

Planning and Form-Based Codes

Economic Development Workshop
Manatee County Board of County Commissioners
Wednesday, April 8, 2026

Thomas Hawkins, JD, AICP

Agenda

Introduction

Built environment and people

What is a form based code?

Examples

Advice?



Thomas Hawkins, JD, AICP

**Director, Environmental and
Community Development
Clinic**

**Legal Skills Professor, Fredrick
G. Levin College of Law**



CHAPTER 89-393

House Bill No. 450

An act relating to the University of Florida; naming the Civil Legal Clinic at the University of Florida, College of Law, the Virgil Darnell Hawkins Civil Legal Clinic; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the Florida Supreme Court decreed that Virgil Hawkins' struggle for equal justice under the law should be memorialized, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Governors of The Florida Bar declared that special recognition of the unique contributions of Virgil Darnell Hawkins in opening the practice of law in Florida to persons of all races is quite appropriate and timely, and

WHEREAS, to expedite desegregation of Florida's universities, Virgil Darnell Hawkins sacrificed his opportunity to be educated at the University of Florida, College of Law, and his opportunity to practice during the productive years of his life, and

WHEREAS, such sacrifice of personal gain for the public good should inspire students who will be the future leaders of this state and nation, and

WHEREAS, at the Civil Legal Clinic of the University of Florida, College of Law, students provide legal services to the indigent clients that Virgil Hawkins dreamed of representing, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The Civil Legal Clinic at the University of Florida, College of Law, is hereby named the "Virgil Darnell Hawkins Civil Legal Clinic."

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

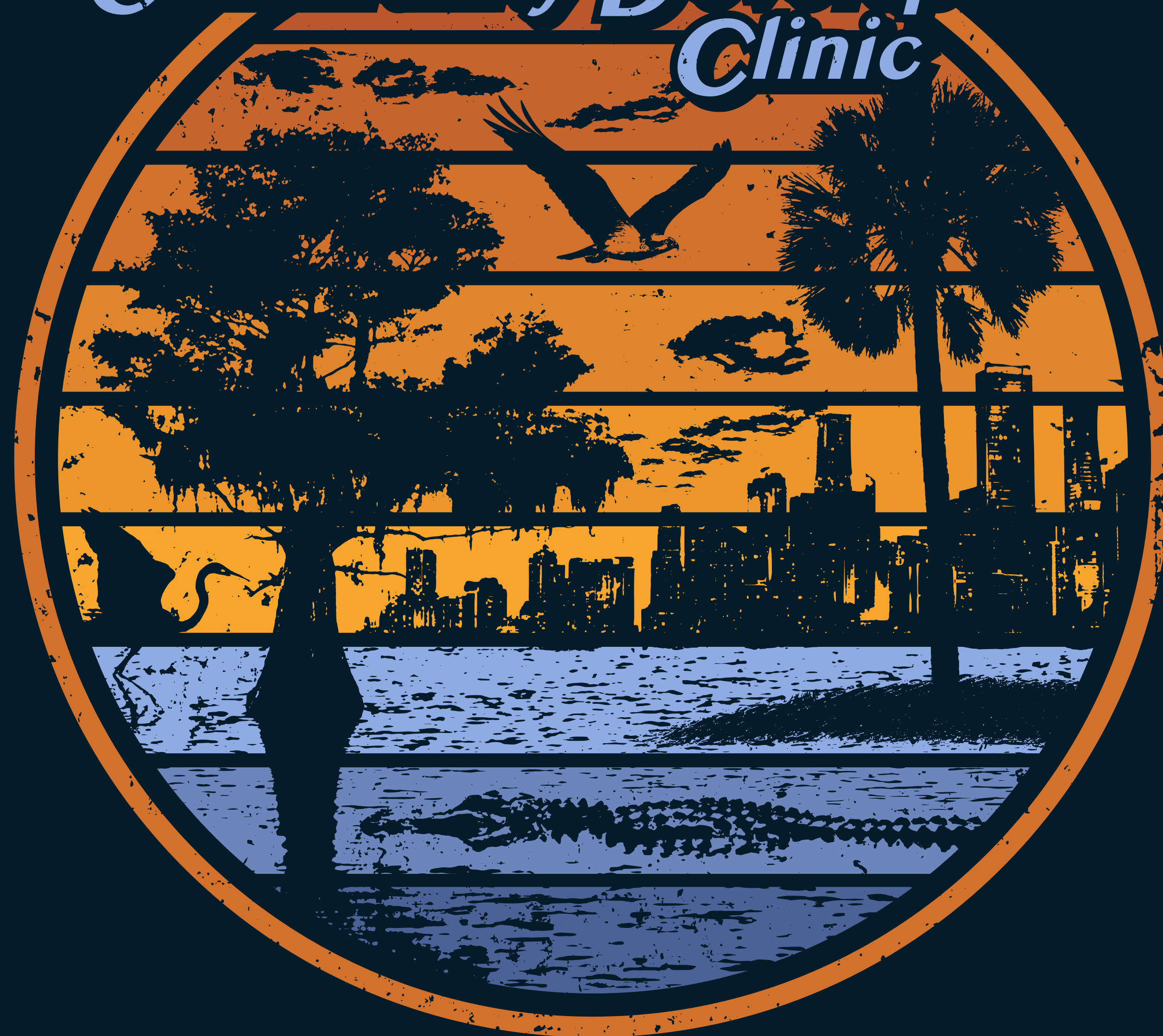
Approved by the Governor June 15, 1989.


Filed in Office Secretary of State June 15, 1989.

VIRGIL D. HAWKINS
CIVIL LEGAL CLINICS



Environmental and Community Development Clinic





***Built
environment
and people***

Human health

Affordability

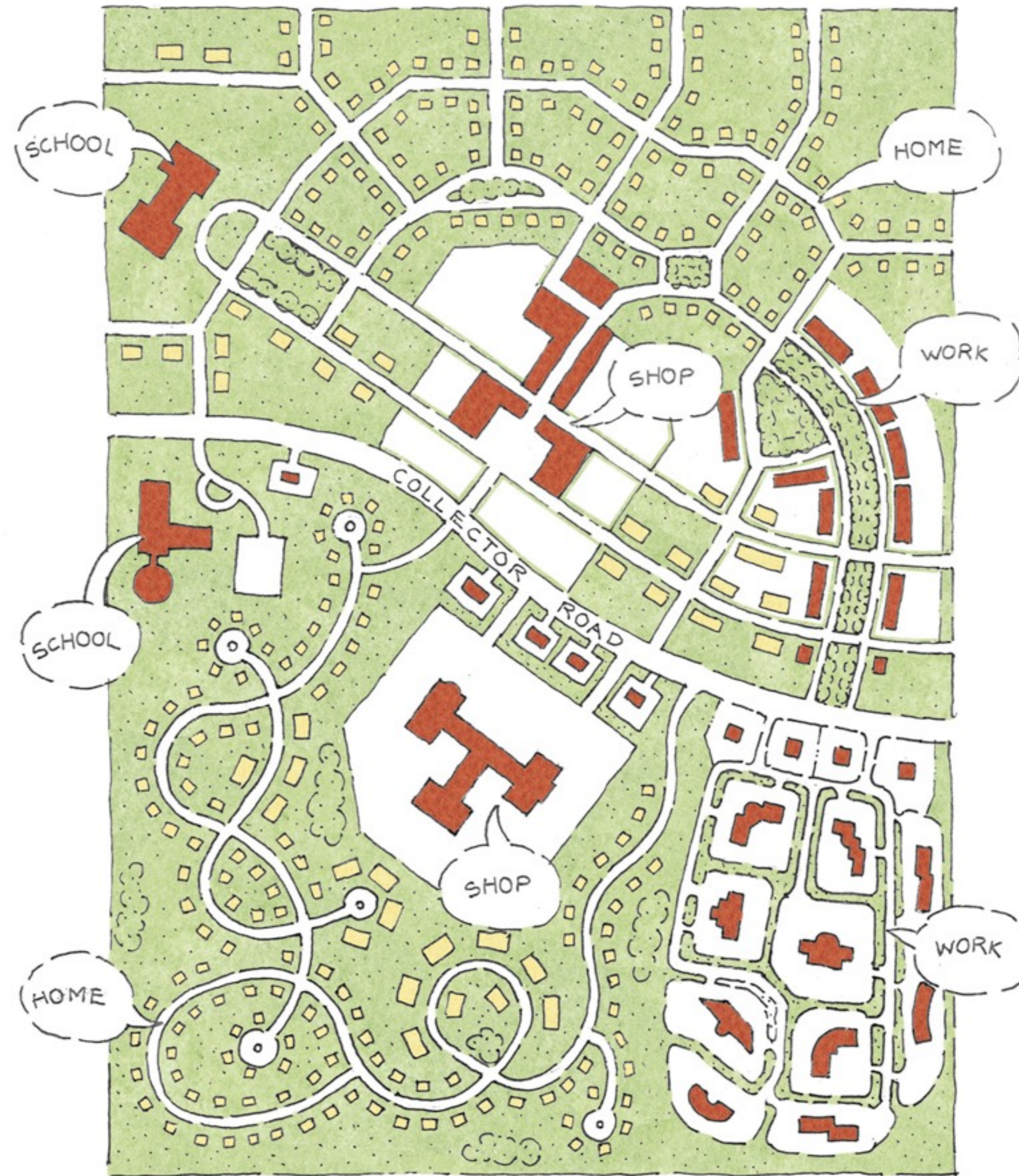
Quality of life

**Built environment
matters for...**

Economy

Environment

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD



SUBURBAN SPRAWL

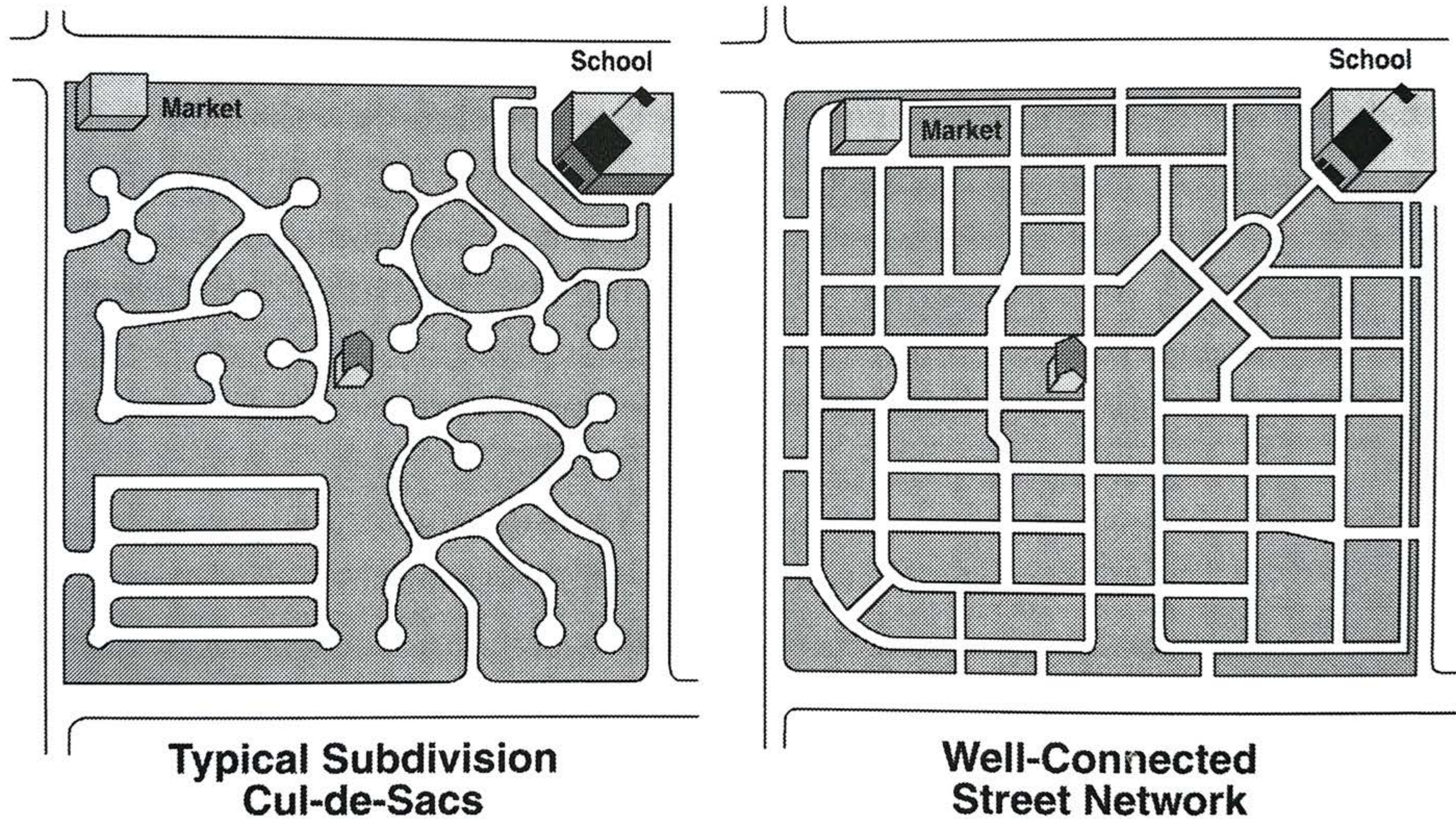
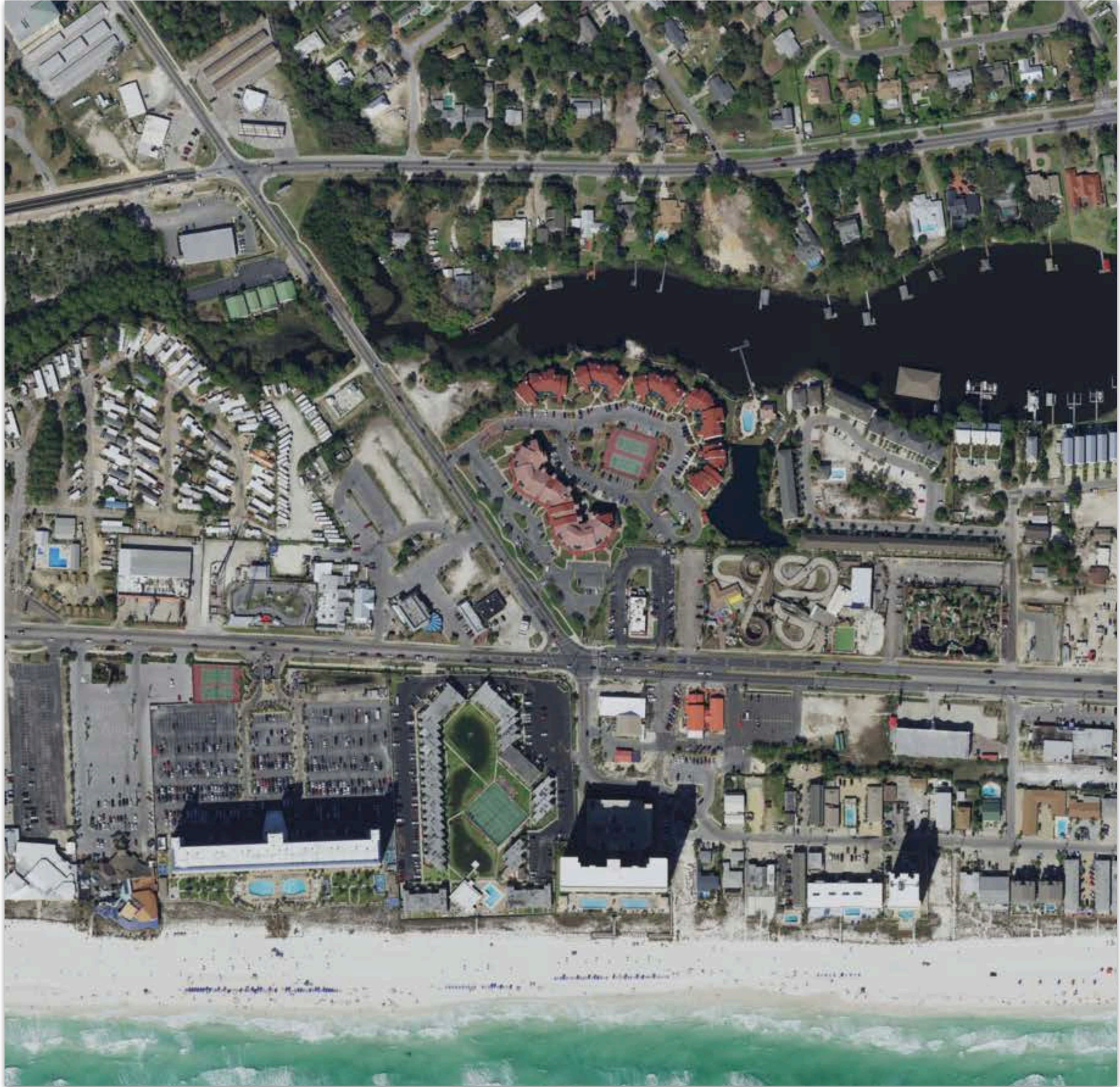
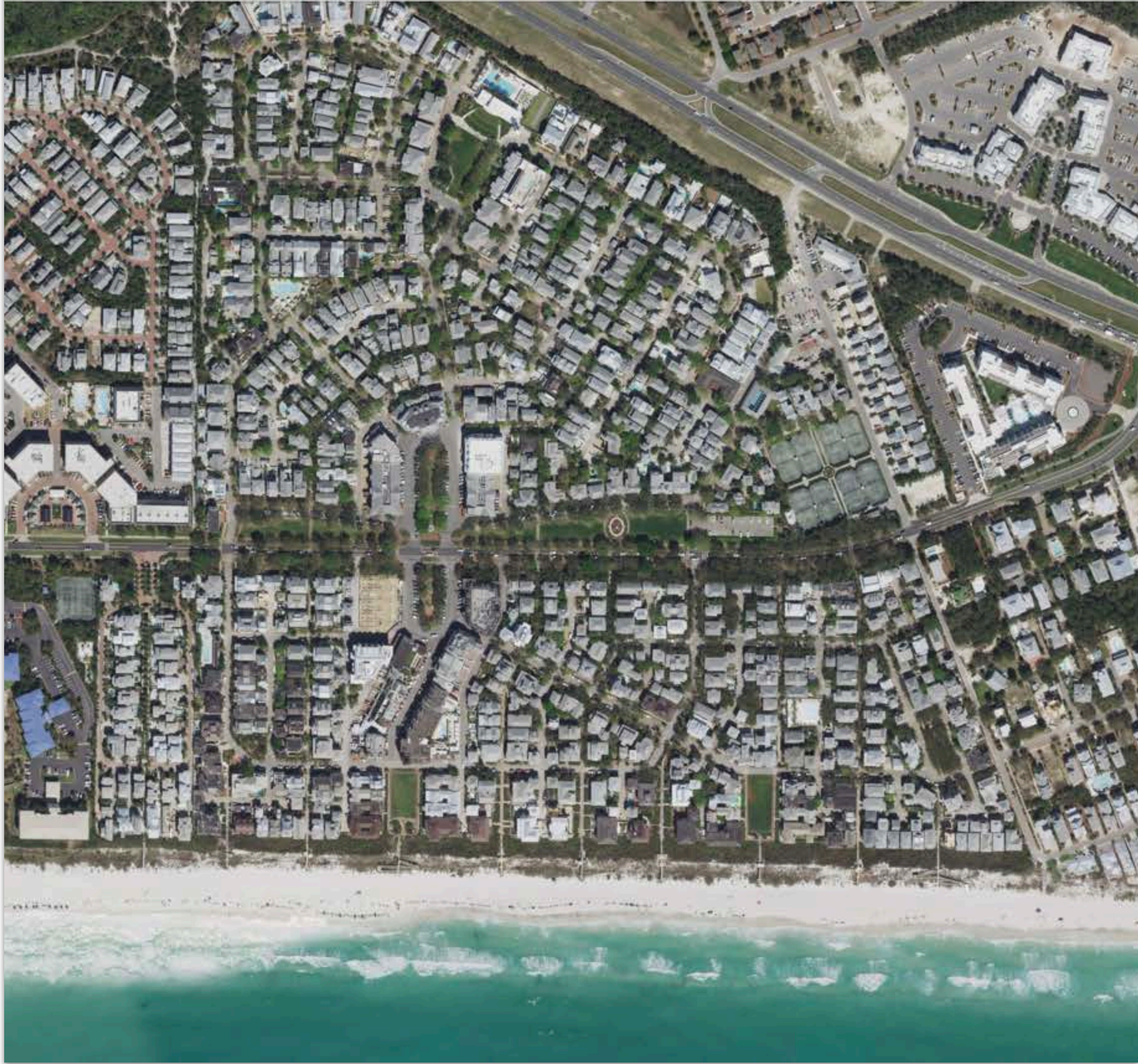


