

Kings Highway Jobs Corridor Initiative, Phase I DRAFT Report & Recommendations



Treasure Coast Food Bank under construction, Spring 2025

August 14, 2025 draft prepared by:



DISTRICT
PLANNING
GROUP

Executive Summary

The **Kings Highway Jobs Corridor Initiative** is a collaborative effort led by the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC) on behalf of the City of Fort Pierce and Fort Pierce Utilities Authority with strong involvement from local landowners, businesses, and the Kings Highway Corridor Association. Its goal is to chart a path for transforming Kings Highway into a thriving hub for quality jobs, modern industry, and supporting services.

Why This Study Matters:

- **Limited-time opportunity** to transform a key roadway corridor for long-term growth
- Already **5+ million sq. ft.** industrial & logistics space at key intersections
- **Large underdeveloped tracts** = rare chance to shape future development intentionally

Challenges:

- **Jurisdictional & Regulatory Complexity.** Split across City & County: Different rules + Slower approvals = Development uncertainty.
- **Infrastructure Gaps.** Limited electrical transmission capacity threatens the ability to support new industrial growth.
- **Design Concerns.** Metal boxes, unscreened yards = risk to long-term value & community image.

Strengths:

- **Strong Stakeholder Support.** Property owners, businesses, utilities & officials are excited for a unified approach.

Our Key Recommendations

1. **Focus on Jobs, Not Just Buildings:** Target businesses that create a mix of high-paying and entry-level jobs with clear advancement opportunities.
2. **Address Critical Power Needs:** Coordinate with FPL and FPUA to secure adequate electric capacity.
3. **Create a Unified Overlay District:** Adopt a joint overlay zone between the City and County that:
 - a. Allows developers to opt in for streamlined approvals.
 - b. Establishes shared design standards and a clear menu of permitted uses.
 - c. Offers faster, staff-level approvals for large projects that meet quality benchmarks.
 - d. Implements an initial 3-Year Pilot Program to measure its efficacy before a permanent roll-out.
4. **Conduct Economic & Fiscal Analysis:** Use independent experts to quantify the corridor's potential economic impact and benefits to local tax revenues.
5. **Create a City of Fort Pierce Economic Development Fund:** Set aside recurring funding to provide Economic Development Match Grants for impactful attraction/expansion/retention projects to leverage outside funding.

Next Steps

The project team seeks direction from the Fort Pierce City Commission to finalize the report's recommendations and begin work on detailed implementation tools, including the proposed overlay district framework, infrastructure buildout scenarios, and economic impact modeling.

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About the Study

The Kings Highway Jobs Corridor is one of the most promising areas in St. Lucie County for new business growth. Local landowners, businesses, and economic development leaders — including the Kings Highway Corridor Association, District Planning Group (DPG), Planning & Economic Strategies Consulting (PES), through the Economic Development Council (EDC) — have come together to create a roadmap for development that benefits everyone.

Study Method

The project team used a simple, common-sense approach to guide the study:

- Define the focus area and why it matters
- Create maps and collect data on pertinent information, including existing land use, future land use, development proposals, zoning, and utilities
- Review land uses, development patterns, challenges, and opportunities
- Collect stakeholder feedback from local property owners, businesses, government staff and elected officials
- Draft a shared vision for the corridor's future and recommend steps to make that vision a reality

Area of Focus

The study looks at two connected areas:

1. Primary Study Area: Properties with direct access to Kings Highway, between Okeechobee Rd. (SR 70) and Orange Avenue
2. Expanded Area: The surrounding land that supports development in the corridor, including housing and services, which expands the study area west to the Turnpike and east to include both sides of Jenkins Road.

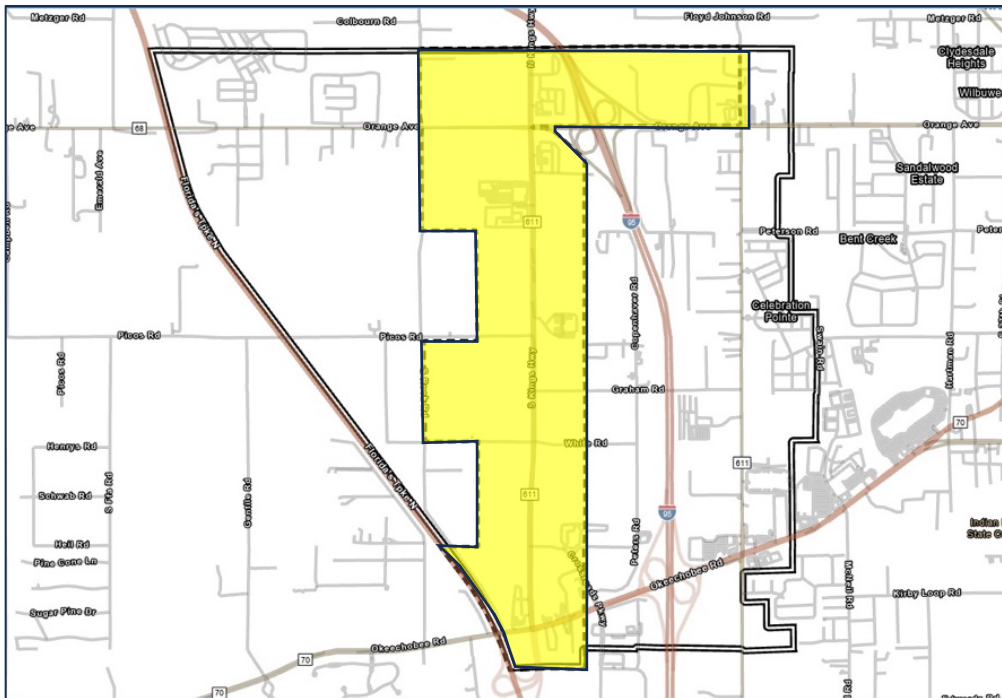


Figure 1: Core Study Area

Core Study Area -

Shown in yellow within the dashed black line - consists of properties or parcels fronting on Kings Highway from just north of Orange Avenue south to the State Road 70 /Okeechobee Road intersection.

Expanded Study Area is within the heavy dark double line and generally is east of the Turnpike, taking in both sides of Jenkins Road, south of the SR 70 (Okeechobee Road) commercial node and including both sides of Orange Avenue to the north.

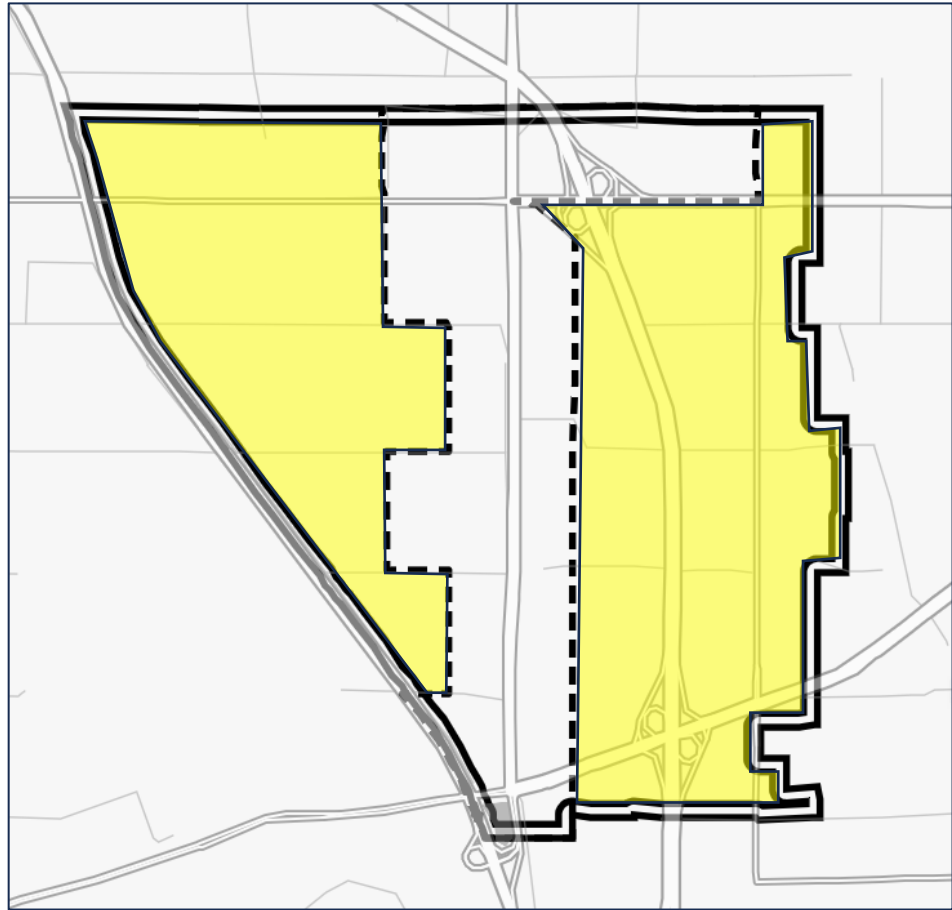


Figure 2: Expanded Study Area

Existing Conditions: What's There Now

Understanding the existing conditions surrounding the primary study area is an important step in determining the capacity of the area to support a robust Jobs Corridor. This includes an analysis of available and proposed housing, commercial uses like restaurants, services, offices and retail, and support services for incoming businesses. Most development today is clustered around the Okeechobee Rd. and Orange Ave. intersections of Kings Highway. This includes fast food, gas stations, and service plazas alongside new warehouses and logistics centers.

Over 2 million square feet of large industrial buildings have been built recently in the southern section of the corridor, south of Okeechobee Road. Most of the remaining development in this area is older commercial in the process of being redeveloped, or in need of redevelopment. The figure below shows the new industrial development to the south with the older commercial development lining Okeechobee Road between the Turnpike and I-95 intersections. New development includes General RV to the north, and redevelopment includes Florida Nexus Park, which was previously constructed as a furniture outlet mall. This site is now 100% leased.



General RV

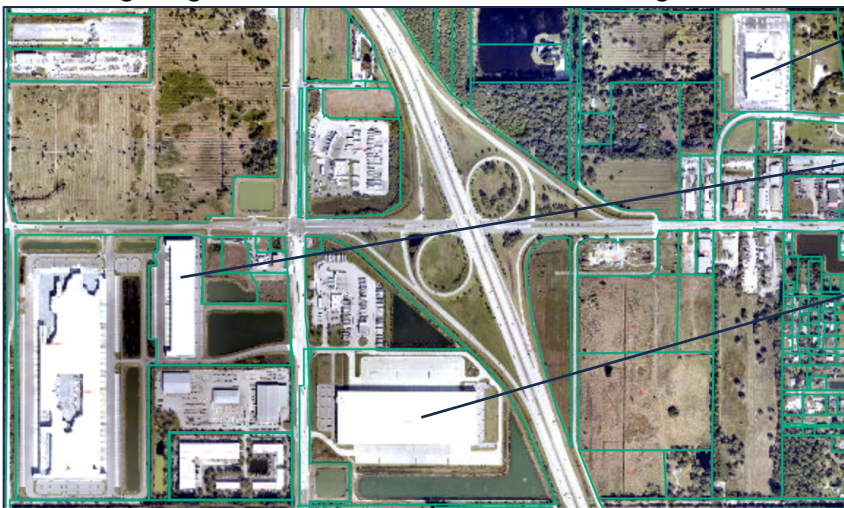
Florida Nexus Park

JBL

Crossroads Business Center

Southern study area: Okeechobee Road

Roughly 3 million square feet of warehouse and logistics centers have been constructed at the north end of the study area at the Orange Avenue and Kings Highway intersection, including the Treasure Coast Food Bank, Kings Logistics Center and the South FL 95 Logistics Center.



