

SOCIOCULTURAL EFFECTS EVALUATION TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

**Widen Florida's Turnpike (SR 91)
from South of Kissimmee Park Road to US 192
MP 238.5 to MP 242.5
Osceola County**

FPID No.: 441224-1-22-01

**Prepared for:
Florida's Turnpike Enterprise**

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I. Introduction

Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate alternatives for the widening of Florida's Turnpike (SR 91) from south of Kissimmee Park Road to US 192 in Osceola County, a distance of approximately 4 miles. The project consists of widening Florida's Turnpike, from four to eight-lanes, and the evaluation of modifications to the existing Kissimmee Park Road and US 192 interchanges.

The Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE) process ensures that transportation projects comply with FDOT Policy Statement 000-650-015 (SCE Evaluation Policy), which states:

"It is the policy of the Florida Department of Transportation to work proactively with communities in implementing the principles, concepts and philosophy of Sociocultural Effects Evaluation throughout the transportation project development process. Transportation facilities and services make an important contribution to a community's economy and quality of life. Understanding the vision, goals and objectives, and the values of a community's citizenry is essential to providing effective, community-based solutions to transportation while addressing appropriate community concerns."

This SCE is prepared in accordance with the FDOT PD&E Manual, Part 2, Chapter 4, published January 14, 2019. The purpose of this SCE is to document potential occurrence of six sociocultural issues (social, economic, land use, mobility, aesthetics, and relocation) within the alternatives of the study.

- Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to increase capacity of the Turnpike Mainline (SR 91) and interchange at Kissimmee Park Road to accommodate future traffic volumes generated by anticipated growth and development in Osceola County, Florida.

Population and employment projections referenced in MetroPlan Orlando's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (Blueprint 2040) indicate that the population of Osceola County is expected to grow from 350,542 to 609,025 (74% growth) between 2015 and 2040. Employment is projected to grow from 96,460 jobs to 269,821 jobs (180% growth) between 2015 and 2040. The project area is expected to experience a portion of this growth directly, due to several planned developments in the vicinity of the project, including the Edgewater Development of Regional Impact (DRI), Toho Preserves Subdivision, and the Tohoqua Subdivision. Edgewater DRI has a buildout date of 2027 and maximum buildout potential of 7,000 single and multi-family residential units, and 507,000 square feet of retail space in mixed-use community centers. Preliminary Subdivision Plans for Toho Preserves and Tohoqua were approved by Osceola County in 2015 and 2016, respectively. These subdivisions are located west of Florida's Turnpike mainline and north of the Kissimmee Park Road Interchange. Tohoqua and Toho Preserves, combined, are approved for approximately 650 lots on 317 acres of land.

Future traffic projections for the project area show that peak hour traffic volumes will increase, on average, 275% during the AM peak period and 136% during the PM peak period from 2016 to 2045, under No Build conditions. Directional Design Hourly Volume (DDHV) estimates indicate that Florida's Turnpike mainline north of Kissimmee Park Road will operate at Level of Service

(LOS) F by the year 2030, and the ramps to and from the north at the Kissimmee Park Road interchange will operate at LOS F by the year 2032 under no-build conditions.

- **Conceptual Alternatives**

Originally five build alternatives were considered at the beginning of the PD&E study that included interchange improvements along the corridor. They included the No-Build Alternative and Alternatives 1, 2, 3a, 3b, and 4. Alternatives 1, 2, and 3a were eliminated during preliminary stages of traffic analysis as they did not meet future traffic demands. Alternatives 3b and 4 were carried forward to further analysis for consideration, and are currently the primary alternatives. Throughout the remainder of this document, Alternative 3b is referred to as Alternative 1 and Alternative 4 is referred to as Alternative 2, respectively.

Alternative 1 will add capacity to Florida's Turnpike through the addition of travel lanes from south of Kissimmee Park Road to US 192. The Turnpike will be widened, to the median, from the existing 4-lane section (2 lanes in each direction) to an ultimate 8-lane section (4 lanes in each direction). This alternative includes modifications to the existing Kissimmee Park Road interchange and direct connections between Florida's Turnpike and Old Canoe Creek Road, located approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of Kissimmee Park Road. The existing Kissimmee Park Road interchange only provides northbound on-ramp and southbound off-ramp connections with the Turnpike. The interchange improvements will add a southbound on-ramp and northbound off-ramp as well as modifications to the existing ramps. This alternative also includes a proposed southbound on-ramp from US 192 at the existing US 192 partial interchange.