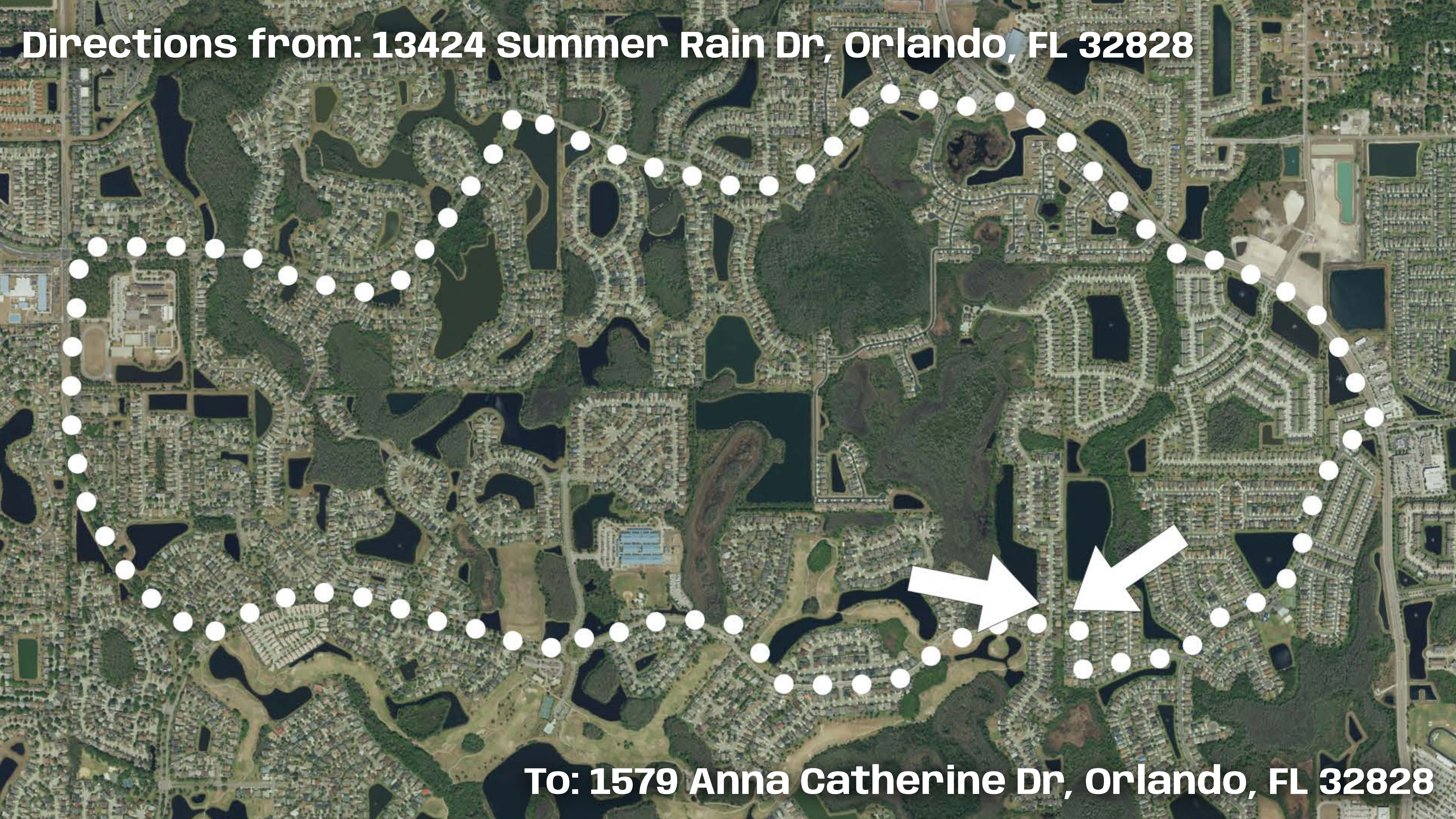
FIGURE 12.2. This illustration shows the relative walking distances from 2 homes that are equidistant from a school, based on different street layouts. *Source:* Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Publications, *Neighborhood Street Design*, p. 9; see egov.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/publications.shtml.



County



Directions from: 13424 Summer Rain Dr, Orlando, FL 32828



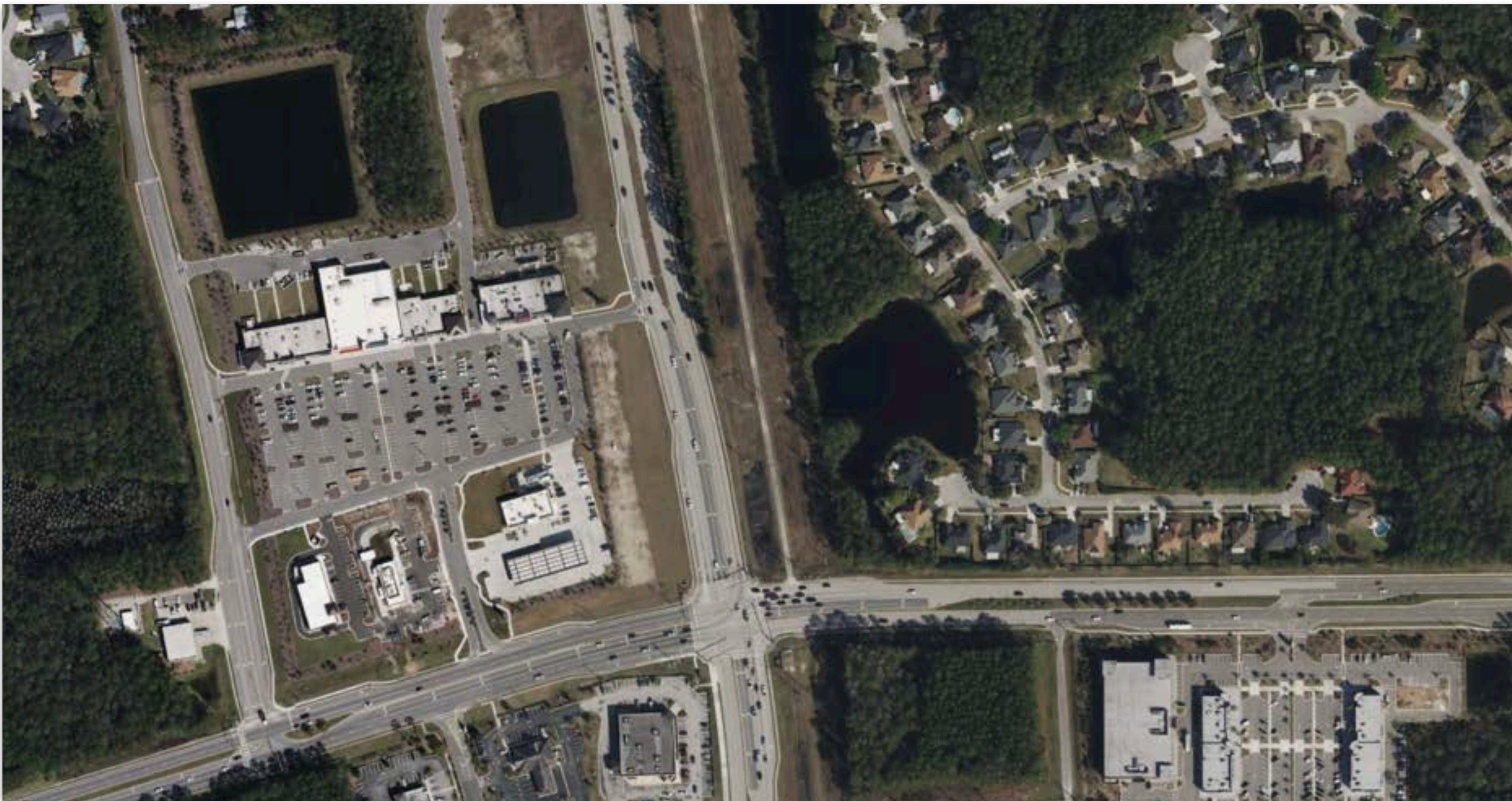
To: 1579 Anna Catherine Dr, Orlando, FL 32828



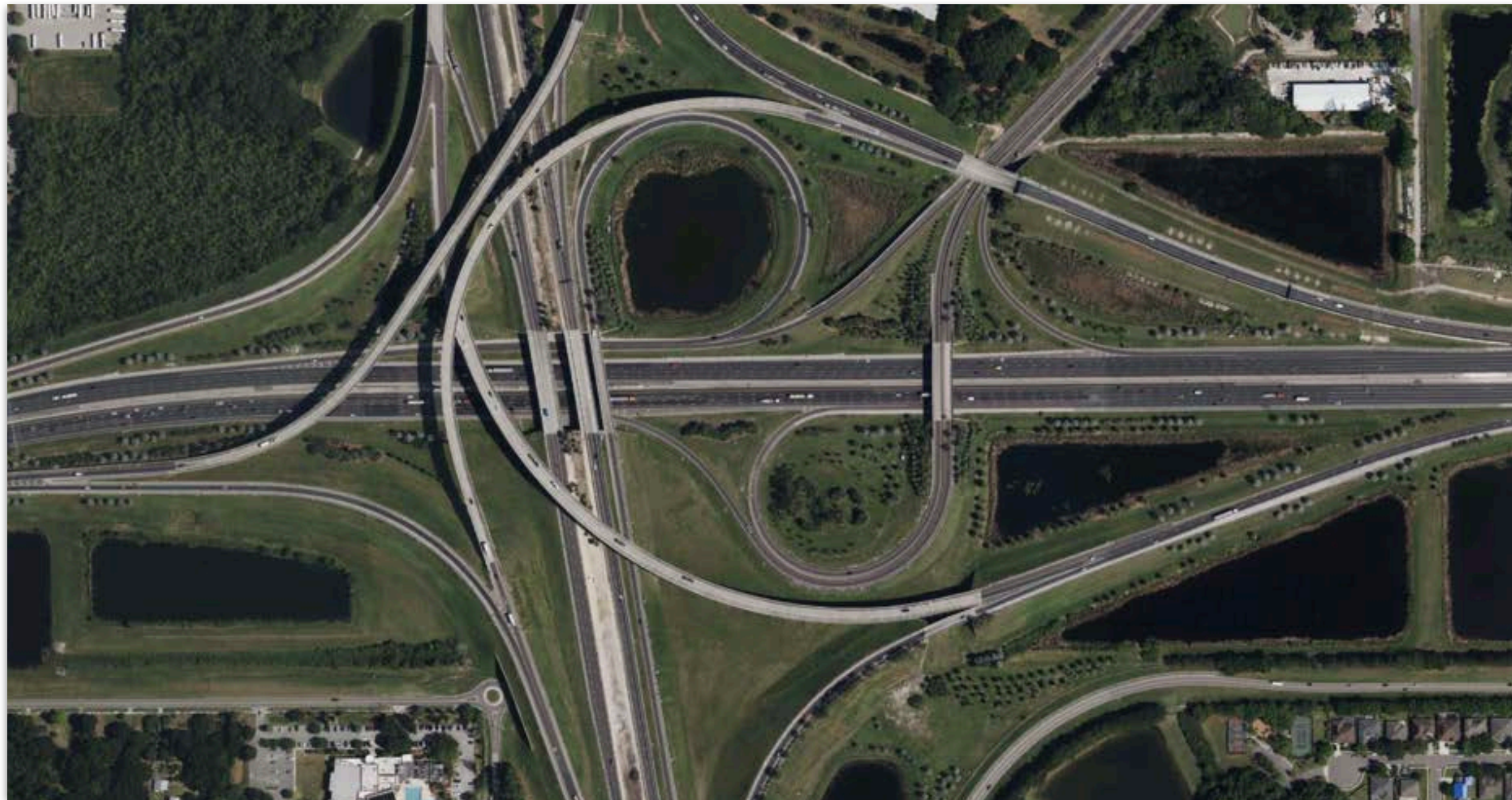


In the following pictures, ask–

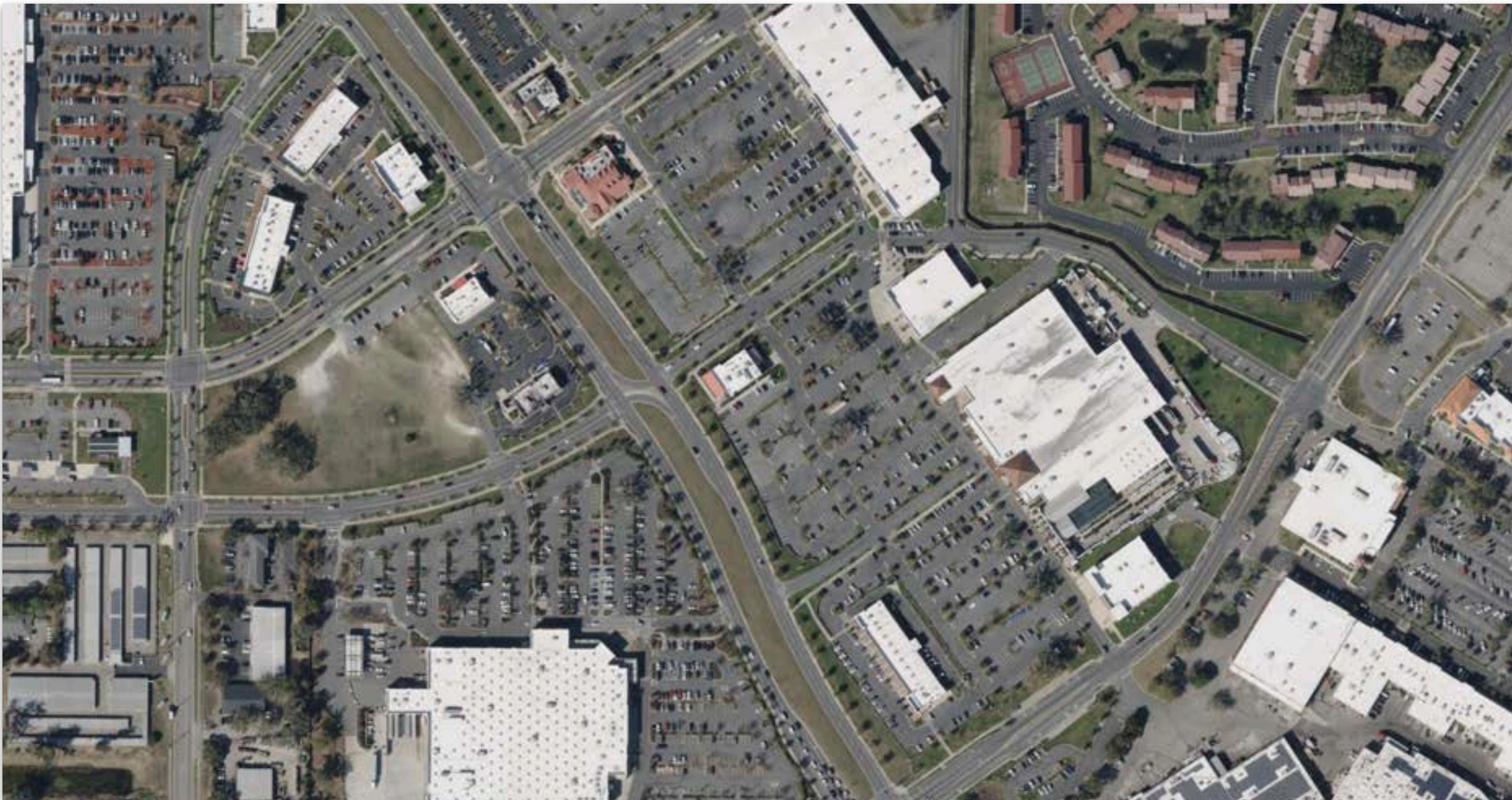
- In this place, what is ‘normal’ human behavior?
- If I were there, would I consider walking?
- If I were a real estate developer, what would I build?