Treasure Coast Food Bank

South FL 95 Logistics Center

Kings Logistics Center

Northern study area: Orange Avenue

Between Orange Avenue and Okeechobee Road is largely vacant land, much of it ready for development now that Kings Highway has been expanded. The County and School District recently returned about 100 acres of land in the Treasure Coast Education and Research Park back to private ownership, opening the door for future projects. The street view below shows this undeveloped County land at the central intersection of Graham Road and King’s Highway. While this shows undeveloped land, it is the future site of the Pruitt Commerce Center under development by Ashley Capital. The site is in the entitlement process, with construction expected to begin in late 2026. When fully developed this site will provide an anchor for the area with over 1.5M square feet of small, mid-size and large industrial locations for employers. It’s central location at Graham Road is the only additional east/west connection over I-95 in the study area.



Central study area: Graham Road and Okeechobee Road

The expanded study area is currently divided between City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County jurisdictions. Land within the City is mostly zoned appropriately for future growth, but in the unincorporated County, the land is still mostly zoned for farming or very low-density housing. Consequently, new projects often need special approvals, adding time and complexity the development approval process.

The Existing Uses in the Core Study area are predominantly agricultural or vacant. Lands classified as "Vacant" make up 40% of the core study area, which does not include the lands within the Treasure Coast Education, Research and Development Authority (TCERDA), most of which are also vacant.

Characteristics of the area

Mix of Jurisdictional Authority

The Study area is a mix of jurisdictional authorities and utility service areas. Unincorporated St. Lucie County is shown in the Jurisdictional Map, below in white. City of Fort Pierce jurisdiction is shown in the diagonal hatched area, which covers most of the south east portion of the Study area. Each jurisdiction has its own policies and regulations related to development, and this issue will be discussed further in the report.

Jurisdictions

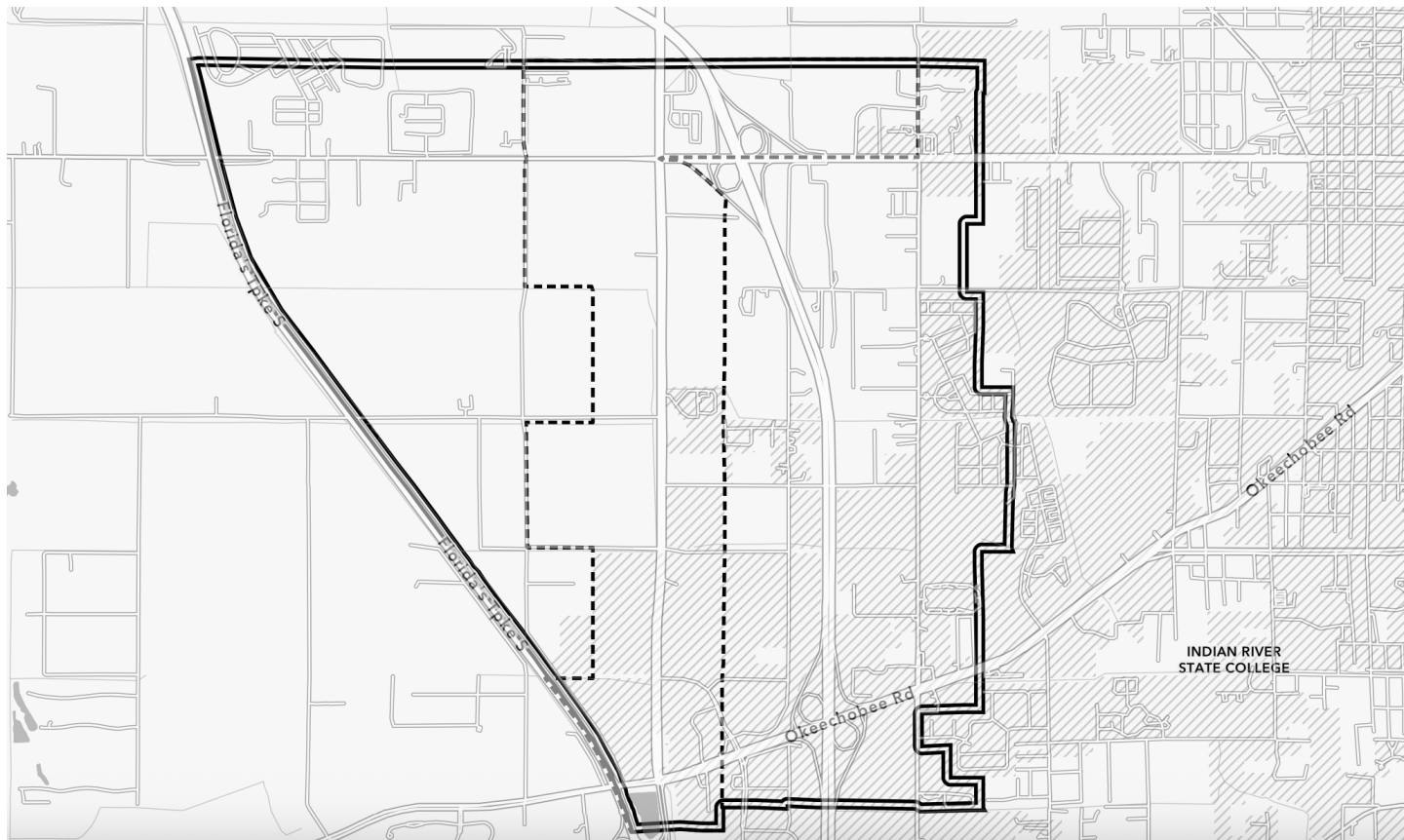


Figure 3: Jurisdictions Map

Utilities Service Areas

In addition to the jurisdictional mix within the Study area, Utility Service Areas also play an important role in the ultimate development of this area.

FPUA Water/Wastewater Service Area and City of Fort Pierce Annexation Area

The City of Fort Pierce expands its jurisdictional boundaries through FPUA Water Agreements, signed by property owners when they develop their property and hook up to FPUA utilities. These Agreements make annexation from Unincorporated St. Lucie County into the City of Fort Pierce mandatory when the parcel is developed and becomes contiguous with (touching) the City's boundaries. This means that the future boundaries of the City of Fort Pierce are the same as the FPUA Water Service Territory. This FPUA Water Service map is below, and identifies the future boundaries of the City of Fort Pierce.

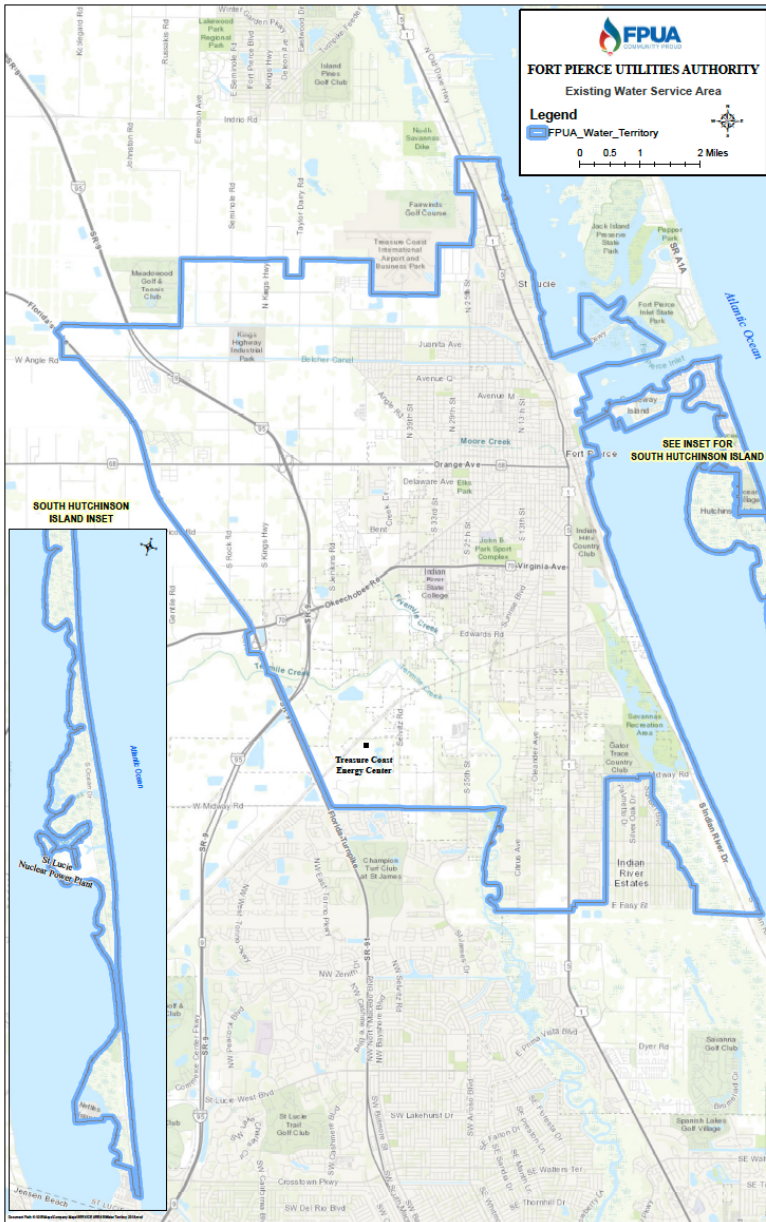


Figure 4: FPUA Water Service Area

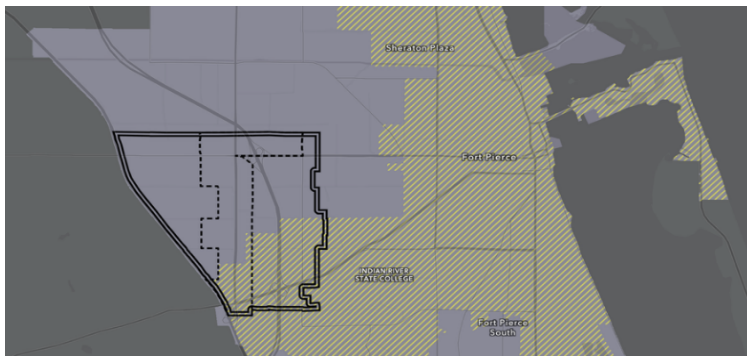


Figure 5: FPUA Electric Service Area

The FPUA Water Service Area Map, shown to the left, identifies the planned, future City boundaries, as when these parcels develop and connect to FPUA Utilities, they will be annexed by Agreement into the City of Fort Pierce.

Ultimately, as this area develops, the City will have jurisdiction over the entirety of the Study area.

Electrical Service Areas

The Study area is served by two electrical utility providers: FPL and FPUA. FPUA Electrical Service Area is depicted in Figure 5 in a yellow hatched overlay. All other areas (both light gray and dark gray) are served by FPL electric. This Figure shows that the majority of the Study area will be served by FPL for their electrical needs.

In interviews with FPL and FPUA staff, both agencies indicated that there is limited transmission availability to serve the remainder of the undeveloped Study area, with FPL at a critically low capacity of 0.5 megawatts (MW) to serve the area. This will limit the capacity of future employers to make the necessary improvements to serve their business' electrical needs.

