

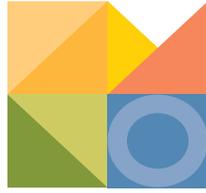


# LAKE WALES, FL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FEBRUARY 2021

2040





# LAKE WALES, FL

## 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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***Lake Wales, the shining  
garden city on the ridge where  
residents celebrate their  
vintage charm and cultivate a  
progressive future.***

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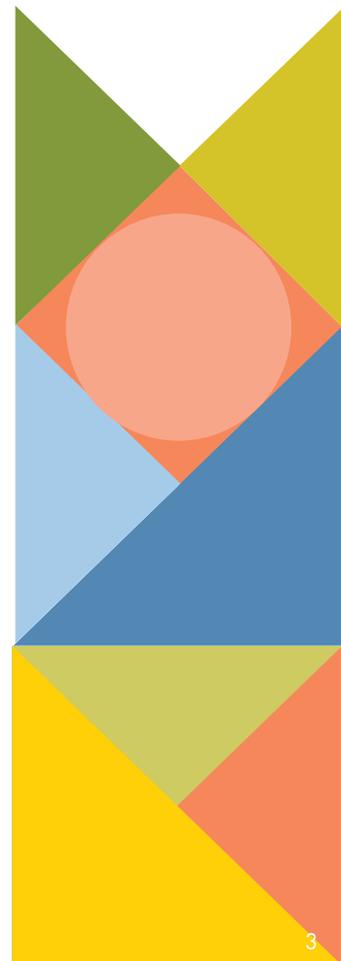
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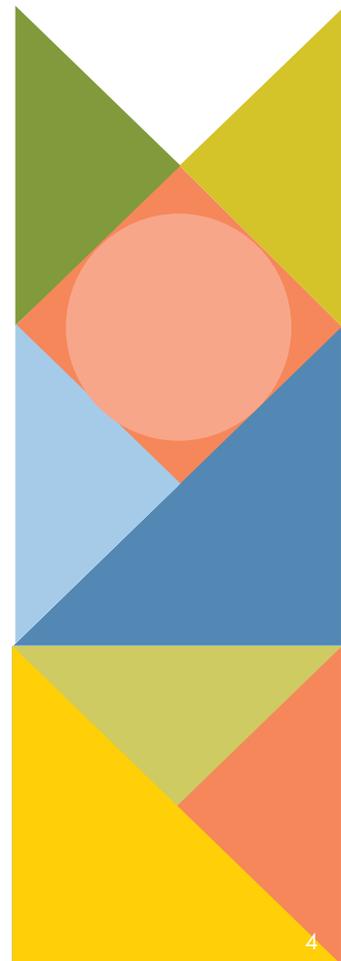
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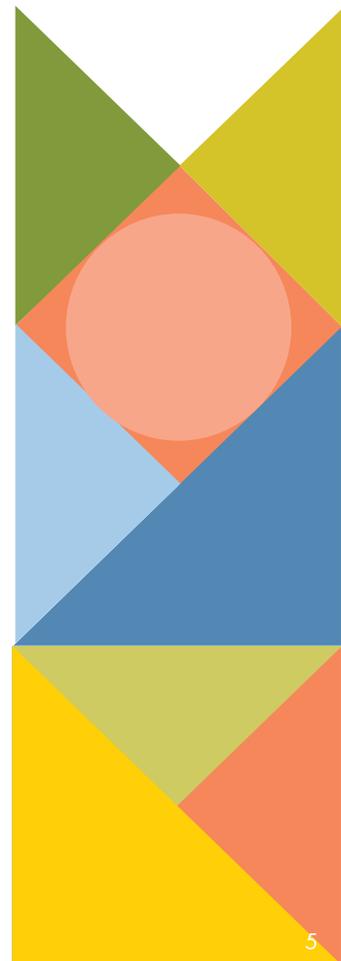
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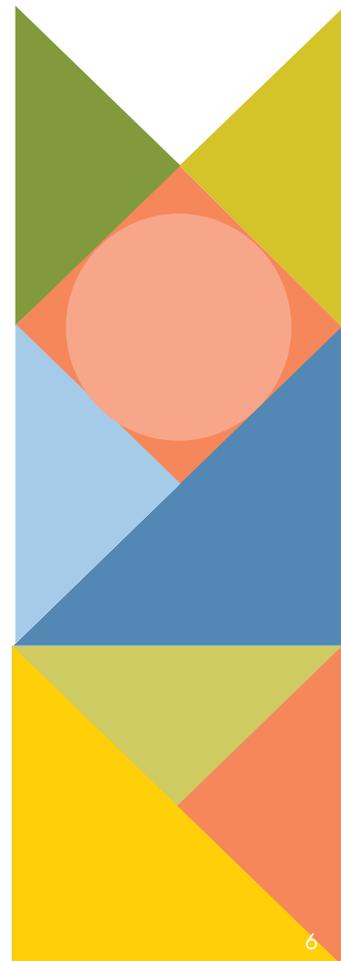
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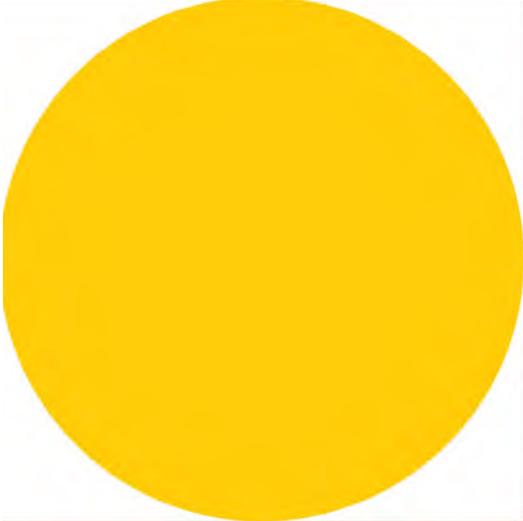
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# FUTURE LAND USE



# I. INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The Future Land Use Element is intended to designate future land use patterns that will best accommodate the projected population and development while minimizing adverse impacts on natural resources and maintaining essential public facilities and services.

The element consists of an inventory and analysis of existing land use data and patterns, the projection of future land needs, objectives and policies as well as a land use map series. The Future Land Use Map and associated policies will guide development in a 20-year planning horizon. Land development regulations and other tools will be used to implement the plan.

## GENERAL HISTORY

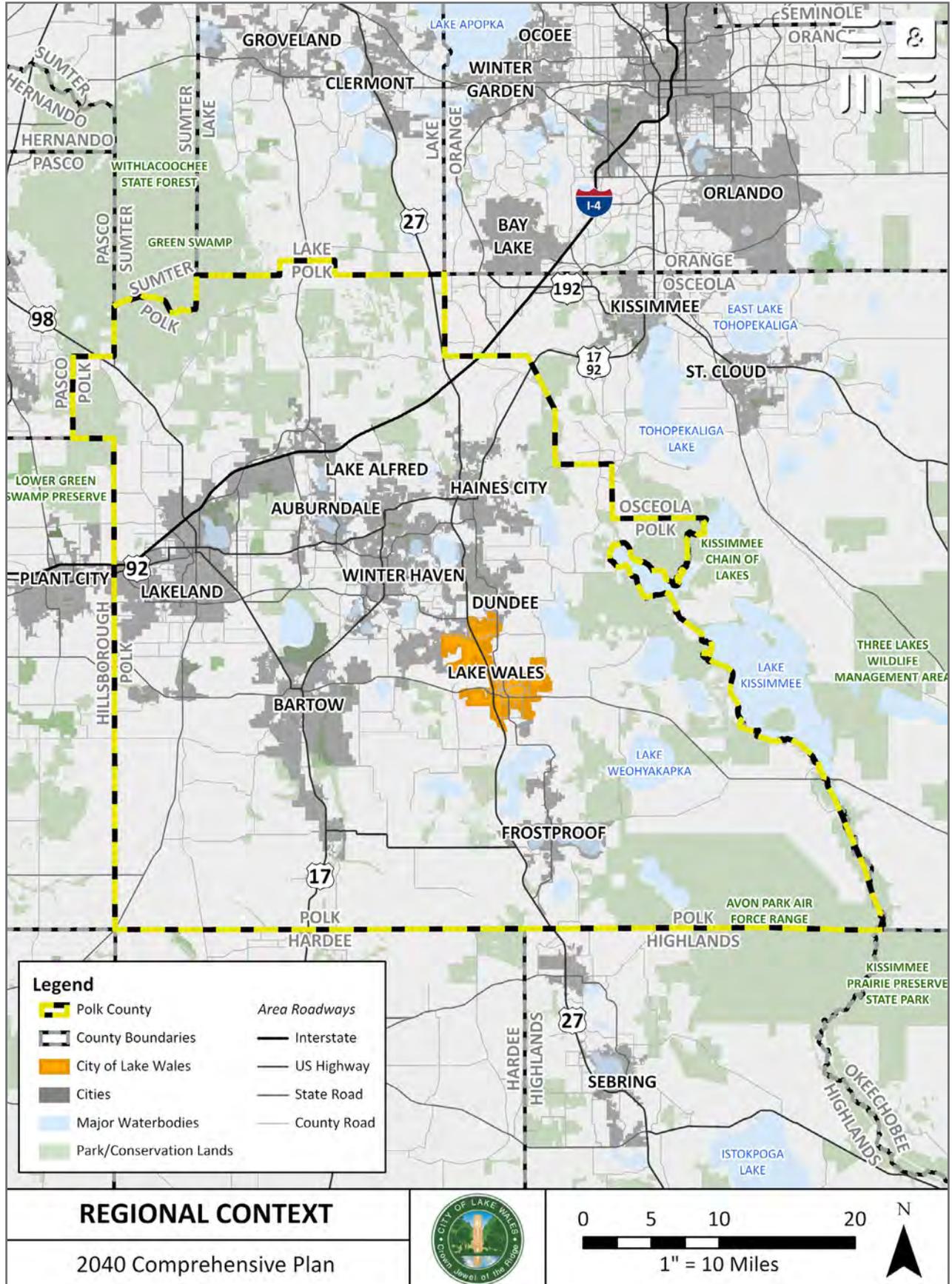
Originally settled by Native American tribes before colonial expansions, the City of Lake Wales was officially established in 1911. Named after a nearby lake of the same name, the township was originally surveyed and planned by the newly created Lake Wales Land Company. Assisted by the recent expansion of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad into the Lake Wales area, industries quickly began to rise throughout the area, including the development of a turpentine still, blacksmith, hotel, general store, sawmill, newspaper distributor, ice plant, and a financial institution. Around this time, the Lake Wales area became one (1) of the largest citrus producers in the world. Enticed by the area's growing economy and warm climate, the City of Lake Wales saw an influx of residents and was eventually incorporated in April of 1917.

In the decades that followed, the City of Lake Wales' economy and residency continued to grow. Although many of the downtown's historic structures were cleared to make room for mid-to-late 20th century redevelopment, the City was able to largely retain the area's historic small-town charm. Supplemented by the area's rich natural amenities, local tourism also began to increase due to the development of new attractions such as Camp Mack, Bok Tower Gardens, and Hotel Grand. Today, the City of Lake Wales continues to thrive as an historic Central Florida community with a progressive, 21st century economy.

The City's comprehensive plan was last updated in 2015. Due to voluntary annexations into the City and national, state, and local growth trends, the city has grown in both size and population since the plan's last update. In 2015, the size of the City was 12,873.0 acres and had a population of 15,011 people; in 2020, Lake Wales grew to 12,980.5 acres and currently has an estimated population of 16,377. These changes in local population and size are expected to have significant ramifications on the future of Lake Wales' local economy.

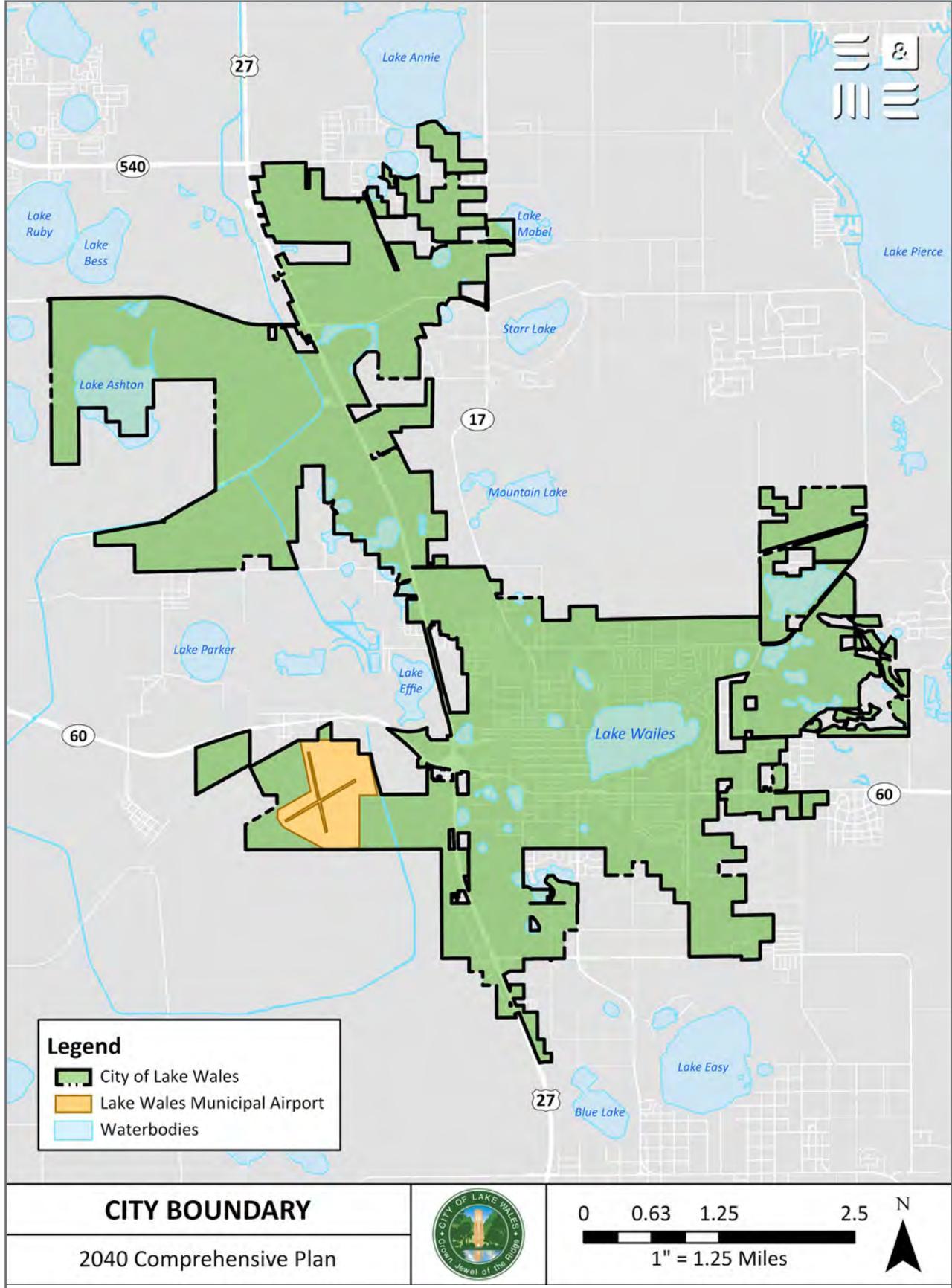
The City is located roughly in the geographical center of Polk County and the state of Florida. In relation to other Polk County jurisdictions, the City of Lake Wales shares a northern boundary with the cities of Winter Haven and Dundee, and the census-designated place (CDP) of Waverly. Additionally, the City of Lake Wales is located less than a half mile from the City of Highland Park to the south. Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrates the general location of Lake Wales within the region and City's immediate area.

Figure 1 Regional Context of Lake Wales, 2020



Sources: Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 2 Lake Wales City Boundary, 2020



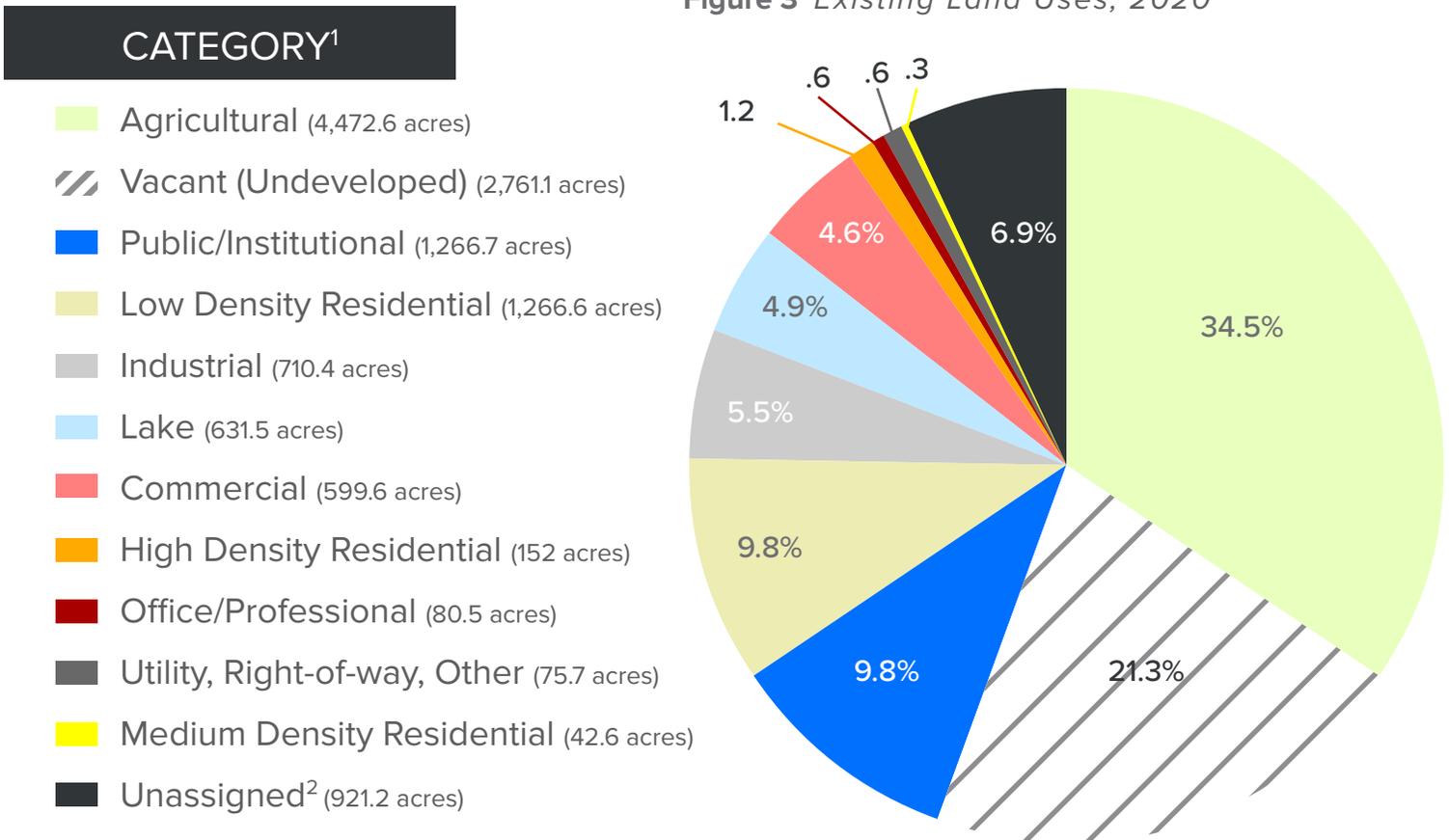
Sources: FGDL, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

# II. LAND USE DATA, INVENTORY, AND ANALYSIS

## EXISTING LAND USES

In order to better guide and direct future land uses (FLU) within the City of Lake Wales, it is necessary to first gain an understanding of present land use patterns. Figure 3 depicts the existing land use and development patterns by parcel in the City of Lake Wales, as of 2020. The existing land use (ELU) inventory serves as the basic framework for the FLU designations.

**Figure 3 Existing Land Uses, 2020**



<sup>1</sup>The ELU categories shown above are derived from the Department of Revenue (DOR) land use codes provided within the most recent version of the Polk County Property Appraiser's parcel shapefile.

<sup>2</sup>Unassigned includes any portion of the City not located within a tax parcel.

Sources: Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 3 shows the acreage of land use by category. This pie chart and Figure 4 show that the predominant use of land in the city is currently Agriculture, covering 4,472.6 acres or about 34.5% of the entire city. The second most predominant land use is Vacant, covering approximately 21.3% of the city, or 2,761.1 acres. A brief description of each land use category, along with their typical uses, is provided below.

### 1. Agriculture

This designation represents areas used for agricultural activities and rural residential development located on the fringes of the urban areas. Uses found in the agriculture areas may include vegetable farms, livestock ranches, fruit groves, plant nurseries and silviculture activities, as well as kennels, farm equipment storage and sales, and other more intensive uses. As shown on the ELU map, agricultural land uses are located around the perimeter of the city.

## **2. Vacant (Undeveloped)**

The vacant classification refers to undeveloped or unimproved parcels. This includes lots in subdivisions that have already been platted, but are not developed, as well as lands that currently have no active uses. As shown on the ELU map, the vacant lands are scattered throughout the city, with the largest parcels on the city's outskirts.

## **3. Public/Institutional**

Public/Institutional uses consist of public, semi-public and private not-for-profit uses, such as civic and community centers, parks, conservation areas, hospitals, libraries, police and fire stations, and government administration buildings, as well as churches, social service facilities, cemeteries, nursing homes, emergency shelters, and similar uses. Educational facilities, such as public or private schools (primary or secondary), vocational and technical schools, and colleges and universities, are also included in this category. This land use is primarily located in the southern half of the city surrounding Lake Wailes.

## **4. Low-Density Residential**

The low-density residential land use category includes low density housing accommodations such as single-family detached dwellings and mobile home units. This type of residential development is located throughout the city but is particularly concentrated around Lake Wailes.

## **5. Industrial**

Industrial uses typically include warehousing, wholesaling/distribution, heavy equipment repair, assembly, processing, motor vehicle impoundment facilities, construction offices, and outdoor storage. This use is primarily located in the eastern-most portions of Lake Wales.

## **6. Lake**

This ELU category contains lands within the City of Lake Wales that predominately feature significant bodies of water. Lakes within city limits include Lake Wailes, Twin Lakes, Lake Weader, and Lake Cooper.

## **7. Commercial**

The commercial land use category consists of a variety of restaurant and retail uses including, but not limited to fast-food establishments, clothing stores, automobile service facilities, and more. As shown on the ELU map, commercial uses are located along major roads such as US-27 and State Road 60.

## **8. High Density Residential**

This ELU designation within the City of Lake Wales describes residential structures capable of accommodating a large number of dwellings that frequently takes the form of multi-story apartments or condominiums. This designation can be found scattered throughout the City.

## **9. Office/Professional**

This ELU designation describes lands within the City of Lake Wales that contain professional offices including medical complexes, office buildings, doctor's offices, and may include structures that have been adapted from single-family homes into offices. Although this land use category is similar to commercial in that it is often found along major roadways that run through the city, it differentiates itself by clustering around the downtown area.

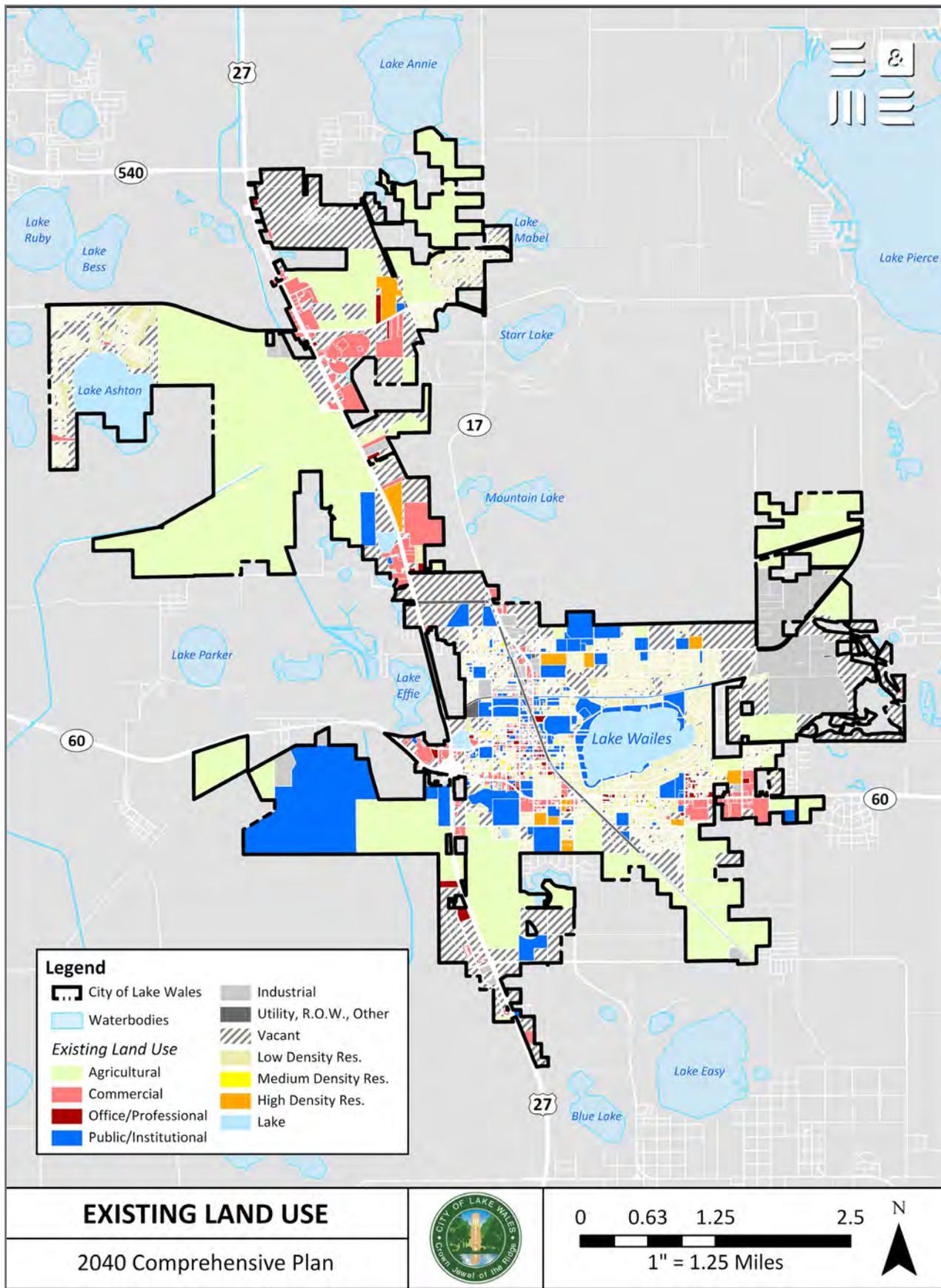
## **10. Utility, Right-of-Way, Other**

The Utility, Right-of-Way, Other ELU category contains infrastructure designed to accommodate the city's diverse residential and nonresidential uses. This designation includes uses such as utility boxes, railroads, stormwater retention/detention facilities, and a limited number of roadways. This land use is found in the southern portion of the city, most notably including the CSX Corporation-owned rail line that runs vertically through the downtown area.

## **11. Medium Density Residential**

The medium density residential land use category includes attached medium density housing accommodations such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes. This ELU category is located throughout the southern portion of the city.

Figure 4 Existing Land Uses, 2020



Sources: Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

# NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The ability of land to support development is a major determinant in land use patterns. The City of Lake Wales is located in the heart of central Florida, and thus shares common environmental characteristics with nearby municipalities. As such, Lake Wales is home to several prominent lakes including, most notably, Lake Wailes, as well as numerous wetlands and floodplains which can pose natural constraints to development. These constraints can slow or hinder development within the City by requiring additional environmental permits through multiple agencies and/or excluding properties for development that have been designated as Conservation on the City's Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Yet, the City of Lake Wales has continued to grow in both and population and size over the past two (2) decades, while still largely maintaining and preserving its rich natural heritage. The following narrative briefly summarizes the state of the natural environment within the City of Lake Wales. Please note that much of this information is discussed in greater detail in the Conservation Element.

## **1. Climate**

The City of Lake Wales enjoys a sub-tropical climate, characterized by warm, humid summers and mild, dry winters. The region's temperature averages 73.45°F; extremes of over 100°F or under 20°F are rare. The average annual precipitation in the region is about 50 inches per year, more than half of which occurs during the rainy season from June through September.

## **2. Water Bodies, Wetlands, and Floodplains**

The primary surface water resource within the City of Lake Wales is Lake Wailes, which covers approximately 310.2 acres and is centrally located in the southern half of the city. Although Lake Ashton is similar to Lake Wailes in overall size, only 272.5 acres of the waterbody is located within city limits. Additionally, the city is home to several smaller lakes and ponds and pockets of swamp/marsh scattered throughout the city. Also scattered throughout the City of Lake Wales are wetlands and floodplains. Figure 5 and Figure 6 show water bodies, wetlands, and the 100-year floodplains within and around the city limits. Wetlands cover approximately 22% of the city's total area, or 2,783.9 acres and 100-year floodplains encompass 3,857 acres, which is nearly 30% of Lake Wales.

Statutory requirements and land development regulations limit development in wetlands and floodplain areas. Additionally, any wetlands impacted by development are required to provide compensatory mitigation, obtain a permit from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Additional regulations for development within the floodplains will be maintained in the city's land development regulations to prevent flooding and require that there be no new net encroachment in the floodplains without compensating storage.

### **3. Soils**

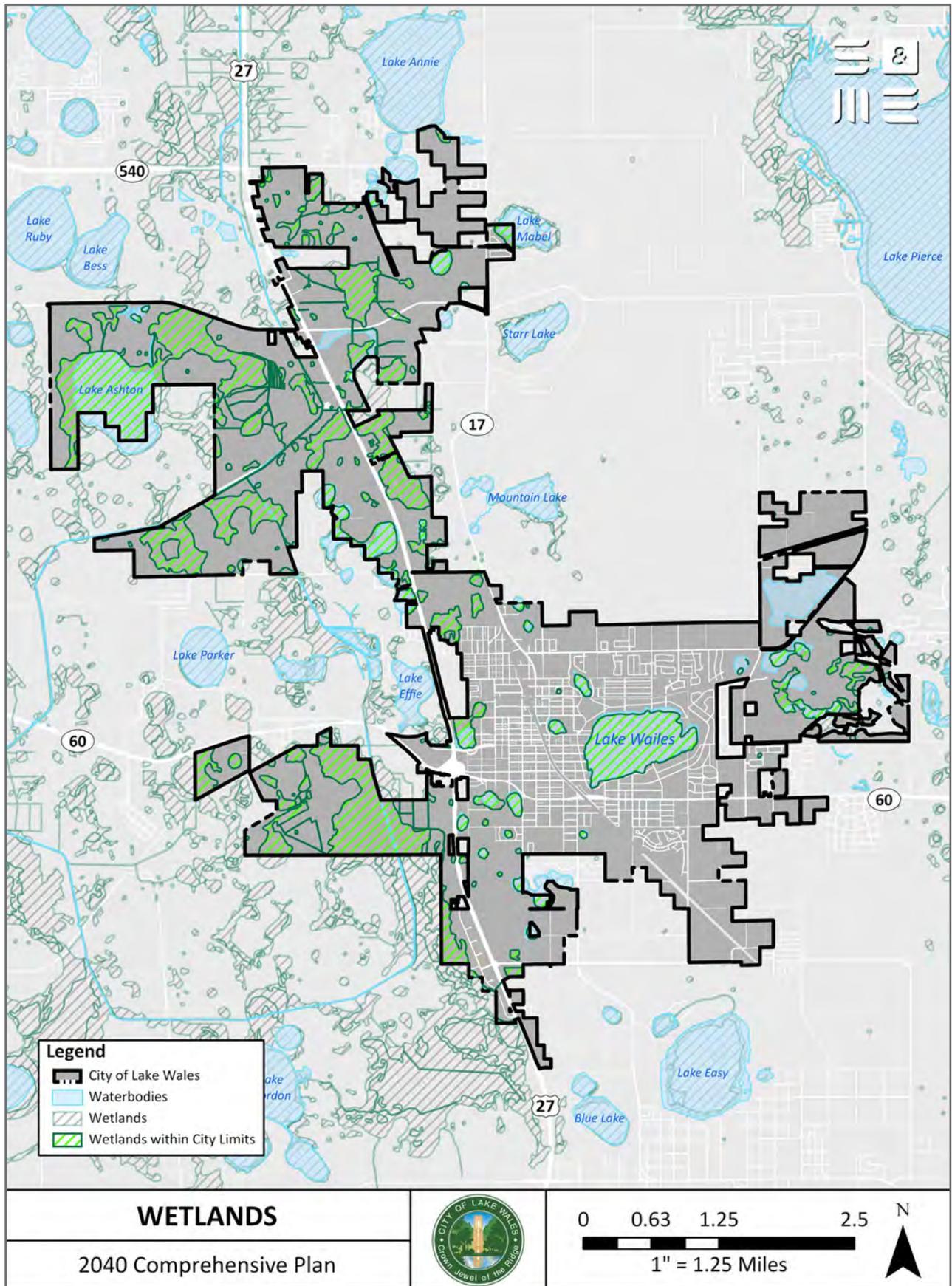
The development potential of land can be affected by the types of soils present. Soils that have poor load bearing features or drain poorly will be more difficult and costly to develop. Other soils may not be suitable for certain types of development and septic tanks. The soil types best suited to support development in the city are those that are well- to excessively-drained and occurring in large areas on uplands, such as the Norfolk, Arredondo and Candler soils.

As shown in Figure 7, soil types found within the City of Lake Wales vary widely from poor to excellent soil conditions for development. Lands located west of US-27 often possess the worst draining soil types, ranging primarily from poorly drained to very poorly drained. Alternatively, areas of the City located to the east feature soils that are well suited for development. In fact, a majority of incorporated lands east of US-27 contain soils that drain excessively. This sharp contrast in local soil conditions largely reflect the City's overall development pattern, as the eastern portion of the City features a relatively dense development pattern, while development in western Lake Wales is often sparse and sporadic.