St. Johns County, Florida



Orlando, Florida



Gainesville, Florida



Palm Beach County, Florida

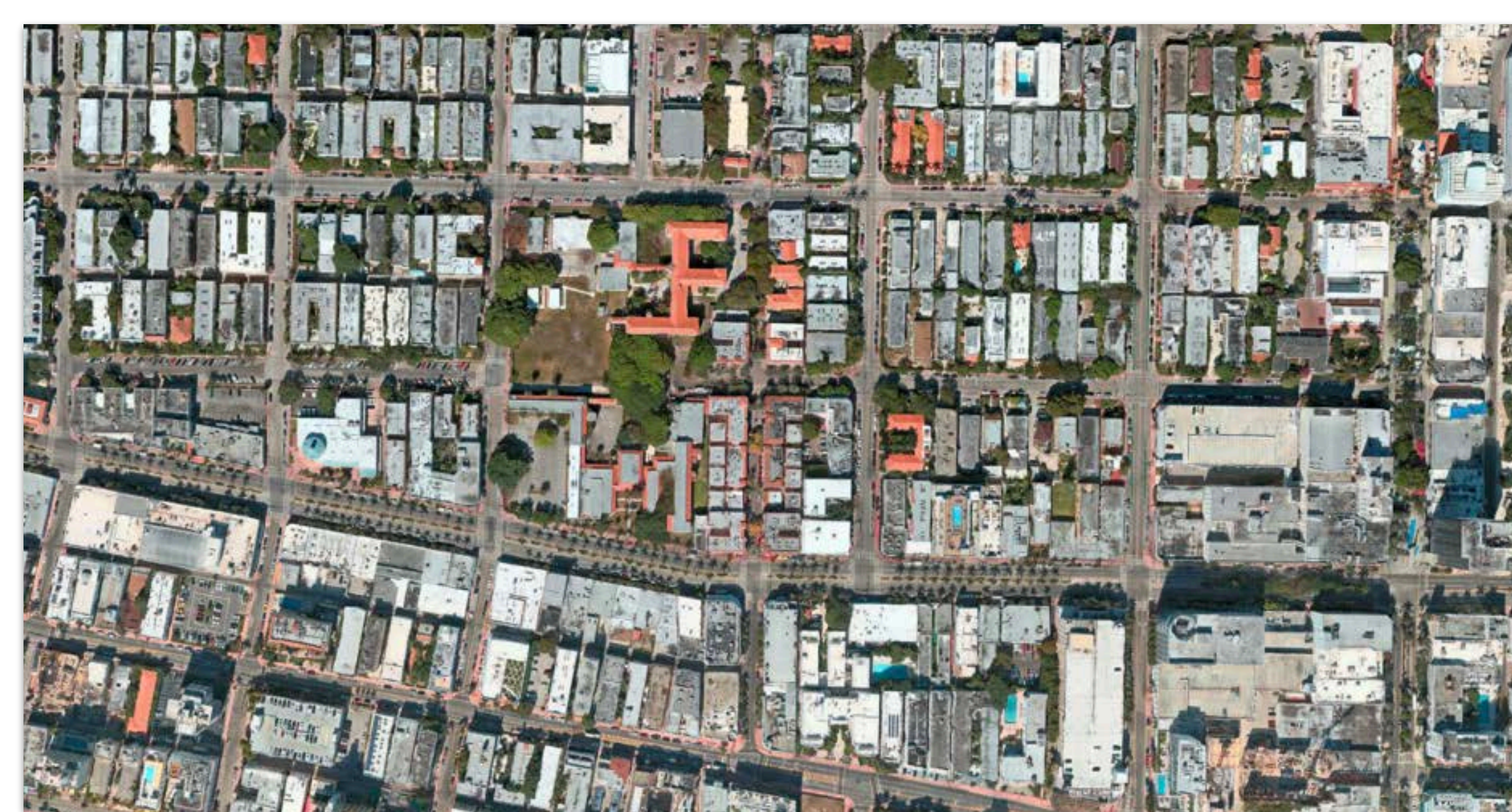


Image: Miami Beach, Florida, Apple Maps



Image: Key West, Florida, Apple Maps

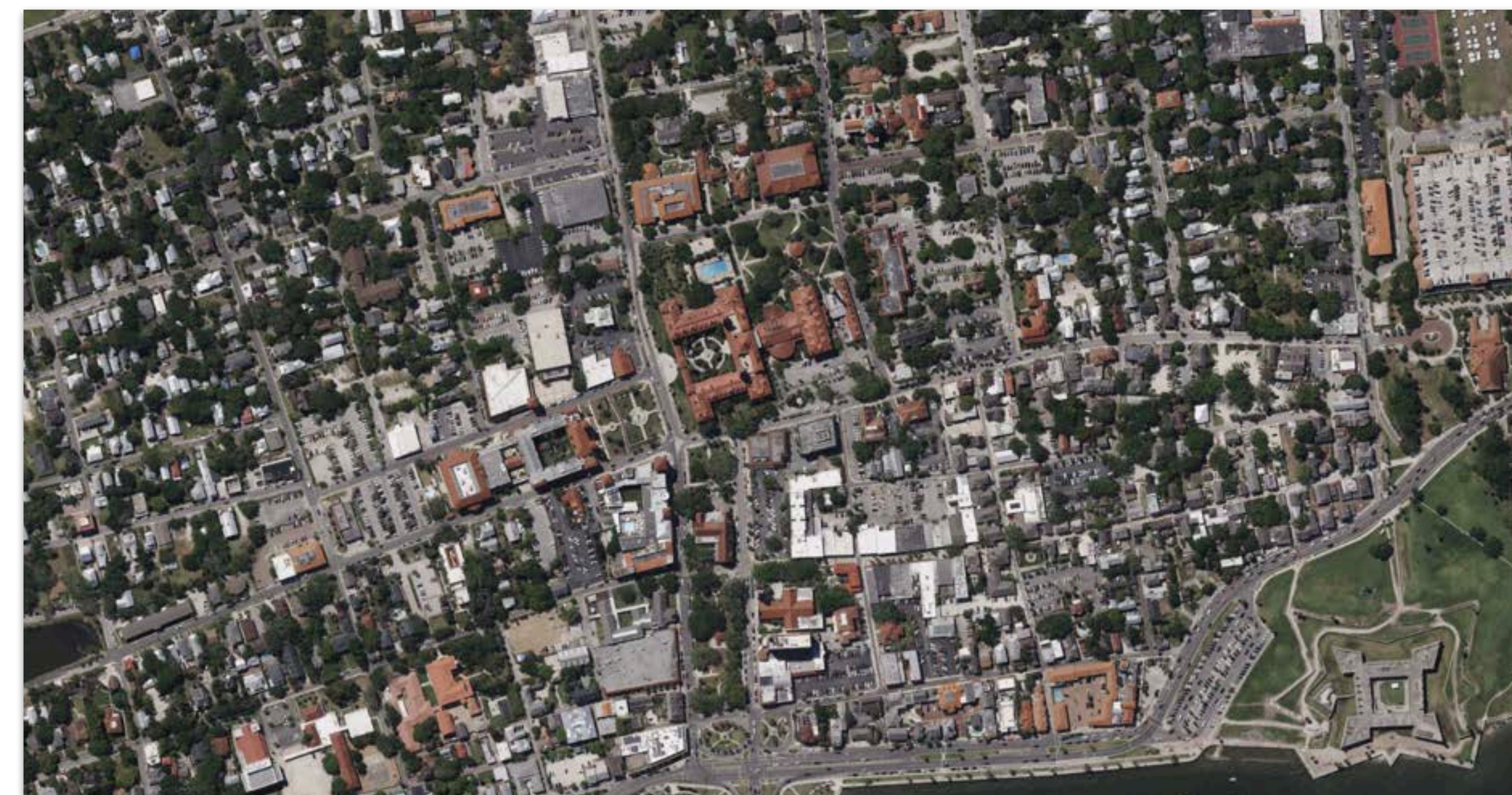


Image: St. Augustine, Florida, Apple Maps

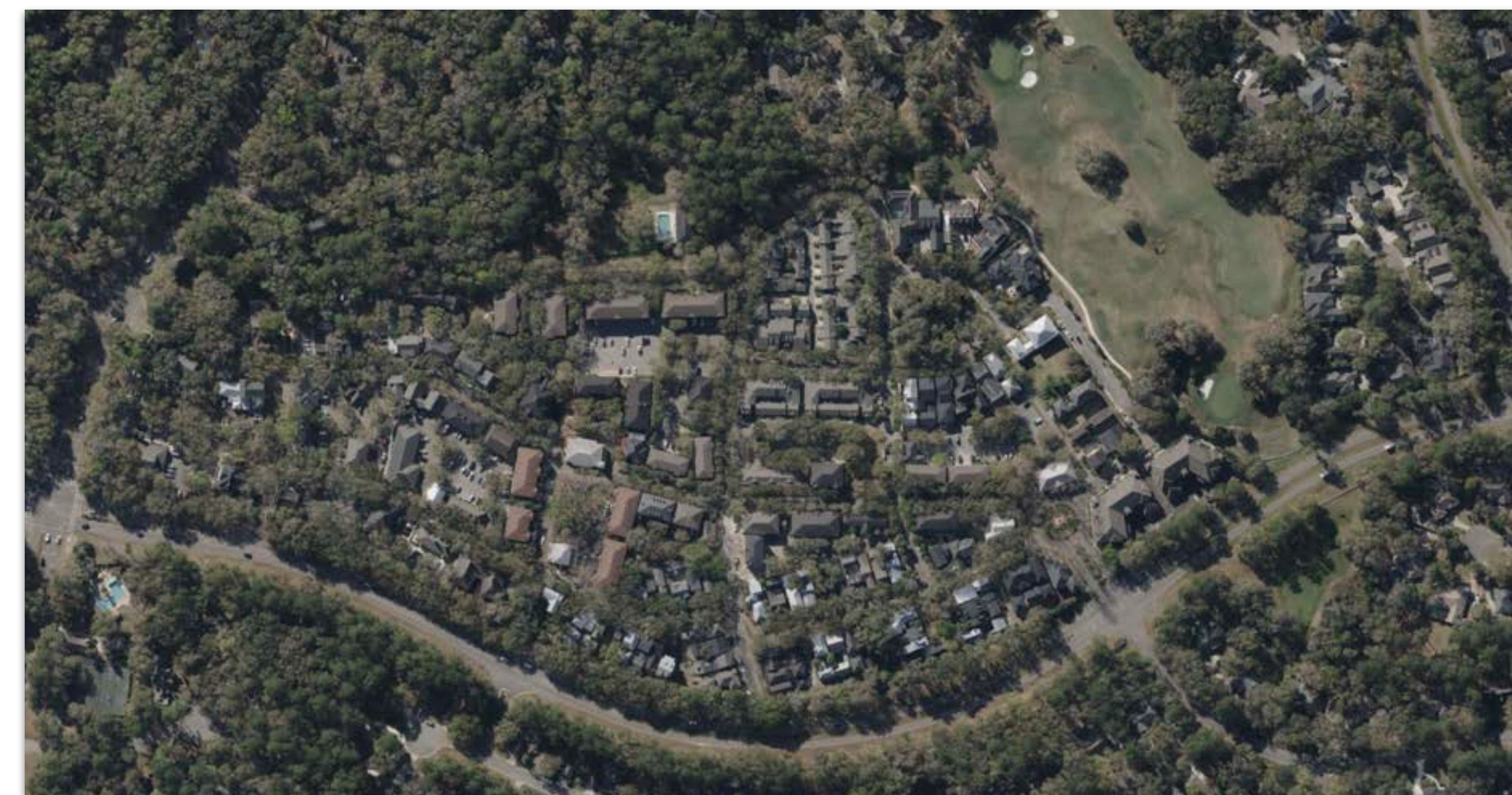


Image: Alachua County, Florida, Apple Maps

Regulation of built environment



Real estate development

Consumer demand for certain land uses and urban design



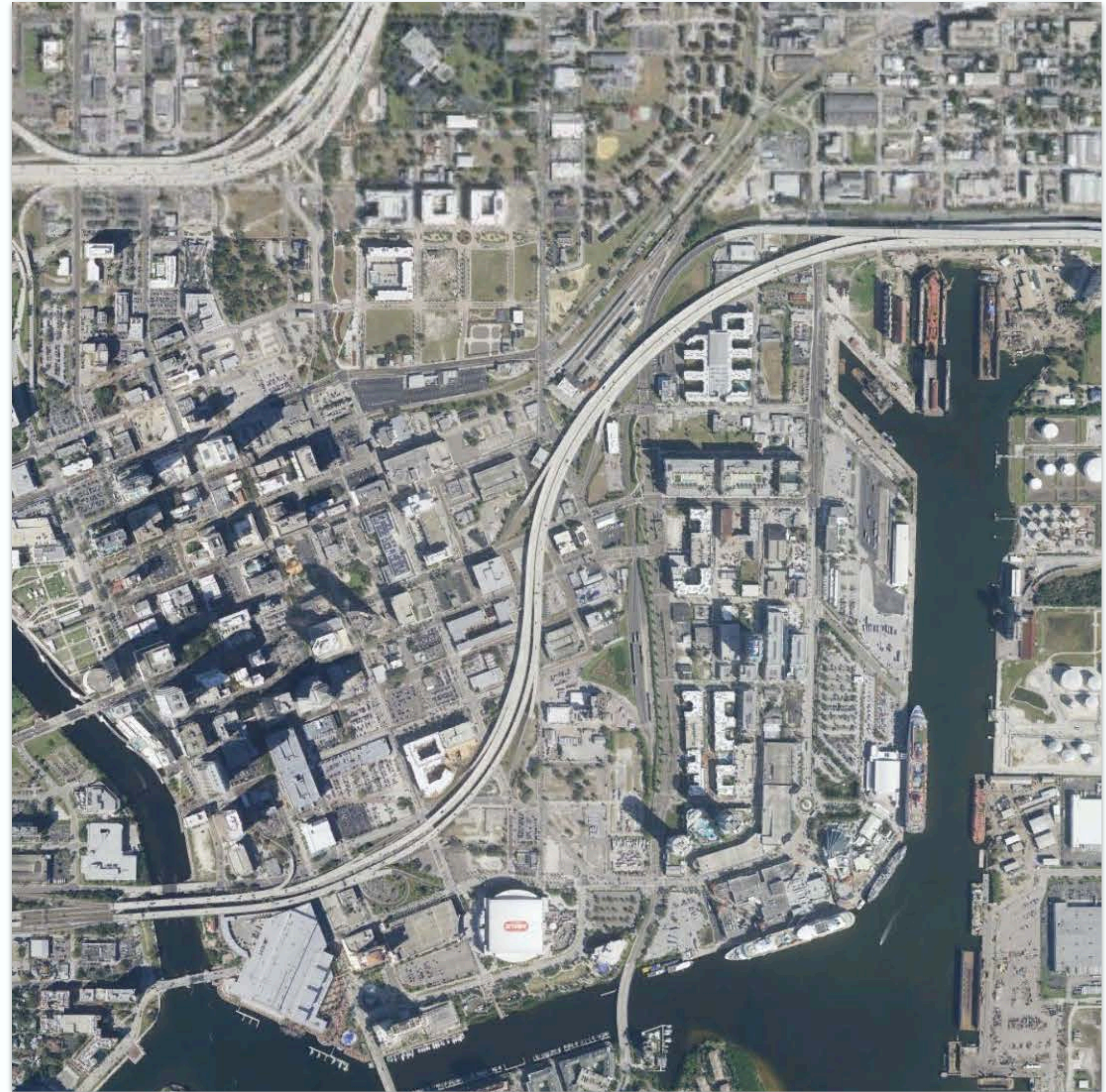
Aerial photograph of Overton and downtown Miami, Florida in 1958. Image credit: The University of Florida Map & Imagery Library, Aerial Photography: Florida Collection.



Aerial photograph of Overton and downtown Miami, Florida in 2025. Image credit: Google Maps.



Aerial photograph of downtown Tampa, Florida in 1957. Image credit: The University of Florida Map & Imagery Library, Aerial Photography: Florida Collection.



Aerial photograph of downtown Tampa, Florida in 2017. Image credit: Apple Maps.

Mashpee Commons suburban retrofit



Image credit: Congress for the New Urbanism



Image credit: Google Maps



Image credit: Cape Code Times



Image credit: Google Maps

Mizner Park

- Florida example
- Images from *Retrofitting Suburbia* by Dunham-Jones and Williamson



◀ Color Plate 20: "After" view shows the publicly owned and maintained linear park at the heart of Mizner Park.

▶ Color Plate 21: "Before" view of the short-lived Boca Raton Mall.