Alternative 2 will add capacity to Florida's Turnpike through the addition of travel lanes from south of Kissimmee Park Road to US 192. The Turnpike will be widened, to the median, from the existing 4-lane section (2 lanes in each direction) to an ultimate 8-lane section (4 lanes in each direction). This alternative has a proposed new Turnpike interchange at an extension of W. New Nolte Road, located approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile north of Kissimmee Park Road. This new interchange will provide all directional access to and from the Turnpike. The existing ramps at the Kissimmee Park Road interchange will be removed, however the overpass will remain for local access. The proposed interchange features a diverging diamond configuration, which offers improved capacity with a smaller footprint. Direct connections between Florida's Turnpike and Old Canoe Creek Road will be located approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of Kissimmee Park Road. The alternative also includes a proposed southbound on-ramp from US 192 at the existing US 192 partial interchange.

The No-Build Alternative is also considered by FTE for this corridor; it assumes that no improvement to capacity, safety or intersections are proposed. No further evaluation of sociocultural impacts is provided for the No-Build Alternative.

II. Community Characteristics

Dewberry has analyzed the proposed improvements to avoid disproportionately high or adverse effects to any populations identified in the project areas described above. Where impacts are unavoidable, special public outreach will be undertaken to involve the affected population in the decisions regarding the alternatives, including mitigation, if needed. A Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan will be prepared for this project provided that any potential right-of-way (ROW) acquisition results in necessary relocations.

The project is being developed in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1968, along with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice).

III. Potential Effects

A. Social

- Demographics

The American Community Survey (ACS) 2017 Five-Year Projections data was used to formulate this SCE Technical Memorandum. The data includes population and income for the study area, housing characteristics, minority populations, and geographic distribution.

Population and Income. Nearly 12,293 households were assessed in the study area for income across seven census tracts. The median household income for 12 consecutive months in 2017 was \$49,421 within the study area (ACS 2017 Five Year Projections). Of the households surveyed for income, 12% were found to be below the poverty level.

Minority Population. Minority populations comprise a significant percentage of residents within Census block groups located in the study area. For example, between 26.1-34% of the population residing in communities southeast of Florida's Turnpike (SR 91) and Kissimmee Park Road interchange identified themselves as racial minorities (see Figure 1).

Limited English Proficiency (LEP). LEP households are concentrated in Census tracts overlapping Old Canoe Creek Road and the communities overlapping the Florida's Turnpike (SR 91) and US 192 interchange area (see Figure 2). Of the households surveyed and determined to be LEP households, the highest LEP percentages range from 28.1–34% for Spanish-speaking LEP households. The Public Involvement efforts will include provisions for LEP households.

- Community Cohesion.

Neighborhoods. There are several residential neighborhoods within or adjacent to the 500-foot buffer. These include Amber Pointe, a single-family development located between the Turnpike and US 192; Emerald Lake Colony, a single-family development in the northwest corner of the interchange between US 192 and the Turnpike; Jefferson Green at Anthem Park, a single family home development east of the Turnpike; Teka Village, an age-restricted (55+) manufactured-home community located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection between Kissimmee Park Road and Old Canoe Creek Road; and Whaley's Landing, comprised of lots located southeast of the intersection of the Turnpike and Kissimmee Park Road. With the current build alternatives, impacts to the community cohesion is rated low.

Figure 1: Percent of Population Identified as Minority (ACS 2017)