### **4. Historic Resources**

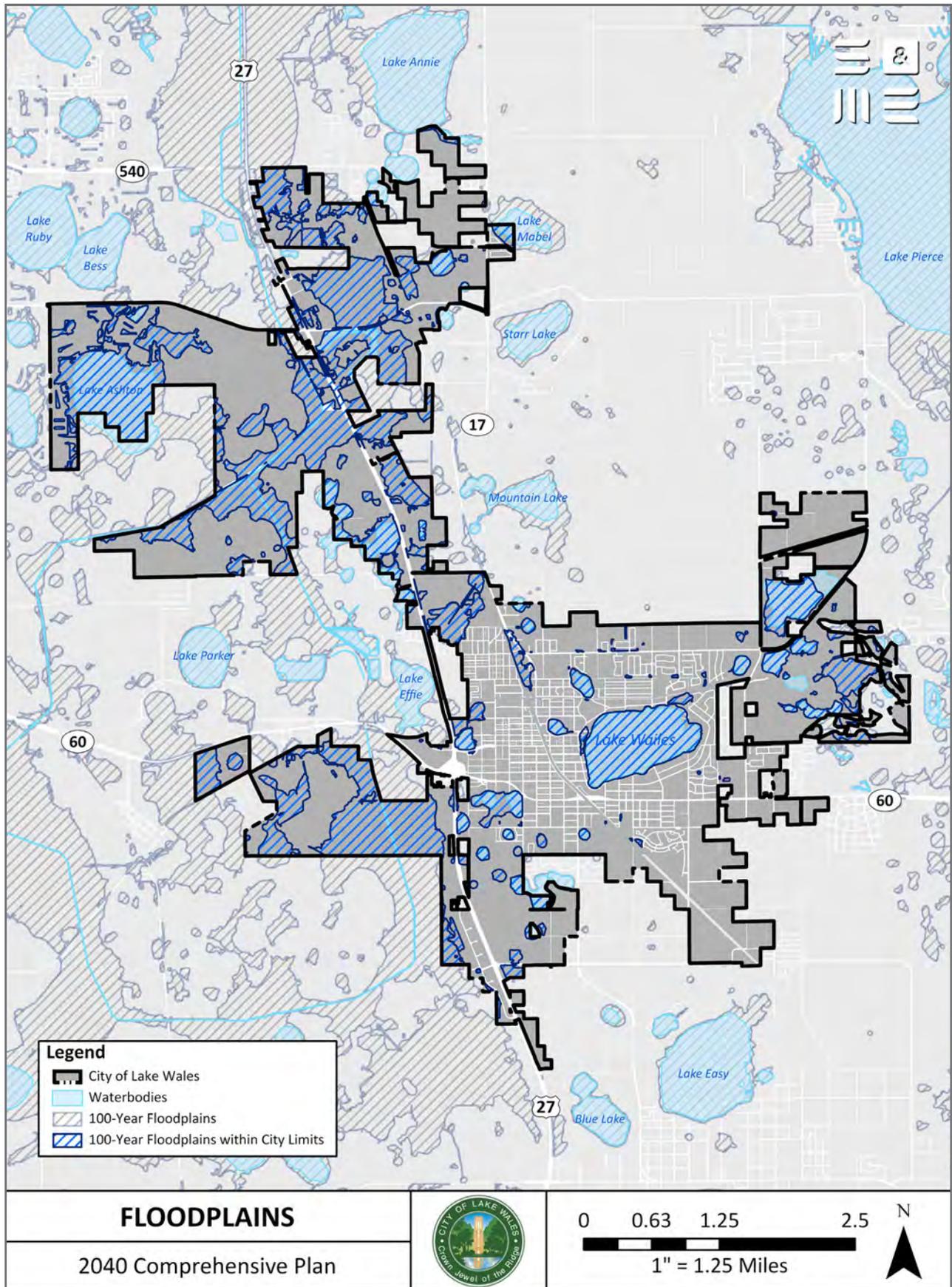
Historic resources within the state are primarily cataloged and maintained by the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Of the 662 structures listed within their database that are located within the City of Lake Wales, eight (8) are currently listed on National Register of Historic Properties (NRHP) with seven (7) additional structures potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP as well. There are also four (4) resource groups within the city that are currently listed on the NRHP, with the most recent addition being Spook Hill, which was listed in April 2019. Finally, there are no cemeteries within the city that are currently listed on the NRHP, but the Lake Wales Municipal Cemetery is eligible for a potential listing. These historic resources are shown on Figure 8.

Figure 5 Wetlands, 2020



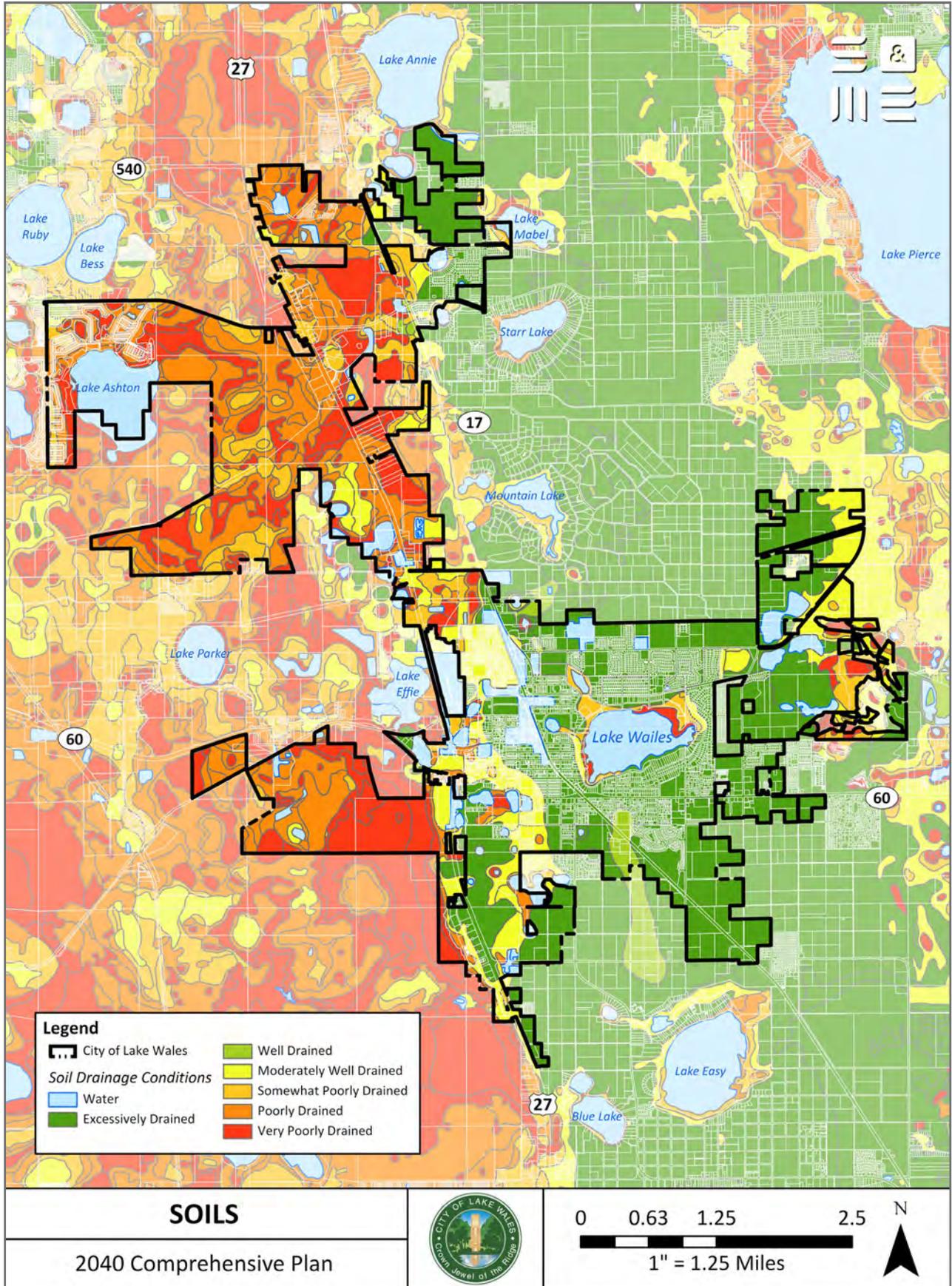
Sources: Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 6 Floodplains, 2020



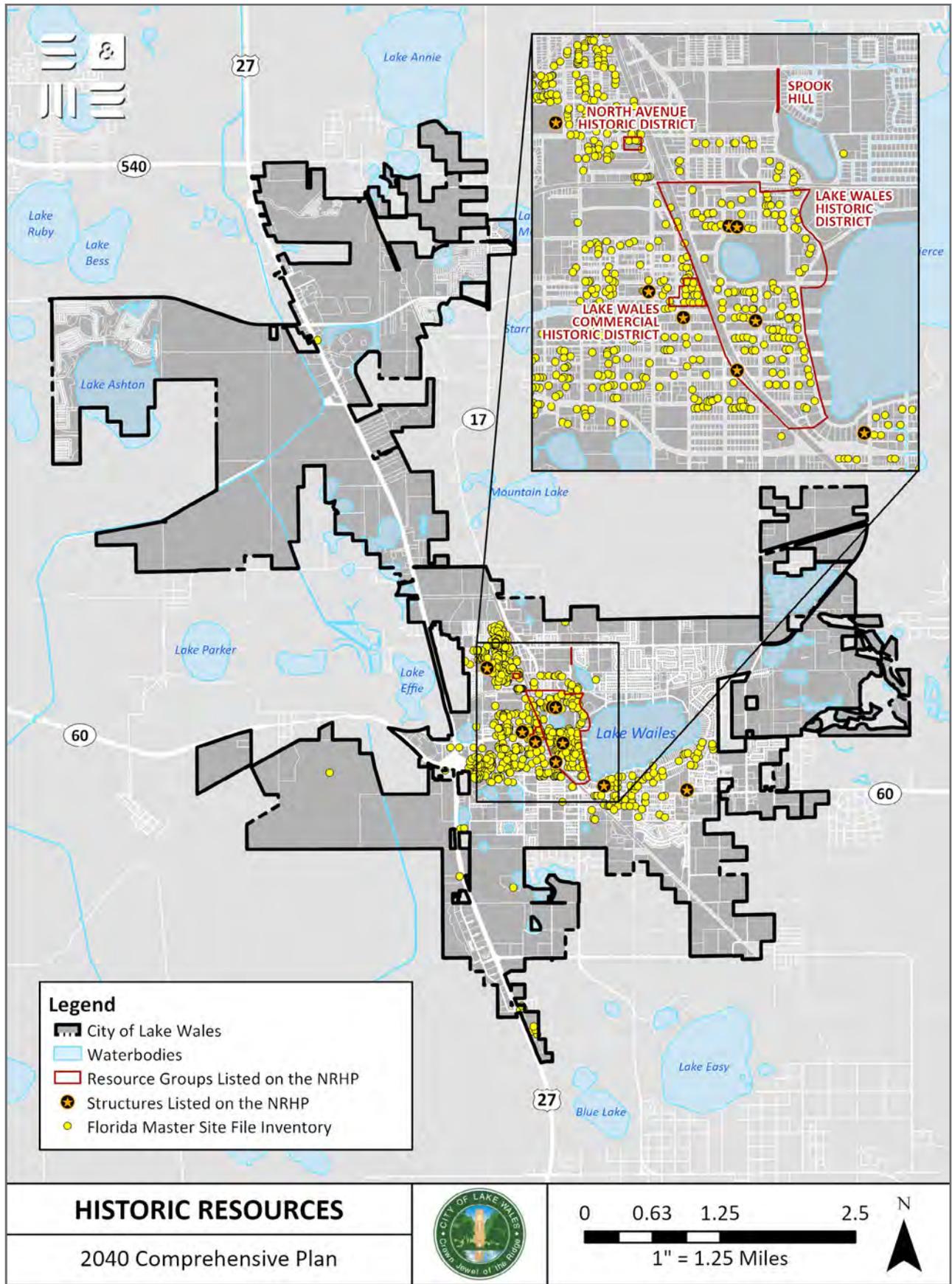
Sources: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), FGDL, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 7 Soils, 2020



Sources: FGDL, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2020.

Figure 8 Historic Resources, 2020



Sources: FDHR, FGDL, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

# PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

## **1. Local Utilities and Services**

As detailed in later sections of this document, developed parcels within the City are currently served by area utility providers and services, such as potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, solid waste, transportation, and public schools. As the City continues to grow and vacant parcels develop, developers are required to provide for the extension and/or construction of utilities and services to their site. By doing so, the City ensures that new and existing residents and businesses continue to enjoy a high quality of life, supported by well-functioning public utilities and services.

## **2. Airports**

Established in 1928, the Lake Wales Municipal Airport is the only airport within City Limits and totals nearly 500 acres in size. During World War II, the Army Corps of Engineers utilized the airport for the training of military pilots while making improvements which included the construction of the 2 present 4,000-foot runways. The airport is owned by the City but is advised by an Airport Authority appointed by the City Commission. The airport is located approximately two (2) miles southwest of Downtown Lake Wales and primarily serves the following communities: Dundee, Eagle Lake, Fort Meader, Frostproof, Highland Park, Hillcrest Heights, Lake Hamilton, and Lake Wales. Typical operations conducted at the airport are comprised of local and transient general aviation, localized recreational glider activity, and skydiving. Presently there are no air carrier, commuter or air taxi operations conducted at the airport.

## **3. Military Installations**

There are no military installations within or near the City limits.

# PROJECTED POPULATION AND HOUSING NEEDS

Future population growth is the driving force behind future facility needs and land requirements. The 2010 population for the City of Lake Wales totaled 14,225 residents. To determine the City’s estimated current and future populations, a step-down analysis was utilized using Polk County’s 2020 population projections retrieved from the University of Florida’s Bureau of Economics & Business Research (BEBR). This form of analysis determines an area’s population based by examining the City’s proportionate share of Polk County’s projected growth. The results of which are found in Figure 9. The analysis conducted throughout the plan update process also accommodates for the City’s projected seasonal and total population as well, which is identified in Table 1. Please note that the current and anticipated economic conditions, trends, and needs of this population are addressed in the Economic Development Element of this document.

**Figure 9** Permanent Population Projections for Polk County and Lake Wales<sup>1</sup>, 2020-2040



<sup>1</sup>This method assumes that Lake Wales population remains at 2.326% of the County’s total population growth year-over-year, based upon BEBR’s estimated population for Polk County (690,606) and Lake Wales (16,062) in 2019.

**Table 1** Permanent, Seasonal, and Total Population Projections, 2020-2040

YEAR	PERMANENT <sup>1</sup> POPULATION PROJECTION	SEASONAL <sup>2</sup> POPULATION PROJECTION	TOTAL PROJECTED POPULATION
2020	16,377	996	17,373
2025	17,826	1,084	18,910
2030	19,003	1,156	20,159
2035	19,957	1,214	21,171
2040	20,774	1,264	22,038

<sup>1</sup>See Figure 9.

<sup>2</sup>Seasonal population projections for 2020 through 2040 were calculated by applying a seasonal population percentage (6.08%) derived from data provided by the Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse (FHDC) and the American Community Survey (ACS).

Source: ACS, FHDC, S&ME, 2020

A carrying capacity analysis has been included in this element (as Table 2) that identifies the housing units necessary to accommodate the projected 20-year growth identified in Table 1. Additionally, the Housing Element provides for additional metrics helpful in identifying the current state of housing within the City and compares these conditions to contemporary County and State averages.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER

### 1. *Residential Neighborhoods*

The residential neighborhoods in the City of Lake Wales consist of single-family residences, mobile homes, and multiple-family structures. Most of the residential developments within the City are situated within a ¾-mile radius surrounding Lake Wailes. A majority of these neighborhoods feature a more disconnected, suburban roadway network, yet neighborhoods located in more historic portions of Lake Wales often possess a relatively well-connected grid-like street pattern. Just 32% of the City’s housing stock was built within the last 20 years, with the remaining 68% of the local housing inventory built before 2000. Neighborhoods within the City are served by public facilities, such as police and fire stations, an elementary school, and parks.

### 2. *Downtown Core*

The downtown core generally comprises the area located immediately west of State Road 17 and extends westward until surpassing City Hall at S Sharp Street, with W Sessoms Avenue and E Polk Avenue acting as the northern and southern boundaries, respectively. The downtown core primarily consists of commercial activity, with residential and institutional uses located along the periphery. Although the area does provide goods, services, and employment opportunities to area residents, the volume offered by downtown core is not enough to sustain the City’s growing population, as many of these daily needs have been satisfied with the continued development of the US-27 and Thompson Nursery Road/Chalet Suzanne Road intersection. Other attributes that characterize the downtown core are historic properties, walkability, and an urban framework which loosely follows a traditional gridded street network.

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## URBAN SPRAWL

The City of Lake Wales is a small suburban community that has experienced tremendous growth in the last 20 years. According to BEBR population estimates, the City’s population has increased by over 50% (from 10,194 to 16,377) since 2000. To complement this rapid growth in residents, the City has also annexed over six (6) square miles into the City during this same period—with the majority of this land area designated for future residential development. Although large portions of Lake Wales currently remain vacant, the surge in residential and non-residential activity within the City foreshadows a higher utilization of land within the planning horizon identified in this plan.

# III. FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

This section compares the carrying capacity of the land, based on the adopted FLUM, with the population projections for the city. Table 2 lists the FLU categories and their corresponding acreage, density, and intensity. This table also shows the amount of developable vacant land available within each FLU that, when combined with a site's maximum development potential, identifies the City's remaining carrying capacity for future growth. The carrying capacity calculations assume that new development will utilize the maximum density allowed by their FLU designation (the descriptions of which are provided below) while previously developed properties will retain their existing density. The location of FLU designations throughout the City are shown on Figure 10.

Table 2 shows that the City could accommodate an additional 24,233 residents by the year 2040. As noted previously, the population projections conducted by S&ME using BEBR-derived data revealed that the population is only expected to increase by approximately 5,000 people in the next 20 years. Therefore, this expected increase in population can be accommodated within city limits if the City's remaining residential FLU-designated properties are developed within the 20-year planning horizon established by this document.

Alternatively, Table 3 identifies City's current inventory of ELUs and compares this data to their equivalent FLU designations. Thus, this table shows how land is currently being utilized within the City and how the community desires the public and private sector to develop its remaining vacant properties (the location of which, are shown on Figure 10).

## ***A) Rural-Residential (RR)***

The primary function of the RR classification is to permit agricultural activities, rural-density residential development, environmental protection of sensitive lands, and to also serve as a reserve for future urban development. Figure 10 and Figure 11 show that this FLU designation is concentrated most intensely in northwest portion of the City and comprises approximately 1,843 acres—or 14.2% of the City.

## ***B) Low Density Residential (LDR)***

The primary function of the LDR FLU classification is to provide areas for housing, primarily single-family, with an overall density of 5 or fewer dwelling units per acre. This classification is intended to preserve the character of existing single-family residential areas with large lots and to allow the continued development of these areas. It is also intended for classification of vacant parcels, particularly newly annexed lands on the periphery of the City. This FLU designation is found throughout the city but is particularly concentrated around Lake Wailes and comprises approximately 3,405.2 acres, which is 26.2% of the City's total area.

## ***C) Medium Density Residential (MDR)***

The primary function of the MDR FLU classification is to provide areas for housing in compatible groupings at a density of up to 12 units per gross acre. This classification is intended to preserve the character of existing single-family residential areas and to allow the continued development of these areas. It is also intended to encourage redevelopment of declining residential areas and to allow a variety of housing types on vacant lands within a half-mile of commercial areas and arterial highways. The total acreage of MDR-designated properties is 2,319.8 (or 18.4% of Lake Wales' total land area), which are in both the northern and southern sides of the City.

#### ***D) High Density Residential (HDR)***

The primary function of the HDR FLU classification is to allow for housing at a density not to exceed 25 dwelling units per acre located within a quarter mile of commercial centers and along major roadways. This classification is intended to encourage redevelopment of declining urbanized areas along major roadways and to allow for new multi-family development convenient to commercial centers. HDR-designated lands are scattered throughout the City and total 331.5 acres (or 2.6% of the City's land area).

#### ***E) Residential-Office (RO)***

The primary function of the RO FLU classification is to permit low intensity office and commercial uses in conjunction with residential use. This classification may serve as a transition between commercial and residential use or as a buffer where a major highway intersects an existing residential neighborhood. This designation is intended primarily for developed areas to provide viable economic use and redevelopment option for residential areas that have declined in value because of their location on major roadways. This FLU designation surrounds State Road 60 and totals 160.5 acres, which equals 1.2% of Lake Wales' total land area.

#### ***F) Community Activity Center (CAC)***

The primary function of the CAC FLU classification is to encourage a variety of commercial and professional uses in shopping plazas to serve the City as a whole, as well as surrounding residential areas and to allow residential uses in planned mixed-use developments. This FLU designation is intended to provide an inter-connect grouping of commercial facilities and plazas conveniently accessible from a major highway and connected via collector roads, local roads, and pedestrian/bike facilities to nearby residential areas. Similar to RO, CAC-designated lands are concentrated primarily around State Road 60 and comprise 224.9 acres (1.7%) of the City.

#### ***G) General Commercial (GC)***

The primary function of the GC FLU classification is to allow continued development and infill of areas on the periphery of central business districts and to allow the continuation of existing businesses in isolated pockets and along highways. The classification is intended primarily for developed commercial and mixed-use areas and is not intended for designation of undeveloped properties or the creation of new, isolated commercial areas or strip commercial development. This FLU designation is predominately found north-east of the downtown core and comprises approximately 37.7 acres, which is less than 1% of the City's total area.

#### ***H) Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC)***

The primary function of the NAC FLU classification is to accommodate businesses and services oriented to the needs of residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. The NACs are also intended as village centers in planned residential developments. They should be designed as community centers and integral parts of residential neighborhoods, with businesses located in groups rather than in a strip along a roadway, and should be accessible via local roads and pedestrian/bike paths from nearby residential areas. Residential uses and mixed-uses are allowed only in planned developments. The NAC classification is intended as an overlay district, optional to the primary designation of the land, usually residential. The NAC overlay comprises 0.3% of the City at 42.1 acres and is found in the southern half of the City. Please note that the City of Lake Wales also combines this FLU designation with the Business Park Center (BPC) FLU category for approximately 42.1 additional acres, or 0.3% of the City.

### ***I) Business Park Center (BPC)***

The primary function of the BPC FLU classification is to promote employment opportunities within the region by allowing for the establishment of office parks, research and development parks, light-industrial facilities, distribution centers, and mixed-use employment parks. This classification is intended for well planned, extensively landscaped business park development rather than piecemeal development of individual lots. BPC-designated lands are found in the southern-most point in the City along US 27 and totals 304.3 acres (2.3% of all land within the City).

### ***J) Industrial (IND)***

The primary function of the IND FLU classification is to accommodate the facilities necessary for the processing, fabrication, manufacturing, recycling, or wholesale distribution of goods. Industrially designated properties are located throughout the City and totals 749.8 acres (or 5.8% of the municipality's total land area).

### ***K) Limited Commercial-Industrial (LCI)***

The primary function of the LCI FLU classification is to allow low traffic generating commercial and industrial uses fronting on major roadways (such as US Highway 27 and State Road 17) that will not result in commercial strip development. This classification is to be used along major roadways outside of CACs- and RACs-designated lands. LCI comprises just over 230 acres and comprises 1.8% of the City's total land area.

### ***L) Regional Activity Center (RAC)***

The RAC FLU classification is established to create a concentration of commercial facilities to serve the region and to provide for high density housing in conjunction with and in close proximity to these facilities. This FLU designation is intended to be a major commercial area designed as a unit and integrated with surrounding developments in terms of layout, facilities for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians, stormwater management, green space, and design elements. RAC is centralized around the US Highway 27 and Thompson Nursery Road/Chalet Suzanne Road intersection and totals 3.7% of the City, at 474.8 acres.

### ***M) Downtown District (DD)***

The primary function of the DD FLU classification is to maintain the historic or traditional central business district as a vital and focal point of the city through continued enhancement of its accessibility, appearance, preservation, utilization, and facilities. This FLU category is intended to be a walking district with a mix of traditional downtown uses and residential. DD comprises nearly 200 acres and comprises 1.5% of the City's total land area.

### ***N) Public (PUB)***

The primary function of the PUB classification is to designate or identify existing government owned facilities, parks, and open space areas. This designation can be found throughout the southern half of the City and totals 254.9 acres, or 2.0% of the land located within Lake Wales.

### ***O) Conservation (CON)***

The primary function of the CON classification is to provide for the use and protection of wetlands and habitat areas that are recognized as significant by the City. Lands featuring the CON FLU designation are found in the southern half of the City and total 825.6 acres, which is 6.4% of the total land within the City.

Table 2

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES AND RESIDENTIAL HOLDING CAPACITY, 2020-2040

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES	All Parcels		Vacant Parcels		Environmentally Sensitive Vacant Land <sup>1</sup>	Developable Vacant Land <sup>2</sup>	Maximum Density / Intensity	Holding Capacity
	(Acres)	(%)	(Acres)	(%)	(Acres)	(Acres)	(du/ac; FAR) <sup>3</sup>	(Units)
<i>Residential</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Rural Residential</i>	1,843.0	14.2	0.6	<0.1	0.6	0.0	0.20 du/ac	0
<i>Low Density Residential</i>	3,405.2	26.2	1,232.4	9.5	445.6	786.8	5 du/ac; .25 FAR	3,934
<i>Medium Density Residential</i>	2,319.8	17.9	398.5	3.1	104.6	293.9	12 du/ac; .40 FAR	3,526
<i>High Density Residential</i>	331.5	2.6	78.2	0.6	50.5	27.7	25 du/ac; .60 FAR	692
<i>Commercial and Employment Activity Centers</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Regional Activity Center</i>	474.8	3.7	209.9	1.6	126.3	83.6	25 du/ac; 300k min. <sup>4</sup>	522
<i>Community Activity Center</i>	224.9	1.7	48.2	0.4	1.1	47.1	12 du/ac; .60 FAR <sup>5</sup>	283
<i>Neighborhood Activity Center</i>	42.1	0.3	4.0	<0.1	0.7	3.3	12 du/ac; 2.0 FAR <sup>6</sup>	16
<i>Business Park Center</i>	304.3	2.3	202.7	1.6	70.9	131.8	.75 FAR	-
<i>Business Park Center / Neighborhood Activity Center</i>	41.8	0.3	41.8	0.3	24.8	17.0	12 du/ac; 2.0 FAR <sup>6</sup>	82
<i>Downtown District</i>	195.9	1.5	43.9	0.3	0.0	43.9	25 du/ac; 4.0 FAR <sup>7</sup>	548
<i>General Commercial</i>	37.7	0.3	6.6	0.1	0.3	6.3	.40 FAR	-
<i>Industrial</i>	749.8	5.8	79.3	0.6	35.4	43.9	.75 FAR	-
<i>Limited Commercial-Industrial</i>	230.7	1.8	86.6	0.7	67.3	19.3	.60 FAR <sup>8</sup>	-
<i>Other</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Residential-Office</i>	160.5	1.2	20.7	0.2	0.0	20.7	12 du/ac; .25 FAR	248
<i>Public</i>	254.9	2.0	66.3	0.5	21.1	45.2	-	-
<i>Conservation</i>	825.6	6.4	239.6	1.8	87.7	151.9	-. <sup>9</sup>	-
<i>Unassigned<sup>10</sup></i>	1,537.9	11.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,980.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,759.3</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>1,036.9</b>	<b>1,722.4</b>	-	<b>9,851 (±24,233 potential residents)<sup>11</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup>Environmentally Sensitive Vacant Land' includes the portion of vacant parcels that feature wetlands, lakes, reservoirs, swamps, freshwater marshes, wet prairies, emergent aquatic vegetation, surface water collection basins, and FEMA SFHA Zone A and AE (100-year floodplain).

<sup>2</sup>'Developable Vacant Land' includes the portion of vacant parcels that do not contain the environmentally sensitive features identified in Note 1.

<sup>3</sup>du/ac = dwelling units per acre; FAR = floor area ratio

<sup>4</sup>Residential development limited to 25% of each individual development for lands within this FLU category.

<sup>5</sup>Residential development limited to 50% of the total floor area and nonresidential development must be between 90k to 300k sq ft of GLA within the FLU category.

<sup>6</sup>Residential uses are limited to 40% of the area for developments featuring this FLU category; if the site does not feature a Planned Development (PD) zoning designation, then onsite FAR is limited to .25.

<sup>7</sup>Residential land uses shall not exceed 50% of the total DD area.

<sup>8</sup>Developments possessing this FLU designation shall not exceed 200,000 GLA.

<sup>9</sup>Wetlands and scrub habitats shall be preserved within this FLU category. If non-environmentally sensitive areas are identified through an environmental survey, a FLUM amendment may be requested to reclassify those areas for development. Density rights may be transferred from wetlands and scrub habitats to those non-environmentally sensitive portions of the same site during a Planned Development Review. Density rights on wetlands may be transferred at the rate of up to one du/ac for residential land use and .05 FAR for commercial/industrial use. Density rights on scrub habitat may be transferred at a rate of up to five du/ac for residential land use and .25 FAR for commercial/industrial use. A density bonus of up to one dwelling unit per acre may be granted.

<sup>10</sup>'Unassigned' includes any area of the City that was not assigned a FLU designation, which predominately includes major waterbodies and rights-of-way.

<sup>11</sup>Based on 2.46 persons per dwelling unit according to 2019 ESRI BAO population data.

Sources: City of Lake Wales, FEMA, FGDL, NWI, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020; ESRI BAO, 2019.

Table 3

LAND USE COMPARISON, 2020-2040

Existing Land Use (ELU) Group <sup>1</sup>	Acre	%	Comparative FLU Category	Acres	%	Maximum Density/Intensity (du/ac; FAR) <sup>2</sup>
<b>Agricultural Uses</b>	4,472.6	34.5	Rural Residential	1,843.0	14.2	0.20 du/ac
<b>Residential Uses</b> (Includes the Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential ELU categories)	1,461.2	11.3	Low Density Residential	3,405.2	26.2	5 du/ac; .25 FAR
			Medium Density Residential	2,319.8	17.9	12 du/ac; .40 FAR
			High Density Residential	331.5	2.6	25 du/ac; .60 FAR
			Residential Office	160.5	1.2	12 du/ac; .25 FAR
<b>Nonresidential Uses</b> (Includes the Commercial, Industrial, Office/Professional ELU categories)	1390.5	10.7	Regional Activity Center	474.8	3.7	25 du/ac; 300k min. <sup>3</sup>
			Commercial and Employment Activity Centers	224.9	1.7	12 du/ac; .60 FAR <sup>4</sup>
			Regional Activity Center	42.1	0.3	12 du/ac; 2.0 FAR <sup>5</sup>
			Community Activity Center	304.3	2.3	.75 FAR
			Neighborhood Activity Center	41.8	0.3	12 du/ac; 2.0 FAR <sup>5</sup>
			Business Park Center	195.9	1.5	25 du/ac; 4.0 FAR <sup>6</sup>
			Neighborhood Activity Center	37.7	0.3	.40 FAR
			Business Park Center / Neighborhood Activity Center	749.8	5.8	.75 FAR
			Downtown District	230.7	1.8	.60 FAR <sup>7</sup>
			General Commercial			
			Industrial			
<b>Public/Semi-Public Uses</b> (Includes the Public/Institutional and Lake ELU categories)	1,898.2	14.7	Public	254.9	2.0	-
			Conservation	825.6	6.4	. <sup>8</sup>
<b>Utilities, Private ROW, and Other Uses</b>	75.7	0.6	-	-	-	-
<b>Vacant</b>	2,761.1	21.3	-	-	-	-
<b>Unassigned<sup>9</sup></b>	921.2	6.9	-	1,537.9	11.8	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,980.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,980.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-</b>

<sup>1</sup>See Figure 3.

<sup>2</sup>du/ac = dwelling units per acre; FAR = floor area ratio

<sup>3</sup>Residential development limited to 25% of each individual development for lands within this FLU category.

<sup>4</sup>Residential development limited to 50% of the total floor area and nonresidential development must be between 90k to 300k sq ft of GLA within the FLU category.

<sup>5</sup>Residential uses are limited to 40% of the area for developments featuring this FLU category; if the site does not feature a Planned Development (PD) zoning designation, then onsite FAR is limited to .25.

<sup>6</sup>Residential land uses shall not exceed 50% of the total DD area.

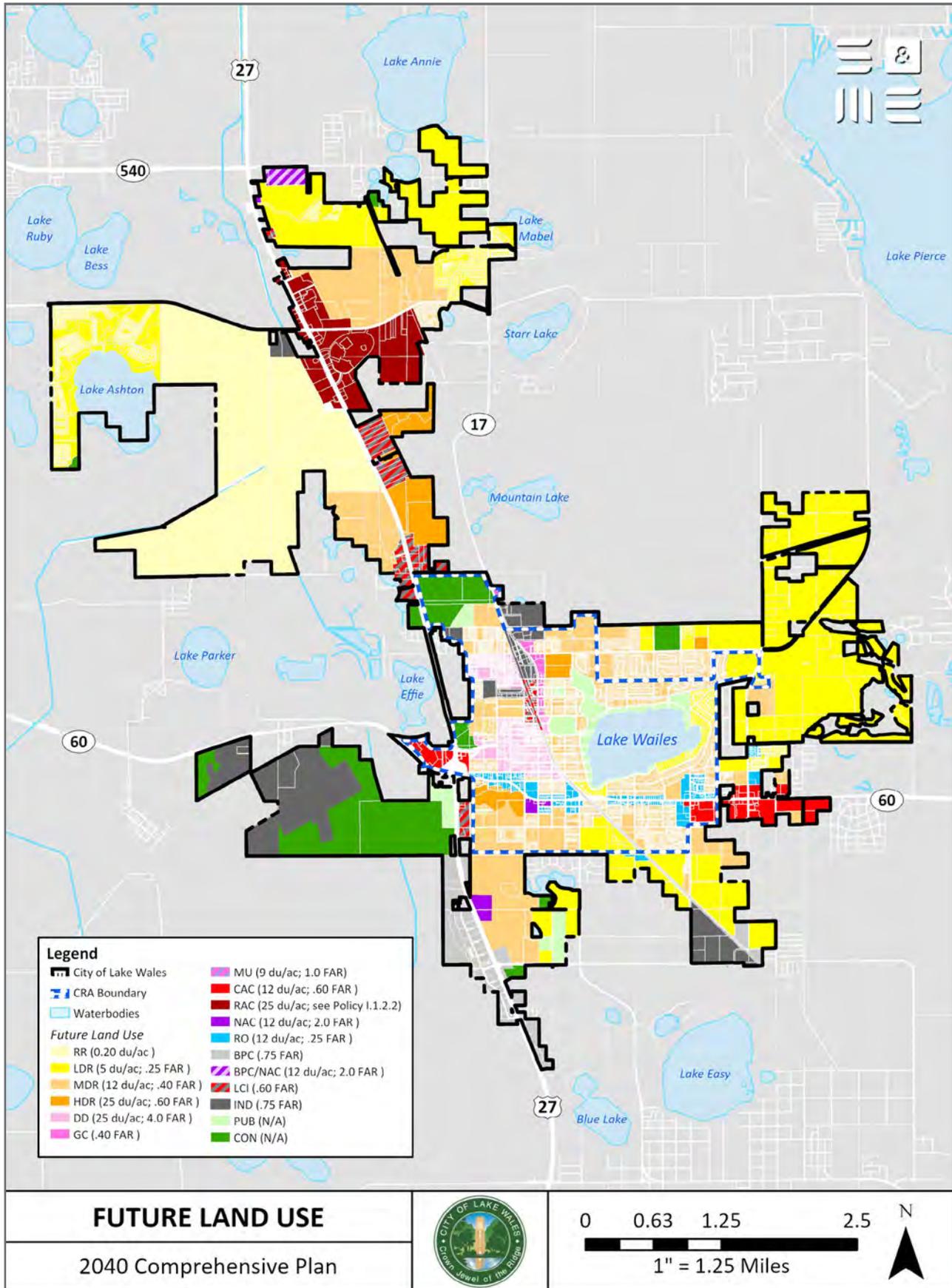
<sup>7</sup>Developments possessing this FLU designation shall not exceed 200,000 GLA.

<sup>8</sup>Wetlands and scrub habitats shall be preserved within this FLU category. If non-environmentally sensitive areas are identified through an environmental survey, a FLUM amendment may be requested to reclassify those areas for development. Density rights may be transferred from wetlands and scrub habitats to those non-environmentally sensitive portions of the same site during a Planned Development Review. Density rights on wetlands may be transferred at the rate of up to one du/ac for residential land use and .05 FAR for commercial/industrial use. Density rights on scrub habitat may be transferred at a rate of up to five du/ac for residential land use and .25 FAR for commercial/industrial use. A density bonus of up to one dwelling unit per acre may be granted.

<sup>9</sup>'Unassigned' for ELU primarily includes public rights-of-way, while unassigned for FLU includes rights-of-way and major waterbodies. Please note that minor discrepancies in acreage exist where the City's FLU shapefile does not match the dimensions of individual parcels used to determine ELU acreages.