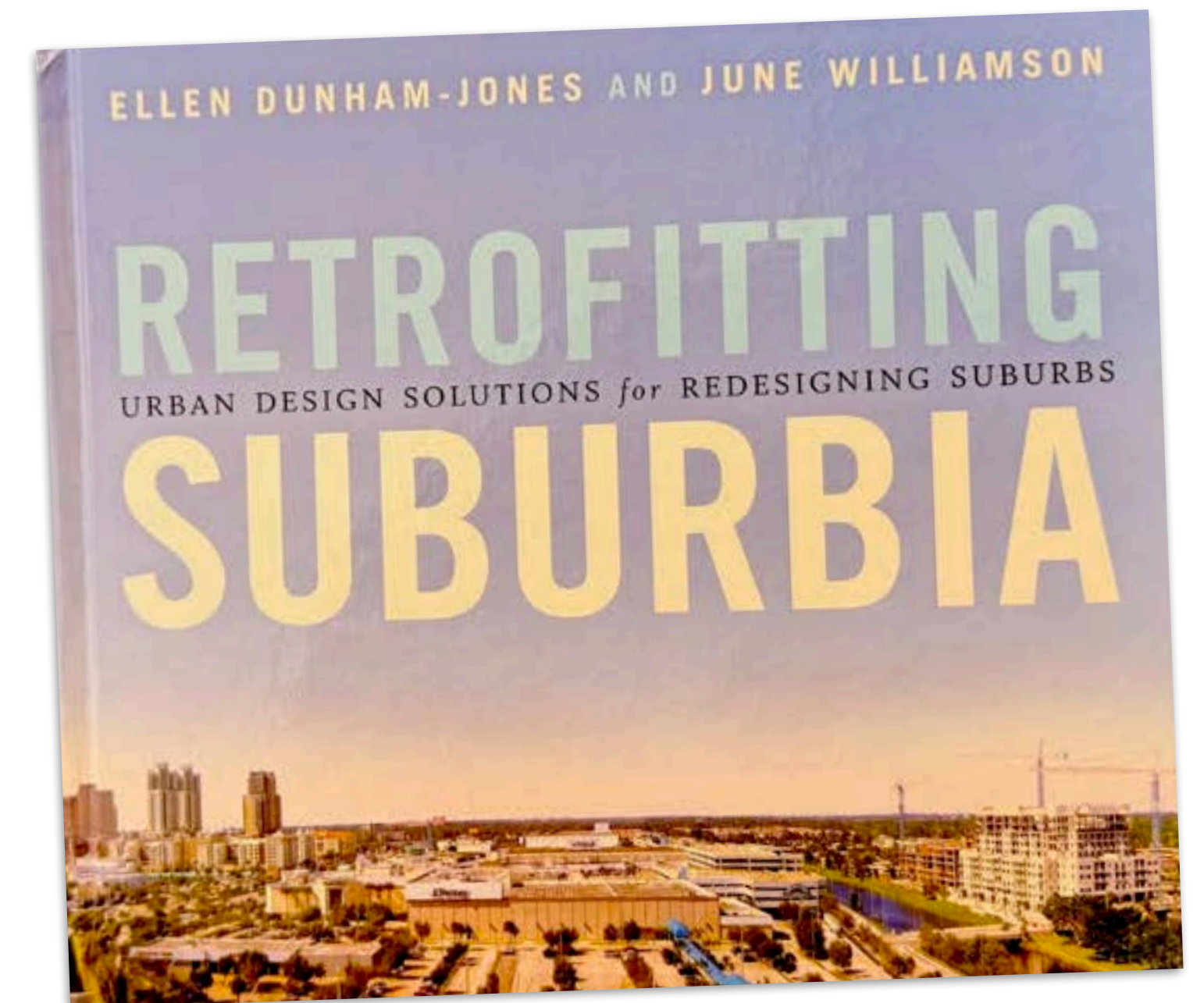
MIZNER PARK: From Dead Mall to Town Center

PRINCIPAL CLIENTS: Boca Raton Community Development Agency and Crocker & Company

LEAD DESIGNER: Cooper Carry Inc.

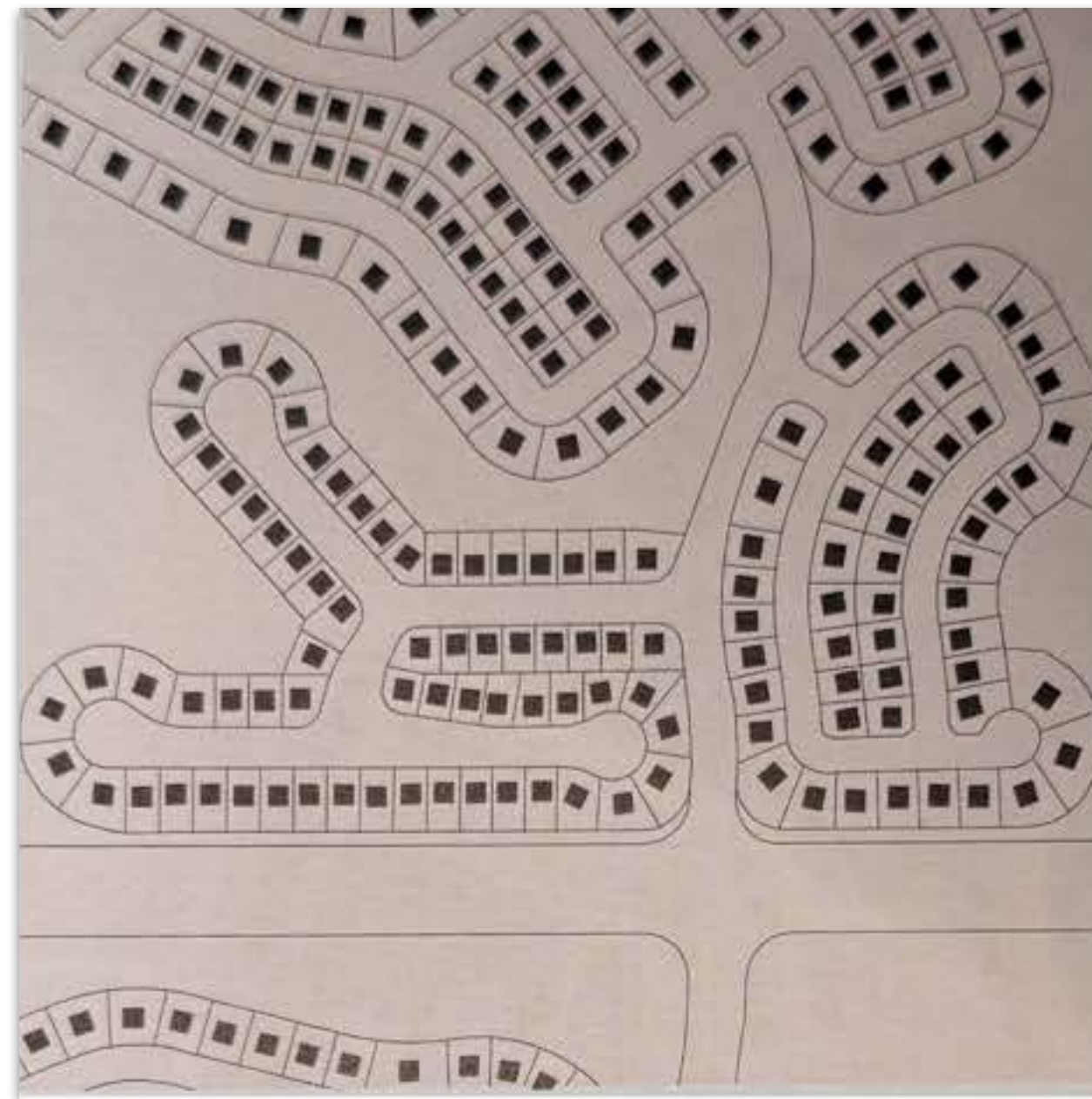
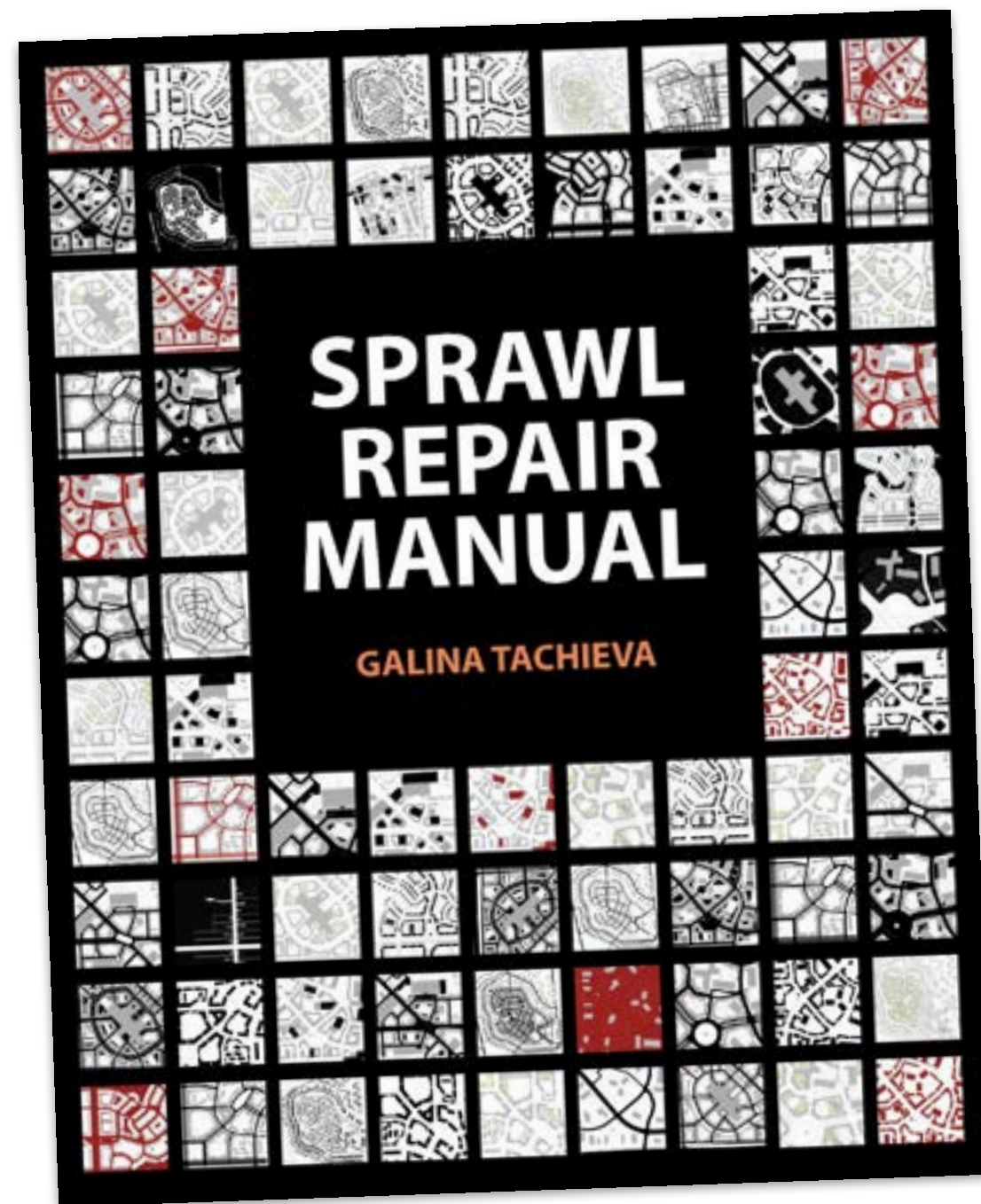
LOCATION: Boca Raton, Florida

The most prevalent sites for suburban retrofits are dead malls. Many hope to emulate Mizner Park's success at proving the value of investing in public space. The mall was replaced with a lifestyle center with shops and restaurants centered on a verdant plaza. Significantly, the inclusion of housing and offices both above the retail and lining the parking garages, as well as several cultural institutions, has enabled it to take on the role of Boca's downtown. (See Chapter 6.)

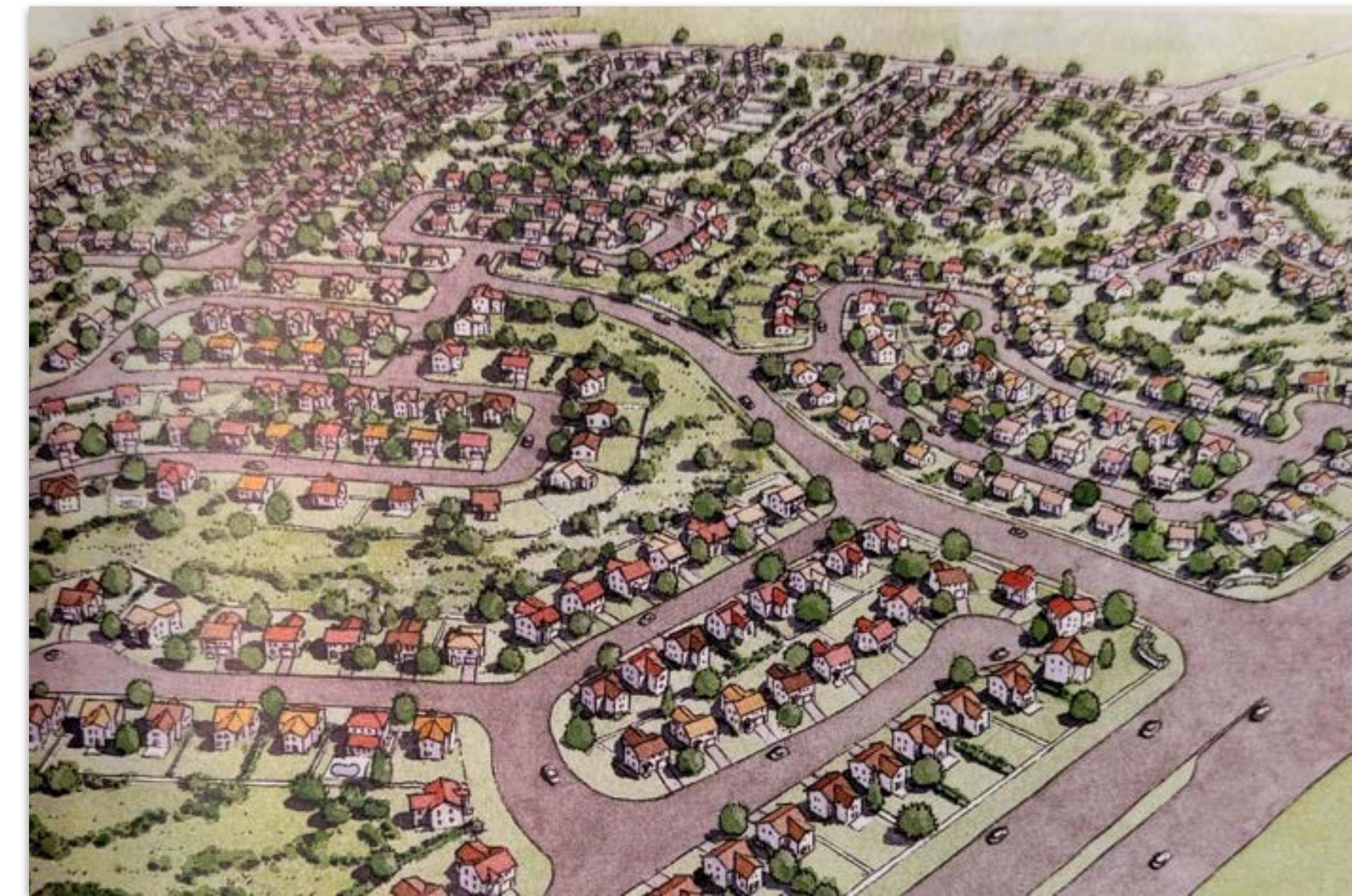


Single family residential retrofit example

- Images from *Sprawl Repair Manual* by Tachieva



"Before" diagram



"Before" illustration



"After" diagram



"After" illustration



Form based codes

Euclidean

- Named for *Euclid v. Ambler*, U.S. Supreme Court decision approving local government zoning
- Based on U.S. Department of Commerce model
- Focus on land use, building height, and setbacks
- Has led to use-segregated communities

Form-based

- Product of new urbanism
- Explicitly conceived as alternative to Euclidean zoning
- Focus on appropriate development for urban, suburban, and rural areas
- Addresses community-scale and development-scale regulation
- Still regulates land use, building height, and setbacks



