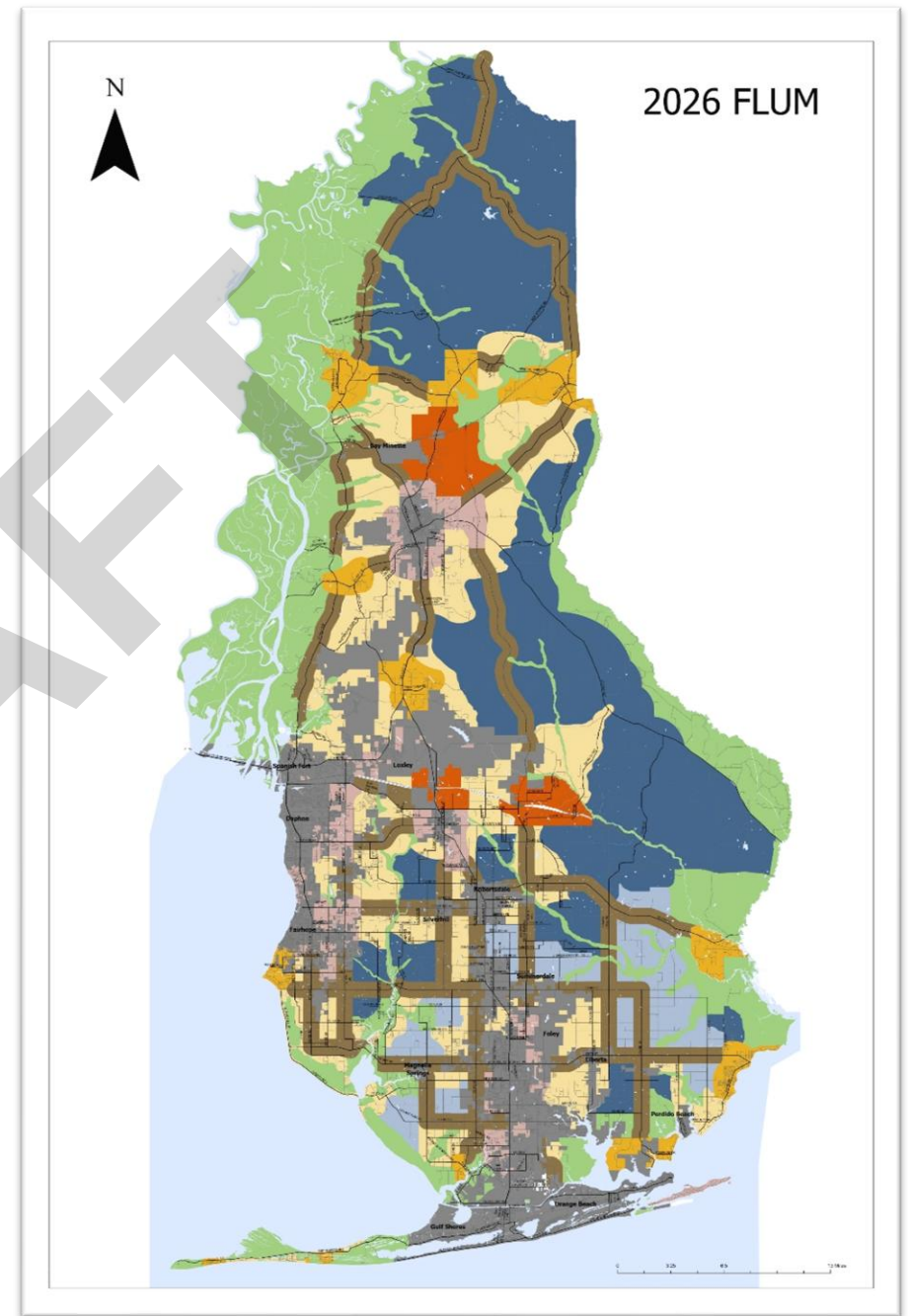
- Use the land use plan to identify priority farmland and rural preservation areas.
- Use the land use plan to identify economic development areas of regional importance that require larger sites and can leverage Baldwin County's unique transportation assets and proximity to regional commerce centers.
- Provide transition areas from growth areas to rural and agricultural areas.

Provide expectations of future availability of community services, sewer, and other utilities.

- Use the future land use plan and growth projections to coordinate with state, local, and private entities to plan for and invest in infrastructure, including schools, roads, sewer, and other utilities, in anticipation of growth.
- Acknowledge that some land uses may not have the same level of community services and utility access.

Detailed Future Land Use Maps can be found in Appendix "A". GIS maps of Future Land Use Plan can be found at <https://baldwincountyal.gov/departments/planning-zoning/planning-department-maps>

The following pages describe each land use category.



Future Land Use Map

Future Land Use Plan Category Descriptions

The land use category descriptions on the following pages include:

Preservation Areas

- Farmland Preservation
- Rural Preservation
- Conservation Buffer

Transition Areas

- Rural Neighborhood
- Highway Corridor

Growth Areas

- Regional Economic Opportunity
- Unincorporated Village Node
- Urban Growth

There is no standard for how detailed a land use category description should be. While zoning descriptions are typically very specific, detailing permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks, and density, the Future Land Use Plan is intentionally more generalized. As a guiding document, it offers flexibility, allowing for broader considerations such as natural resources, transportation, and economic development.

For each land use category, information includes:

- Overview of category
- Uses
- Development Density

Additionally, the descriptions outline expectations for:

- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Community Services and Utilities
- Housing Mix
- Visual Character

Baldwin County is geographically large, and needs, expectations, and goals vary across different areas and communities within the County.

It's important to remember that the descriptions for each land use category are purposefully general. They are detailed enough to provide policy guidance, but not so specific as to be overly prescriptive. While this master plan and Future Land Use Plan serve as a guide for more detailed plans, regulatory updates, or design guidelines, those processes should include further public and community input.

It is also important to note that the Future Land Use Plan is not a rigid designation per parcel. It provides a guide for how land should develop over time based on community goals, anticipated growth, and infrastructure needs. By using a guiding approach, the plan can balance flexibility with strategic direction, ensuring it remains relevant and actionable while allowing for case-by-case evaluations, particularly in areas near the boundary edges of Future Land Use Plan categories.

Land Use: **FARMLAND PRESERVATION**



Overview

Baldwin County has a rich agricultural heritage. Preserving farmland maintains this tradition for future generations while enhancing food security and contributing to the economy of Baldwin County. Preserving farmland also helps to maintain the rural character of Baldwin County. Many residents value the open spaces, scenic landscapes, and cultural identity associated with agriculture. Preserving farmland contributes to the county's overall quality of life and attractiveness as a place to live and visit. 'Farmland Preservation' areas are likely to include a mix of natural habitats and open space in addition to agricultural areas.

Uses

Typical uses include land devoted to agriculture including working farms used for cultivated croplands, pastures, and livestock operations. Residential should be limited and should include farmstead splits and small farm development. Residential development should be associated with food production or be consistent with the historic use of the property and area. Commercial uses support or are dependent upon agriculture, and tourism that is compatible with rural and agriculture character and respect neighboring property owners. This land use category may also include other types of open space including woodlands, grasslands, waterbodies, and wetlands.

A priority should be the permanent preservation of prime farmland through voluntary conservation tools.

Development Density

Very low development density. Overall residential density should be limited to a maximum of 64 dwelling unit per square mile.

Higher density residential development may be suitable if residential lots are clustered with a minimum of 50% of the remaining land subdivided as permanently preserved open space or agriculture.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: With very low-density development, future volume increases on county roads will likely remain limited. Coordinate with ALDOT to prioritize improvements on state routes that are increasing in traffic volumes. Recognize the importance for agriculture equipment to travel safely on county roads.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Due to the low-density and distance from destinations, pedestrian travel will be less common. Bicycle networks will be uncommon unless part of planned routes to destinations.

Transit: Due to the low-density, transit will be uncommon but the use of BRATS should be encouraged to transfer workers and residents from the rural areas into the community and employment centers.

Economic Development

Focus on agriculture and agri-business. Tourism should be compatible and dependent upon rural and agricultural character and respect neighboring property owners.

Natural Resources

Emphasis on preserving existing natural habitats, especially areas that are part of habitat cores. Encourage permanent preservation through voluntary conservation easements. Encourage new natural ecological habitats through restoration. Utilize watershed approach for best practices related to water quality and stormwater management.

Community Services and Utilities

Public water and sewer service will be limited. Because of low-density development patterns and distance from population centers, water and sewer utilities may require higher connection costs and expansion of water and sewer utility systems should be discouraged. Land uses within these areas should predominantly rely on on-site potable water wells and on-site septic systems.

Housing Mix

Limited single-family housing that should be associated with food production or be consistent with the historic use of the property and area.

Visual Character

Views of agriculture, open space, and natural resources are valued. Care should be taken to avoid signage, lighting, infrastructure and other features that distract from the rural character. The siting of buildings, parking, and other man-made elements should take into consideration the importance of preserving the rural character, while acknowledging that some man-made agricultural elements can have varying character.

Land Use: **RURAL PRESERVATION**



Overview

Residents value the rural character of Baldwin County, including open spaces, scenic landscapes, natural habitats, and farmland. 'Rural Preservation' are areas with strong rural character with a mix of natural habitats, open space, agricultural areas and limited residential.