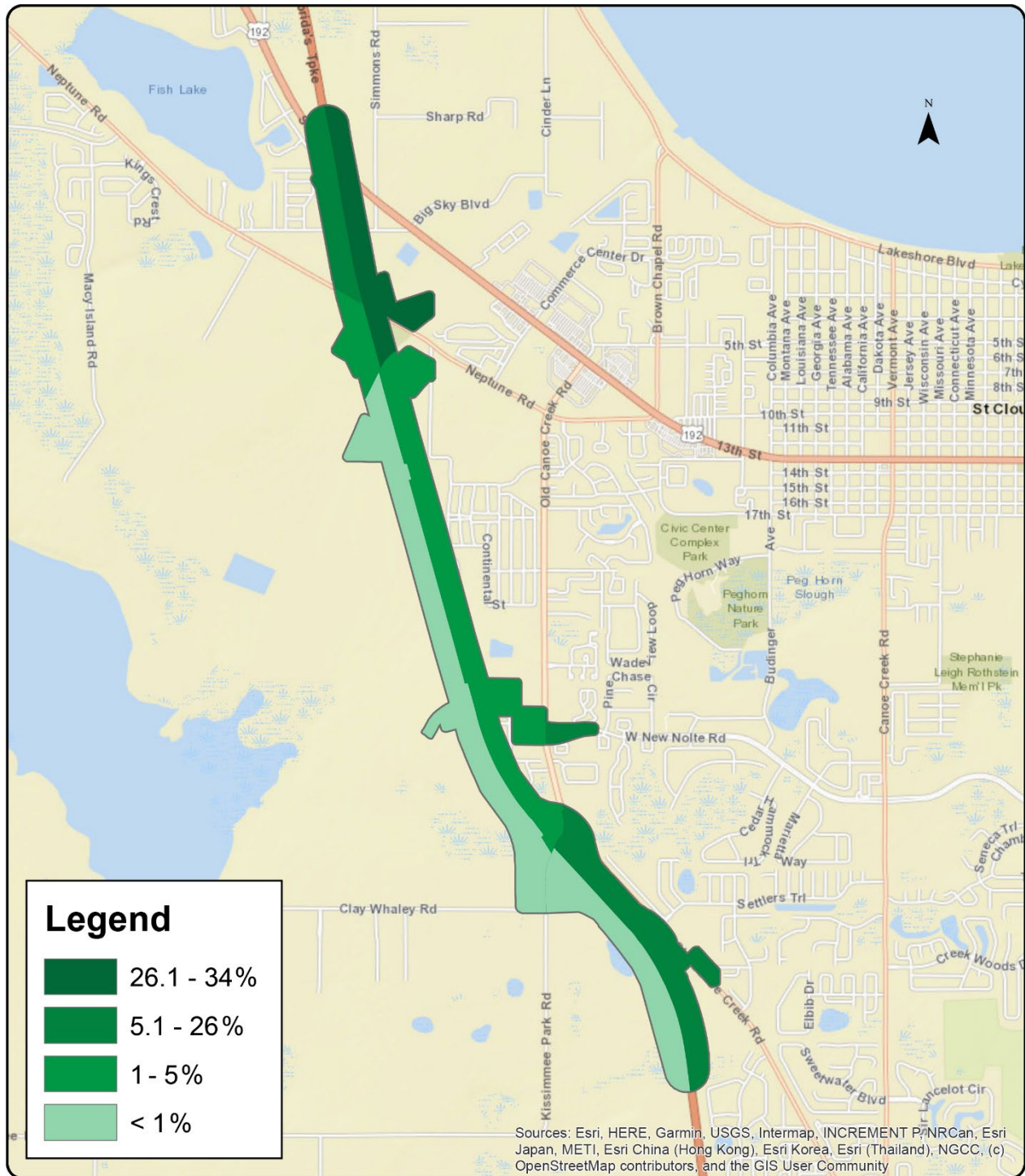
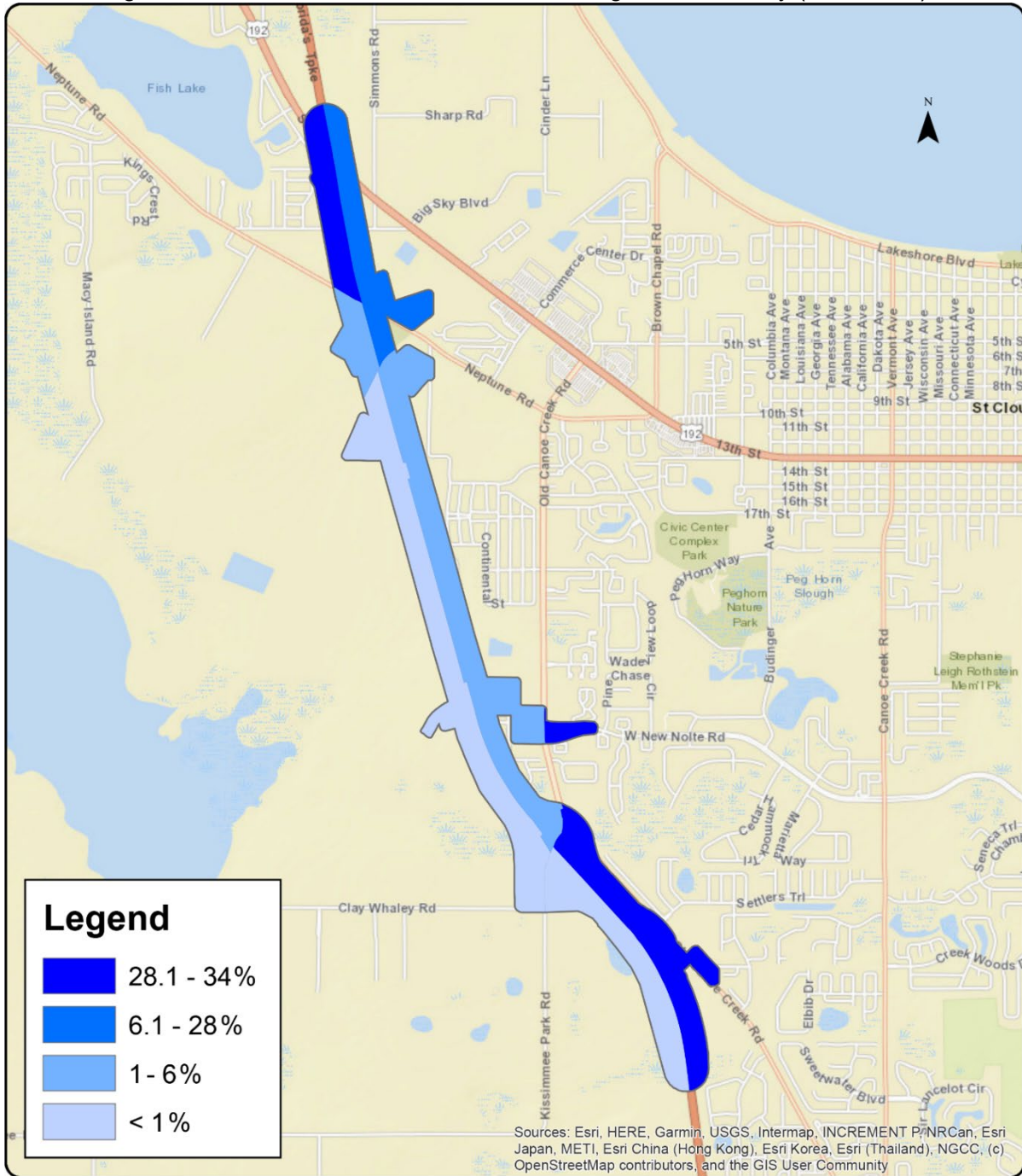