Topics

Big scale

Small scale

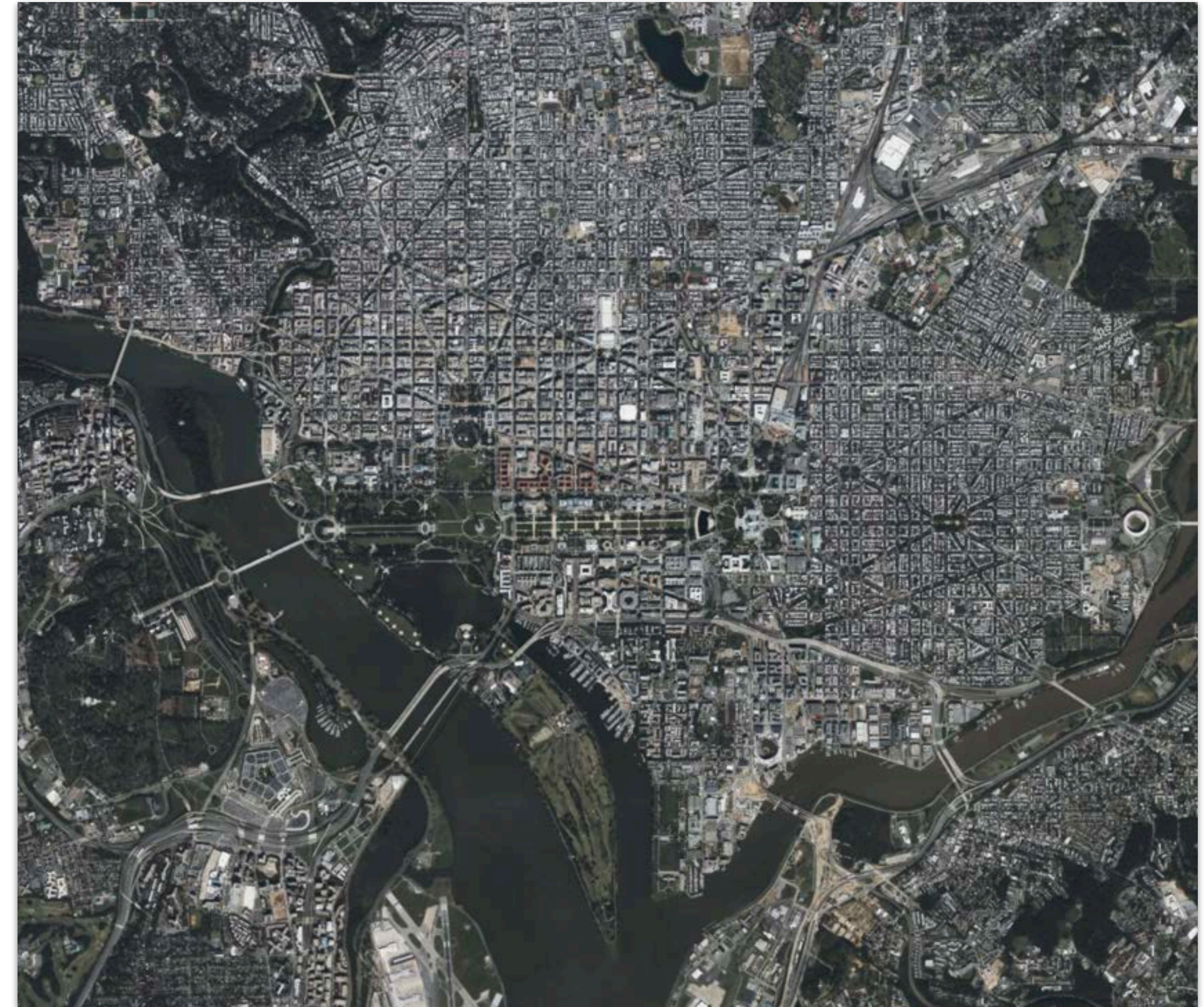
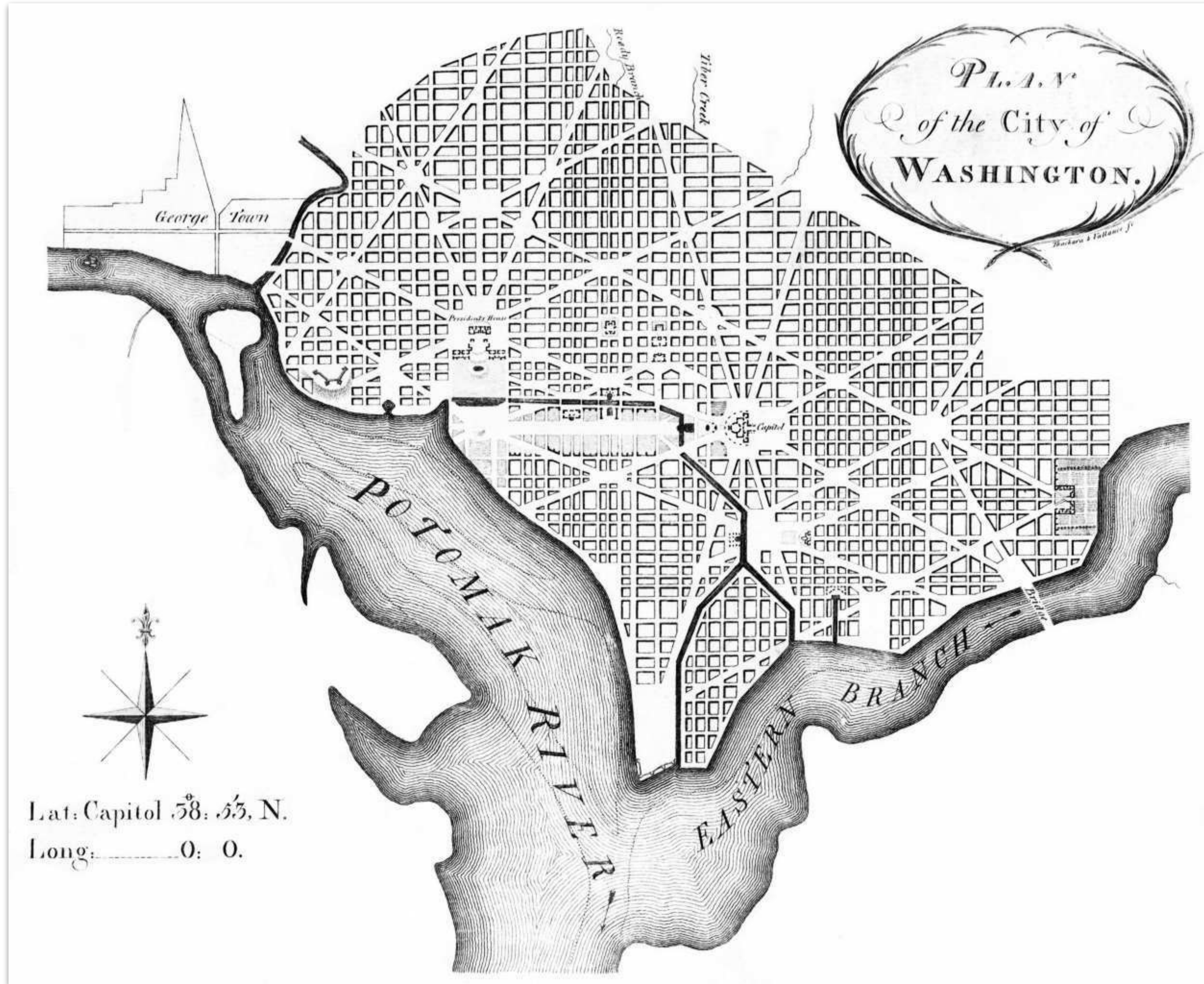
Transect

SmartCode

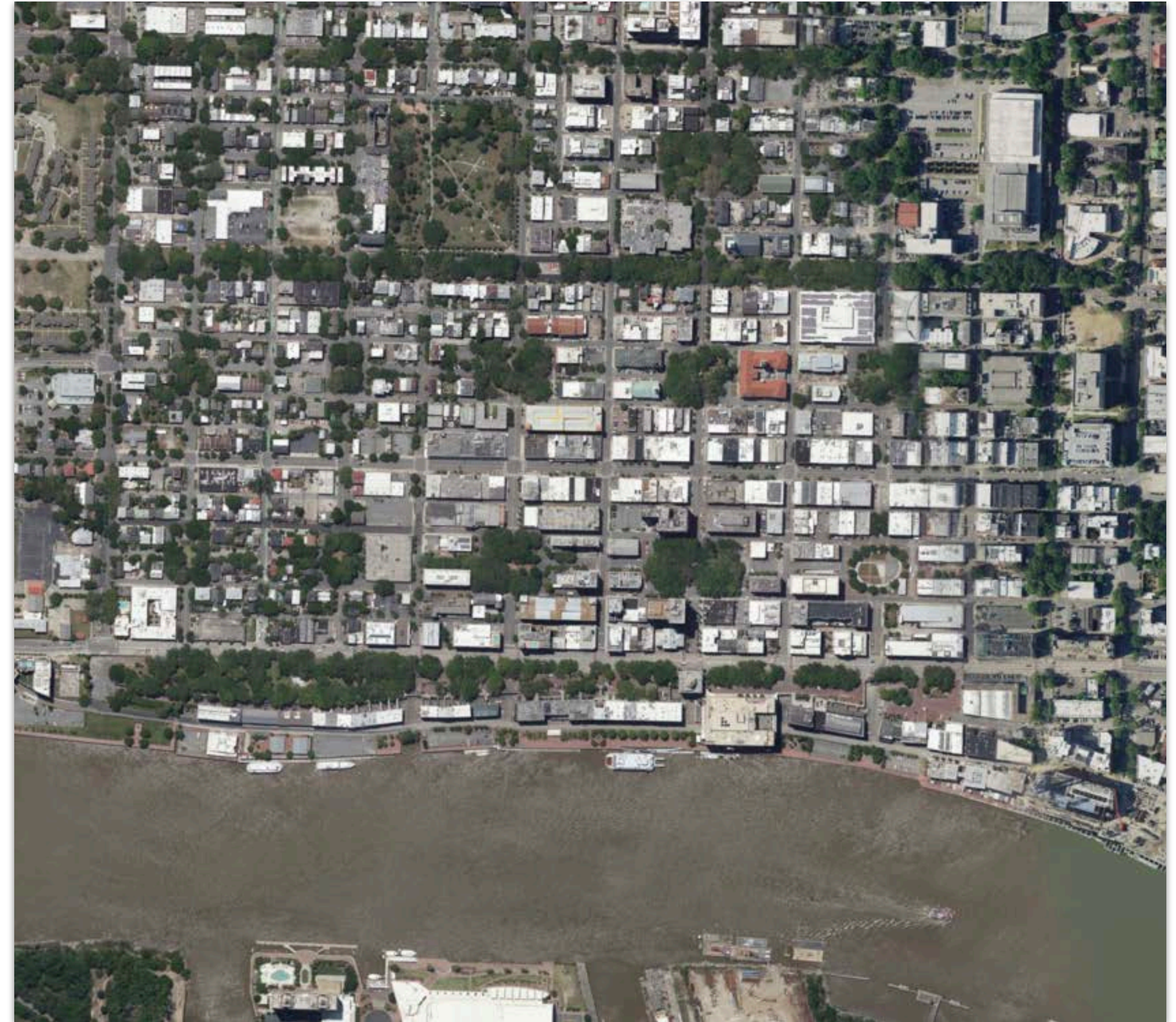
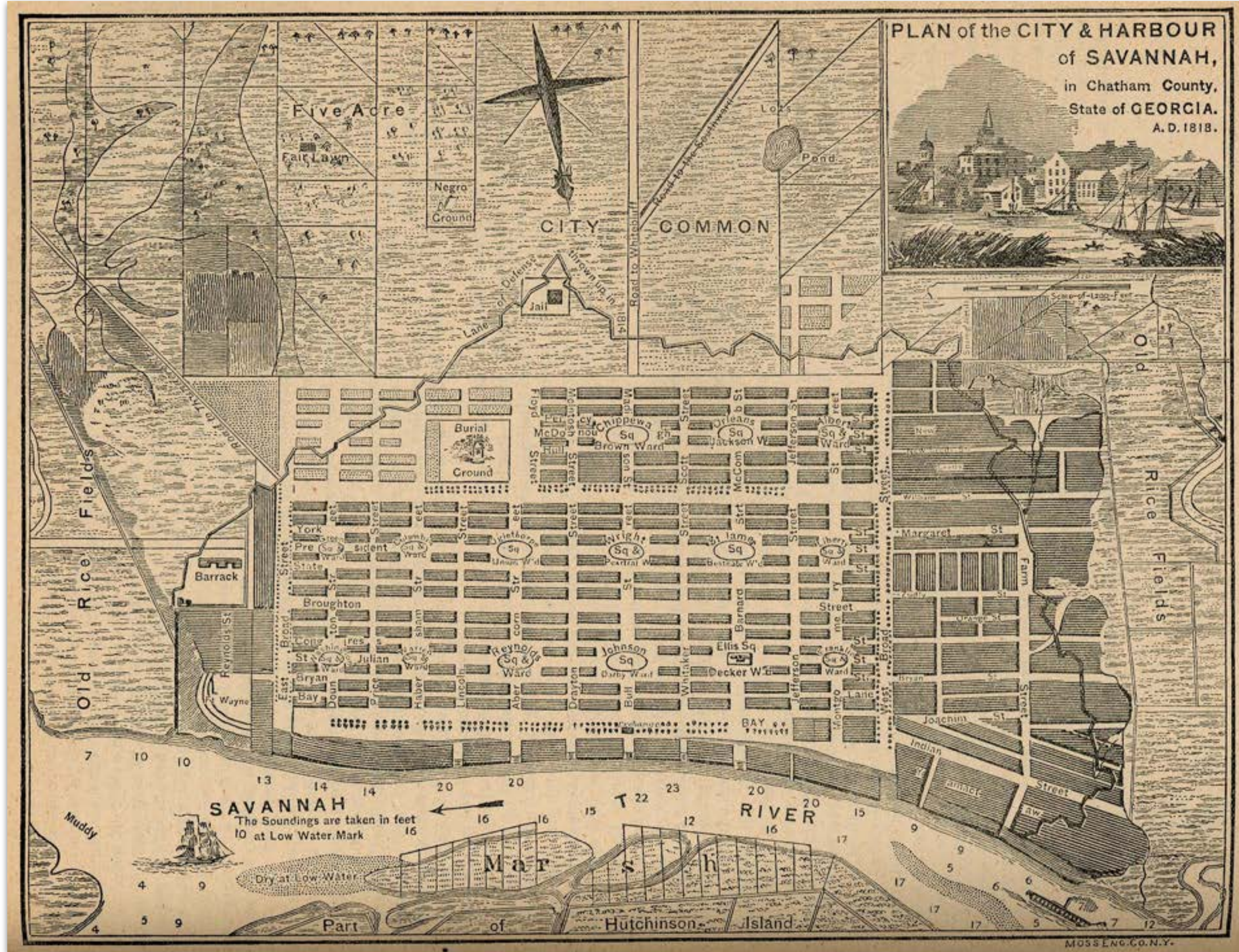
Big scale

At the scale of community design—subdivision, street layout, developing public infrastructure—development decisions are long-lasting and resistant to change.

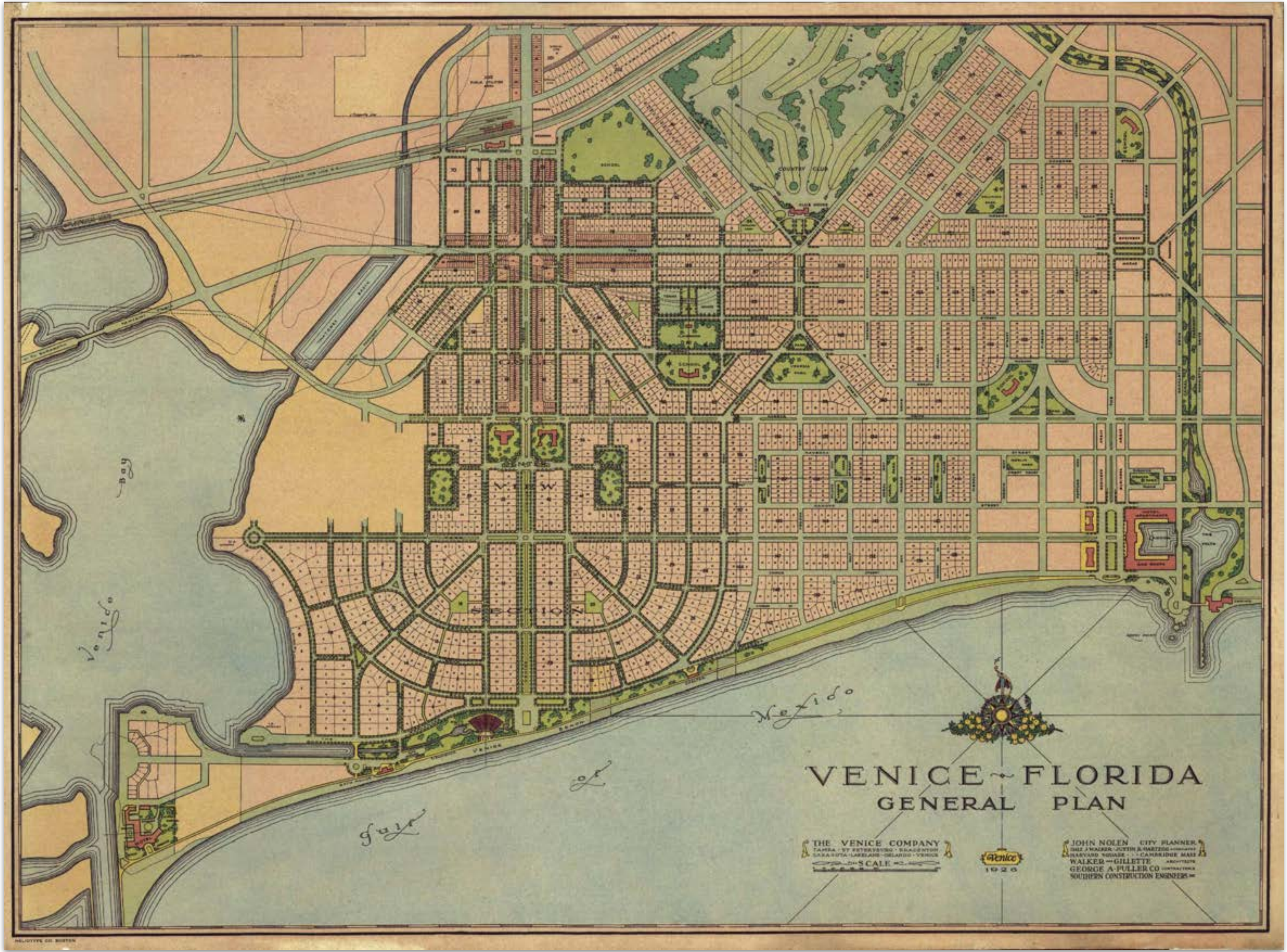
Pierre Charles L'Enfant plan for Washington, 1791