Residential uses are low-density, primarily single-family, and typically are located along existing rural roadways rather than in multi-lot subdivisions.

Uses

Typical land uses include a mix of natural habitats including woodlands, grasslands, waterbodies, and wetlands. Agriculture includes working farms used for cultivated croplands, pastures, and livestock operations. Residential should be limited. Commercial uses support or are dependent upon agriculture, and tourism that is compatible with rural and agriculture character and respect neighboring property owners.

A priority should be the permanent preservation of natural areas and prime farmland through voluntary conservation tools.

Development Density

Very low development density. Overall development density should be limited to a maximum of 128 dwelling units per square mile. Continue measures that ensure minimum parcel size is conducive to on-site, private sewers.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: With very low-density development, future volume increases on county roads will likely remain limited. Coordinate with ALDOT to prioritize improvements on state routes that are increasing in traffic volumes. Recognize the importance for agriculture equipment to travel safely on county roads.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Due to the low-density and distance from destinations, pedestrian travel will be less common. Bicycle networks will be uncommon unless part of planned routes to destinations.

Transit: Due to the low-density, transit will be uncommon but the use of BRATS should be encouraged to transfer workers and residents from the rural areas into the community and employment centers.

Economic Development

Focus on agriculture and agri-business. Tourism should be compatible and dependent upon rural and agricultural character and respect neighboring property owners. Smaller parcels in Rural Preservation areas may be suitable for small-scale, locally-operated farming operations such as hobby farms and Community-Supported Agriculture.

Natural Resources

Emphasis on preserving existing natural habitats, especially areas that are part of habitat cores. Encourage permanent preservation through voluntary conservation easements. Encourage new natural ecological habitats through restoration. Utilize watershed approach for best practices related to water quality and stormwater management. Encourage residential property owners to restore or preserve natural habitats instead of lawns or mono-cultures.

Community Services and Utilities

Public water and sewer service will be limited. Because of low-density development patterns and distance from population centers, water and sewer utilities may require higher connection costs and expansion of water and sewer utility systems should be discouraged. Land uses within these areas should predominantly rely on on-site potable water wells and on-site septic systems.

Housing Mix

Limited single-family housing on large parcels.

Visual Character

Views of agriculture, open space, and natural resources are valued. Care should be taken to avoid signage, lighting, infrastructure and other features that distract from the rural character. The siting of buildings, parking, and other man-made elements should take into consideration the importance of preserving the rural character.

Land Use: **CONSERVATION BUFFER**



Overview

Baldwin County has over 215,000 acres of parks and conservation areas in unincorporated areas. Baldwin County residents and visitors treasure these parks and conservation areas for their beauty and ecological importance. 'Conservation Buffer' areas recognize the importance of existing parks and conservation areas by acknowledging potential priority areas for new parks or conservation areas. 'Conservation Buffer' areas also serve as transition zones between park and conservation areas and adjacent land uses.

Uses

Typical land uses include a mix of natural habitats including woodlands, grasslands, waterbodies, and wetlands. Agriculture includes working farms used for cultivated croplands, and pastures. Residential and commercial should be limited. Natural habitats, agriculture, and limited residential and commercial, serve as a transition and buffer from parks and conservation areas to other land uses.

A priority should be the permanent preservation of natural areas through public acquisition or voluntary conservation tools. Expansion of park and conservation area boundaries are encouraged through private, local, state, and federal partners and agencies.

Development Density

Very low development density. Overall residential density should be limited to a maximum of 64 dwelling units per square mile. Continue measures that ensure minimum parcel size is conducive to on-site, private sewers.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: Vehicular access to parks and conservation areas is important, and local roads often experience higher traffic volumes due to visitor activity. Roadway improvements should prioritize safety, particularly with the increased visitor traffic, without compromising the area's natural character and viewsheds.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Bicycle access to parks and conservation spaces is important. All major parks should be linked together by roadway facilities with wide paved shoulders, adjacent multi-use trails, or a comprehensive county wide trail system.

Transit: BRATS transit access to major park and conservation destinations should be provided wherever possible.

Economic Development

Parks and conservation areas are the focus for visitation. Supportive economic development should be limited and allowed within the 'Conservation Buffer' only if necessary. Supportive economic development should not be within preservation areas.

Natural Resources

Emphasis on preserving existing natural habitats, especially areas adjacent to existing park and conservation areas. Encourage new natural ecological habitats through restoration. Utilize watershed approach for best practices related to water quality and stormwater management. Encourage permanent preservation through public acquisition or voluntary conservation tools. Expansion of park and conservation area boundaries are encouraged through private, local, state and federal partners and agencies.

Community Services and Utilities

Sewer service will be limited. However, sewer access may be desirable to serve restrooms and other park facilities. On-site septic sewer and on-site potable well or water collection systems should be encouraged for lower visitor parks and conservation areas. Utility and services should be primarily focused on visitor requirements.

Housing Mix

Limited single-family housing on large parcels.

Visual Character

The importance of natural aesthetics in parks and conservation areas is paramount. Care should be taken to respect the natural visual character in the 'Conservation Buffer.' Care should be taken to minimize signage, lighting, infrastructure and other features that distract from the natural character. The siting of buildings, parking, and other man-made elements should take into consideration the importance of preserving the natural character.

Land Use: **RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD**



Overview

Baldwin County has many rural areas where single-family homes on larger lots and low-density development are common. The 'Rural Neighborhood' category recognizes this development pattern and also recognizes that additional residential in these areas can help alleviate development pressure in adjacent 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' areas.

'Rural Neighborhood' is a transitional area from higher intensity areas to more rural areas of Baldwin County.

Uses

Primarily single family residential.

Development Density

Low development density. Residential may be limited to a minimum of 128 to 256 dwelling units per square mile with on-site water and sewer. However, increased residential densities of 256 to 640 dwelling units per square mile are encouraged in areas where public water and sewer utility service are available.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: Ensure transportation interconnectivity is achieved with all new residential street construction. Prioritize improvements to county roads based on Baldwin County's roadway connectivity plan and the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan. Coordinate with ALDOT to prioritize improvements on state routes that are increasing in traffic volumes.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Due to the low-density and distance from destinations, pedestrian travel will be less common. Bicycle networks should be encouraged through multi-use trails or paved road shoulders (when roads are paved or improved).

Transit: Due to the low-density, transit will be uncommon, but the use of BRATS should be encouraged to transfer residents from the rural residential areas into the community and employment centers.

Economic Development

Work from home or other limited home-based businesses.

Natural Resources

Recognition that these areas will be a mix of low-density residential and natural areas. Continue best practices for site development regarding water quality, stormwater management, vegetation preservation, and landscaping. Encourage residential property owners to restore or preserve natural habitats instead of lawns or mono-cultures. Subdivisions should include community open spaces and parks.

Community Services and Utilities

Sewer service may be limited. Lower density areas should rely upon on-site water and septic sewer. Subdivisions within higher density areas should require new public water and sewer systems. 'Rural Neighborhood' may have better access to utilities than 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' areas, but service may be mixed.

Housing Mix

Single-family housing at low-density.

Visual Character

Rural character is valued, but opportunities to preserve rural and open space views may be limited due to single family housing. Careful design of new landscaping and preservation of natural elements can better blend residential development with the natural surroundings. Residential home materials and design should complement the rural character and be of high quality. Proper maintenance and upkeep of residential properties contribute significantly to the visual character.

Land Use: **HIGHWAY CORRIDOR**



Overview

'Highway Corridor' are areas that due to their adjacency to transportation corridors have existing or anticipated development. 'Highway Corridor' are located along major county and state roadways which connect growth centers within Baldwin County. 'Highway Corridor' is a transitional area to more rural areas of Baldwin County including 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation.' Important characteristics of 'Highway Corridor' include access management and preserving rural viewsheds.

Uses

Typical land uses include a mix of residential, natural habitats, and agriculture. Along county arterials and major roadways, commercial development may be suitable at appropriate intersections or appropriate outer roads.

Development Density

Low development density. Overall residential density may be limited to 128 to 256 dwelling units per square mile in areas removed from developed areas or key intersections with on-site water and sewer service. However, increased residential densities of more than 256 dwelling units per square mile may be appropriate near developed areas or key intersections where public water and sewer are available.

Commercial density may vary depending on location and existing development context, but likely smaller scale density to service nearby agricultural use, residential development and vehicular travel. Large-scale commercial development should be located in 'Urban Growth' or 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: Emphasis on access management best practices to balance safe and convenient access to adjacent land uses and efficient movement along higher speed, rural roadways. New streets connecting to existing rural corridors should be designed to create a system of interconnected streets and blocks (but not necessarily a grid), including stub streets, to adjacent future development, whenever possible. New streets should be platted as public rights-of-way.

Coordination with ALDOT will be required for any development along state highways. Increased traffic volumes at uncontrolled intersections along Major or Minor Arterial highways should be carefully evaluated for safety considerations. Development along Major or Minor Arterial highways should coincide with appropriate intersection improvements.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Due to the low-density and distance from destinations, pedestrian travel will be less common. Bicycle networks should be encouraged through paved road shoulders or multi-use trails.

Transit: Due to the low-density, transit will be uncommon but the use of BRATS should be encouraged to transfer residents from the rural residential areas into the community and employment centers.

Economic Development

Work from home or other limited home-based businesses. Emphasis should be on local commercial development at appropriate intersections and outer roads.