Figure 2: Percent Households with Limited English Proficiency (ACS 2017)



Special Community Designation. Religious facilities, schools and institutional buildings, and government facilities are located within the 500-ft buffer of the project alternatives. Parcel and lot owners within this buffer include various departments of Osceola County, and Osceola County Public Schools. Neptune Elementary, located within the City Limits of St. Cloud, and Neptune Middle School, located at the southwest corner of the Turnpike and US 192 interchange are located within the study area. Osceola County Road & Bridge Office, Osceola County Animal Services and a branch office for the South Florida Water Management District are located on adjacent parcels along Old Canoe Creek Road, near the Kissimmee Park Road interchange. Potential impacts to these facilities is rated low.

Community - Religious Facilities. Journey Bible Fellowship Church, located at 3220 Old Canoe Creek Road, and City of Life, a religious center located at the intersection of Florida's Turnpike and US 192 are two religious facilities within the study area. Potential impacts to these facilities is rated low.

- Safety

A total of three Safety/Emergency Response facilities and two government services facilities were identified. Fire Station 32 is one, out of three, of the City of St. Cloud's Fire Rescue locations. Operations are spread across two parcels, one of which is within the buffer zone. Facilities are adjacent to neighborhoods such as Teka Village and Sawyer Estates northeast of the Kissimmee Park Rd and Old Canoe Creek Rd.

The Osceola County Emergency Management Complex provides a comprehensive, all hazards emergency management system of prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation for the County. Operations include Fire Rescue, and the Complex is adjacent to the Osceola Sheriff's Office. Alternative 1 impacts a parcel planned for expansion of a St. Cloud fire station. Alternative 2, the preferred alternative does not impact this parcel. While the potential for impacts to their facilities is rated low, with the exception noted, coordination with the City of St. Cloud and Osceola County will be required.

- Special Community Designations

Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The Turnpike corridor intersects the Tohoqua and Edgewater Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs), with close proximity to the Bella Tara DRI.