When capacity is limited, the Utilities require that the Industrial or Commercial users front the cost of improving the necessary infrastructure, even if that user does not need all of electrical capacity created by that improvement. This requirement creates a significant hurdle for the development of an area with limited infrastructure, such as within this Study area.

Utilities do not have a mechanism for multiple future users to pay into a fund for the development of electrical infrastructure serving more than one customer. Because of this, the EDC, with their specialized skillset and outside partner status, may be an effective bridge to evaluate and propose a creative local solution that could combine public and private funding strength to address these types of infrastructure deficiencies that stunt economic growth.

Furthermore, we recommend creation of a City of Fort Pierce Economic Development Fund where both City and developer funds could be aggregated to address funding needs for infrastructure to support economic development projects.

Existing Jurisdictional Future Land Use and Zoning

One challenge this study addresses is existing deficiencies in the GIS tools necessary for a comprehensive environment scan for the study area. Until now, developers or city/county staff could only do land analysis of areas in either City of Fort Pierce or Unincorporated St. Lucie County. It was not possible to overlay all jurisdictional findings on a single map. Included in this report are interactive GIS maps that combine city and county parcels in the study area, showing Future Land Use, Zoning, Existing Uses, Utilities and Demographics. These interactive map links can be found in Exhibit _1_, and will remain available for use for staff, developers and the public.

The Future Land Use and Zoning maps, below, illustrate the disconnect between the current policy direction of developing the King's Highway Corridor with quality job-creating businesses and the existing Future Land Use and Zoning. Much of the City's available land is set up for either commercial or residential development, and much of the County's land is set up for either farming, institutional or very low-density residential development. The new GIS tools developed for this project allow visualization of these issues across jurisdictions.

Future Land Use

Future Land Use Map: Kings Highway Jobs Corridor Plan

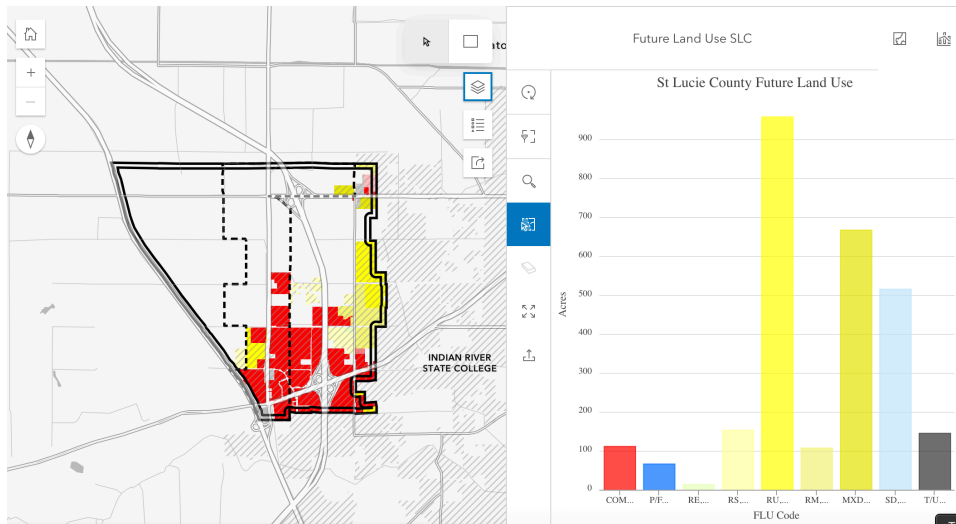


Figure 6: City of Fort Pierce Future Land Use

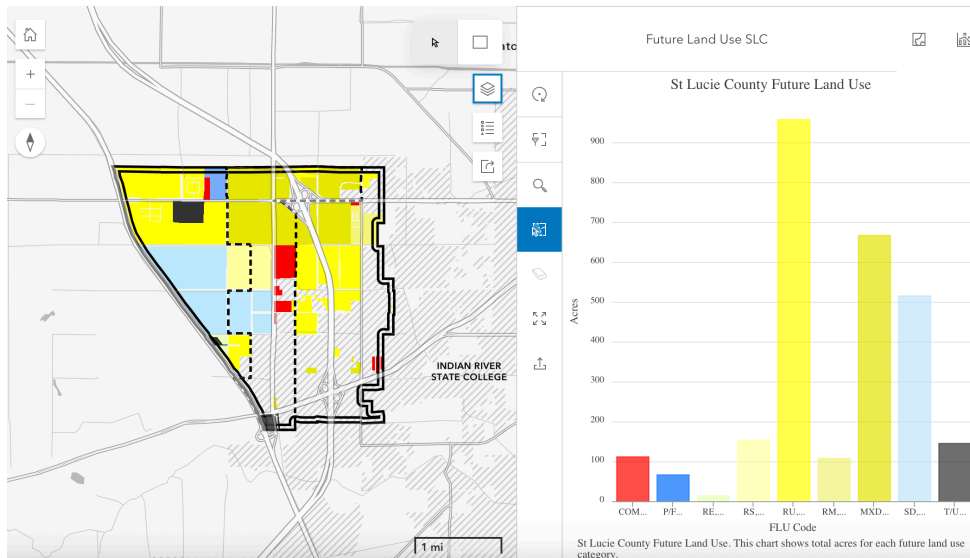


Figure 7: St. Lucie County Future Land Use

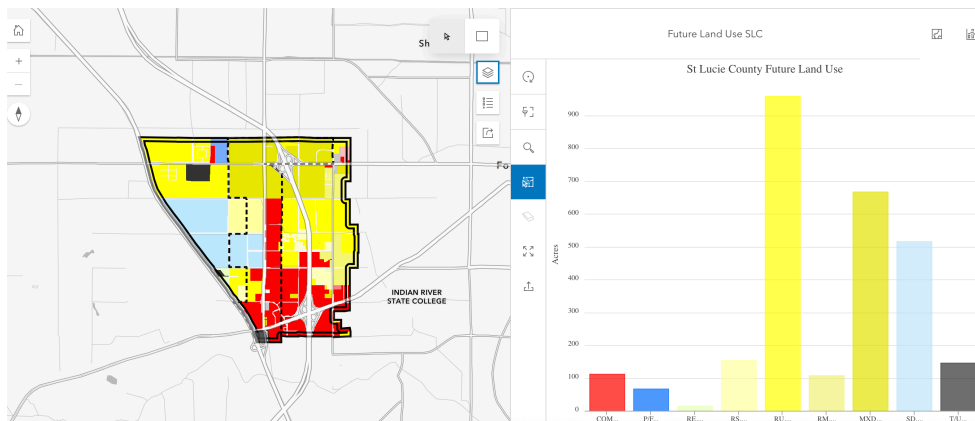


Figure 8: Combined Future Land Use

Zoning

Zoning Map: Kings Highway Jobs Corridor Plan

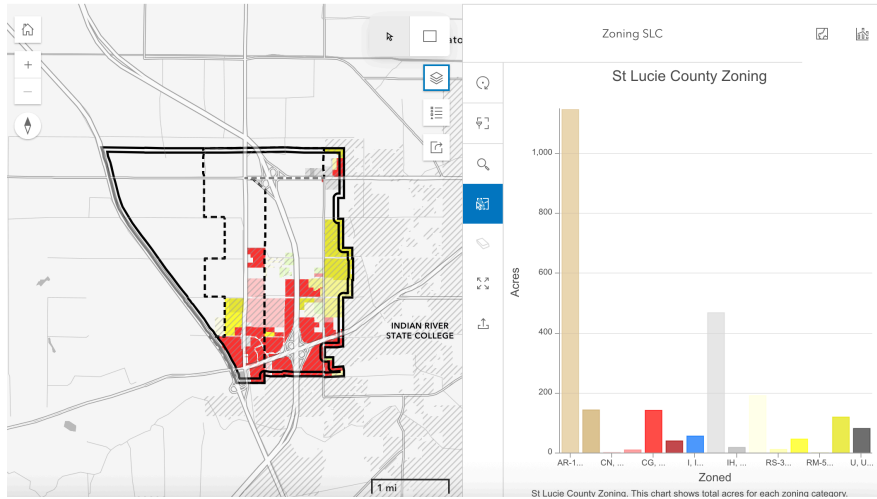


Figure 9: City of Fort Pierce Zoning

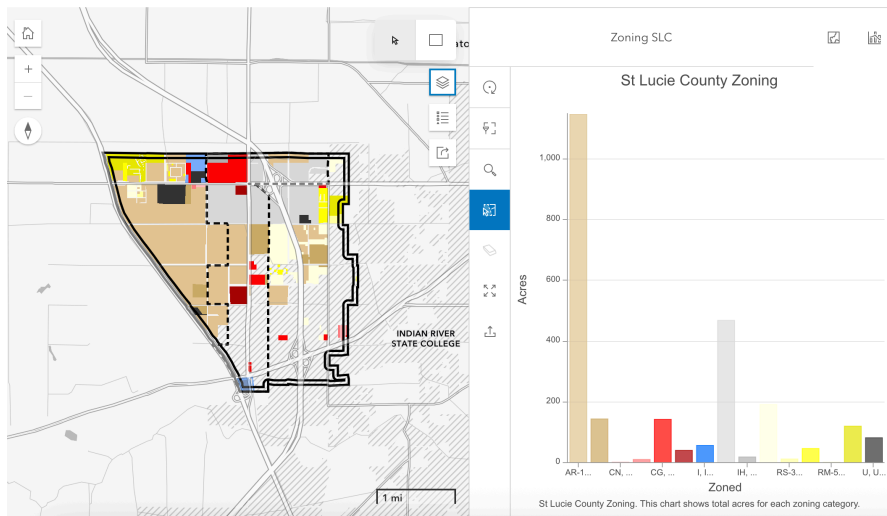


Figure 10: St. Lucie County Zoning

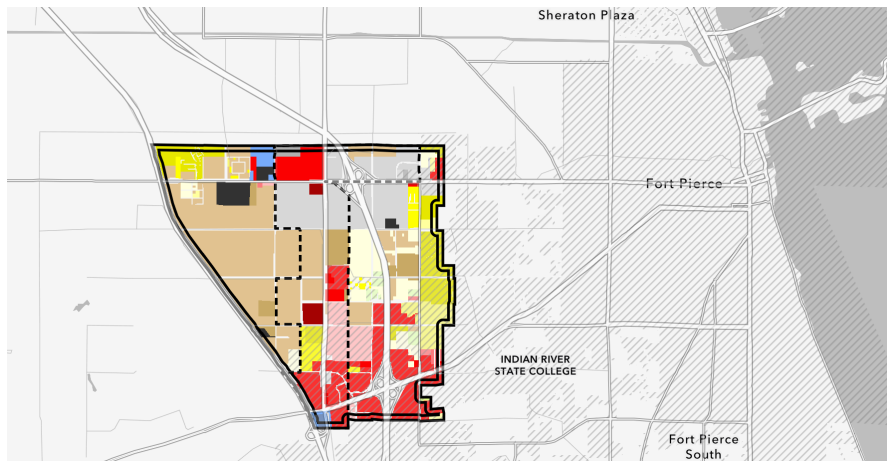


Figure 11: Combined Zoning

What is available: Vacant Land in the Study Area

Summary of Development Potential

There are 1,959 acres of vacant land divided amongst 476 parcels in the study area. These undeveloped parcels have existing land uses that can generally be described as either Residential or Nonresidential. Among Nonresidential land uses, specific use types include: Agricultural, Commercial, Institutional, and Industrial.