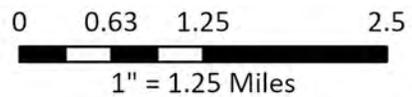
Sources: City of Lake Wales, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 10 Future Land Use Map, 2020



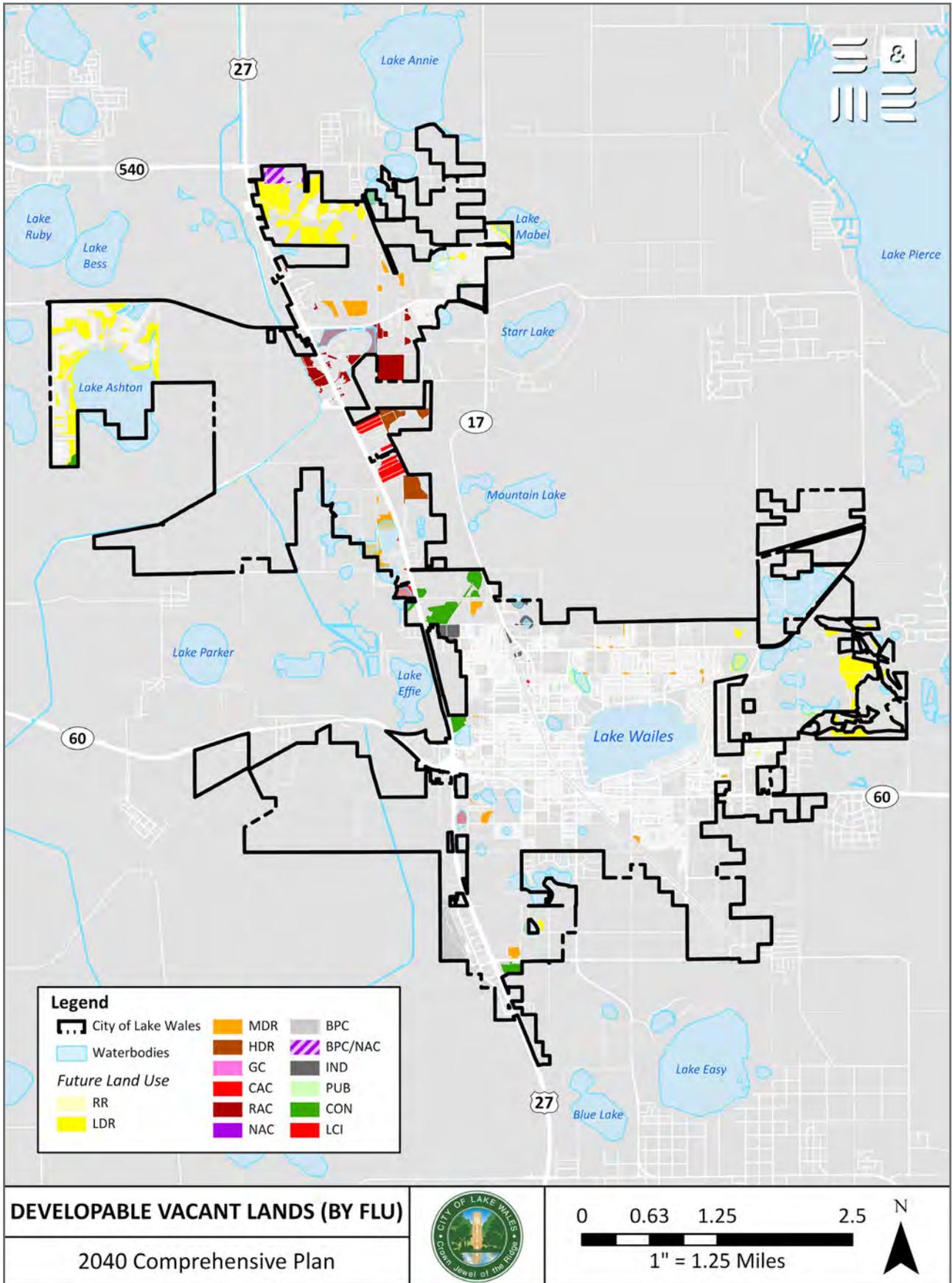
**FUTURE LAND USE**

2040 Comprehensive Plan



Sources: City of Lake Wales, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, Inc., 2020.

Figure 11 Future Land Uses of Existing Vacant Parcels, 2020



Sources: City of Lake Wales, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, Inc., 2020.

# TRANSPORTATION



# I. INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Element is the blueprint to plan for and enhance the mobility of not only goods and services but also to provide for the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and automobiles. This element analyzes the current performance and capacity for the existing transportation facilities, projects future needs for roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and recommends future system improvements.

Alternative modes of transportation are an important part of this Element. Providing accessible multimodal transportation options in the form of roadway, transit facilities, public parking facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, airport and railroad systems, and other services and programs is a challenge for many communities that this element seeks to embrace and enhance. Strict adherence to roadway capacities is no longer the focus of a sound transportation element. In recent years, the legislature determined that mobility or planning for all modes was more comprehensive and more functional than having a singular focus on total vehicle throughput. Improving transportation connections that provide options to all residents while proactively investing to improve neighborhood connections to the City's downtown is another key focal point of this plan.

## II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### A. ROADWAYS

#### ***1. Inventory of Roadways and Signals***

The major roadways within the City of Lake Wales are as follows:

US 27 is under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and acts as the principal north-south arterial connecting Lake Wales to Haines City. US 27 is a six (6) lane divided facility.

State Road (SR) 60, also known as Hesperides Road, is a principal arterial, four (4) way divided highway that falls under the jurisdiction of FDOT. This east-west arterial connects Lake Wales to Bartow to the west and to Vero Beach on the coast.

State Road (SR) 540 (Waverly Road) is under the jurisdiction of FDOT and acts as a minor arterial. SR 540 is an east-west urban collector that connects Lake Wales to Eloise to the west and SR 17 to the east.

State Road (SR) 17 (Ridge Scenic Highway) is another major north-south arterial that provides connections in an urban and rural context. SR 17 is designated as a Florida Scenic Highway and the associated Corridor Management Plan (CMP) outlines various visions, policies, and a plan that would enhance and protect the resources along the scenic corridor. SR 17 is two (2) lane undivided facility in both its urban context and rural context.

Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard is an important north-south urban collector that provides a connection from the Northwest Neighborhood with the Downtown area. This two (2) lane undivided facility is a locally maintained roadway that serves the western side of the redevelopment area.

1st Street is another north-south urban collector that provides an important connection from the Northwest Neighborhood with the central business district portion of the Downtown area. This two (2) lane undivided facility is a locally maintained roadway that serves the western side of the redevelopment area.

Thompson Nursery Road is a two (2) lane undivided urban collector and falls under the jurisdiction of Polk County, which becomes Chalet Suzanne Road east of US 27. This roadway provides connections to Winter Haven to the west and SR 17 to the east.

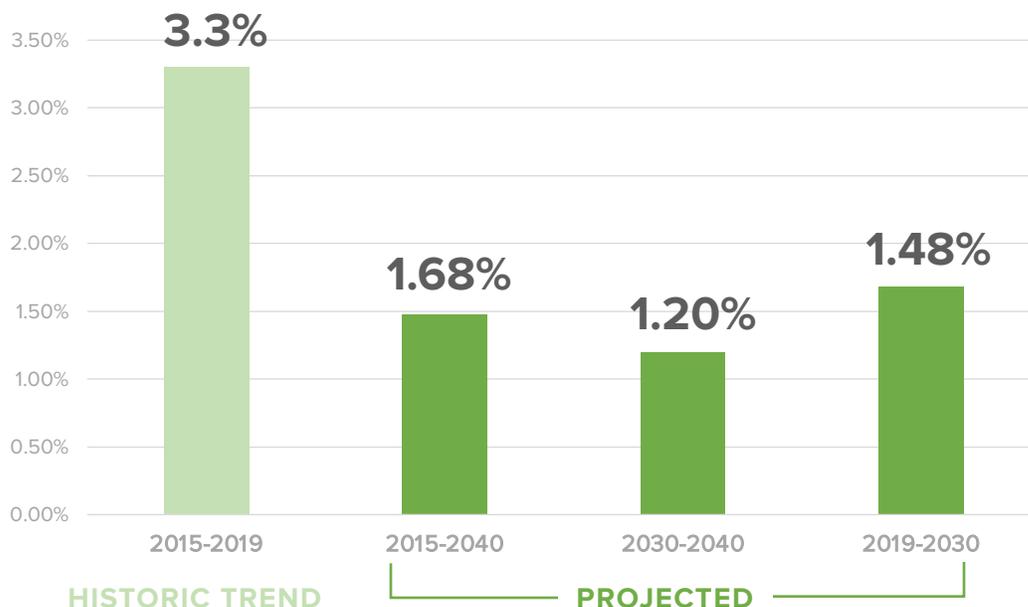
Central Avenue is a four (4) lane divided urban arterial that transitions to a two (2) lane undivided urban collector at the intersection of Dr. MLK Jr. Boulevard. This roadway falls under the jurisdiction of the City and connects SR 60 to the commercial core area.

Park Avenue is a two (2) lane undivided is locally maintained urban collector that connects the western Downtown residential area with the commercial core.

## 2. Historic and Projected Trends

Based on the current traffic volumes and the forecasted traffic volumes, the traffic in the city limits of Lake wales can expect to experience 1.48 percent average annual growth from 2015 traffic volumes to 2040 traffic volumes. Figure 12 details the growth between the years that have counted traffic, 2015 to 2019 (3.30 percent average annual growth), and future forecasted traffic for 2030 and 2040. Based on the trended traffic volumes, Lake Wales can expect to experience a 16.78 percent increase in overall traffic volumes by 2030 (or 1.68 percent average annual growth), and between 2030 and 2040 an overall increase of 12.02 percent (or 1.20 percent average annual growth). These estimates are based on historical trends and forecasts from the transportation model for the region. Changes in volumes and growth rates over time could be attributed to advancements in vehicle technology, changes in growth patterns, or other external influences that impact traffic movements.

**Figure 12** *Historic and Projected Average Annual Traffic Growth*



### **3. Maintenance and Responsibility**

Within the City, US 27, State Road 60, SR 540, and SR 17 are maintained by FDOT. CR 17A, CR 17Bm CR 652, and Waverly Road are maintained by Polk County and all remaining roadways within the City limits are maintained by the City of Lake Wales.

### **4. Existing Roadway Performance**

Table 4 and Figure 13 show the existing levels of service for each major thoroughfare in Lake Wales. Currently, all roadways within the City of Lake Wales operate at a level of service of C or better and operate at or above their adopted level of service.

### **5. Projected Roadway Performance**

This subsection provides an analysis of the projected roadway performance for 2020 and 2035. Figure 12 and the maps in Figure 14, Figure 15, and Figure 16 show the 2024, 2030, and 2040 projected level of service. The projected travel demand was based on FDOT trends projections or a 2 percent per year growth rate of existing roadway volumes.



**Table 4 Existing Roadway Performance, 2019**

ROAD SEGMENT			AADT YEAR	PROJECTED LOS	AADT YEAR	PROJECTED LOS	AADT YEAR	PROJECTED LOS
NAME	FROM	TO	2024		2030		2040	
SR 60	US 27	SR 17 (Right Scenic Highway)	27,000*	B	39,100**	C	50,100*	C
SR 60	CR 655 (Rifle Range Rd)	US 27	27,000*	B	39,100**	C	50,100*	C
US 27	CR 640	SR 60	31,000*	C	38,400**	C	45,100*	C
US 27	SR 60	Mountain Lake Cutoff	34,700*	C	37,400**	C	39,900*	C
US 27	Mountain Lake Cutoff	CR 17 A	40,700*	C	40,550**	C	48,100*	D
US 27	CR 17A	Waverly Rd	40,700*	C	40,550**	C	48,100*	D
SR 17 (Ridge Scenic Highway)	Mountain Lake Cutoff	Waverly Rd	9,400*	B	10,200**	C	10,900*	C
SR 17 (Ridge Scenic Highway)	E Central Ave	Mountain Lake Cutoff	9,400*	B	10,200**	C	10,900*	C
CR 17A (Chalet Suzanne Rd)	SR 17 (Right Scenic Highway)	US 27	11,300	C	13,100**	C	14,700	C
CR 17A (Masterpiece Gardens Rd)	Mammoth Grove Rd	SR 12	9,400	B	10,900**	B	12,200	C
CR 17B (11th St South/Hunt Brothers Rd)	US 27	SR 60	3,600	B	4,200**	B	4,800	B
CR 17B (Buck Moore Rd)	SR 60	CR 17Z (Bums Ave)	4,500	B	5,200**	B	5,900	B
Thompson Nursery Rd	CR 653 (Rattlesnake Road)	US 27	7,100	B	8,200**	B	9,200	B
Central Ave	US 27	SR 17 (Ridge Scenic Highway)	8,900	B	10,300**	C	11,500	C
Central Ave	SR 60	US 27	8,900	B	10,300**	C	11,500	C

\*Source: FDOT District 1 2018 Level of Service Reports.

\*\*-AADT is calculated using 2024 and 2040 AADTs listed in the table.

All other projections based on 2 percent per year growth.

## B. PARKING

Parking within the City is generally handled by individual developments. The City's land development regulations require off-street parking based on the size or number of units provided in a specific use of a development. Throughout the downtown, there are on-street parking facilities parallel and angled, primarily within the central business district.

Downtown parking facilities are for members of the public visiting and working in the area. As Downtown Lake Wales continues to develop, parking has been an important issue for residents and business owners. Within a ¼ miles radius of the Downtown core, marked by the intersection of Park Avenue and Market Street, there are approximately 1,646 public and private spaces. The City has developed parking management standards depending on land use and encourages innovative solutions to create adequate off-street parking.

The parking management system, which includes better utilization of existing parking, modification of parking rules, reduction of demand, and consolidating supply support economic vitality and allow neighborhoods and business districts to be a more livable environment.

## C. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Lake Wales is a part of public transit system in Polk County, which provided through the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District. The district operates the Citrus Connection, which includes all public transportation within the County servicing Winter Haven, Lake Wales and rural routes that service Bartow, Fort Meade and Frostproof, as well as all paratransit services.

Citrus Connection has two (2) fixed bus routes (17X and 35) that service the City of Lake Wales. The Lake Wales/Haines City Express (17X) provides services from the interchange at US 27 and SR 60 to Downtown Haines City. The Lake Wales/Babson Park/South County Jail (35) bus route includes a loop from Frostproof, around the Hunt Brothers properties to Babson Park through Downtown Lake Wales and back.

## D. AIRPORTS

The City is home to the Lake Wales Municipal Airport which is approximately two (2) miles southwest of the downtown central business district. The closest international airports are Orlando International Airport (MCO), approximately 56 miles northeast of the City, and Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ), approximately 89 miles southwest of the City. The Lake Wales Municipal Airport is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City, which has recently undergone new airside industrial development that will complement the activity occurring at the airport.

## E. PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

The pedestrian system within the City is fragmented and lacks significant connectivity necessary for meaningful linkages between residential and non-residential uses. Some roads have sidewalks on both sides while others only have it on one (1). The City has set aside improvement plans to extend and expand current sidewalk facilities.

The Northwest Neighborhood near Downtown exhibits corridors that provide insufficient pedestrian facilities. Many of the roadways lack sidewalks all together while others only have sidewalks on one (1) side of the road. The Connected Plan (for Northwest Neighborhood and Downtown) provides recommended strategies for addressing the existing corridors as well as bringing back the previous Olmstead Brothers plan for the streets in

Lake Wales.

The main thoroughfares in downtown with sidewalks are Central Avenue, 1st Street, and Park Avenue. The Downtown core contains the most connected sidewalk network within the City limits. Moving from the downtown core to the perimeter of the city the sidewalk coverage deteriorates to predominantly auto centric facilities.

## F. BICYCLE SYSTEM

Bike lanes are present through most of the downtown core of Lake Wales. Proposals have been made in order to construct a two-way bike path that would connect 1st Street, from Winston Avenue to Seminole Avenue, to the trail network. The goal for future development is to expand these bicycle facilities to allow for active transportation and increased mobility options for all residents. To fully understand the current state of the bicycle facilities, a master plan should be developed as well as participation in the TPO's bike/ped program

## G. TRAILS

There are two (2) different trails today in Lake Wales, which includes the Lake Wailes Trail and the Lake Wales Trailway. Both trails provide walking and biking opportunities around and near Lake Wailes. The City plans to expand the current trails system that would allow greater connection throughout the city and region. These expansions would create viable modes of active transportation. The Lake Wales Trailway is a rails-to-trails facility that runs from Scenic Highway to Buck Moore Road for 2.3 miles. The trail is a 12-foot wide asphalt path that allows users to walk, bike, skate and engage in other fitness activities. The Lake Wailes Trail is a 2.5-mile paved path that connects South Lake Shore Boulevard and Mariette Street to Kiwanis Park at the corner of North Lake Shore Boulevard and Cephia Street.

The Momentum 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has established a goal for a regional trail network that would include and extend all the established trails within the City and connect them to trails throughout the County, including a connection from the Lake Wales Trail to Bok Tower.

# II. FUTURE NEEDS

## A. NEAR TERM

Lake Wales will focus its efforts on investing in and developing its neighborhood areas. Downtown Lake Wales used to be a place of commerce and civic space that engaged community members. Improving mobility throughout the downtown and the rest of the commercial, residential, and other community facilities will allow the City to develop in a more attractive and functional manner.

## B. LONG TERM

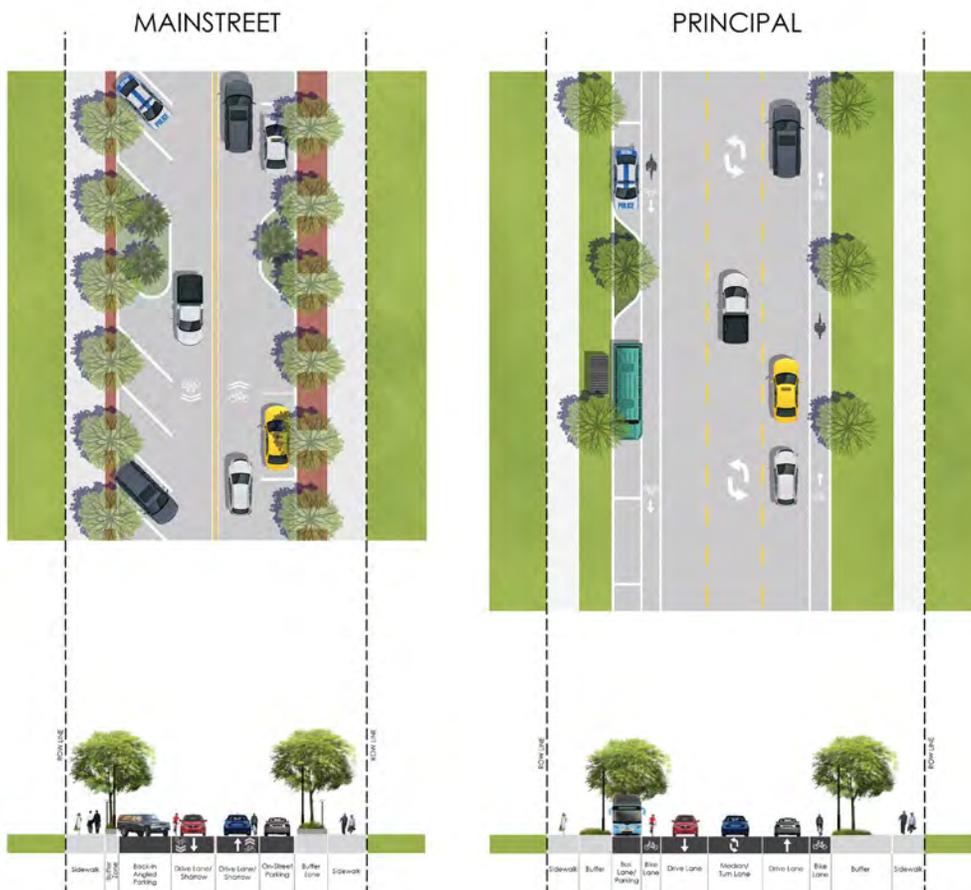
Projected growth rates will continue at a steady rate throughout all of Polk County and Lake Wales. The Polk County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has analyzed future population projections and it does not appear that growth rates would necessitate capacity improvements to the area. The LRTP has set goals to improve livability, mobility, safety, sustainable resources, and the economy. The 2040 LRTP has set goals to facilitate increased mobility throughout Lake Wales that include investing in Complete Streets, sidewalk construction, and multi-use trails between Downtown and the Bok Tower Gardens.

A major infrastructure project, the Central Polk Parkway, is a proposed toll road that will connect the Polk Parkway with SR 60 between Bartow and Lake Wales. From there, the toll road will connect with Interstate 4 north of Davenport. The segment from the Polk Parkway to SR 60 is listed as a top priority project in the Polk TPO TIP and is listed with partial funding with an agreement between the TPO, FDOT, and the Florida Turnpike to fully fund this project.

## C. COMPLETE STREETS

A paradigm shift is underway in the planning and design of transportation systems throughout the country. No more are we designing auto-centric roadways that bisect crucial core areas and put the burden on pedestrians and cyclists to move safely through an economic hub. The Complete Streets movement seeks to get back to the original design intent of a city's roadway network that promotes walkability with compelling and functional public spaces which will ultimately inform the development of a mobility framework of the city. Status Quo auto-dependency has undermined the character and livability of many of this nation's cities, particularly within their historic downtowns. Personal automobile trips by residents, visitors, students and workers strain the local street network and in downtown areas causes conflicts where pedestrian, wheelchair and bicycle modes are at risk of accidents created by the auto-centric transportation system.

Complete Streets is a context sensitive design concept that informs decisions for roadways that is more focused on the full functional value of a right-of-way rather than the sole focus being on automobile capacity. This a mobility tool that has been adopted by the FDOT and TPO, which provides for funding and design assistance for roadways within the city. FDOT District 1 has been a leader in complete streets and has allocated resources specifically for this cause.



The City should continue to work with its state and regional partners to enhance their mobility aspirations. A commitment by the City has already been made in bringing back the old design of Park Avenue, with a new streetscape underway as an extension of the Connected Plan recommendations.

## D. MOBILITY PLAN

The proposed amendments to the Transportation Element (TE) of the Comprehensive Plan seek to implement changes related to transportation concurrency, existing roadway level of service standards, and policies that largely emphasize the movement of motor vehicles, rather than the movement of people by multiple modes of transportation. The proposed amendments establish policies to consider development and implementation of one or more mobility plans and for the future adoption of mobility fees as an alternative funding system per Florida Statute.

The Community Planning Act, which was amended by the Florida Legislature in 2019, provides the following guidance for local governments that elect to repeal transportation concurrency and adopt an alternative mobility funding system using one or more of the tools and techniques identified in Florida Statutes 163.3180(5) (f) such as:

- “1. Adoption of long-term strategies to facilitate development patterns that support multimodal solutions, including urban design, and appropriate land use mixes, including intensity and density.
2. Adoption of an areawide level of service not dependent on any single road segment function.
3. Exempting or discounting impacts of locally desired development, such as development in urban areas, redevelopment, job creation, and mixed use on the transportation system.
4. Assigning secondary priority to vehicle mobility and primary priority to ensuring a safe, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian environment, with convenient interconnection to transit.
5. Establishing multimodal level of service standards that rely primarily on nonvehicular modes of transportation where existing or planned community design will provide adequate level of mobility.
6. Reducing impact fees or local access fees to promote development within urban areas, multimodal transportation districts, and a balance of mixed-use development in certain areas or districts, or for affordable or workforce housing.”

The Community Planning Act provides the following guidance for local governments, for adopting an alternative to transportation concurrency through Florida Statute 163.3180(5)(i), which states:

“If a local government elects to repeal transportation concurrency, it is encouraged to adopt an alternative mobility funding system that uses one or more of the tools and techniques identified in paragraph (f). Any alternative mobility funding system adopted may not be used to deny, time, or phase an application for site plan approval, plat approval, final subdivision approval, building permits, or the functional equivalent of such approvals provided that the developer agrees to pay for the development’s identified transportation impacts via the funding mechanism implemented by the local government. The revenue from the funding mechanism used in the alternative system must be used to implement the needs of the local government’s plan which serves as the basis for the fee imposed. A mobility fee-based funding system must comply with s. 163.31801 governing impact fees. An alternative system that is not mobility fee-based shall not be applied in a manner that imposes upon new development any responsibility for funding an existing transportation deficiency as defined in paragraph (h)”.

The adoption of a mobility plan and mobility fee within the City’s CRA could be used as an alternative to establishment of a Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA). The pursuit of a mobility plan and mobility fee within the CRA and providing a map of the limits of the CRA would be one means to address the

Florida Department of Economic Opportunities (DEO) first objection. The City may elect to take a phased approach to development of an alternative funding system, per Florida Statute (FS) 163.3180(5)(i), by using the Lake Wales Connected Plan as a mobility plan to serve as the basis for creation of mobility fees within the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). Concurrently or as a separate initiative, the City could expand the Lake Wales Connected Plan citywide or develop a specific mobility plan for areas outside the CRA to serve as the basis for citywide mobility fees. The intent of development and adoption of mobility plans and mobility fees would be to replace transportation concurrency, proportionate share, and Polk County's road impact fee.

The development of one or more mobility plans could also be used to address DEO's second objection related to inclusion of a future transportation map. Properly developed mobility plans could be used to identify existing and future road, bicycle, pedestrian, rail and transit improvements for inclusion in the City's Comprehensive Plan to meet statutory comprehensive plan requirements for future transportation maps. The establishment of measurable level of service (LOS) and quality of service (QOS) standards, as statutorily required for comprehensive plans would also be included in mobility plans and would address DEO's objection.

The proposed amendments to TE Policies II.1.1.3, II.1.1.4, and II.1.1.7 seek to provide the City with the flexibility to adopt mobility plans and fees to transportation concurrency, proportionate share, and Polk County's road impact fee within the CRA and Citywide consistent with FS 163.3180(5)(f) and (i). Proposed Policy II.1.1.5 recognizes the ability of the City to adopt areawide road level of service (LOS) standards per FS 163.3180(5)(f) (2) to recognize the benefit of a gridded transportation network. Proposed Policy II.1.1.6 recognizes the ability of the City to consider a road impact fee for road capacity. A road impact fee would be required to meet legal precedents and be consistent with FS 163.31801 (Impact Fee Act).

Proposed Policy II.1.1.13 recognizes that the City was elect to develop and adopt a mobility plan and mobility fee that just addresses City maintained roads. Proposed Policy II.1.1.14 establishes criteria for the City to consult with Polk County if it intends to adopt a mobility plan and mobility fee that would replace the County's road impact fee and identify mobility projects necessary to address needed mobility improvements. Proposed Policy II.1.1.15 addresses the options for formally adopting a mobility plan and the need to adopt an implementing ordinance if the City were to adopt a mobility fee. Proposed Policy II.1.1.16 recognizes the ability of the City to adopt a mobility plan and mobility fee to meet mobility needs and requires the City to amend the Comprehensive Plan, concurrently with the Mobility Fee Implementing Ordinance, to ensure internal consistency and to integrate the mobility plan and fee into the Comprehensive Plan.

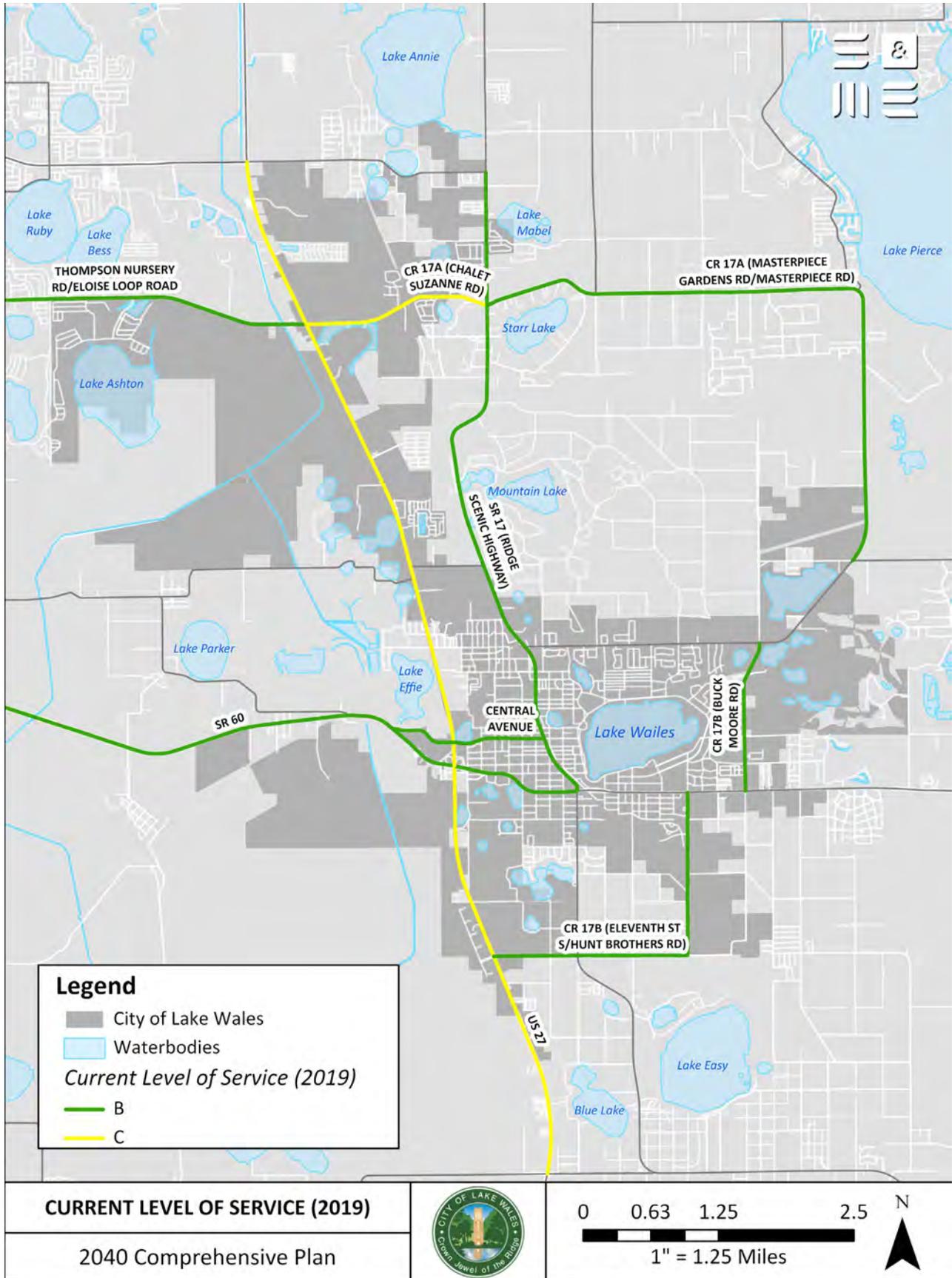
Proposed Policy II.1.1.17 provides criteria for development of a mobility plan. Proposed Policy II.1.1.18 provides criteria for potential establishment of multimodal quality of service standards per FS 163.3180(5)(f)(6). Proposed Policies II.1.1.19 and II.1.1.20 identify additional components of a mobility plan and fee and recognizes that a mobility plan could replace transportation plans and road impact fees. Proposed Policies II.1.1.21, II.1.1.22, II.1.1.23, and II.1.1.24 establish creiteria for development of a mobility fee. Proposed Policy II.1.1.25 establishes that new development cannot be charged both a mobility impact fee and a road impact fee, unless the road impact fee requires mitigation for improvements and projects not addressed in an adopted mobility fee ordinance. The City would need to include City, County and State projects in its mobility plan and mobility fee to have a rational basis to replace Polk County's road impact fee.

The proposed Transportation Element amendments establish the legislative intent that the City may elect to pursue adoption of one or more mobility plans and mobility fees within the City. The amendments provide notice to the County, adjacent Cities, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Polk County

Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) that the City may elect to move forward with a mobility plan and mobility fee and that the intent of doing so would be to replace transportation concurrency and proportionate share either within the CRA or Citywide. To the extent County improvements are included in a mobility plan and mobility fee, the City would also seek to replace the County's road impact fee with a City administered and collected mobility fee, which the City would use to fund multimodal projects identified in the adopted mobility plan. The proposed amendments also require the City, within one year of adopting the mobility fee, to update its Comprehensive Plan to ensure internal consistency and integrate the mobility plan and mobility fee.

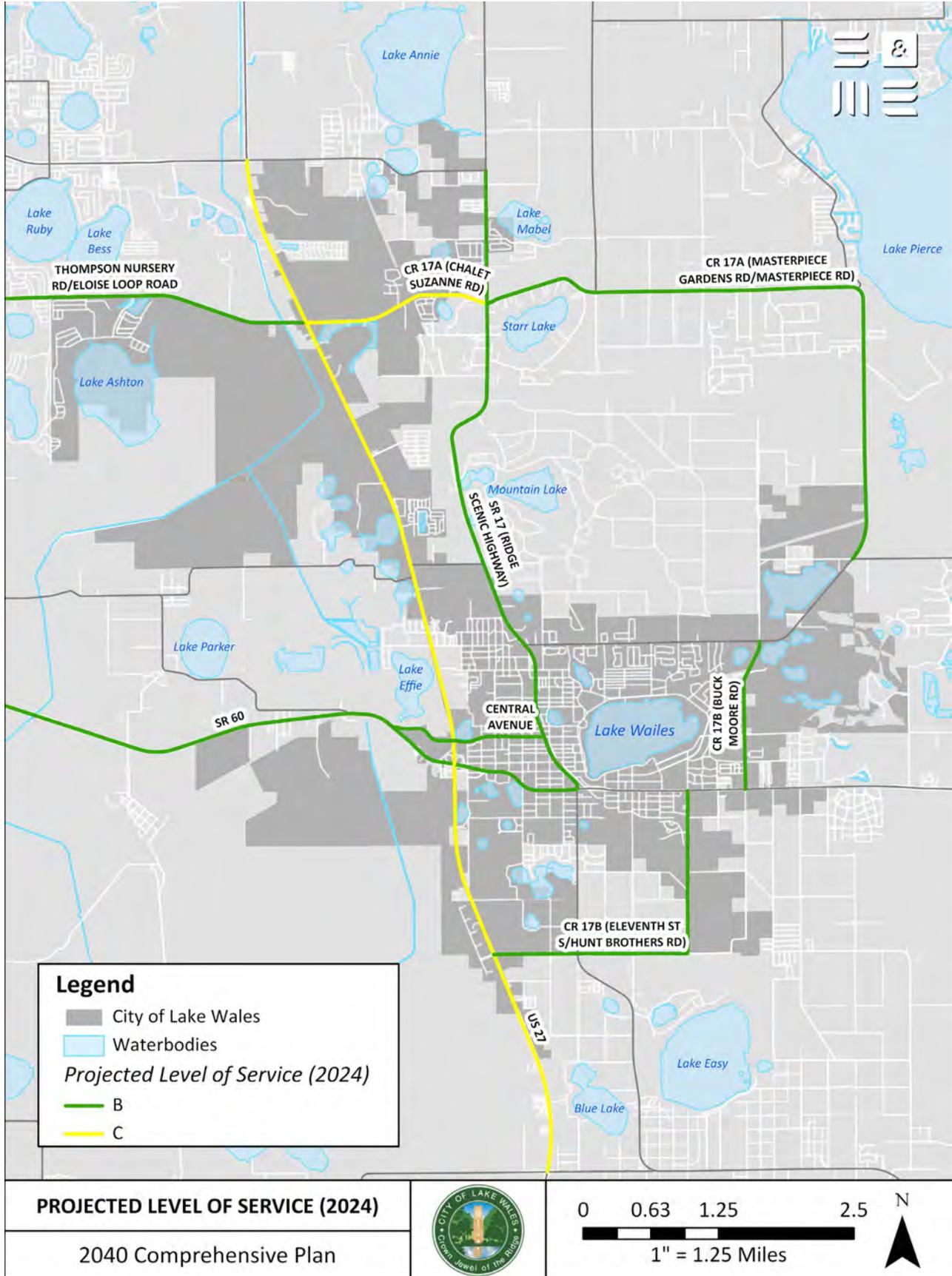
The next steps for the City to undertake, if it elects to move forward, would be to identify where it would like to pursue development of a mobility plan and mobility fee. The City's CRA would make logical sense if a phased approach is desired. The Lake Wales Connected Plan, with modifications to meet legal and statutory requirements, could serve as a mobility plan, and be used as the basis to develop a mobility fee. The mobility fee would require a technical report that documents how the fee was developed and the adoption of an implementing ordinance. To the extent the mobility fee would replace all or a portion of Polk County's road impact fee, consultation with the County is recommended. It is also recommended that the City consult with FDOT, adjacent Cities and the Polk County TPO on development of the mobility plan and fee.