The Tohoqua DRI is a development consisting of; a maximum of 3,220 mixed residential units, a maximum of 150,000 square feet of retail/services and office use, 30,000 square feet of institutional/civic uses, and up to 300 hospitality suites. This DRI is significant to the project because it is positioned within or adjacent to pedestrian/bike trails, a regional drainage and flood control facility, an elementary school, and intersects a transit corridor.

The Edgewater Development of Regional Impact is a mixed use development of approximately 2,972 acres. The development includes: a maximum of 7,000 single and multi-family residential units and 507,000 sq. ft. of retail services to include a mixed-use community center. This development includes close proximity to pedestrian/bike facilities, stormwater treatment facilities, community centers, multiple school sites and is adjacent to transit stops. The preferred alternative will require ROW within the DRI limits. A portion of the DRI was recently purchased by a developer and coordination is on-going.

B. Economic

- Business and Employment

The project is expected to have a beneficial effect on businesses within the study area by improving capacity and access. The following table depicts the largest commercial parcels within the study area. St. Cloud Commons is a shopping center located off Turnpike Exit 244 and is one of the largest employers within the project area. Other employers include the WWRH Osceola 3, otherwise known as Florida Limited Liability, and U-Haul.

Owner Name	Location / Address	Parcel Area	Use Type
U-Haul Co of Florida	E Irlo Bronson Mem Hwy	3.3+ acres	Commercial
WWRH Osceola 3, LLC	E Irlo Bronson Mem Hwy	3.37 acres	Commercial
St. Clouds Commons, LTD	E Irlo Bronson Mem Hwy	29 acres	Commercial

The interchange will improve access to the Edgewater DRI, which includes a commercial center and schools.

- Traffic Patterns

This area has a large number of commuters to work centers in Orlando. The existing Kissimmee Park Road interchange ramps, and corresponding intersections, experience significant congestion during the morning (northbound) and afternoon (southbound) peak periods. The southbound off-ramp to Kissimmee Park Road exiting traffic often backs up into the southbound Turnpike travel lanes during the afternoon peak, creating a serious safety issue. In addition, the existing interchange does not provide a southbound on-ramp to the Turnpike or northbound off-ramp from the Turnpike. The preferred alternative will address the current, and future, traffic demands as well as provide full access to and from the Turnpike.

C. Land Use Changes

- Land Use

Existing land uses within the study area include Rural/Agricultural, Low Density Residential, Mixed Use, and areas designated as “Incorporated” uses (see Figures 3 and 4). The potential impacts from the build alternatives included parcels zoned within Agricultural, Mixed Use, and Planned Units of Development Districts (see Figure 5). Their defined future land uses include Medium Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Mixed Use, and Agricultural uses.

- Plan Consistency

MetroPlan. The MetroPlan Orlando 2040 LRTP (Blueprint 2040) Cost Feasible Plan was amended to include improvements to the Kissimmee Park Road interchange and the widening of Florida's Turnpike mainline from approximately milepost (MP) 240 to 242. The amendments were