Natural Resources

While these areas may incur development, these areas are also transitions to more rural areas of the county, including important natural habitats. Continue best practices for site development regarding water quality, stormwater management, vegetation preservation, and landscaping. Preserve natural habitats and the above best practices so that they become amenities for new developments and help preserve rural viewsheds.

Community Services and Utilities

Future growth in these areas should occur as utilities are available. Sewer service may be limited. Subdivisions should incorporate new sewer systems. 'Highway Corridor' may have better access to utilities than 'Rural Preservation' and 'Farmland Preservation' areas, but service may be mixed. Lower density development may occur in areas without public utilities by utilizing on-site water and sewer.

Housing Mix

Single-family housing at moderate to low-density.

Visual Character

While these areas may incur development, views of agriculture, open space, and natural resources are valued. Care should be taken to avoid signage, lighting, infrastructure and other features that distract from the rural character. The siting and setbacks of buildings, parking, and other man-made elements should take into consideration the importance of preserving the rural character. Buffering with new landscaping or preservation of existing natural elements contributes significantly to the visual character.

Land Use:

REGIONAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



Overview

While communities in Baldwin County have many available areas for job and employment growth, some of these areas include smaller parcels that limit the opportunity for large scale facilities, or multiple facilities as part of campus-style office or industrial park settings. The 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas anticipate economic development of regional importance, requiring larger sites that can capitalize on Baldwin County's unique transportation assets, including I-10 & I-65, Class 1 railroads, and the proximity to the Port of Alabama and other large industrial complexes within the region.

Uses

Typical uses include employment or job centers of regional significance that are large scale facilities, or multiple facilities as part of campus-style office or industrial park settings. Uses should align with priority industry clusters through coordination with the Baldwin County Economic Development Alliance, Alabama Department of Commerce, and the local Chambers of Commerce to provide expansion for existing businesses and attraction of new businesses.

Temporary uses such as agriculture may serve as a "holding" land uses until the area transitions to a regional economic opportunity. Stand-alone commercial uses such as gas stations, neighborhood retail, or other spot commercial should be strategically located to serve the workforce in these areas, while avoiding fragmentation of the large sites needed for the targeted industries of regional scale. Mixed uses could be part of a larger planned development.

Development Density

Development and job density can vary depending on the targeted industry cluster.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: Special consideration for street and roadway design to accommodate larger design vehicles and potential peak volumes of traffic, shipments, and deliveries. Recognition of the requirements of emergency responders and services, including the need for multiple access points. Traffic impact studies should be performed with all developments within 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Commuting by automobile will likely remain the primary form of transportation for employees. However, transportation options should be available in the form of sidewalks and shared-use paths, especially from transit stops and perhaps in coordination with longer regional trail networks.

Transit: Transit options should be accommodated.

Economic Development

Significant sites suitable for employment hubs or regional job centers, tailored to host specific industry clusters, are anticipated.

Natural Resources

Recognition that these areas will incur significant development, continue best practices for site development regarding water quality, stormwater management, vegetation preservation, and landscaping. Incorporate open spaces and the above best practices so that they become amenities for new developments.

Community Services and Utilities

Sites should be "shovel ready" with sewer and other utilities readily available (or planned). Baldwin County should coordinate with municipalities and emergency responders to ensure necessary community services and response times for the particular industry.

Housing Mix

Limited housing is expected. However, innovative live-work, mixed-use developments should be encouraged.

Visual Character

The visual character of 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas is expected to be a man-made environment of buildings, parking areas, signage, and lighting of various architecture styles and materials based on the type of industry.

Building form, site design, and materials should complement other high quality commercial development precedents in Baldwin County and surrounding region. Sites should include open space that allows landscaping, buffering, stormwater management and outdoor amenities for employees. Signage should be coordinated with the character of the building and community.

Land Use:

UNINCORPORATED VILLAGE NODES



Overview

To accommodate the growing demand of population and jobs in Baldwin County, Unincorporated Village Nodes' guide development in rural, unincorporated areas by concentrating growth into compact, mixed-use centers. These nodes balance development with rural preservation by creating walkable, high-density hubs for housing, jobs, and services, surrounded by lower-density areas.

'Unincorporated Village Nodes' are areas likely to remain unincorporated.

Uses

A mix of uses is encouraged, including but not limited to residential, commercial, and institutional characteristics of neighborhoods. The specific mix of uses will depend on location, access considerations, and existing development context. Development may take the form of linear corridors along major roadways, large districts that serve as regional destinations for commerce, dining, and entertainment, or small nodes.

Development Density

Residential densities should encourage efficient use of infrastructure and community services. While individual lot sizes can vary, gross residential densities should be in the range of 1,280 to 2,560 dwelling units per square mile.

Commercial density may vary depending on location and existing development context, but likely neighborhood scale density to service nearby residential development as opposed to large scale commercial development that would be better located in 'Regional Economic Opportunity' areas.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: The street network should be designed to create a system of interconnected streets and blocks (but not necessarily a grid), including multiple connections with existing road networks in the county and nearby cities. New streets should be platted as public rights-of-way. Streets should follow "Complete Streets" goals of accommodating multiple modes of transportation, including vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Development should be walkable with sidewalks on both sides of streets. Bicycle networks should be designated with multi-use trails connecting to the regional bike trail network.

Transit: BRATS transit hubs should be accommodated at convenient locations within the 'Unincorporated Village Node'.

Economic Development

Emphasis on neighborhood and local commercial development.

Natural Resources

Recognition that these areas will incur significant man-made development. Continue best practices for site development regarding water quality, stormwater management, vegetation preservation, and landscaping. Incorporate open spaces and the above best practices so that they become amenities for new developments.

Community Services and Utilities

Sewer and other utilities should be available or planned. Baldwin County should coordinate with utility providers, adjacent communities, and emergency responders to ensure necessary community services and response times.

Housing Mix

A mix of housing types to provide housing choices for a wide range of population groups. Village Centers with a mix of neighborhood commercial, multi-family, and single-family uses should be encouraged to create a sense of place for the 'Village Center Node'.

Visual Character

An emphasis on place-making that seeks to create walkable, livable neighborhoods and places where people want to live, work, and play. Development should include open spaces that allow landscaping, buffering, stormwater management, and outdoor amenities for the neighborhood. Buildings, parking areas, signage, and lighting of various architectural styles and materials based on the type of development.

Building form, site design, and materials should complement the character of the unincorporated community and other high quality development precedents in Baldwin County.

Land Use:

URBAN GROWTH



Overview

To manage urban sprawl while accommodating the growing demand of population and jobs in Baldwin County, certain areas of unincorporated Baldwin County should develop at densities consistent with nearby communities. 'Urban Growth' areas should be on the periphery of municipalities or census designated urbanized areas. Baldwin County should respect the need for local communities to plan for future land use adjacent to their areas. Future zoning decisions should be made in coordination with municipal goals and priorities.

'Urban Growth' boundaries allow for efficient annexation and should be coordinated with the municipal annexation plans. The areas would gain access to municipal services such as water and sewer utilities, garbage collection, street maintenance, and emergency response services. 'Urban Growth' areas within unincorporated census designated urbanized areas should be developed around the unincorporated community's goals and to guide growth to appropriate areas surrounding the core of the unincorporated urbanized area.

Uses

A mix of uses is encouraged, including but not limited to residential, commercial, and institutional characteristics of neighborhoods. The specific mix of uses will depend on location, access considerations, and existing development context. Uses should be coordinated with the comprehensive plan of the local community.

Development Density

Residential densities should encourage efficient use of infrastructure and community services. While individual lot sizes can vary, gross residential densities should be in the range of 1,280 to 3,840 dwelling units per square mile. Commercial density may vary depending on location and existing development context.

Transportation

Streets and Roads: The street network should be designed to create a system of interconnected streets and blocks (but not necessarily a grid), including multiple connections with existing road networks in the county and nearby cities. New streets should be platted as public rights-of-way. Streets should follow "Complete Streets" goals of accommodating multiple modes of transportation, including vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.

Pedestrians and Bikes: Development should be walkable with sidewalks on both sides of streets. Bicycle networks should be designated with multi-use trails connecting to the regional bike trail network.

Transit: BRATS transit hubs should be accommodated at convenient locations within the 'Urban Growth' area.

Economic Development

Should be coordinated to align regional and local community goals. Economic development opportunities may have a wide range of uses from neighborhood and local commercial development to significant sites suitable for employment hubs or regional job centers.

Natural Resources

Recognition that these areas will incur significant man-made development. Continue best practices for site development regarding water quality, stormwater management, vegetation preservation, and landscaping. Incorporate open spaces and the above best practices so that they become amenities for new developments.

Community Services and Utilities

Sewer and other utilities should be available or planned. Future growth in these areas should occur as public water, sewer, and roads are provided. If the boundary of planned utilities differs from the boundary of the 'Urban Growth' area, the planned limits of utilities should be shown.

Housing Mix

Housing mix per the goals and objectives of the county and local community. Communities should consider neighborhoods that include a mix of commercial, single-family homes, townhomes, and multi-family developments.

Visual Character

Should align with the goals and objectives of the county and local community to compliment the character of the local community and other high quality development precedents in Baldwin County.

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Transportation Plan

4

Transportation Plan

THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN IS A GUIDE

The Transportation Plan is an essential component of the master plan. It reflects the relationship between land use and transportation in Baldwin County, where development patterns influence travel demand and where the roadway network often shapes the form and intensity of new growth. As a result, this chapter focuses on how the transportation system will respond to the growth patterns identified in the Future Land Use Plan.

