

Final Draft

Best Practices Toolbox

Final Report for the SunRail Station Area Study Plan for East Altamonte Springs

Submitted by:

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

The commencement of SunRail commuter rail transit service in Central Florida brings enhanced regional accessibility and opportunities for community development at the station area scale. Because rail transit service has permanent stations that are centers of activity and improve regional accessibility, it can also spur real estate development and help create nodes of commercial, residential, and public land uses in a compact, walkable form that offers job opportunities, housing options and needed public facilities and community services. The building of mixed-use, walkable activity centers around transit stations is known as transit-oriented development (TOD).



The Altamonte Springs SunRail station area is a prime candidate for TOD.

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a \$2.4 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant in 2011 to the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) on behalf of 26 partners that comprise the East Central Florida Sustainable Communities Consortium. The purpose of the grant was to use the new commuter rail service as a catalyst for sustainable and inclusive Transit Oriented Development around SunRail station locations to promote economic opportunity, social equity and access to jobs for low income neighborhoods, improve health and safety by providing bicycle and pedestrians connections, provide affordable housing options, and increase economic value through compact development and access to job opportunities. As a part of the consortium, Seminole County is a sub-grantee with funding allocated for three projects: station area plans for the Sanford and Altamonte Springs SunRail stations, and the East Altamonte Springs Sidewalk Improvement Project.

With the support of the HUD grant to hire Renaissance Planning Group as a project consultant and through extensive community outreach efforts with affected neighborhood residents and land owners, Seminole County has prepared a recommended station area plan around the Altamonte Springs SunRail station for the area within Seminole County's jurisdiction. This plan is intended to encourage and provide incentives for long-term neighborhood sustainability through increased mobility options, equitable and affordable housing options, access to job opportunities, and availability of needed community services through compatible infill and redevelopment of areas surrounding the SunRail station.



The Lillie H. Green Community Center, home to the local Boys & Girls Club, is a well-used center, but has exceeded its capacity to meet the community's needs.



Outreach with the community was incorporated throughout the study process to gather input and foster a dialogue about the community's needs. Meetings with the community included working groups meetings with a small group of residents and landowners, a preliminary public workshop to familiarize the community with the study and identify issues and opportunities, and an open house to present the Recommended Plan Scenario. These meetings were supplemented by attending community forums and with one-one-one meetings with several community members who were involved in the working group for the sidewalk improvement project. Study documents were posted to a Mindmixer site (<http://www.liveableeastaltamonte.com/>) to keep the community apprised of study milestones and give access to important documents. Previous work of the community was incorporated into the plan recommendations. A strategic action plan developed by the South Seminole Community Association for Progress, Inc. (SSCAFP), called the We Kare Action Plan, outlined strategies to reduce crime, improve the appearance of the community, and identify resources to provide for the needs of youth, young adults, and senior citizens.



Over 85 people attended the Open House held on June 10 at the Boys & Girls Club on Station St.

The recommendations presented for consideration by the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners include amending the Future Land Use Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, identifying community development strategies, and consideration of other policies, programs, and partnerships to ensure that future development in the area achieves the needs of the County and supports the existing community. The recommendations were developed in coordination with the City of Altamonte Springs to align policies and strategies that best serve the interests of the County, City and local community.

EAST ALTAMONTE COMMUNITY STUDY AREA

The boundaries of the East Altamonte Study Area (East Altamonte area) follow major corridors and neighborhood boundaries. The station is located at the intersection of Ronald Reagan Boulevard and Altamonte Drive (SR 436), on the west side of the railroad tracks. Ronald Reagan Boulevard generally serves as the western boundary for much of the East Altamonte area, Campello Street is the northern boundary, Lyman and Anchor Roads are the eastern boundary, and Altamonte Drive is the southern boundary. This area is generally known as East Altamonte, an historically African American neighborhood that has relatively lower household incomes and high unemployment compared to the rest of Seminole County.

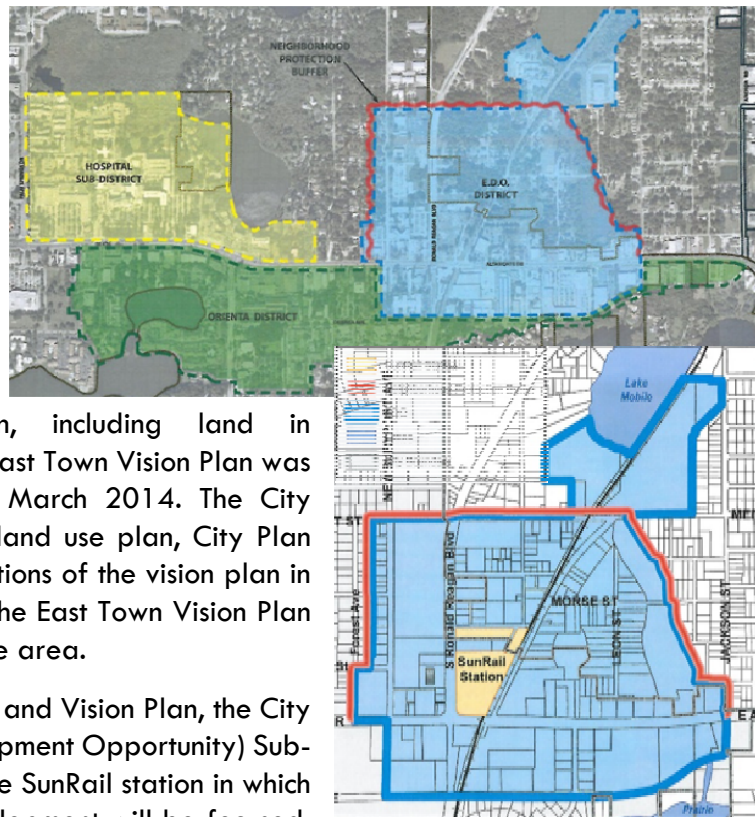


In general, the demographic statistics describe a community that is greatly in need of investment in education, training, affordable and elderly housing, and community services. Twenty three percent of residents have not achieved a high school diploma. Thirty eight percent of households earn less than \$20,000 per year; this number has gone up four percent over the last 10 years. A quarter of households live under the poverty line, half of which are single-headed family households, meaning only one parent. Half of the working age population (ages 16 to 64) did not work in the past year. Eleven percent of households do not own a car and depend on walking, bicycling, and transit for mobility. The recommendations described in this report, such as creating appropriate mixed income development, improving access to employment education and training, and providing community and health services can help to improve these numbers.

Over one-third of households in the East Altamonte study area earn less than \$20,000 per year.

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS EAST TOWN VISION PLAN

The City of Altamonte Springs has been actively planning for TOD in and around the station area, on both land within its jurisdiction and on land in unincorporated Seminole County that it anticipates would eventually be annexed into the City when development occurs. The City's East Town Vision Plan is a long-range development vision plan for the area immediately surrounding the Altamonte Springs SunRail station, including land in unincorporated Seminole County. The East Town Vision Plan was adopted by the City Commission in March 2014. The City formally amended its comprehensive land use plan, City Plan 2030, to incorporate the recommendations of the vision plan in July 2014. This report acknowledges the East Town Vision Plan for continuity in planning for TOD in the area.



As part of the redevelopment strategy and Vision Plan, the City has adopted an EDO (Economic Development Opportunity) Sub-District that defines the area around the SunRail station in which higher-intensity, Transit Oriented Development will be focused. The EDO sub-district includes four proposed street types: Core, Urban, Transition, and Arterial. Development intensity is determined by proximity to the SunRail station and street types. The vision plan also includes five Development Areas: Core, Urban, Transitional Local, and Transitional Arterial. The minimum densities and intensities allowed in these areas are shown in Table 1.

The EDO sub-district includes areas both inside and outside of the Altamonte Springs city limits. The EDO sub-district includes a Neighborhood Buffer Line to focus urbanized, Transit Oriented Development, including non-single family residential development, into a tightly coordinated urbanized area surrounding the SunRail station. This is intended to protect existing residential areas, and inside of which stormwater infrastructure and utilities will be provided by the City. The City is currently completing a drainage basin study that will result in floodplain protection through a series of stormwater mitigation ponds that will support the higher-intensity development. The recommendations and conceptual land use plan for the East Altamonte Station Area acknowledges and complements the City's plan at the station area core, and provides a means for compatible development that serves the existing and future needs of the community.

Table 1 – EDO Sub-District Density and Intensity Minimums

Development Areas	Density (du/ac)*	Intensity (FAR)**
	Minimum	Minimum
Core	30 du/ac	0.6 FAR (Retail, Office)
Urban	25 du/ac	0.4 FAR
Transition	20 du/ac	0.25 FAR
Arterial	20 du/ac	0.25 FAR
*Density is measured in units per net buildable acres		
**Intensity is measured in floor area ratio (FAR), which is calculated by the total covered area on all floors of a building divided by the area of the plot of land		

The recommendations and conceptual land use plan for the East Altamonte Station Area acknowledges and complements the City's plan at the station area core, and provides a means for compatible development that serves the existing and future needs of the community.

Future development in the East Altamonte Station Area depends on the ability to serve the area with utilities, including water and sewer capacity to meet future demand, and providing stormwater detention necessary to enable compact development and provide an overall benefit the surrounding neighborhoods. The provision and timing of those utilities is key to enabling development to occur at a scale of density and intensity appropriate for Transit Oriented Development. The jurisdiction able to provide utilities to the station area is at a significant advantage to guide future development and the anticipated economic outcomes. Any development served by City utilities will annex into the City when legally able to do to.

HOUSING NEEDS

A housing needs study of available demographic and housing data shows that the housing needs of the East Altamonte area are significant. Many family and elderly households are burdened by their housing costs and some may need different choices to live more comfortably and/or more affordably. More than half of the households in the East Altamonte area would likely qualify as Very Low Income under the HUD requirements, and other households will qualify as Low Income. Key findings of the needs assessment are:

- The East Altamonte area is characterized by low household incomes and low home values. The median household income (average of 2008-2012) is \$28,090, compared to \$48,763 in Altamonte Springs and \$42,687 in Casselberry.
- Rental housing does not dominate the East Altamonte area, unlike many lower-income neighborhoods. This solid base of owners brings stability to the neighborhood, but with low



incomes and a significant elderly population, homeownership can also be a burden (both physical and financial) for some households.

- There is a mismatch between resident needs and the existing housing stock. The housing stock is primarily single-family detached homes; few multifamily options exist and those are in very small buildings. Half of renters are in single-family homes, when multifamily apartments might be preferable and/or more affordable.
- A substantial number of vacant housing units are not on the market and available for occupancy. The five-year average vacancy rate available from the American Community Survey (ACS) shows that 19 percent, or nearly one in five homes in the East Altamonte area are vacant. Only 20 percent of these are classified as being available for rent or for sale.
- Elderly households make up one-fourth of the East Altamonte area and a significant number have disabilities. Most 65+ age households live in single-family detached homes that they own, and over half are burdened by their housing costs. There is a significant need for assisted/supportive living, and around three-fourths of elderly households would likely qualify for subsidized housing programs based on their income levels.
- Half of the 15-64 age households that own their homes are burdened by housing costs, and nearly all the renters of this age are burdened.

The demand for affordable housing development in East Altamonte will come from a larger area than just the area itself. The relevant local market area for affordable housing development in the East Altamonte area was defined as the study area itself plus the cities of Altamonte Springs and Casselberry. The pool of potential affordable housing demand in the market area is 5,459 family households (age 15-64) and 1,747 elderly households (age 65+). Developers considering this potential demand would typically assess how much of it could be captured by a single project. While there is no firm rule and every developer has different requirements, a common rule of thumb is that an acceptable capture rate for a single project is between five and seven percent of the demand pool. Applying those rates to the total potential demand pool results in a market-supportable family project of 273-382 units and a market-supportable elderly project of 87-122 units.

A thoughtful strategy is needed to properly use TOD to improve the housing situations of lower-income residents in the East Altamonte area. A housing strategy should focus on mixed income development so that affordable units are dispersed throughout the area and not concentrated in a particular area. Achieving this requires a combination of market rate and below market housing to help attract more services and create a vibrant, growing community. Several potential affordable housing strategies are identified below and described in the report:

- Tax credit project facilitation - Seminole County should be prepared to work collaboratively with other affordable housing developers to facilitate additional tax credit projects, similar to the City Park project at Merritt Street
- Resident consortium for redevelopment - A consortium of residents/property owners could agree to pool their adjacent properties together to strike a more effective deal with an interested buyer
- Accessory dwelling units – These units can be located within the primary unit as a separate apartment, attached to the primary unit with a separate entrance, or completely separate



from the primary unit as a stand-alone cottage. These units can be an effective affordable housing strategy because their relatively small size and sharing of a lot with another unit mean that they usually rent for less than typical apartments.

- Housing rehabilitation program – With a significant number of elderly households and vacant housing, there is a need to rehabilitate homes in the East Altamonte area to improve the housing stock.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

A market study of potential employment opportunities found that the most direct way to increase the employment opportunities in the East Altamonte Study Area is to encourage job creation through the development of new or expanded business facilities. However, given the limits of the market and concerns about neighborhood compatibility with existing established residents, the focus of the recommendation is to enhance access to the SunRail station so residents can better reach jobs and job training opportunities elsewhere in the region.

This analysis is intended to help Seminole County understand the potential for market-driven job creation and job access in East Altamonte. For both elements, the focus is on higher paying job opportunities, which for the purpose of this study are defined as jobs paying \$40,000 or more in annual wages. This is roughly the average annual wage of jobs in Seminole County in 2013, according to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) conducted by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. TOD employment strategies can take advantage of the enhanced regional multimodal accessibility provided by SunRail.

- Industry sectors in Seminole County that pay above-average wages and are focused on office-using jobs are professional services, wholesale trade, finance, and healthcare.
- Any strategy for increasing employment opportunities will need to focus on education and training as well as development.
- The existing employment base of the East Altamonte area is minimal and will not have much influence on the development of new employment opportunities.
- The best sites for office-using development in the East Altamonte area are near the SunRail station, which can capitalize on both auto and transit accessibility as well as the visibility to passing traffic on Altamonte Drive and Ronald Reagan Boulevard.
- The office submarket relevant to the East Altamonte area is a relatively minor one in the regional marketplace and has been underperforming for some time.

Besides providing sites for potential job creation in the East Altamonte area, TOD also can enhance local residents' accessibility to jobs located elsewhere regionally. The potential for connecting East Altamonte area residents with higher paying employment opportunities is significant, given that several of the largest concentrations of higher paying jobs in Seminole County and the Central Florida region are located at other SunRail stops. Enhancing connectivity to the SunRail station through and from the station to other areas via bus service is essential in making this a hub for mixed income housing with excellent regional accessibility to higher paying jobs located at SunRail stations and key nodes elsewhere along SR 436 in other parts of Seminole County.



- Jobs available at companies located in Lake Mary (and accessible via SunRail and LYNX shuttle bus) may be within reach of East Altamonte area residents through training at Seminole State College and internships at an incubator program located in the East Altamonte neighborhood.
- Jobs in Downtown Orlando and at the two major hospital system campuses are readily available today via SunRail.
- Airport jobs at Orlando International Airport (OIA) would be an important source of potential jobs for East Altamonte area residents if a proposed extension of SunRail to the airport were to be completed, or a LYNX NeighborLink shuttle or express bus service were instituted.
- Healthcare jobs associated with Florida Hospital Altamonte are the most prominent higher paying employment opportunities that are potentially locally accessible.
- SunRail and connectivity improvements can help East Altamonte area residents get to higher paying job locations, but to get the jobs themselves residents will need to have the required education and/or work skills.

The most effective employment strategy to address the widest range of opportunities is one that combines an emphasis on both job creation and job access. Approaches to facilitate this should include:

- Encouraging and assisting office development through expedited development approvals, targeted standards for TOD that reduce development costs and increase efficiency and project profitability, financial incentives that reduce or eliminate project costs, and local government actions to set the stage for TOD through infrastructure and public realm improvements.
- Focusing economic development efforts to attract companies
- Improving connectivity within the East Altamonte area to enhance job access
- Adding more housing to the East Altamonte area, particularly mixed income housing
- Connecting residents to education and training resources, possibly through a partnership with Seminole State College

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

The purpose of scenario planning is to consider and assess different options for community growth. During this project, two different development scenarios for future growth in the East Altamonte area were identified. Through a collaborative process with the community and the County, different land use options were evaluated to determine a recommended plan scenario that best addresses the community's needs and provides a basis for long-term neighborhood sustainability, while considering the conditions influencing the study area and capturing that value for the broadest benefit of the community.

The first development scenario considered was the "Trend Scenario" (see Map 1), which is essentially the "status quo" option as defined in the current Comprehensive Plan. The Seminole County Comprehensive Plan guides growth and development in the unincorporated areas of the community. The Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan shows the future pattern of development and where different types of land uses will be found.



The Trend Scenario is a viable growth option for the East Altamonte area - during public events for the project, many people in the community expressed sentiments against growth. They wanted to keep and improve their homes, maintain and enhance the historic elements of the community, provide options for aging in community, and make sure that redevelopment and infill development fit with the character of existing neighborhoods.

While future land uses in the Trend Scenario have not been modified to reflect the potential of higher densities and intensities associated with development adjacent to the SunRail station and the East Town Center, it does not mean that the East Altamonte area neighborhoods have to remain static forever. The residents understand that change will happen, but they want to guide changes in ways that positively affect the community. There is flexibility within the future land use designations that may allow different and denser uses than those currently being utilized on a particular parcel, allowing the community to consider development opportunities as adjacent areas begin to evolve.



Figure 1 – Trend Scenario



The second development scenario considered was the “Recommended Plan Scenario” (see Map 2), which acknowledges likely growth and proposes certain new land use designations in areas where the proximity of SunRail and the emerging East Town Vision Plan may influence growth in the East Altamonte area. The goal of the scenario is to ensure that potential development occurs in an orderly, fiscally efficient and logical manner over time; provides proper scale, transitions and buffers; remains compatible with the neighborhood character; and is appropriate and advantageous for the community.

The Recommended Plan Scenario was developed through meetings with residents, property owners and community leaders in the study area, input and surveys at public events, as well as through research of past and current planning efforts done for the community. Some of the specific recommendations in this scenario include:

- Two new neighborhood parks with community centers, one east of Ronald Reagan Boulevard and one west. These core community features will provide recreation space and gathering places in centrally located areas within walking distance for most residents. That is not currently available.
- Change in future land use along Merritt Street, between Ronald Reagan Boulevard and the railroad tracks, from Medium Density Residential and Public to Mixed Use Development to allow development of a community core consisting of neighborhood support such as job training, continuing education, health care and social services, as well as a variety of housing choices. Previous studies stressed the need for these services and discussions with residents confirmed the need continues. This area is adjacent to the East Town Center and within a ½ mile walk radius of the SunRail station.
- Change in future land use along Jackson Street, between Amanda Street and Merritt Street, from Medium Density Residential to High Density Residential to allow residential development that is compatible in scale and density with the adjacent areas of “Transitional” development in the East Town Center. This new designation also provides an appropriate transition to the more established residential neighborhoods to the north and east.
- Change in future land use along southern portion of Ronald Reagan Boulevard from Medium Density Residential (10-12 dwelling units per acre) to High Density Residential (20 dwelling units per acre) to not only allow higher density residential development such as condominiums and townhomes along a major roadway corridor, but also nursing homes and convalescent centers that would serve the local population and allow aging in place. Facilities for the elderly were one of the often-requested needs voiced at public events.
- Change in future land use along northern portion of Ronald Reagan Boulevard from Industrial to Commercial to allow retail sales and commercial services that are compatible with the residential uses along the corridor.