Figure 3: Osceola County, Florida Land Use by Parcel

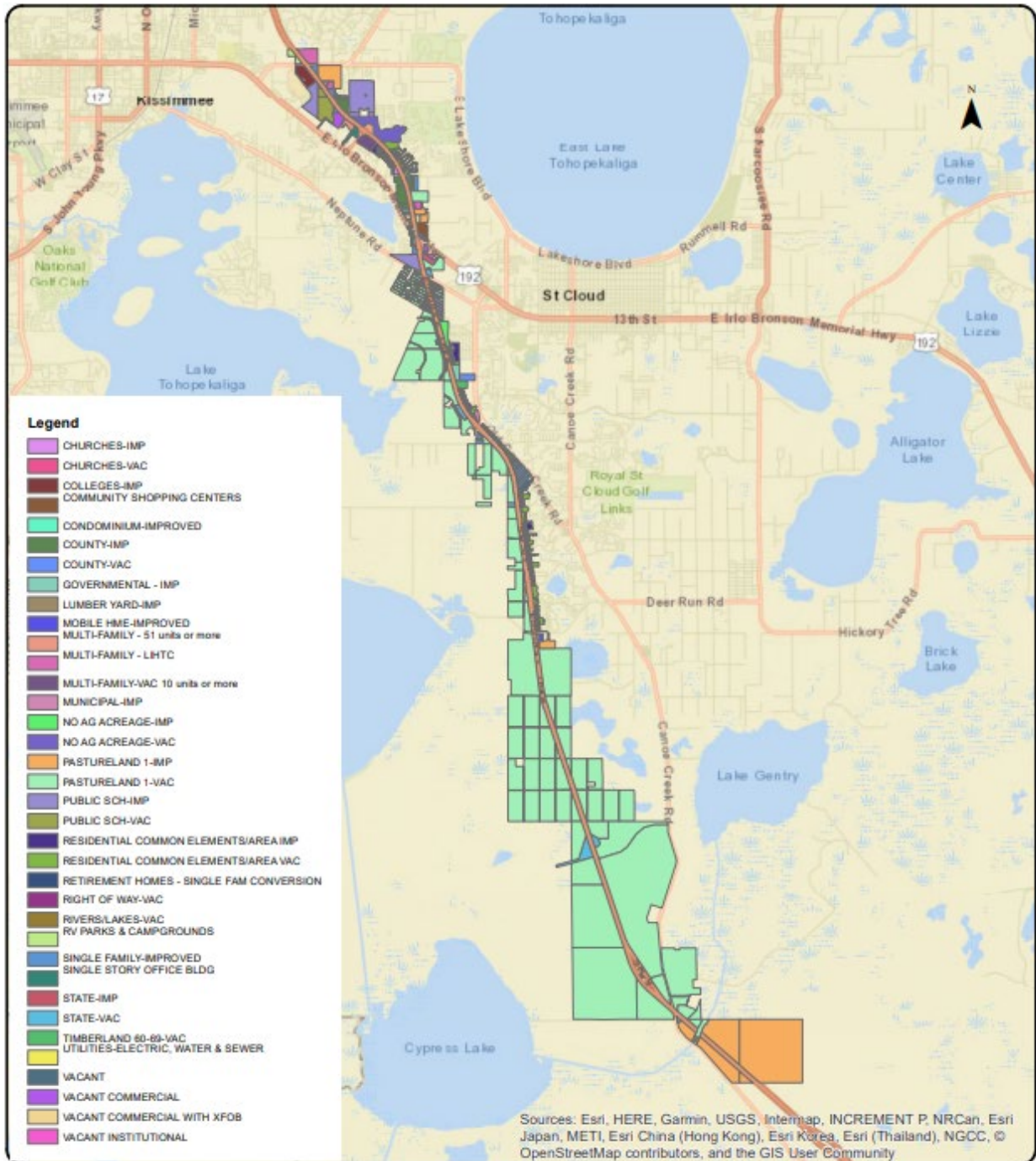


Figure 4: City of