Land Use Type	Parcels	Acres	Estimated Capacity
Nonresidential	91	861	9,163,292 sq ft of development
Residential*	383	1,097	Up to 5,455 housing units

**At least two of the parcels are undeveloped lots in the approved planned developments of Celebration Point and Morningside.*

Based on GIS analysis, only 1% of the Study area has an existing Land Use Classification of Vacant Industrial, and 7% of the Existing Land Use Classification is Vacant Commercial. The largest single segment of existing Land Use in this area is Grazing/Land Crop at 18% of total land area.

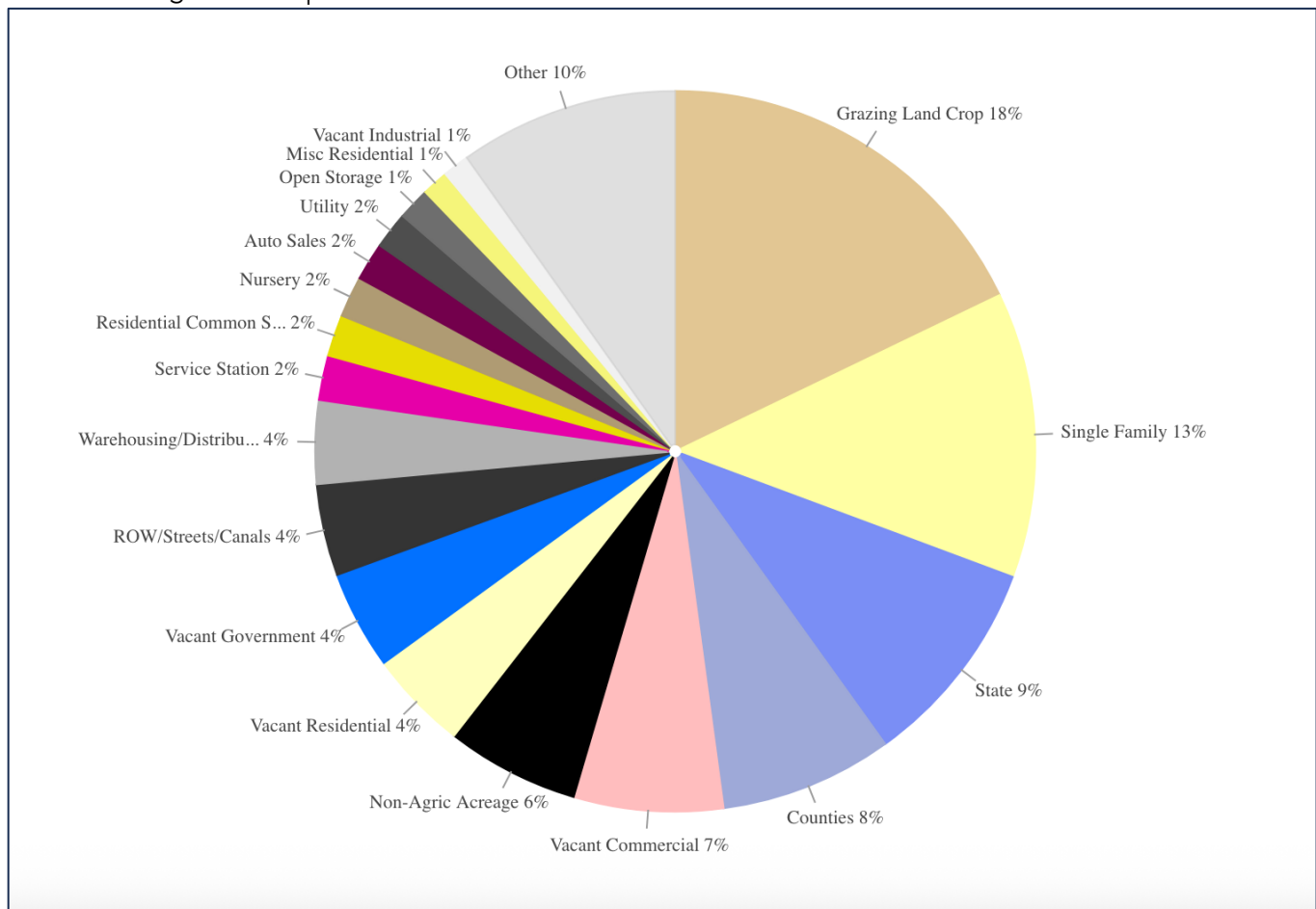


Figure 12: Existing Land Uses Chart

Core Study Area Existing Uses	% of Agreeage
<i>Industrial</i>	6%
<i>Vacant Commercial</i>	7%
<i>Retail</i>	0%
<i>Service</i>	2%
<i>Office</i>	0%
<i>Restaurant</i>	0%
<i>Residential</i>	18%
<i>Agricultural</i>	27%
<i>Institutional</i>	24%
<i>ROW/Water/Common Space</i>	16%

Figure 13: Existing Land Uses Summary Table

This analysis shows there is little land area appropriately entitled for the kinds of uses that will enable or support a Jobs Corridor without significant change to regulatory entitlements.

There are two takeaways from these findings. First, there is very little available, properly zoned land to affect the development of this corridor with Class A Commerce Park development. Second, there is available land to develop if the Future Land Use and Zoning on these parcels is made ready for such development.

Stakeholder Feedback

District Planning Group interviewed and surveyed a wide range of people — elected officials, City and County staff, utility providers, local landowners, realtors, and business owners — to understand what’s working and what’s not; where there are opportunities and challenges; what stakeholders want to make happen for the future in this area. Key takeaways from those conversations:

- The area needs **better infrastructure**, especially **electric power** to serve a variety of industrial needs
- The development approval **process is too slow and uncertain**, which keeps the community from leveraging market timing and interest
- Zoning rules are **inconsistent** across the City and County
- We need for **more affordable housing** nearby
- People want **better-looking buildings and landscaping**; not metal buildings with unsightly and unscreened outdoor storage
- The Tradition Class A Commerce Park area was mentioned as a local success story and a model for the Kings Highway Jobs Corridor
- Create a mix of **high paying jobs** with entry-level positions and a **clear path toward growth**
- Desire for **better coordination among local governments**

Kings Highway Corridor Association Feedback

Interviews and surveys were conducted with the Kings Highway Corridor Association members to garner their feedback on the desired development of this corridor. The interview form and individual feedback can be found in Exhibit _2_ in this report.

There was significant support for developing this corridor to support the economic development of Fort Pierce through high quality job creation. The project team spoke to a variety of stakeholders who pointed to aspirational descriptors for future uses. The chart below identifies the number of times each use type was

St. Lucie County

Balancing Housing and Employment Uses. Advocation for land uses that would generate **higher-paying jobs**, such as manufacturing, aviation, boating companies, and large retail anchors to support both existing and future industries.

Residential Development Location Concerns

There was a strong preference to **avoid placing residential development along Kings Highway**, with recommendations for **light industrial** and **agritourism** uses instead. This reflects a desire for compatibility with existing industrial uses and to preserve the corridor's economic focus.

Support for Mixed-Use and Diverse Housing

Diverse housing, including apartments and a range of options. They suggested **mixed-use nodes**, especially in areas like **Orange Avenue and Graham Road**, where commercial uses could be integrated with residential (e.g., apartments above retail). This supports both smart growth and community vibrancy.

Concerns About Rapid Residential Growth

There was concern over the pace of **"cluster residential" development**, particularly when it outpaces supporting infrastructure and services, such as schools and teachers.

Planning and Mapping Needs

Access to **clear development maps**, showing approved and in-process projects with their densities and intensities.

State Representative Feedback:

Affordable Housing and Skilled Workforce

Need for **affordable housing** and ensuring the availability of **skilled workers** to meet the demands of incoming businesses. Workforce readiness was identified as essential to supporting sustained economic expansion.

Commercial and Technology Infrastructure

As part of commercial readiness, he noted the **need for robust data transfer capabilities** to support business operations and future technologies.

Trade, Tariffs, and State Support

Consider the role of the **airport and port in supporting import/export activity** and expressed concerns about the **potential impact of tariffs**. Additionally, he advised stakeholders to **engage the state for funding and support opportunities**, highlighting the importance of intergovernmental collaboration.

Senior Staff Feedback

City of Fort Pierce

Annexation and Communication Gaps:

Staff highlighted challenges around annexation, specifically the need to **extend municipal services** (such as police and fire) to newly incorporated areas. It was noted that some residents are unaware they are within city boundaries, signaling a **communication gap**.

Importance of Transparent Reporting:

Identify **anticipated tax contributions** resulting from development of annexation activities.

Transportation Funding and Aesthetics:

A primary concern was how to establish a **funding mechanism** that ensures development contributes proportionately to transportation improvements. Staff noted that **transportation infrastructure influences the type of development** the city can attract and retain. There was also an emphasis on **corridor aesthetics**, including landscaping and beautification of bordering properties and medians along Kings Highway.

Commercial and Interstate-Oriented Development:

The conversation also touched on the need for **interstate-oriented services**, such as **nicer hotels, large retail, and commercial amenities** to support both economic activity and traveler needs.

Community Engagement and Site Activation:

There was interest in highlighting **active commercial locations** (e.g., Jenkins Road area), especially those where people can observe daily operations. This reflects a community desire for transparency, walkability, and engagement with local businesses and a need for recreational sites.

St. Lucie County

Transit and Micro transit Services: The corridor is zoned for micro transit, and current services include approximately 350 bus stops weekly (Monday through Saturday). Staff shared details on a forthcoming van pool program launching in July, as well as ART (Area Regional Transit) services. The corridor falls within Micro transit Zone 3, spanning from 25th Street to Kings Highway. While these services are not 24-hour, they represent growing investment in flexible transit options.

Development Activity: There are considerations for density and multimodal connections, highlighting coordinated planning efforts in the area due to upcoming residential development.

Long-Term Planning and Infrastructure: Staff indicated that the Expanded transportation outlook is still in the early stages. The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) has initiated new planning work, including future improvements to Graham Road.

St. Lucie Fire District**Water Capacity/Communication**

The District raised concerns about water capacity and being able to serve the area based on what is coming into the area.

FPUA**Electric Utility Strain and Underutilized Areas**

Staff noted **electric capacity concerns**, particularly along **Jenkins Road**, where infrastructure is strained by facilities like the **Tesla charging station**. There were also concerns about **underutilized areas north of Orange Avenue**, which have a prevalence of vacant housing but are still fully serviced by FPUA.

Gas and Water Service Capacity

Despite concerns about electric load, **gas and water capacities in the Kings Highway Jobs Corridor (KHJC) area are currently sufficient**, and **fiber is not a limiting issue**.

Parks, Recreation, and Aesthetic Enhancements

There was an expressed desire to see more **parks and recreation amenities**, similar to what has been developed in Port St. Lucie. Staff also recommended **additional beautification efforts**, especially at corridor **entry points**, to elevate the area's visual appeal.

Data Requests and Future Planning

FPUA leadership expressed interest in **data related to future development** within the KHJC area, which would support future infrastructure planning and load assessments.