Figure 2 – Recommended Plan Scenario



Both the Trend Scenario and Recommended Plan Scenario incorporate a proposed series of connectivity and accessibility improvements. These improvements are not only meant to make walking and bicycling easier in general within the East Altamonte area, but to specifically improve connections with the new SunRail station, providing safe, comfortable and convenient linkages between residential areas, the station and supporting uses like parks, open space and community services. These include:

- Streetscape improvements, such as shade trees, lighting, and benches to make walking safer and more comfortable for all users.
- Connectivity improvements, such as sidewalk repair, gap linkage, and addition of new sidewalks to encourage walking and bicycling.
- Pedestrian crossing improvements, such as enhanced crosswalk markings, vehicular signage, and audible signals to increase awareness of and aid pedestrians crossing major roadways.
- Railroad crossing improvements, such as raising sidewalk approaches to match top of track rails and reducing flange way gap width to allow easier passage for those who rely on wheeled devices for mobility.

The Recommended Plan Scenario is the recommended development option for this project. It includes a mix of neighborhood preservation, redevelopment potential, housing choice expansion, and community services for residents of the East Altamonte Area, reflecting the high intensity development plan developed by the City of Altamonte Springs in its East Town Center Vision Plan. The land use designation changes are presented in a phased and orderly manner that provides appropriate transitions, amenities and choices so that residents can grow and prosper within their community. The Recommended Plan Scenario protects established neighborhoods and provides them with additional amenities and services within walking distance, creating community cores and centers.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

For TOD to be successful at this station and serve the needs of the surrounding community, it is imperative for the right set of complementary policies, programs, and partnerships need to be put into place. This is a critical step to ensure that the community benefits from the new SunRail station and the future development that is expected to come as a result of improved regional accessibility. Implementing the suggested policies and programs, and facilitating key partnerships will help ensure that anticipated development pressures and private investment in the area provides tangible benefits for the existing community and Seminole County.

Many communities with transit have implemented Transit Oriented Development overlays to guide proper development surrounding transit stations and support mixed income housing and community development activities. The overlay provides a policy framework oriented toward making sure TOD occurs in a rational and well-planned manner to the benefit of existing communities within walking distance of the transit station. Seminole County does not currently have a TOD overlay policy, although its policies for Energy Conservation and High Intensity Planned Districts contain elements that are appropriate for TOD. It is recommended that the County create such a policy that mirrors the Energy Conservation Overlay to implement for the East Altamonte area surrounding the Altamonte Springs station. This can essentially be the same overlay boundary but with policies



addressing the added components of community development improvements and inclusion of a target number of affordable housing units that responds to demand while aligning with the development capacity of the area. A TOD overlay for the study will help to mitigate transportation impacts associated with new development by directing them towards multimodal and accessibility improvements, which are generally less costly than maintaining roadway level of service.

There is a growing trend to establish policies that support “aging in community.” These policies offer guidance focused on allowing older residents to stay in the community providing housing, services, and infrastructure to ensure the needs of this population are met. There is a significant senior population living in the East Altamonte community who wish to remain in the community. Policies addressing affordable housing, access to transportation, social interaction and engagement, land use, health care, economic well-being, and community assets.

Equitable TOD focuses on ensuring all residents benefit from the addition of a transit station. By developing or preserving affordable housing and encouraging jobs to locate near transit, equitable TOD can minimize the burden of housing and transportation costs for low income residents and preserve the neighborhood. Given the history and context of the East Altamonte area, Equitable TOD should be a goal of this transit station area. To support that goal, it is necessary to ensure that affordable housing supply meets demand and other community facilities and infrastructure are provided. Some strategies or programs to ensure mixed income housing and community facilities are provided in this area include:

- Accessory dwelling units
- Affordable housing trust fund
- Land banks
- Developer incentives (reduced parking requirements, reduced impact fees, property tax abatement)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds
- Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

One community development option in particular to consider in order to achieve mixed income housing and other community amenities is a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA). CBAs are legally-binding documents that address a range of community issues specifically identified by the community. It is a mutually-beneficial, project-specific agreement between a developer and a broad community coalition that outlines the ways that the development will benefit the community through projects desired by the community. Implementing this kind of program will help to create equitable TOD. CBAs allow a win-win approach to development: meaningful, up-front communication between the developer and a broad community coalition decreases developers’ risk while maximizing the positive impact of development on local residents and economies. The developer benefits from active community support of the project, and the community has their specific needs met. Through this method, the community will receive concrete benefits from new development in a legally-binding contract.

Because the area immediately surrounding the station is what will likely see development first, partnering with the City of Altamonte Springs to create a development agreement with developers

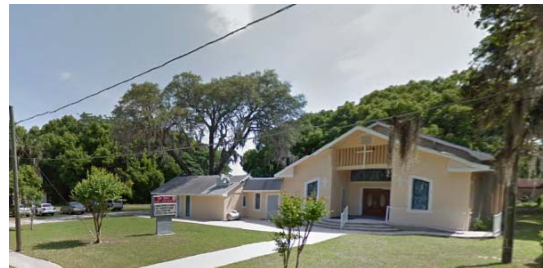


in their portion of the station area will be critical. Altamonte Springs is using land in unincorporated Seminole County to provide stormwater utilities to support their future development around the station. The County can leverage this to build a partnership with the City to ensure CBAs are included with new developments to ensure a win-win for all parties.

A Community Benefit Agreement for the East Altamonte station area should include provisions of:

- Mixed income and elderly housing – enough to meet the demand referenced in the Housing Study
- First-right of current residents and land owners to purchase or lease affordable housing included in new developments
- Community development activities:
 - Community center,
 - Vocational/training center,
 - Health center
 - Recreation facility
 - Neighborhood-serving retail
 - Daycare
 - Sheriff or police substation
 - Sidewalks
 - Lighting
 - Crosswalks
 - Stop signs
 - Road paving

For the recommendations presented in this report to work, strong partnerships must be in place with a variety of entities, including other government entities, developers, non-profits and other non-governmental organizations, and the community residents themselves. Partnerships in the form of community partnerships, intergovernmental partnerships, and public-private partnerships leverage resources to achieve shared goals. Specific partnerships to consider strengthening or fostering include:



Numerous churches are dispersed throughout this tight-knit, historically African American community. Church leaders will likely be key partners in forming a partnership with the community.

- East Altamonte Community – Enhancing partnerships with the community is critical to carrying the plan recommendations forward and ensuring any new development fits with the neighborhood character.
- City of Altamonte Springs - The overlap of city and county boundaries and planning areas surrounding the Altamonte Springs SunRail station warrant the need for coordination on coming developments. This partnership will be critical to carrying out community benefit agreements.
- Seminole County School Board – Partnering with the School Board to return the vacant Rosenwalk School to a use beneficial to the community, such as a training center or community center.



- **Hospitals/Health Providers** - Health providers are good partners in creating programs or providing funding to provide services and centers in communities in need. Florida Hospital has a location in Altamonte Springs, just a half-mile west of the station area on Altamonte Drive.
- **Seminole State College** - Seminole State College is an important resource, and its Altamonte Springs campus focuses on adult education and healthcare industry training, along with general education programs. Partnerships between the college, Seminole County, and charitable or nonprofit organizations could potentially be used to deliver programs at a convenient location within the East Altamonte area.

CONCLUSION

This report outlines the key actions needed to ensure SunRail provides lasting value to the East Altamonte community and Seminole County as a whole by developing a plan framework to guide access and opportunity for higher paying jobs, expand housing options, improve connectivity in the neighborhood and invest in key community development strategies that will deliver needed services to residents. The goals of the plan entail capturing the value of the SunRail investment to boost economic opportunity and facilitate compatible development for needed housing, services, parks and public facilities that make a great neighborhood. The specific actions to implement this plan entail changing the County's Future Land Use Element and advancing key Capital Improvement Program projects with funding for community development activities that meet the needs of area residents. Funding can come from a variety of sources, but leveraging future development and strengthening existing and fostering new partnerships are essential ingredients of success.

The next steps are to continue building relationships and partnerships, amending the Future Land Use Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and implementing the community development policies, programs, and partnerships recommended in this plan. One of the key first steps will be to facilitate a meeting among key leadership from the East Altamonte community, Seminole County, Altamonte Springs, FDOT, and other related parties to build consensus on how this area will grow. This will build a foundation upon which equitable development surrounding the new SunRail station preserves the neighborhood character and also benefits both Seminole County and the City of Altamonte Springs.



Introduction

SunRail commuter rail service began Central Florida operations in May 2014. SunRail connects communities and key employment centers in Orange, Seminole and Volusia Counties in Central Florida, with planned extensions within the next year further into Volusia County and to Osceola County. The rail service enhances regional mobility generally along the Interstate 4 corridor, offering an alternative to driving that is convenient and attractive for many people. Because rail transit service has permanent stations that are centers of activity and improve regional accessibility, it can also spur real estate development and help create nodes of commercial, residential, and other land uses in a compact walkable form. Being able to live, work, and shop within walking distance of a SunRail station can allow people to live without having to own a car, or to reduce the amount of driving they do (perhaps reducing the need for a second car in some households). The building of mixed-use, walkable activity centers around transit stations is known as transit oriented development (TOD).

Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes defines TOD as:

“Transit-oriented development” means a project or projects, in areas identified in a local government comprehensive plan, that is or will be served by existing or planned transit service. These designated areas shall be compact, moderate to high density developments, of mixed-use character, interconnected with other land uses, bicycle and pedestrian friendly, and designed to support frequent transit service operating through, collectively or separately, rail, fixed guideway, streetcar, or bus systems on dedicated facilities or available roadway connections.” (Chapter 163.3164(46), F.S.).

The Altamonte Springs SunRail station is a prime candidate for TOD. It is located close to the regional business center in Altamonte Springs that includes substantial retail, office, and health care development, but it still contains vacant and underutilized properties that present opportunities for compatible redevelopment or new development. Furthermore, TOD offers the possibility of locating mixed income housing options in close proximity to the station to enable greater regional mobility and access to healthcare, jobs, other services and social activities for those who need affordable housing and may have mobility limitations that prevent them from owning or driving a car. The station area can become a node of activity that capitalizes on its proximity to existing development but establishes its own market position centered on access to rail transit. TOD in other regions has proved to be an attractive and economically competitive form of development preferred by residents and businesses alike.

BACKGROUND AND STUDY PURPOSE

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC), on behalf of 26 partners that comprise the East Central Florida Sustainable Communities Consortium, was awarded a \$2.4 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to plan for sustainable Transit Oriented Development around SunRail station locations. The purpose of the grant was to use the new commuter rail service as a catalyst for sustainable and inclusive Transit Oriented Development around SunRail station locations to promote economic opportunity, social equity and access to jobs for low income neighborhoods, improve health and



safety by providing bicycle and pedestrians connections, provide affordable housing options, and increase economic value through compact development and access to job opportunities. The grant funding is supporting detailed station area planning for six out of the 12 Phase I SunRail stations, affordable housing assessments for all 12 Phase I stations, and regional collaboration to share best practices and to guide future transit planning in East Central Florida. As a part of the consortium, Seminole County is a sub-grantee with funding allocated for three projects: station area plans for the Sanford and Altamonte Springs SunRail stations, and the East Altamonte Springs Sidewalk Improvement Project.

With the support of the HUD grant and a dialogue with affected neighborhood residents and land owners, Seminole County developed a recommended station area plan, herein referred to as the Plan, for the portion of the station area around the Altamonte Springs SunRail station that is within Seminole County's jurisdiction. Under the guidance of Seminole County, the planning process focused on developing a plan intended to encourage and provide incentives for long-term neighborhood sustainability through increased mobility options, equitable and affordable housing options, job opportunities and needed community services through compatible infill and redevelopment of areas surrounding the SunRail station.

The recommendations presented for consideration by the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners include amending the Future Land Use Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, identifying community development strategies, and consideration of other policies, programs, and partnerships to ensure that future development in the area achieves the needs of the County and supports the existing community. The SunRail station is located in the City's East Town Center. The Town Activity Center was adopted by policy in 1986 in anticipation of commuter rail. In 2014, the City completed the East Town Vision Plan, which further defined the TOD approach in the area around the Altamonte SunRail station. The recommendations were developed in coordination with the City of Altamonte Springs to align policies and strategies that best serve the interests of the County, City and local community.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES

The infill and redevelopment options proposed in the plan are supportive of the unique conditions and characteristics of the surrounding neighborhoods, and consistent with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities' Livability Principles to:

Provide more transportation choices

Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing

Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.



Enhance economic competitiveness

Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

Support existing communities

Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment

Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

Value communities and neighborhoods

Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

EAST ALTAMONTE COMMUNITY STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES

The East Altamonte Study Area (East Altamonte area) is the portion of the SunRail station area that falls within the County's jurisdiction. This area is generally known as East Altamonte, an historically African American neighborhood that has relatively lower household incomes and high unemployment compared to the rest of Seminole County.

The boundaries of the East Altamonte area follow major corridors and neighborhood boundaries. The East Altamonte Study Area is generally described as the northeast quadrant of a half-mile walking distance centered on the Altamonte Springs SunRail station. The station is located at the intersection of Ronald Reagan Boulevard and East Altamonte Drive (SR 436), on the west side of the railroad tracks. Ronald Reagan Boulevard generally serves as the western boundary for much of the East Altamonte area, Campello Street is the northern boundary, Lyman and Anchor Roads are the eastern boundary, and Altamonte Drive is the southern boundary. See Figure 3 for a Study Area boundary map.



Figure 3 - Study Area Map



The primary neighborhoods that make up the East Altamonte area are the unincorporated subdivisions of Granada South, Griffin Park, Groves Terrace, Harmony Homes, Hayman Subdivision, Lake Mobile Shores, Lakeview Subdivision, Lula Blake Subdivision, Magnolia Hills, Orange Estates, Sanlando Springs, Winwood Park, Merritt Park, Frost Addition, and Oak Park. Most of the East Altamonte area is located within the jurisdiction of Seminole County. However, a small portion consisting of the SunRail station property and the frontage parcels moving east along Altamonte Drive up to Jackson Street is in the City of Altamonte Springs. There is also a small area in the northeast portion of the East Altamonte area that is in the jurisdiction of the City of Casselberry.

The City of Altamonte Springs has been actively planning for TOD in and around the station area, on both land within its jurisdiction and land in unincorporated Seminole County that it anticipates would eventually be annexed into the City when development occurs. The East Town Vision Plan is a long-range development vision plan for the area immediately surrounding the Altamonte Springs SunRail station, including some land in unincorporated Seminole County. This report acknowledges the East Town vision Plan for continuity in planning for TOD in the area. As part of the redevelopment strategy and Vision Plan, the City has adopted an EDO (Economic Development Opportunity) Sub-District that defines the area around the SunRail station in which higher-intensity, Transit Oriented Development will be focused and provides a Neighborhood Buffer Line to protect existing residential areas, and inside of which stormwater infrastructure and utilities will be provided. This district includes areas both inside and outside of the Altamonte Springs city limits. The City is currently completing a drainage basin study that will result in floodplain protection through a series of stormwater mitigation ponds that will support the higher-intensity development. The recommendations and conceptual land use plan for the East Altamonte Station Area acknowledges and complements the City's plan at the station area core, and provides a means for compatible development that serves the existing and future needs of the community.

STUDY PROCESS

The study began in January 2014 and is anticipated to be completed in August 2014, pending direction from the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners. The study included a housing needs assessment to determine the demand for affordable and senior housing in the area, and a market assessment to analyze what types of employment can be supported in the East Altamonte area. The existing and future land uses for the East Altamonte area were reviewed, along with previous and related planning efforts to develop scenarios for future change that formed the basis for development of a recommended land use plan to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners, with the objective of amending the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan for this study area. Public input was a large factor in the development of the final recommended plan, along with the community development strategies described in this report.

Community Outreach Efforts

Throughout the study, public outreach efforts were used to ensure the community was aware of the project, understood what is occurring and what their options are, and the potential for change. The project began with confusion in the community regarding the many different plans and projects that have occurred and are occurring in this area.



The City of Altamonte Springs conducted a land use study and developed a vision plan, called the East Town Vision Plan. Early on, the City's plan was recognized as an important feature of the study area and was used as a guide in the development of the East Altamonte Station Area Plan for Seminole County. The release of this vision plan coincided with the start of the Seminole County study, which led to some confusion in the community between the two plans, the impact on utilities, the potential for purchasing homes, and the future of the community. There was also confusion over the sidewalk study that is part of the HUD grant, but began earlier than the station area planning effort. Seminole County is also funding the repaving of several streets around the new SunRail station, which led to additional confusion over who was in charge of that effort and under what plan.

In order to implement the East Town Vision Plan and support its development concepts around the Altamonte Springs SunRail station, the City has signaled its intent to purchase land in unincorporated Seminole County in floodplain areas to create stormwater ponds. The City of Altamonte Springs utility service area includes the majority of the East Altamonte Study Area. The Granada South neighborhood receives utilities from the City of Casselberry.

The outreach process began by contacting local residents to create a Working Group to consult with and help develop and review potential land use scenarios. The residents who were contacted were involved in the sidewalk study portion of the planning process. The Working Group was open to other interested parties residing or owning property in the area. The first of those meetings was held on February 20, 2014 at the Seminole County Library in Casselberry.

The first public workshop for the East Altamonte Springs SunRail Station Area Study Plan was held on March 25, 2014 at the Eastmonte Civic Center. The purpose of this meeting was to explain the purpose of the plan, give an overview of the planning process, answer questions, and identify issues and opportunities in the East Altamonte area. Seventeen people attended, five of whom live or own property in the unincorporated area. Representatives from the City of Altamonte Springs and the City of Casselberry were also in attendance. After the presentation and question and answer period, most East Altamonte residents and land owners left the workshop without completing the survey or participating in the mapping activity. This was mainly due to confusion and frustration expressed by the area residents over the many plans and a lack of trust in government authorities after years of being underserved.

Follow-up conversations with the community were initiated on the day after the workshop to better establish a dialogue and build trust necessary to gather the input sought at this first workshop. County staff and Renaissance devised strategies for engagement and continued to communicate with Working Group members to evaluate the feasibility of these strategies and confirm a strategy for having a more complete dialogue to fully understand the expectations and desired outcomes from community residents and stakeholders. One-on-one meetings with community leaders who had been involved in the sidewalk improvement plan were held in their homes to explain the purpose of the project, reduce confusion, and ultimately build trust.

The study team attended other community forums to continue meeting with residents, explaining the study and plan purpose, and build trust. The team presented at a Seniors Plus meeting on April 14, 2014 at the New Bethel AME Church. The team also set up an information booth at the weekly food bank at the Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ on May 5, 2014.



A second Working Group meeting was held in which the draft recommended plan was presented to gather feedback and explain the proposed land uses, connectivity enhancements, and community development opportunities. After approval from the Working Group, the draft recommended plan was presented at the community open house. The open house was held on June 10, 2014 at the Boys and Girls Club on Station Road in the East Altamonte area. This meeting was the final public meeting before presenting the recommended scenario to the Board of County Commissioners on August 26, 2014. More than 85 residents and landowners were in attendance, along with city, county and regional planning council staff.

Following that meeting, the consultant team reviewed comments and made revisions to the final recommended land use scenario to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners on August 26.

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

Several planning studies have been conducted by various organizations over the past few decades to evaluate ways to revitalize this community. The creation of the new transit station presents a timely opportunity to set in motion the redevelopment initiatives the community needs.

Redevelopment Plan

In 1992, a Redevelopment Plan was prepared for the East Altamonte area by Florida Planning Group and funded by both Seminole County and the City of Altamonte Springs. The Plan evaluated the feasibility of creating a Community Redevelopment Area to improve existing conditions. No action has been taken to date on the study, but it demonstrates that interest in creating redevelopment opportunities have been ongoing for some time.