St. Cloud, Florida Future Land Use

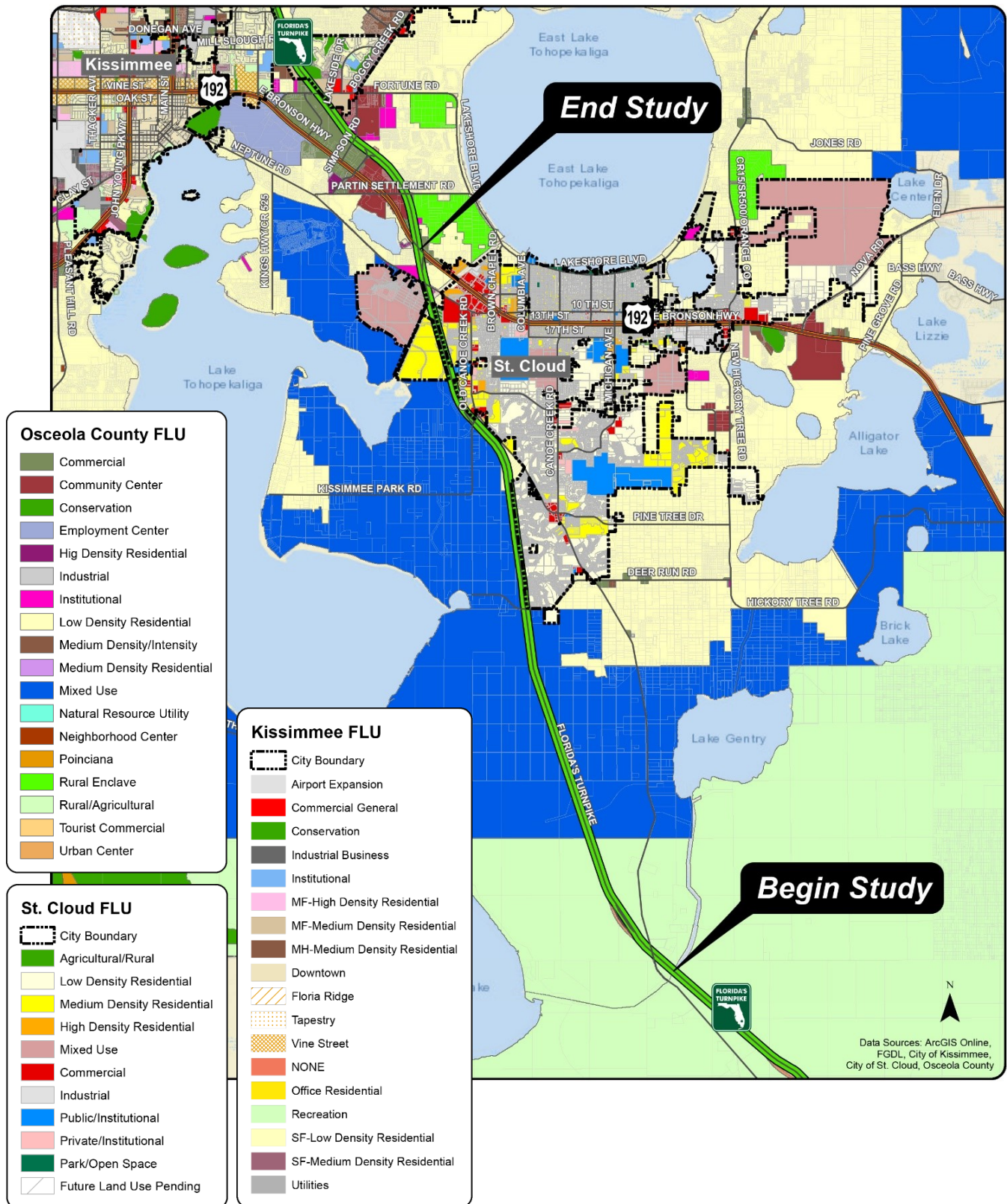
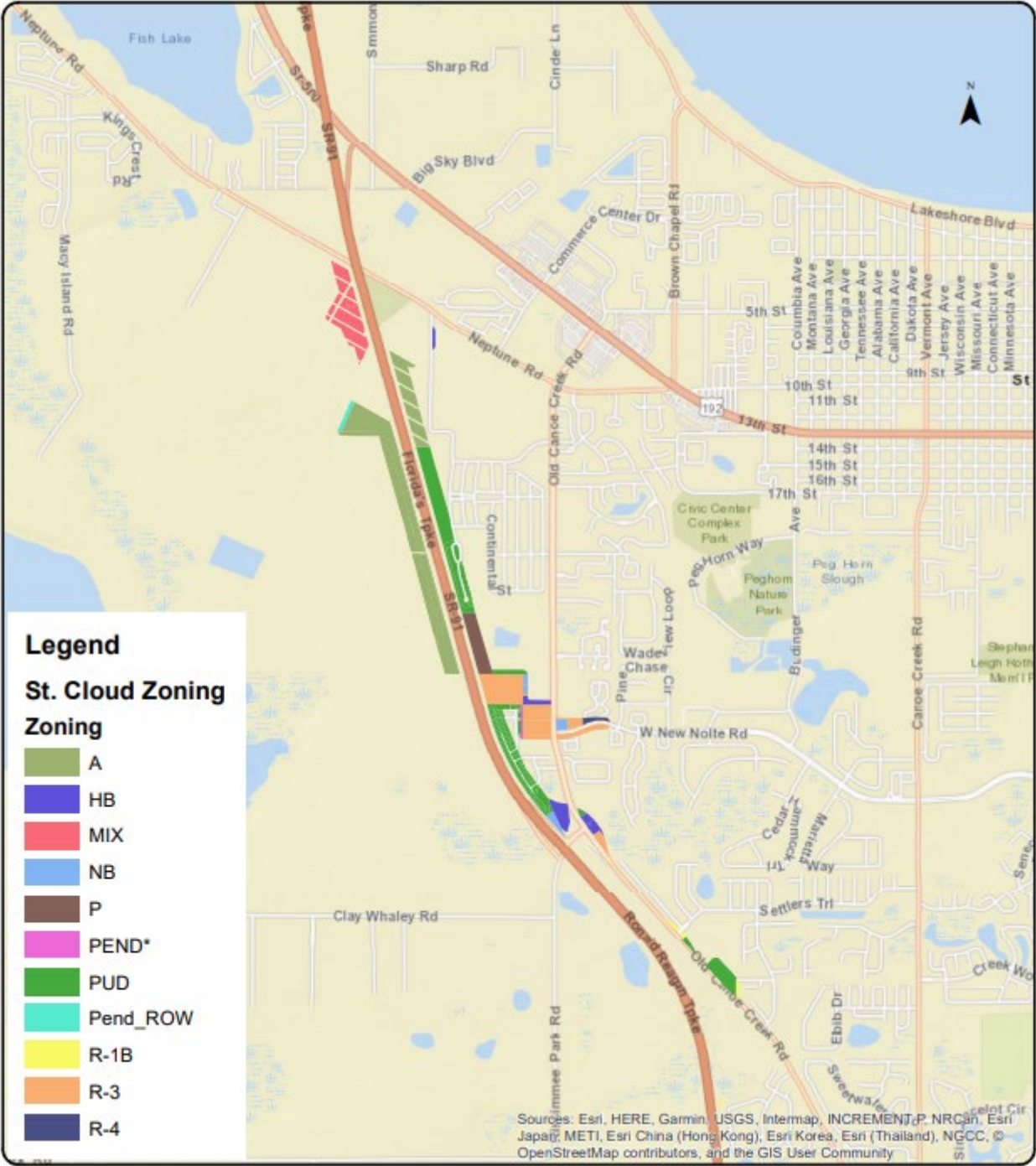