Figure 13 Existing Roadway Performance, 2019



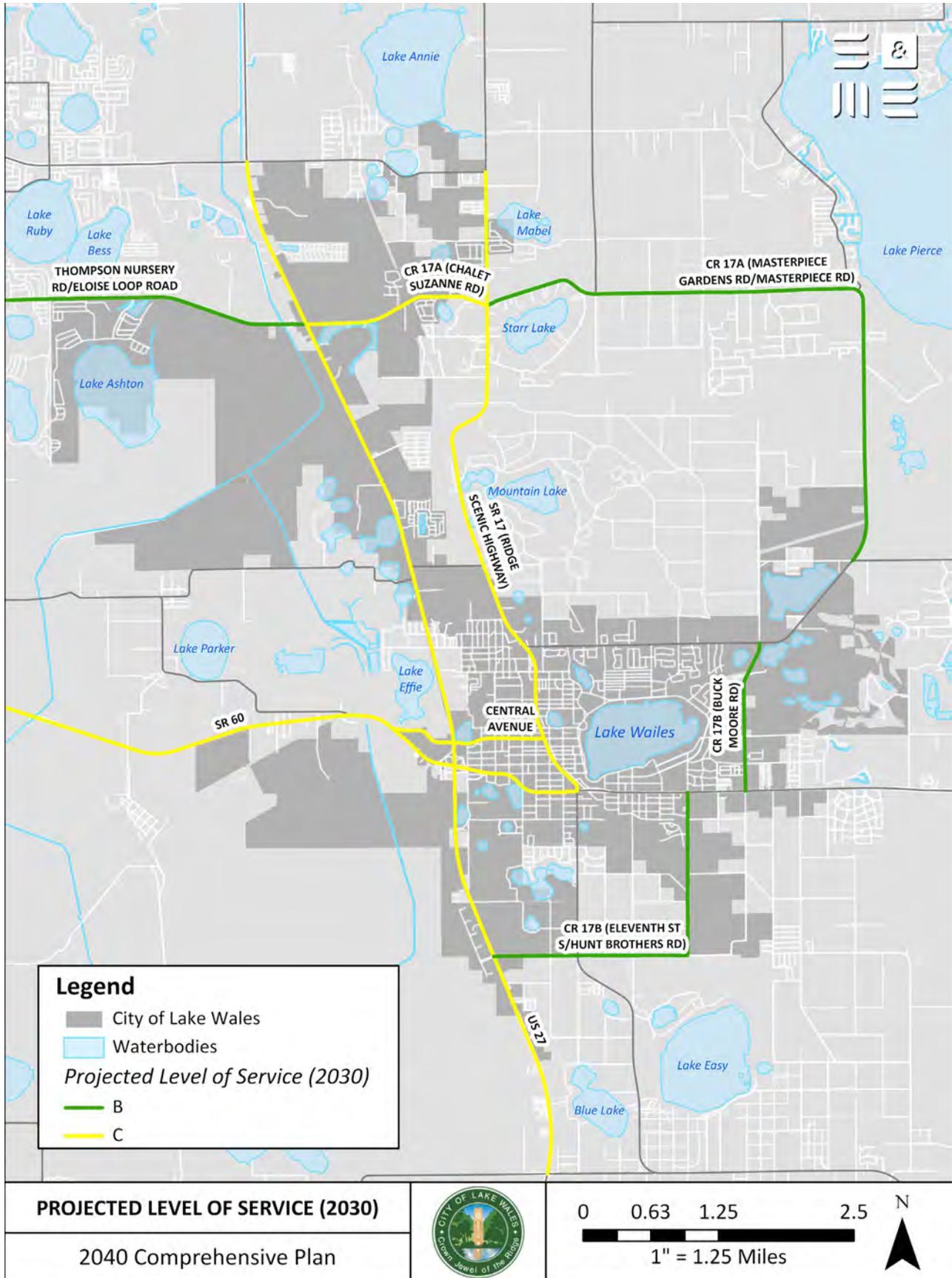
Sources: FDOT, FGDL, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

**Figure 14** Projected Roadway Performance, (5 Years)



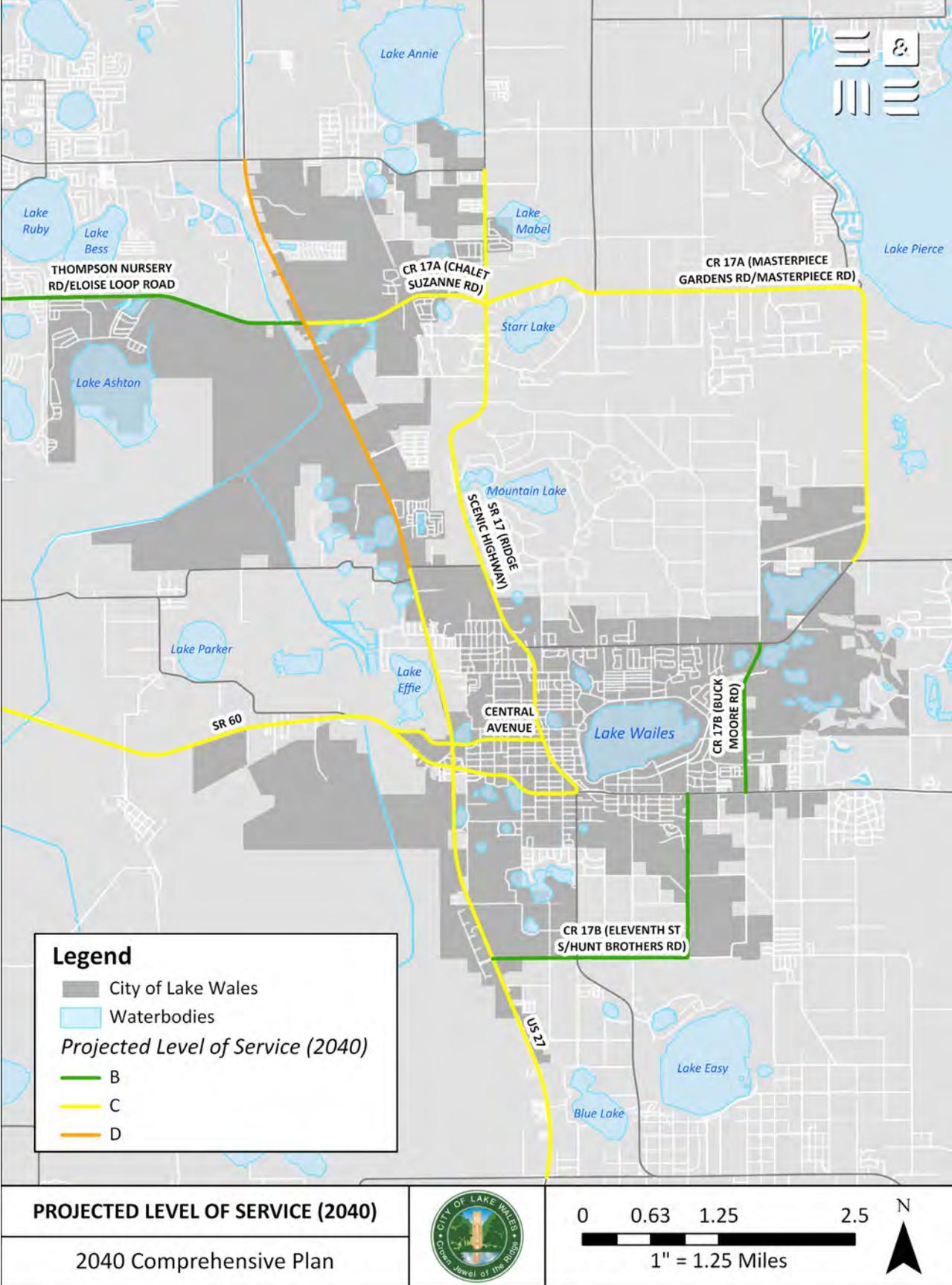
Sources: FDOT, FGDL, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

**Figure 15** Projected Roadway Performance, (10 Years)



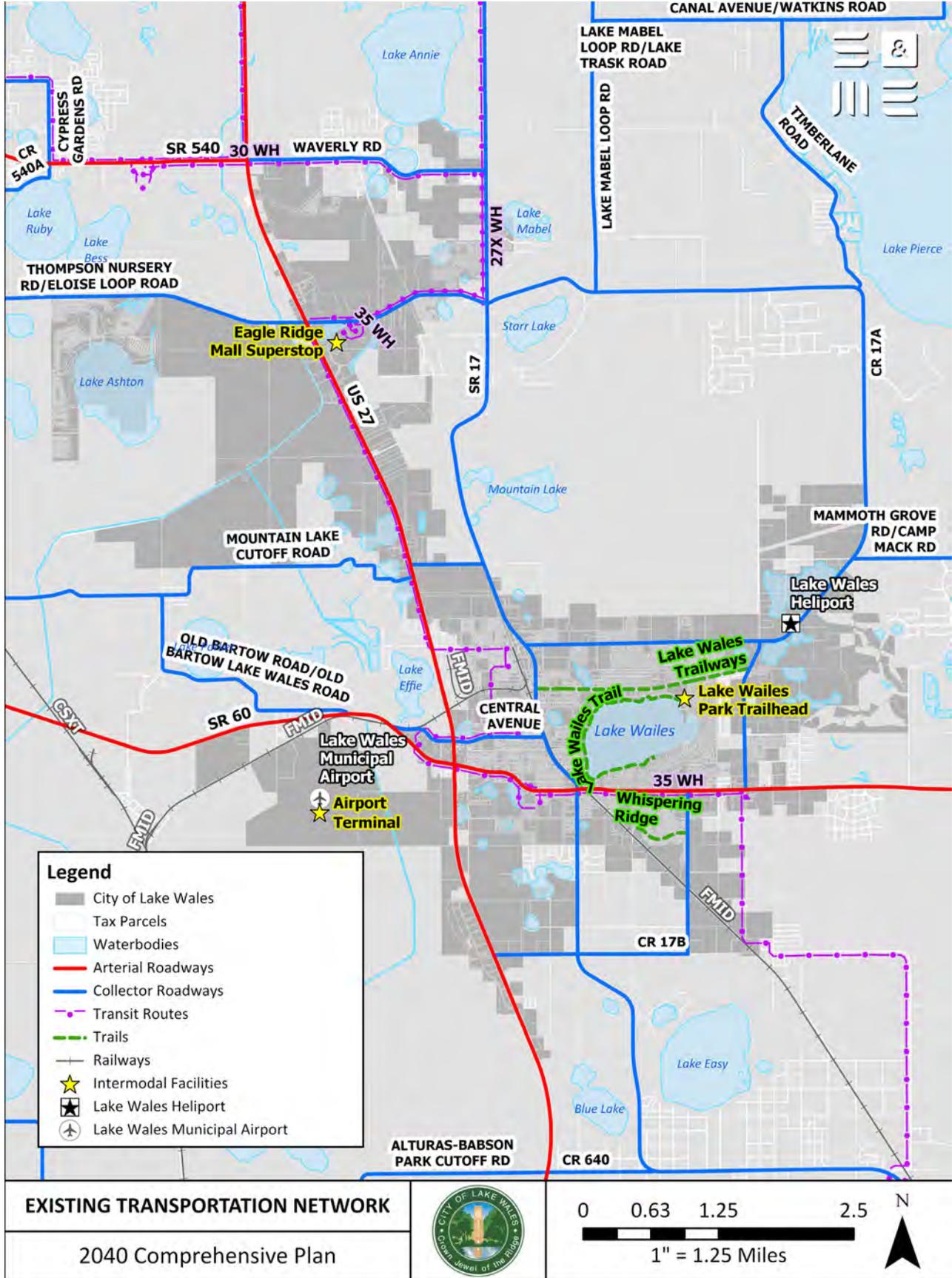
Sources: FDOT, FGDL, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

**Figure 16** Projected Roadway Performance, (20 Years)



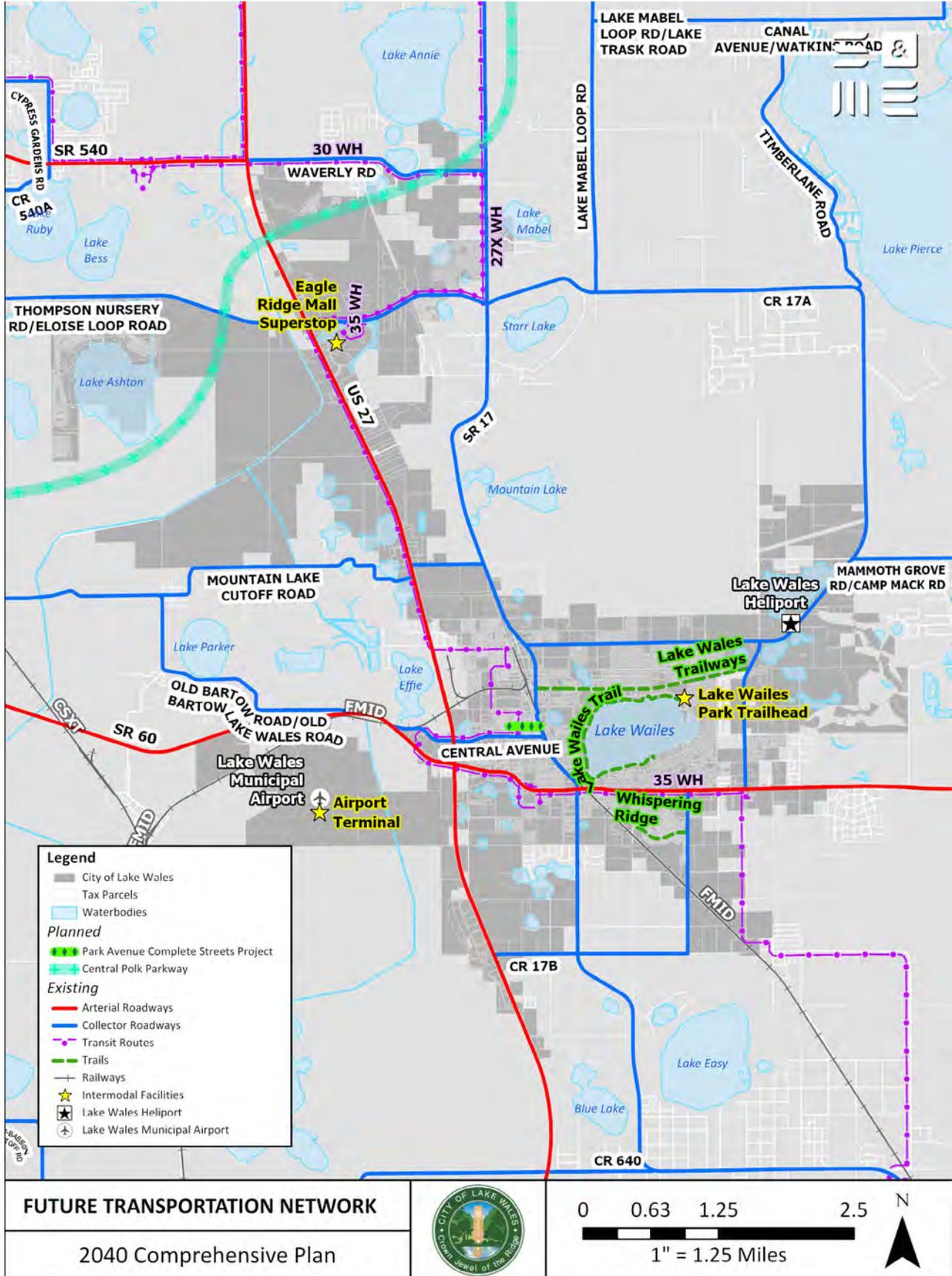
Sources: FDOT, FGDL, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 17 Transportation Network



Sources: FDOT, FGDL, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

Figure 18 Future Transportation Network



Sources: FDOT, FGDL, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

# HOUSING



# I. INTRODUCTION

According to Florida Statutes, it is not the City of Lake Wales responsibility to construct affordable housing. Yet, the City plays a large role in facilitating its provision by coordinating with affordable housing providers and ensuring safe and quality living standards are being met. Pursuant to Chapter 163, F.S., the housing element is intended to establish principles, guidelines, standards, and strategies to be followed in:

- a.** The provision of housing for all current and anticipated future residents of the City.
- b.** The elimination of substandard dwelling conditions.
- c.** The structural and aesthetic improvement of existing housing.
- d.** The provision of adequate sites for future housing, including affordable workforce housing as defined in s. 380.0651(1)(h), F.S., housing for low-income, very low-income, and moderate-income families, mobile homes, and group home facilities and foster care facilities, with supporting infrastructure and public facilities.

This data and analysis document contains the background information used to develop the Housing Element Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs).

# II. INVENTORY

The provided herein has been collected, analyzed, and extrapolated from various, highly reputable databases and reports, including decennial census data from the U.S. Census Bureau, five-year estimates (2014-2018) derived from the American Community Survey (ACS), housing and population reports from the Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI)'s Business Analyst Online (BAO) software, the Shimberg Center's Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse (FHDC) at the University of Florida, and local permitting data provided by the City's Permits and Inspections Department. Wherever possible, the newest and best available data was utilized to develop the contents of this element. All values found within this element are estimates unless specifically noted otherwise.

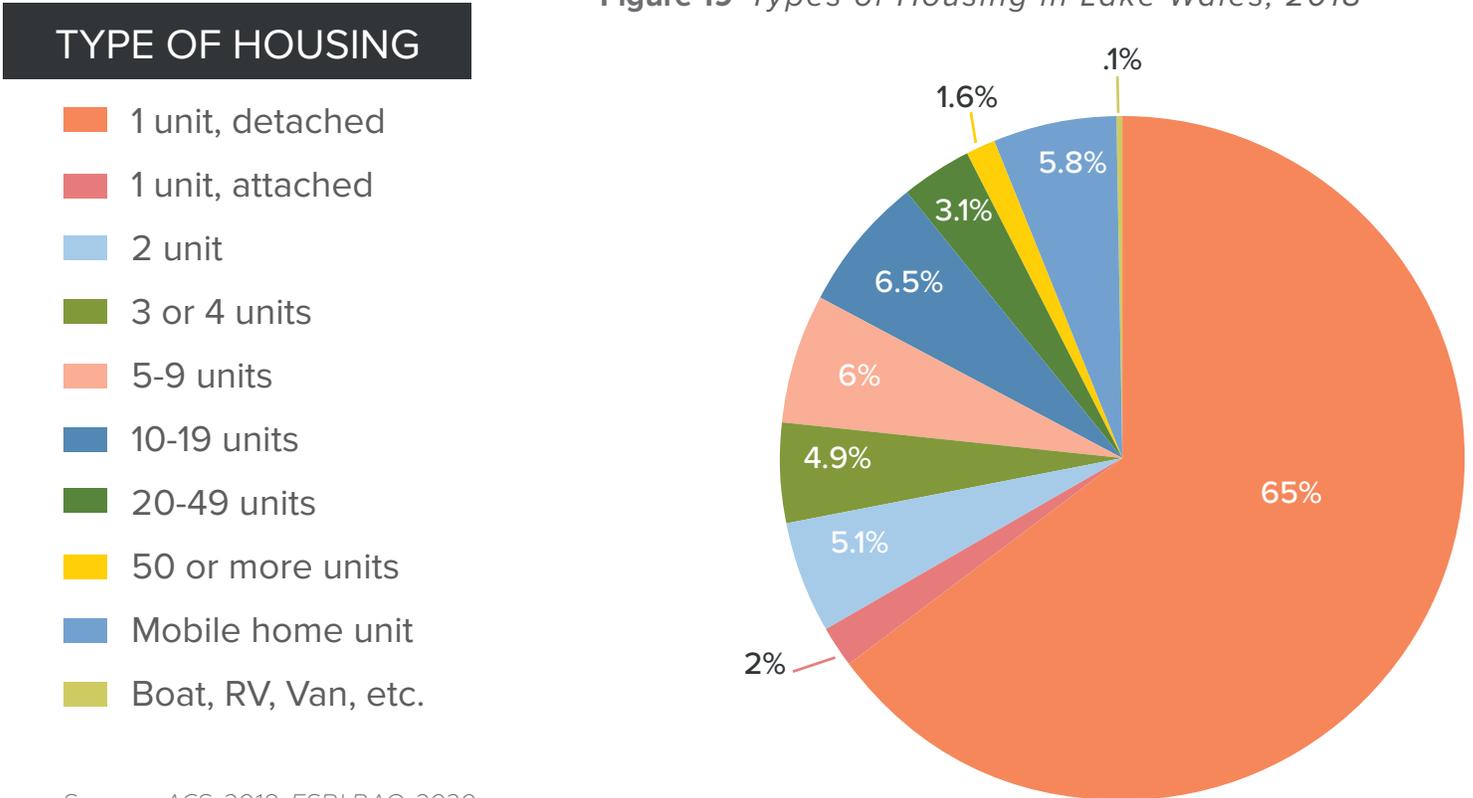
## A. NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS

According to the 2019 ACS data, there were approximately 6,808 housing units (often referred to as 'dwelling units' throughout this document) within the City of Lake Wales as of 2018. However, it should be noted that although the provided margin of error is minimal, this value is an estimate based on a sampling of small geographic areas and are subject to sampling variability and thus, are not based on actual counts.

## B. HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE AND CAPACITY

As per the 2019 ACS data, housing units within the City of Lake Wales vary greatly in both type and structural capacity. Like most suburban communities, the overwhelming majority (65%) of the City’s housing unit inventory is comprised of ‘1-unit, detached’ housing at 4,422 units. The remaining housing unit types within Lake Wales are split relatively evenly in comparison and range from 0.1 to 6.5% of the City’s total 2018 housing inventory. A summary of this data can be found in Figure 19.

**Figure 19** *Types of Housing in Lake Wales, 2018*



Sources: ACS, 2018; ESRI BAO, 2020.

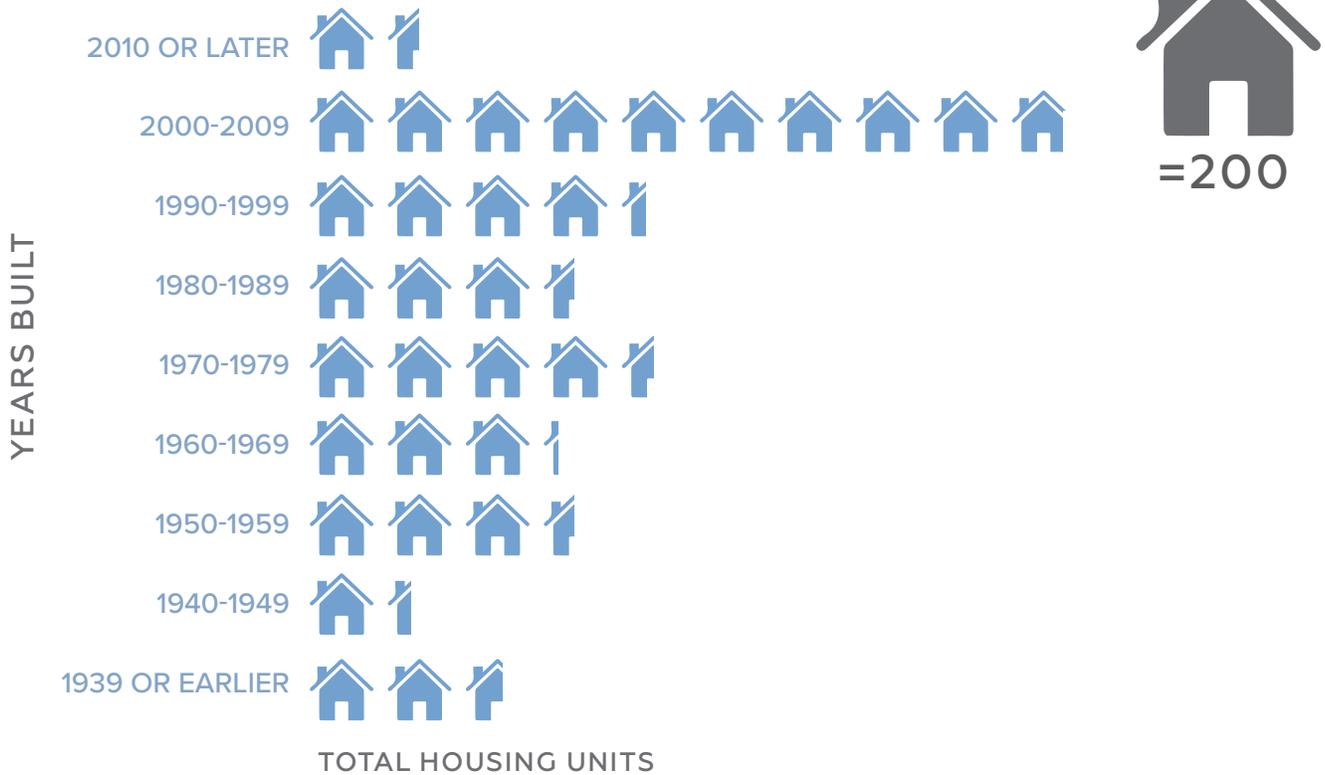
## C. HOUSING TENURE AND OCCUPANCY

According to ACS data published in 2019 regarding the City of Lake Wales, approximately 3,210 dwelling units (or 47% the City’s estimated total of 6,808) were owner occupied in 2018, 2,608 (38%) were occupied by a renter, and the remaining 990 units (15%) were vacant. Of those vacant housing units, 130 were available for rent, 47 were for purchase, 441 were listed for seasonal, recreation, or occasional use, and the status of remaining 372 units were listed as ‘other’ by the 2019 Survey.

## D. AGE OF HOUSING

The ACS also provides historical building information in their 2014-2018 5-year estimates. Of the 6,808 units estimated within the City of Lake Wales in 2018, less than a third (2,205) were built after the turn of century, with the remaining 4,603 units built before the year 2000. The high percentage of older homes within the City is an important component of this report, as the age of the housing has a direct correlation with the decline of its condition. Typically, when homes get older, the cost of maintaining and improving the structure increases, which means homeownership within the City will become cost-prohibitive for its current and prospective owners as their property continues to age. Figure 20 identifies the age of housing units found within the City of Lake Wales.

**Figure 20** Number of Residential Structures Built, By Decade



Sources: ACS, 2019; ESRI BAO, 2020.

## E. ANNUAL HOUSING VALUES

According to the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR), as annually published by the FHDC, the median sales price for a single-family home in the City of Lake Wales has varied significantly during the last 20 years, but has frequently remained lower than the median sales price for both Polk County and State of Florida as a whole. Reflective of trends in the national housing market, the median sales price for a single-family home in Lake Wales peaked in 2007 at \$256,132, which closely aligns with the timing of the County’s and State’s peak in median sale price in 2006 (\$275,359 and \$317,088, respectively).

**Table 5** Median Sales Price Single Family Homes, 2000-2019

YEAR	LAKE WALES	COUNTY	STATE
2000	\$115,674	\$140,917	\$176,703
2001	\$112,473	\$144,237	\$189,573
2002	\$157,627	\$147,038	\$201,831
2003	\$186,494	\$165,371	\$216,928
2004	\$203,991	\$181,386	\$243,653
2005	\$233,050	\$219,957	\$295,764
2006	\$250,183	\$275,359	\$317,088
2007	\$256,132	\$256,563	\$296,035
2008	\$207,838	\$213,776	\$230,759
2009	\$156,162	\$151,990	\$196,692
2010	\$154,170	\$134,709	\$186,411
2011	\$130,749	\$119,380	\$175,090
2012	\$122,504	\$128,073	\$181,529
2013	\$137,178	\$148,152	\$203,024
2014	\$145,837	\$162,041	\$218,215
2015	\$160,271	\$171,546	\$231,964
2016	\$156,616	\$180,695	\$239,719
2017	\$166,920	\$189,871	\$247,145
2018	\$178,715	\$201,627	\$258,042
2019	\$175,900	\$195,500	\$250,000

Sources: DOR, FHDC, 2020.

## F. OWNERSHIP COSTS AND BURDENS

Homeownership can be a costly endeavor. In addition to the relatively reliable costs associated with taxes, insurance, utilities, and association fees, maintenance costs for repairs and improvements tend to increase as structures age. The costs to maintain an aging structure can be cost-prohibitive for both current and prospective residents. Another significant cost to home ownership is mortgage payments, which can influence decisions to either buy or rent property. Of the 3,210 owner-occupied housing units within the City, 1,715 were purchased using a mortgage loan or contract (ACS, 2019). These ownership costs, particularly when combined with monthly mortgage payments, can be a significant financial burden. The monthly ownership cost as a percentage of their household income is shown in Table 6.

**Table 6** Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 2018

53.4%	<b>WITH MORTGAGE PAYMENTS</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>%OF TOTAL UNITS</b>
	LESS THAN 10.0%	124	3.9
	10.0 to 14.9%	286	8.9
	15.0 to 19.9%	362	11.3
	20.0 to 24.9%	205	6.4
	25.0 to 29.9%	177	5.5
	30.0 to 34.9%	139	4.3
	35.0 to 39.9%	90	2.8
	40.0 to 49.9%	85	2.6
	50.0% OR MORE	222	6.9
	NOT COMPUTED	25	.8

46.6%	<b>WITHOUT MORTGAGE PAYMENTS</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>%OF TOTAL UNITS</b>
	LESS THAN 10.0%	500	15.6
	10.0 to 14.9%	357	11.1
	15.0 to 19.9%	176	5.5
	20.0 to 24.9%	82	2.6
	25.0 to 29.9%	73	2.3
	30.0 to 34.9%	0	0
	35.0 to 39.9%	92	2.9
	40.0 to 49.9%	31	1
	50.0% OR MORE	184	5.7
	NOT COMPUTED	0	0

Sources: ACS, 2019; ESRI BAO, 2020.

According to HUD, a household is considered to be cost-burdened when housing costs exceed 30% of a household's monthly income—particularly when the household has moderate to low incomes. Of the City's 3,210 owner-occupied households, 843 (26.3) can be considered cost burdened under these terms (as shown in Table 7).

**Table 7** Cost Burdened Households, 2018

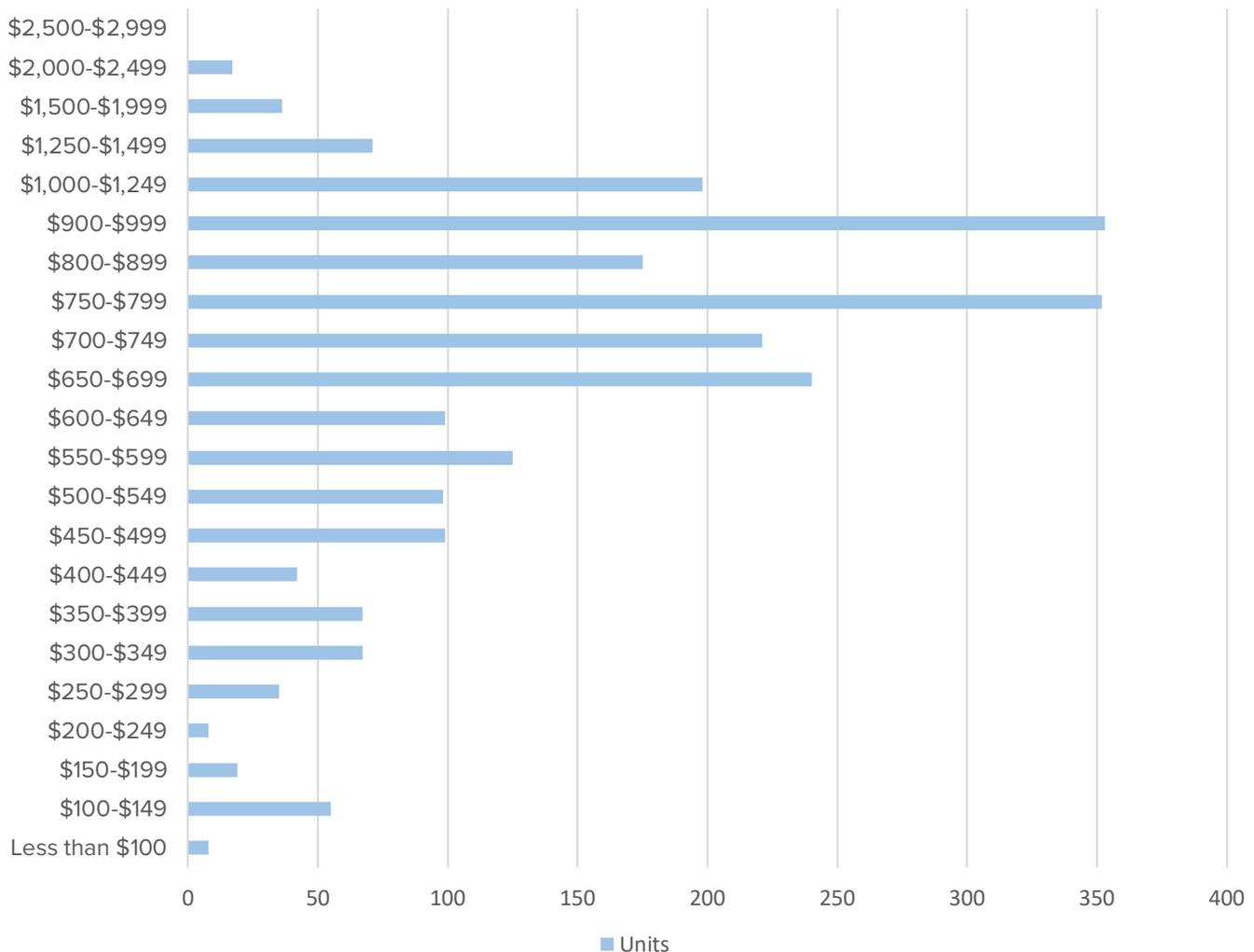
53.4%	WITH MORTGAGE PAYMENTS	UNITS	%OF TOTAL UNITS
	LESS THAN 30%	1,154	36
	MORE THAN 30%	536	16.7
	NOT COMPUTED	25	.8
46.6%	WITHOUT MORTGAGE PAYMENTS	UNITS	%OF TOTAL UNITS
	LESS THAN 30%	1,188	37
	MORE THAN 30%	307	9.6
	NOT COMPUTED	0	0

Sources: ACS, 2019; ESRI BAO, 2020.

## G. RENTAL COSTS AND BURDENS

Renting is often considered to be an affordable alternative to single-family homeownership, however, when a high demand for rental housing units exceeds an affordable local supply, the cost of renting can escalate quickly. According to 2019 ACS data, the median gross rent (which includes the cost of both rent and utilities) for a household in Lake Wales is \$803, with the average being \$866. Figure 21 shows the range of gross rents throughout the City.

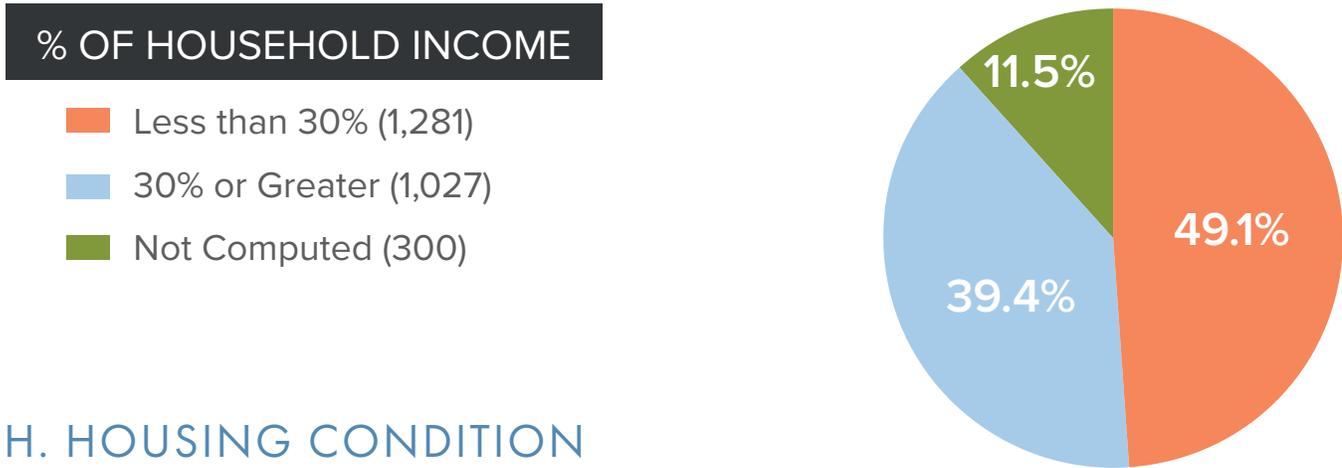
**Figure 21** *Housing Rentals by Gross Rent, 2018*



Sources: ACS, 2018; ESRI BAO, 2020

If the total cost of rent exceeds 30% of the household’s income, the household is generally considered to be cost-burdened by HUD. Cost-burdened households often are forced to choose between essential items, such as transportation, food, clothing, or medicine because they cannot afford to purchase these items once rent and utilities are paid. These choices can have long-term and dramatic effects on a household, often leading to issues such as long-term health concerns, limited employment opportunities, and a lack of educational achievement. According to the estimated rental data provided by 2019 ACS data in Figure 22, approximately 39.4% (or 1,027) of renting households within the City are estimated to be cost-burdened by their housing choices (please note that the ACS was not able to provide rental cost-burden estimates for 300 (11.5%) of Lake Wales’ 2,608 rental units).