We Kare Action Plan

In 2009, the South Seminole Community Association for Progress, Inc. (SSCAFP) developed an action plan to reduce crime, improve the appearance of the community, and identify resources to provide for the needs of youth, young adults, and senior citizens. The SSCAFP is a local neighborhood-based non-profit organization focused on improving the quality of life in the East Altamonte community. The We Kare Action Plan is a community-driven plan to address the needs of unincorporated subdivisions in East Altamonte. The action plan identifies the community's needs, including facilities, services, programs, and maintenance. The action plan includes many strategies that are incorporated into the recommendations of this plan, such as a community center, health care center, daycare, training center, crime prevention, and other community development strategies.

Winwood Park Corridor Study

In 2013, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) prepared a corridor study for the Winwood Park area to be used as a baseline for future studies occurring in the area of the new SunRail station. The study analyzed traffic, transit, and walkability in the area. It also evaluated the feasibility of creating a Community Redevelopment Area for the Winwood neighborhood.



East Altamonte Springs Sidewalk Improvement Project

As part of the HUD grant funding this station area plan study, Seminole County performed a sidewalk study to assess the need for, determine placement of, and design sidewalks surrounding the Altamonte Springs SunRail station. These recommendations are incorporated into the scenario plan of this report.

Street Paving

To improve connectivity to the transit station, Seminole County recently repaved or plans to pave some of the key streets surrounding the new station. These streets include:

- Station St.
- Central St.
- Pine St. from Harris St. to Jackson St.
- Depugh St.
- Marker St. from Merritt St. to Leonard St.
- Dunbar St.
- Merritt St. from Ronald Reagan Blvd. to Anchor Rd.
- Jackson St.
- Morse St.

City of Altamonte Springs East Town Vision Plan

As previously discussed, the City of Altamonte Springs East Town Vision Plan is a long-range development vision plan for the area immediately surrounding the Altamonte Springs SunRail station, including some land in unincorporated Seminole County land. This report acknowledges the East Town Vision Plan for continuity in planning for TOD in the area. As part of the redevelopment strategy and Vision Plan, the City has adopted an EDO Sub-District that defines the areas around the SunRail station in which redevelopment will be focused and provides a neighborhood buffer line to protect existing residential areas. This district includes areas both inside and outside of the Altamonte Springs city limits. The City is currently completing a drainage basin study that will result in floodplain protection through a series of stormwater mitigation ponds. The East Town Vision Plan was adopted by the City Commission in March 2014. The City formally amended its comprehensive land use plan, City Plan 2030, to incorporate the recommendations of the vision plan in July 2014.

HISTORY OF THIS AREA

Originally referred to as Winwood, the East Altamonte community has a rich history with generations of African American families having lived, and still living, in the area. Winwood was developed after World War II by Condor Merritt, who was one of Central Florida's most powerful African Americans. The East Altamonte community was once included as part of the City of Altamonte Springs, but split from the City in 1951, when Merritt and 80 other property owners won a lawsuit that argued the City was collecting their taxes but not providing equal services.



The Rosenwald School, located in the community, is one of many schools opened in the south by Julius Rosenwald, a wealthy clothing merchant. Rosenwald used money earned through his 25 percent share in Sears Roebuck and Co. to build schools following World War I. The original school was built in the 1930s, moved to its current location in 1952, but was destroyed by a fire in 1960 and rebuilt the following year. The school was evaluated in 2005 by the Division of Historical Resources for the State of Florida, which determined that the school does not qualify to be registered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. However, to many in the community who attended the school before it was closed, the school represents an important piece of history in their lives and the community. After Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964, students at the Rosenwald School were transferred to larger schools in the area. Since 1960, it has been owned by the School Board of Seminole County.

East Altamonte is also the site of the historic Evergreen Cemetery, which dates to 1890. It was established when Laura and William Brawner donated 16 acres of land for the creation of a cemetery for black slaves. The cemetery is still in operation and maintained by a group of East Altamonte residents.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Throughout this process meeting with community residents, the feelings of mistrust, frustration, and anxiety of the community were palpable. The community feels they have been underserved and overlooked for many years. They also feel threatened by the coming changes due to SunRail that could uproot their community identity and heritage. The community sees the change coming, but are unsure exactly how and if they will benefit. Working with the community to address their needs should be an ongoing process.

Much work has been done over the years to study and prepare for the addition of SunRail to the community, led by the City of Altamonte Springs, Seminole County, ECFRPC, and the community. Through research and review of these existing plans and the public outreach conducted as part of this planning process, there is a clear list of community needs:

- Mixed income and elderly housing – enough to meet the demand referenced in the Housing Study
- First-right of current residents and land owners to purchase or lease affordable housing included in new developments
- Community development activities:
 - Community center
 - Vocational/training center
 - Health and mental health center
 - Daycare
 - Recreation facility
 - Neighborhood-serving retail
 - Sheriff or police substation
 - Sidewalks
 - Lighting
 - Road paving of dirt roads



EAST ALTAMONTE STUDY AREA PROFILE

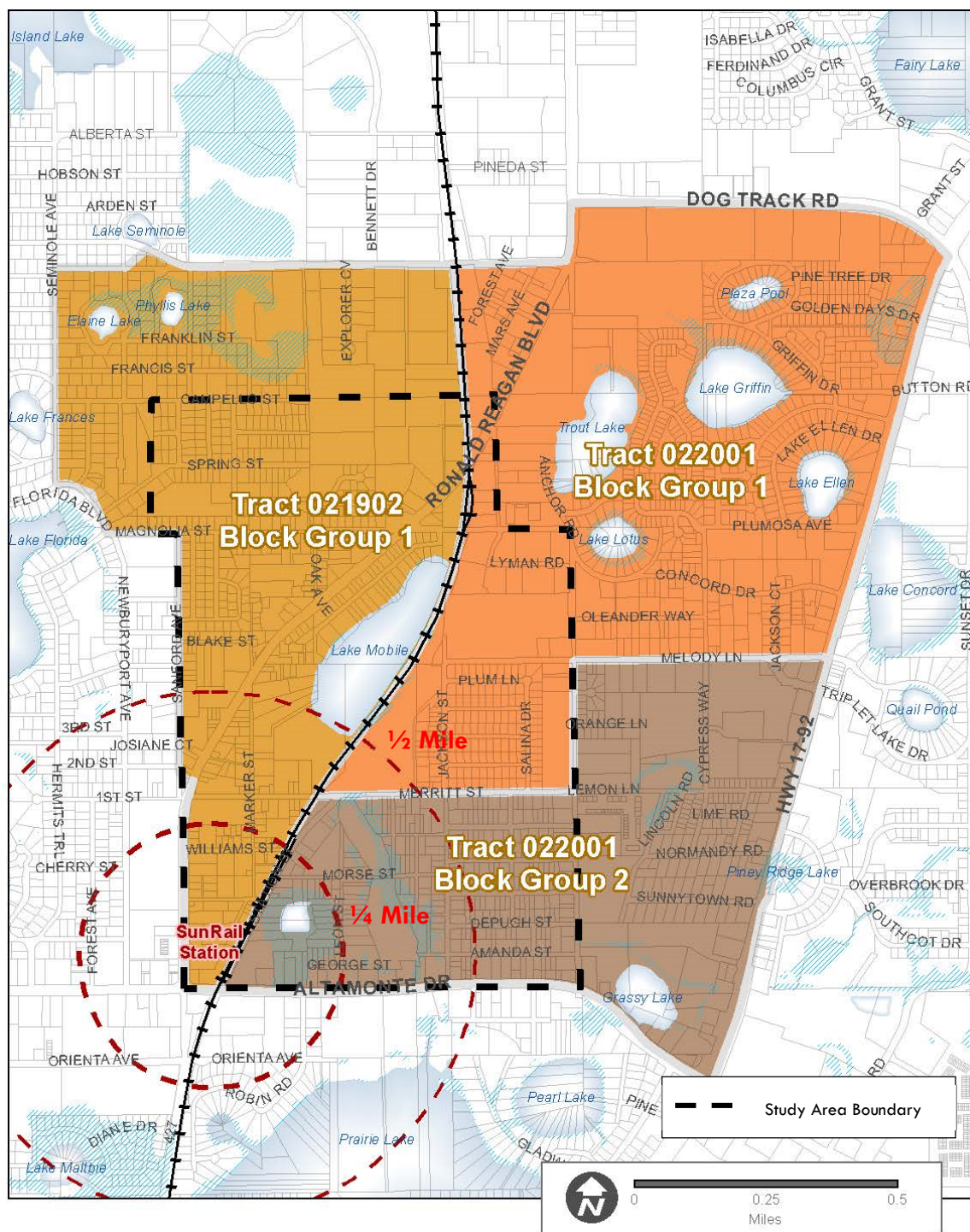
This section presents a demographic profile of the East Altamonte Study Area, covering selected elements including population and household characteristics, educational attainment, and workforce characteristics. The primary source of demographic and housing data for this study is the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data are available at the Census block group level and are averages for the five-year period from 2008-2012. This is the smallest level of geography and most recent time period for which pertinent data are available. Given the size and boundaries of the East Altamonte area, it was necessary to assemble a “profile area” from available Census block groups that when combined best correspond with the study area boundaries. In this case three block groups were used as a proxy for the study area to obtain and analyze data that describe demographic and housing conditions in the East Altamonte area. The boundaries of these block groups and their relation to the study area boundaries are shown in Figure 4.

In addition, a recent estimate of the number of households by age and income for the study area itself was obtained from ESRI, a private national provider of demographic and geographic data. This estimate is a count of households categorized by the age of the householder and the household’s income for the year. Other than this estimated household count by age and income, all other demographic and household data presented for the study area were obtained for the block group-derived profile area that serves as a proxy for the actual study area.

In general, the numbers describe a community that is greatly in need of investment in education, training, affordable and elderly housing, and community services. Twenty three percent of residents have not achieved a high school diploma. Thirty eight percent of households earn less than \$20,000 per year; this number has gone up four percent over the last 10 years. A quarter of households live under the poverty line, half of which are single-headed family households, meaning only one parent. Half of the working age population (ages 16 to 64) did not work in the past year. Eleven percent of households do not own a car and depend on walking, bicycling, and transit for mobility. Improving access to employment education and training and creating appropriate mixed income development can help to improve these numbers.



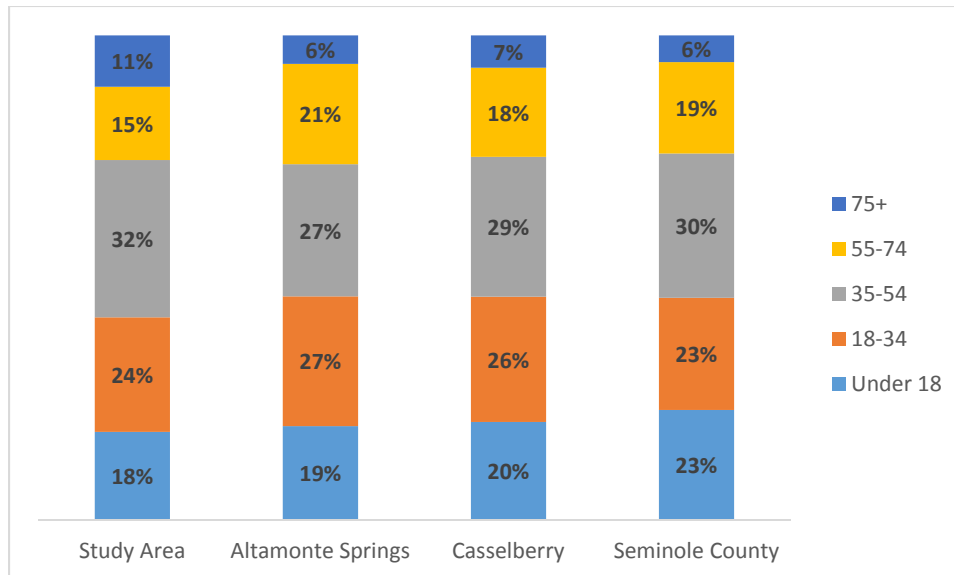
Figure 4 - Profile Area Map



ESRI estimates that 1,484 people live in the study area, and projects that this population will grow by 3.7 percent over the next five years to 1,539 people. According to the ACS, the population is fairly well-distributed across the age groups, with 18 percent under 18, 56 percent in the prime working ages of 18-54, and 26 percent close to retirement or older (55+). The distribution is fairly similar to that in Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, and Seminole County as a whole.



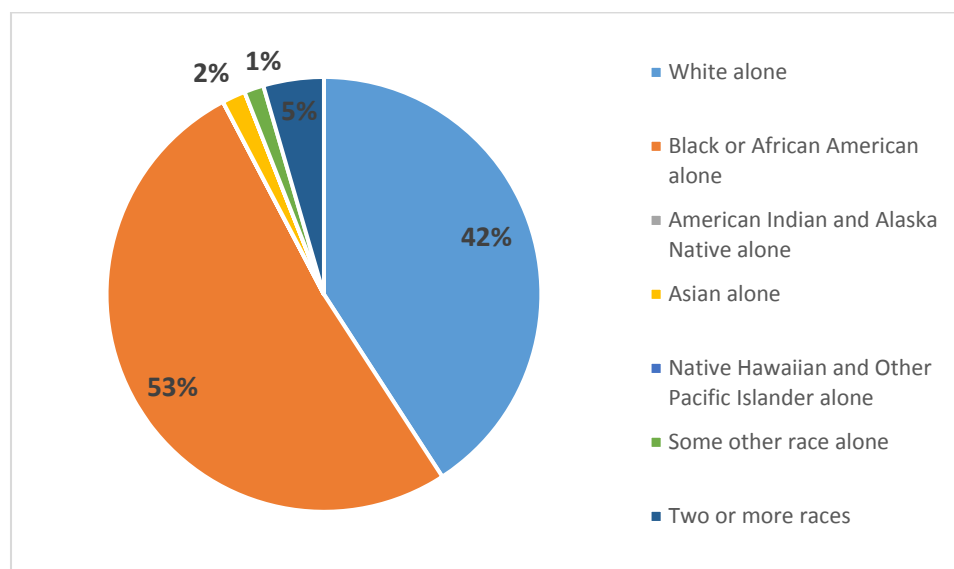
Figure 5 - Population by Age Group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

African Americans are a slight majority of the population, with whites making up most of the rest. There are very few people of other or multiple races. Ten percent of the population identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and these people may be of any race.

Figure 6 - Population by Race Category



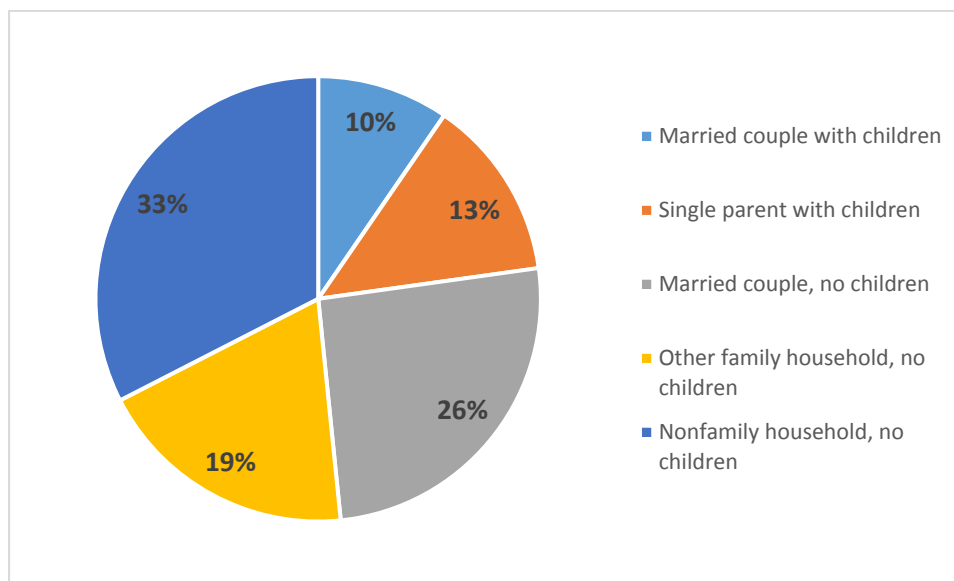
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Looking at household type, 67 percent are families, meaning that they contain people related by blood or marriage. Nonfamilies (single persons or roommates) make up the other 33 percent, and 31 percent of all households contain only one person. Children under age 18 are present in 23



percent of the households, and over half of these households are single-parent families. This means that 77 percent of households do not have any children in them. The largest single household category is nonfamilies without children.

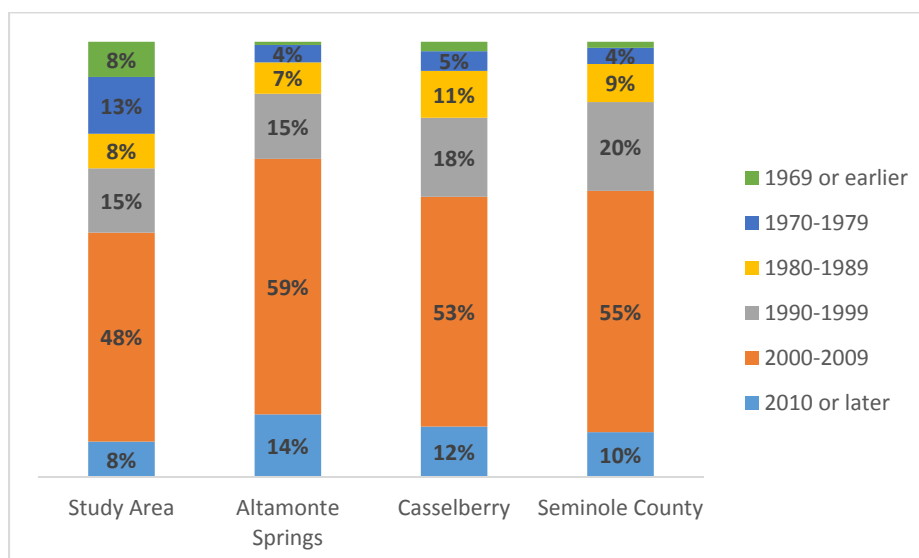
Figure 7 - Household Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Most of households have moved into their current homes in the past decade, with 56 percent moving in since 2000. Longtime residents make up almost one-third of the total: 29 percent of households have lived in their homes since 1990 (which is over 20 years). The equivalent figure is 12 percent for Altamonte Springs, 18 percent for Casselberry, and 14 percent for Seminole County as a whole – a notable difference from the study area.

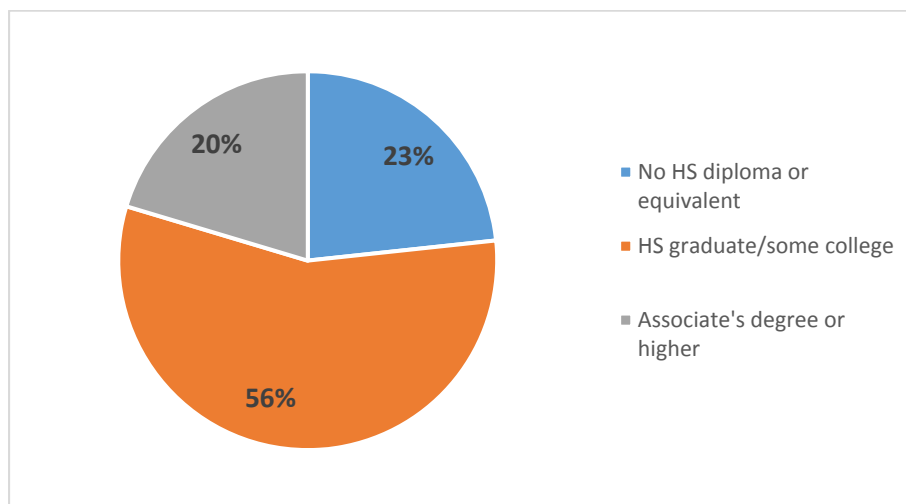
Figure 8 - Year Householder Moved Into Current Unit



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Educational attainment is relatively low, with 23 percent of the adult population (age 25+) not having a high school diploma or equivalent. One in five have received a post-high school degree and 15 percent have received a bachelor's degree or higher.