FPL

FPL indicates they have approximately 0.5 megawatts (MW) of availability left in this area without substantial infrastructure upgrades, which must be paid for by the end industrial or commercial user who needs it first. FPL is aware of the deficiency and is beginning internal conversations about possible long-term solutions. That said, it is unclear what solutions will be available to meet the immediate needs of industrial developers and end users in order to advance this Jobs Corridor development.

FPUA has MW available to serve this general area, and has plans to build a new 35MW substation near Indian River State College in the coming 5 years.

Both utilities also indicated the need to understand the amount of residential development in the pipeline, as this impacts their need to possibly speed up infrastructure development to serve those incoming residential units.

Analysis

Utilities Availability

Electric

Because residential demand impacts both utilities timeframes for infrastructure development, this report also collates the approved and “in-review” residential site plans approved in this general vicinity, extending up to Indrio Road in order to share this data with both FPL and FPUA for their planning purposes. Based on our review of available online information, there are at least 5,000 units approved or proposed in the study area and the areas adjacent.

Development Name	Units	Jurisdiction	General Location	Core/Anc	Approved/In Review	Provider
Whispering Oaks	372	SLC	N Jenkins Rd	Ancillary	Approved	FPL
Farrell Communities	488	FP	S Kings Hwy	Core	Approved	FPUA/FPL
Eagle Bend	1713	SLC	Jenkins Rd Overlay	Ancillary	Approved	FPL
Pineapple Grove	402	SLC	N Kings	Ancillary (N)	Approved	FPL
Sunnyland Farms	458	SLC	NW Kings	Ancillary (NW)	In Review	FPL
Hillpointe Residential	252	FP	S Jenkins	Ancillary	Approved	FPUA
Waypoint Jenkins	324	FP	S Jenkins	Ancillary	Approved	FPUA
Regatta Apartments	312	FP	S Jenkins	Ancillary	Approved	FPUA
Viva West	222	FP	S Jenkins	Ancillary	Approved	FPUA
Pulte Cornerstone	212	FP	S Jenkins	Ancillary	In Review	FPUA
4540 N Kings Hwy	231	SLC	N Kings	Outside	Approved	FPL
Viva East	206	FP	Edwards	Outside	Approved	FPUA
Sunset Gardens	112	FP	Edwards	Outside	In Review	FPUA
Total Units	5,304					

Figure 16: Residential Development in process

Water and Wastewater

Water Availability: FPUA serves the entirety of the Core and Expanded Study Area with water. 12" water mains serve King's Highway, Jenkins Road and Rock Road. A variety of smaller supply lines serve Picos Road, Graham Road, Pruitt Research Center Road, Copenhagen Road, Peters Road and other ancillary roads.

Sewer Availability: FPUA serves the entirety of the Core and Expanded Study Area with sewer with a variety of line sizes and types, ranging from a 24" force main on north Jenkins Road to smaller force mains and gravity mains throughout the study area. Line types and sizes can be explored on the Study's FPUA Utilities GIS map at the following link: [FPUA Utilities Map](#)

Fiber

FPUA Net has fiber services available in this area, but the exact geographical availability is not a part of the existing GIS layers included in the FPUA Utilities Map. This can be added in Phase 2, if desired.

Gas

FPUA serves the Study Area with 4" Gas lines on King's Highway, Jenkins Road and Pruitt Research Road.

Transportation

The King's Highway corridor was identified for this study as a prime focus for economic development and job creation in large part due to its excellent transportation facilities. It has recently been widened to a 4-lane divided major arterial, and has three (3) interchanges serving it: one Turnpike interchange, and two I-95 interchanges. There are few areas in our region with this kind of ready access to the State's Intermodal System paired with available land and excellent geographical location.

In addition to these excellent transportation facilities, this Study also addresses how people, goods and services will move within the local area to support these new businesses. A part of this evaluation addresses where employees may live and how they'll get to work.

As seen in the Zoning Maps and in Residential Developments (Figure 16) chart, there is significant residential development along the Jenkins Road corridor that will serve as housing opportunities for future employees of the businesses that locate along King's Highway. Moving people between Jenkins Road and Kings Highway will be an important consideration for future transportation planning of the area. As such, the St. Lucie TPO's initial findings for the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan is instructive.

TPO 2050 LRTP Data & Map

2045 Failing Roads Map

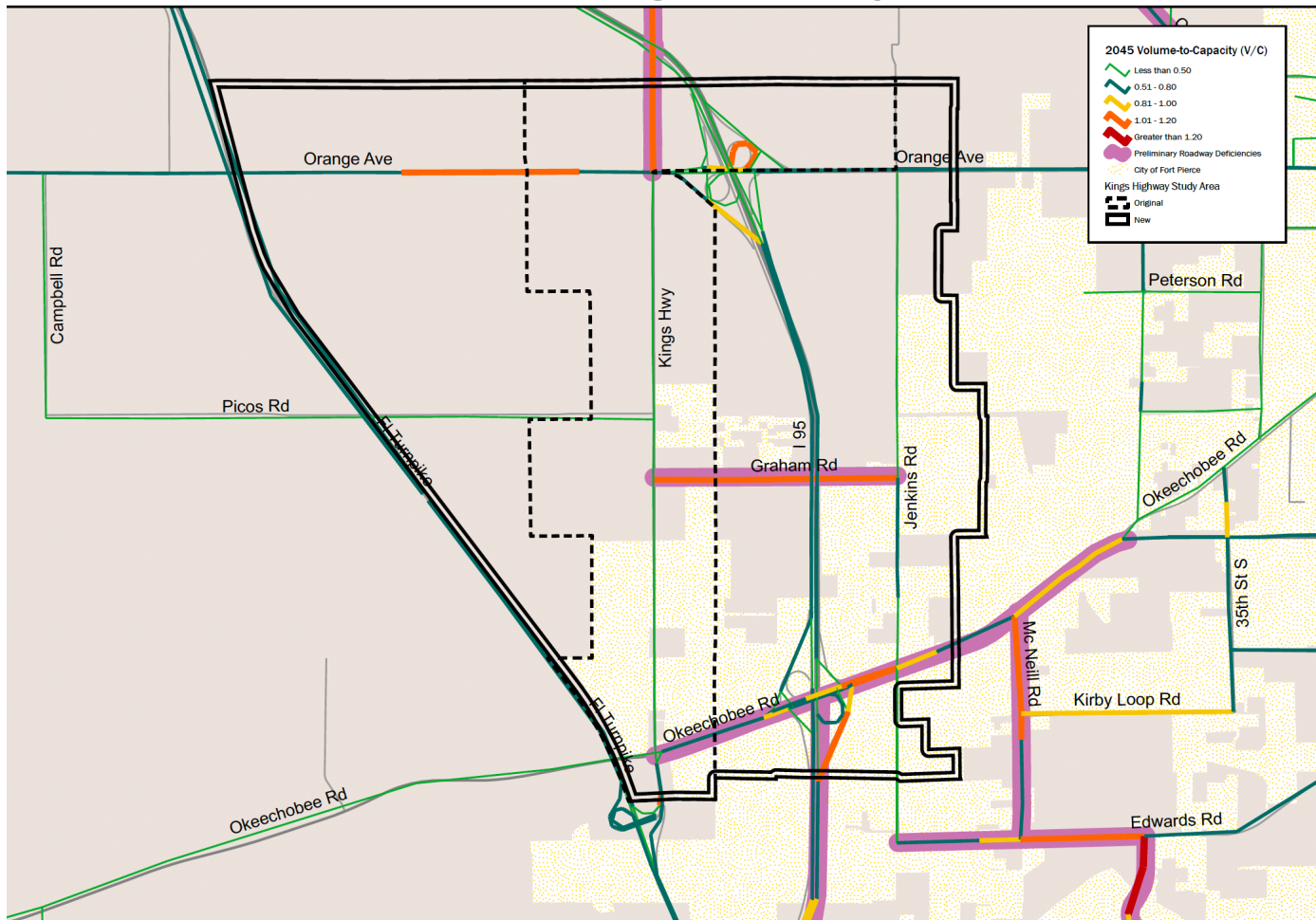


Figure 17: Failing Roads Map for 2050 LRTP

As seen in the above 2045 Failing Roads map developed for the 2050 Reimagine Mobility Long Range Transportation Plan, moving people between Jenkins Road and Kings Highway will become more difficult unless attention and funding is focused on this area. Of primary importance is Graham Road, which is the only connector of Kings Highway and Jenkins Road outside the already congested Okeechobee Road and Orange Avenue corridors.

It is a recommendation of this Study to **advocate in the 2050 LRTP to prioritize the widening of Graham Road**, along with its bridge over I-95, and prioritize multi-purpose sidewalks connections from King's Highway to and along the entirety of Jenkins Road to provide for multimodal transportation options for employees: walking and bicycling.

St. Lucie County Right of Way Protection Map

Graham Road, a County road, is identified on the St. Lucie County Right of Way Protection Map as a future 80' ROW. This study recommends further evaluating whether this future ROW width is adequate to manage the multimodal traffic this important connector will be required to serve.