Figure 22 Gross Rent as Percentage of Household Income, 2018



Sources: ACS, 2019; FHDC, 2020.

## H. HOUSING CONDITION

Housing quality plays a significant role in the success of individuals, families, and their communities. Housing quality refers to the physical condition of a person's home as well as the quality of the social and physical conditions in which the home is located. Although there are numerous factors that can be used to determine the current condition of an area's housing stock, two of the most frequently used indicators include overcrowding and the year built. An analysis of each of these indicators in reference to the City of Lake Wales has been provided within the subsection.

### (1) Overcrowding

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, overcrowding exists if there are more than 1.01 persons per room living in a dwelling unit. In developing this analysis, a 'room' is defined as a living room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom, finished recreation room, or enclosed porch suitable for year-round use. Excluded are bathrooms, open porches, balconies, halls and utility rooms. The Census Bureau considers overcrowded units to be a form of substandard housing. According to the 2019 ACS data estimates, 264 housing units (4.7% of the City's total number of occupied dwellings) are considered to be overcrowded.

### (2) Physical Conditions

The age of a structure often has a direct impact on its condition. As homes get older, their continued maintenance can become a significant cost over time. As stated in Section D above, more than 67% of the City's housing stock is older than 20 years old, nearly 13% of which was built before 1950. Although a study on the condition of the City's housing stock has yet to be conducted, it is assumed many of the residential structures within Lake Wales are in need of maintenance and repairs due to the wear and tear that comes with age.

## I. HISTORICAL HOUSING

Historic resources within the state are primarily catalogued and maintained by the Florida Division of Historical Resources (FDHR). Of the 662 structures listed within their database that are located within the City of Lake Wales, 568 (or 86%) are residential, which includes private residences, apartments, and a mixed-use building. Of these structures, three (3) are currently listed on the NRHP (301 and 315 E Sessoms Avenue and 644 S Lakeshore Boulevard) and one (1) is likely eligible for a future listing (300 S Lakeshore Boulevard). Section 23-208.1. of the Lake Wales Land Development Code designates Historic District Regulatory Board as the historic preservation board, which is active and meets regularly to hear applications for Certificates of Appropriateness.

## J. GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

According to the FHDC's Assisted Housing Inventory, Polk County is currently home to 84 government subsidized housing facilities. Of these facilities, eight (8) (or approximately 10%) are located within the City of Lake Wales. These local facilities are detailed in Table 8, which contains information related to each property, including: the facility's name, the total number of units provided, the number of government-assisted units, the public funding mechanism utilized, the target population, the year in which the structure was built, the type of ownership, and the year the subsidies are expected to end.

**Table 8** Government Subsidized Housing Inventory, 2020

NAME	TOTAL UNITS	ASSISTED UNITS	PROGRAMS PROVIDED	TARGET POPULATION	YEAR BUILT	OWNERSHIP TYPE	SUBSIDY END
Grove Manor	140	140	Public Housing	Elderly; Family	1950	Public Housing Authority	Not Provided
Lake Wales Gardens	96	87	Extremely Low Income; Housing Credits 4%; Rental Assistance/HUD; SAIL; Section 207/223(f); State Bonds	Family	1974	Non-Profit	2071
Lake Wales Villas	56	56	Rental Assistance/RD; Section 515	Elderly	1980	Limited Dividend	2043
Orangemont Village	53	52	Housing Credits 9%; Rental Assistance/RD; Section 515	Family	1987	Limited Dividend	2070
Orangemont Village Phase 1	34	34	Rental Assistance/RD; Section 515	Family	1987	Limited Dividend	2037
Sunrise Park	72	72	Exchange; Housing Credits 9%; Public Housing	Family; Link	2012	Non-Profit	2062
Tower Point	192	192	Housing Credits 9%	Family	2003	For-Profit	2053
Wales Landing Apartments	34	33	Rental Assistance/RD; Section 515	Family	1984	Limited Dividend	2034

Source: FHDC, 2020.

The State of Florida has also provided means for the creation of local housing finance authorities {Chapter 159, Florida Statutes (F.S.)}, Local Public Housing Authorities (Chapter 421, F.S.), and the State Housing Development Corporation (Chapter 420, F.S.). In partnership with the federal and state government, both the City of Lake Wales and Polk County administer several affordable housing programs to area residents. A listing of these programs is provided below:

### ***(1) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)***

This grant program provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Each CDBG-funded project must meet one (1) of the three (3) objectives:

- Benefit low- and moderate-income persons,
- Prevent or eliminate slum and blights, and
- Meet other community development needs having a particular urgency.

The CDBG also funds the County's demolition program, which is designed to eliminate slum and blight in unincorporated areas of Polk County.

### ***(2) Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG)***

The grant assists nonprofit organizations to provide emergency shelter and associated support services to homeless individuals and families within the County.

### ***(3) Home Investment Partnership (HOME)***

The grant funds are used to build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent, homeownership, or to provide rent assistance to low-income individuals within Polk County.

### ***(4) Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)***

The LIHTC was created to provide an incentive for the development and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. These federal housing tax credits are awarded to developers of qualified projects via a competitive application process administered by state housing finance authorities (HFAs). Developers either use the credits or sell them to investors to raise capital for real estate projects, which, in turn, reduces the debt or equity contribution that would otherwise be required of developers. With lower financing costs, tax credit properties can potentially expand the supply of affordable rental housing.

### ***(5) Public Housing***

Public housing was established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single-family houses to high rise apartments for elderly families.

### ***(6) Section 3***

The Section 3 program requires that recipients of certain HUD financial assistance, to the greatest extent possible, provide training, employment, contracting and other economic opportunities to low- and very low-income persons, especially recipients of government assistance for housing, and to businesses that provide economic opportunities to low- and very low-income persons.

### ***(7) Section 8***

The housing choice voucher program (Section 8) provides assistance to very low-income families to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing. Housing can include single-family homes, townhouses and apartments

and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the family's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the local housing authority on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

#### **(8) State Housing Initiative (SHIP)**

The State Housing Initiative funds are used to preserve affordable housing for very low to moderate income families. These funds are given to local governments and are based on a populations-based formula.

## **K. GROUP QUARTERS**

The US Census Bureau classifies all people not living in housing units (house, apartment, mobile home, rent-ed rooms) as living in group quarters. There are two (2) types of group quarters: (1) Institutional, which includes correctional facilities, nursing homes, or mental hospitals, and (2) Non-Institutional, which encompasses college dormitories, military barracks, group homes, missions, or shelters. According to 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data, there were an estimated 352 persons living within group quarters, of which 297 were categorized as institution-alized.

## **L. FARMWORKER HOUSING NEEDS**

Although the FHDC does not provide farmworker housing data at the City level, the newest available information from Clearinghouse reveals that there is a significant need for additional 'Single Worker Beds' and 'Multifamily Units' within Polk County. Currently, the Shimberg Center estimates that there are 3,885 'Total Unaccompanied Workers' within Polk County, with only 2,078 Department of Health (DOH) permitted camp beds available for these workers. Additionally, the Center also estimates that the County currently contains 1,773 'Accompanied Migrant & Seasonal Households' but only offers these families 284 'Rural Development & Florida Housing Multi-family Units.'

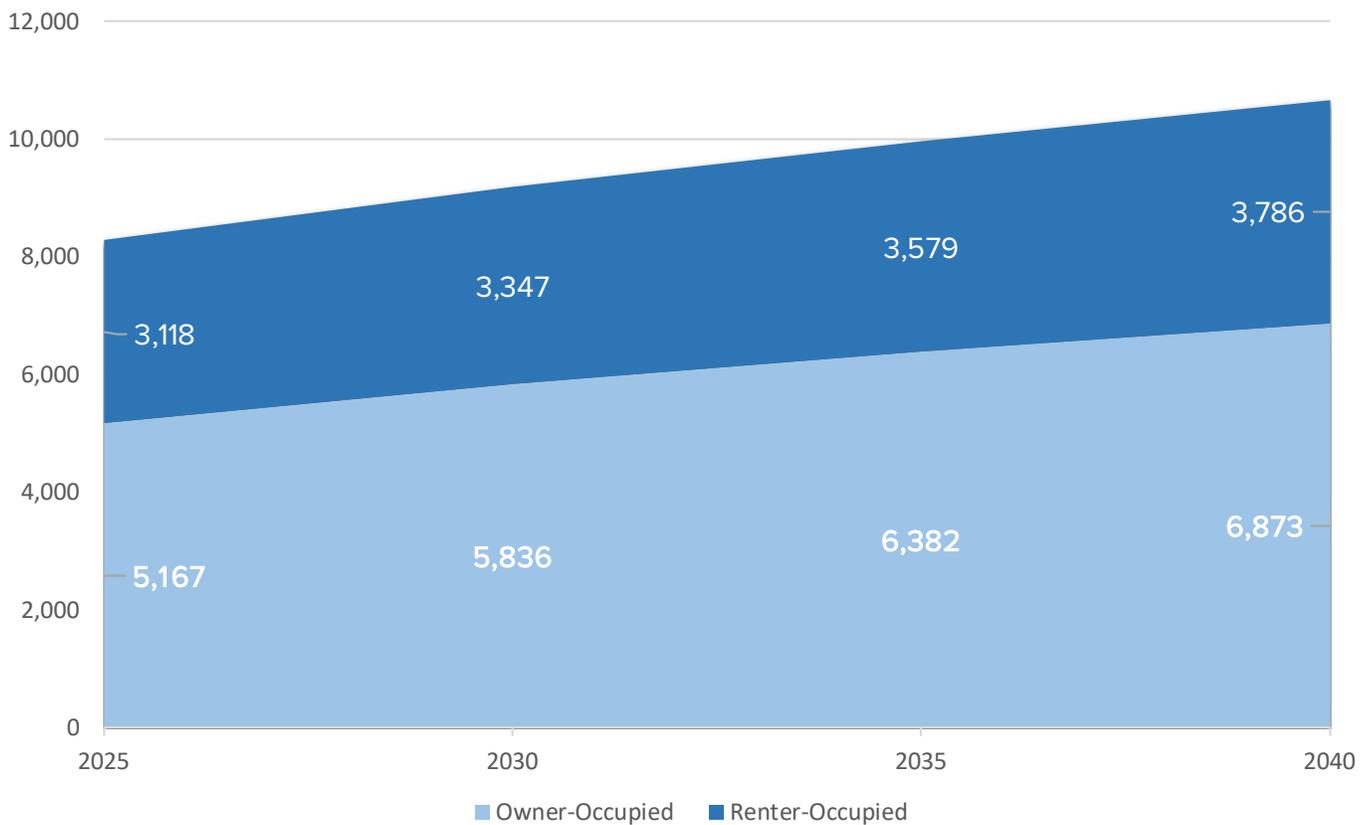
## **M. MANUFACTURED HOMES**

A manufactured home (formerly known as a mobile home) is built to the Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (HUD Code) and displays a red certification label on the exterior of each transportable section. Manufactured homes are built in the controlled environment of a manufacturing plant and are transported in one (1) or more sections on a permanent chassis. These structures are traditionally provided on individually platted lots or within a mobile home park under unified ownership. According to 2019 ACS housing data, approximately 5.8% of the housing stock in Lake Wales (394) consists of manufactured homes—each of which are provided on individually platted lots.

# III. SHORT- & LONG-TERM HOUSING NEEDS

According to 2019 ACS population and housing estimates, the City of Lake Wales possessed a total population of approximately 15,735 residents in 2018. This population comprised an estimated 5,818 households and shared the City’s 6,808 housing units. Of these units, 3,210 were owner-occupied, 2,608 were renter-occupied, and 990 were vacant. Using ACS population data, the FHDC prepares housing projections and segregates them by tenure, household income, age, and cost burden. Figure 23 contains household projections in five (5) year increments up to 2040.

**Figure 23** *Housing Projections, 2025-2040*



Sources: ACS, 2019; FHDC, S&ME, 2020.

## A. PROJECTION OF COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

Table 9 highlights FHDC estimates and projections of the number of households that will be considered cost-burdened (paying more than 30% of their income for housing) by HUD. Household projections for Lake Wales show that both the percentage of cost-burdened owner- and rental-occupied households will continue to decline by one (1) point throughout the 2040 planning horizon. However, when examining cost-burden projections for seniors only (65 years and older) as shown in Figure 24, the portion of cost-burdened households remain constant during this same period.

**Table 9** Housing Cost Projections for Owner-and Renter-Occupied Units, 2025-2040

OWNERS		2025	2030	2035	2040
	TOTAL OWNERS	5,167	5,836	6,382	6,873
	30% OR LESS	3,885	4,422	4,846	5,229
	30.1%-49%	700	771	837	894
	MORE THAN 50%	582	643	699	750
	COST BURDEN OWNERS	1,282	1,414	1,536	1,644

RENTERS		2025	2030	2035	2040
	TOTAL RENTERS	3,118	3,347	3,579	3,786
	30% OR LESS	1,340	1,454	1,560	1,654
	30.1%-49%	715	761	810	852
	MORE THAN 50%	1,063	1,132	1,209	1,280
	COST BURDEN RENTERS	1,778	1,893	2,019	2,132

Sources: ACS, 2019; FHDC, S&ME, 2020.

**Figure 24** Housing Cost Projections for Owner-and Renter-Occupied Units (65 & Older), 2025-2040

	 OWNER	 RENTER	 Total Elderly Households	 Total Cost Burdened Elderly HHs
<b>2025</b>	3,204	933	4,137	1,078
<b>2030</b>	3,878	1,131	5,009	1,309
<b>2035</b>	4,312	1,257	5,569	1,455
<b>2040</b>	4,697	1,371	6,068	1,584

Sources: ACS, 2019; FHDC, S&ME, 2020.

## B. COST-BURDENED LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS PROJECTION

The housing cost projections provided by the FHDC provide further detail if the cost-burdened households are also low-income (incomes below 80% of area median) and how many of those are severely cost-burdened (paying 50% or more for mortgage costs or rent). The 80% of median income figure is a traditional measure of eligibility for housing assistance. For example, all beneficiaries of the federal public housing program and federal HOME program must have incomes below this amount. The estimates and projections can serve as an approximation of the total number of households that would benefit from some type of housing assistance. Such assistance could include the construction of new affordable housing units, but it could also include the provision of subsidies to make current units more affordable. The projections of cost burdened and severely cost burdened households prepared by the FHDC assume the same rate of growth as the overall number of households. Figure 25 show the adjusted projections by income and cost burden for low income households.

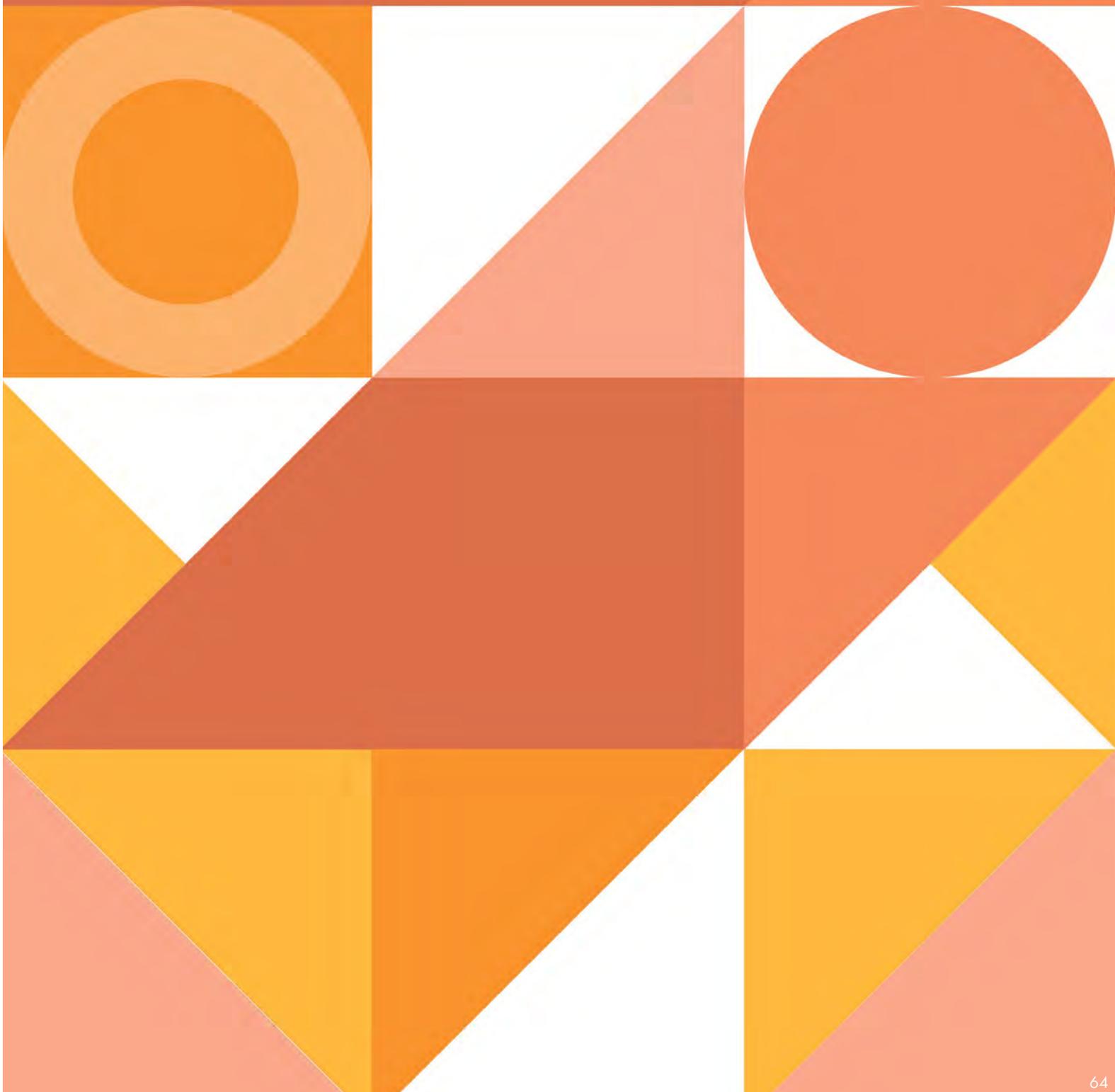
**Figure 25** *Cost Burdened Low-Income Household Projections, 2025-2040*



Sources: ACS, 2019; FHDC, S&ME, 2020.

With nearly 30% of low-income households projected to continue to be cost burdened throughout the 2040 planning horizon, the City should undertake significant measures to continue providing their residents with greater access to housing programs and affordable housing units. This may include the provision a mixture of housing types, small house pocket neighborhoods, and possible inclusionary housing/impact fee policies. While pursuing these types of housing options, the City should encourage and ensure that future development provides a mixture of housing types and costs, rather than creating isolated, homogeneous, low-income neighborhoods.

# PUBLIC FACILITIES



# I. INTRODUCTION

The Public Facilities Element provides an inventory, analysis and future needs of potable water, wastewater treatment, solid waste collection, drainage and stormwater management, and natural groundwater aquifer recharge within the City of Lake Wales. Through the Utilities Department, the City of Lake Wales operates and is responsible for the maintenance and capital expansion of the municipality owned utilities systems.

The City provides water service to more than 17,000 residents and the primary source of water for the City is the Floridan aquifer. Water is pumped from wells drilled into the aquifer from the City's three (3) water plants: Market Street, Grove Avenue, and the High School Water Plant.

## II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

### A. POTABLE WATER

The City of Lake Wales owns, operates and maintains a potable water distribution system that pumps water from the Floridan aquifer. The City's potable water system provides water for both residential and non-residential uses, including fire protection. As part of the water system, the City owns, operates and maintains three (3) water plants. These plants have an average annual permitted capacity of 3.39 million gallons per day. The City's 2020 demand is 2.8 million gallons per day.

#### *(1) Potable Water System Inventory*

This section identifies potable water facilities within the City's utility service area. The City has historically provided adequate potable water service to meet the demand of residents and commercial within the city limits and some unincorporated areas of Polk County. The water plant operators visit each plant daily and are responsible the distribution of 2.39 million gallons of water. Presently, the City's service area includes the city limits of Lake Wales and some unincorporated areas of Polk County.

Lake Wales potable water distribution system is comprised of three (3) water plants, seven (7) potable ground water supply wells, and seven (7) water storage. Four (4) elevated storage tanks provide water to isolated pressure zones.

#### *A. Operational Responsibility*

The City of Lake Wales Utilities Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the central public water system, in accordance with state regulations and requirements.

#### *B. Predominant Users*

The residents of Lake Wales make up 60 percent (17,000 residents) of the City's potable water customers. The City also provides water service to areas in unincorporated Polk County.

#### *C. Public Potable Water Facility Design and Capacity*

The City of Lake Wales potable water system is currently functioning well and meets state and federal drinking water standards. Based on the City of Lake Wales Potable Water Master Plan, dated February 2020, the City's potable water production, transmission, and distribution facilities have ample capacity to meet future demands.

#### **D. Wells and Storage Facilities**

The potable water system utilizes seven (7) active wells. The wells produce an average of 2.39 MGD of water for treatment and distribution. The wells are fed by groundwater from the Floridian Aquifer. WTP #1 has 800,000 gallons of storage capacity; one (1) 300,000-gallon tank, and one (1) 500,000-gallon tanks. WTP #2 has one (1) 260,000-gallon tank. WTP #3 has one (1) 400,000 gallon storage tank, one (1) 200,000-gallon tank on site, and a 500,000-gallon tank off-site for a total of 1,100,000 gallons of storage capacity.

#### **E. Water Distribution System**

The City's potable water facilities are connected by way of an intricate water distribution system. The City serves potable water to its customers via seven (7) potable ground water supply wells, three (3) water treatment plants, nine (9) high service pumps, and seven (7) ground storage and elevated tanks throughout the distribution system and three (3) emergency interconnections with neighboring cities for fire and pressure related emergencies

The City's water supply, treatment, storage and distribution facilities are in good shape; the City recently completed previous master plan recommendations, is keeping up with repair and replacement needs.

The water quality from the Floridian aquifer is sufficiently good that only requires chlorination treatment and iron removal to provide potable water. Additionally, a sequestering agent is added to allow for corrosion control.

The City's water treatment plant has consistently operated in compliance with all criteria established by the FDEP and Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services with respect to public water supplies. The plant continues to be operated and maintained in good working condition. Repairs and/or upgrades to the plant are performed as required on an individual basis.

#### **2)Public Level of Service**

The current level of service for potable water demand is calculated by dividing the volume of water treated and pumped by the City's population. In 2018, the City's average daily demand was 2.6 MGD of potable water. Based on historical usage and the estimated the level of service (LOS) was determined to be 122 gallons per capita per day. This amount is for residential and non-residential combined. Table 10 shows the existing and projected potable water demand based on a LOS of 122 gallons per capita, using estimates and projections for the City's population.

**Table 10** *Current and Projected Potable Demand*

YEAR	POPULATION	AVERAGE DAY DEMAND (MGD)
2018	17,000	2.6
2039	22,170	3.6

Source: City of Lake Wales Potable Water Master Plan, dated February 2020.

### 3) Existing Demand

The evaluation of necessary system improvements to meet domestic and commercial consumptive demand is based upon the entire system's ability to meet peak demands. Presently, the City's maximum permitted pumping capacity is limited by the City's Consumptive Use Permit from the SWFWMD.

The City Lake Wales current capacity of the potable water system can be rated in terms of well supply capacity and finished water high service pumping capacity. The City's existing aquifer withdrawal permit limit is 3.90 GPD for AADD and 4.68 GPD for peak flow month. In 2018, the City's maximum day potable water demand was at 2.6 MGD, leaving approximately 1.3 MGD of surplus well supply capacity. Therefore, the City's central potable water system has adequate capacity to serve all of the existing residential and non-residential units that are currently connected.

With respect to storage volume, it is standard practice to be able to provide a storage volume equivalent to at least 25 percent of the maximum day potable water demand. Using the 2018 maximum day potable water demand of 3.9 MGD, this provision equates to 0.98 MGD, or approximately 975,000 gallons per day (GPD). Therefore, Lake Wales's existing 2,160,000 gallons of total system storage is sufficient to meet this rated system capacity and the City's demands.

With respect to the distribution system, there are no known deficiencies. The existing system is adequate to meet all water demand conditions of the existing customer base. Therefore, no large scale improvements are required for the existing system.

### (4) Future Demand Capacity

Future water demand was forecasted based on City population projections and according to the City of Lake Wales Potable Water Master Plan, dated February 2020. The potable water supply and demand for 2018 and projections for the 2039 are presented in Table 11. The table below show there is sufficient well capacity for the future water demands through year 2035. Additionally, total system water storage capacity is also sufficient for meeting the projected demand through year 2039.

**Table 11** Current and Projected Potable Water Supply and Demand

YEAR	POPULATION	AVERAGE DAY DEMAND (MGD)	PROJECTED DESIGN CAPACITY (MGD)	MAX WELL SUPPLY (MGD)
2018	17,000	2.6	3.9	3.9
2039	22,170	3.6	3.9	

Source: City of Lake Wales Potable Water Master Plan, dated February 2020.

In addition to domestic and commercial demand, the City provides water for fire protection needs. Currently, there are no known deficiencies in the distribution system for meeting fire flows.

As stated above, the City will not require any additional water supply facilities and elevated storage tanks. The existing wells and storage tanks are adequate to meet the projected water demands through year 2039.

In accordance with section 163.3177(6)(c) of the Florida state statutes, should the City consider or investigate improvements for expansion of its water supply facilities, such improvements should be performed while giving consideration to the current published Southwest Florida Water Management District Regional Water Supply Plan. The District's Water Supply Plan has been created to provide a regional plan for supplying water to meet the projected needs of users across the entire region.

### **(5) Distribution System Improvements**

The City plans to continue maintenance on the existing distribution system. Extensions of the water lines, pumps, and interconnection upgrades are currently planned within the five-year capital improvements.

## **B. WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

The City of Lake Wales owns, operates, and maintains a 2.19 MGD AADF Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). The City maintains 177,000 linear feet of force mains and 40 lift stations. The City also owns, operates, and maintains a Reclaimed Water Treatment Plant (RWTP) with 2-million-gallon storage capacity. The total reclaimed storage capacity is 2.5-million-gallons with the permitted 0.5-million-gallon storage at the Lake Wales Country Club Golf Course.

### **(1) Wastewater Facilities Inventory**

The WWTF is located on Henry Street just south of SR 60. The WWTF is permitted to treat 2.19 MGD on an annual average basis. Permit number FLA129844 from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and is effective until April 19, 2022. The facility's average monthly flow was 1.14 MGD for 2018. Reuse demand for the 2018 were less than 1 MGD on average.

### **(2) Level of Service**

Future capacity of a WWTF is evaluated based on the historical trends, projected growth, and the City's adopted level of service standards. The level of service standard used for the City is 240 gallons per day (gpd) per capita for the sanitary sewer system.

### **(3) Wastewater Demand**

The existing wastewater flow for 2018 and the projected wastewater flow for the years 2025 to 2040 are shown on Table 12 below. The projections are based on general population growth, including the impacts from any currently proposed development. Table 12 shows that City's WWTF currently has and will have adequate capacity to treat wastewater for the City's customers until the year 2040.

**Table 12** *Current and Projected Potable Water Supply and Demand*

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MAX. MONTH AVERAGE DAILY FLOW (MGD)</b>	<b>WWTF CAPACITY (MGD)</b>
2018	1.14	2.19
2025	1.5	2.19
2030	1.59	2.19
2040	1.64	2.19

*Source: Lake Wales Wastewater & Reclaimed Master Utility Plan, dated October 2019.*

### **(4) System Improvements**

Based on the wastewater flows stated above, no additional expansions to the City's WWTF or new facilities are projected to be needed through 2040. Based on the capital improvements recommended in the Lake Wales Wastewater & Reclaimed Master Utility Plan, dated October 2019, there are several system upgrades including force main replacement and lift station improvements and lift station additions.

## C. SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

The City of Lake Wales provides solid waste collection services to residential and commercial customers through Republic Services of Florida also D/B/A Florida Refuse. They do both weekly curbside solid waste and recycling pickup. Commercial rates and frequency of collection vary depending on dumpster size.

### *(1) Solid Waste Facilities Inventory*

#### **A. Active Landfills**

There are no active landfills in the city limits of Lake Wales. There is an active landfill in Polk County which allows all Polk County residents to drop off refuse and construction debris for a fee.

#### **B. Collection Centers**

There are no active waste collection centers for residents in Lake Wales. The solid waste service provider offers residential bulk pick up and yard waste collection.

#### **C. Transfer Station**

There are no active transfer stations in Lake Wales. The solid waste service provider offers residential bulk pick up and yard waste collection.

#### **D. Recycling Program**

The City of Lake Wales has an active curbside recycling program. The materials that can be recycled consist of glass, plastic, aluminum, and steel containers, newspapers/magazines, and brown bags. The curbside pickup for recyclables is for one (1) mixed recyclable container.

#### **E. Hazardous Waste**

Hazardous wastes are corrosive, toxic, flammable, or reactive substances that may harm public health and the environment. Some examples of hazardous wastes are motor oil, paints, pesticides, fluorescent light bulbs, and pool chemicals. There are no hazardous waste generators within the City of Lake Wales.

As mentioned above, the nearest Hazardous Waste Collection Center is the Polk County Hazardous Waste Collection Center (HHWCC), located at 5 Environmental Loop S., Winter Haven FL, 33880. The City of Lake Wales also offers free Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events at temporary collection sites periodically.

### *(2) Solid Waste Facilities*

There are no active landfills in the city limits of Lake Wales. There is an active landfill in Polk County which allows all Polk County residents to drop off refuse. The level of service for the City of Lake Wales is 1.3 pounds per capita per day. Solid waste from the City is hauled to the North Central Landfill, which has approximately 1.5 years of capacity left. A phase VI is being designed and funded, which has a design life of 7.6 years. The City will continue its effort to reduce waste by increasing participation in their recycling program.

## D. DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The main goal of this section is to provide an evaluation of the City's stormwater management system and to establish a level of service standard that will promote the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the City of Lake Wales. The enforcement of stormwater management regulations within the City basically falls under

the jurisdiction of four (4) government agencies: Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Polk County, and the City of Lake Wales. Depending on the location of a project, it is conceivable that permits could be required from three (3) of the four (4) agencies.

### ***(1) Drainage and Stormwater Inventory***

Developed land within the City of Lake Wales relies on an existing stormwater management system. In areas of the City developed in the distant past (prior to 1982), stormwater run-off is most often directed via overland flow to one (1) of the many isolated surface waters or wetlands located within the City. In areas of the City more recently developed, stormwater run-off is conveyed via underground pipes (storm sewer) to either detention or retention ponds.

The City of Lake Wales and the SWFWMD have developed criteria for the management of stormwater runoff. The 25-year, 96-hour and 25-year, 24-hour rainfall events were selected in developing the design storm criteria for projects that fall within a stream or open lake watershed. According to Sections 23-308. and 23-705. of the land development code, "All proposed projects for construction approval shall be required to submit site and drainage plans to Southwest Florida Water Management District for application, approval or exemption as specified in F.S. Chs. 373 and 120, and Chapter 40-D40, General Surface Water Management Permits, addressing both water quantity and quality aspects of stormwater management."

### ***(2) Drainage and Stormwater Needed Facilities***

Any new land development or redevelopment within the City of Lake Wales must meet the stormwater quantity and quality standards and requirements of the Southwest Florida Water Management District through the Environmental Resource Permitting process. The City of requires evidence from the developer that an Environmental Resource Permit has been granted prior to issuing any development orders or construction permits.

The City of Lake Wales Land Development Code regulates the stormwater management capacity of various infrastructure components that will be publicly maintained, such as streets, bridges, culverts, ditches, and storm sewer pipes. In addition, the Land Development Code prohibits new discharges into isolated surface waters or wetlands unless permitted by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

### ***(3) Future Demand***

In addition to requiring new development to comply with local, state and federal stormwater regulations, the City will continue to address localized flooding through the Capital Improvements Plan as funding becomes available. The City will be instituting a stormwater fee to anyone on Lake Wales utilities. The stormwater fee will be dedicated to managing stormwater flow throughout the City.

## **E. AQUIFER RECHARGE**

Rain replenishes or recharges aquifers by percolating through the soil or entering through sink holes and fissures. Aquifers can also be recharged from adjacent aquifers or from surface water bodies. Not all precipitation reaches the aquifers. Of the approximately 52 inches of rain that Central Florida receives during a typical year, 39 inches is returned to the atmosphere directly through evaporation or indirectly through plant transpiration. Runoff to surface waters accounts for another 6 inches or more, depending upon the amount of impervious surface (roads, parking areas, roofs). Only 7 inches of 13 percent is available for aquifer recharge. If total water loss and withdrawal exceeds the amount of recharge, the amount of water stored in the aquifer decreases.

### ***(1) Groundwater Recharge Impact***

Groundwater is the principal source of water supply for municipal, industrial, and agricultural water in Central Florida. The groundwater is contained in aquifers (water bearing geologic strata) that are separated or confined by layers of less permeable material. The City of Lake Wales is underlain by three (3) principal aquifer systems: the surficial aquifer, the intermediate aquifer, and the Floridan aquifer. The intermediate and Floridan aquifer can be further divided into sub-units.

### ***(2) Aquifer Contamination***

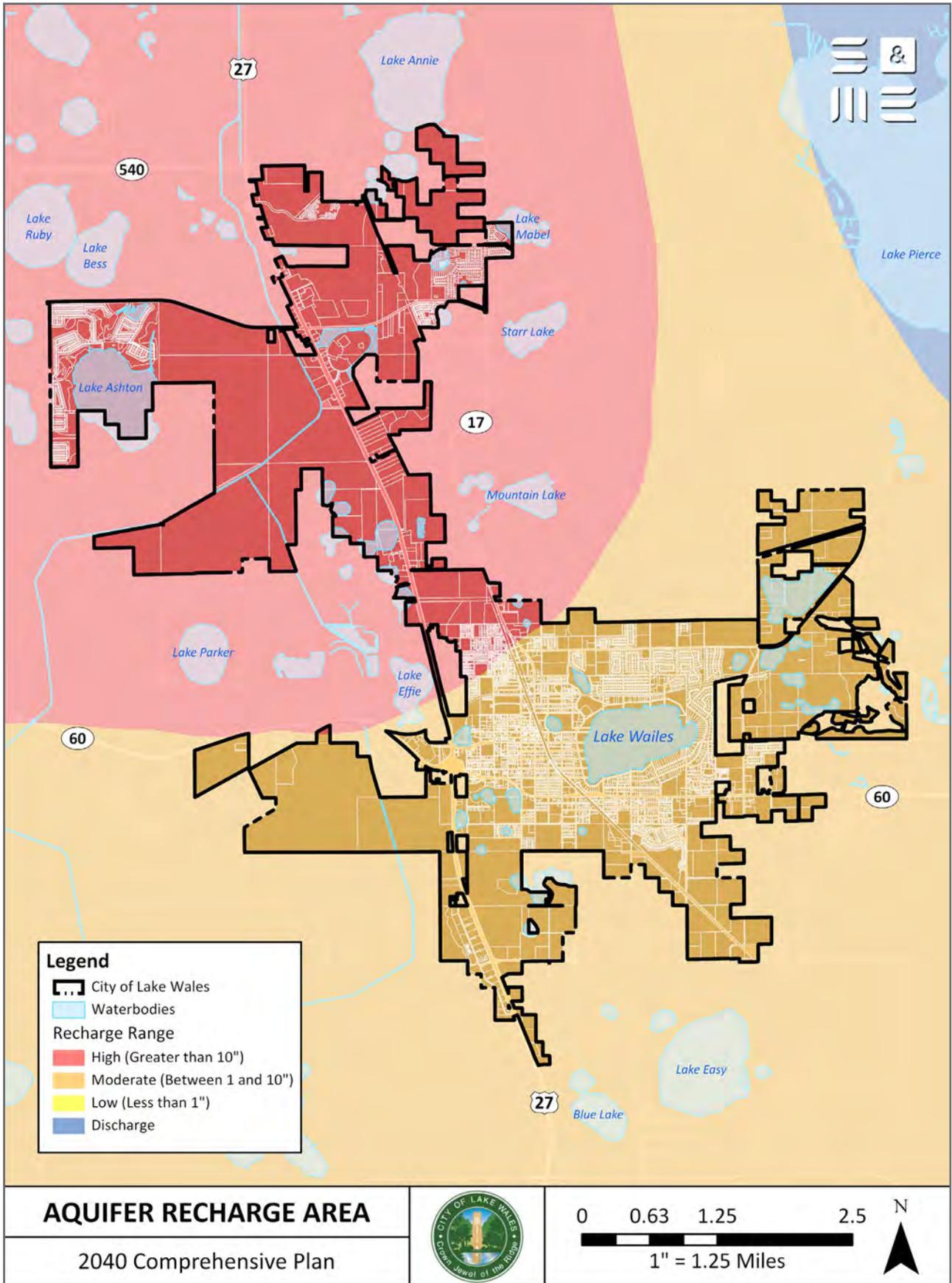
In general, the susceptibility of the Floridan Aquifer to contamination decreases from north to south in Polk County, because the aquifer is less confined and nearer the surface in the northern areas. Lake Wales is in the middle range geographically. In the Ridge area, the confining layers of the intermediate aquifer are discontinuous, allowing contaminants to directly reach the Floridan Aquifer.