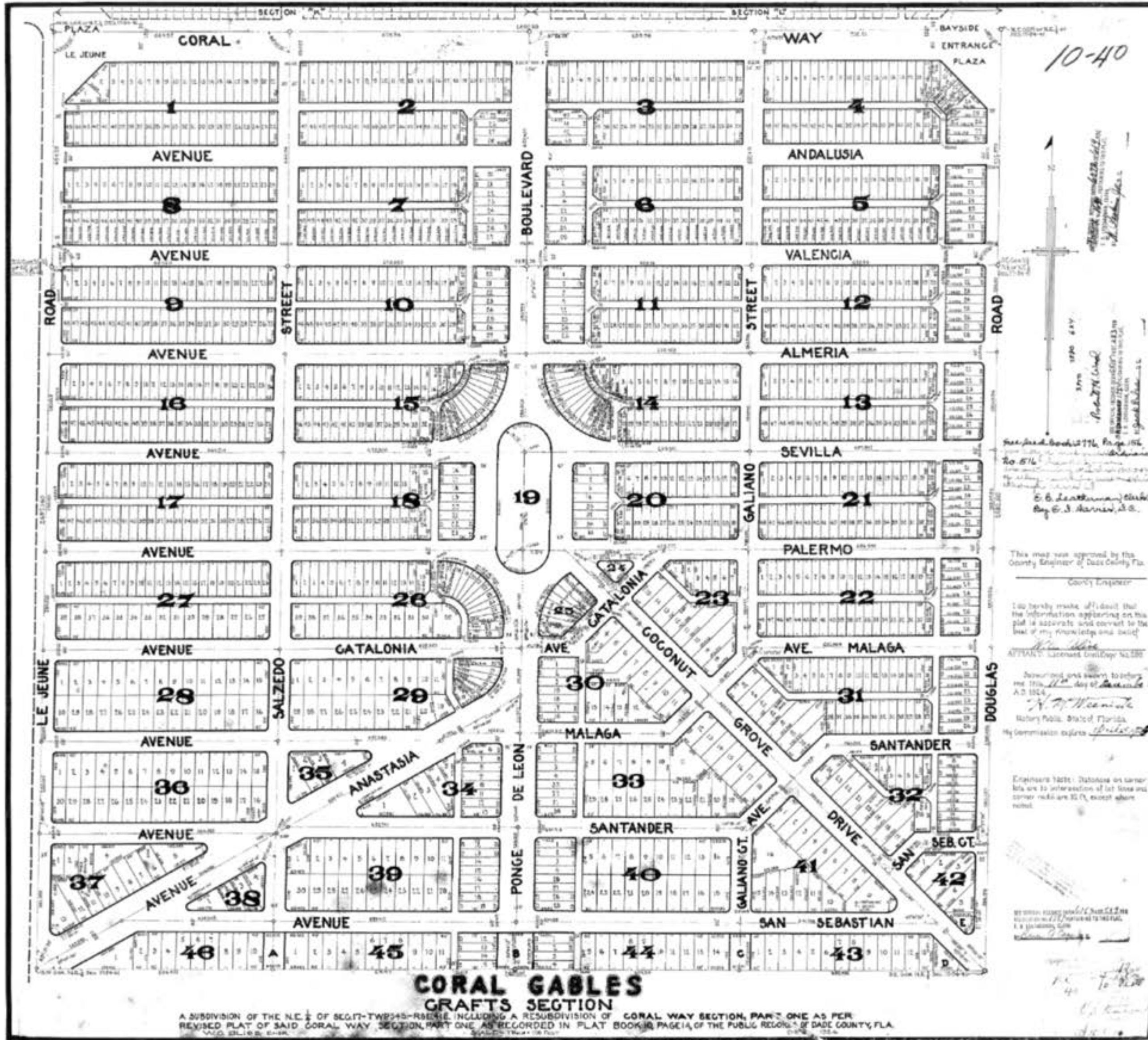
James Edward Ogelthorpe Plan for Savannah, Georgia, 1733



John Nolen plan for Venice, Florida, 1926

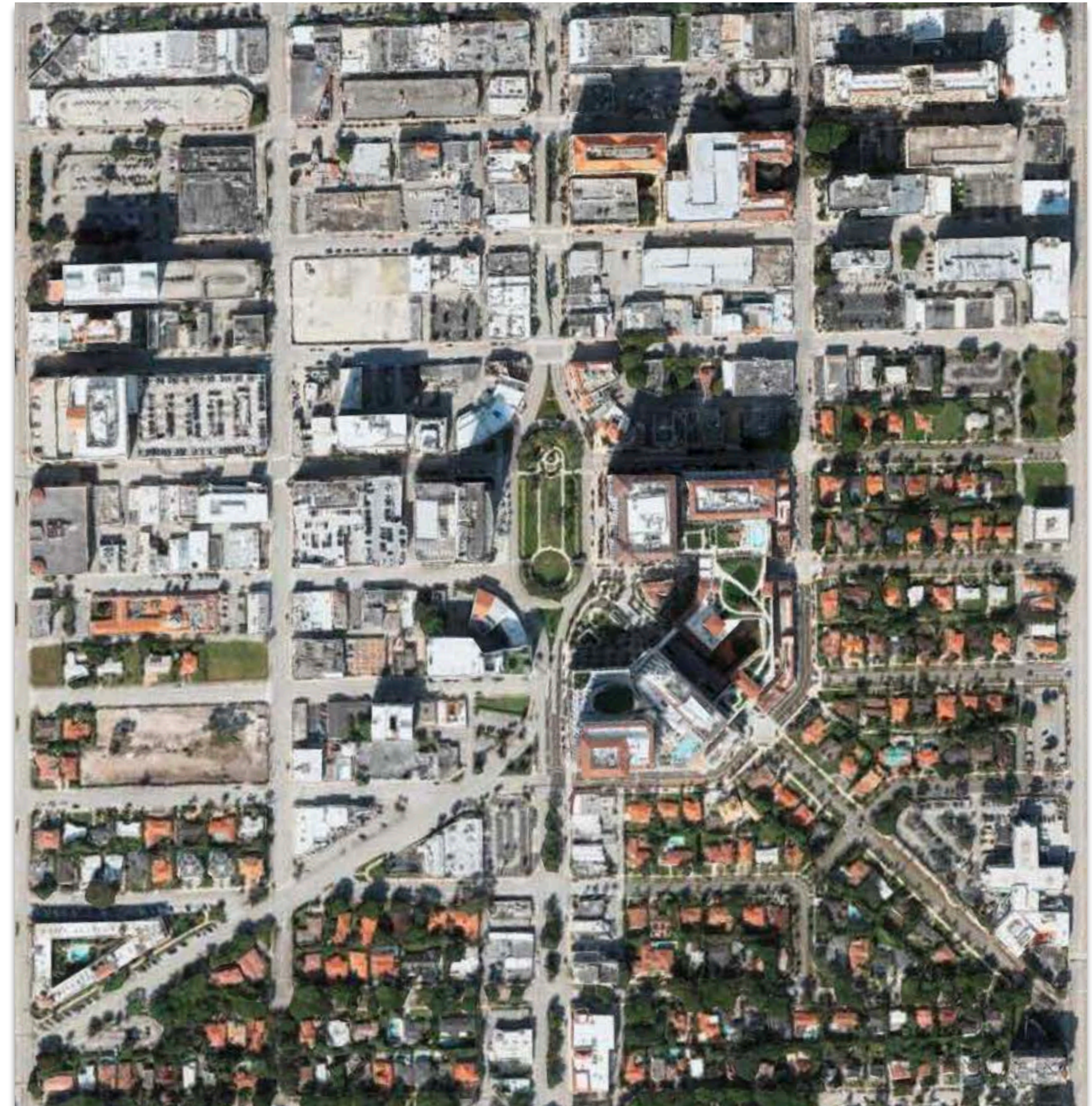


Plat of downtown Coral Gables, Florida

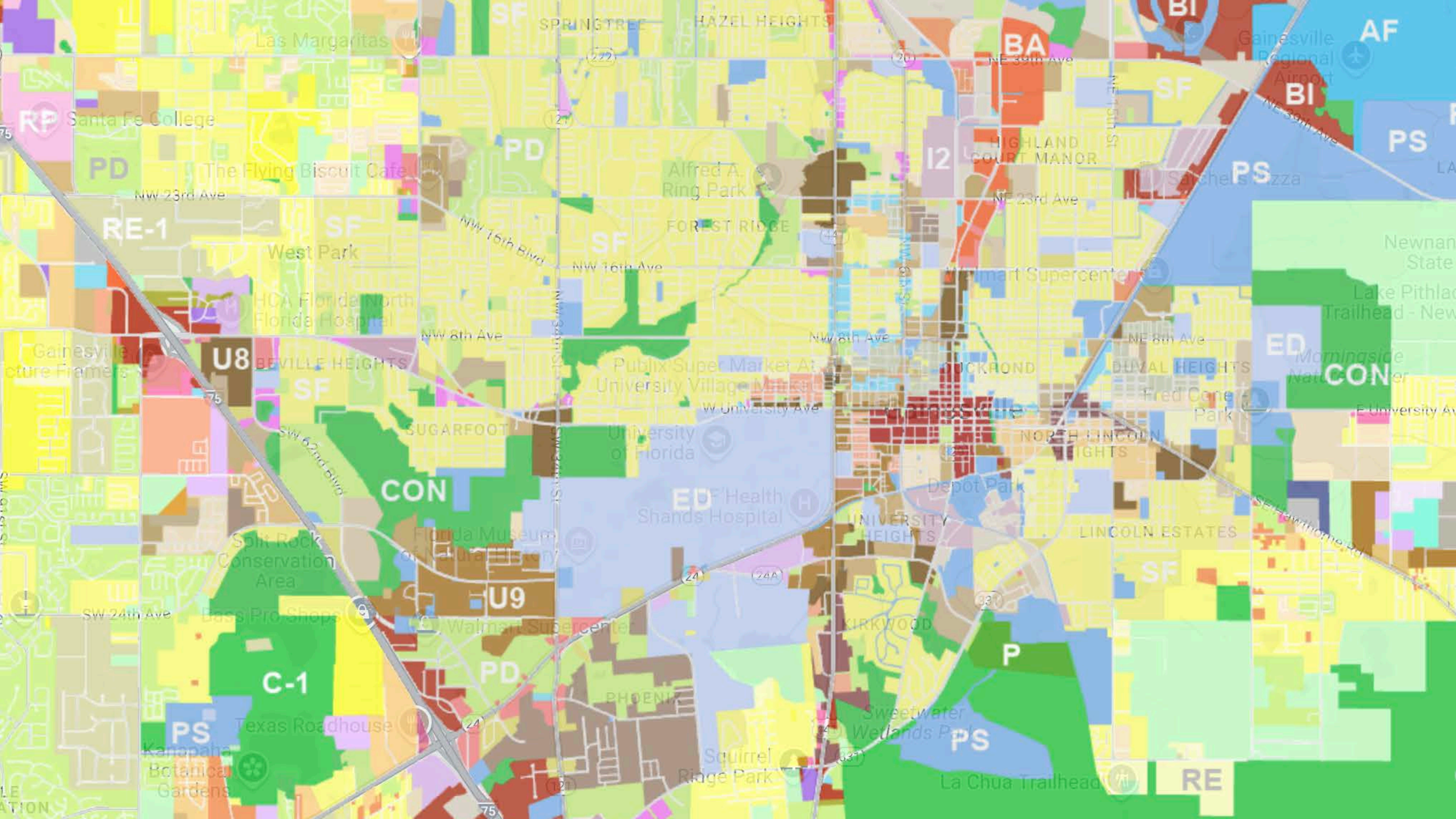


Plat book 10, Page 40 Official records of Miami-Dade County

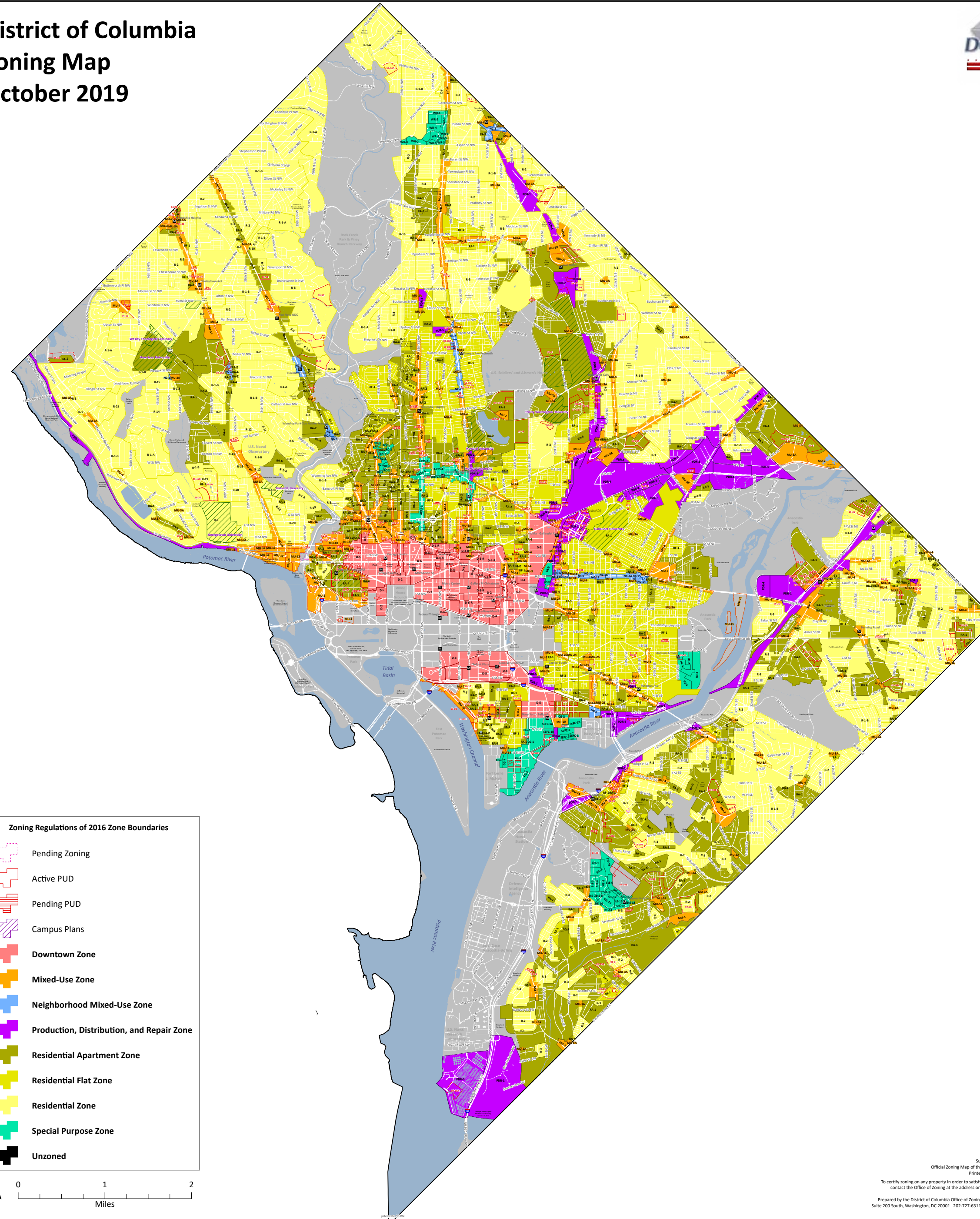
Aerial photograph of downtown Coral Gables, Florida



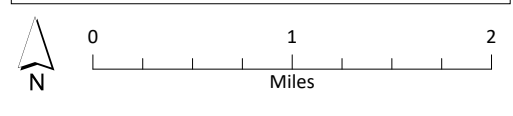
Apple Maps



District of Columbia Zoning Map October 2019



- Zoning Regulations of 2016 Zone Boundaries**
- Pending Zoning
 - Active PUD
 - Pending PUD
 - Campus Plans
 - Downtown Zone
 - Mixed-Use Zone
 - Neighborhood Mixed-Use Zone
 - Production, Distribution, and Repair Zone
 - Residential Apartment Zone
 - Residential Flat Zone
 - Residential Zone
 - Special Purpose Zone
 - Unzoned