Although the proposed land use plan appears in another chapter, the transportation strategies presented here are intended to support and respond to those long-term development expectations. This chapter outlines the transportation needs that result from projected changes in population and development activity and describes the roadway, connectivity, and multimodal improvements needed to maintain a functional and efficient network.

The Future Land Use Plan serves as a long-range guide for shaping growth, while zoning regulations govern current legal uses. State law requires planning districts to adopt zoning through a local referendum. Some districts remain unzoned, and in those areas the Future Land Use Plan is used primarily to guide transportation and infrastructure planning and to inform the initial zoning map if zoning is later adopted. In districts that do have zoning, the land use plan is carried out through updates to zoning regulations and through the review of rezoning requests to ensure that changes are consistent with the adopted vision for growth and supported by appropriate transportation facilities.

This chapter also introduces the principal elements of the Transportation Plan.

- **Connectivity Plan.** Identifies gaps in the roadway network and locations where new or extended roadways are needed to meet current and future travel demand and improve the overall function of the system.
- **Intersection Improvement Plan.** Identifies intersections that require upgrades in order to address existing congestion and to accommodate future traffic conditions.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.** Future
- **Priority List and Implementation Plan.** Establishes an organized approach for ranking projects, identifying funding needs, and planning improvements over time.

Together, these components guide Baldwin County as it plans, invests, and manages transportation systems in response to future growth while maintaining the character and quality of life valued by local communities.

THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN SHOULD BE REGULARLY UPDATED

The Transportation Plan should not be considered a static document, especially in a fast-growing county like Baldwin County. The plan and growth projections should be updated at least every five (5) years, and the full master plan should be updated every ten (10) years.

Connectivity Plan

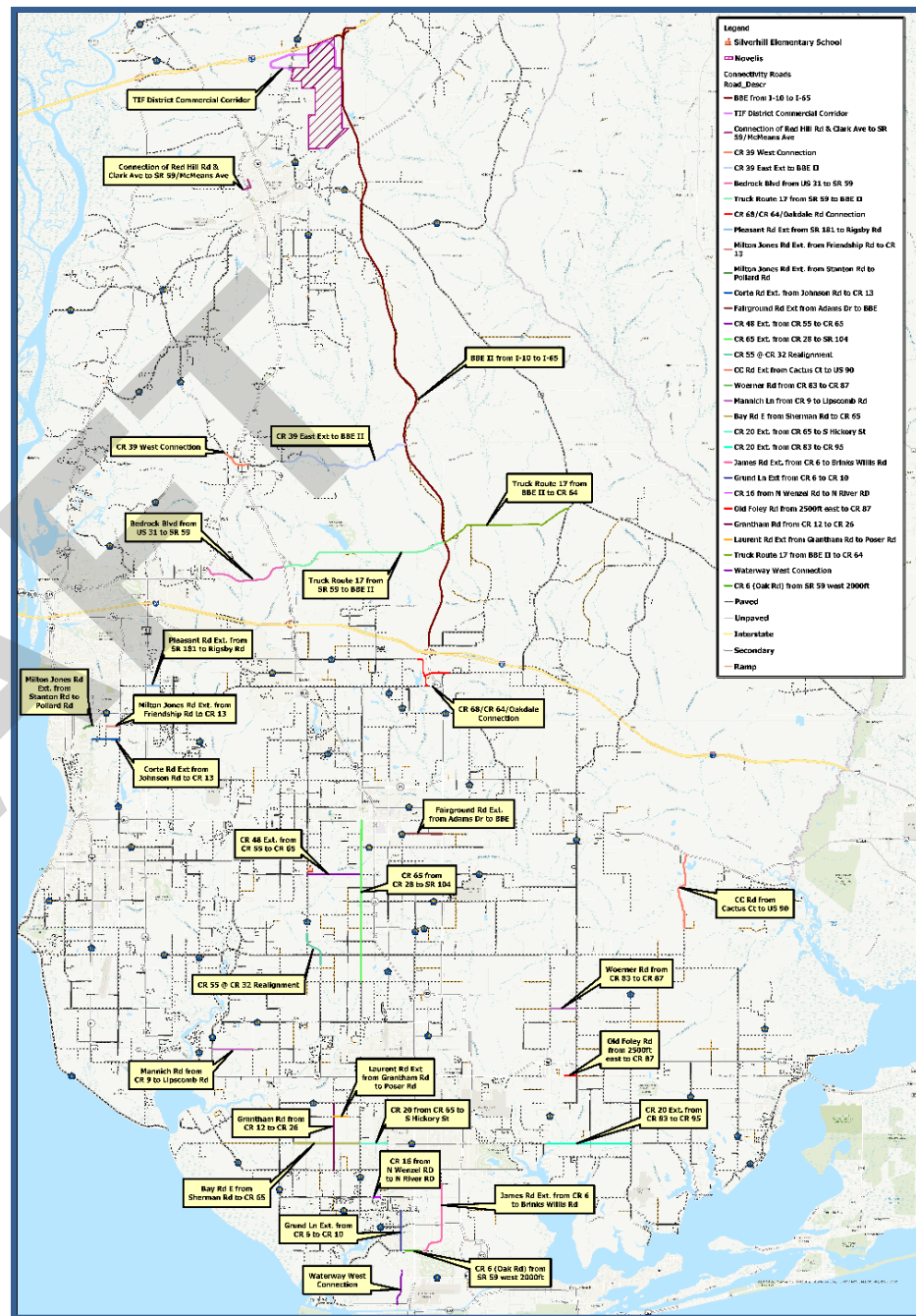
The Connectivity Map illustrates the major roadway links needed to support future growth and maintain mobility throughout Baldwin County. The map shows a dense network in the southern portion of the county, where residential, commercial, and tourism activity is concentrated, and more limited connections in the central, northern, and eastern areas. These variations highlight where additional corridors and upgraded links will be necessary to improve travel efficiency and support long-term development.

A central element of the Connectivity Plan is the proposed Baldwin Beach Express II, which would extend the existing Baldwin Beach Express from Interstate 10 to Interstate 65. This corridor would create a direct connection between the Gulf Coast, central Baldwin County, and the regional interstate system. By reducing pressure on existing north-south routes and improving access to major economic centers, BBE II would play a significant role in supporting countywide mobility and long-term economic growth.

The plan also identifies improvements along County Road 65, an important north-south corridor extending from Bon Secour to Robertsedale. When completed, CR 65 will provide a local alternative to heavily traveled state routes and will help distribute traffic more evenly across the roadway network. This corridor supports growing residential areas and strengthens access between coastal communities and central Baldwin County.

In addition to these major projects, the Connectivity Plan includes targeted east-west and local connections that will help address congestion and improve circulation within and between communities. These improvements increase travel options, enhance access to key destinations, and support efficient movement throughout the county.

Together, these proposed corridors and connections create a more resilient, efficient, and reliable transportation network that supports Baldwin County's long-term mobility needs and economic vitality.



Connectivity Plan Map

The Intersection Improvement Plan identifies locations throughout Baldwin County where targeted upgrades are needed to improve traffic operations, reduce delay, and support long-term mobility. The map highlights a range of intersections on both county and state routes where current traffic conditions, turning movements, or roadway geometry create congestion or operational issues.

Minor intersection improvements include lower-cost enhancements such as stop control additions, improved signage, or the construction of right-turn lanes. These upgrades provide localized operational benefits and improve access where traffic volumes are moderate. Major intersection improvements address more significant congestion points and may include full turning movements in all directions, the addition of left-turn and right-turn lanes, new traffic signals, or the conversion to roundabouts.

Collectively, these improvements strengthen the efficiency of the existing roadway system, support circulation between communities, and reinforce the operational benefits of the broader Connectivity Plan. These upgrades also enhance the overall resiliency of Baldwin County's transportation network by improving performance at critical junctions that serve both local and regional travel needs.



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Priority List and Implementation Plan

Connectivity Plan

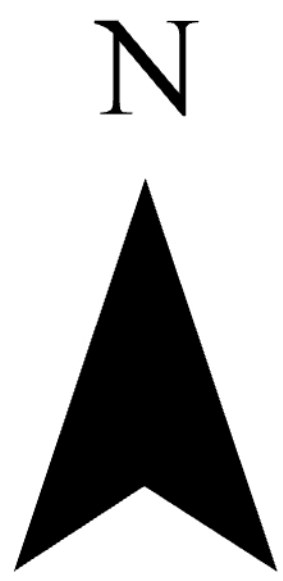
The Connectivity Plan projects represent roadway extensions, new links, and corridor improvements that address gaps in the existing network and support long-term travel needs throughout Baldwin County. These projects improve north-south and east-west circulation, relieve pressure on heavily traveled state routes, and strengthen overall network resiliency. Major corridors such as the Baldwin Beach Express II and County Road 65 form the backbone of this effort, while additional connections enhance access between communities. Implementation of these projects will occur as funding, right-of-way availability, and development conditions allow. The estimated costs provide a planning-level framework that will guide future capital programming and help prioritize investments that support long-term mobility across the county.