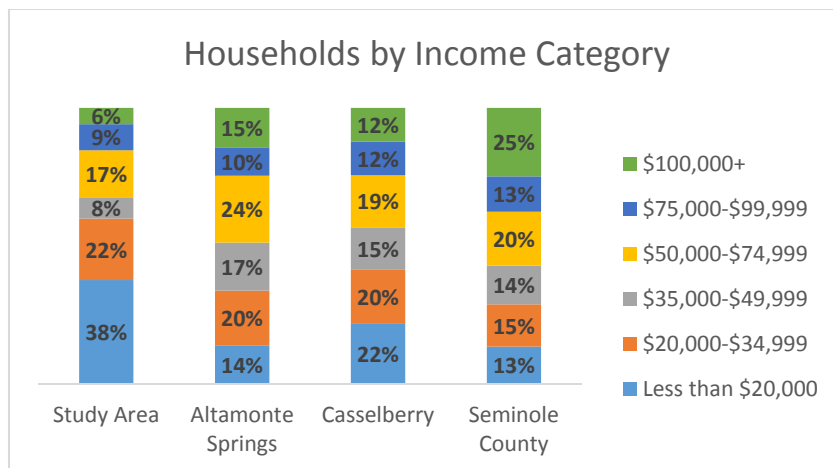
Figure 9 - Educational Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Estimates from the ACS for the three block groups that make up the profile area (not the ESRI estimates for the study area) show that 38 percent of households earn less than \$20,000 per year. The majority (60 percent) of households earn less than \$35,000 per year. In contrast, only 14 percent of households in Altamonte Springs, 22 percent in Casselberry, and 13 percent in Seminole County as a whole earn less than \$20,000 per year.

Figure 10 - Households by Income Category

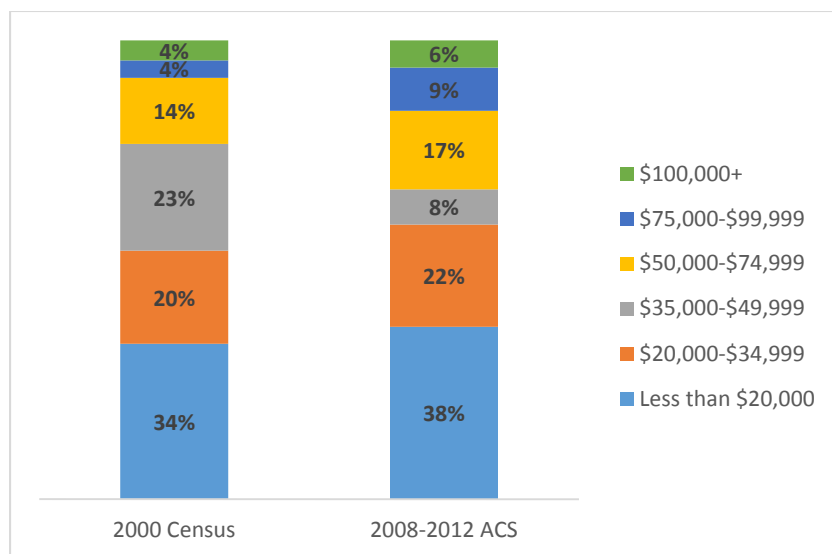


Source: U.S. Census Bureau



The proportion of lower-income households has increased slightly since 2000, while the middle-income category (\$35,000-\$49,999) has been “squeezed” smaller since 2000. Over the past decade, the under-\$35,000 category went from 54 percent to 60 percent of households, the \$35,000-\$49,999 category went from 23 percent to eight percent of households, and the above-\$50,000 category went from 22 percent to 32 percent of households.

Figure 11 - Study Area Households by Income Category over Time

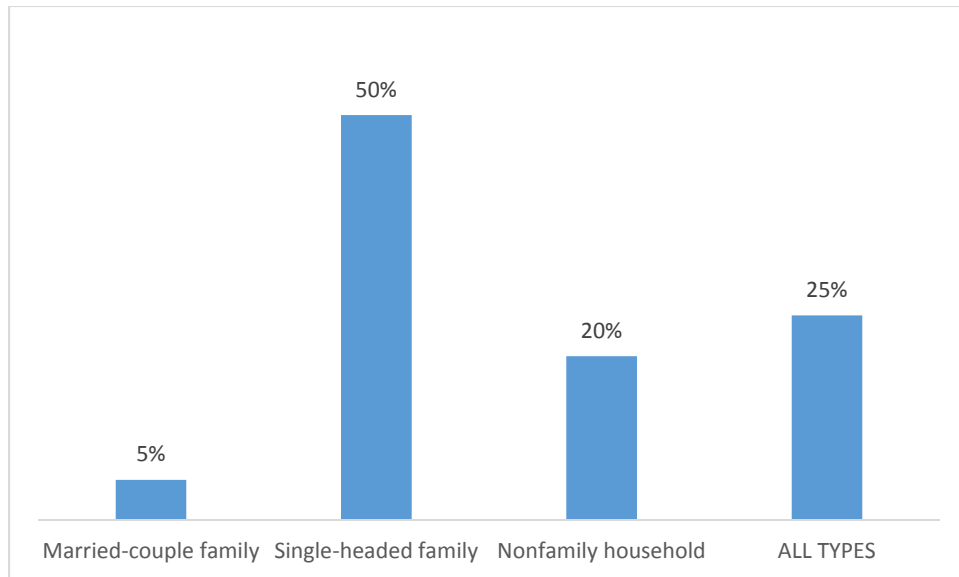


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

One in four households are below the poverty line, with half of these being single-headed households with no spouse present. A majority of the households in poverty are headed by a person under age 25, while almost one in five households age 45-64 (typically the peak earning years) are in poverty.

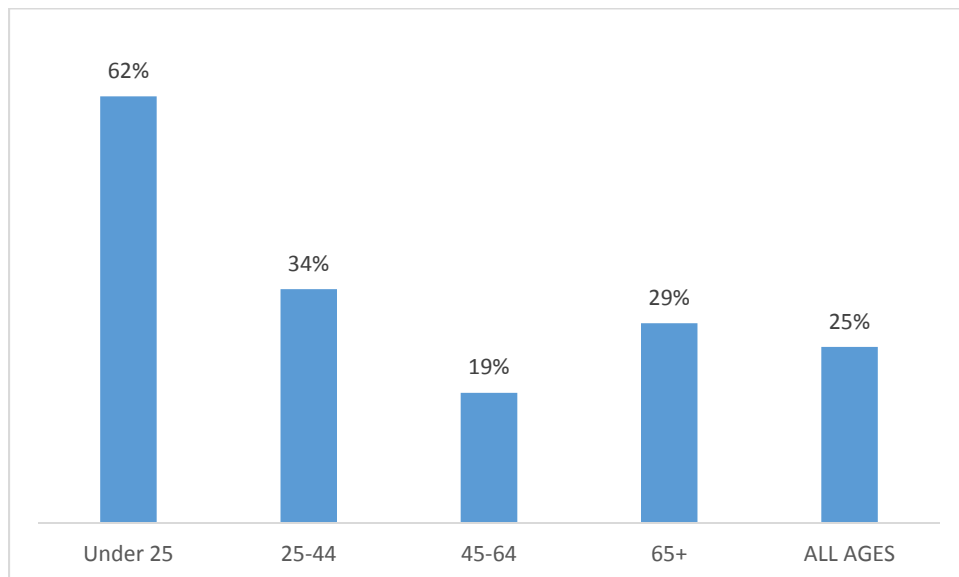


Figure 12 - Households below the Poverty Line by Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 13 - Households below the Poverty Line by Age of Householder

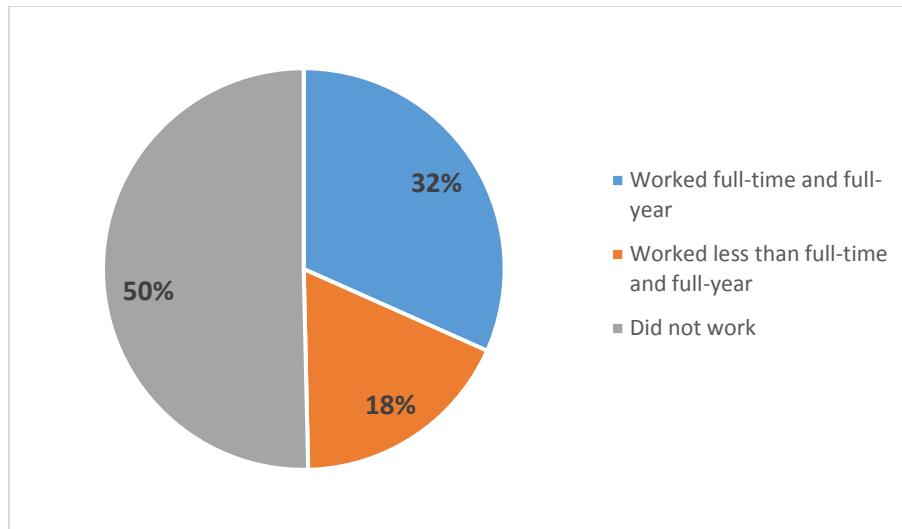


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Half of the working-age population did not work in the past year, and another 18 percent did not work full-time and/or for the full year.



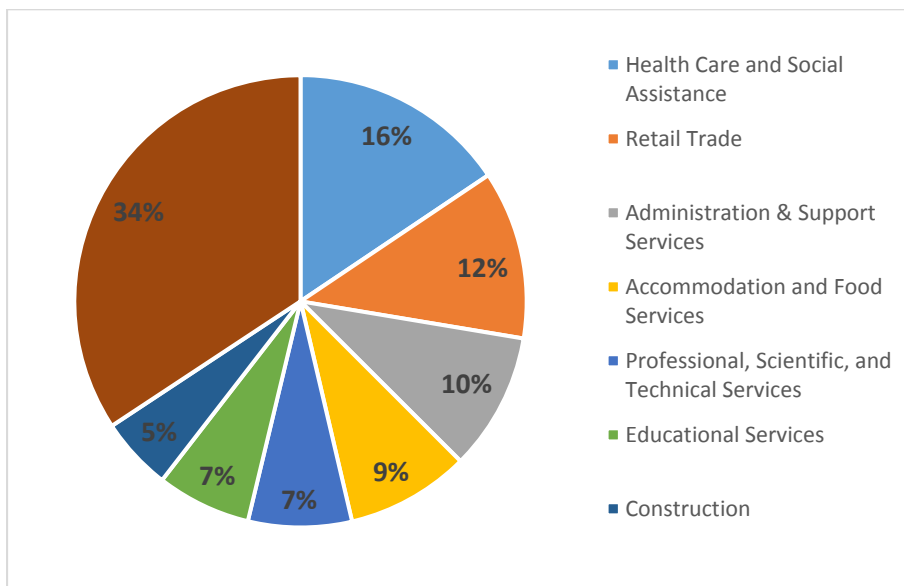
Figure 14 - Employment Status in the Past Year of the Population Age 16-64



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

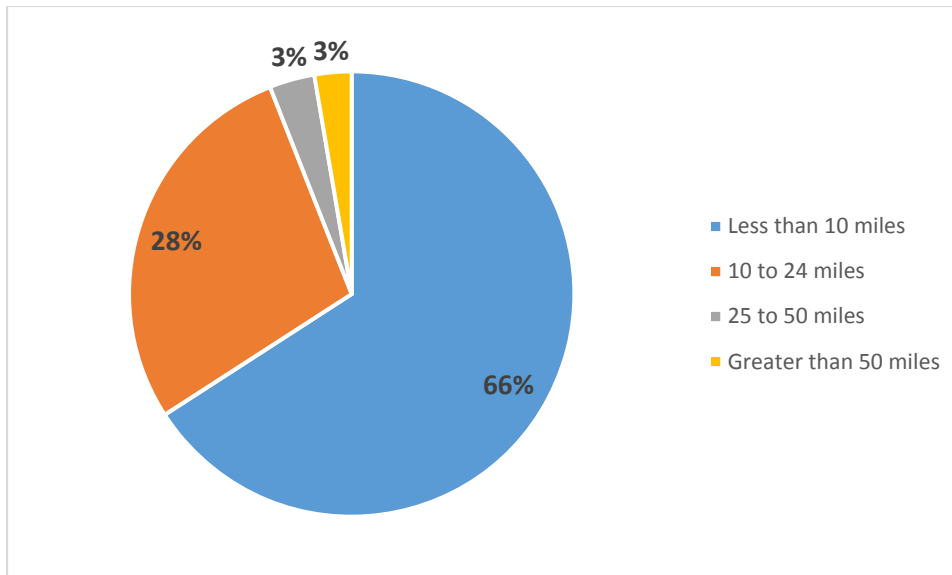
More than one-fourth of employed residents work in health care or retail jobs. Most are not commuting long distances, with 66 percent traveling less than 10 miles to get to work. Most residents work in the Interstate 4 corridor, with the top destination zip codes being Altamonte Springs east of I-4, Lake Mary/Heathrow, Longwood, Downtown Orlando, and the East Colonial Drive corridor in Orlando.

Figure 15 - Industry Sector of Employed Residents



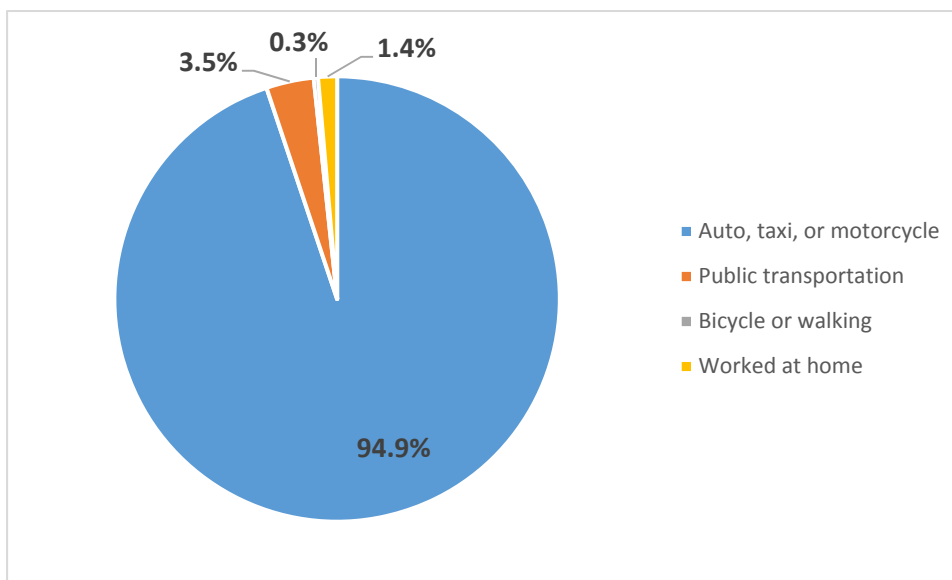
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Figure 16 - Commute Distance of Employed Residents

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Nearly all employed residents drive or ride to work in a personal vehicle. Only 3.5 percent use public transportation to get to work, reflecting its limited availability in the study area prior to the advent of SunRail, and more people work from home than bike or walk to work. Eleven percent of all households have no vehicle available, compared to six percent in Altamonte Springs, four percent in Casselberry, and four percent in Seminole County as a whole.

Figure 17 - Means of Transportation to Work

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Housing Analysis

The purpose of the housing analysis was to evaluate the housing needs of existing residents in the East Altamonte area. Because TOD has been shown to spur redevelopment activity and raise property values, it represents both an opportunity to create new housing options and a risk of displacement of existing residents. By understanding the housing needs of East Altamonte residents and identifying potential strategies to meet those needs, Seminole County will be better able to enact policies and take specific actions that preserve and/or create affordable housing in the station area, as well as opportunities for elderly residents to age in place within their established neighborhood. Affordable housing strategies as part of an overall approach to foster mixed income housing can be particularly effective in East Altamonte because they can take advantage of the enhanced regional accessibility provided by SunRail.

The primary source of demographic and housing data used is the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Data are available at the Census block group level and are averages for the five-year period from 2008-2012. In addition, a recent estimate of the number of households by age and income for the East Altamonte area itself was obtained from ESRI, a private national provider of demographic and geographic data. This estimate is a count of households categorized by the age of the householder and the household's income for the year.

EAST ALTAMONTE STUDY AREA HOUSING NEEDS

Housing needs are driven by demographics, economic factors, and housing stock conditions. Because age plays a large role in influencing the housing needs and preferences of households, the analysis looked at elderly-oriented housing and affordable "standard" housing oriented at younger occupants, particularly families with children.

Eligibility for most affordable housing programs is determined by household income and household size, using thresholds established by HUD. More than half of the households in the East Altamonte area would likely qualify as Very Low Income under the HUD requirements, and other households will qualify as Low Income. Therefore, a majority of East Altamonte area households may potentially have need of affordable housing. For comparison, the Shimberg Center for Housing Research estimates that in 2010 the proportion of households qualifying as Very Low Income was 19 percent in Altamonte Springs, 16 percent in Casselberry, and 14 percent in the entire unincorporated area of Seminole County.

When looking at household income by age group in the East Altamonte area, the highest median income is actually found in the 25-34 age group rather than any of the middle age groups. This figure is still relatively low compared to the Seminole County median household income and it also suggests that unlike what is typically seen, East Altamonte area residents are not attaining higher incomes as they progress through their working years.

Analysis of available demographic and housing data shows that the housing needs of the East Altamonte area are significant. Many family and elderly households are burdened by their housing costs and some may need different choices to live more comfortably and/or more affordably. But



housing options in the East Altamonte area are very limited. Key findings of the needs assessment are:

- The East Altamonte area is characterized by low household incomes and low home values. The lack of financial resources constrains residents' housing options and makes finding better living situations challenging. Low home values mean that leveraging home equity to improve a unit will be more difficult, and the low demand for homes in the area means that the financial return on remodeling or new construction is likely to be small.
- The homeownership rate is in line with the broader market, but ownership could be a burden. Rental housing does not dominate the East Altamonte area, unlike many lower-income neighborhoods. This solid base of owners brings stability to the neighborhood, but with low incomes and a significant elderly population homeownership can also be a burden (both physical and financial) for some households.
- There is a mismatch between resident needs and the existing housing stock. The housing stock is primarily single-family detached homes; few multifamily options exist and those are in very small buildings. Half of renters are in single-family homes, when multifamily apartments might be preferable and/or more affordable.
- A substantial number of vacant housing units are not on the market and available for occupancy. If these units could be returned to the available housing stock they would provide additional housing choices as well as improve the appearance and image of the neighborhood.
- Elderly households make up one-fourth of the East Altamonte area and a significant number have disabilities. Right now most 65+ age households live in single-family detached homes that they own, and over half are burdened by their housing costs. There is a significant need for assisted/supportive living, and around three-fourths of elderly households would likely qualify for subsidized housing programs based on their income levels. Different options and levels of care should be explored that will let older residents continue to live comfortably and affordably in the East Altamonte area as they age. The East Altamonte neighborhood is specifically referenced in the County Comprehensive Plan to increase the supply of elderly housing to meet the needs of existing residents wishing to remain in the neighborhood.
- Half of the 15-64 age households who own their homes are burdened by housing costs, and nearly all the renters of this age are burdened. Half of these family-age households would likely qualify for subsidized housing programs based on their income levels.