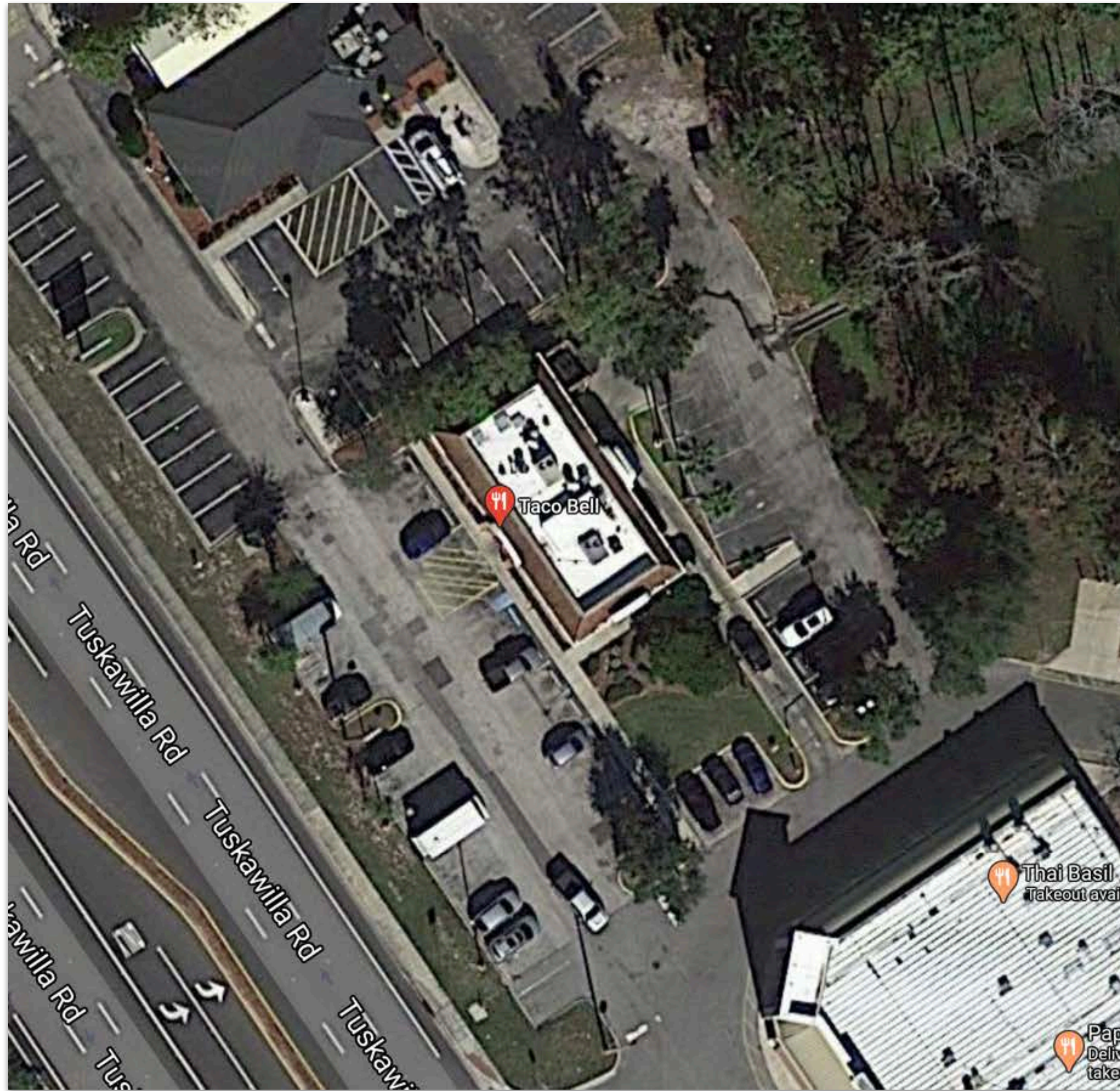


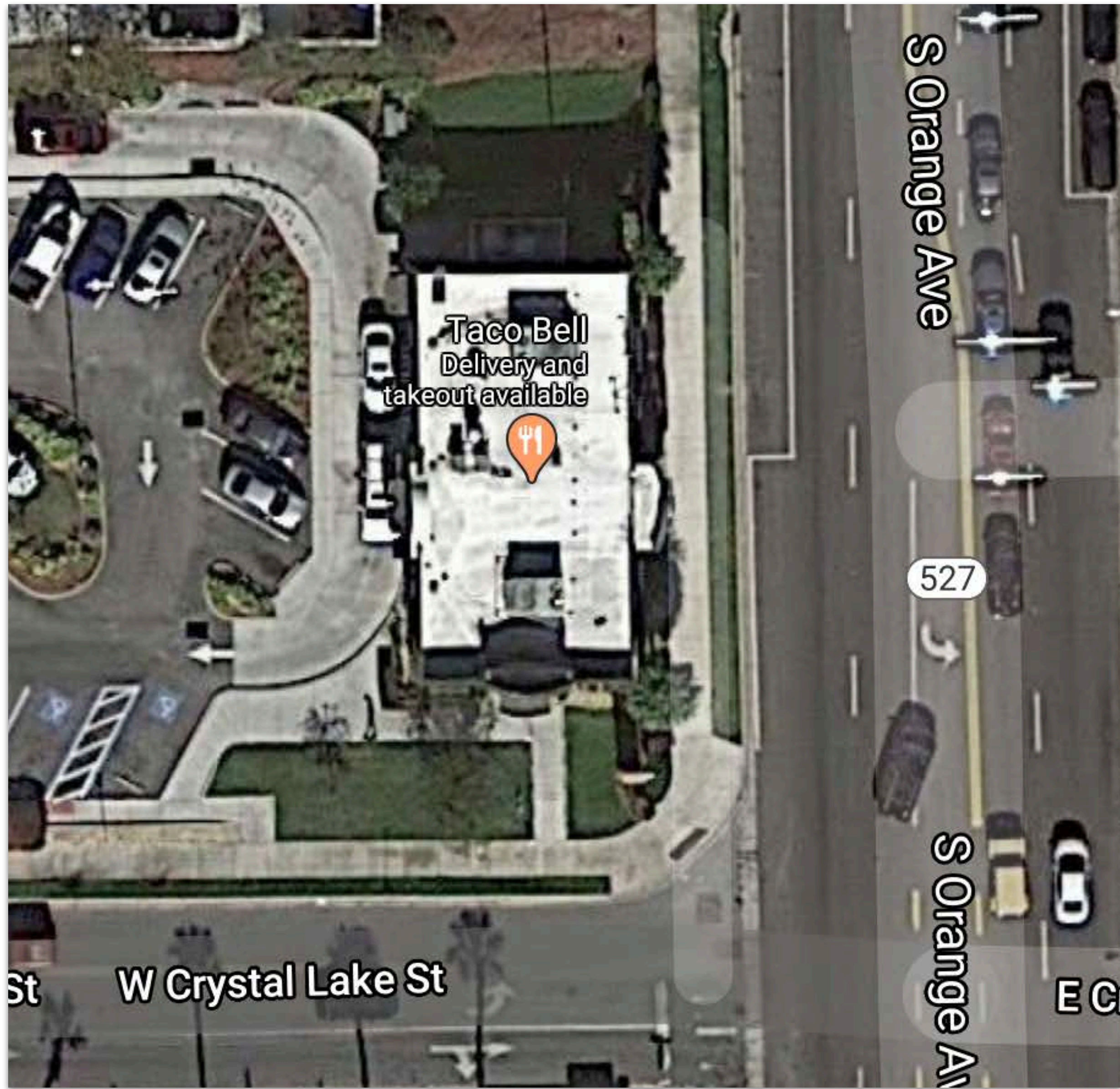
Summary Extract of the
Official Zoning Map of the District of Columbia
Printed on October 1, 2019
To certify zoning on any property in order to satisfy a legal requirement,
contact the Office of Zoning at the address or number listed below.
Prepared by the District of Columbia Office of Zoning, 441 4th Street, NW
Suite 200 South, Washington, DC 20001, 202-727-6311, <https://dcoz.dc.gov>

Small scale

Site planning regulations determine how people interact with development

Differences in setbacks, building orientation, or amount of parking welcome or discourage people walking





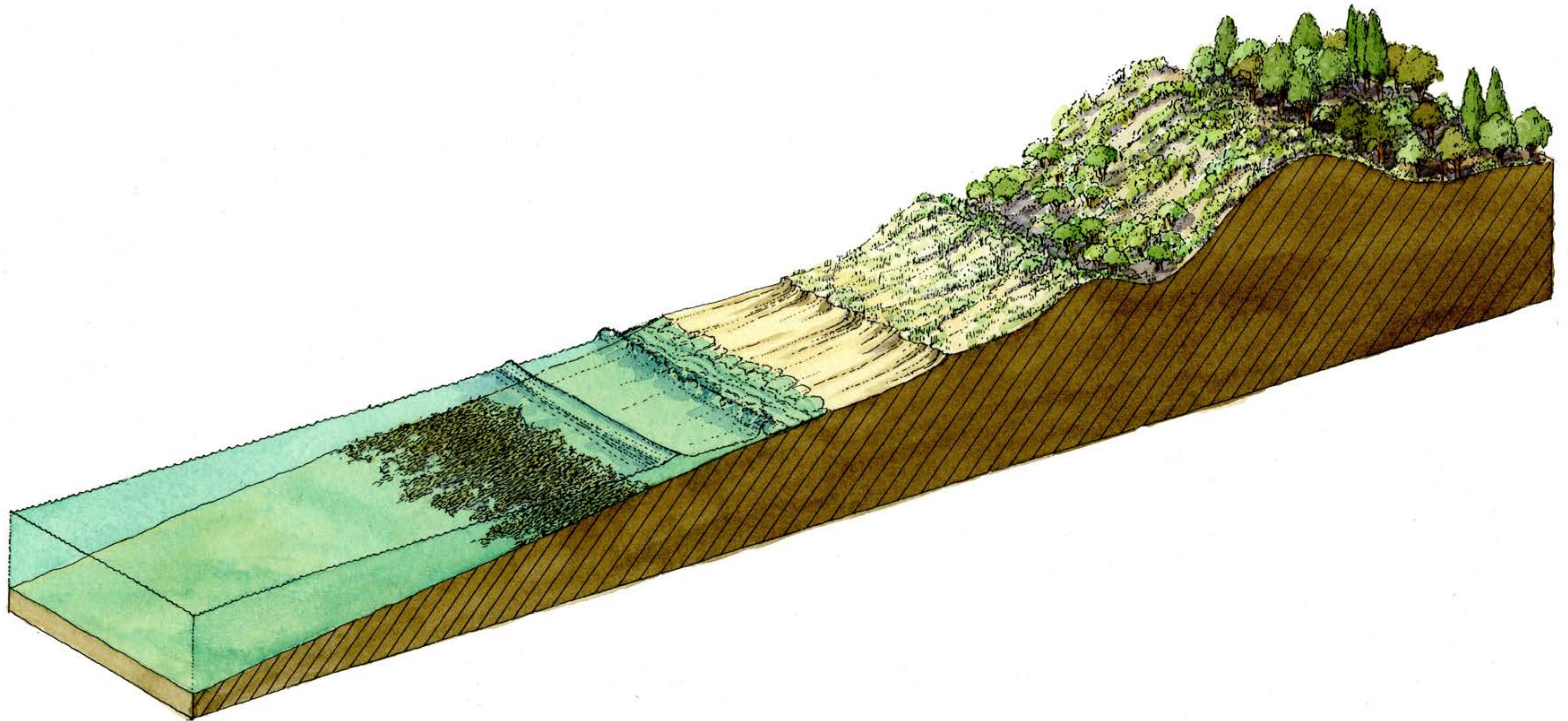
Transect

New urbanist concept

What form based codes use instead of Euclidean zoning designations

Organization based on how urban development should be

Natural transect



Urban transect

T1 - The Natural Zone



T2 - The Rural Zone



T3 - The Sub-Urban Zone



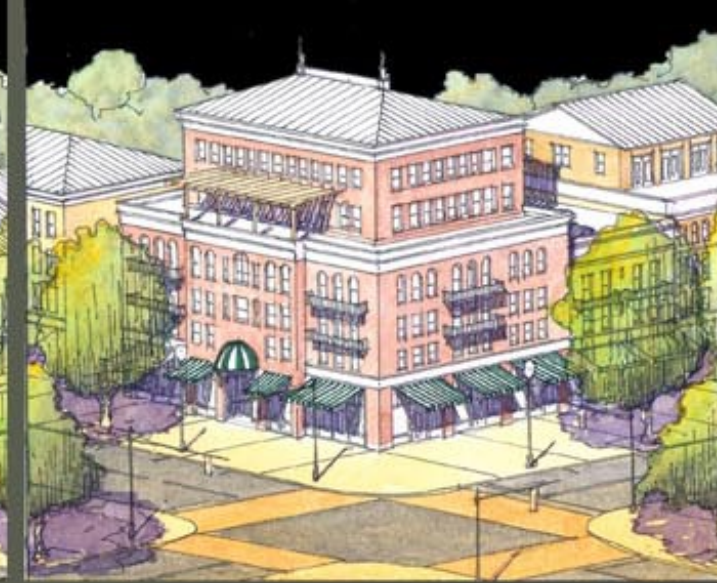
T4 - The General Urban Zone



T5 - The Urban Center Zone



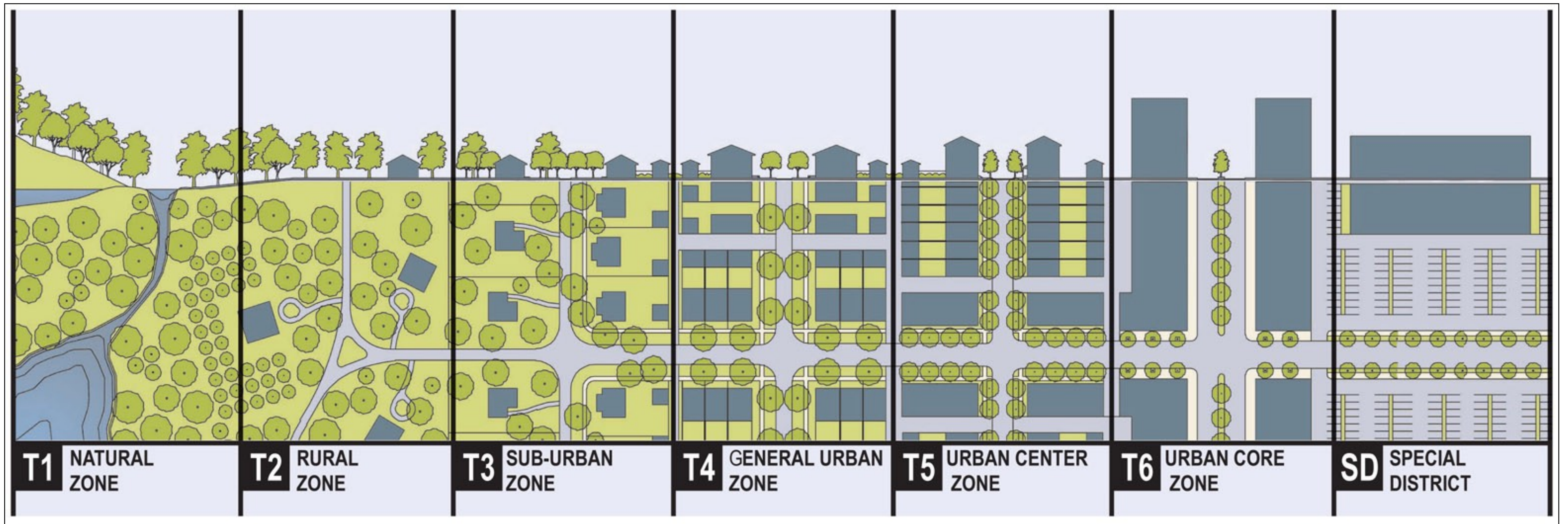
T6 - The Urban Core Zone



T6.1 - The Urban Core Zone



Regulating the transect



Many applications: FDOT Context Classification Guide



C1-Natural

Lands preserved in a natural or wilderness condition, including lands unsuitable for settlement due to natural conditions.

C2-Rural

Sparsely settled lands; may include agricultural land, grassland, woodland, and wetlands.

C2T-Rural Town

Small concentrations of developed areas immediately surrounded by rural and natural areas; includes many historic towns.

C3R-Suburban Residential

Mostly residential uses within large blocks and a disconnected or sparse roadway network.

C3C-Suburban Commercial

Mostly non-residential uses with large building footprints and large parking lots within large blocks and a disconnected or sparse roadway network.

C4-Urban General

Mix of uses set within small blocks with a well-connected roadway network. May extend long distances. The roadway network usually connects to residential neighborhoods immediately along the corridor or behind the uses fronting the roadway.

C5-Urban Center

Mix of uses set within small blocks with a well-connected roadway network. Typically concentrated around a few blocks and identified as part of a civic or economic center of a community, town, or city.

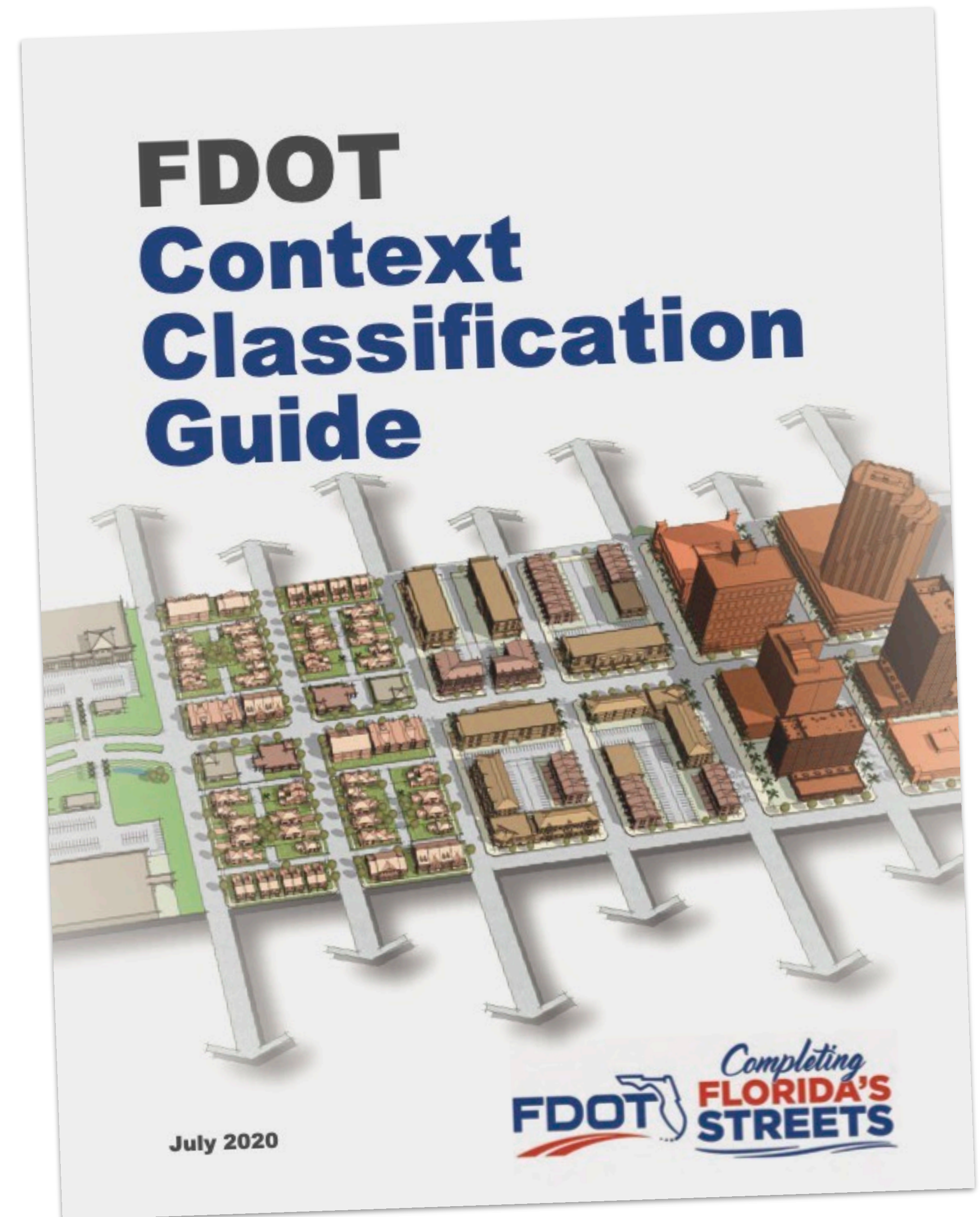
C6-Urban Core

Areas with the highest densities and building heights, and within FDOT classified Large Urbanized Areas (population >1,000,000). Many are regional centers and destinations. Buildings have mixed uses, are built up to the roadway, and are within a well-connected roadway network.