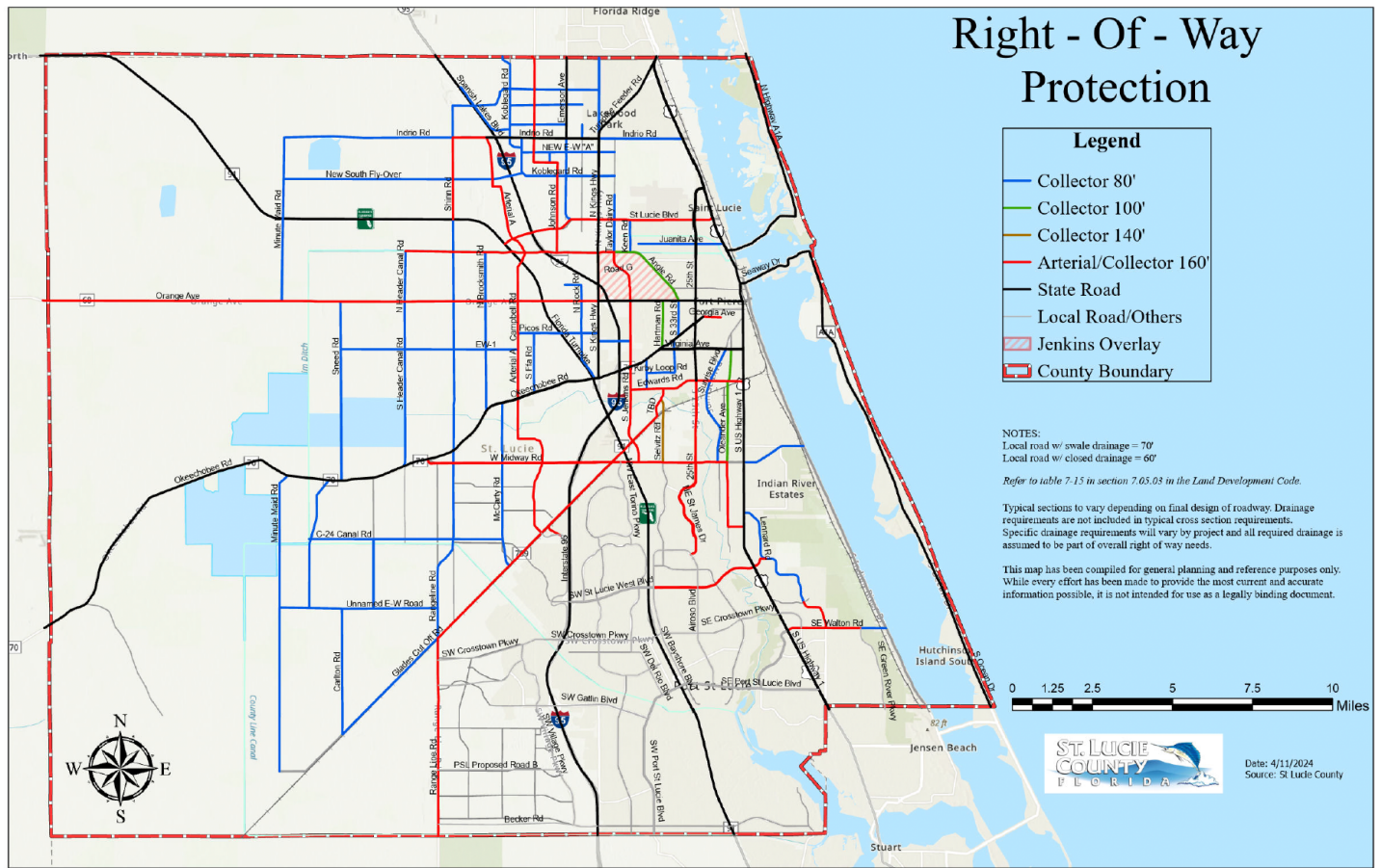


Figure 18: St. Lucie County ROW Protection Map

Transit

St. Lucie County ART (Area Regional Transit) serves this area with a free micro transit ride sharing service called ART on Demand. The Study Area is located within Zone 3, and if travelling between any two points within that Zone’s map area, individuals can use the ART app to call for a door-to-door ride. Links to download the app can be found on the [St. Lucie County Art on Demand webpage](#). If travelling between Zones, users must transfer at Meet Up Points, identified on the map on the following page.

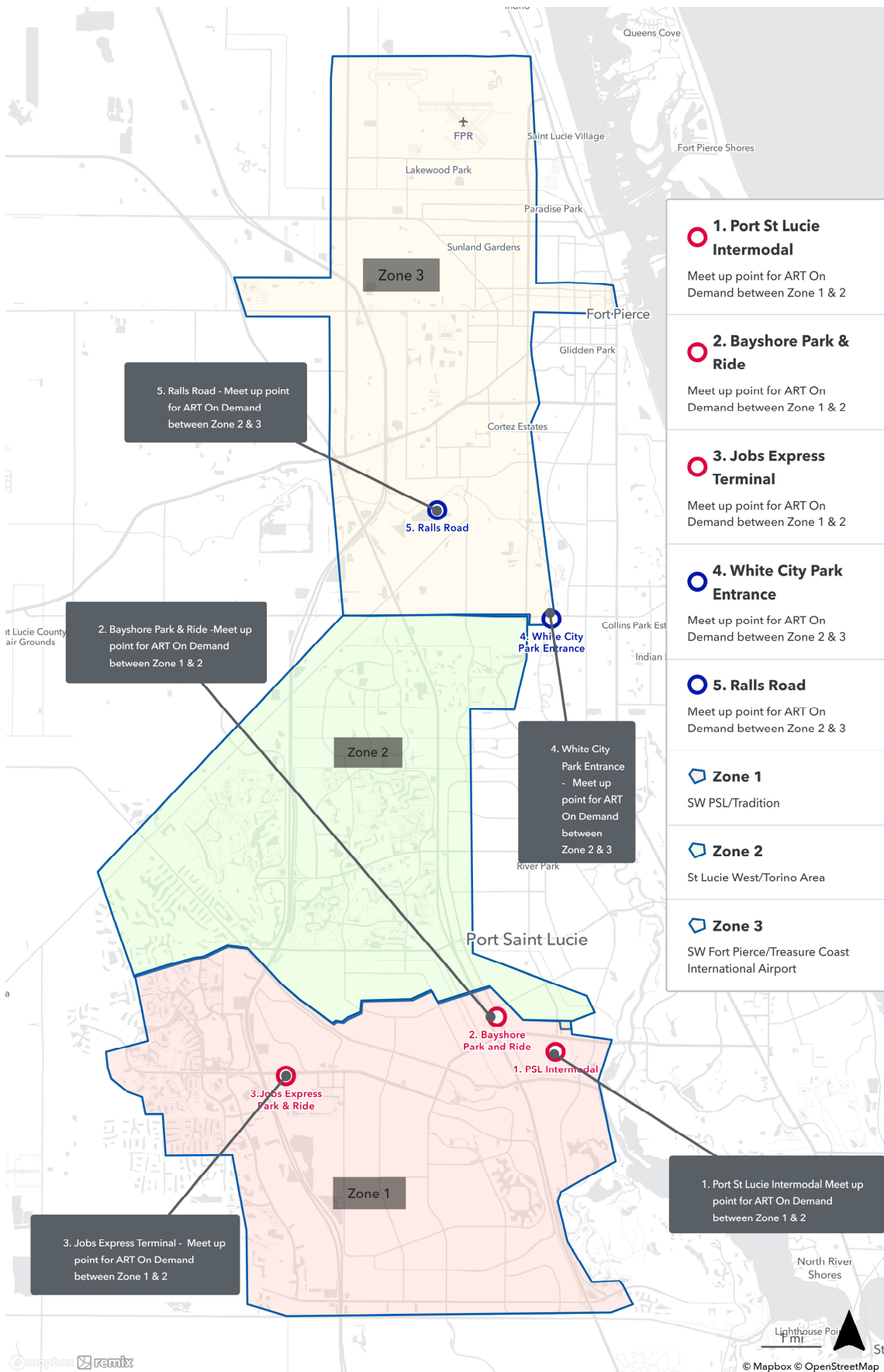


Figure 19: St. Lucie County ART on Demand Map

Based on interviews with senior County staff, there are no current plans to develop a fixed bus route for the Kings Highway corridor in the Study Area, but the Bus Service map, below, does show an existing bus route (Route 3) serving the area along Okeechobee Road.

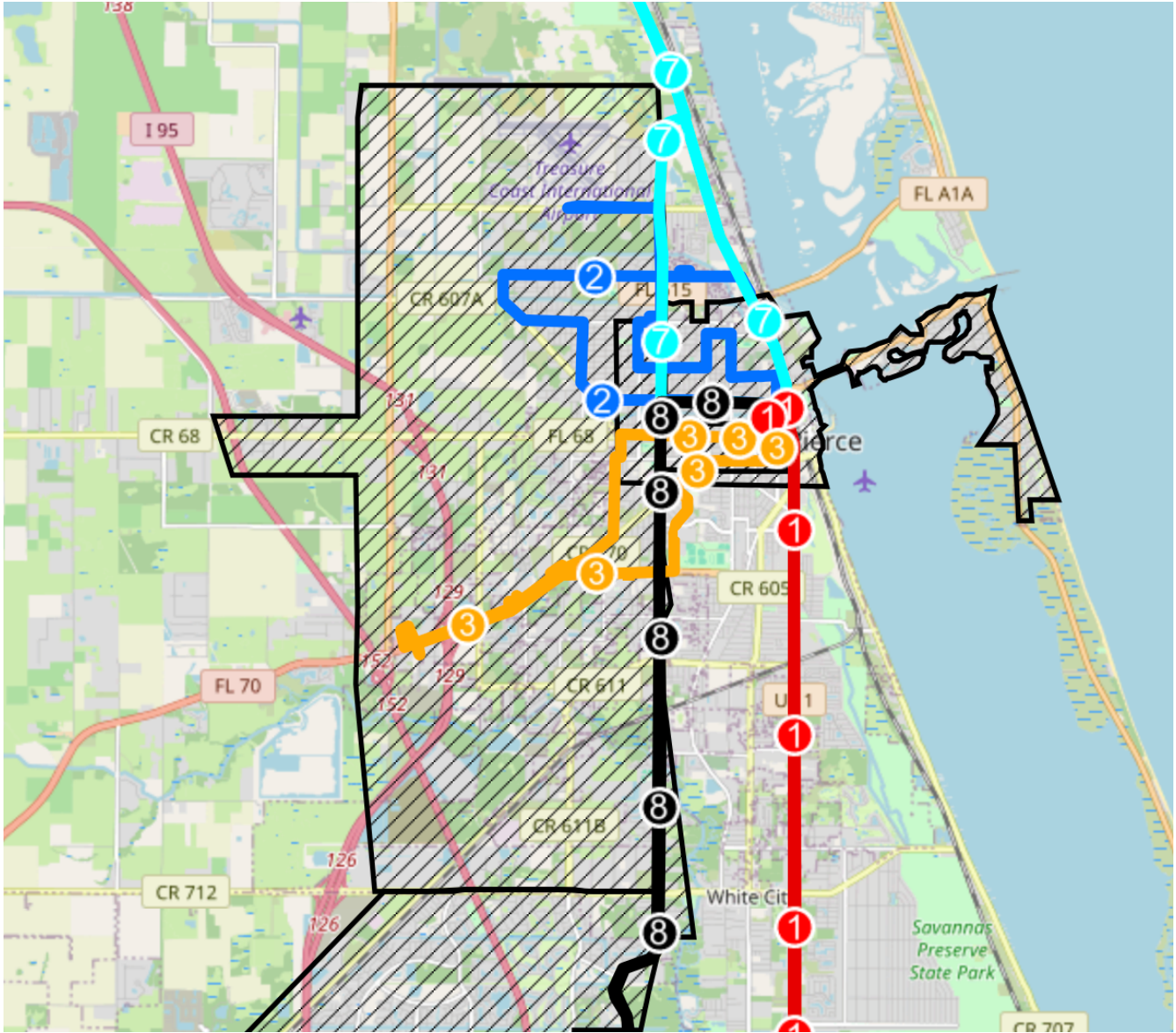


Figure 20: St. Lucie County ART Fixed Route Bus Map

Airport Connector Recommended Alternative Map

The St. Lucie TPO has also prioritized the development of the North County Connector/Airport Connector future roadways to create new interchanges at the Turnpike and I-95, and connect to St. Lucie Boulevard to create efficient connections for the TCIA Airport. Below is a map of the proposed alignment of the Airport Connector between I-95 and St. Lucie Boulevard. These new roads and interchanges, when constructed, will alleviate congestion near the Study interchanges and provide additional transportation options for businesses that locate on the King's Highway Jobs Corridor.