The potential for contamination of public water systems is monitored by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection under the “Source Water and Protection Program” or SWAP. The assessments of Lake Wales water supply wells from 2004 to 2011 identify potential sources of contamination such as industrial uses in the vicinity of the well and assigns a “susceptibility score.” Sources of contamination to the city’s wells are petroleum storage tanks and “delineated areas,” areas known to have ethylene dibromide (EDB) contamination from spraying for nematodes in citrus groves. The susceptibility of the wells to contamination from these sources is 33.3 or “moderate,” according to the latest assessment. EDB is a suspected carcinogen and mutagen that has caused widespread groundwater contamination in Florida. It has been found to be persistent and mobile in groundwater and has been detected in many public water supplies in Central Florida.

### ***(3) Regulatory Framework***

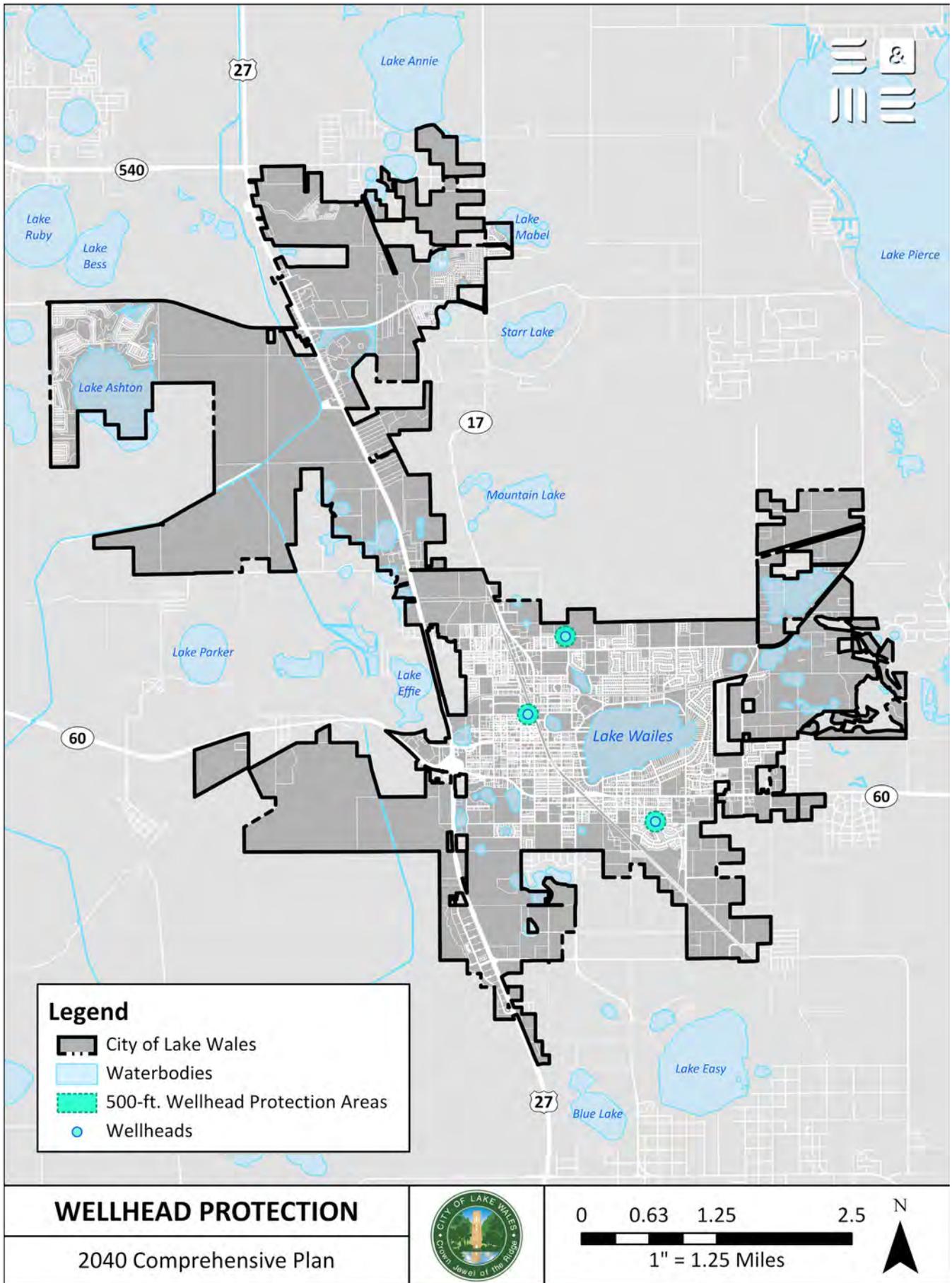
Florida Administrative Code rules, local regulations and state statutes have been enacted to prevent negative impacts of excessive water consumption. Extreme lowering of aquifer levels and surface water flows can adversely impact ecosystems by lowering lake levels, degrading wetlands and other natural systems and habitats. Other related negative impacts as mentioned above can include increased sinkhole frequency. In Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the state delegates powers to water management districts to regulate potable water well construction and consumptive use permitting.

Figure 26 Aquifer Recharge



Sources: City of Lake Wales, Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, SWFWMD, S&ME, Inc., 2020.

Figure 27 Wellhead Protection Area



Sources: FDOT, FGD, POLK COUNTY, POLK TPO, S&ME, 2020.

# CONSERVATION

# I. INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is meant to identify the natural resources in the City as well as establish policies that would protect and conserve environmentally sensitive lands. This section will take inventory and discuss the quality of air, surface waters, forest and agricultural lands, soils within the City and the conservation of these resources.

## II. INVENTORY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

This section identifies the natural resources that are located within the City of Lake Wales.

### A. SURFACE WATERS

#### *Rivers, Bays, and Lakes*

There are 22 named lakes and one (1) canal (Peace Creek Canal) in the city. The two (2) major water bodies within the City limits are Lake Wailes and Lake Ashton. The City of Lake Wales is located within the Lake Wales Ridge Major Watershed which is within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The City is comprised of three (3) smaller drainage watersheds, which include the Kissimmee River - Above Lake Hatchineha, Kissimmee River - Below Lake Hatchineha, and the Peace River - Peace Creek Watersheds. The Lake Hatchineha Watersheds comprise the eastern half of the City while the Peace Creek watershed comprises the western half of the City.

The SWFWMD sets minimum guidelines and levels for Lake Wales. These levels are meant to take into consideration all relevant environmental values in relations to water resources. Due to the population growth and strain on the water supply within this area, the District designated this area as the Ridge Lakes Water Use Caution Area.

#### *(1) Pollution*

Pollution to the environment can be classified as point or non-point. Point sources are pollutants that originate from one (1) particular site or source in large quantities, while non-point pollution is derived from many diffuse sources. Land use coverage is a significant indicator of non-point source pollution. Non-point pollution can also be difficult to monitor because of the irregularity of the discharges. Most sources come from septic tanks, pesticides, and fertilizers that are used on crops and lawn, which eventually leak into the aquifer.

The majority of buildings in the city are connected to the municipal wastewater treatment system. The locations and exact number of buildings that are not connected to the system is currently unknown. Undoubtedly, there are septic systems and cesspools that are contributing nutrients to the lakes causing aquatic plant growth. Septic systems leach both nitrogen and phosphorus which travel readily through the soil, particularly sandy soils, into a water body. Even years after a system is shut down, these nutrients can continue to travel toward the water body. The wastewater treatment plant no longer discharges treated wastewater into the Peace Creek Drainage Canal. The effluent is now conveyed to specially designed rapid infiltration basins (RIBs) where it percolates through the soil, receiving further treatment before it reaches the groundwater aquifer. (See "Sanitary Sewer" section of the Utilities Element for further information.)

There is no significant non-point source of water pollution in the City as identified by the United States Soil Conservation Service.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection performed a Source Water Assessment in 2019 and identified nine (9) potential sources of contamination, most of which consist of – petroleum storage tanks. Additionally, there are five (5) delineated areas suspected of groundwater contamination, which were scored as moderate concern according to the susceptibility of a containment entering the public water system. The report also found that the quality of drinking water was safe for drinking/consumption.

## B. SOILS

The Lake Wales Ridge is a major geomorphological feature that runs through the City. It's known for its wide range of biodiversity and is a cause for the broad soil types that are found in the area. The primary soil types found in Lake Wales are Arents-Hydraquents-Neilhurst, Smyrna-Myakka-Immokalee, Pompano-Satellite-Immokalee, Astatula-Tavares-Basinger, Archbold-Satellite, and Candier-Tavares-Apopka.

## C. WETLANDS INVENTORY

Wetlands are generally identified as areas where the water table is at, or above, the land surface for a significant part of most years and are estimated to encompass approximately 2,750 acres within the City, including both surface waters and wetlands. As shown in Figure 5, approximately 1,937 acres of the total 2,750 acres is estimated to be wetlands.

Wetlands within the City are mostly located within flood prone areas and composed primarily of Wet Coniferous Plantation and Forested Mixed vegetative communities. Given the seasonal presence and constantly shifting boundaries of wetland areas, they are neither stable nor deep enough to be utilized for the same purposes as other bodies of water.

Wetland areas within vacant land areas largely remain in their natural state. The potential future land uses of the City's wetlands are limited due to the integral role these areas provide in the hydrological balance. Wetlands serve as natural water retention systems, regulate the flow of water and remove excess nutrients and particulates from stormwater. When the weather is wet or areas experience flooding, wetlands accept the excess water, and when drought conditions exist, wetlands keep the surrounding area from becoming parched. Wetlands are also fragile ecological communities supporting an assortment of plants and wildlife. The alteration of the natural topography and character of these areas may extract a great expense both monetarily and physically to the surrounding natural environment and community at large.

## D. FLOODPLAINS

Following similar geographic areas as wetlands, the floodplains in the City of Lake Wales provide crucial flood waters storage during significant rain events. As shown in Figure 6, much of the 100-year floodplains occur in the northern and western portions of the City. Additionally, lands adjacent to the Peace Creek Canal, west of US 27 appear to be significantly impacted by flood events.

The City has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program since 1988 and recently updated its floodplain management ordinance in 2016 to be consistent with recent changes in Florida Building Code and Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements. In excess of minimum requirements, the City does not allow single-family or duplex lots to be constructed on a lot that is entirely within an area of special flood hazard. (More strict than typical ordinances for development in flood prone areas. Usually, elevation of the floor to above base flood elevation is required.) Additionally, one-foot of freeboard above the base flood elevation is required for the lowest floor of a residential or non-residential building. (Minimum requirement is base flood elevation.)

## E. COMMERCIALY VALUABLE MINERALS INVENTORY

The City Polk County historically has been a producer of aluminum, fluorine-fluorite, iron, magnesite, phosphorus-phosphates, and uranium as identified by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Lake Wales was deemed to have phosphate as the only potentially recoverable mineral within City limits by the Florida Ecological Atlas. Sand mines and the mining of Florida Rock is still legally active throughout the City, but no new mining operations are allowed within City limits. Currently, Vulcan Materials operates an active sand mine in the eastern portion of the City.

## F. AIR QUALITY INVENTORY

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection only has two (2) ambient monitoring locations in Polk County. The first is located at Sikes Elementary School and the second is located at Baptists Children's Home, both are in the City of Lakeland. The site at Sikes Elementary only monitors for ozone (O3) and sulfur dioxide (SO2); the site at Baptists Children's Home monitors ozone (O3), particle pollution (PM2.5), and particle matter (PM10).

The highest ozone concentration detected at Sikes Elementary in 2020 was approximately 66 parts per billion within an eight (8)-hour monitoring window. The sulfur dioxide concentration was highest at two (2) parts per billion over a 24-hour daily max. The monitoring location at Baptists Children's Home had a O3 maximum of 66 parts per billion, a PM2.5, over a 24-hour monitoring cycle, of 22.5 micrograms per cubic meter, and an PM10 of 40.4 micrograms per cubic meter.

There are no significant point air pollution sources within the City permitted by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation.

## G. HAZARDOUS WASTE

Hazardous wastes are corrosive, toxic, flammable, or reactive substances that may harm public health and the environment. There are no hazardous waste sites or generators within the City of Lake Wales, only everyday household hazardous wastes. There are processing and manufacturing facilities within the City that likely utilize caustic chemicals in their daily activities, which are monitored and regulated by the EPA.

Household hazardous waste can be disposed of at the Polk County North Central Landfill. The landfill is located at 7425 DeCastro Road Winter Haven, FL, which is approximately 20 miles northwest of the City.

## H. SOIL EROSION

According to the United States Soil Conservation Service, there are no major soil erosion problems in the City.

## I. VEGETATIVE, WILDLIFE AND LISTED SPECIES COMMUNITY INVENTORY

Vegetative communities within the City limits are documented and classified using the 2017 Land Use and Land Cover GIS data from SWFWMD based on the Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System.

Within the City limits, there are approximately 3,469 acres of urban land, 3,200 acres of agriculture, 2,092 acres of upland, 429 acres of forest, 276 acres of recreation, 485 acres of mining activity, 1,886 acres of surface waters, 1,173 acres of wetlands, and 356 acres of roads and utilities as depicted in Lake Wales area land cover map (Figure 28).

### *Land Use/Land Cover*

According to SWFWMD data, the five (5) most prominent land uses/land coverage (by acreage) within Lake Wales are: Cropland and Pastureland, Residential Med Density 2 To 5 Dwelling Units Per Acre, Tree Crops, Commercial and Services, and Freshwater Marshes.

**Table 13** Land Use/Land Cover

<b>LAND USE/LAND COVER</b>	<b>ACRES</b>
CROPLAND AND PASTURELAND	1,836
RESIDENTIAL MED DENSITY 2 TO 5 DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE	1,575
TREE CROPS	1,288
COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES	948
FRESHWATER MARSHES	904

Most of the land in Lake Wales is used for agriculture or silviculture purposes. This correlates with the significant citrus production and cultivation that the City has enjoyed for several decades. Residential density between 2 to 5 dwelling units per acre comes in as the second largest area and exemplifies the limited nature of the housing diversity, typology and density in the City. Last, the Freshwater Marsh is the fifth most prevalent land cover and consists of grasses, rushes and other herbaceous plants in an area where soil is usually saturated or covered with surface water for two (2) or more months during the year. This land cover provides a significant habitat for many of the native species found throughout the City.

### *Lake Wales Ridge*

The Lake Wales Ridge was established in 1990 and encompasses 1,965 acres throughout Polk, and Highland Counties. The area contains 23 listed plants, approximately 40 endemic plants, and four (4) threatened wildlife species. The ridge is a sand dune system that was formed over three million years ago.

### Threatened or Endangered Species

There are five (5) categories of special status that will be referenced in this document. The categories are: 1) Federally-designated Endangered (FE) - Species in danger of extinction if the deleterious factors affecting their population continue to operate;; 2) Federally-designated Threatened (FT) - Species that are likely to become endangered in the nation within the foreseeable future if current trends continue;; 3) State-designated Threatened (ST) - Species that are likely to become endangered in the state within the foreseeable future if current trends continue;; 4) State-designated Endangered (SE) - Species in danger of extinction if the deleterious factors affecting their population continue to operate, and ; 5) Species of Special Concern (SSC) - Species that do not fit into the previous categories, yet warrant special attention.

Table 14 lists the species which may be found within a geographic area in the City. This table categorizes these species by name, Fish and Wildlife Conservation classification, habitat, and the likelihood of occurrence.

**Table 14** Protected Species with Potential for Occurrence in Lake Wales

SPECIES	HABITAT	FWC CLASS.	LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE
<b>AMPHIBIANS</b>			
Gopher frog ( <i>Lithobates capito</i> )	Xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, sandhill, upland hardwoods, pine flatwoods, freshwater marsh.	SSC	Low
<b>REPTILES</b>			
American alligator ( <i>Alligator mississippiensis</i> )	Freshwater marsh, cypress swamp, mixed hardwood swamp, shrub swamp, bottomland hardwoods, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams	FT	Moderate
Eastern indigo snake ( <i>Drymachron corais couperi</i> )	Xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, sandhill, pine, flatwoods, pine rocklands, tropical hardwood hammock, hydric hammock, wet prairie, mangrove swamp	FT	Low
Gopher Tortoise ( <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> )	Sandhill, sand pine scrub, xeric oak scrub, coastal strand, xeric hammock, dry prairie, pine flatwoods, mixed hardwood-pine forests, ruderal	ST	High
Sand skink ( <i>Plestiodon reynoldsi</i> )	Principally rosemary scrub, but also in sand pine and oak scrubs, scrubby flatwoods, turkey oak ridges within scrub, and even along edges of citrus groves occupying former scrub.	FT	Moderate
Blue-Tailed Mole Skink ( <i>Plestiodon egregius lividus</i> )	Well-drained sandy uplands within the Lake Wales Ridge in Polk County.	FT	High
Florida pine snake ( <i>Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus</i> )	Xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, sandhill, scrubby pine flatwoods, old fields on former sandhill scrub sites	SSC	Unlikely

BIRDS			
Burrowing owl ( <i>athene cunicularia</i> )	Sandhill, dry prairie, pastures, ruderal	SSC	Low
Southeastern American kestrel ( <i>Falco sparverius paulus</i> )	Sandhill, pine flatwoods, dry prairie, pasture, old field.	ST	Moderate
Florida sandhill crane ( <i>Grus canadensis pratensis</i> )	Dry prairie, freshwater marsh, pasture.	ST	Moderate
Wood stork ( <i>Mycteria americana</i> )	Freshwater marsh, various types of forested wetlands, ponds, salt marsh, mangrove swamp, tidal mud flats, lagoons, flooded pastures.	FT	Moderate
Red-cockaded woodpecker ( <i>Picoides borealis</i> )	Sandhill, pine flatwoods.	FE	Unlikely
Florida Scrub-Jay ( <i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i> )	Inhabits fire-dominated, low-growing, oak scrub habitat found on well-drained sandy soils. May persist in areas with sparser oaks or scrub areas.	FT	Moderate
MAMMALS			
Florida Panther ( <i>Puma concolor coryi</i> )	Requires extensive blocks of mostly forested communities.	FE	Unlikely
Florida Mouse ( <i>Podomys floridanus</i> )	Xeric oak scrub, sand pine scrub, sandhill.	SSC	Unlikely
Sherman's Fox Squirrel ( <i>Sciurus niger shermani</i> )	Sandhill, pine flatwoods, pastures.	SSC	Moderate

Source: Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 2020.

## J. FISHERIES

There are no fish management areas within the City.

## K. POTABLE WATER SOURCES AND CURRENT DEMAND INVENTORY

Potable water within the City is obtained by tapping groundwater sources with two (2) wells that are located in the City. The main source of groundwater supply in the City is the upper aquifers and the Floridan Aquifer. The Floridan Aquifer is one (1) of the most productive and extensive groundwater bearing formations in the United States. Potable water in the City of Lake Wales undergoes secondary treatment through a disinfection process using chlorine. The water is treated with sodium hydrochloride under the guidelines of the Department of Environmental Protection. The natural groundwater aquifer recharge areas can be seen in Figure 26.

The upper aquifers, which are located above the Floridan Aquifer, are composed of the water table aquifer and secondary artesian aquifers. The secondary aquifers, which are located between the water table aquifers and the Floridan Aquifer are the single largest source of potable water used for domestic purposes in the City. According to the USGS, in 2015, 63 percent freshwater withdrawals came from groundwater withdrawals. The remaining 37 percent were surface water withdrawals.

# III. ANALYSIS OF NATURAL RESOURCES

This section provides an analysis of the condition of natural resources in the City and how the management of these resources relates to the sustainability and growth of the community. The City will continue to coordinate with the SWFWMD and FEMA on wetland issues and floodplain management.

## A. WETLANDS AND WATERSHEDS

Approximately 15 percent of the City or (1,937 acres) comprise wetlands. Wetlands are regulated by the Southwest Florida Water Management District through Environmental Resource Permits. The City actively requires developers to seek these permits during the site plan review process.

An important classification for surface waters is that of Outstanding Florida Waters, a state designation given to waters worthy of special protection because of its natural functions and water quality attributes. There are no Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) within the City limits. However, the City is located approximately four (4) miles southwest from Catfish Creek, which is designated as an OFW. It is unlikely that water quality at the creek is impacted by the activities within the City given the distance and drainage patterns.

Based on the level of nutrients found in Lake Effie and Lake Wailes, these surface waters are considered impaired by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). However, the Kissimmee River watershed and both lakes are not considered impaired by the EPA standards. The programs and stormwater regulations administered by SWFWMD focus on reducing pollutants in the Basin. Major activities include monitoring water quality and plankton populations, modeling pollutant loading, stormwater permitting, quantifying nutrient pollutant sources, and local/state government coordination.

Additionally, the eastern portion of the City is within the Lake Okeechobee Basin, which is subject to a recently adopted Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). This plan represents joint efforts of multiple stakeholders to identify where nutrients, both nitrogen and phosphorus, can be reduced through regulatory and nonregulatory programs, incentive-based programs, and the implementation of projects that will ultimately achieve the TP TMDL for Lake Okeechobee and help reduce nitrogen in the lake and connected estuaries.

## B. FLOODPLAINS

The 100-Year Floodplain covers approximately 29 percent, or 3,856 acres, of the City. In order to manage development within the floodplain, the City adopted floodplain management regulations in the City Code (Section 23-601.). Continued coordination with FEMA will be necessary if future development requests occur within the floodplain.

City coordinates with FEMA through their participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP offers federally subsidized flood insurance for property owners within the City in exchange for commitment to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations and encourage more careful planning. The City recently updated their floodplain management regulations to remain consistent with the National Flood Insurance Program.

## C. AIR QUALITY

The FDEP has only two (2) ambient monitoring locations in Polk County. The first is located at Sikes Elementary School and the second is located at Baptists Children's Home, both are in the City of Lakeland.

There are no significant point air pollution sources within the City as permitted by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation.

The FDEP publishes air quality scores using an Air Quality Index, the ambient air quality is ranked "Good", the highest available air quality category. At present, there are no identified sources of air pollution in the City. Prevailing atmospheric conditions and convective activity around the City diffuse air pollutants helping maintain a "good" air quality rating. However, there have been eight (8)-hour averages collected previously that rated "moderate" on the ozone scale at both collection locations.

## D. SOILS

While soil erosion is not considered to be a significant local problem, continued enforcement of local subdivision, excavation and fill regulations, as well as other best management practices, should be maintained. As mentioned previously, there is an active sand mine in the eastern portion of the City. As this mine reaches the end of its extraction life, the owner of the mine will be required to follow reclamation standards to mitigate the significant disturbance to the native soil.

Soils within the City have been determined to be ill-suited for prime farmland, usually associated as a primary cause for soil erosion. However, the City contains approximately 600 acres of Chandler Sand, which is a soil considered to be of unique agricultural importance. This soil coincides with the area currently occupied by successful citrus groves.

Currently, the characteristics of soils in the City are such that in their natural state, erosion will be at a minimum due to the natural vegetative cover. Soils suitability should be used as a performance standard for the location of land use types. The soils pose only slight limitations to community development, sanitary facilities, water management and recreation facilities. Soil suitability should be used as a performance standard for the location of land use types.

## E. VEGETATIVE COMMUNITIES

The location of vegetative communities, such as forests and wetlands can be seen in Figure 28. Approximately 40% of the City is covered by vegetation, surface waters and natural features with the remaining 60% land cover consisting of uses attributed to human activities (agriculture, urban, roads and utilities).

## F. WILDLIFE COMMUNITIES

There are potentially two (2) strategic habitat areas within the City. The first is the Florida Sand Skink, which is known to inhabit the Lake Wales sand ridge. This is a protected species that requires coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) if development occurs within the consultation area. Sand skinks are known to occur in this area as well as near citrus groves due to the sandy soil conditions. The City continues to coordinate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to ensure that no such communities will be affected, if present, in the City. The Florida Panther is another protected species that may venture into the City. Although a rare sight in this area of Florida, the Florida Panther lives in southeastern counties in the state and has the potential to roam the Ridge in search of mates or vegetative cover.

## G. LISTED SPECIES

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission official list of Florida's Endangered Species, Threatened Species, and Species of Special Concern as derived from FNAI biodiversity matrix to determine those species that are likely to exist in the Lake Wales area is currently the best data available. Potential of occurrence has not been confirmed by direct observation, but rather by habitat suitability based on where the appropriate habitats exist. As described above, through permitting requirements and state and federal regulations, the City will continue to work with the development community to ensure that habitat loss is mitigated to the fullest extent feasible.

## H. POTABLE WATER DEMAND AND SOURCE ANALYSIS

With development planned for the near future, potable water demand will increase, but is not expected to exceed the City's current Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) limit of 3,902,600 gallons per year.

The City has in place natural groundwater aquifer recharge and potable water wellfield protection requirements in Sections 23-623. (Wellhead Protection Area and Zones) of the Land Development Code. Given the nature of the sandy soil that occurs within this area, much of Lake Wales is considered an aquifer recharge area.

## I. AGRICULTURAL, RECREATION AND CONSERVATION USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

### *Agricultural/Commercial Use of Natural Resources*

Within the City there is an active sand mine that extracts sands from post-consumer products. Additionally, citrus cultivation remains economically viable with Florida's Natural co-op being one (1) of the most successful citrus producing groups in Florida.

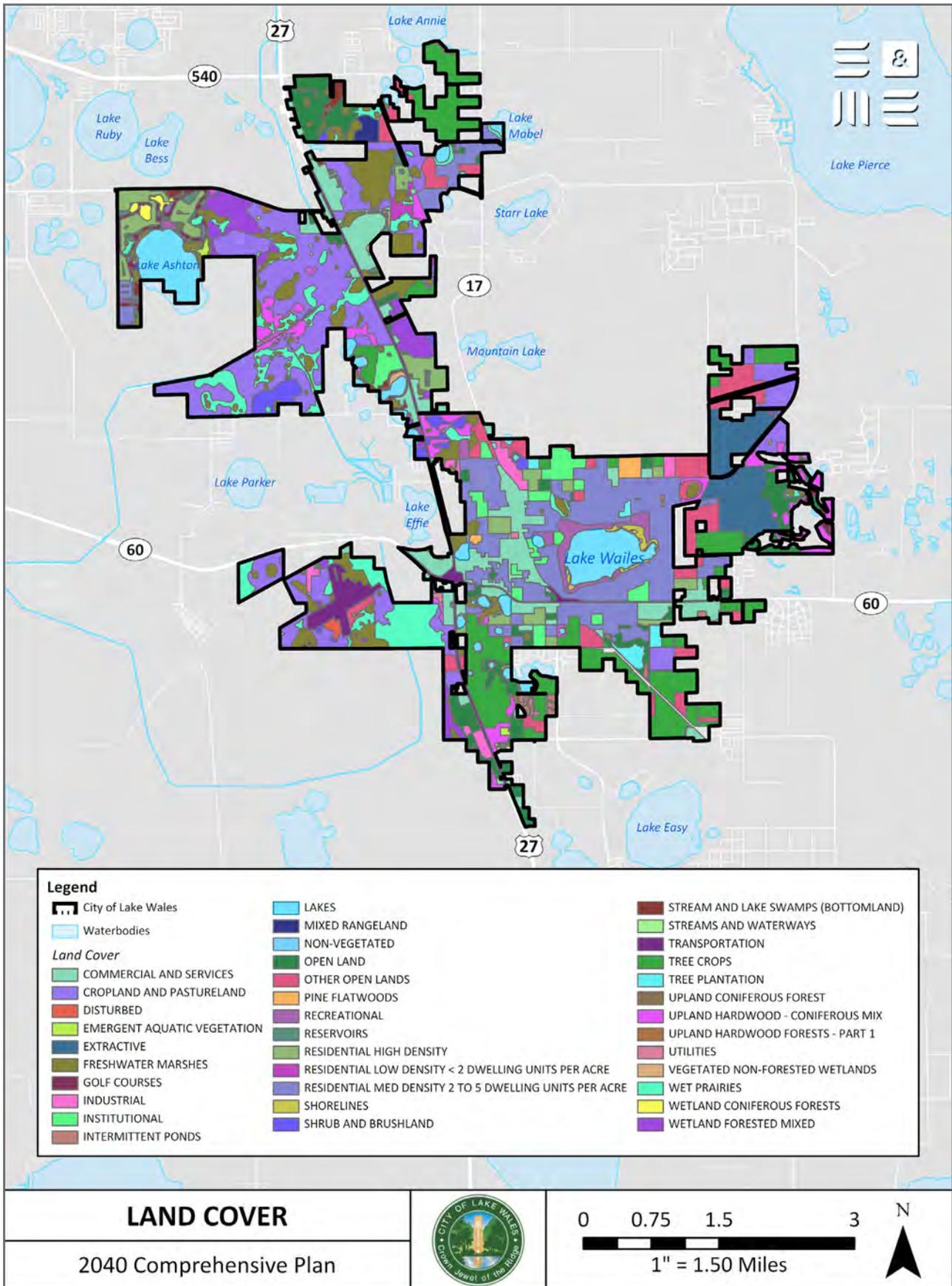
### *Recreation and Conservation Use of Natural Resources*

Recreational uses of natural resources include boating and fishing on local lakes within the City and regional. Additionally, the Lake Wales Ridge Wildlife and Environmental Area, Mountain Lake Tract is a passive recreational space that provide habitat for the Florida Scrub-Jay. The land surrounding the airport is designated as Conservation on the future land use map, which provides a natural flood storage area as well a buffer between the urban area and the airport operations.

## J. HISTORICAL RESOURCES

According to the Florida Master Site File, maintained by the Florida Division of Historical Resources, there are seven (7) previously recorded archaeological sites, 662 surveyed properties, (nine (9) of which remain currently listed on the NRHP), with seven (7) additional structures eligible for listing in the future. The Historic Preservation Element provides greater detail regarding historical resources within the City.

Figure 28 Land Cover



Sources: Polk County, Polk County Property Appraiser, S&ME, 2020

# RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE



# I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Lake Wales Public Services Department is committed to providing a safe recreational environment that offers innovative and diversified programming and activities to all area residents—primarily through the continued expansion and maintenance of the City’s recreation and open space system. To ensure that this desire is reflected in the City’s updated comprehensive plan, this section of the Data and Analysis seeks to: identify the City’s current inventory open space and recreation facilities, examine the City’s existing level of service (LOS) standards for the provision of such facilities, and analyze current and projected parkland needs based upon future population estimates.

## II. INVENTORY OF EXISTING RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Excellent park spaces can provide many benefits to a community, including the conservation of open spaces, the preservation of natural resources, and the provision of venues for recreational activities. In general, parks are categorized as being either activity-based or resource-based. Activity-based parks provide user-oriented, recreation facilities designed for a specific purpose, such as tennis, basketball, softball or soccer. Alternatively, resource-based parks utilize the natural environment to provide more passive activities, such as picnicking, hiking, fishing, swimming, or boating.

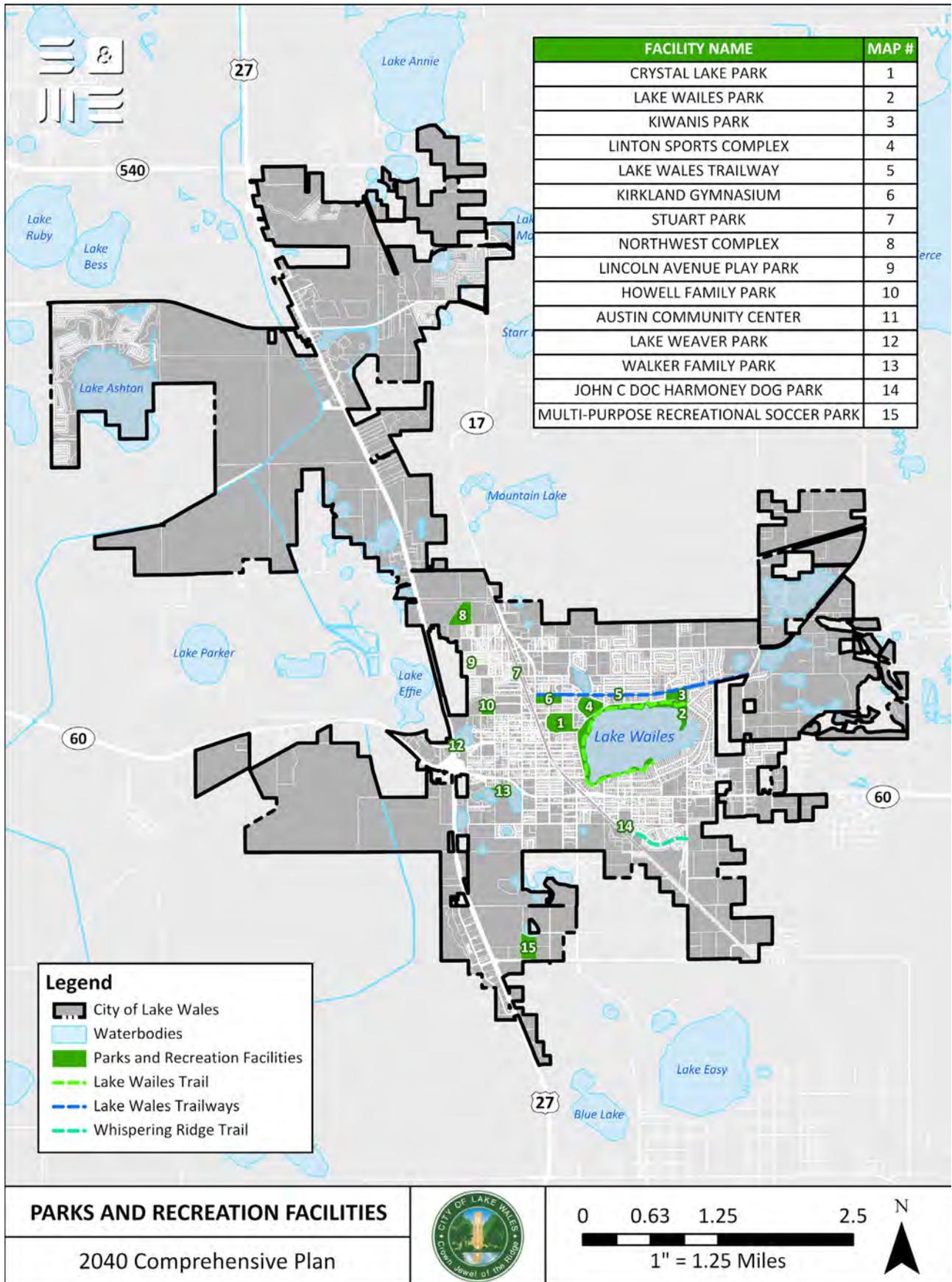
City parks have been classified based on a hierarchy of park facilities in order to better determine the level of recreation and open space opportunities available to City residents. The classification and standards for the different types of parks are based upon the City’s existing park classification system. A description of the characteristics of each park type is provided later in this section. It should be noted that only sites that are officially designated as public parks have been included in this section. Thus, vacant public lands and open space typically found in medians, buffers, retention areas and similar facilities are not included as part of this analysis.