Figure 5: City of St. Cloud, Florida Zoning



adopted on May 10, 2017. The LRTP will be updated to include the full project limits during the PD&E phase. This project is being completed without a federal funding.

Osceola County Parks Master Plan (2018). Osceola County maintains several recreational trails within the study area. One of these facilities, the Neptune Recreational Pathway, follows Neptune Road with an overpass of the Turnpike. The existing overpass will be replaced by FTE, through an agreement with Osceola County, as part of the Turnpike widening project to the north (FPID 436194-1). The County has plans for a C31 South Trail, which will run from Neptune Road to Lake Tohopekaliga. This trail will pass under the Turnpike at the C-31 Canal. Accommodations for the trail have been included in the build alternatives.

Osceola County/ City of St. Cloud. Within the project study area, Florida's Turnpike is a state-maintained roadway. Kissimmee Park Road, Old Canoe Creek Road and New Nolte Road are County-maintained roadways. The City of St. Cloud states in its Comprehensive Plan that the maintenance responsibility of each roadway is dependent on various jurisdictions. All of the proposed improvements to the local roadways, included in the build alternatives, will be submitted to Osceola County and the City of St. Cloud for approval.

- Growth Trends and Issues

District V Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The Turnpike corridor intersects the Tohoqua and Edgewater Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs), with close proximity to the Bella Tara DRI. These DRIs are expected to grow and attract residents within and adjacent to the project area.

D. Mobility

Both of the build alternatives, and the preferred alternative in particular, offer improved mobility and access within the study area. The preferred alternative includes a new, fully directional, interchange north of the existing Kissimmee Park Road interchange, providing more separation between the Turnpike and Old Canoe Creek Road.

Mobility Choices. Five-foot designated bike lanes, and sidewalks, are located along Old Canoe Creek Road through the study area, including the intersections with Kissimmee Park Road and New Nolte Road. New Nolte Road has designated bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the road approaching Old Canoe Creek. There are no existing bike lanes on Kissimmee Park Road proper, although sidewalks are provided on the north side in the interchange area only. The closest transit route is Route 10 - East US 192/St. Cloud, operated by LYNX at a 30-minute frequency. This transit route is roughly 2.1 miles north of the study area. The build alternatives will include designated bike lanes and sidewalks for all improvement areas for the local roadways.

E. Aesthetic Effects

Noise/ Vibration. A noise study was conducted and is submitted under separate cover. Vibrations are anticipated during construction and a monitoring program will be implemented by the Contractor.

Viewshed. Existing vegetation along the Turnpike will be impacted by the build alternatives. A landscaping opportunity plan will be developed for the proposed improvements. It is anticipated that noise barrier walls may be warranted in certain locations. These barriers have the potential to alter the viewshed.

Compatibility. Considering that the project involves modifying an existing interchange and widening an existing limited access facility; the proposed improvements are compatible with the project study area.

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