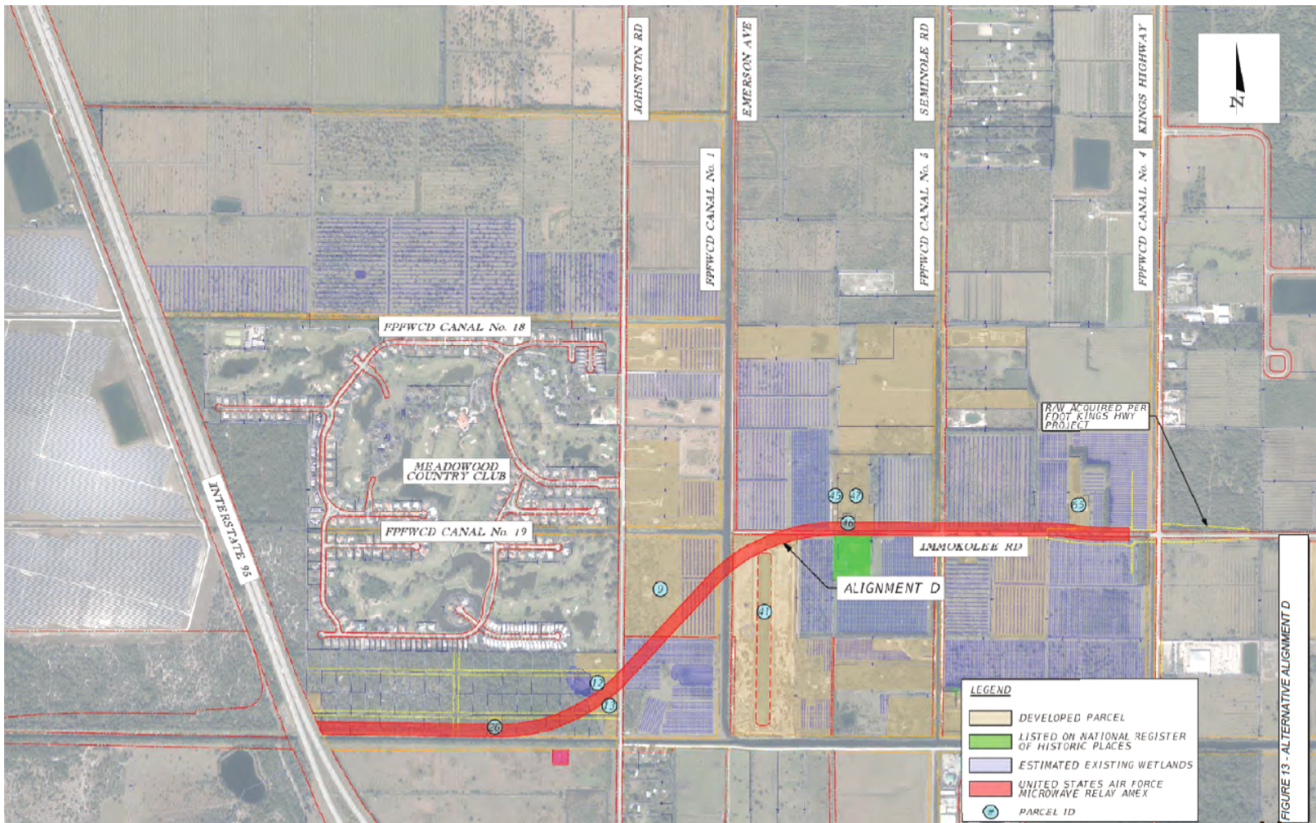


Figure 21: St. Lucie County Airport Connector Proposed Alignment Map

Vacant Land Opportunities

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Fort Pierce		Estimated, Approved or Maximum Potential Residential Density	Estimated Maximum Non-residential Calculated at 25% of Land Area	
No. of Parcels	Total Acreage			
248	585	2,583	3,986,829	
St Lucie County		Approved or Maximum Density under Current SLC Zoning	*Residential Density Allowed by SLC Future Land Use	Estimated Maximum Non-residential Calculated at 25% of Land Area
No. of Parcels	Total Acreage			
226	1,373	1,157	2,872	5,176,462
Combined City & County		Combined Density SLC & Fort Pierce Current Zoning	*Combined Density With SLC Future Land Use	Estimated Maximum Non-residential Calculated at 25% of Land Area
No. of Parcels	Total Acreage			
474	1,958	3,740	5,455	9,163,292

* The St Lucie County Zoning and Future Land Use do not align on a number of parcels this column reflects the potential density increase allowed under the Future Land Use.

The summary data reflects an approximated estimate of maximum development potential based upon existing zoning and comprehensive land use designations. Actual development likely be less intense than permitted under the zoning and land use designations. Many factors reduce actual development potential of land; including rights-of-way, driveways, easements, open space, setbacks, parking lots, stormwater, along with landscape, conservation and buffering requirements.

The maximum intensity analysis makes sense because it provides the upper threshold of development for which the Fort Pierce Utility Authority may plan in the area. Knowing that that the max threshold is unlikely, but possible, current and projected capacity demand can be better planned.

The City's zoning and future land use are aligned for the most part. As such, the County's vacant land analysis includes development potential under current zoning and then the Future Land Use, while the City analysis includes development potential under existing Zoning.

Future non-residential square foot development is calculated on a 25% maximum land usage scenario. We looked at 8 relatively recent non-residential developments in the general vicinity of the study area as a predictor of site development potential. The building footprint foot print ranged from approximately 7 to 35%, with most being in the 20-25% usage range. The smallest square footage was at the Wawa at Kings and Orange and the largest was in the Crossroads Commerce Park.

Future Land Use and Zoning Consistency

While stakeholder engagement identified a desire for the Kings Highway study area to be developed with Class A Commerce Centers, the existing Future Land Uses and Zoning designations are in conflict with that goal. The existing development pattern at the major intersections of SR 70 and Orange Avenue is highway-oriented commercial of fast food, gas stations and motels. The other major uses are truck-oriented service plazas and newly constructed large warehouse, distribution and logistics facilities.

Between the two major intersections, the land is mostly undeveloped. St Lucie County and the St Lucie School District are in the process of divesting about 200 acres of property that was part of the Treasure Coast Educational and Research Park back to private ownership.

Within the Expanded study area, jurisdiction is about equally split between City of Fort Pierce and unincorporated St Lucie County. Much of the land within the City generally has zoning and land use appropriate for the current and future uses. Conversely, the lands outside of the Kings Highway and Orange Avenue intersection in the unincorporated County has agriculture, low density residential or special district land use and zoning.

St Lucie County

As a result of the County's existing future land use and zoning of the undeveloped parcels, each new industrial or commercial proposal within the County will likely require future land use amendment and rezoning petition, which adds uncertainty, time and cost to each economic development project.

The county had addressed the demand for large scale development at the Orange/Kings intersection and along Orange Avenue with MXD-Mixed Use, CG-Commercial General, IL-Industrial Light, or Planned Nonresidential Development (PNRD) zonings.

The recently developed, large-scale warehouse facilities near the Kings and Orange intersection have an industrial light zoning.

For the remaining large undeveloped parcels, the legacy underlying low density agricultural-oriented zoning has remained in place and/or has been overlaid with Special District Planned Development zoning at the Treasure Coast Research Park. The overlay was intended to accommodate the basic research-oriented development there and not more general light industrial, commercial or logistics-type development into which the corridor has begun to develop. The county had been offloading some of that land purchased to support the Research Park and development of that land will require use amendments.

Other undeveloped parcels in the primary corridor have a residential and commercial land use - the desired development on Kings isn't supported by these designations and will require land use amendments and rezonings.

The county's desired path for non-residential development is to support a change of Future Land Use to MXD. The MXD Future Land Use Element then requires a planned development zoning for most rezonings. The county prefers this path because it allows flexibility in application of development standards - but also tends to add time and cost to a development because the process encourages staff and the policy makers to negotiate site development items that the developer wouldn't necessarily do under a straight zoning development. This path has been adopted in order to require a higher quality development than what is required in Industrial zoning, which has no architectural requirements and can lead to unsightly developments over time with metal buildings and burgeoning outdoor storage. The County uses the tools it has to avoid this potential outcome: Planned Development. This approach to development entitlements could create inconsistent design outcomes for the Corridor, as each Planned Development's site and architectural design is negotiated for each application.

As an example, for the requested development flexibility in a PNRD, the County may request (require) other concessions for things such additional traffic improvements, open space set-asides or conservation areas, enhanced landscaping or other site improvements not required for a straight site plan approval.

This Study recommends the development of a King's Highway Jobs Corridor Overlay which could be adopted by both the County and City to provide for more straightforward entitlement processes in return for higher quality development standards.

City of Fort Pierce

The City's Future Land Use designation in the Core Study Area is nearly all General Commercial with one parcel having an RL designation. Many of the parcels are already developed with an existing commercial use.

The larger undeveloped parcels have a CP-1 Commercial Parkway zoning designation "*which is established for the purpose of providing space for large lot development along principal vehicular approaches into the city. This is a mixed-use district which should provide for certain types of office, commercial, and industrial operations which are typically characterized by a business park setting. This district may function as a transition zone between commercial/light industrial activities and uses which may be sensitive to nuisance such as residential land uses.*" The CP-1 zoning allows for a wide range of permitted and conditional uses with offices, clinics, schools, limited vehicle repair, light industrial, warehouse and freight and wholesale uses as permitted – while other land uses such as vehicle sales, animal care, retail sales, grocery, and heavy equipment sales are conditional uses.

All major site plans for development require going through the process as outlined in Section 125-313 of the City Land Development Code, Major and Minor Site Plans. All major site plans must go through Technical Review Committee and the Design Review Board, and proceed to public hearings before the Planning Board and the City Commission.

Conditional Uses must also comply with Sections 125-235 through 247. The process for achieving approval for a conditional use is similar to the site plan process, but entails a higher level of scrutiny and focuses on mitigating potential negative impacts on existing, neighboring development.

The City of Fort Pierce also appears to prefer applications be made in the form of Planned Developments. Like St. Lucie County, the City's Light Industrial zoning district does not apply Design Review requirements, and therefore discourages that type of "straight zoning" to this Corridor in order to reduce risk of unsightly industrial development. The City has stated a desire to improve the type and quality of development and uses the planned development process to leverage a negotiated site design. The approval process is similar to that of a major site plan, and the City

will process a preliminary and final planned development together. However, a planned development requires a planned development agreement which adds review time and negotiations with the City Attorney's office.

In order to attain a higher quality development outcome while making the process more streamlined and predictable, this Study recommends the development of a King's Highway Jobs Corridor Overlay which could be adopted by both the County and City to provide for more straightforward entitlement processes in return for higher quality development standards.

The intent of such an overlay is to provide regulatory predictability in the process while outlining clear expectations of developers. An overlay will allow developers to forecast costs and schedules, which is difficult under the current County and City preferences of Planned Development. This type of predictability makes development more attractive to job creators who put a high value on development time savings and regulatory predictability.

Design Requirements for Industrial Zoning

In both the City of Fort Pierce and in unincorporated St. Lucie County, neither jurisdiction applies design requirements to Industrial zoning. As a result, a rezoning to an Industrial zoning category means the site can be developed with metal buildings and visible outdoor storage. One of the primary areas of feedback we have received from stakeholders, including landowners and elected officials, is that it is vital for the economic vitality of this area as a Jobs Corridor for the quality of development to be of a Class A Commerce Park quality.

St. Lucie County generally addresses this issue by recommending Planned Developments within the Study area. Recommending Planned Development allows the jurisdiction to require a higher quality development through the negotiated Planned Development process. While this advances the desired policy of high-quality design, it also adds uncertainty, longer development review time periods and higher costs to the entitlement process. This makes dampens market interest in developing the corridor for job creators. What if there were a process by which the City could support the policy direction of Class A Commerce Park design with the certainty and predictability of by-right zoning?

DPG recommends the development of an Overlay District that could be adopted for the Study area that blends the goals of high-quality site design with predictability. If possible, this Overlay could be:

- Adopted by both the City of Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County,
- Applicable to the Core Study area,
- Adopted as a pilot program that will sunset within 3-years unless extended by each jurisdiction,
- Applicable on a parcel-by-parcel basis as an option, not a requirement.