Some City parks offer passive recreation opportunities while others offer active recreation, with several parks offering both. A local example of a park which offers both is Crystal Lake Park, which in addition to offering residents passive recreational amenities such as pavilions, picnic tables, and a playground, also provides active recreational facilities including tennis, shuffleboard, and sand volleyball courts.

### A. CITY-PROVIDED RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Currently, the City of Lake Wales offers more than 200 acres of parks and a variety of recreational facilities, including (but not limited to) multipurpose trails, community centers, neighborhood playgrounds, and sport complexes. Figure 29 and Table 15 shows the current inventory of existing recreation and open space facilities provided by the City of Lake Wales.

**Figure 29** City-Provided Recreation and Open Space Facilities, 2020



Sources: City of Lake Wales, S&ME, 2020; FGDL, 2019

**Table 15** City-Provided Recreation and Open Space Facilities, 2020

PARKS	ACTIVE/PASSIVE ACRES	RESOURCES & FACILITIES
Lake Wailes Park	76.6	<b>Natural Resources:</b> Fishing Lake <b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Basketball Court, Children's Play Equipment, Multipurpose Trail, Soccer Field <b>Other:</b> Boat Ramp, Fishing Pier, Grills, Picnic Tables
Crystal Lake Park	26.3	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Children's Play Equipment, Racquetball Courts (3), Sand Volleyball Court, Shuffleboard Courts (24), Tennis Courts (5) <b>Other:</b> Grill, Pavilion, Picnic Tables, Restrooms
Northwest Complex	20.2	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Ball Fields (3), Basketball Courts (2), Children's Play Equipment, Tennis Courts (2) <b>Other:</b> Concessions, Picnic Tables, Press Boxes, Restrooms
Multipurpose Recreation Soccer Complex	19.6	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Children's Play Equipment, Soccer Fields (4) <b>Other:</b> Picnic Tables, Restrooms
Linton Sports Complex	18.7	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Ball Fields (6) <b>Other:</b> Concession Stands, Press Boxes, Restrooms
Kirkland Gymnasium	13.3	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Basketball Court; Weight Room <b>Other:</b> Restrooms
Kiwanis Park	12.2	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Ball Fields (4), Children's Play Equipment, Soccer Field, Skate Park <b>Other:</b> Grills, Picnic Tables, Pavilions, Restrooms
Lake Wales Trailway	8.4	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Multipurpose Trail
Howell Family Park	6.3	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Children's Play Equipment <b>Other:</b> Grill, Pavilion, Picnic Tables
Walker Family Park	3.7	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Children's Play Equipment <b>Other:</b> Pavilions, Picnic Tables
John C Doc Harmony Dog Park	3.7	<b>Other:</b> Picnic Tables
Austin Community Center	2.1	<b>Other:</b> Kitchen, Large Community Meeting Space, Restrooms
Lincoln Avenue Play Park	0.8	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Children's Play Equipment, Basketball Court <b>Other:</b> Grills, Pavilion, Picnic Tables

PARKS	ACTIVE/PASSIVE ACRES	RESOURCES & FACILITIES
Stuart Park	0.6	<b>Recreational Facilities:</b> Children’s Play Equipment <b>Other:</b> Grill, Pavilion, Picnic Tables, Restrooms
Lake Weaver Park	0.4	<b>Natural Resources:</b> Fishing Lake
<b>Total:</b>	<b>212.9</b>	

Note: The acreages provided herein are estimates derived from area calculations conducted in GIS using the most recently available state-wide park facility shapefile found in the Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), titled ‘gc\_parksbnd\_oct19’.

Sources: City of Lake Wales, S&ME, 2020; FGDL, 2019

**(1) Local Park Classification**

The City’s rich inventory of local parks can all be classified into one (1) of three (3) similar, yet distinct groups, as follows:

**Community Parks** can be defined as ‘ride-to’ parks that should be located near major streets or arterials, schools, homes or light commercial activities. These parks are designed to serve significant swaths of the City by having a service radius of approximately three (3) miles and usually comprise between 16 and 100 acres. Typical facilities found in community parks are designed to serve the entire family and include both passive and active recreation opportunities such as playground areas, recreation buildings, sports fields, paved multipurpose courts, amphitheaters, picnic areas, open or free play areas, swimming pools, and landscaping. Local examples of community parks include both Crystal Lake and Lake Wailes Parks.

**Neighborhood Parks** are often seen as ‘walk-to’ parks that are generally located near schools and along streets where people can travel without encountering heavy traffic. Ranging from one (1) to 15 acres in size with a service radius of approximately 0.75 miles, the typical facilities found in these parks include playground areas, recreation buildings, pavilions, restrooms, sports fields, paved multi-purpose courts, picnic areas, open or free play areas, and landscaping. A local example of a neighborhood park could include Kiwanis and Howell Family Parks.

**Mini-Parks** (also commonly known as a ‘pocket park’ or ‘parkette’) are the smallest form of park space within the City. Often found deep within neighborhoods to serve nearby residents, these facilities are generally less than an acre in size. Amenities offered by these facilities are frequently varied, but are likely to include children’s playground equipment, benches and tables, landscaped areas, fishing lakes, monuments, or items of artistic expression. Local examples of mini-parks include Lincoln Avenue Play Park, Stuart Park, and Lake Weaver Park.

**B. FACILITIES OWNED AND OPERATED BY OTHER AGENCIES**

**(1) National Forest**

The City’s rich inventory of local parks can all be classified into one (1) of three (3) similar, yet distinct groups, as follows:

There are currently three (3) National Forests’ located within the State of Florida: Apalachicola National Forest (near Tallahassee), Osceola National Forest (in Olustree), and Ocala National Forest (located three miles east of the City that shares its namesake). Of the three (3), the National Forest in Ocala is located less than 100 miles away from Lake Wales and thus, is the closest to the City. This US Forest Service parkland area offers visitors over 350,000 acres of unique ecological sites, trails, and natural springs. In addition, there are hundreds of camping sites found throughout the forest offering everything from full-service facilities to more rustic sites.

The National Forest also has designated onsite trails for horseback riding and hunting is permitted in designated areas where the enforcement of state regulations is relatively strict.

## **(2) State Facilities**

The two (2) nearest State Parks to the City of Lake Wales are Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek Preserve and Lake Kissimmee Park—both of which are located less than 20 miles northeast of the City. Geographically, these adjacent park facilities are located in the northeast quadrant of Polk County (less than three (3) miles from the shared Polk/Osceola County boundary). Further detail on these natural amenities are as follows:

### **(a) Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek Preserve State Park**

Located along Lake Wales Ridge, the Preserve covers more than 8,000 acres of scrub, sandhill and flatwoods in addition to over 50 acres of submerged land. The preserve also offers several miles of hiking and equestrian trails, a covered pavilion, fishing spots, and excellent wildlife viewing opportunities. Additionally, the facility home to numerous rare plants, such as the scrub morning glory, scrub plum, pygmy fringe tree and cutthroat grass, and several protected animal species including the Florida scrub jay, bald eagles, gopher tortoises and Florida scrub lizards.

### **(b) Lake Kissimmee State Park**

Covering nearly 6,000 acres along Lake Kissimmee, visitors of this facility can enjoy activities such as bird-watching, boating, canoeing, kayaking, touring and fishing in area waterbodies, including Lake Kissimmee. Additionally, the park possesses more than 13 miles of trails, in which visitors can observe and study the abundant plant and animal life found within the park’s domain.

## **(3) County Facilities**

The Polk County Parks, Recreation, and Preserves Master Plan is currently in development. The purpose of the plan is to provide the Polk County Parks and Natural Resources Department with a “roadmap to ensure that the County makes the best decisions for the future”. In addition to conducting an inventory of the County park facilities, the Department also seeks to “prioritize and identify the issues that needed to be addressed in the Master Plan and to support key recommendations to act on over the next 10 years”.

Polk County owns and maintains over 50 park spaces within the County totaling over 3,000 acres. These parks range widely in size, from mini-parks which comprise less than an acre (such as Babson Park) to community parks exceeding 500 acres, including Saddle Creek and Lake Highland Scrub Parks. Additionally, most County Parks offer a variety of recreational amenities and natural features within their boundaries.

Several County parks are within half mile distance to the City of Lake Wales—all of which are of neighborhood scale. One (1) such County facility is Waverly Park, which is located north of the City at 619 Hodge Street, and offers area residents several notable amenities including ballfields, basketball courts, picnic pavilions and tables, children’s play equipment and public restrooms. Located west of the City is Washington Park (1420 Washington Avenue) which includes a combination of both recreational (e.g. ball fields, football fields, basketball courts, children’s play equipment) and nonrecreational facilities (e.g. open spaces, restrooms, and picnic-related amenities). Located just south of Lake Wales is Mary Norma Campbell Park, which includes a rentable multi-purpose room, restroom facilities, basketball courts, and a ball field. The address of this facility is currently listed as 2226 Karen Street.



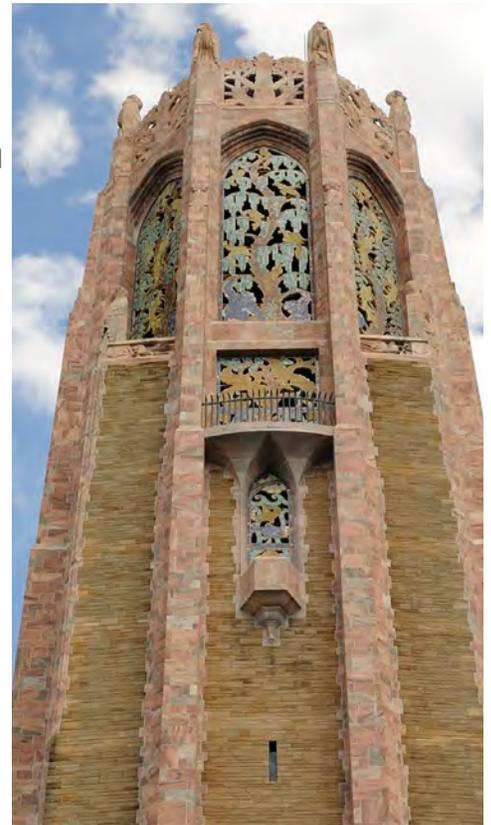
#### **(4) School Facilities**

Traditional comprehensive planning in the State of Florida often recommended the collocation of parks and recreation facilities and public schools. In fact, the previous interlocal agreements between the School Board of Polk County and the City of Lake Wales have permitted such activities in the past. However, due to the increasing prioritization of school safety in light of recent tragedies, this practice is no longer recommended. This has caused issues with scheduling maintenance as well as access issues for the general public. Therefore, collocation of park facilities on school property should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### **(5) Private Facilities**

Recreational facilities and services, such as bowling alleys, golf courses, or racquetball clubs are usually provided by the private sector and are available to the public through a membership or a fee. The provision of this type of recreational resource is normally based on market studies. Presently, there are few private recreational facilities within the City, including, but not limited to, First Frame Bowl (950 Eagle Ridge Drive), the Lake Wales Family YMCA (1001 Burns Avenue), and the Sunrise Park Apartment Complex tennis court and playground (105 Sunrise Parkway).

Although the facility is privately owned by a foundation, one (1) notable facility often associated with the City of Lake Wales is Bok Tower Gardens. Located approximately two (2) miles north of Lake Wales, attractions offered to visitors at this facility includes a nearly 50-acre garden designed by world-renown landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr, a 2.5-acre children’s garden, a tour of the onsite historic mansion, and a chance to see to the titular Bok Tower, and a 205-foot art deco and neo-gothic singing tower carillon.



## **III. ANALYSIS**

Specific recreational and open space demands in a community do not remain constant over time. As the population for an area increases, so do the area’s need for recreational and open space facilities. This analysis examines both the current and projected need for these facilities using the population projections provided by 2019 BEBR population trend data. After this update, a more detailed parks and recreation master plan is recommended to be undertaken in the near future, which will establish community preferences for specific program elements within the City’s park system.

### **A. CURRENT NEED FOR LOCAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES**

Level of service (LOS) standards are a measure for determining the specific types and amounts of parklands necessary to accommodate the recreation and open space needs of local communities. The criteria define the acreage, facility type, and service area requirements based on the changes seen in population demographics.

In the City’s currently adopted Recreation and Open Space Element, the City establishes the following LOS Standards for recreation and open space facilities within the City:

- Mini-Parks (less than 1 acre) - 0.25 acres per 1,000 population
- Neighborhood Parks (1-15 acres) - 1.5 acres per 1,000 population
- Community Parks (16-100 acres) - 2.0 acres per 1,000 population

**Aggregate - 3.75 acres per 1,000 population**

The 2020 population for the City of Lake Wales is estimated to be 16,377. Currently, this population is served by 212.9 acres of recreational and open space facilities within the City. As shown in Table 16, the total demand (based on population) for parkland within the City is approximately 61.4 acres—rendering the City with a total surplus of 151.5 acres of existing parklands. Despite this achievement, the City is currently not meeting its adopted LOS standard for mini-parks.

**Table 16** Current Recreational and Open Space Facility Demand, 2020

PARK TYPE	LOS STANDARD	2020 DEMAND <sup>1</sup>	ACREAGE PROVIDED <sup>2</sup>	SURPLUS/ (DEFICIENCY)
Mini	0.25 ac per 1,000 persons	4.1 ac	1.8 ac	(2.3 ac)
Neighborhood	1.5 ac per 1,000 persons	24.6 ac	49.7 ac	25.1 ac
Community	2.0 ac per 1,000 persons	32.8 ac	161.4 ac	128.6 ac
Aggregate	3.75 ac per 1,000 persons	61.4 ac	212.9 ac	151.5 ac

<sup>1</sup> The City's current (2020) population is projected to be 16,377.

<sup>2</sup> See Figure 29

Sources: City of Lake Wales, S&ME, 2020; BEBR,FGDL, 2019.

## B. PROJECTED NEED FOR LOCAL RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

Changes to the City’s current LOS standards are not required as part of the plan update process. Therefore, the projected demand for recreation and open space facilities resulting from the City’s projected population growth has been derived using the current LOS standards adopted in the previous Lake Wales Comprehensive Plan. The resulting demand and estimated surplus/deficiency for parkland facilities in Lake Wales for the years 2025, 2030, 2035, and 2040 are shown in Table 17.

**Table 17** Projected Recreational and Open Space Facility Demand, 2025-2040

PARK TYPE	LOS STANDARD	PROJECTED DEMAND	ACREAGE PROVIDED <sup>1</sup>	SURPLUS/ (DEFICIENCY)
2025 (Estimated Population: 18,910) <sup>2</sup>				
Mini	0.25 ac per 1,000 persons	4.7 ac	1.8 ac	(2.9 ac)
Neighborhood	1.5 ac per 1,000 persons	28.4 ac	49.7 ac	21.3 ac
Community	2.0 ac per 1,000 persons	37.8 ac	161.4 ac	123.6 ac
Aggregate	3.75 ac per 1,000 persons	70.9 ac	212.9 ac	142.0 ac
2030 (Estimated Population: 20,159) <sup>2</sup>				
Mini	0.25 ac per 1,000 persons	5.0 ac	1.8 ac	(3.2 ac)
Neighborhood	1.5 ac per 1,000 persons	30.2 ac	49.7 ac	19.5 ac
Community	2.0 ac per 1,000 persons	40.3 ac	161.4 ac	121.1 ac
Aggregate	3.75 ac per 1,000 persons	75.5 ac	212.9 ac	137.4 ac

<sup>1</sup> See Table 15

<sup>2</sup> See Table 1

Sources: City of Lake Wales, S&ME, 2020; BEBR,FGDL, 2019.

PARK TYPE	LOS STANDARD	PROJECTED DEMAND	ACREAGE PROVIDED <sup>1</sup>	SURPLUS/ (DEFICIENCY)
2035 (Estimated Population: 21,171) <sup>2</sup>				
Mini	0.25 ac per 1,000 persons	5.3 ac	1.8 ac	(3.5 ac)
Neighborhood	1.5 ac per 1,000 persons	31.8 ac	49.7 ac	17.9 ac
Community	2.0 ac per 1,000 persons	42.3 ac	161.4 ac	119.1 ac
Aggregate	3.75 ac per 1,000 persons	79.4 ac	212.9 ac	133.5 ac
2040 (Estimated Population: 22,038) <sup>2</sup>				
Mini	0.25 ac per 1,000 persons	5.5 ac	1.8 ac	(3.7 ac)
Neighborhood	1.5 ac per 1,000 persons	33.1 ac	49.7 ac	16.6 ac
Community	2.0 ac per 1,000 persons	44.1 ac	161.4 ac	117.3 ac
Aggregate	3.75 ac per 1,000 persons	82.7 ac	212.9 ac	130.2 ac

<sup>1</sup> See Table 15

<sup>2</sup> See Table 1

Sources: ACS, FHDC, City of Lake Wales, S&ME, 2020; FGDL, 2019.

Even if the City fails to expand upon its existing inventory of recreation and open space facilities within the planning horizon identified in this comprehensive plan update (2040), it will continue to maintain a surplus of parklands within the City for the next 20 years. However, it should be noted that the deficiency of mini-parks within the City will continue to grow during this same period. Although easily overseen due to their limited size and scope, these facilities can serve a vital function to the neighborhoods comprising our communities.

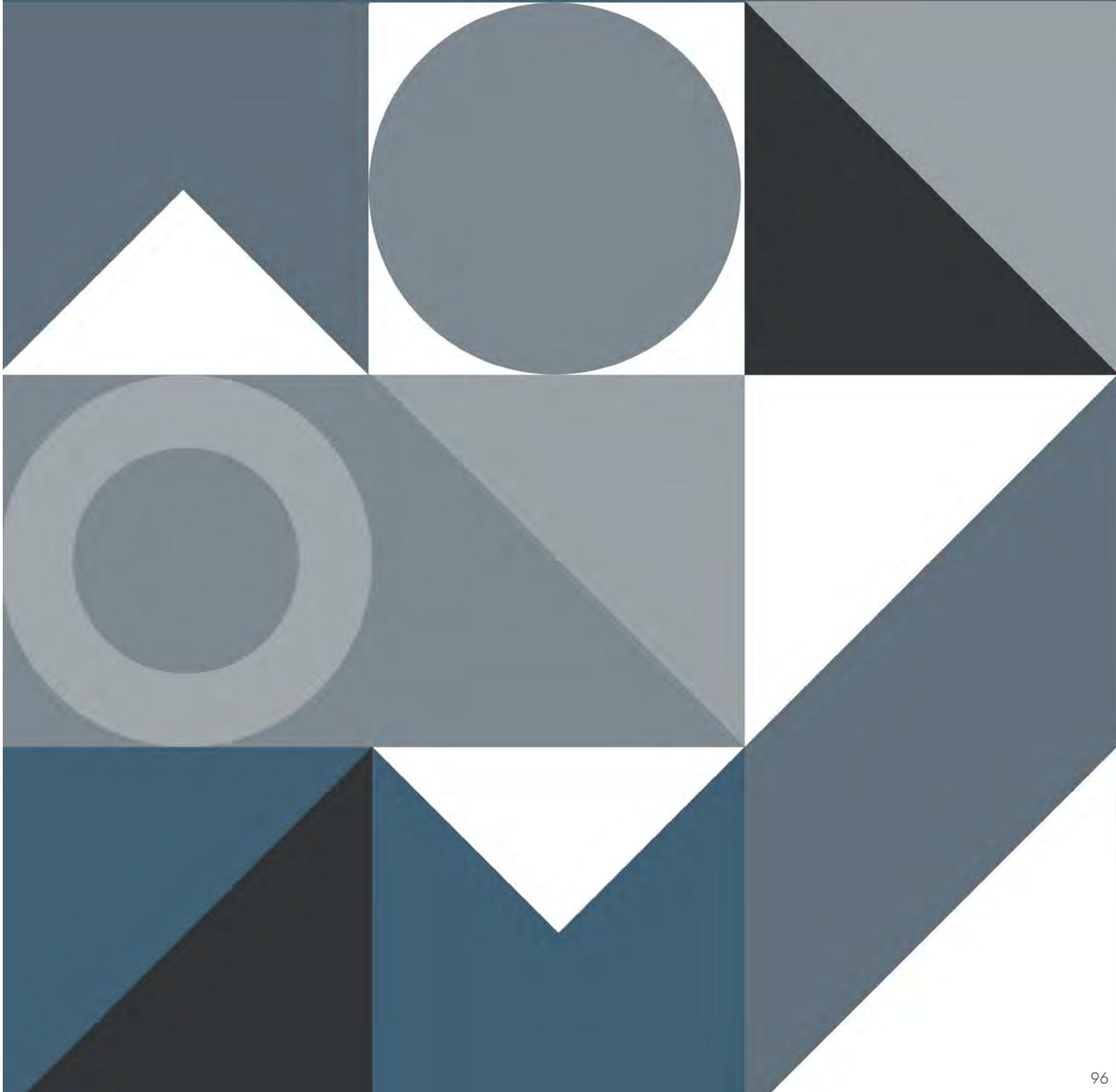
Unlike neighborhood or community parks, mini-parks are intended to serve the immediate area and thus, can be catered to the specific interests and needs of the nearby households at a significantly lower cost than other park types. Additionally, many new residential subdivisions accommodate this need through private facilities. Private facilities do help meet the needs of the homeowners in a subdivision but provide little benefit to the community as a whole and should not be solely relied upon.

## C. RECOMMENDATION

On the whole, the City of Lake Wales currently maintains a substantial surplus of parklands that exceed both the existing and projected need for recreation and open space facilities within the City for the identified 20-year planning horizon. However, this analysis is just a broad examination of the recreation and open space demand and supply on a community-wide level. Thus, a more thorough and detailed inventory of public park facilities, including a determination of whether the LOS currently established for the City remains adequate and whether the City needs to expand its current inventory of mini-parks, should be included as part of a new parks and recreation master planning process for the City. Conducting this analysis will allow City Staff to more accurately determine the various park types, amenities, sizes, frequencies, programming and locational needs of its current and projected citizenry more accurately than a broad comprehensive plan analysis is capable of providing.



# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION



# I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element (ICE) is to establish mechanisms and methods to ensure the appropriate level of coordination between the City of Lake Wales and regional, state and federal agencies and adjacent jurisdictions.

In order to provide for consistency and coordination among state, regional and local governments and agencies, it is essential to plan for and engage in coordinated efforts, especially among adjacent jurisdictions. This coordination provides not only the method for the plans to be consistent, but also allows for more efficient delivery of services to City residents and businesses.

The ICE can also be used as a mechanism to provide direction to the City for future implementation of federal, state, and regional programs, grants and assistance. Numerous government programs exist which can be used by the City in the implementation of its Comprehensive Plan. In addition, these programs can be used to coordinate the increasing demands of population growth on the City's services and public infrastructure.

## II. INVENTORY OF EXISTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

In order to ensure the adequate provision and coordination of services within and adjacent to the City proper, Lake Wales is charged with coordinating with multiple agencies, such as adjacent municipalities, Polk County, and several federal, state and regional agencies. This section identifies the current mechanisms that are in place for coordination with private entities and governmental agencies and organizations at varying levels of government.

### A. ADJACENT GOVERNMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

As shown in Table 18, the City of Lake Wales has utilized multiple intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms, such as interlocal and franchise agreements, to further its ability to serve its citizens. The City of Lake Wales coordinates with several agencies in the County, which includes, but is certainly not limited to Polk County, the Polk County School Board, the Polk County Sherriff's Office, and the Republic Services of Florida.

#### ***(1) Countywide Coordination***

The City of Lake Wales, Polk County, the Polk County School Board have interlocal mechanisms to provide for efficient delivery of services to the citizens of the City and County. Lake Wales also has other types of agreements, such as a franchise agreement, with Republic Services of Florida for the provision of solid waste collection and disposal services with private entities. These mechanisms are described below in alphabetical order.

Emergency Dispatch – The City of Lake Wales currently possess its own police and fire services who maintain jurisdiction over all lands located within City limits. However, the City has an interlocal agreement with the Polk County Sherriff's Office and Polk County for county-wide dispatch services and mutual aid.

Gas Tax – The City and Polk County, pursuant to Section 336.025(3)(a)(1), Florida Statutes, entered into an interlocal agreement to provide for the division and distribution of proceeds stemming from a six-cent local option gas tax.

The City of Lake Wales and Polk County have entered into an agreement to waive impact fees (excluding water and sewer fees) for development within the City's Core Improvement Area.

Potable Water, Wastewater, and Reclaimed Water Service - Lake Wales is currently engaged in two (2) separate agreements with (1) the City of Winter Haven and (2) Polk County to provide potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water service to unincorporated areas surrounding the City, where the City can feasibly and efficiently extend their existing utility infrastructure.

Public Schools - Pursuant to the now repealed Section 163.31777, Florida Statutes, the County and 15 municipalities, including the City of Lake Wales, have partnered with the School Board to develop and execute an interlocal agreement for public school facility planning. The Interlocal agreement jointly establishes the specific ways in which the plans and processes of the district school board and the local governments are to be coordinated.

Solid Waste – The City of Lake Wales has a franchise agreement with Republic Services of Florida for solid waste and recycling garbage to be collected.

Water Cooperative – The City has entered into an agreement with the County and multiple municipalities within the County to create the Polk County Water Cooperative (PRWC). The intent of this cooperative is to develop a robust public water supply system comprised of diverse sources to ensure reliable, sustainable, and drought resistant systems, which maximize the use of alternative water supplies to the great extent practicable. The Cooperative seeks to develop alternative water supply projects that solve local water resources problems, as well as provide a source of water to meet public water supply demands within the County.

Although the City is currently not engaged in an interlocal agreement with the Polk Transportation Planning Organization, the City of Lake Wales continues to coordinate with the TPO regarding their ongoing regional planning efforts. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, the Polk TPO's Long Range Transportation Plans, Trail Master Plans, and Safety Plans.

## B. REGIONAL COORDINATION

The primary regional agencies that provide the mechanisms for coordination and input regarding regional issues include the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).

### ***Central Florida Regional Planning Council***

The Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) is the regional planning agency responsible for the implementation of powers and duties pursuant to Chapter 186, F.S., for Polk County and the City of Lake Wales. The CFRPC, located in Bartow, has regional planning jurisdiction in the counties of DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Okeechobee, and Polk County.

The CFRPC is responsible for the development and implementation of the Strategic Regional Policy Plan and the authority to regulate Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The City of Lake Wales coordinates with the CFRPC to provide the documentation for the local comprehensive plan amendments. As a member community, the City of Lake Wales may utilize the CFRPC for dispute resolution, as needed.

### ***Southwest Florida Water Management District***

Created in 1961, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) is responsible for water quality, flood control and water conservation in the southwest Florida region. This authority has regulatory control over all water-based resources within its jurisdiction, including but not limited to, wetland conservation, water supply planning, aquifer water withdrawals, stormwater treatment and policy coordination.

## C. STATE COORDINATION

The City coordinates with the following agencies regarding state resources and programs.

- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC)
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
- Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)
- The Department of Children & Families (DCF)
- Florida Department of State (FDOS)
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
- Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (DHR)
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

## D. FEDERAL COORDINATION

In addition to required coordination with state agencies, Lake Wales is also required to coordinate with Federal agencies that enforce federal regulations. The federal agencies the City regularly coordinates with are as follows:

- Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

## E. FORMAL AGREEMENTS

A listing of each formal agreement and their provided expiration dates (if applicable) are included in Table 17 below, organized by expiration date:

*Table 18 Formal Agreements*

AGREEMENT BETWEEN	TYPE OF AGREEMENT	DETAILS OF AGREEMENT	EXPIRATION (IF PROVIDED)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polk County</li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> <li>• Republic Services of Florida, L.P.</li> </ul>	Franchise Agreement	Solid waste facilities	September 30, 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polk County</li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> </ul>	Interlocal Agreement	Gas tax division and distribution	August 31, 2047

AGREEMENT BETWEEN	TYPE OF AGREEMENT	DETAILS OF AGREEMENT	EXPIRATION (IF PROVIDED)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polk County</li> <li>• School Board of Polk County</li> <li>• City of Auburndale</li> <li>• City of Bartow</li> <li>• City of Davenport</li> <li>• Town of Dundee</li> <li>• City of Eagle Lake</li> <li>• City of Fort Meade</li> <li>• City of Frostproof</li> <li>• City of Haines City</li> <li>• City of Lake Alfred</li> <li>• Town of Lake Hamilton</li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Lakeland</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Mulberry</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Polk City</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Winter Haven</b></li> </ul>	Interlocal Agreement	School facility planning	None (Ongoing until terminated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polk County</li> <li>• <b>Sheriff of Polk County</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Auburndale</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Bartow</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Davenport</b></li> <li>• <b>Town of Dundee</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Eagle Lake</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Fort Meade</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Frostproof</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Haines City</b></li> <li>• <b>Village of Highland Park</b></li> <li>• <b>Town of Hillcrest Heights</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Alfred</b></li> <li>• <b>Town of Lake Hamilton</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> <li>• City of Lakeland</li> <li>• City of Mulberry</li> <li>• City of Polk City</li> <li>• City of Winter Haven</li> <li>• Florida Polytechnic University</li> </ul>	Interlocal Agreement	Emergency dispatch and communications	None (Ongoing until terminated)

AGREEMENT BETWEEN	TYPE OF AGREEMENT	DETAILS OF AGREEMENT	EXPIRATION (IF PROVIDED)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polk County</li> <li>• <b>City of Auburndale</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Bartow</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Davenport</b></li> <li>• <b>Town of Dundee</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Eagle Lake</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Fort Meade</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Frostproof</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Haines City</b></li> <li>• <b>Village of Highland Park</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Alfred</b></li> <li>• <b>Town of Lake Hamilton</b></li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> <li>• City of Lakeland</li> <li>• City of Mulberry</li> <li>• City of Polk City</li> <li>• City of Winter Haven</li> </ul>	Interlocal Agreement	Water cooperative	None (Ongoing until terminated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polk County</li> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> </ul>	Interlocal Agreement	Potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water service	None (Ongoing until terminated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>City of Lake Wales</b></li> <li>• City of Winter Haven</li> </ul>	Interlocal Agreement	Potable water, wastewater, and reclaimed water service	None (Ongoing until terminated)

Source: City of Lake Wales, 2020.

### III. ANALYSIS FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

As the City of Lake Wales continues to expand and grow with higher densities and intensities of development, it should explore establishing a Joint Planning Agreement (JPA) or Interlocal Service Boundary Agreement (ISBA) with adjacent municipalities and Polk County. This would help establish specific roles and responsibilities for each jurisdiction within their given JPA/ISBA area. Generally, an JPA/ISBA sets guidelines for processing annexations, fire protection, utility services, development applications, land development regulations, comprehensive plan provisions, solid waste, and economic development that provides a predictable framework for cooperation and growth within Polk County.

No additional agreements or coordination efforts are anticipated or needed in the near future. However, as current agreements begin to expire or are up for renewal, each agreement's terms and conditions should be analyzed to meet the current and future conditions of the City.

# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



# I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Capital Improvements Element is to compile a list of potential improvements to public facilities identified in all of the other elements and their potential funding sources. Additionally, the CIE includes a schedule for such improvements to ensure that adequate public facilities are provided in a timely manner.

## II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF NEEDED FACILITIES

Needed capital improvements are those that are necessary to meet the adopted level of service standards identified in other elements of this plan. The public facilities necessary to accommodate the adopted level of service for each facility are as follows:

### A. PUBLIC EDUCATION FACILITIES

The City of Lake Wales continues to participate in the school concurrency in accordance with the interlocal agreement that was originally adopted in 2008 and recently revised in 2014. As residential amendments are considered by the City, capacity determination requests are processed with the School Board in advance of the amendments being adopted.

In addition to traditional public schools operated by the Polk County School Board within the City, there are five (5) charter schools. All of the schools within the City are operating well below capacity, except for Roosevelt Academy, which is at approximately 142 percent of the operating capacity and is projected to be at 149 percent by 2022. Roosevelt is an applied technology school that draws from the County at large and has a relatively small overall enrollment (270 students). However, there are no plans in the School Board's work plan to address existing and projected capacity issues at this facility.

### B. TRANSPORTATION

The City has determined that transportation concurrency is no longer necessary to meet the needs of its residents. Instead of strictly addressing automobile capacity on its roadway network, the City is committed to providing alternative modes of transportation that will focus on bringing back its complete streets that were originally contemplated by the Olmstead Brothers in the early 1900s. As such, mobility standards and strategies have been developed in the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan.

In review of the analysis prepared for major roadway facilities (local, county and state), there is plenty of capacity today and out to the horizon year on these roadways. Although there are no future concerns for capacity, the City has made the decision to move forward with developing a multimodal system. Future projects are likely to entail streetscape improvements, enhancing the public realm by improving the bicycle and pedestrian environment. As more development occurs within the downtown, a concerted effort should be made to enhance access to public transportation. Additionally, the City should also develop a transportation master plan that clearly identifies needed improvements to the multimodal transportation network.

## C. SANITARY SEWER

Lake Wales has an existing wastewater system that includes a wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) permitted to treat 2.19 million of gallons per day (mgd). Currently, there are no sanitary sewer deficiencies. The current capacity for the WWTF is expected to accommodate the projected population beyond 2040. There are no capacity concerns with the collection system. Continued maintenance and line replacement will occur on an as-needed basis.

## D. SOLID WASTE

Solid waste from the City is hauled to the North Central Landfill, which has approximately 1.5 years of capacity left. A phase VI is being designed and funded, which has a design life of 7.6 years. The City will continue its effort to reduce waste by increasing participation in their recycling program.

## E. DRAINAGE

There are no current or projected deficiencies in the City's stormwater management system. The City is in the process of updating its stormwater master plan. The City will continue to participate in the water management district's stormwater capacity and water quality regulations. The City will continue to monitor the flow in the Peace Creek Drainage Canal as development begins to occur around the facility.