Priority List and Implementation Plan

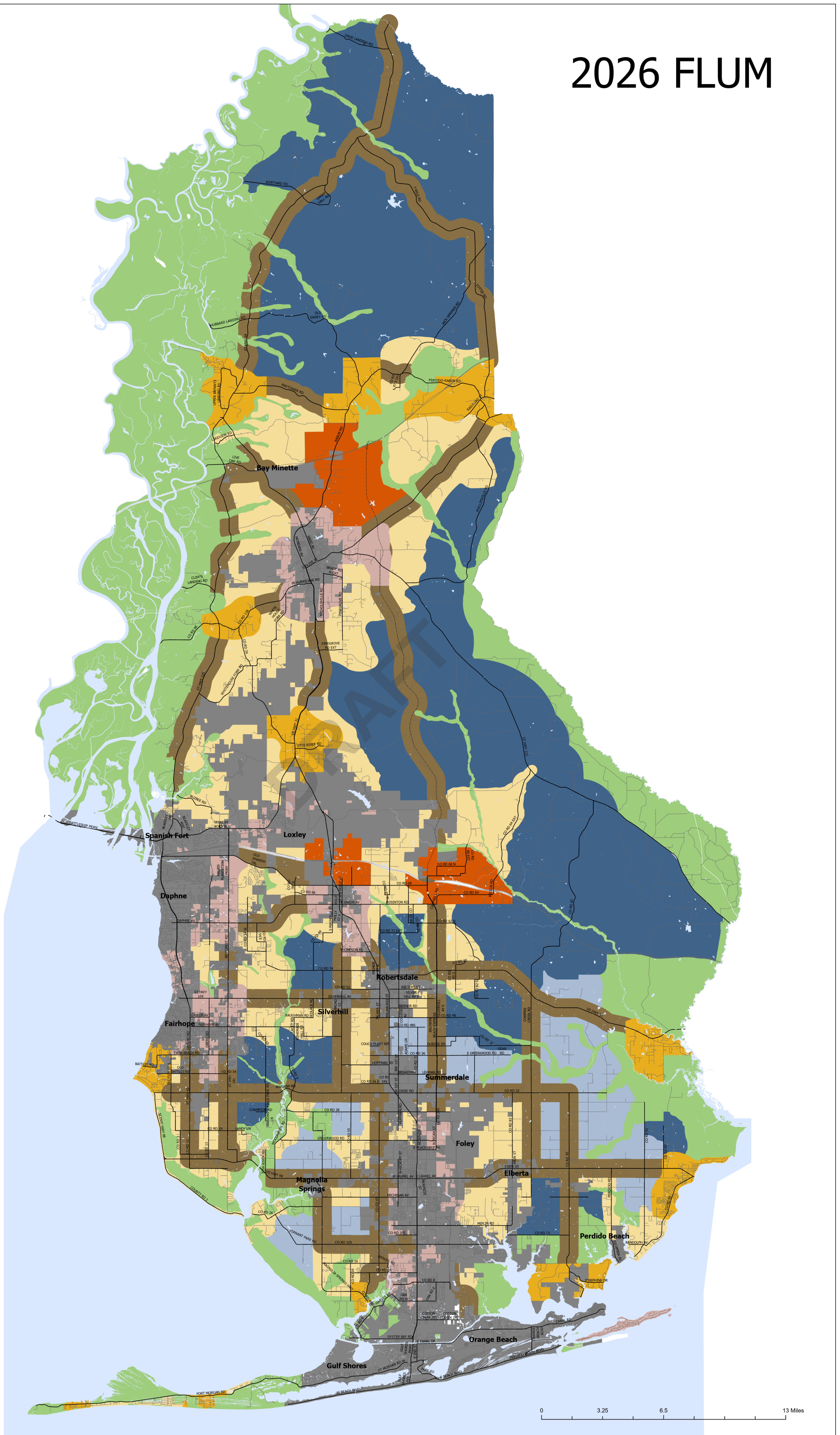
Intersection Improvement Plan

The Intersection Improvement Plan includes both minor and major upgrades intended to reduce congestion and improve traffic operations at key locations throughout the county. These projects address delays created at intersections, which often influence travel times more than the roadway segments between them. Minor improvements consist of lower-cost measures such as stop control and right-turn lanes, while major improvements include full turning movements, added turn lanes, new traffic signals, or roundabout conversions. Implementation of these improvements will advance as resources become available and as operational priorities are identified through ongoing evaluation. The project cost estimates provide a framework for budgeting and help guide the sequencing of intersection upgrades across Baldwin County.

Appendix “A” - Future Land Use Maps



2026 FLUM



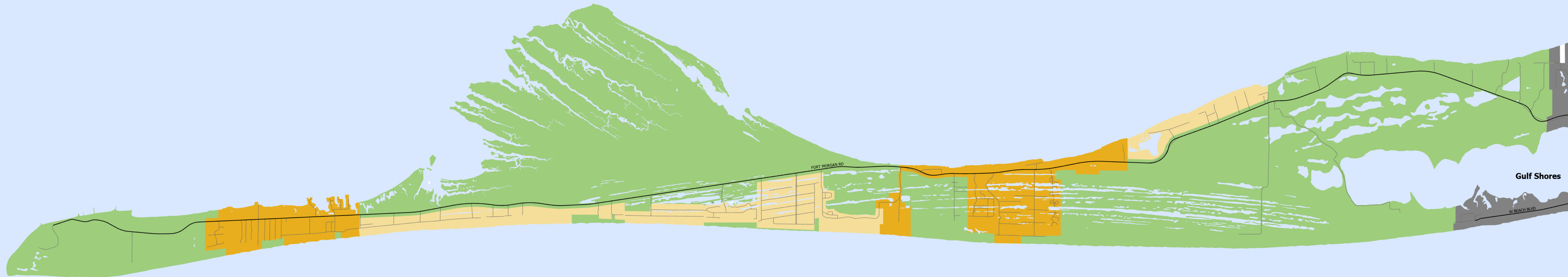
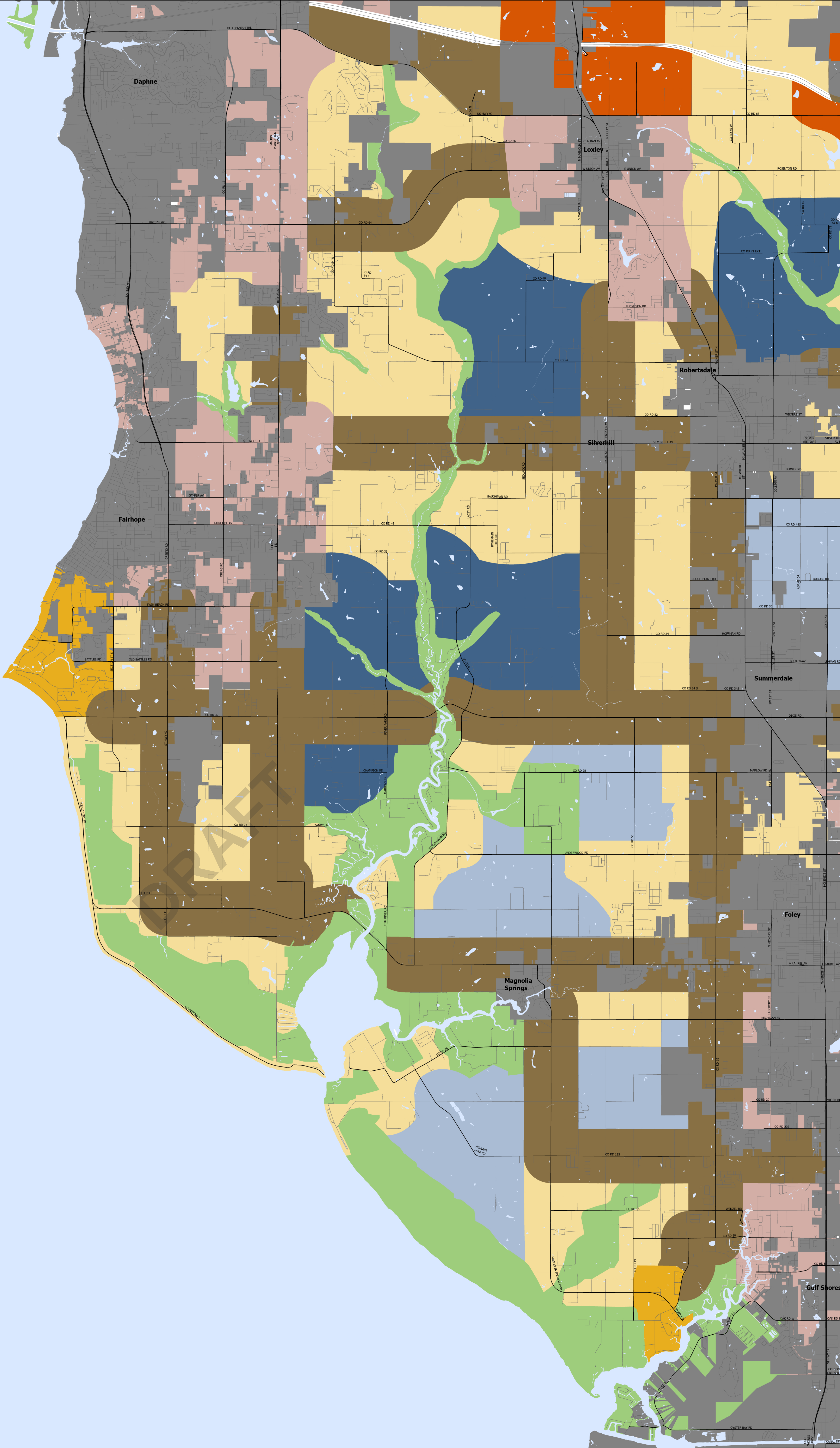
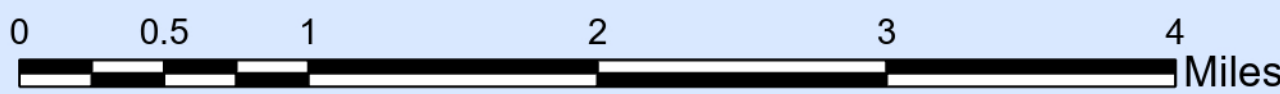
Planning Area 1