The East Altamonte Study Area needs more housing options that can help meet the needs of its residents. Elderly households need more accessible multifamily options that allow them to age in place in the neighborhood. Renters of all ages need affordable options, particularly multifamily apartments that are more practical and economical for many of these households. Homeowners need an improved and more attractive neighborhood that attracts new investment and capitalizes on the enhanced multimodal transportation options coming with SunRail to increase their property values and the equity in their homes. TOD can be the means to add needed housing for all types of residents, stimulate the local market, and improve neighborhood conditions.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEMAND

The demand for affordable housing development in the East Altamonte Study Area will come from a larger area than just the East Altamonte area itself. While people who are already living in the East Altamonte area would be prime candidates for new or rehabilitated affordable housing near where they live, people from the surrounding area also will be attracted to the location. This fact is illustrated through ongoing analysis by the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies which indicates that the East Altamonte area is well-suited for affordable housing development because of its transportation accessibility, proximity to employment centers, and other factors. Given the overall scarcity of affordable housing and level of need, demand could potentially be attracted from across Seminole County and even the region given the East Altamonte area's excellent accessibility via I-4, SR 436, and now SunRail. However, for the purpose of this report a more locally oriented market area was defined to estimate potential demand. The relevant local market area for affordable housing development in the East Altamonte area was defined as the study area itself plus the Cities of Altamonte Springs and Casselberry.

The pool of potential affordable housing demand in the market area is 5,459 family households (age 15-64) and 1,747 elderly households (age 65+). Developers considering this potential demand would typically assess how much of it could be captured by a single project. While there is no firm rule and every developer has different requirements, a common rule of thumb is that an acceptable capture rate for a single project is between five and seven percent of the demand pool. Applying those rates to the total potential demand pool results in a market-supportable family project of 273-382 units and a market-supportable elderly project of 87-122 units. These unit counts are based solely on the estimated market-driven demand – local land use and zoning regulations will dictate the size of any potential future housing developments.

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Proactive strategies will need to be implemented to capitalize on the opportunity to use TOD to improve the housing situations of lower-income residents in the East Altamonte Study Area. A housing strategy should focus on mixed income development so that affordable units are dispersed throughout the area and not concentrated in a particular area. This would be achieved through a combination of market rate and below market housing to help attract more services and create a vibrant, growing community. Several potential affordable housing strategies have been identified and are summarized below.

Tax Credit Project Facilitation

The City Park at Merritt Street project proposed for a site in the East Altamonte area is a prime example of affordable housing development seeking financing through the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, which is the most important financing source for new affordable housing development. Besides continuing to support the City Park developers in the competitive tax credit allocation process, Seminole County should be prepared to work collaboratively with other affordable housing developers to facilitate additional tax credit projects in the East Altamonte area. The allocation process is now awarding points to reflect a preference for TOD sites around SunRail stations, which should benefit proposed projects in the East Altamonte area. Although the



preference in the last funding cycle was limited to the Longwood SunRail station, Seminole County can play a key role in lobbying the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) to expand the preference to other stations. The County can also work to “set the stage” for redevelopment by identifying prospective development sites, preparing a package of redevelopment actions it would be prepared to take in support of a proposed project, and seeking a private developer through a competitive solicitation process. All of those actions would require the establishment of a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) for public sector-led actions or alternately a non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC) to undertake similar activities in collaboration with the County. The County Commission has become concerned about the impact of Community Redevelopment Areas on the remainder of the unincorporated area. Therefore, the creation of a new CRA may not be a viable option. The use of a CDC may be more likely. The County also could use CDBG funding to facilitate redevelopment projects that benefit low and moderate-income households.

Resident Consortium for Redevelopment

TOD planning around the Altamonte Springs SunRail station has highlighted the different interests of area stakeholders, but also has demonstrated an opportunity where these interests intersect to potentially create a win-win situation for both advancing TOD and addressing some of the affordable housing needs in the East Altamonte area. The City of Altamonte Springs has stated its plans to pursue its recently adopted vision plan for the station area by acquiring currently unincorporated properties in the East Altamonte area to facilitate the construction of a master stormwater system that would serve the new TOD. The owners of East Altamonte area properties targeted for acquisition would like to ensure that they can benefit from the increased property values sparked by transit-driven development potential, and other residents with affordable housing needs could also potentially benefit from redevelopment activity. A consortium of residents/property owners could agree to pool their adjacent properties together to strike a more effective deal with an interested buyer. Compensation to the consortium members would likely be a direct payment for their properties, but could also include a guaranteed unit in a new affordable housing development on their previously owned property or elsewhere in the East Altamonte area.

The purchaser benefits from a more streamlined acquisition process that deals with only one seller of a single property rather than multiple sellers with small lots. The residents benefit from negotiating as a unified group that can better argue for a price that reflects the true value of the assemblage as an enabler of greater development value at other locations (because of the master stormwater system), rather than as isolated individual parcels. Negotiating as a group may also facilitate the obtaining of replacement affordable housing. Seminole County can help facilitate the formation of the consortium if there is sufficient interest by owners of strategically located parcels. In the parts of the East Altamonte area where a significant number of single-family properties may potentially change over to multifamily development, planning for the area surrounding these properties should address the need to protect remaining single-family properties from any adverse impacts of this land use change.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Florida Statutes Section 163.31771 encourages local governments to permit the construction of accessory dwelling units as a strategy for increasing the supply of housing affordable to lower-



income households. The accessory unit can be located within the primary unit as a separate apartment, attached to the primary unit with a separate entrance, or completely separate from the primary unit as a stand-alone cottage. These units can be an effective affordable housing strategy because their relatively small size and sharing of a lot with another unit mean that they usually rent for less than typical apartments. There are financial benefits for the owner too, through additional income and/or personal or medical services accepted in lieu of cash rent from the accessory unit occupant.

Accessory dwelling units currently are not permitted by the Seminole County Land Development Code (LDC) in the residential zoning districts present in the East Altamonte area. The LDC would need to be amended to allow such dwelling units in the relevant residential districts. Given the more urban setting and smaller lot sizes of these zoning districts, if accessory dwelling units are to be allowed there are a number of potential issues that the County may wish to consider before implementing this strategy.

Housing Rehabilitation Program

Regular maintenance and repair will be important for many of the older homes in the East Altamonte area, and some are likely to need more extensive renovation or rehabilitation. With a high percentage of elderly households living in single-family detached homes, the amount of maintenance required to keep a home in good condition can be a challenge both physically and financially. There are also a significant number of vacant homes in the East Altamonte area, many of which are not classified by the Census Bureau as being on the market or available for occupancy. These vacant homes can potentially be added to the local housing stock as affordable units, but probably will require some amount of rehabilitation before they are ready for occupancy.

Seminole County can use its housing funding from federal and state sources to support owner-occupied housing rehabilitation countywide. Given the limited funding available and the potential level of need, one approach could be to rotate between the County-defined target areas (of which East Altamonte is one) similar to how CDBG infrastructure spending has been implemented. In this approach a target area would receive a substantial portion of the available funding for housing rehabilitation every few years to assist as many eligible homes as possible, with other target areas being the focus in the other program years. Separate from Seminole County housing resources, HUD offers two programs that provide assistance to people looking to repair or rehabilitate residential properties. The Section 203(k) program provides mortgage insurance to homebuyers or developers who are purchasing a property, while the Title I program provides property improvement loans to owners.

Seminole County can conduct outreach in the East Altamonte area and throughout the local market to identify interested and eligible residents, homebuyers, and developers who are looking to renovate homes in East Altamonte. Then with a combination of County financial assistance for selected households and facilitation of applications to the HUD rehabilitation programs for other stakeholders, these resources can be leveraged to improve the housing stock in the East Altamonte area.



Market Analysis

The East Altamonte area is a historically African American neighborhood that is in need of revitalization and higher paying employment opportunities. Redevelopment activity driven by TOD can be an opportunity to both create new jobs in the East Altamonte area and connect residents to jobs located near other SunRail stations. This study was prepared to help Seminole County understand the potential for market-driven job creation and job access in East Altamonte. For both elements the focus is on higher paying job opportunities, which for the purpose of this study are defined as jobs paying \$40,000 or more in annual wages. This is roughly the average annual wage of jobs in Seminole County in 2013, according to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) conducted by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. TOD employment strategies can take advantage of the enhanced regional multimodal accessibility provided by SunRail.

After initially evolving into a bedroom community following the rise of Orlando and the tourism and services-driven economy of Central Florida, Seminole County has again become a major employment center in its own right with significant nodes of employment along the Interstate 4 corridor in Altamonte Springs, Longwood, Lake Mary, and Sanford, as well as other notable centers in Oviedo and downtown Sanford. Like the rest of Central Florida, Seminole County's economy has been recovering from the recession of 2007-09 over the past several years. Employment growth in the County was 10 percent over the past decade compared to 17 percent for the entire Orlando metro area, but the average wage and wage growth over the past 10 years was almost identical in both areas.

The East Altamonte Study Area is located on the eastern edge and just outside of the City of Altamonte Springs's Regional Business Center (RBC), which is the City's primary employment area and a center of commercial and office development. The portion of the RBC east of I-4 saw a slight net decline in total employment since 2002, led by a loss of almost 2,300 jobs in the retail sector. Other sectors, particularly administration and support services, grew over the same time period. The number of jobs paying over \$40,000 per year increased by 35 percent, but when compared to the average wage of Seminole County and the metro area as a whole, the average wage in the eastern RBC area is still 13 percent lower. Given the strong presence of the retail and support services industries in the area, it is not surprising that the average wage trails the county and regional averages.

JOB CREATION ANALYSIS

The most direct way to increase the employment opportunities in the East Altamonte Study Area is to encourage job creation there through the development of new or expanded business facilities. The analysis of job creation potential addresses target industry sectors, the characteristics of the East Altamonte area that shape its development potential, and market conditions in the relevant real estate submarket.

- Industry sectors in Seminole County that pay above-average wages and are focused on office-using jobs are professional services, wholesale trade, finance, and healthcare. Office development will be one the primary means of adding employment to the East Altamonte



area but not the only potential source of future employment. Modern and smaller scale manufacturing and smaller scale institutional uses can potentially be compatible with TOD because they can be similar in character to office development.

- Any strategy for increasing employment opportunities will need to focus on education and training as well as development. Higher paying jobs typically require higher levels of education, and currently there is a mismatch between the educational attainment of East Altamonte area residents and the education requirements of many higher paying jobs. Seminole State College is available with a strong commitment to developing curricula and matriculating students who will be prepared to work in area businesses.
- The existing employment base of the East Altamonte area is minimal and will not have much influence on the development of new employment opportunities. Most of the job-generating land uses in or near the East Altamonte area are oriented toward the US 17-92 and Altamonte Drive (SR 436) frontages. There may be some future job opportunities created in the retail sector due to redevelopment along Altamonte Drive or new transit-driven development near the SunRail station, but the number of jobs is not likely to be large and retail does not pay very high wages.
- The best sites for office-using development in the East Altamonte area are near the SunRail station, which can capitalize on both auto and transit accessibility as well as the visibility to passing traffic on Altamonte Drive and Ronald Reagan Boulevard. Proximity and connections to the Altamonte Springs Regional Business Center just to the west will also be beneficial. The East Town Vision Plan adopted by the City of Altamonte Springs for land in its jurisdiction allows both commercial and residential uses, with the exact mix driven by market demand.
- The office submarket relevant to the East Altamonte area is a relatively minor one in the regional marketplace and has been underperforming for some time. Vacancy rates are generally high and asking rents are generally low compared to other submarkets. Near term market conditions are not very conducive to new office development. Therefore, the potential for small scale high-tech industrial and institutional businesses should be explored, as well as startups and small skilled trades (construction) businesses, with assistance from the programs at the Seminole State College. Vacant land that is designated as Commercial and well located for access to the SunRail station may serve as locations for an incubator program to increase job access for the residents of the East Altamonte area.

JOB ACCESS ANALYSIS

Besides providing sites for potential job creation in the East Altamonte Study Area, TOD also can enhance local residents' accessibility to jobs located elsewhere. The potential for connecting East Altamonte area residents with higher paying employment opportunities is significant, given that several of the largest concentrations of higher paying jobs in Seminole County and the Central Florida region are located at other SunRail stops. Improvements in local connectivity associated with TOD can also improve accessibility to local jobs.

- Jobs available at companies located in Lake Mary (and accessible via SunRail and LYNX shuttle bus) may be within reach of East Altamonte area residents through training at Seminole State College and internships at an incubator program located in the East Altamonte neighborhood.



- Jobs in Downtown Orlando and at the two major hospital system campuses are readily available today via SunRail. These are some of the largest centers of higher paying jobs in the region. Professional services, finance, government, and healthcare are the predominant industry sectors in these centers.
- Airport jobs at Orlando International Airport (OIA) would be an important source of potential jobs for East Altamonte area residents if a proposed extension of SunRail to the airport were to be completed.
- Healthcare jobs associated with Florida Hospital Altamonte are the most prominent higher paying employment opportunities that are potentially locally accessible. Improvements in connectivity and transit service in and around the East Altamonte area may be necessary to make these jobs truly accessible to East Altamonte area residents without using a car. Not all of these jobs will necessarily be medical positions, as hospitals and doctors' offices also employ a significant number of administrative and other non-medical workers.
- SunRail and connectivity improvements can help East Altamonte area residents get to higher paying job locations, but to get the jobs themselves residents will need to have the required education and/or work skills. Access to resources that help people increase their human capital and prepare them for higher paying jobs will be an important element of an employment strategy for East Altamonte. Seminole State College is the key local provider of such resources, and access to its facilities and other technical training providers will be as important as access to jobs.

CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Creating employment opportunities in the East Altamonte Study Area through TOD planning could call for both job creation and job access elements. Selection of the most effective strategic direction should take into account the findings of this analysis as well as County and community goals. A job creation strategy would seek to use TOD to make the East Altamonte area an employment center, thus creating new job opportunities in close proximity to existing East Altamonte area residents. Key factors to consider are:

- Office development is one of the foundations of a job creation strategy in the East Altamonte area, but smaller scale industrial and institutional uses also can be important.
- The East Altamonte area currently is not an established employment center.
- The local office market is relatively weak, and near term conditions are not very conducive to new office development.

The East Altamonte Study Area will likely need a robust and proactive strategy to achieve significant job creation around the SunRail station. Local market conditions for new office development are not strong, and multifamily residential is a viable alternative that is growing in popularity among consumers and developers alike.

A job access strategy would focus on the ability of SunRail to connect East Altamonte area residents with employment opportunities elsewhere. Key factors in such a strategy include:

- SunRail now provides ready access to three of the leading centers of higher paying jobs in the region.



- Access to suburban employment centers will depend on the implementation success and reliability of local transit connections. The FlexBus service now being tested in Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, and Maitland could be a key component. The cost implications of this smartphone-accessed service for low-income East Altamonte area residents should be studied and potential alternatives be developed that allow wider access.
- The area of Altamonte Springs west of the East Altamonte area also is a significant employment center, and a major portion of its higher paying jobs are located at or near Florida Hospital Altamonte.
- Transit schedules (including SunRail) should be coordinated to align with the working hours and shift changes of major employers in the area.

A strategic approach to employment-oriented TOD planning that combines an emphasis on both job creation and job access can address the widest range of opportunities that may emerge in the East Altamonte Study Area. Potential strategies that have been identified are:

- Encourage/assist office-using development and certain smaller scale industrial, construction trades, and institutional uses
- Focus economic development efforts to attract companies
- Improve East Altamonte area connectivity to enhance job access
- Add more housing to the East Altamonte area, especially affordable units
- Connect residents with education and training resources, including potential development of such resources locally within walk access.

TOD represents a significant opportunity for economic development in the East Altamonte area, but such efforts will need to be balanced against the other needs of the existing residents, including affordable and supportive housing and services for elderly and lower income households. The development of medical and institutional uses within the area can not only create jobs, but can also meet the needs of residents who currently lack access to these services.



Development Scenarios

This section describes existing county land use policies and the two development scenarios. The purpose of scenario planning is to consider and assess different options for community growth. The process begins with the Existing Future Land Use policies as a base. Through a collaborative process with the community and the County, various land use options and connectivity enhancements were evaluated to determine the recommended plan scenario that addresses the community's needs and incentivizes long-term neighborhood sustainability, while considering the conditions influencing the East Altamonte area.

EXISTING COUNTY POLICIES

The East Altamonte community is designated as a target area, defined as “geographic areas within which a minimum of 51 percent of the households earn incomes that do not exceed 80 percent of the area median income.” The Future Land Use Element of the County Comprehensive Plan states that “target areas for community development are identified for purposes of preservation and revitalization of existing neighborhoods, consistent with Federal and State funding programs. To preserve these neighborhoods and encourage infill development of single family and duplex structures, the County designated the residential lands within these target areas as low to medium density. The County has also adopted community development and code enforcement programs to enhance target area living conditions and continues to encourage redevelopment of these areas through private development proposals and community development activities.”

The East Altamonte community is also part of the County's Energy Conservation Overlay. These are defined as areas within a half-mile radius of major urban activity centers and the SunRail commuter rails stations, and within a quarter-mile of the right-of-way of major urban transit corridors. This overlay was created for the purpose of encouraging phased redevelopment of these areas into a more compact, energy conserving land development pattern that allows for a balance of jobs to housing and the use of multiple modes of transportation, in order to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gases. New developments are assessed for their consistency with this overlay based on the Energy Conservation Assessment Performance Framework, and must achieve a score of 80 percent or higher.

Table 2 outlines the allowable densities and intensities based on the proposed development's Energy Conservation Assessment score.

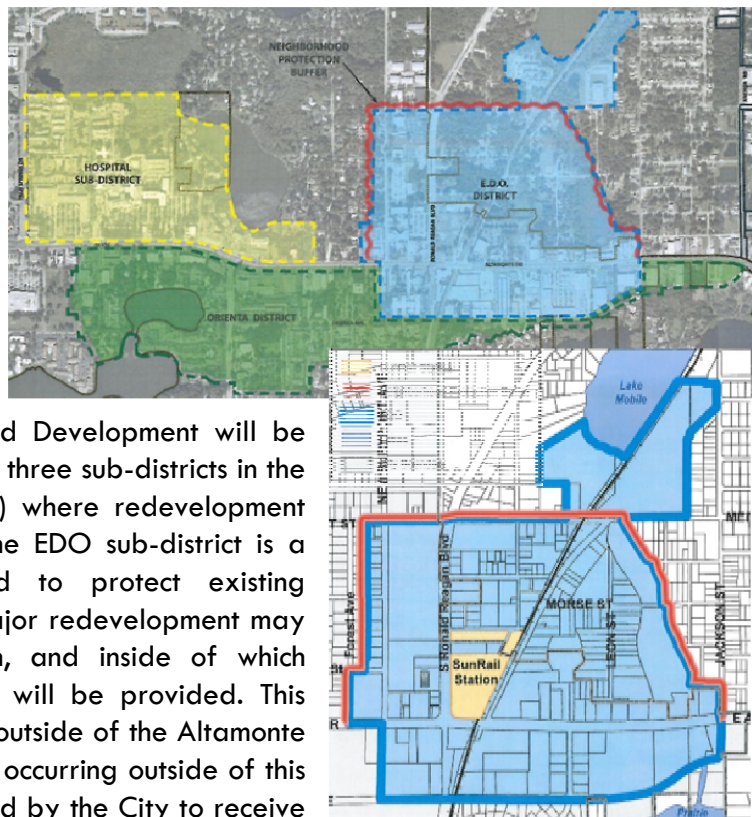


Table 2 – Energy Conservation Overlay Permitted Development

Percent Score	Density (du/ac)*		Intensity (FAR)**	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
95-100	15.00	20.00	.85	1.0
90-94	10.00	14.99	.71	.84
85-89	8.50	9.99	.53	.70
80-84	7.00	8.49	.36	.52
Less than 80	Comply with underlying FLU designation			
*Density is measured in units per net buildable acres				
**Intensity is measured in floor area ratio (FAR), which is calculated by the total covered area on all floors of a building divided by the area of the plot of land				

CITY OF ALTAMONTE SPRINGS EAST TOWN VISION PLAN

As previously discussed, the City of Altamonte Springs developed a station area plan for the half-mile area surrounding the new SunRail transit station, including portions of unincorporated Seminole County. As part of the redevelopment strategy and Vision Plan, the City has adopted an EDO (Economic Development Opportunity) Sub-District that defines the area around the SunRail station in which higher-intensity, Transit Oriented Development will be focused. The EDO Sub-District is one of three sub-districts in the City's study area (shown to the right) where redevelopment efforts will be focused. Included in the EDO sub-district is a Neighborhood Buffer Line intended to protect existing residential areas by limiting where major redevelopment may occur relative to the SunRail station, and inside of which stormwater infrastructure and utilities will be provided. This district includes areas both inside and outside of the Altamonte Springs' city limits. New developments occurring outside of this buffer must be reviewed and approved by the City to receive utilities. Property owners adjacent to City land are able to be annexed into the City.