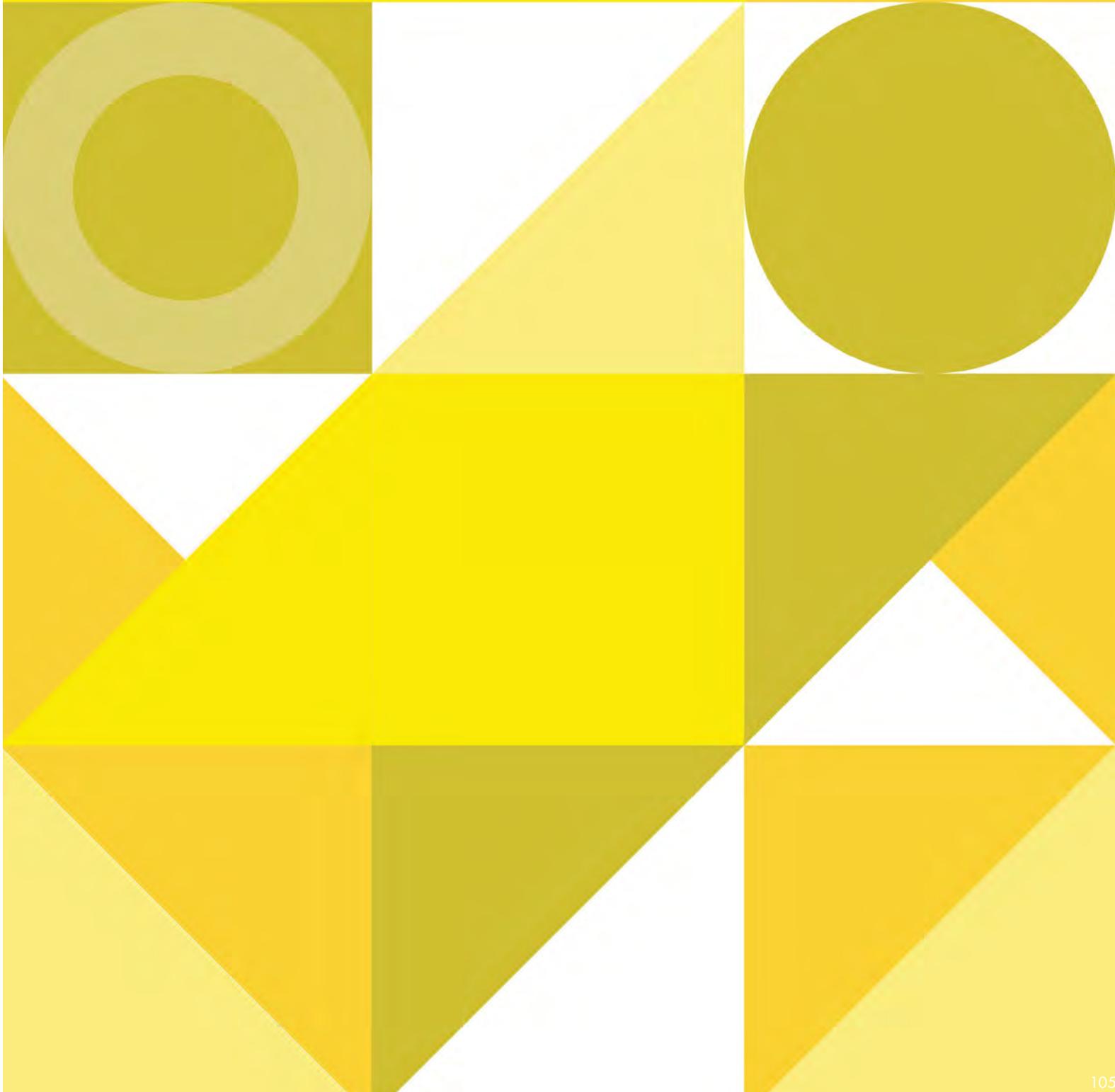
## F. POTABLE WATER

The City's potable water facilities consist of three (3) water treatment plant a central potable water distribution system. The City's water treatment facilities have a current capacity of 3.9 mgd which will accommodate the projected population well beyond 2040. There are no known deficiencies, nor are there any anticipated in the near term.

## G. RECREATION / OPEN SPACE

Based on the LOS defined in the Recreation and Open Space Element of this plan, the City's park inventory includes nearly triple the amount of parkland needed to accommodate the 2040 projected population. With a substantial surplus of parklands that exceed both the existing and projected need for recreation and open space facilities within the City for the identified 20-year planning horizon, there should be a broad examination of the recreation and open space demand and supply on a community-wide level. Thus, a more thorough and detailed inventory of public park facilities, including a determination of whether the LOS currently established for the City remains adequate and whether the City needs to expand its current inventory of mini-parks, should be included as part of a new parks and recreation master planning process for the City. Conducting this analysis will allow City Staff to more accurately determine the various park types, amenities, sizes, frequencies, programming and locational needs of its current and projected citizenry more accurately than a broad comprehensive plan analysis is capable of providing.

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION



# I. INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Element is an optional element in Lake Wale's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this element is to address the prevalent historic preservation issues of today and anticipated challenges facing the City's future preservation efforts. Although not a required element by Florida Statutes, the subject is important enough to warrant careful consideration during the comprehensive planning process. The value of this data and analysis section lies in the documentation of its statistics and conditions and in providing ideas and opportunities to spur economic development within the City.

# II. PURPOSE

The fundamental purpose of historic preservation is to prevent the destruction of historic resources that are judged, by responsible standards, worthy of preservation. Over the last several decades, there has been a growing nation-wide movement that recognizes the importance of identifying, celebrating, and preserving our historic resources. In an age of franchised architecture, the individuality of older buildings is a community asset that cannot be overestimated. Historic preservation programs draw neighborhoods together and instill a socially constructive pride in community. They also help establish a sense of place in a community – elements that are unique from one (1) community to the next. By stressing the positive aspects of a neighborhood, historic preservation becomes an agent for renewal.

The historic preservation plan focuses grassroots and community-based efforts on preserving historic resources that are recognized for their economic, historical, or architectural value. Accordingly, participants in the planning process, including administrators, officials, and residents, must develop agreement upon what they wish to

achieve and how they intend to achieve it. As a set of GOPs, the Historic Preservation Element constitutes an agreement about the historic resources that have community value and what should be done to preserve them. Given assurances that the sense of place which distinguishes their neighborhoods, commercial districts, and other resources of historical value will be protected, residents will find it easier to make a commitment to neighborhood and community.



# III. EVOLUTION OF LOCAL PRESERVATION EFFORTS

## A. INSPIRATION FOR LOCAL PRESERVATION

Local historic preservation efforts in Lake Wales, like many communities, can be traced to the United States Bicentennial celebration, when community consciousness about historic resources began for the first time to result in organized activity. In 1976, the local Bicentennial Committee received two (2) grants from the state's Bicentennial Commission to construct a local museum which honors the City's collective history in a remodeled railroad depot. The Seaboard Coastline Railroad donated the building for the project, ensuring its preservation and providing the community with a facility for the organized inventory and exhibit of items that reflected the City's rich history and heritage.

## B. EARLY PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The following decade, historic preservation efforts within the City continued and were primarily led by the Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), which was founded in 1985 by the City Commission to address the local presence of 'slum' and 'blight' via economic redevelopment projects, initiatives, and incentives in Downtown Lake Wales. As part of their economic redevelopment efforts, the Agency frequently incorporated elements of historic preservation into local projects, particularly those that made physical improvements to the downtown. These improvements were partially guided by a team from the Department of Architecture at the University of Florida, who produced base maps and suggested downtown streetscape plans for physical renovations.

In 1987, the CRA received a grant from the Florida Department of State to undertake a survey of historic buildings throughout the city in order to establish a base of knowledge for making preservation decisions. A second project was initiated the year after to complete the survey, prepare National Register nominations for deserving properties, and develop a Historic Preservation Element for the city's Comprehensive Plan. The results of these projects continue to serve as the foundation for all ongoing historic preservation efforts within the City.

Much of the survey findings were incorporated into the Historic Preservation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Throughout numerous amendments and updates, the primary goal of the Historic Preservation Element has remained unchanged from its original language: "It shall be the goal of the City of Lake Wales to identify, document, protect, and preserve its archaeological, historic, architectural, and cultural resources. Instilling public awareness of those resources shall be part of the effort." Included within this Element were GOP that addressed: (1) the administration of local preservation efforts, (2) management practices for future surveys, evaluations, and data, (3) economic incentives for preservation, (4) public awareness, and (5) historic preservation education. Within a few years of its adoption, several of the GOPs outlined in the Element had already come to fruition.

## C. CURRENT PRESERVATION EFFORTS

One (1) such example is the adoption of the City's comprehensive historic preservation ordinance (Ordinance 2008-11). Although adopted more than a decade ago, the legislation continues to enact the City's current historic preservation efforts. Under this ordinance, the City's Historic District Regulatory Board is established to administer the historic preservation regulations found within the ordinance. Members are appointed to serve three (3) year terms, meet monthly, and are asked to make a 'reasonable effort' to attend State Preservation Office training programs as they become available. Their responsibilities include:

- a. Hearing and deciding upon applications for certificates of appropriateness (COAs),
- b. Adopting guidelines for the review and issuance of COAs consistent not only with local historic preservation regulations, but also Secretary of the Interior standards for historic properties,
- c. Making recommendations to the city commission on matters relating to the establishment of historic districts and regulation of such district,
- d. Making recommendations to the planning board and the city commission for amendments to the code of ordinances and the comprehensive plan on matters relating to historic preservation,
- e. Making recommendations to the planning and the city commission regarding special permits for properties within an historic district in cases in which the special permit involves work requiring an COA, and
- f. Performing any other duties which are lawfully assigned to it by the city commission.

## IV. CURRENT RESOURCES

Information regarding the City's current inventory of historic resources are derived from two (2) primary sources: (1) previous studies and (2) the Florida Master Site File (FMSF). The FMSF is the state's clearinghouse for information on archaeological sites, historical structures, and field surveys. A system of paper and computer files, it is administered by the Bureau of Archaeological Research, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. The recording of a site or building upon that form and its entry into the site file does not mean that the site is historically significant, but simply that the site meets a particular standard for recording. However, the FMSF does record historic resources which are currently listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP as well. All items listed within the FMSF database are shown in Figure 8 and are listed in Table 19 and Table 20.



Locally, the Historic District Preservation Board has identified three (3) historic districts within the City of Lake Wales. The first, the Lake Wales Commercial Historic District, is comprised entirely of buildings associated with the development of the Lake Wales business area during the first half of the 20th century. Next, the Lake Wales Residential Historic District is comprised of a concentrated collection of contributing resources located between the Commercial Historic District and the western shores of Lake Wales. Finally, the North Avenue Historic District occupies a historically African American neighborhood northwest of downtown. In addition to their local designation, the Commercial Historic District, Lake Wales Residential Historic District, and the North Avenue Historic District were also listed on the NRHP in 1990, 1997, and 2001, respectively.

Considering that the City does not currently maintain a local register of historically significant properties, the City currently relies on survey data derived from the FMSF. According to their most recently available GIS data (published by the Florida Geographical Data Library (FGDL) in 2020), there are currently 662 surveyed properties on the FMSF within the City. Of these properties, nine (9) are currently listed on the NRHP (all of which are still standing), with seven (7) additional structure eligible for listing in the future.

It should also be noted that the City currently has additional historic resources and cemeteries inventoried in the FMSF as well. This include five (5) building complexes, five (5) linear resources, a historic landscape and one (1) cemetery. Of these items, Spook Hill (a linear resource) is currently listed on the NRHP (designated in 2019), with potential listings available for the Lake Wales Cemetery and the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Grade (another linear resource).

**Table 19** *Current Resources Listed on the NRHP and Potential Listings 2020 (A)*

PROPERTY NAME	ADDRESS	TYPE OF RESOURCE	DATE LISTED
<i>Currently Listed on the NRHP</i>			
Johnson, C.L. House	315 E Sessoms Avenue	Structure	09/21/1989
Lake Wales Commercial Historic District	--	District	05/10/1990
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Depot	325 S Scenic Highway	Structure	08/31/1990
Bullard, B.K. House	644 S Lakeshore Blvd.	Structure	08/31/1990
Central Avenue Baptist Church	388 E Central Avenue	Structure	08/31/1990
Church of the Holy Spirit	1099 Hesperides Road	Structure	08/31/1990
Dixie Walesbilt Hotel	115 N 1st Street	Structure	08/31/1990
Polk State College – JD Alexander Center (Formerly Lake Wales City Hall)	152 E Central Avenue	Structure	08/31/1990
Tillman, G.V. House	301 E Sessoms Avenue	Structure	08/31/1990
Lake Wales Historic District	--	District	08/08/1997
Roosevelt Academy	115 E Street	Structure	03/29/2001
North Avenue Historic District	--	District	10/12/2001
Spook Hill	--	Linear Resource	04/05/2019

Sources: FGDL, FMSF, S&ME, 2020.

**Table 20** Current Resources Listed on the NRHP and Potential Listings 2020 (B)

PROPERTY NAME	ADDRESS	TYPE OF RESOURCE	DATE LISTED
<i>Local Resources Eligible for Potential Listing on the NRHP</i>			
43 Park Avenue (Formerly American Legion Post 71)	43 W Park Avenue	Structure	09/21/1989
Albert Kirkland Sr. Gymnasium	413 N 3rd Street	Structure	05/10/1990
Lake Wales Cemetery	--	Cemetery	08/31/1990
Harmsco Filtration Products (Formerly Lake Wales Growers Association)	623 N Doctor M.L.K. Jr Blvd	Structure	08/31/1990
Lake Wales Main Post Office	6 W Park Street	Structure	08/31/1990
Old Lake Wales Grade School	309 E Seminole Avenue	Structure	08/31/1990
Rhodesbilt Arcade	230 E Park Avenue	Structure	08/31/1990
Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Grade	--	Linear Resource	08/31/1990
Woman's Club of Lake Wales	275 E Park Avenue	Structure	08/31/1990

Sources: FGDL, FMSF, S&ME, 2020.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

### A. MAINTAIN A LOCAL HISTORIC PROPERTIES REGISTRY

The Historic District Preservation Board currently maintains a local listing of historic districts throughout the City. Although many of the contributing structures found within these districts enjoy national significance (as evidenced by their listing on the NRHP), some structures that are locally significant to understanding Lake Wales' history, such as the historic Calvary Temple (335 W Central Avenue), may not be eligible for listing on the NRHP. Thus, relying solely on the NRHP to recognize the importance of the area's historically significant properties is highly discouraged.

In coordination with Staff, the Board should expand their duties to regularly maintain and update a historic properties map and database that identifies and catalogues historic properties within the City, including contributing and non-contributing structures within the area's historic districts. These maps should be referenced whenever an application is submitted for a property located on the registry and/or located within a historic district.

## B. ADOPT HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

To maintain the balance between local preservation and economic development efforts within the City’s historic districts, the City of Lake Wales’ Historic District Preservation Board should consider drafting and adopting design guidelines for each of the City’s historic districts that are tailored to the building types, conditions, and history of each district. These guidelines will include regulations addressing building components and form that helps protect the district’s historic integrity. The building components regulated under these guidelines should address: windows, doors, roofs, cornices, exterior walls, foundations, porches, and additions; form will be likely be addressed with regulations pertaining to setbacks, building heights, parking, landscaping, and other related items.

## C. SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF FORM-BASED CODE REVISIONS FOR HISTORIC AREAS

Although not strictly related to historic preservation, implementing a form-based code area in certain portions of the City will assist Staff and the Historic District Preservation Board in both maintaining and preserving the historic character and form of the City, particularly in downtown. Previous plans adopted by the City, including the Connected Neighborhood plans, have already introduced and proposed transect-like design recommendations for historic portions of the City. Adoption of form-based code in the City’s land development regulations for historic areas of the City would be the best route in ensuring that the design recommendations provided by previous plans are implemented successfully in Lake Wales.

## D. PURSUE A CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT DESIGNATION

The City should continue to pursue a certified local government (CLG) designation under the state’s historic preservation program. This designation offers municipalities focused on historic preservation multiple benefits, such as: providing technical assistance and training for local preservation boards, eligibility for the historic preservation grants, and conducting project reviews for Florida’s local option property tax exemption program that are available for qualified improvements to historic properties listed in the NRHP and/or designated by a CLG.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# I. INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Element is an optional element in Lake Wale's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this element is to address the prevalent economic issues of today and the anticipated challenges facing the City's future. Although not a required element by Florida Statutes, the subject is important enough to warrant careful consideration during the comprehensive planning process. By doing so, the plan will be able to act as a guide for the future growth of the City's local economy. The value of this data and analysis section lies in the documentation of its statistics and conditions and in providing ideas and opportunities to spur economic development within the City.

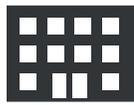
## A. DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL ECONOMY

The following analysis examines the status of Lake Wales' current economic conditions through the lens of industry diversity, major employers, educational attainment, cost of living, and unemployment metrics using data collected from industry-leading sources, such as ESRI Business Analyst, ACS, and Sperling's Best Places.

### 1. Industry Diversity

The following chart (Figure 30) identifies the City's most prevalent industries (generally categorized by their Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)) code using 2019 population and employment forecasts provided by ESRI Business Analyst. As shown below, the two (2) largest industries within the City are Private Services and Retail Trade at 396 and 219 businesses, respectively. These rankings also mirror each industry's total number of persons employed, as both Private Services and Retail Trade, when combined, employ more than 75% of the City's total working population—indicating that the City's local economy depends heavily on the provision of services, rather than the production and manufacturing of goods.

**Figure 30** *Employment Industry, 2019*

	<b>BUSINESSES</b> 	<b>EMPLOYEES</b> 	
<b>AGRICULTURE &amp; MINING</b>	16	420	<i><sup>1</sup>Retail Trade groups together the following industries: (1) Home Improvement, (2) General Merchandise Stores, (3) Food Stores, (4) Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, and Auto Aftermarket, (5) Apparel and Accessory Stores, (6) Furniture and Home Furnishings, (7) Eating and Drinking Places, and (8) Miscellaneous Retail.</i>
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	31	161	
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	18	293	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	22	181	
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	16	67	
<b>UTILITY</b>	4	105	
<b>WHOLESALE TRADE</b>	24	276	
<b>RETAIL TRADE<sup>1</sup></b>	219	3,522	
<b>FINANCE, INSURANCE, &amp; REAL ESTATE<sup>2</sup></b>	95	471	<i><sup>2</sup>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate groups together the following industries: (1) Banks, Savings, and Lending Institutions, (2) Securities Brokers, (3) Insurance Carriers and Agents, and (4) Real Estate, Holding, and Other Investment Offices.</i>
<b>PRIVATE SERVICES<sup>3</sup></b>	396	3,987	
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	30	340	
<b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>	57	32	<i><sup>3</sup>Private Services groups together the following industries: (1) Hotel and Lodging, (2) Automotive Services, (3) Motion Pictures and Amusements, (4) Health Services, (5) Legal Services, (6) Education Institutions and Libraries, and (7) Other Services.</i>

Sources: ESRI BAO, S&ME, 2020.

According to the Lake Wales Chamber of Commerce, the area’s largest local employer is Florida’s Natural Growers, a nationwide citrus producer and distributor. Their headquarters are located northwest of downtown—immediately east of US 27. The City’s second largest employer is the Lake Wales Medical Center, which is found southeast of Lake Wales, in the northwest quadrant of the State Road 60 and 11th Street intersection. This facility includes an emergency department, an intensive care unit, and provides various outpatient services. Other major employers within the area are shown in Figure 31 below.

**Figure 31 Major Area Employers**

	SERVICE/PRODUCT	EMPLOYEES
	CITRUS	1,000
	HEALTH CARE	520
	EDUCATION	400
	RETAIL	350
	RETAIL	214
	EDUCATION	209
HUNT BROS, INC.	CITRUS	195
 WARNER UNIVERSITY	EDUCATION	190
	MUNICIPAL SERVICES	172
	CITRUS	170

Source: Lake Wales Chamber of Commerce, n.d.

## 2. Education

Two (2) significant trends emerge when looking at local, county-wide, and state educational attainment projections for 2019 (see Figure 32). The first trend is that the City of Lake Wales possesses a much larger percentage of individuals over the age of 24 that did not receive a high school diploma or equivalent (18.3%) than both Polk County (14.3%) and the State of Florida (11.1%) (ESRI BAO, 2020). The second notable observation is that the City also houses a lower percentage of combined associate and bachelor's degree earners (19.5%) than the County (22.9%) and State (29.5%) as well.

In general, individuals with higher levels of educational attainment are more economically mobile than their less formally educated counterparts. Expanded further, a well-educated community is significantly more likely to attract higher-paying industries in need of a well-educated workforces, such as biotech, software development, research, and logistical services. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that Lake Wales is not only able to foster a well-educated community (through the provision of high-quality educational facilities and programming) but also to retain (and attract) these individuals to the City once their academic careers conclude.

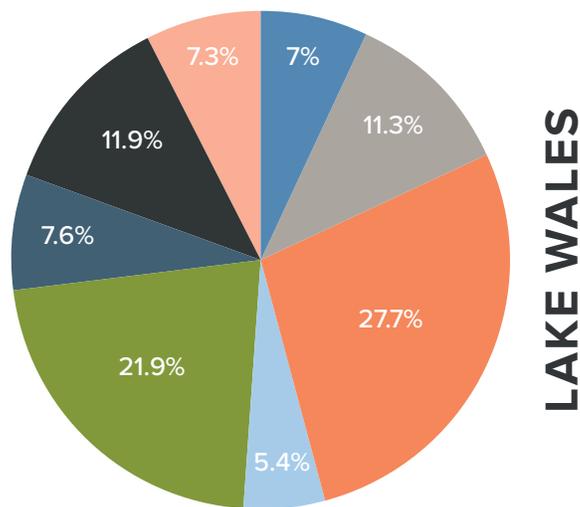
**Figure 32 Educational Attainment Comparison, 2019**

**EDUCATION LEVEL**

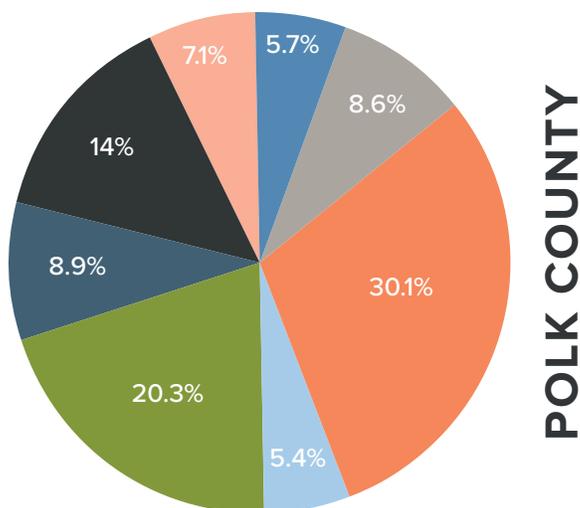
(RESIDENTS OVER 24 YEARS IN AGE)

- Less than 9th Grade
- 9th-12th Grade
- High School Graduate
- GED/Alternative Credential
- Some College, *No Degree*
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate/Professional Degree

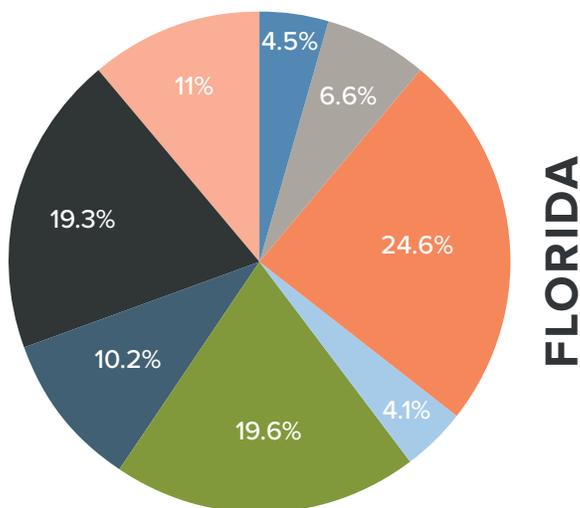
Sources: ESRI BAO, S&ME, 2020.



**LAKE WALES**



**POLK COUNTY**



**FLORIDA**

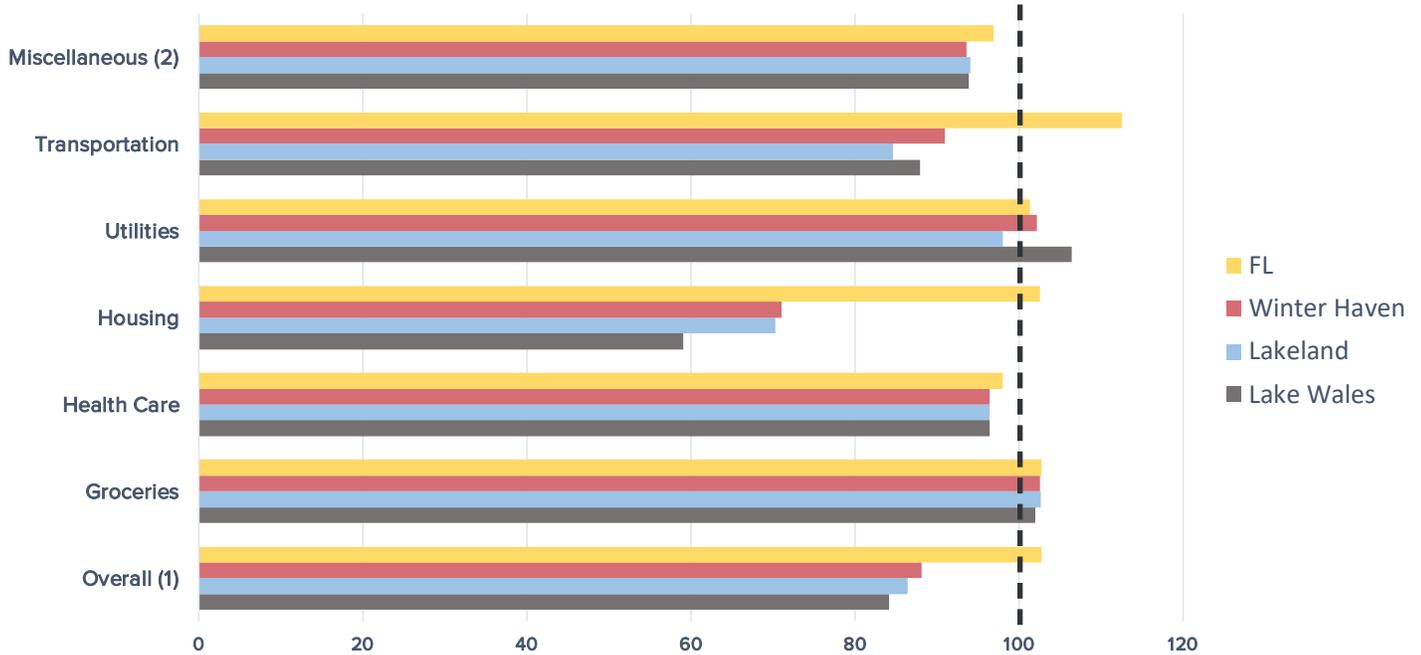
**3. Household Income**

According to ACS income data extrapolated by ESRI BAO, the 2019 median household income for the City of Lake Wales was \$40,500. In comparison, this value is significantly lower than the median household income for both Polk County and the State of Florida, which are \$50,006 and \$54,238, respectively.

**4. Financial Health and Cost of Living**

Figure 32 examines the 2019 cost of living for Lake Wales residents and compares it to the national average, along with several other geographic areas at varying scales. The metrics used for this analysis includes: the average cost of groceries, health care, housing, utilities, and transportation. In addition to including the State of Florida for this comparison, the cost of living for both Lakeland and Winter Haven were also analyzed, as these cities are Lake Wales' likeliest competitors for residential and nonresidential investment within the area.

**Figure 33 Cost of Living Comparison, 2019** **U.S.  
Average**



<sup>1</sup>The total of all cost of living categories are weighted subjectively as follows: Groceries (15%), Health Care (7%), Housing (30%), Utilities (6%), Transportation (10%), and other Miscellaneous spending (32%).  
<sup>2</sup>Includes clothing, restaurants, repairs, entertainment, and other general services.

Sources: Sperling's Best Places, S&ME, 2020.

As shown in Figure 32, the City of Lake Wales currently maintains the lowest overall cost of living, as compared other nearby municipalities, the State of Florida, and the United States average. These lowered costs help make the City more attractive to existing and new residents and businesses looking to remain or relocate within city limits.

### 5. Unemployment

According to unemployment projections provided by ESRI BAO, the City of Lake Wales has an estimated unemployment rate of 6.3% as of 2019. When compared to unemployment rates for Polk County and the State of Florida as a whole, the City's rate is 1.6% higher than the County (4.7%) and 1.8% more than the State (4.5%). Many of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies provided in the Economic Development Element (EDE) are intended to lower the City's unemployment rate in the decades ahead.

## B. ECONOMIC CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

### 1. Traffic Capacity and Roadway Expansions

The ability to move people, goods, and services efficiently throughout the community is an integral component of a successful economy and addressed in this plan. Like most central Florida cities, Lake Wales' existing transportation network is based around the automobile, with accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders found in varying locations throughout the City. As public and private sector investment continues to occur throughout the region, traffic flow within the City will likely increase, forcing the City to expand their roadway network and/or make significant investments in improving local multi-mobility opportunities and access.

One (1) such investment of regional significance is the Central Polk Parkway, an FDOT roadway project

that will likely impact not only Lake Wales' existing transportation network but will also create additional demands for residential and nonresidential services within the City. Currently, the project is limited to a six (6) mile roadway extension from Polk Parkway (State Road 570) at Winter Lake Road (State Road 540) to US Highway 17 (State Road 35). However, future expansions may include routes that run directly through the City. As these plans develop, the City of Lake Wales must remain proactive in addressing the City's transportation needs, while also capitalizing on the economic development potential that may result from increased regional traffic.

## ***2. Attracting and Retaining Human Capital***

Earlier sections of this document revealed that the City of Lake Wales trails both Polk County and State of Florida in the total percentage of residents with college degrees. According to the insights provided by the public and local stakeholders, this is primarily due to the lack of quality employment opportunities for college graduates. Goals, Objectives, and Policies have been included in this comprehensive plan which are designed to attract and retain both high-paying industries and well-educated individuals to advance the local economy in the future.

## ***3. Citrus Viability***

Historically, Lake Wales has enjoyed a local resource-based economy that has relied heavily upon the success of the citrus industry. Although its success has fluctuated over the 20th century (often stemming from changes in the national economy), many experts and researchers in the field project that the economic viability of Florida's citrus industry is in significant peril. One (1) such reason is the continued spread of 'citrus greening', or the prevention of ripening for green fruits necessary to produce palatable citrus products. According to recent studies, approximately 90% of Florida's citrus trees have already been infected with this industry-killing pathogen.

Another concern of the citrus industry is the continual threat of freezing, which devastated the state's supply of citrus in 1983, 1985, and 1989. Although Florida has not experienced the extreme freezes felt throughout the 1980's since, the threat of freezing continues to increase as Florida's frost line is projected to continue to move further south as a result of climate change.

The potential demise of Lake Wales' citrus industry will have a dramatic effect on the City's economy. As a result, the City and the Chamber of Commerce have recognized that decisive measures are needed to reduce the economic multiplier effect that may result from the potential demise of this historic industry.

# C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

## ***1. Targeted Industry Identification***

The City of Lake Wales has partnered with the Lake Wales Chamber of Commerce to develop a listing of targeted industries. These industries have been identified based on their suitability for the region and their ability to employ and attract a highly skilled and educated labor force to locate within the City. The targeted industry list is as follows:

- AGRIBUSINESS
- TOURISM
- LOGISTICS AND DISTRIBUTION
- LIGHT MANUFACTURING
- MEDICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES
- RETAIL

## ***2. Economic Development Incentives***

The City, in tandem with the Lake Wales Chamber of Commerce, Polk County, the Central Florida Development Council, and the State of Florida offer a number of local, regional, and state-wide incentives to encourage firms to relocate and stay within the Lake Wales area. These incentives are listed below:

### ***(a) LOCAL INCENTIVES***

#### **(i) Polk County Business Incentive (PCBI)**

In an effort to establish a competitive posture both statewide and nationally, Polk County offers the PCBI grant to qualified applicants. It is a cash grant that pays between \$1,000 and \$5,000 per new job created based on the average annual wage of the new jobs. The company must be a qualified targeted industry and meet the eligibility requirements.

#### **(ii) Polk County Ad Valorem Tax Exemption (AVTE)**

The exemption was implemented to support economic growth and enhance the county's ability to be competitive. To be eligible, a company must be a qualified target industry, create a minimum of 10 new jobs and meet the programs wage requirement. Projects must invest a combined minimum of \$5 million in building and equipment (real and tangible property). The exemption must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners before any improvements to real property are made.

#### **(iii) Employment-Based Impact Fee Mitigation**

For new construction, a portion of the total impact fees are mitigated. The mitigated amount depends on the number of new jobs created (minimum of 10 jobs), average annual wage of new jobs and total capital investment. The construction must be considered a qualified target industry and meet program eligibility.

#### **(iv) Impact Fee Mitigation for Development within the Core Improvement Area Overlay**

To encourage revitalization, redevelopment, and rehabilitation within Lake Wales, all new construction, expansions, and alterations within the Core Improvement Area are exempt from impact fees except those for water and sewer. This area generally lies south of Florida Avenue between Miami Street and the Scenic Highway. It extends southward to State Road 60 from

### ***(b) REGIONAL INCENTIVES***

#### **(i) Duke Energy Economic Development Rider**

Reduction of base rate demand and energy charges for companies that add 25 net new jobs and have an electrical demand of 500 kWh of which a minimum load factor of 50% must originate from a single point of delivery. Capital expenditures must exceed \$500,000.

#### **(ii) TECO Energy Economic Development Rider**

Reduction of base rate demand and energy charges for companies that add 25 full-time equivalent new jobs and have an electrical demand of 350 kWh from a single meter.

#### **(iii) Florida Public Utilities Natural Gas Commercial Rebate**

Rebates are available for new natural gas commercial appliances. Amounts vary by rebate category and customer class.

#### **(iv) Foreign Trade Zone**

International business can take advantage of added import flexibility on products for re-export and enjoy cash flow benefits and substantial savings on import fees. The closest FTZ subzone is in Auburndale. Lake Wales airport would be an ideal location for another subzone given the proximity to Florida's Natural Growers.

### **(c) STATE INCENTIVES**

#### **(i) Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund**

The Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund incentive is available to companies that create high wage jobs in targeted industries. If your business qualifies, you will receive a tax refund against corporate, sales, ad valorem, intangible personal property, insurance premiums and other taxes. Pre-approved companies who create jobs in Florida will receive \$3,000 for every full-time job created with higher awards available for companies paying very high wages, operating within a designated high impact sector, or meeting other specific criteria.

#### **(ii) Quick Response Training (QRT) Grant**

The QRT Grant is available to new or expanding businesses to help fund customized training for new employees. Reimbursable training expenses include instructors'/trainers' wages, curriculum development, and textbooks/manuals. Because this program is customized, flexible, and responsive to individual company needs, funds are determined on a case-by-case basis.

#### **(iii) Economic Development Transportation Fund (EDTF)**

Perhaps better known as the "Road Fund," the Economic Development Transportation Fund is an incentive tool created to help mitigate transportation problems that adversely impact a specific company's location or expansion decision. Local governments may receive up to \$3,000,000 dollars to implement improvements like road widening, rail spur extensions and building access roads. The actual funded amount is based on necessary costs and limited to \$7,000 per job, although this limit may be waived for areas experiencing severe economic distress.

#### **(iv) High Impact Performance Incentive Grant (HIPI)**

The High Impact Performance Incentive is a negotiated grant available to companies with a headquarters relocation project or those operating in a high-impact sector of one (1) of Florida's key industries, including clean energy, financial services, life sciences, semiconductors and transportation equipment manufacturing. In order to qualify, businesses must create 50 new full-time jobs (25 for Research & Development facilities) and make a cumulative investment of \$50 million (\$25 million if R&D) during a three-year period. If approved, 50 percent of the award is distributed at the beginning, followed by 50 percent once employment and investment goals are met.

#### **(v) Capital Investment Tax Credit (CITC)**

Up to 20 years in corporate tax credits are available to companies with a headquarters relocation project or operating in the clean energy, financial services, life sciences, semiconductors or transportation equipment manufacturing sectors. In order to qualify, businesses must create 100 new full-time jobs in three (3) years and make a total investment of a minimum of \$25 million.

### **3. Community Redevelopment Agency and Plan**

The City of Lake Wales is currently home to a thriving community redevelopment area that spans approximately 2,970 acres. Initially established in 1987 to address conditions of slum and blight within the City's downtown, it was expanded in 1990 to include Lincoln Avenue and its surrounding neighborhoods. The redevelopment area was eventually expanded further in 1999 to include a large portion of the City. The Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Area is governed by the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), whose past projects include sanitary sewer, roadway, and streetscape improvements.

The City's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Fund experienced a high growth rate in the first several years of its lifespan; however, this growth slowed to a halt when property values fell during the great recession. Post-recession, property values have slowly began to rise once more and are expected to continue to increase in the future, as the CRA plans to utilize TIF fund revenues to implement the activities and programs that are identified in the Agency's adopted Community Redevelopment Plan that was completed in 2018.

As part of their plan update process, the CRA has adopted several Goals, Policies, and Activities/Projects designed to establish the City as a destination for existing and new entrepreneurs. Many of the strategies listed in the plan are designed to encourage local economic development opportunities including, targeted recruitment efforts, streetscape projects, incubator projects, and researching new business assistance programs.

# SCHOOL CONCURRENCY



# I. PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACILITIES

The City of Lake Wales adopted the Polk County Public Schools Interlocal Agreement in 2008 and participates in school concurrency. For purposes of data and analysis for this element, please refer to the County's most recent annual work plan, which is available on the Polk County Public School System's official website (<https://polkschoolsfl.com>).