Legend

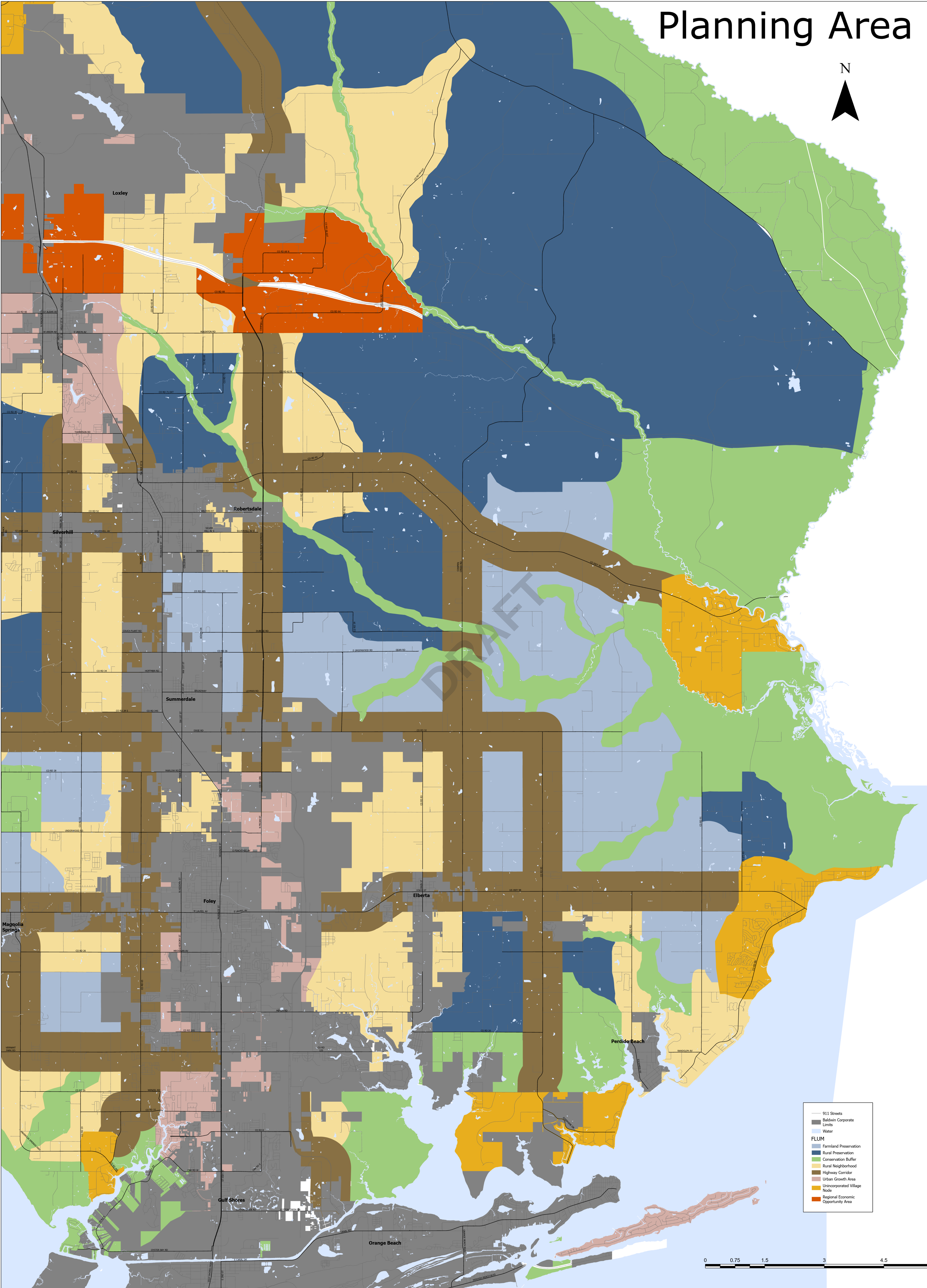
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- Baldwin Corporate Limits
- Water

FLUM

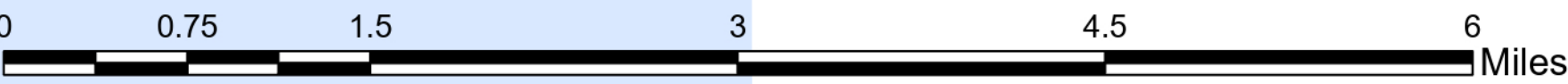
- Farmland Preservation
- Rural Preservation
- Conservation Buffer
- Rural Neighborhood
- Highway Corridor
- Urban Growth Area
- Unincorporated Village Node
- Regional Economic Opportunity Area



Planning Area 2



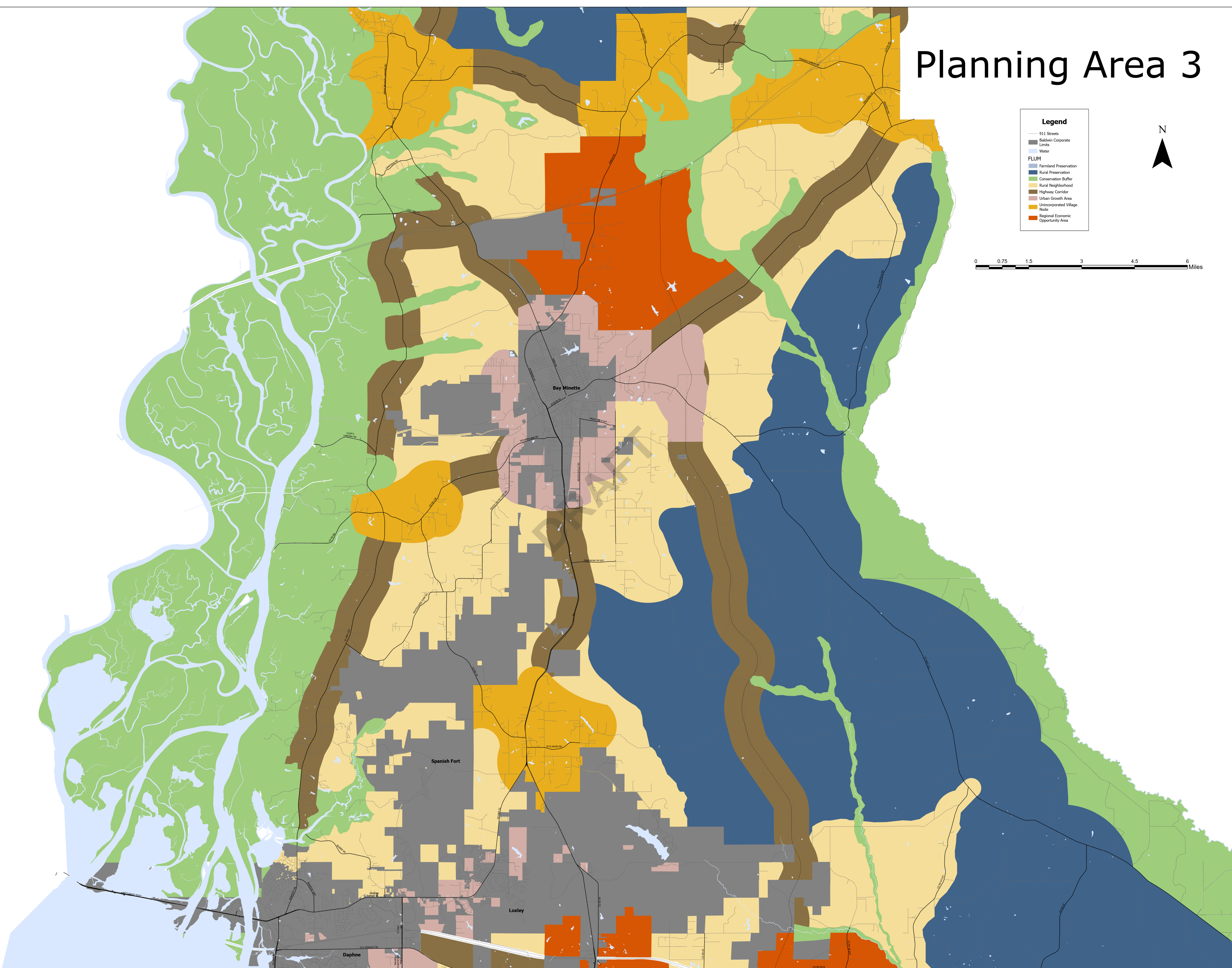
- 911 Streets
- Baldwin Corporate Limits
- Water
- FLUM
 - Farmland Preservation
 - Rural Preservation
 - Conservation Buffer
 - Rural Neighborhood
 - Highway Corridor
 - Urban Growth Area
 - Unincorporated Village Node
 - Regional Economic Opportunity Area