The City of Altamonte Springs is the current utility provider in a portion of the study area. The City requires annexation as a condition of utility provision for all non-single family detached dwelling unit developments, and therefore, may require annexation into the City prior to development approvals being issued, if a change of land use or a rezoning is requested that may be different than what is proposed in the East Town Vision Plan. The City has indicated that utility service for changes of use outside of its Neighborhood Protection Buffer may require additional hearings beyond those for annexation, change of land use to a City land use or rezoning to a City zoning district.

The EDO sub-district includes four proposed street types: Core, Urban, Transition, and Arterial. Development intensity is determined by proximity to the SunRail station and street types. The vision plan also includes five Development Areas: Core, Urban, Transitional Local, and Transitional Arterial. The minimum densities and intensities allowed in these areas are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – EDO District Density and Intensity Standards

Development Areas	Density (du/ac)	Intensity (FAR)
	Minimum	Minimum
Core	30 du/ac	0.6 FAR (Retail, Office)
Urban	25 du/ac	0.4 FAR
Transition	20 du/ac	0.25 FAR
Arterial	20 du/ac	0.25 FAR

The vision plan also includes the added component of community open space using existing wetlands to create a blue/green destination park adjacent to the SunRail station. The vision plan also proposes the creation of two stormwater ponds on existing wetlands to provide stormwater system supportive of the future development surrounding the station. The City is currently completing a drainage basin study that will result in floodplain protection through a series of stormwater mitigation ponds that will support the higher-intensity development.

The recommendations and conceptual land use plan for the East Altamonte Station Area acknowledge and complement the East Town Vision Plan at the station area core, and provide a means for compatible development that serves the existing and future needs of the community. A rendering of the EDO master plan is depicted to the right.



Source: City of Altamonte Springs

SEMINOLE COUNTY UTILITY SYSTEMS

In order to minimize duplication of infrastructure and maximize use of existing facilities, Seminole County currently uses a combination of its own utilities, private utility companies, and other jurisdictions to provide water and sewer services. The study area is served by both the City of Altamonte Springs and the City of Casselberry through interlocal agreements. As the County evaluates future development potential in the study area as a result of the SunRail station, it may determine its long term best interests are served by expanding utility capacity and extending lines instead of relying on the interlocal agreements and their adjunct requirements, such as annexation and site plan review.

The Seminole County Southeast Service Area (for both water and sewer) extends to the southeast corner of the study area (south side of East Altamonte Drive/Anchor Road intersection). Utility lines are located as close as the southeast quadrant of the SR 436/US 17-92 intersection, approximately one-half mile to the east. A County water treatment plant is located at the southern end of Wilshire Boulevard, approximately one and one-half miles to the east. A sewer treatment plant is located approximately nine miles away, near Alafaya Trail.

Extending potable water service from the existing system to the study area would primarily be determined by the ability to maintain level of service standards (a prescribed minimum water pressure needed for normal daily usage plus fire protection), an exercise that can be computer modeled by the County. Trunk line upsizing within the existing system and additional system connections may be needed to make the system operate properly. If the proposed water line extension can be successfully modeled, construction costs and long term revenue generation can be assigned to evaluate the feasibility of the project.

Extending sewer service from the existing system to the study area by simple connection is unlikely due to distance and elevation constraints. The more likely scenario would be to create an internal gravity sewer and lift station(s) system within the study area, using force mains to make the connection back to the existing system. This would be dependent on current and planned loads within the existing system (both on gravity lines and force mains) and capacity within the treatment plants, an exercise that can also be modeled by the County. As in the water system, upsizing of existing components may be required to make the system operate properly before the project feasibility can be evaluated.

Future development in the East Altamonte Station Area depends on the ability to serve the area with utilities, including water and sewer capacity to meet future demand, and providing stormwater detention necessary to enable compact development and provide an overall benefit to the surrounding neighborhoods. The provision and timing of those utilities is key to enabling development to occur at a scale of density and intensity appropriate for Transit Oriented Development. The jurisdiction able to provide utilities to the station area is at a significant advantage to guide its future development and the anticipated economic outcomes. Any development served by City utilities will annex into the City when legally able to do to.



EXISTING FUTURE LAND USE – TREND SCENARIO

The Seminole County Comprehensive Plan guides growth and development in the community. The Future Land Use Map within the Comprehensive Plan shows the future pattern of development and where different types of land uses will be found. The map identifies different locations for different types of homes, places for parks and civic uses, and sites where shopping and offices will be found.

The Trend Scenario reflects the current Future Land Use Map and is essentially the “status quo” option. It focuses on the need for compatibility standards to guarantee that redevelopment and infill development fit with the character of existing neighborhoods. The Trend Scenario is a viable growth option for the East Altamonte area - during public events for the project, many people in the community expressed sentiments against growth. They wanted to keep and improve their homes, maintain and enhance the historic elements of the community, provide options for aging in community, and make sure that redevelopment and infill development fit with the character of existing neighborhoods.

While the future land uses around the Altamonte Springs SunRail station have not been modified to reflect the potential of higher densities and intensities associated with future development, it does not mean that the East Altamonte area neighborhoods within the study area have to remain static forever. The residents understand that change will likely happen, but they want to guide changes in ways that positively affect their community. There is flexibility built into each Future Land Use designation, as indicated in Table 4.

While some neighborhoods within the East Altamonte area are very stable and do not desire changes, there are others with an abundance of vacant houses and undeveloped lots. With the City of Altamonte Springs resolving area floodplain issues with a series of mitigation ponds as part of their East Town Vision Plan, individual homeowners in the study area will now more easily be able to repair, improve or sell their homes. Other homeowners may take the opportunity and aggregate lots in an effort to develop on a larger parcel of land.

Although the Trend Scenario (see Figure 18) does not propose land use changes, it still incorporates a series of connectivity and accessibility improvements (as described in more detail below). These improvements are not only meant to make walking and bicycling easier in general within the East Altamonte area, but to specifically improve connections with the new SunRail station.

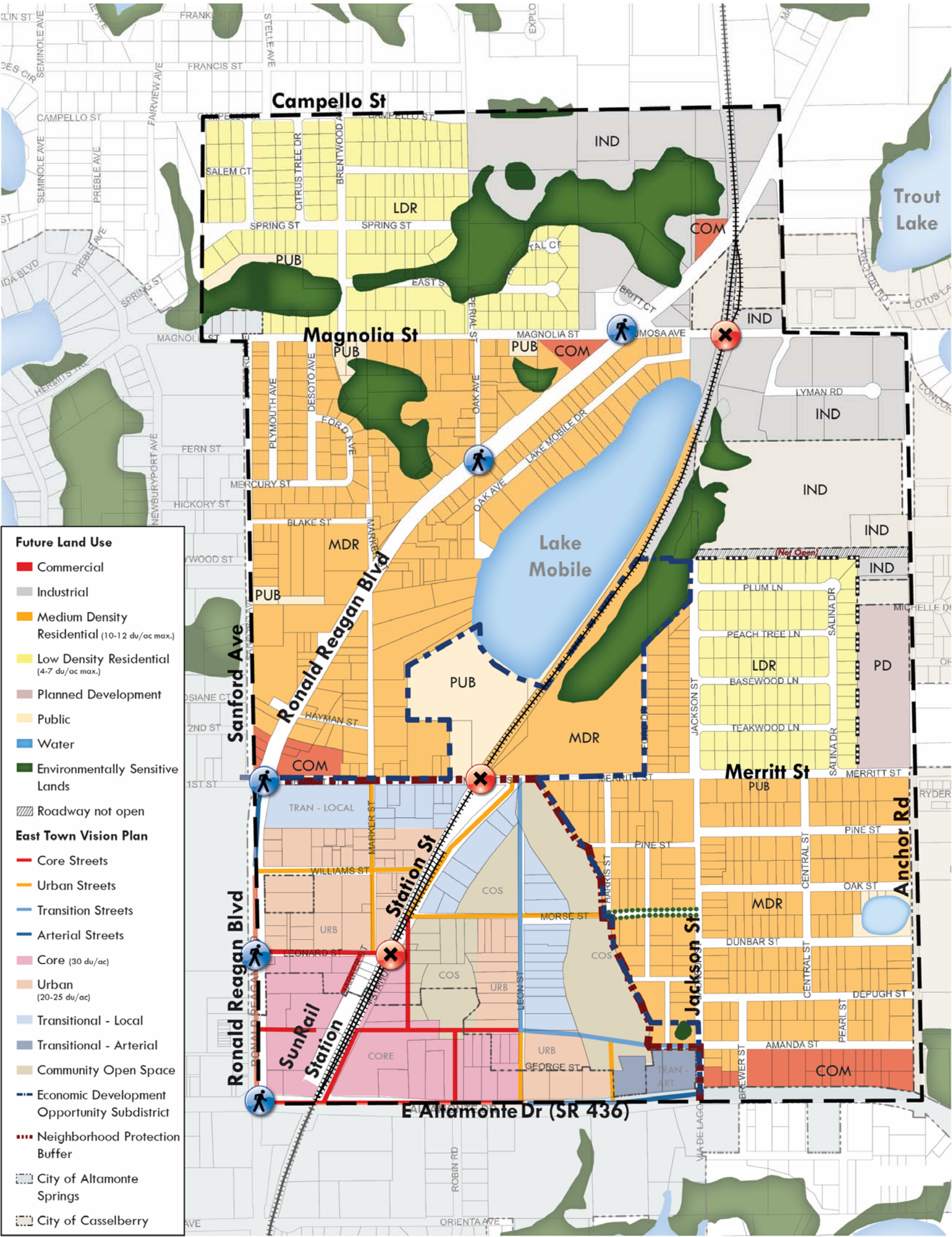


Table 4 – Future Land Uses

Future Land Use Designation	Typical Uses	Max. Density/Intensity
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Single-family detached, school, church, day care, public parks	4 du/ac; 7 du/ac with affordable or workforce housing
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Single-family detached, duplex, multi-family, conversion to residential office, school, church, day care	10 du/ac; 12 du/ac with affordable or workforce housing
Commercial (COM)	Retail sales and commercial services, highway oriented business, school, day care, hotel, service station, nursing home	0.35 FAR
Industrial (IND)	Light manufacturing, distribution, auto repair, warehousing, medical clinic, school, nursing home	0.65 FAR
Public (PUB)	Recreation, education facility, library, school, cemetery, public safety facility, utilities	0.65 FAR
Planned Development (PD)	Mixed use, residential with a range of unit types and densities, non-residential, school, utilities, recreation	Determined at time of Plan Amendment



Figure 18 – Trend Scenario



RECOMMENDED PLAN SCENARIO – REVISED FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The Recommended Plan Scenario (see Figure 19) was developed through meetings with residents, property owners and community leaders in the East Altamonte area. It keeps some land uses the same as in the Trend Scenario, but proposes different land uses in areas where the proximity of SunRail and the City of Altamonte Springs' emerging East Town Vision Plan may influence growth in the study area. By preparing for and anticipating that growth now, Seminole County can ensure that potential development occurs in an orderly and fiscally efficient manner over time, provides proper transitions and buffers, remains compatible with the neighborhood character, and is appropriate and advantageous for the community.

While potential development changes in the East Altamonte area are subject to variable market conditions and time frames, there are logical steps that can be anticipated and taken to prepare for that development. The Recommended Plan Scenario proposes three phases to change the future land uses and pattern of development in the East Altamonte area: short term (2 – 5 years), intermediate term (6 – 10 years), and long term (11+ years).

Short Term (2-5 years)

Short Term development (see Figure 20) starts in year two to give the City of Altamonte Springs time to implement its stormwater mitigation effort. The East Town Vision Plan will likely still be in the planning and design stages and not directly influencing the study area yet. Therefore, land use changes can be more community oriented as opposed to being a response to external conditions.

US 17-92, about one mile to the east of the East Altamonte area, is designated as a Seminole County Economic Development Target Area. To avoid taking needed commercial development from the US 17-92 corridor, Ronald Reagan Boulevard will likely remain primarily residential and neighborhood commercial in character. There is a small node in the northern portion of the study area that has smaller lots with an Industrial land use that are proposed to be changed to Commercial to make them more compatible with the character of the street. Additionally, there is Industrial land use at the NW intersection of Ronald Reagan Boulevard and Magnolia Street abutting a Low Density Residential land use. The Industrial is proposed to be changed to Medium Density Residential to provide an appropriate transition and street presence.

The back half of the block between SR 436 and Amanda Street and between Jackson Street and Brewer Street (four lots) has a Medium Density Residential land use. To complete the block fronting SR 436, it is proposed to change the four lots to Commercial land use.

The north side of the intersection of Merritt Street and the SunRail tracks is essentially the physical center point of the study area. The We Kare Action Plan identified a near term action of establishing a police substation within the community. The Recommended Scenario proposes changing a portion of the Medium Density Residential land use in this area to Public land use to facilitate that substation.

Winwood Park, the only park in the East Altamonte area, is inadequate to serve the needs of the entire study area based on accessibility (walkshed) and facilities. Although Seminole County has a Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, it relies on private developers and new construction to



fill the gaps in neighborhood parks. However, in areas like the East Altamonte area, a lack of new construction has meant a lack of new open spaces and new facilities.

The Recommended Plan Scenario proposes two neighborhood parks to serve the East Altamonte area - one east of Ronald Reagan Boulevard and one west. The eastern park is proposed on a two block area bounded by Oak Street, Dunbar Street, Jackson Street and Anchor Road, changing the land use from Medium Density Residential and Public to Recreation, with an area on the western boundary proposed for a Public land use. This creates room for a centrally located park with a community center prominently located at the end of Morse Street. A similar park and community center are proposed on the west side of Ronald Reagan Boulevard at the intersection of Oak Avenue and Magnolia Street to serve those neighborhoods.

While parks are shown as short term development, it is understood that the timing of these amenities is based on several factors - exact location of the proposed parks may change based on existing uses, availability of land for purchase, and County funds to purchase and maintain park space. However, the designation of land for parks is important as both an organizing neighborhood element and needed community space and is something that can start being planned for in this time frame.



Figure 20 – Short Term Development (2 – 5 Years)



Intermediate Term (6-10 years)

During the Intermediate Term phase (see Figure 21), the Economic Development Opportunity (EDO) Sub-District of the East Town Vision Plan (the area to the north and east of the SunRail station extending to the City of Altamonte Springs Neighborhood Protection Buffer) is expected to begin coming to life. Portions of the urban infrastructure (roadways, utilities and ponds) will be in place and some construction of mixed use residences is likely occurring in the core surrounding the SunRail station.

East of Ronald Reagan Boulevard, in areas adjacent to the Neighborhood Protection Buffer (south of Merritt Street), an area with Medium Density Residential is proposed to be changed to a High Density Residential land use. This area will act as a transition and complement to the densities of development proposed along the edges of the EDO sub-district. High Density Residential has the following characteristics, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 – High Density Residential Land Use

Future Land Use Designation	Typical Uses	Max. Density/Intensity
High Density Residential (HDR)	Condominium, townhouse, apartment hotel, school, church, nursing home, accessory office uses	20 du/ac

West of Ronald Reagan Boulevard, in an area between Sanford Avenue, Blake Street and Marker Street, Medium Density Residential land use is proposed to be changed to High Density Residential. Further north, in an area north of Magnolia Street and east of Imperial Street, Low Density Residential is proposed to be changed to Medium Density Residential. These changes will bring more density to the area around the park and community center and continue the land use character change (to a more residentially oriented corridor) along Ronald Reagan Boulevard started in the Short Term phase.

North of Merritt Street, between Ronald Reagan Boulevard and the railroad tracks, Medium Density Residential and Public land use is proposed to be changed to Mixed Use Development to allow development of a community core consisting of neighborhood support such as job training, continuing education, health care and social services, as well as a variety of housing choices. Previous studies stressed the need for these services and discussion with residents confirmed the same. This area is adjacent to the EDO sub-district and within a half-mile walk shed radius of the SunRail station. Mixed Development has the following characteristics, shown in Table 6.



Table 6 – Mixed Development Land Use

Future Land Use Designation	Typical Uses	Max. Density/Intensity
Mixed Development (MXD)	Medium and high density residential uses; commercial uses (including retail and office), service uses	30 du/ac; 40 du/ac when min 20% of units are workforce. 0.60 FAR; 0.20 FAR bonus for workforce housing; 0.20 FAR bonus for green certification

Long Term (11+ years)

During the Long Term phase (see Figure 22), development of the EDO sub-district will likely continue to move outward from the core. Because the City of Altamonte Springs is the utility provider in this area, land in the EDO sub-district that is outside the city limits will be brought into the city as development occurs. A mix of residential and non-residential uses will probably be present. Property in the East Altamonte area will likely begin to develop into new uses as the density and intensity around the SunRail station grows.

A section of Medium Density Residential land use between Ronald Reagan Boulevard and Lake Mobile, from Hayman Street on the south to Plumosa Avenue on the north, is proposed to change from a Medium Density Residential land use to High Density land use. This change will complete the changes along the Ronald Reagan Boulevard corridor and provide an area where higher density residential development such as condominiums and townhomes can be located along a major roadway corridor, as well as nursing homes and convalescent centers that would serve the local population and allow aging in place. Facilities for the elderly were one of the often-requested needs voiced at public events during this project.

The parcel north of Merritt Street along Anchor Road will remain as a Planned Development, but the development will be specified as office uses. A masonry wall will be constructed along the back property line to buffer the offices from the established Low Density Residential land use neighborhood directly west.

Overall, the Recommended Plan Scenario is the recommended development option for this project. It provides a mix of neighborhood preservation, redevelopment potential, housing choice expansion, and community services for residents of the East Altamonte area. The land use designation changes are presented in a phased and orderly manner that provides appropriate transitions, amenities and choices so that residents can grow and prosper within their community. The Recommended Plan protects established neighborhoods and provides them with additional amenities and services within walkable distance, creating new community cores and centers.