Summary: Outcomes and Recommendations

Conclusion

This report assembles an array of data and analyses on the **Kings Highway Jobs Corridor** for the purpose of planning the future of one of the most promising new business growth areas in St. Lucie County. To restate the options for moving forward with the next phase of this planning exercise, our key recommendations are:

1. **Focus on Jobs, Not Just Buildings:** Target businesses that create a mix of high-paying and entry-level jobs with clear advancement opportunities.
2. **Address Critical Power Needs:** Coordinate with FPL and FPUA to secure adequate electric capacity.
3. **Create a Unified Overlay District:** Adopt a joint overlay zone between the City and County that:
 - a. Allows developers to opt in for streamlined approvals.
 - b. Establishes shared design standards and a clear menu of permitted uses.
 - c. Offers faster, staff-level approvals for large projects that meet quality benchmarks.
 - d. Implements an initial 3-Year Pilot Program to measure its efficacy before a permanent roll-out.
4. **Conduct Economic & Fiscal Analysis:** Use independent experts to quantify the corridor's potential economic impact and benefits to local tax revenues.
5. **Create a City of Fort Pierce Economic Development Fund:** Set aside recurring funding to provide Economic Development Match Grants for impactful attraction/expansion/retention projects to leverage outside funding.

Next Steps

The project team seeks direction to finalize the report's recommendations and begin work on detailed implementation tools, including the proposed overlay district framework, infrastructure buildout scenarios, and economic impact modeling. Public and private sector partners remain poised for collaborating on effective solutions for ensuring thriving development with a cohesive placemaking experience for a hub for quality jobs, modern industry, and supporting services. The EDC and District Planning Group look forward to continuing our efforts for the City of Fort Pierce and Fort Pierce Utilities Authority on implementing shared goals for the continued transformation of this area.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Kings Hwy Jobs Corridor GIS Map Links

[Zoning Map: Kings Hwy Jobs Corridor Plan](#)

[Future Land Use Map: Kings Hwy Jobs Corridor Study](#)

[Land Use Map: Kings Hwy Jobs Corridor Study](#)

[FPUA Utilities Map](#)

[Future Development Map: Kings Hwy Jobs Corridor Plan](#)

[Built Out vs Vacant Map: Kings Hwy Jobs Corridor Plan](#)

[Kings Hwy - Demographics](#)

Exhibit 2: Stakeholder Survey and Individual Feedback

Survey Form:

Kings Highway Corridor Study Stakeholder Survey

1. Do you live in St Lucie County? Yes / No
2. What is your primary interest in the Kings Highway Corridor Study area? (Property Owner / Business Owner / Developer / Realtor / Other)
3. Do you own or lease property in the Kings Highway Corridor Study Area? (Owner / Lessor)
4. Do you own developed or undeveloped land? (Developed / Undeveloped)
5. If you own land, how many Acres? _____ Acres
6. How long have you owned the land? _____ Years
7. Do you own building(s) that you lease or occupy? Yes / No
8. If you own buildings, how many square feet in each building? Bldg 1: _____ Bldg 2: _____ Bldg 3: _____
9. If you own developed property, when was your property developed, and did you develop it? (Developed / Undeveloped)
10. What type of tenants do you have in your building(s)? _____
11. What is the average per square foot rent you charge? \$ _____
12. Do you know the zoning and land use designation on your property(s)? Fort Pierce LU: _____ Zoning: _____ | St Lucie County LU: _____
Zoning: _____
13. What is/are the biggest challenges facing the corridor? _____
14. If your property is undeveloped, what is/are the most significant challenge to proceeding with development?

15. Have you developed other properties in St Lucie County, Fort Pierce or Port St Lucie?
16. In your opinion, what improvements can be made to the development process in the City of Fort Pierce?
17. Why do you think the corridor has remained underdeveloped for so long given its access to the State's Strategic Intermodal System - I-95, Turnpike, Airport, etc.?
18. What land uses would you like to see locate within the corridor study area?
19. What would you like for the future appearance of the corridor to be?
20. Are you a member of the Economic Development Council of St Lucie County? Yes / No

Stakeholder Feedback:

Stakeholder Questions:

What is/are the biggest challenges facing the corridor?

1. Electric Capacity, housing, Transit, Lengthy approvals
2. Getting approvals quickly would be very beneficial
3. Cohesive master plan and coordination with SLC and CoffP
4. Power
5. Access to east/west arterial roadways
6. Power and utilities - Transportation for employees
7. Attracting more industrial user to the corridor
8. FPL Lacks capacity to serve the corridor. A 1-megawatt substation is needed.
9. Disjointed ownerships and interests - infrastructure
10. Lack of speculative development of buildings under 200,000 square feet with available spaces under 30,000 square feet.
11. If your property is outside the USB in SLC, we face limited access to public utilities and slower emergency services. Land use and zoning restrictions could limit development options and increase permitting challenges. We also risk the need to cover infrastructure costs, like road maintenance and utility connections, out of pocket

12. Traffic and housing

If your property is undeveloped, what is/are the most significant challenge(s) to proceeding with development?

1. Development Approval time
2. Speed of Approval Process
3. Lack of utilities and time it takes to get ready for development
4. This is not specific to City or FPUA but a general statement to always move the needle forward on business-friendly policies. Exhausting processes for review and permitting and inadequate infrastructure are the most significant challenges in development. Power is a major challenge currently on the corridor
5. Getting power to the site and working with the County to get a PNRD
6. Lack of electric power
7. Financing and constructions costs
8. The most significant challenge to developing underdeveloped property outside the USB is the lack of access to public utilities. Installing private systems (like well and septic) can be costly and may face regulatory hurdles. Additionally, zoning and land use restrictions could limit the type and scale of development allowed
9. We have 1.4 acres undeveloped - the challenge is securing a retail build to suit.

In your opinion, what improvements can be made to the development process in the City of Fort Pierce?

1. Create overlay
2. Transportation for future residents
3. Better communication between city and county
4. More capacity for water, sewer, fiber, cable and wider roadways
5. To make sure the process is effective and efficient for all parties involved. Delays or roadblocks are reviewed and addressed so that developers, business owners, everyone involved has a clear understanding of the process and not that it's this way because it always has been. How do we gain accountability in the process? Like any service organization (which the cities and county are service organizations) have realistic deadlines. Collaboration between the city and county with overlay zones would be impactful to helping with the right level of development.
6. It will be key for City Commissioners to be aligned with the new City Manager
7. Better coordination between the Planning Dept, Engineering and the legal department. Lack of coordination leads to missteps and delays.
8. More expertise - can't all be done "in-house"
9. Have a reliable calendar, once a submittal is determined complete (the "in" date), then the final approval date (the "out" date) should be certain.
10. Strategic development to be permitted along the I-95 and Turnpike corridor to maximize the benefits of its prime logistical location
11. Speed in permitting

Why do you think the Corridor has remained undeveloped for so long?

1. Lack of demand
2. Timing/TCERDA lease
3. Time it takes to get approvals
4. No demand
5. The focus has been on development in PSL
6. Time, cost and process for land use and rezoning: Infrastructure expansion costs and lack of infrastructure; Demand and need for the right size product in the marketplace
7. St Lucie County was overlooked by significant developers and or owner users outside of some industrial users or farm related activities because it has historically been seen as a bedroom community for more metro areas to the north and south. The community lacked infrastructure, access to workforce (skilled labor), and synergies with other like kind companies.
8. Tax millage rate is higher in Fort Pierce; transportation; Employment base
9. In the past, developers walked away from large down payments because it took years to get site plan approval. No cooperation from the County.
10. Issues with Kings Highway expansion and the costs and uncertainty that it created for developers.
11. Disjointed messaging - no "catalyst" project
12. There wasn't much activity
13. It had to wait its turn. It was out positioned by PSL Tradition Jobs Corridor, so that developed first
14. Viewed as a truck stop and not a business corridor. Demand is growing though.

What land use uses would you like to see locate within the corridor study area?

1. Industrial
2. Allow Residential
3. Uniform Class A - similar to Tradition - Eliminate the TVC
4. Residential
5. Primarily a mixed use designation that combines industrial, office, retail, hotels, residential, etc
6. The north county corridor study area, sited within a mile of I-95 and Florida's Turnpike is one of the fastest growing and regional areas. The road network, interstate access and location lends itself to light industrial activities that can include both office and research components. Also, ancillary commercial nodes along the corridor and attainable housing options off the main corridor are important to serve the corridor intended as a jobs corridor, restrict heavy industrial uses within the corridor to ensure compatibility and quality of place.
7. Believe the land use aligns with heavy industrial, manufacturing (including advanced manufacturing), storage type facilities (cold storage), and or other logistical type companies needing to move goods up and down the main thoroughfare of I-95 and the turnpike or even the port in Fort Pierce.
8. Industrial
9. Workforce housing developed in the area off either side of Kings Highway
10. Manufacturing and targeted industries
11. Flex/Tech Office/industrial - retail, hospitality
12. Industrial, warehouse, restaurants, retail, mixed use with residential

13. Primarily industrial distribution and manufacturing uses
14. Industrial due to the area's logistical advantages because of the close proximity to 2 major highways, commercial and residential to support employees for any business that would exist along the corridor.
15. More retail and housing

What would you like for the future appearance of the corridor to be?

1. Ashley Capital type
2. Uniform Class A - Similar to Tradition Jobs Corridor
3. Similar to PSL
4. A cohesive land use plan that can create value on a mixed-use project like those listed in §18
5. There should be minimum design standards along the main corridor to ensure a quality business scape. Recommend exploring the addition of credit for specific non-native plants that can add beautification and at the same time be environmentally conscious in water conservation. Recommend a developer roundtable to identify current code items that are impacts to structures, impervious area etc. from experience and utilize that feedback as a platform for potential enhancements to design standards in the code.
6. The appearance needs to be one of a professional corridor and not just big boxes with just an industrial feel.
7. A booming Class A industrial commerce park with other amenities including gas stations, truck stops, restaurants, hotels, etc.
8. Industrial/warehouse, but attractive buildings
9. High tech
10. A mixed use that offers essential housing, live/work opportunities, and a corridor that promotes day/night activity
11. Architectural styles or building siting are not critical factors
12. The I-95/Turnpike corridors offer a strategic location and significant advantage for businesses involved in delivery of goods. The location reduces transit costs and improves supply chain efficiency. Attractive for distribution, manufacturing and commercial. Future development should focus on attracting these uses, enhancing infrastructure to support high-volume freight and create a business-friendly environment that encourages growth and innovation - while also providing housing options.
13. Kings Highway 4 laned into Vero. Standardized and pre-approved development rules, signs

Additional Comments

1. Transit, more food choices and more predictable development process
2. Having a master plan to fall back on for the Tradition project helped make the Tradition Project successful, because there was a predictable timeline that purchasers and developers alike could count on
3. Thank you!
4. As a long-time resident of The Treasure Coast, and Regional Market President of Seacoast Bank (with this geography directly in my leadership) as well as the Incoming Chair for the EDC of St Lucie County

this corridor is vitally important to the overall character and prudent/strategic economic growth of the region.

5. Thank you for all that you are doing
6. I've been working with the TPO and many bus lines can be expanded in the area.
7. We own approximately 890 acres west of the Turnpike, about half of which is inside the USB. It's a prime location to accommodate a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial projects. The property is well-positioned to support a range of development like housing, retail, and industrial facilities. This type of development can provide a significant boost to continue diversification of the local economy.
8. Pre-approved development rules will move the development process faster. See Arvida Park of Commerce in Boca Raton or the other master planned parks. This will minimize government involvement as many developments will be predetermined.