Planning Area 3

Legend

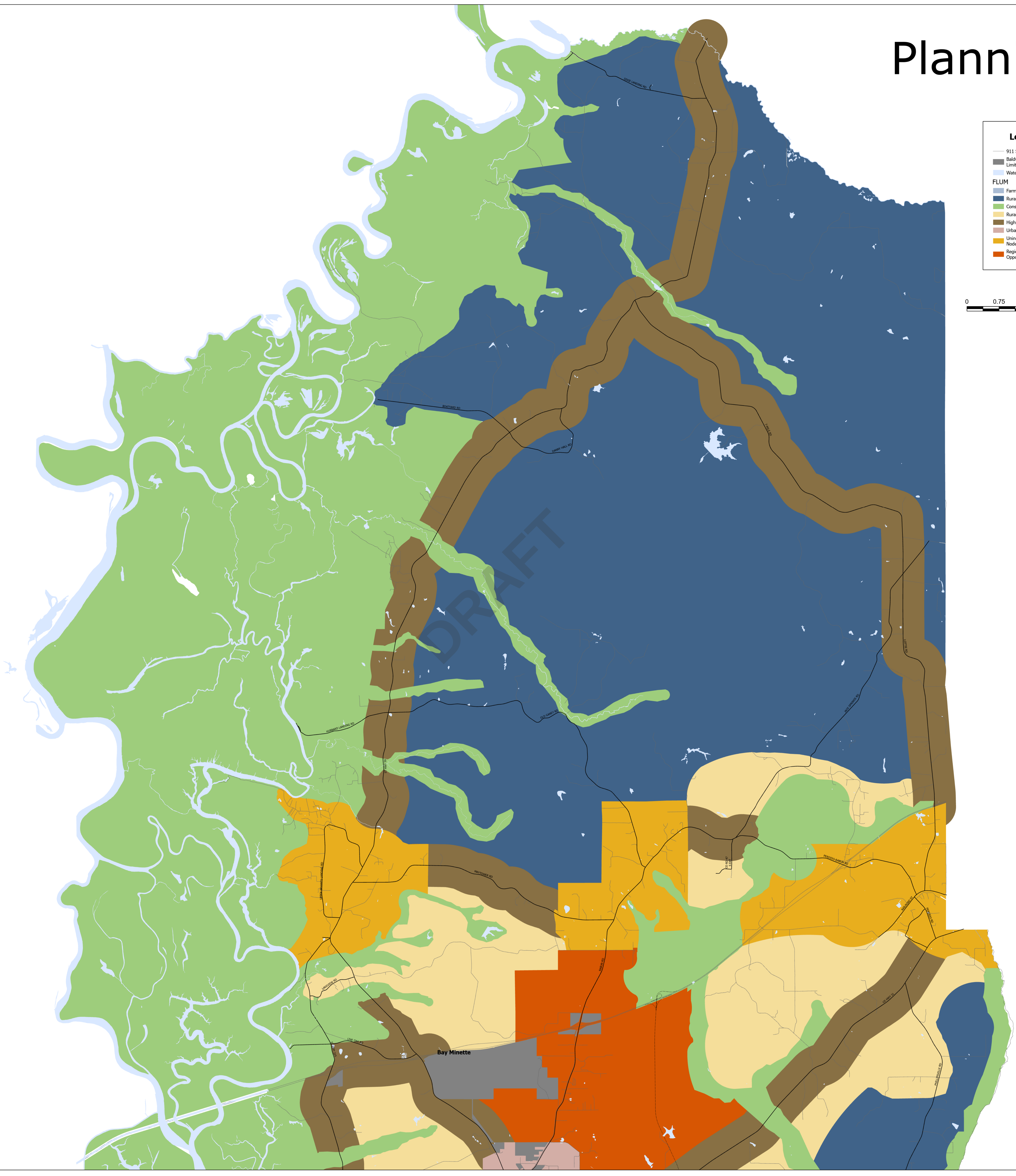
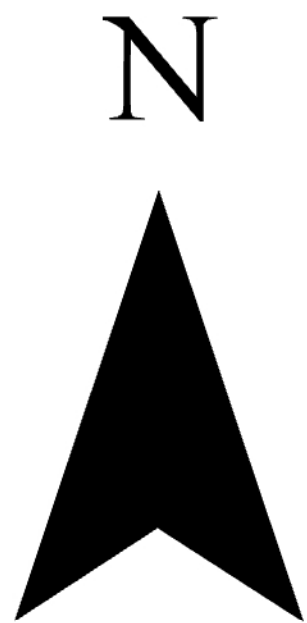
- 911 Streets
- Baldwin Corporate Limits
- Water
- FLUM
 - Farmland Preservation
 - Rural Preservation
 - Conservation Buffer
 - Rural Neighborhood
 - Highway Corridor
 - Urban Growth Area
 - Unincorporated Village Node
 - Regional Economic Opportunity Area



Planning Area 4

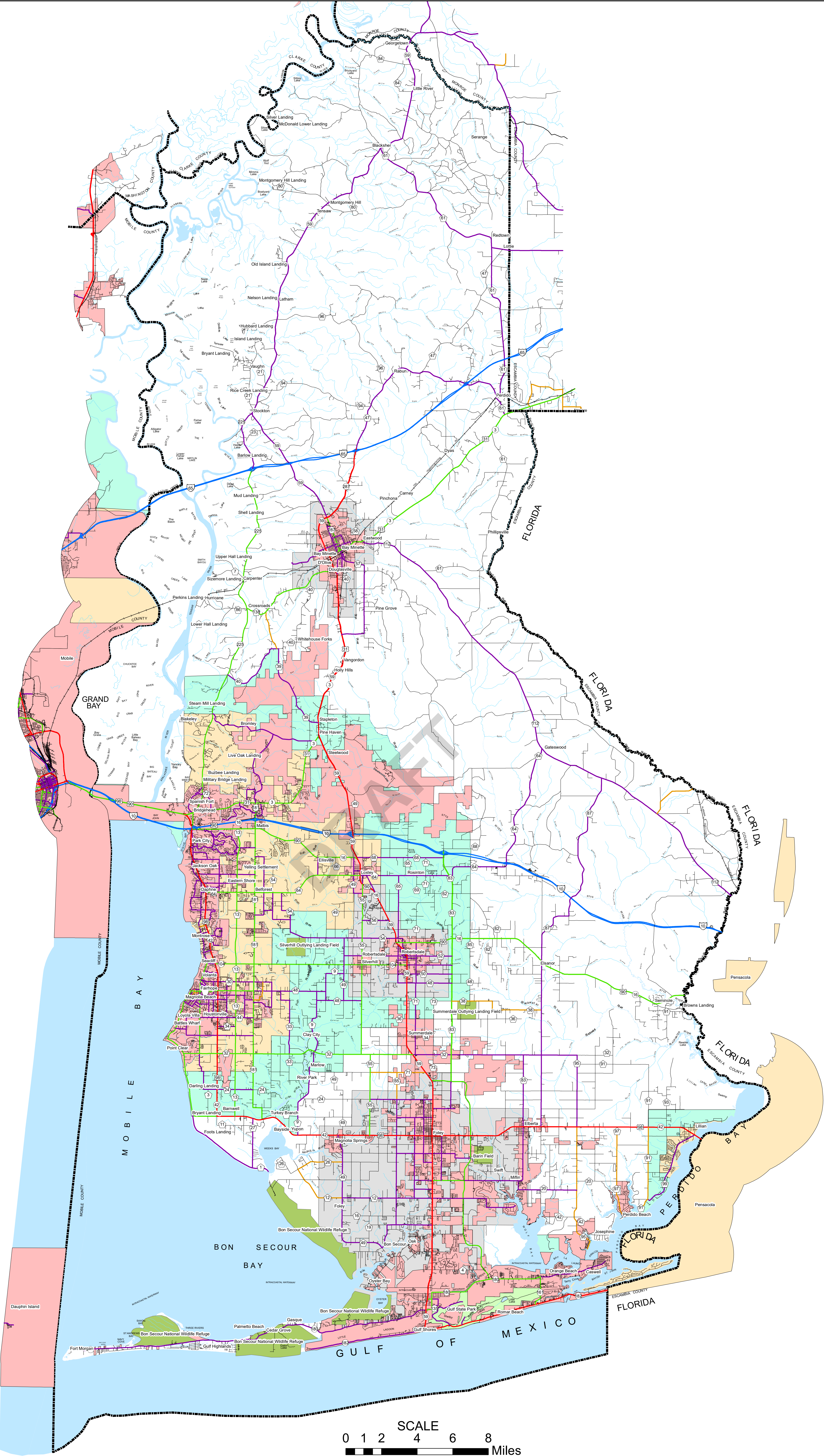
Legend

- 911 Streets
- Baldwin Corporate Limits
- Water
- FLUM
 - Farmland Preservation
 - Rural Preservation
 - Conservation Buffer
 - Rural Neighborhood
 - Highway Corridor
 - Urban Growth Area
 - Unincorporated Village Node
 - Regional Economic Opportunity Area