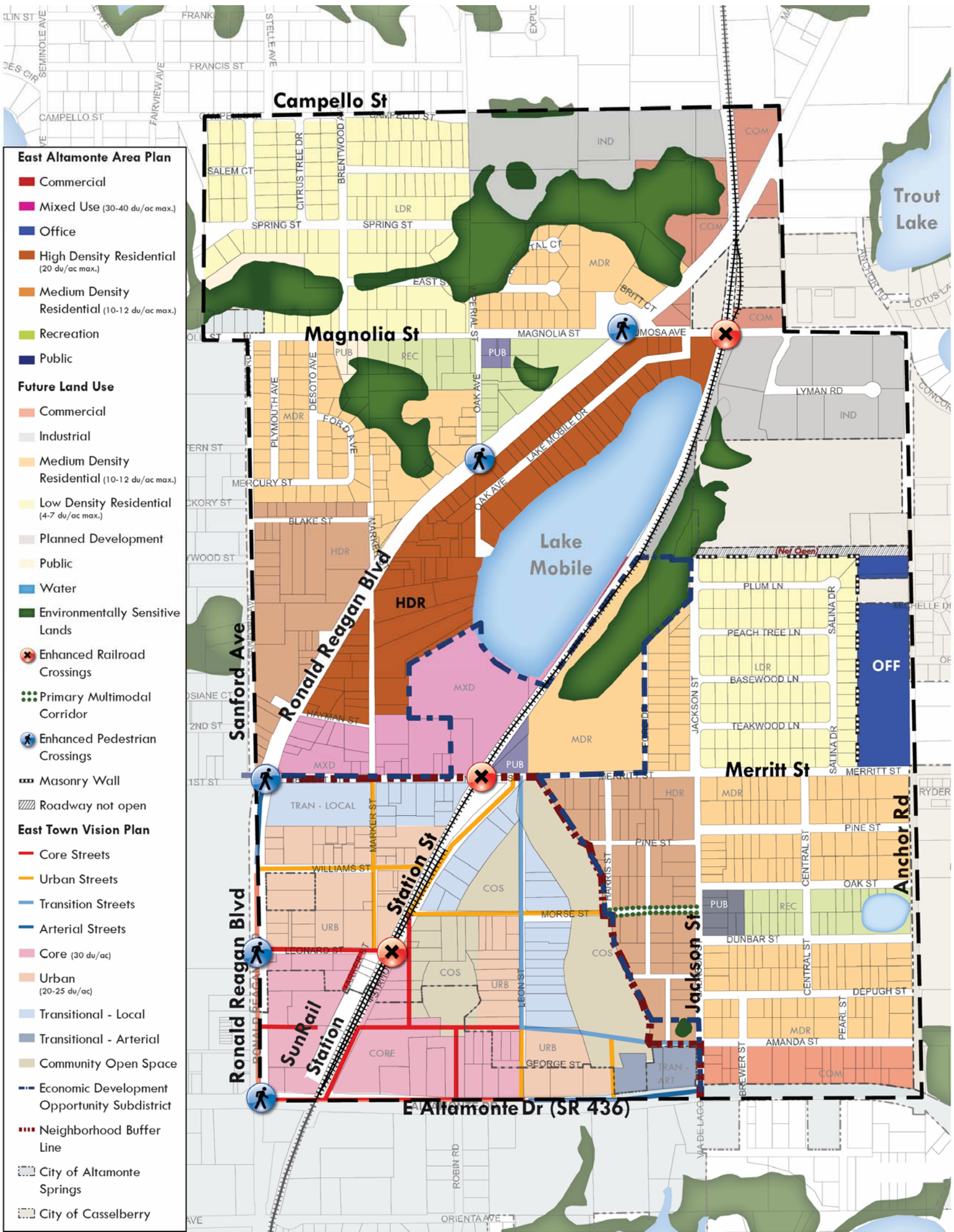
The Recommended Plan Scenario also incorporates a series of connectivity and accessibility improvements (as described in more detail below). These improvements are not only meant to make walking and bicycling easier in general within the East Altamonte area, but to specifically improve connections with the new SunRail station.



Figure 21 – Intermediate Term Development (6 – 10 Years)



Figure 22 – Long-Term Development (11+ Years)



ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

With the opening of the SunRail station and adjacent mixed use development on the horizon, it is imperative that residents in the East Altamonte area have improved accessibility that accommodates the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists and provides a safe and enjoyable experience for all users. The following improvements are suggested to accomplish this:

Streetscape Improvements

Generally speaking, the streetscape is the pedestrian environment along a road corridor. Streetscape features, such as street lights, trees, landscape, signs, and site furnishings can contribute to the character of the block or of the neighborhood, creating a clean and unified look. If streetscapes are comfortable and safe for people, then pedestrian activity along those streets will increase.

A goal for the East Altamonte area is to provide walking routes for residents that connect the different neighborhoods to the SunRail station and adjacent areas. Key streets that are considered primary walking routes and receive streetscape enhancements include Merritt Street, Morse Street, Station Street, Leonard Street, Oak Avenue and Marker Street. With the addition of street lighting, shade trees, sidewalk improvements and seating, these streets will provide a well-defined, safe, connected network of streets that connect the East Altamonte area and provide mobility choices for all users.

Connectivity Improvements

Seminole County has initiated a sidewalk improvement project for an area bounded by Ronald Reagan Boulevard, SR 436, Anchor Road and Merritt Street. The project includes both new sidewalks and upgrade of existing facilities and includes the primary routes from the neighborhoods to the SunRail station. The Recommended Plan Scenario includes similar improvements for the remainder of the study area (see Figure 23) to create a connected sidewalk system, including connections on Station St, Plumosa Avenue, Oak Avenue, Sanford Avenue, and Brentwood Avenue.

Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

A pedestrian crossing is defined as any location where the pedestrian leaves the sidewalk and enters the roadway. Pedestrian safety at crossings relies on the information that is provided to pedestrians. All pedestrians, including people with vision impairments, need the same information. Important information provided in multiple formats (visual, auditory, tactile) benefits all pedestrians since it makes the information more easily recognizable.

As ridership of SunRail increases and development in the EDO sub-district and study area begins, pedestrian activity will increase as well. While there are crosswalks and pedestrian signals at the key intersections in the study area – SR 436/Ronald Reagan Boulevard and Plumosa Avenue/Ronald Reagan Boulevard – there are other pedestrian enhancements that should be implemented to make the experience of crossing a major road safer for all users, including:



- Installing auditory signals to assist people with vision impairments
- Increasing cross time so that people who walk slowly will have sufficient time to cross
- Restricting right turn on red vehicle movement or staggering it with pedestrian crossing
- Enhancing the visibility of crosswalk markings or installing imbedded lights
- Constructing a raised crosswalk
- Installing sensors to prevent traffic lights from changing while a pedestrian is crossing

When the EDO sub-district road network is constructed, there will be a new intersection at SR 436 where Leon Street is extended. The same enhanced treatments as indicated above for major intersections shall be incorporated into this new pedestrian crossing.

Of equal or greater importance is the intersection of Merritt Street and Ronald Reagan Boulevard and the intersection at Galloway Drive and Ronald Reagan Boulevard. There are no traffic signals at these intersections, but they are often-used crossing points. Although these is not an ideal crossing location for many people (such as those that are vision impaired), their continual use calls for crossing improvements to alert motorists, including:

- Installing a marked crosswalk either north or south of the intersection, where a mid-crossing pedestrian refuge island is available. (check which side has the best sight lines)
- Providing flashing signs to warn motorists of pedestrian crossing and reducing traffic speed
- Adding pedestrian crossing signage for vehicle information

Railroad Crossing Improvements

Roads and sidewalks that cross railroad tracks pose potential hazards for all non-motorized users, but particularly for those using wheeled means of transportation (wheelchairs, scooters and bicycles). Tracks and railroad ties that are not flush with the travel surface create a tripping danger and places where the road surface creates a gap with the track greater than 0.5 inches presents a danger of wheel casters getting stuck in the void. This hazard can be reduced by creating an approach ramp with textured rubber surface that is raised to the level of the top of the track rail. The approach should be ramped with minimal grades and be flat on either side of the tracks.

While most of the crossings in the study area currently conform to this design solution, as new sidewalks are constructed, the intersection with railroad tracks should be analyzed and modified as necessary to ensure safe wheeled crossing. Additionally, sight lines and signage should ensure that all users, and particularly those with disabilities affecting hearing, vision, or mobility have adequate warning about the intersection.

Table 7 summarizes the improvement projects discussed in this section:



Table 7 – Proposed Accessibility Improvements

Accessibility Improvement	Location	Notes
Pedestrian Crossing	Ronald Reagan Blvd and Plumosa Ave	Add auditory signal, increase cross time, enhance crosswalk design and visibility
Pedestrian Crossing	Ronald Reagan Blvd and Merritt St	Add crosswalk with mid-block refuge, add flashing sign and pedestrian language
Pedestrian Crossing	Ronald Reagan Blvd and Galloway Dr	Add crosswalk with mid-block refuge, add flashing sign and pedestrian language
Pedestrian Crossing	Ronald Reagan Blvd and SR 436	Add auditory signal, increase cross time, enhance crosswalk design and visibility
Pedestrian Crossing	SR 436 and Leon St	Add auditory signal, increase cross time, enhance crosswalk design and visibility
Sidewalk	Station St	Station St to north side of SunRail station
Sidewalk	Plumosa Ave	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Lyman Rd – north and south sides
Sidewalk	Lake Mobile Dr	Entire length - south side
Sidewalk	Sanford Ave	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Magnolia St – west side gaps
Sidewalk	Blake St and Marker St	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Sanford Ave – south and west sides
Sidewalk	Mercury St	Between Sanford Ave and Desoto Ave – north side
Sidewalk	Plymouth Ave	Between Magnolia St and Mercury St – west side
Sidewalk	Desoto Ave	Between Magnolia St and Mercury St – west side
Sidewalk	Magnolia St	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Sanford Ave – south side
Sidewalk	Oak Ave	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Magnolia St
Sidewalk	Imperial St	Between Magnolia St and Cadillac Ct – east side
Sidewalk	Brentwood Ave	Between Magnolia St and Spring St – west side
Streetscape	Merritt St	Between Anchor Rd and Ronald Reagan Blvd
Streetscape	Station St	Between Merritt St and SR 436
Streetscape	Morse St	Between Station St and Jackson St
Streetscape	Leonard St	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Station St
Streetscape	Marker St	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Leonard St
Streetscape	Oak Ave	Between Ronald Reagan Blvd and Magnolia St



Figure 23 - Connectivity



Implementation Strategies

For TOD to be successful at this station and serve the needs of the surrounding community, it is imperative for the right set of complementary policies, programs, and partnerships need to be put into place. This is a critical step to ensure that the community benefits from the new SunRail station and the future development that is expected to come as the market improves. As outlined in the We Kare plan and reflected in this plan, there are facilities and programs the community needs to enhance its stability and cohesion. These needs includes a community center for meetings, activities and events to complement activities held at the Boys and Girls Club, as well as meeting the community's vocational/training needs, affordable and senior housing, daycare, a sheriff or police substation, and health center, including family checkups and mental health assistance. There are other infrastructure improvements needed, which include sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, stop signs, and paving of dirt roads. Implementing the suggested policies, programs, and facilitating key partnerships will help ensure that anticipated development pressures and private investment in the area provides tangible benefits for the existing community and Seminole County.

POLICIES

TOD Overlay

A Transit Oriented Development overlay surrounding a transit station is intended to foster redevelopment and transform the overall physical character of the streets, the buildings and urban open spaces of a community over time. To be successful here, TOD needs to have the following components:

- A mix of neighborhood-supportive uses
- Transit-supportive development densities/intensities
- Street connectivity with a complementary network of sidewalks, paths and bike facilities
- Open space as a focal point of the station
- Community facilities such as meeting space and parks or playgrounds
- Access to employment, and
- Affordable housing.

A TOD overlay provides a regulatory framework to guide the form of development and support the programs described in the next section that include mixed income housing and community development activities. The overlay provides a policy framework oriented toward making sure TOD occurs in a rational and well-planned manner to the benefit of existing communities within walking distance of the transit station.

The biggest impediment to TOD in this area is likely to be from required transportation improvements associated with the impact of new development on area roadways. As part of the TOD overlay, Seminole County should consider establishing a multimodal transportation district or similar regulatory framework to relax traffic levels of service in favor of providing stronger and more reliable multimodal improvements to facilitate walk, bicycle, and transit access within and to the study area. It is often prohibitively costly for development to fully mitigate its transportation



impacts under conventional concurrency that emphasizes automobile level of service. Examples in Kissimmee and other Florida jurisdictions demonstrate that a multimodal emphasis, particularly for a transit station area, is a more cost-efficient proposition for the development community and better supports the goals and objectives of TOD.

Seminole County does not currently have a TOD overlay policy, although its policies for Energy Conservation and High Intensity Planned Districts contain elements that are appropriate for TOD. It is recommended that the County create such a policy that mirrors the Energy Conservation Overlay to implement for the East Altamonte area surrounding the Altamonte Springs station. This can essentially be the same overlay boundary but with policies addressing the added components of community development improvements and inclusion of a target number of affordable housing units that responds to demand while aligning with the development capacity of the area. As stated in the Housing Analysis section, the local pool of potential demand for affordable housing is substantial: 5,459 family households (age 15-64) and 1,747 senior households (age 65+). Development opportunities in the East Altamonte area cannot physically accommodate all of this potential demand, and not all of these households will be looking to move out of their existing homes. But given that these households have low enough incomes to qualify for subsidized housing programs and are currently paying more than 30 percent of their incomes toward housing (an indicator of unaffordability), there is likely to be significant demand for new affordable housing in East Altamonte. Based on typical industry rules of thumb and the size of the demand pool, a single market-supportable family project would have up to 273-382 units and a single market-supportable elderly project would have up to 87-122 units. Specific land use and zoning regulations will also dictate the size of any new affordable housing developments.

Aging in Community

The East Altamonte community has a large senior population who wish to remain in the community. Twenty six percent of the residents in the East Altamonte area are age 55 and up. This percentage will continue to expand as baby boomers age. Providing housing, services, and infrastructure to support senior residents is needed to ensure that the needs of all residents are met and that risks of social isolation, poverty, declining health, and poor economic well-being are reduced. Consider implementing the policies outlined in the recently published American Planning Association's "Aging in Community" policy guide. This policy guide outlines the provisions of the following:

Affordable Housing

Affordability is a major factor determining where older people live and their quality of life, especially for those with fixed, low-, or extremely-low incomes. The Seminole County Comprehensive Plan, Housing Policy 3.4, explicitly states the need for investment in affordable housing for seniors in East Altamonte. "Affordable housing for the elderly shall be encouraged in the East Altamonte neighborhood to meet the needs of existing residents wishing to remain in that neighborhood."

Access to Transportation

Age-sensitive design and proper maintenance of the transportation system enables persons of all ages and abilities to benefit from system investments. There is a need for safe and direct access to



the SunRail station through complete streets with sidewalks, lighting, and other amenities that improve access for seniors.

Community Engagement

The aging of the population demands a fundamental shift in planning in order to maximize the engagement of older adults and minimize the economic, social and health challenges that will otherwise overwhelm communities. Anticipating this demographic change early facilitates developing key relationships, coordinating critical strategies as well as creating new options.

Land Use

Enabling design standards which respect the varied needs and abilities of older adults can decrease demand for services, increase housing choice, and increase level of functioning, independence, physical activity, social interaction, community involvement, and civic and economic engagement. Older adults often require supportive and enabling living environments to compensate for physical and social changes associated with aging. Parks and recreation facilities and community amenities provide opportunities for not only physical activity, but also social engagement, education, nature study, and environmental awareness.

Economic Well-Being

Older adults and their caregivers represent an under-recognized market segment; serving these groups offers a new business niche that can meet the needs of older adults while at the same time promoting economic development. Older adults continue to work long past traditional retirement age. For many, the supplemental income is critical for reducing poverty.

Community Assets of and Supports

Communities—large and small—where individuals of all ages, identities, and abilities have opportunities to both contribute and receive support and share each other's efforts, talents, and assistance, promote interdependence and connectedness that make people happy and communities resilient. Communities where people of different generations live in proximity, work together and engage in civic activities together, are more sustainable and more resilient. A community's policies, services, settings, and structures support and enable people to age actively in community.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Development is expected to occur in the area as a result of the new SunRail transit station. To capture a portion of that value for the benefit of the community, it is recommended that Seminole County consider some of the implementation programs below as part of changing the Future Land Use and establishing a TOD overlay.

Equitable TOD for Mixed Income and Senior Housing

Equitable TOD is centered on the idea of social equity. All residents should benefit from the addition of a transit station to the neighborhood. Equitable TOD focuses on creating mixed-income communities with connections to employment opportunities, fresh foods, affordable housing and



employment available to everyone. By developing or preserving affordable housing and encouraging jobs to locate near transit, equitable TOD can minimize the burden of housing and transportation costs for low income residents and preserve the neighborhood. Equitable TOD achieves:

- Increases in property values without displacing the residents who would most benefit from the increase
- Greater economic opportunity by creating easier access for low and moderate income households
- A balance between return on investment for private investors and equity goals

Given the history and context of the East Altamonte area, Equitable TOD should be a goal of this transit station area. To support that goal, it is necessary to ensure that affordable housing supply meets demand and other community facilities and infrastructure are provided. There are a number of strategies to support those objectives, both through existing county policies or programs and new ones to consider, as outlined below.

Accessory Dwelling Units

As previously discussed in the Housing Needs Assessment, accessory dwelling units can be an effective affordable housing strategy because their relatively small size and sharing of a lot with another unit mean that they usually rent for less than typical apartments. There are financial benefits for the owner too, through additional income and/or personal or medical services accepted in lieu of cash rent from the accessory unit occupant. The accessory unit can be located within the primary unit as a separate apartment, attached to the primary unit with a separate entrance, or completely separate from the primary unit as a stand-alone cottage.

Accessory dwelling units currently are not permitted by the Seminole County Land Development Code (LDC) in the residential zoning districts present in the East Altamonte area. The LDC would need to be amended to allow such dwelling units in the relevant residential districts. Given the more urban setting and smaller lot sizes of these zoning districts, if accessory dwelling units are to be allowed there are a number of potential issues that the County may wish to consider before implementing this strategy.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

The affordable housing trust fund is a pot of funds provided by HUD's National Housing Trust Fund that grants funds to states for the production and preservation of affordable housing. Seminole County puts its share of the grant funds into an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. According the County Comprehensive Plan, these funds can be used "to purchase and 'write down' the cost of land, impact fees, supporting infrastructure, and other supplement housing delivery costs as a means of encouraging for-profit and nonprofit developers to build and otherwise provide housing for very low and low income households."



Land Bank

Land banks are a popular way for cities to ensure mixed income housing is included in developments surrounding transit stations. Properties are purchased by the County and put into a land bank that is then made available to developers on the conditions they provide affordable housing.

Examples:

The Twin Cities Community Land Bank acquires and banks land for future development and provides discounted lending to support development activity with an emphasis on light rail corridors. Since its creation in 2009, the Land Bank has acquired and/or financed more than 1,000 single family or multifamily housing units. Homes acquired from the Land Bank must be made affordable to homeowners earning no more than 115 percent of AMI or renters earning no more than 80 percent of AMI.

The City of Minneapolis uses Community Development Block Grant funds to acquire and help assemble sites for the development of mixed income rental multifamily projects near “community, commercial, and transit corridors.” The sites are then sold at market value to private developers who agree to make at least 20 percent of the units affordable to households earning 50 percent or less of AMI, and at least 51 percent affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of AMI.

Developer Incentives

Density Bonuses

Density bonuses allow developers to go above a specified density for a project by including a certain percentage of units as affordable. Seminole County allows density bonuses for developers through the Mixed Development Zoning Classification, which allows a residential density of up to 40 units per net buildable acre where a minimum of 20 percent of the project’s units qualify as workforce housing. The maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for nonresidential uses shall be .60 FAR, with a potential FAR bonus, as follows:

- a. A FAR bonus of .20 for projects that qualify as a workforce housing development.
- b. A FAR bonus of .20 for projects that meet the minimum green certification level for the following standards: LEED, Florida Green Building Coalition certification

Reduced Parking Requirements

Minimum parking requirements can burden developers by requiring them to use land for the provision of parking rather than revenue-generating uses. Reducing the number of parking spots required for new developments reduces the burden of the developer to segment enough land for the creation of parking, which can then be used for more development. The Future Land Use Element of the County’s Comprehensive Plan (Policy FLU 4.3) permits the reduction of minimum parking requirements along major transit corridors, and within ½ mile of SunRail stations.



Reduced Impact Fees

Developers are also required to pay impact fees based on the size of their development that will go toward infrastructure improvements. These fees can be reduced or waived by trading the inclusion of affordable housing units, or potentially the construction of a community center or other community amenity.