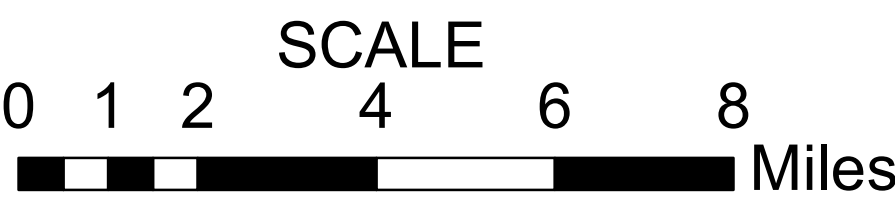


Appendix “B” – Transportation Plan Maps

BALDWIN COUNTY HIGHWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM



APPROVED SIGNATURES	
Federal Highway Administration	DATE
Maintenance Engineer	DATE

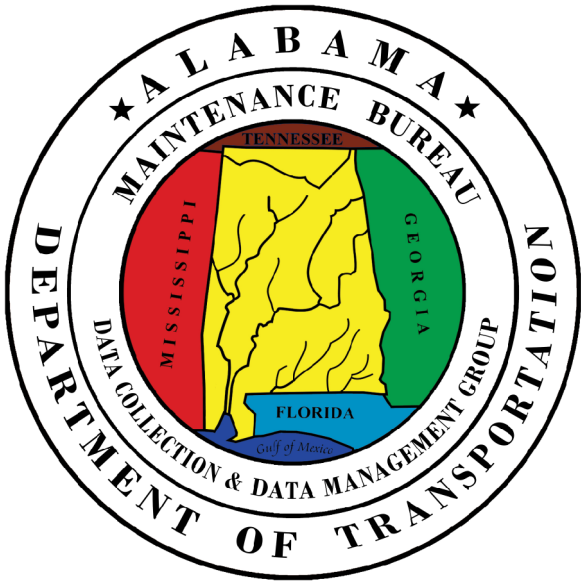
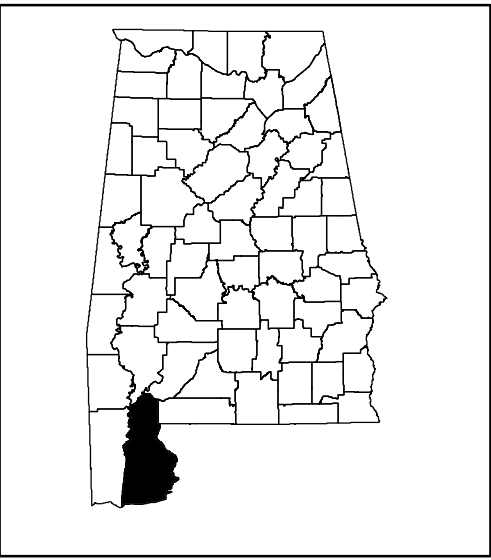


REVISIONS	
DATE	COMMENTS
July, 2021	Added New Legend and Border

BALDWIN COUNTY
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Highway Functional Classification

Disclaimer of Liability:
Due to the scale of this map neither the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) or the State of Alabama nor any employees and contractors thereof, make any warranty, expressed or implied, or assume any legal liability, or responsibility, for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information contained on this map.

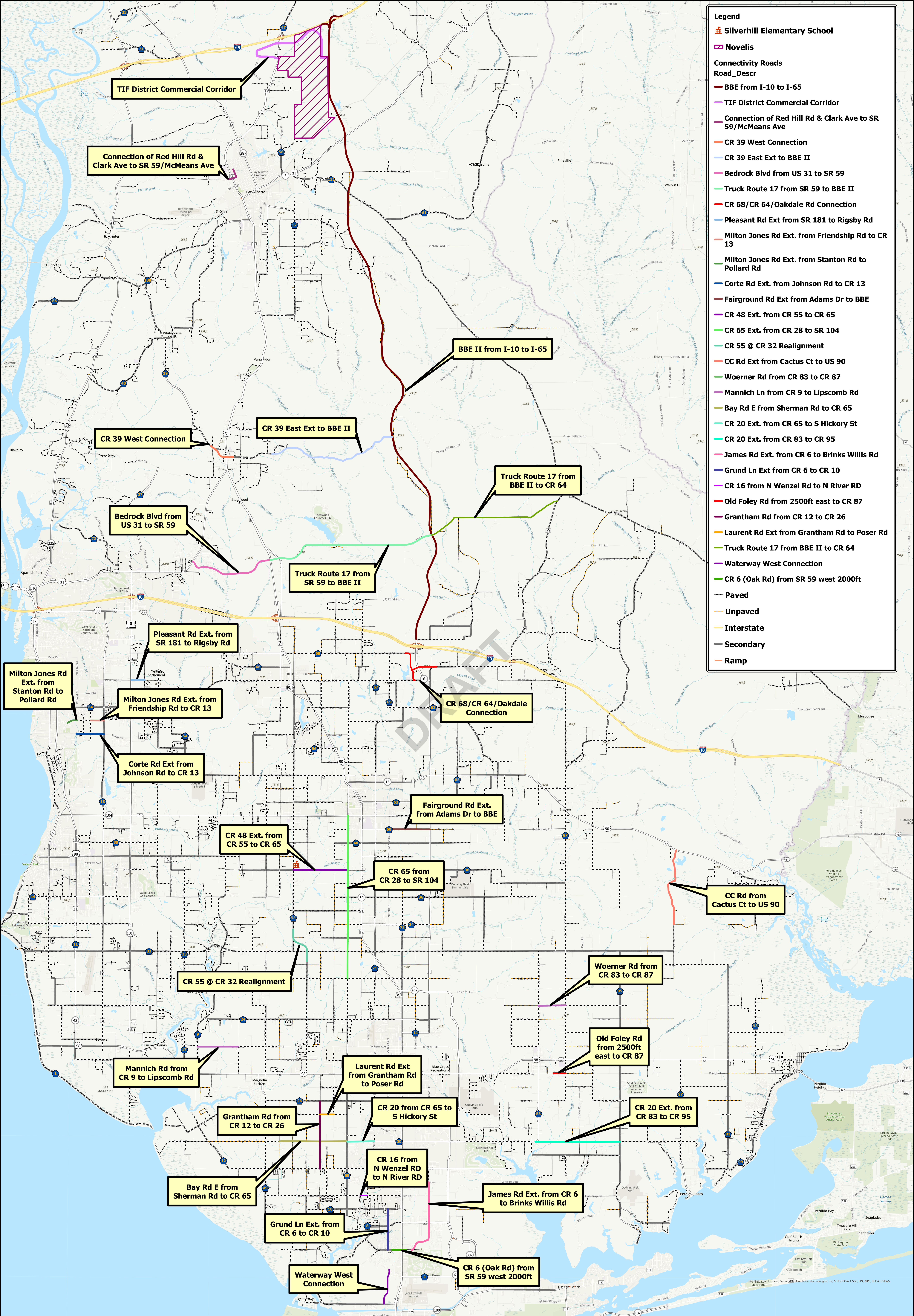
PHWA APPROVAL DATE
July, 2021
DATE



- LEGEND
- Highway Functional Classification
- 1 Interstate
 - 2 Principal Arterial-Other Freeways and Expressways
 - 3 Principal Arterial-Other
 - 4 Minor Arterial
 - 5 Major Collector
 - 6 Minor Collector
 - 7 Local Road
 - Proposed Road
 - Open Water
 - Large Urban Area
 - Small Urban Area
 - State Parks
 - County Boundary
- INTERSTATE
- U.S.
- STATE
- COUNTY
- City Limit
- Federal Lands



Federal Highway Administration
Alabama Division Office



Legend

- Silverhill Elementary School
- Novelis
- Connectivity Roads**
- Road_Descr**
- BBE from I-10 to I-65
- TIF District Commercial Corridor
- Connection of Red Hill Rd & Clark Ave to SR 59/McMeans Ave
- CR 39 West Connection
- CR 39 East Ext to BBE II
- Bedrock Blvd from US 31 to SR 59
- Truck Route 17 from SR 59 to BBE II
- CR 68/CR 64/Oakdale Rd Connection
- Pleasant Rd Ext from SR 181 to Rigsby Rd
- Milton Jones Rd Ext. from Friendship Rd to CR 13
- Milton Jones Rd Ext. from Stanton Rd to Pollard Rd
- Corte Rd Ext. from Johnson Rd to CR 13
- Fairground Rd Ext from Adams Dr to BBE
- CR 48 Ext. from CR 55 to CR 65
- CR 65 Ext. from CR 28 to SR 104
- CR 55 @ CR 32 Realignment
- CC Rd Ext from Cactus Ct to US 90
- Woerner Rd from CR 83 to CR 87
- Mannich Ln from CR 9 to Lipscomb Rd
- Bay Rd E from Sherman Rd to CR 65
- CR 20 Ext. from CR 65 to S Hickory St
- CR 20 Ext. from CR 83 to CR 95
- James Rd Ext. from CR 6 to Brinks Willis Rd
- Grund Ln Ext from CR 6 to CR 10
- CR 16 from N Wenzel Rd to N River RD
- Old Foley Rd from 2500ft east to CR 87
- Grantham Rd from CR 12 to CR 26
- Laurent Rd Ext from Grantham Rd to Poser Rd
- Truck Route 17 from BBE II to CR 64
- Waterway West Connection
- CR 6 (Oak Rd) from SR 59 west 2000ft
- Paved
- Unpaved
- Interstate
- Secondary
- Ramp