Example:

Austin, Texas: TOD Ordinance requires station area plans that "include a housing affordability analysis and potential strategies for achieving housing goals." A resolution sets the goal that 25 percent of new rental and ownership housing in each station area is affordable to low- and moderate-income households (affordability targets: 60 percent AMI for rental units, for 30 years, and 80 percent for ownership units, for 10 years). The SMART (Safe, Mixed-Income, Accessible, Reasonably-Priced, Transit-Oriented) Housing program provides development fee waivers and expedited permit reviews to TOD projects with affordable homes. The percentage of fees waived increases with deeper levels of affordability, up to 100 percent of fees waived for projects if 40 percent of units are affordable.

Property Tax Abatement

Another developer incentive is to waive property taxes for a specified amount of time in return for including a certain amount of affordable units in a development or the construction of a particular community amenity.

Example:

Portland: Offers a 10-year TOD Property Tax Abatement to projects that include housing above a certain density and include community benefits like affordable units or neighborhood meeting space.

Special Assessment Districts

In each of these cases, a special fee or tax is levied on the defined area to generate a source of funds to be used for improvements in the area. Considering that much of the East Altamonte station area is low-income, it is not recommended to implement such measures, which would place an additional undue cost burden on existing residents.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

This is done by creating a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) in a blighted area that can implement a tax increment financing district. The TIF allocates the future increase in property taxes above a base value for property within the defined area toward allowable redevelopment activities. The incremental taxes received by the TIF district can be used in the CRA for improvements to infrastructure and other purposes. The County Commission has become concerned about the impact of Community Redevelopment Areas on revenues to support countywide programs for the remainder of the unincorporated area. Therefore, the creation of a new CRA may not be a viable option from a policy perspective.



In lieu of formally establishing a CRA for the purposes of TIF, some communities have established a “synthetic TIF,” which is simply a policy agreement to allocate a share of future tax revenues received from a given area toward projects within the same area. A synthetic TIF is easier to create and administer, but carries no formal commitment to allocate revenues back to the area for a specific term like a traditional CRA/TIF.

Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)

Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes describes the objectives, abilities, and creation of Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NID). NIDs have a variety of powers, such as control of funds legally available to it, purchase of properties, contracting with consultants, and community policing, to name a few. It allows the community to have more control over the future of the area and the development that can occur.

They are also able to impose a special assessment or levy an additional property tax up to a certain amount in its defined area, by referendum, to pay for improvements to the district and for reasonable expenses of operating the district. Special assessments shall not exceed \$500 per individual parcel of land per year. However, in this case, since the community is largely low income, a special assessment would place a burden on those struggling to make rent or mortgage payments.

Pros:

- Community-appointed board to expend collected funds
- Community has control over what projects are implemented

Cons:

- Levied assessment applies to all properties in the defined area. There is no way to only apply tax to new development

Community Development District (CDD)

Chapter 190 of the Florida Statutes allows the creation of CDDs. This is essentially an alternative to municipal incorporation for managing and financing infrastructure required to support development of a community. They are governed by a board of five members elected by the landowners of the district. CDDs have the power to levy increased taxes or a special assessment on the district. CDDs also have the power to issue bonds to borrow money for the construction of infrastructure or provision of services. The powers of a CDD include the following defined set of services and facilities:

- Water management and control
- Water supply, sewer, and wastewater management
- Bridges and culverts
- District roads and street lights
- Public transportation and parking
- Investigation and remediation of environmental contamination
- Conservation areas, parks and recreational facilities



- Fire prevention and control
- School buildings and related structures
- Security, but not the exercise of any police power
- Waste collection & disposal
- Mosquito control

Community Benefit Agreement

Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) are legally-binding documents that address a range of community issues specifically identified by the community. It is a mutually-beneficial, project-specific agreement between a developer and a broad community coalition that outlines the ways that the development will benefit the community through projects desired by the community. This ensures community support for the project. In this case, no special assessment or tax is levied.

Multiparty Development Agreements is a policy under Seminole County's Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Comprehensive Plan. This states that "the County shall continue to seek multiparty agreements (e.g., City/County/developer agreements) as a means to expedite facility improvements and reduce public costs."

Implementing this kind of program will help to create equitable TOD. CBAs allow a win-win approach to development: meaningful, up-front communication between the developer and a broad community coalition decreases developers' risk while maximizing the positive impact of development on local residents and economies. The developer benefits from active community support of the project, and the community has their specific needs met. Through this method, the community will receive concrete benefits from new development in a legally-binding contract.

In order to be meaningful, a CBA must incorporate concerns from a wide variety of stakeholders that come together as one coalition, and must lead to contributions from the developer and support for the project from coalition members that would not have emerged in the absence of CBA negotiations. Being able to foster good communication and good faith with both the developer and local government officials will help pave the way to a successful negotiation.

Because the area immediately surrounding the station is what will likely see development first, partnering with the City of Altamonte Springs to create a development agreement with developers in their portion of the station area will be critical. Altamonte Springs is using land in unincorporated Seminole County to provide stormwater utilities to support their future development around the station, which will benefit both incorporated and unincorporated areas. The County can work with the City to build a partnership to ensure that CBAs are included with new developments and facilitate a win-win for all parties.

Pros:

- Community has their needs met in a legally-binding contract
- Community coalition is representative of the community's needs
- It is a transparent process



Cons:

- Agreements need to be made for each new development that comes in
- Inadequate organizing can make agreements weaker and set a poor precedent for future projects
- Legal expenses: the community will likely need to hire its own attorney

A Community Benefit Agreement for the East Altamonte station area should include provisions of:

- Mixed income and elderly housing – enough to meet the demand referenced in the Housing Study
- First-right of current residents and land owners to purchase or lease affordable housing included in new developments
- Community development activities:
 - Community center
 - Vocational/training center
 - Health center
 - Recreation facility
 - Neighborhood-serving retail
 - Daycare
 - Sheriff or police substation
 - Sidewalks
 - Lighting
 - Crosswalks
 - Stop signs
 - Road paving

Other Funding Programs

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is an entitlement grant provided by HUD. The grant is distributed directly to certain communities based on population, poverty level, age of housing stock, and other information provided by the United States Census. The primary purpose of the CDBG program is to provide services that principally benefit low income citizens and to develop viable urban communities. The CDBG Program's National Objectives are:

- To benefit low and moderate income persons
- To address slum/blight influences
- To meet a recent urgent community need

Seminole County's CDBG Program sets forth goals to improve designated county neighborhoods, by providing activities such as:

- Capital Improvements: Paving and drainage, sewer & water line improvements, construction of sidewalks, limited park improvements, construction and/or improvements to community facilities



- Affordable Housing Development: Site acquisition and infrastructure
- Housing Rehabilitation/Reconstruction: Extensive or emergency home rehabilitation
- Clearance/Demolition: Demolition of vacant, dilapidated structures
- Parks and Recreation: Improvements to designated neighborhood parks
- Public Services: Child care, services for the elderly, child care assistance, rent assistance, etc.

As previously mentioned, the East Altamonte area is designated as a community development target area for Seminole County. CDBG funds are used in target areas to provide infrastructure, housing, community service, and financing options to stabilize and revitalize target areas. The County Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element states that:

“Policy FLU 9.2 Neighborhood Redevelopment Plans: The County shall continue to implement Community Development Block Grant funded revitalization plans prepared for community development target areas. These plans may specify changes to land use and/or zoning, and may identify improvements to infrastructure, housing, community service, and financing options to stabilize and revitalize target areas.”

The overall goal of the County's program is to stabilize and revitalize low income neighborhoods through capital improvement, housing rehabilitation, and public service activities. Citizen participation is encouraged through public hearings and neighborhood meetings whereby current activities are discussed and new proposals and project suggestions are considered for the annual CDBG one year action plan.

Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program

The HOME Program is an entitlement grant provided by HUD. HOME provides funding to Seminole County to implement local housing strategies in order to increase affordable housing opportunities & availability for lower income households. Through this program, Seminole County is able to expand the supply of affordable housing, and particularly rental housing. The goal of the HOME Program is the preservation, expansion and long-term affordability of housing stock. Its activities include:

- Rental Housing Development: Rental housing activities under HOME are undertaken by Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and other agencies. Eligible activities are site acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable multi-family rental housing.
- Rental Guidelines: The HOME Program provides restrictions on the composition of the tenants and the rents owners can charge. Resale restrictions are enforced to ensure long-term affordability requirements.
- Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA): This activity is targeted to special needs populations by providing rental assistance similar to the Section 8 program. Households are required to make a monthly contribution.

A Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) is a non-profit organization specifically designed for the HOME Program. A minimum of 15% of the total HOME allocation is reserved for CHDOs. Once funding is awarded, the CHDO will enter into legal agreements with Seminole County specifying HOME rental housing activities to be carried out and requirements such as the number of years that the project must remain affordable, management control, financial and



record keeping. CHDO projects are awarded funding on a competitive basis. Public/Private Partnership is encouraged through the use of CHDOs for selected rental housing and rehabilitation activities.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

The Seminole County Neighborhood Stabilization Program was established for the purpose of stabilizing neighborhoods suffering from foreclosures, short sales and abandonment. Seminole County received over \$11 million and is implementing two strategies for the use of NSP funds, including property acquisition and rehabilitation for resale to income eligible home buyers, and rental acquisition and rehabilitation to support the need for affordable rental housing stock.

NSP grantees develop their own programs and funding priorities. However, NSP grantees must use at least 25 percent of the funds appropriated for the purchase and redevelopment of abandoned, short sale, or foreclosed homes or residential properties that will be used to house individuals or families whose incomes do not exceed 50 percent of the area median income. In addition, all activities funded by NSP must benefit low, moderate, and middle income persons whose income does not exceed 120 percent of area median income.

NSP funds may be used for activities which include, but are not limited to:

- Establish financing mechanisms for purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed, short sale, or abandoned homes and residential properties
- Purchase and rehabilitate homes and residential properties that are abandoned, foreclosed, or short sold
- Establish land banks for foreclosed homes
- Demolish blighted structures
- Redevelop demolished or vacant properties

PARTNERSHIPS

For the recommendations presented in this report to work, strong partnerships must be in place with a variety of partners, including other government entities, developers, non-profits, and the community. Partnerships will be needed to carry the recommended policy forward.

Community Partnerships

Seminole County and the East Altamonte Community

The East Altamonte community has a strong neighborhood identity, a number of churches, and lifelong residents. They are the most critical component of carrying the recommendations of this plan forward. Through this planning process, the community has been involved and relationships have been formed or sustained. It is recommended to enhance these partnerships and foster stronger relationships with the community members.

Station branding is one way to continue a partnership with the community. The East Altamonte community has a rich history with several generations of families living the community. This can be



leveraged into developing an identity for the station that displays the history of East Altamonte. The County should work with the community or partner with the South Seminole County Association for Progress to fully-engage the community in this effort. Guidance should be provided but this should largely be a community-driven process. Branding this station based on the history of the community may lead to feelings of ownership and pride for residents, and protect the identity of the community in the wake of the coming new development.

Intergovernmental Partnerships

There are a couple key intergovernmental partnerships that are recommended to be created or supported for equitable TOD to occur in this station area. Multiparty Development Agreements is a policy under Seminole County's Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Policy IGC 1.2). This states that "the County shall continue to seek multiparty agreements (e.g., City/County/developer agreements) as a means to expedite facility improvements and reduce public costs."

Seminole County and the City of Altamonte Springs

The most critical intergovernmental partnership will be between the City of Altamonte Springs and Seminole County. This will be critical to support the community benefit agreements discussed in the previous section. The overlap of city and county boundaries and planning areas surrounding the Altamonte Springs SunRail station warrant the need for coordination on coming developments. This partnership will help to facilitate discussions on extending utilities in the county for future development, as well as to guide discussions on voluntary annexation if residents desire.

A Joint Planning Agreement (JPA) is one way to do this. A JPA is an agreement between two jurisdictions on how a specific area will grow and how the review of the growth will be conducted. This could be helpful in reviewing future developments that will come through. Though development may occur in the Altamonte Springs portion of the station area, this will still affect the residents living in the unincorporated portion of the area. They should be able to have a say in how their community changes and what benefits they will receive.

Seminole County and Seminole County School Board

There is also an opportunity to partner with the School Board, which owns the vacant Rosenwald School. For many years, residents of the community have been in talks with the School Board and County officials to reuse the school as a community facility. Many residents feel a connection to the school, because either they or their relatives attended the school when it was open. Preserving this historic asset and turning it into a community facility residents can use will greatly benefit the community.

The Comprehensive Plan Intergovernmental Policy on Co-location of Facilities states: "The County and the School Board of Seminole County shall continue to coordinate regarding co-location of public facilities, such as parks, libraries, and community centers, with schools to the greatest extent possible. The County shall encourage the School Board of Seminole County to establish or renew cooperative agreements as may be beneficial to the public at large to jointly purchase, develop,



maintain, or operate specific properties or facilities such as recreation facilities, libraries, community centers, playgrounds, and emergency shelters.”

Public – Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships are a commonly used way to implement projects, achieve mutually beneficial goals, and provide community benefits. They provide an excellent way to extend funds invested by two or more entities to achieve a desired project or program outcome.

Seminole County and Hospitals/Health Providers

The East Altamonte community is in need of a community health center that residents can easily access. Health providers are good partners in creating programs or providing funding to provide services and centers in communities in need. Florida Hospital has a location in Altamonte Springs, just a half-mile west of the station area on Altamonte Drive. A partnership with this neighbor could be a good start to getting East Altamonte residents the accessible health care they need, even if provided on a periodic basis, such as one or two days per week in the community.

There is potential to create a multi-use health and life safety center that combines a community health clinic with a fire station or police or sheriff substation building. A police or sheriff substation is identified in the We Kare Plan as a need for the community, and the combination of services in one building can reduce costs. A community health center combined with a fire station is under construction in Hayward, California. It was created under the idea that fire stations are generally under-used facilities with firefighters either waiting around or out fighting fires.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has several grant or funding programs to bring health centers and services to underserved areas. Community-based prevention includes a series of programs to increase investment in the public health infrastructure. The primary source of funding for these programs is from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF). The Health Centers grant includes funding for federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), the National Health Service Corps, and school-based health centers. FQHCs are federally-funded clinics (also called community health centers), which focus on providing primary care in underserved areas. The ACA provided FQHCs with \$11 billion for patient services, construction, and renovation. The National Health Service Corps, which brings health professionals to underserved areas, was given \$1.5 billion. School-based health centers, which connect medical services to students directly in schools, were given \$200 million over four years.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a Healthy Communities Grant Program that works with communities to reduce environmental risks to protect and improve human health and the quality of life. It is a competitive grant program that awards funds annually, in the amount of \$25,000 each. The grant will achieve its goals through identifying and funding projects that:

- Target resources to benefit communities at risk
- Assess, understand, and reduce environmental and human health risks
- Increase collaboration through community-based projects
- Build institutional and community capacity to understand and solve environmental and human health problems



- Achieve measurable environmental and human health benefits
- Advance emergency preparedness and resilience

The Aetna Foundation provides community grants to nonprofits to help create healthier lifestyles. Aetna has a grant program called, the New Digital Health Initiative, to support the use of digital health technology, including mobile health or mHealth, among vulnerable and minority populations. The grants are part of a larger \$4 million, three-year digital health commitment from the Aetna Foundation for the implementation and evaluation of technology innovations to help address public health concerns.

Seminole County and Seminole State College

One of the goals of the station area plan is to connect East Altamonte residents with higher paying job opportunities. While SunRail access and improved local connectivity will help physically get residents to job locations, their ability to actually obtain a job will be determined partly by their educational attainment and/or possession of necessary skills. As noted earlier in this report, there is a mismatch between the education level of many of the higher paying jobs accessible via SunRail or in the local area and the education level of many existing East Altamonte area residents. Closing this gap will call for innovative strategies and partnerships to deliver education and training resources to East Altamonte.

Seminole State College is an important resource, and its Altamonte Springs campus focuses on adult education and healthcare industry training, along with general education programs. Located at 850 State Road 434, the campus offers Associate degrees in Physical Therapy assistance, as well as certification for Respiratory Therapy, Nursing, Medical Coding and other jobs needed in the growing medical/institutional employment sector in Seminole County. The main campus of Seminole State College (located at the Lake Mary campus and accessible via SunRail and LYNX bus) offers Bachelor of Science degrees in Engineering Technology (valuable to modern industry such as Laser Photonics), and Construction, as well as certifications in skilled technical work that continues to be needed as Seminole County grows. These skills include many that are greatly in demand in the construction sector of the economy. Seminole State also has a joint program with the U.S. Small Business Administration. Training programs and other aids are available to assist entrepreneurs who desire to establish a small business in the East Altamonte Study Area.

Convenient transit connections from the East Altamonte area to the campus are a starting point in building a connection. Partnerships between the college, Seminole County, and charitable or nonprofit organizations could potentially be used to deliver programs at a convenient location within the East Altamonte area, either at an existing community facility such as the Boys & Girls Club or a new facility. Seminole County also may be able to fund job training programs using CDBG resources or other community services funding. Given the strong presence of healthcare employment near the Altamonte Springs SunRail station and the two hospital stations, there may be opportunities to develop partnerships with Florida Hospital and Orlando Health that would provide training and job placement programs tailored to the needs of the East Altamonte community. Seminole County can also reach out to other major employers that are located near SunRail stations to explore potential job placement opportunities. The County could take the lead in outreach and coordination with employers and public or nonprofit organizations that can identify the skills needed and



resources available for creating programs that are directly linked to the workforce needs of employers that can be reached by riding SunRail.

Conclusion

The addition of a SunRail station to the East Altamonte area presents both a great challenge and a great opportunity for the community. Rail transit service can spur real estate development and help create nodes of commercial, residential, and other land uses in a compact walkable form. Being able to live, work, and shop within walking distance of a SunRail station can allow people to live without having to own a car, or to reduce the amount of driving they do. Yet the residents of the East Altamonte community have expressed a lack of trust in public agencies and confusion over various plans developed to aid the community. There is a strong concern expressed about possible displacement from long established homes as development pressures grow in the future as SunRail becomes a more successful and prominent part of the region's transportation network.

This report outlines the key actions needed to ensure SunRail provides lasting value to the East Altamonte community and Seminole County as a whole by developing a plan framework to guide access and opportunity for higher paying jobs, expand housing options, improve connectivity in the neighborhood and invest in key community development strategies that will deliver needed services to residents. The goals of the plan entail capturing the value of the SunRail investment to boost economic opportunity and facilitate compatible development for needed housing, services, parks and public facilities that make a great neighborhood.

The recommended plan is a compromise between keeping the existing community relatively the same while ensuring that the development that does occur helps to meet the community's needs, complements the community scale and character, is in the appropriate locations, and benefits the community. The recommendations outlined in this report will additionally help to ensure that:

- Affordable housing needs are met
- Access to employment is improved
- Community facilities are provided

There are numerous policy and program considerations to support this. Key partnerships will need to be formed or strengthened to ensure TOD works at this station and benefits the existing community. The specific actions to implement this plan entail changing the County's Future Land Use Element and advancing key Capital Improvement Program projects with funding for community development activities that meet the needs of area residents. Funding can come from a variety of sources, but leveraging future development and strengthening existing and fostering new partnerships are essential ingredients of success.

The next steps are to continue building relationships and partnerships, amending the Future Land Use Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and implementing the community development policies, programs, and partnerships recommended in this plan. One of the key first steps will be to facilitate a meeting among key leadership from the East Altamonte community, Seminole County, Altamonte Springs, FDOT, and other related parties to build consensus on how this area will grow. This will build a foundation upon which equitable development surrounding the new SunRail station



preserves the neighborhood character and also benefits both Seminole County and the City of Altamonte Springs.