Florida Department of Transportation

“The context classification of a roadway informs decisions made during FDOT’s various project development phases, so that state roadways are planned, designed, constructed, and maintained to support safe and comfortable travel for their anticipated users. Context classification helps identify the anticipated users of the roadway.”

-FDOT Context Classification Guide



Examples

City of Miami

Osceola County

City of Gainesville

Orange County



The logo for the City of Miami is centered on a white rectangular background. This white background is framed by a thick orange border. The entire graphic is set against a dark blue background, with a lighter blue rectangular area behind the white frame. The text 'city of Miami' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font. 'city' is in lowercase, 'of' is in lowercase, and 'Miami' is in uppercase.

city of Miami



Miami 21 Timeline

- Mayor Manny Diaz proposed in 2005
- Duany Plater-Zyberk authored code and city adopted in 2009
- First comprehensive review began in 2019

Miami 21

Based on SmartCode

Generally well-received and credited with improving quality of development

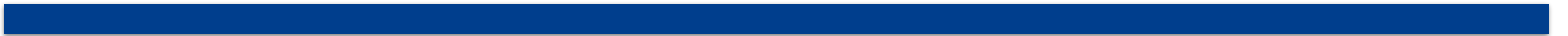
Critiques focus on:

- Special Area Plans, negotiated development standards for developments on more than 9 acres of land
- Gentrification





Osceola County



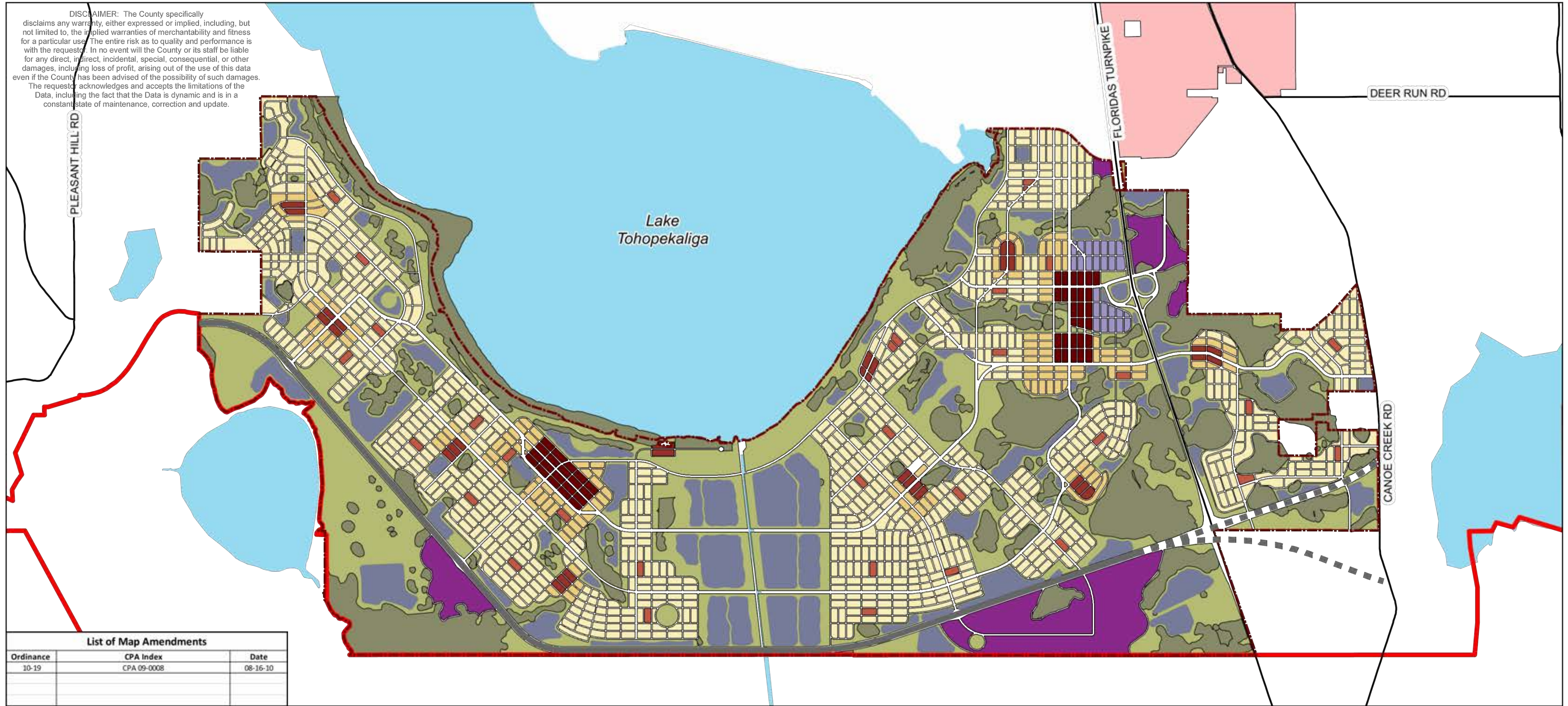
County prescribes street network and development for intended-growth areas.

Developing consistent with plan entitles developer to administrative approval (i.e., no hearing is required).

Based on SmartCode

SLT 1: Development Program

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List of Map Amendments		
Ordinance	CPA Index	Date
10-19	CPA 09-0008	08-16-10

Place Types

- Urban Center
- Community Center
- Employment Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Neighborhood Type 1
- Neighborhood Type 2
- Open Space District
- Special District

Miscellaneous

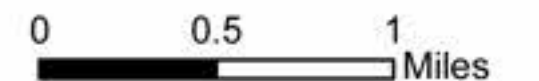
- SLT Boundary
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Preserved Wetlands
- Stormwater Ponds

Regional Facilities

- Other Jurisdictions
- Expressway
- Expressway Alternatives

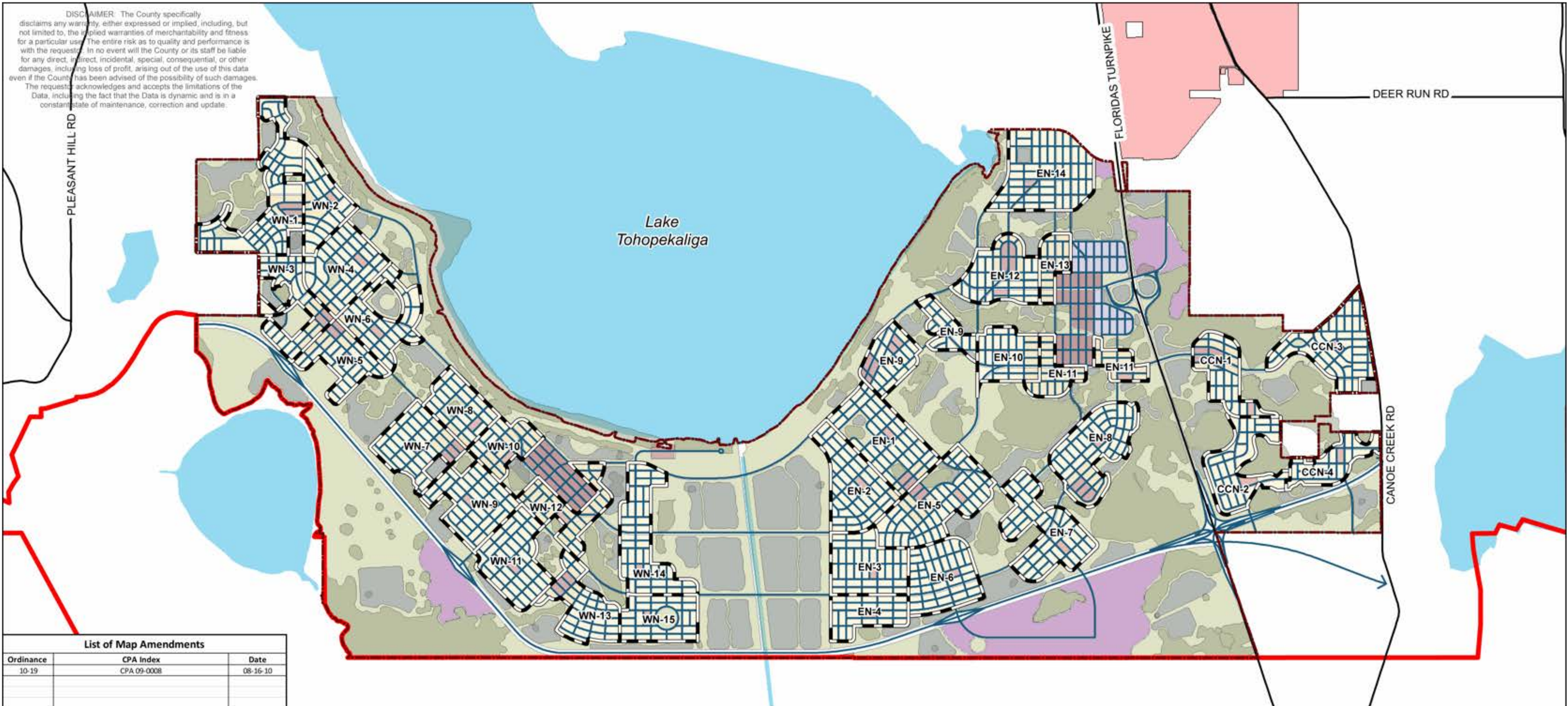


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PLANNING OFFICE - GIS SECTION
01AUGUST2011



SLT 2: Fine Grain Network

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Miscellaneous


- SLT Boundary
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Preserved Wetlands
- Stormwater Ponds
- Other Jurisdictions

Network System

- Fine Grain Network

Neighborhoods

- Neighborhood Boundary
- Neighborhood Label
- TP-6 (Corresponds to Development Program)



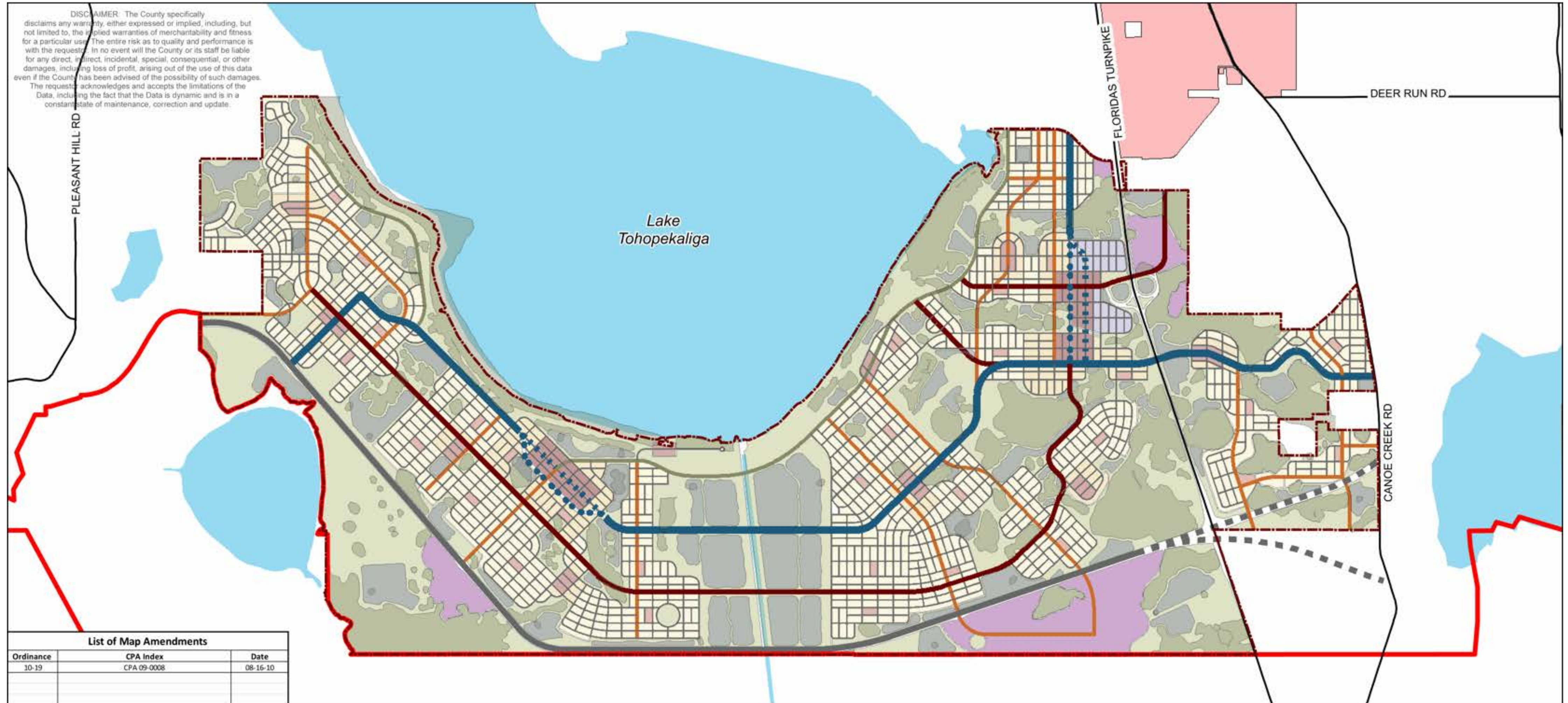
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01AUGUST2011

0 0.5 1 Miles

Caption

SLT 3: Framework Streets

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10-19	CPA 09-0008	08-16-10

Place Types

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- Community Center
- Employment Center
- Neighborhood Center
- Neighborhood Type 1
- Neighborhood Type 2
- Open Space District
- Special District

Miscellaneous

- SLT Boundary
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Preserved Wetlands
- Stormwater Ponds
- Local Streets
- Other Jurisdictions

Regional Facilities

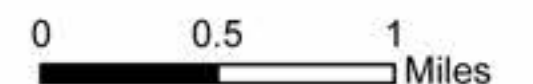
- Expressway
- Expressway Alternatives

Framework Streets

- Avenue
- Boulevard
- Multimodal Corridor
- Multimodal Corridor(Traffic Only)
- Multimodal Corridor(Transit Only)
- Parkway



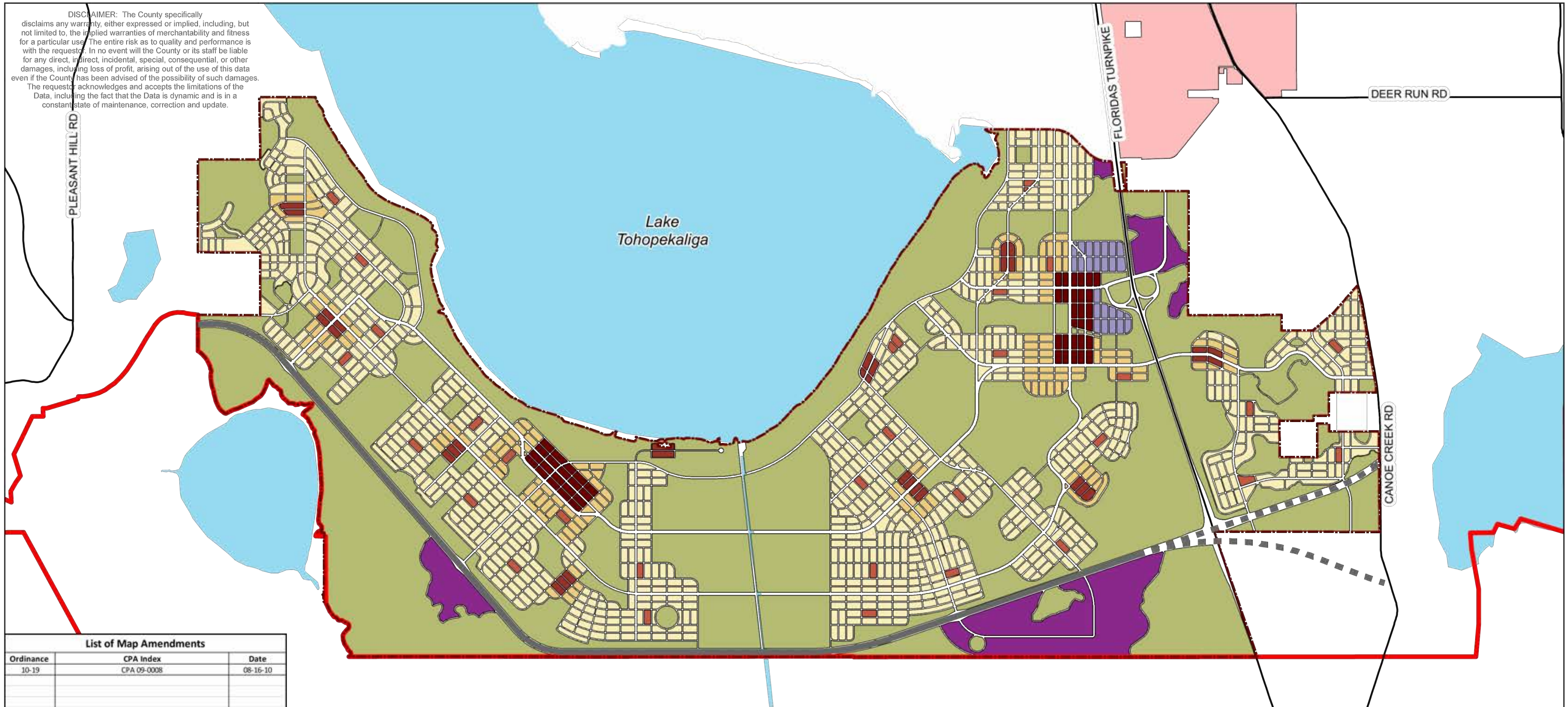
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Caption

SLT 4: Place Types

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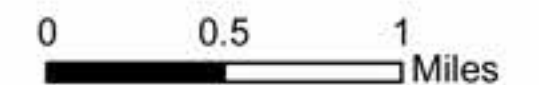
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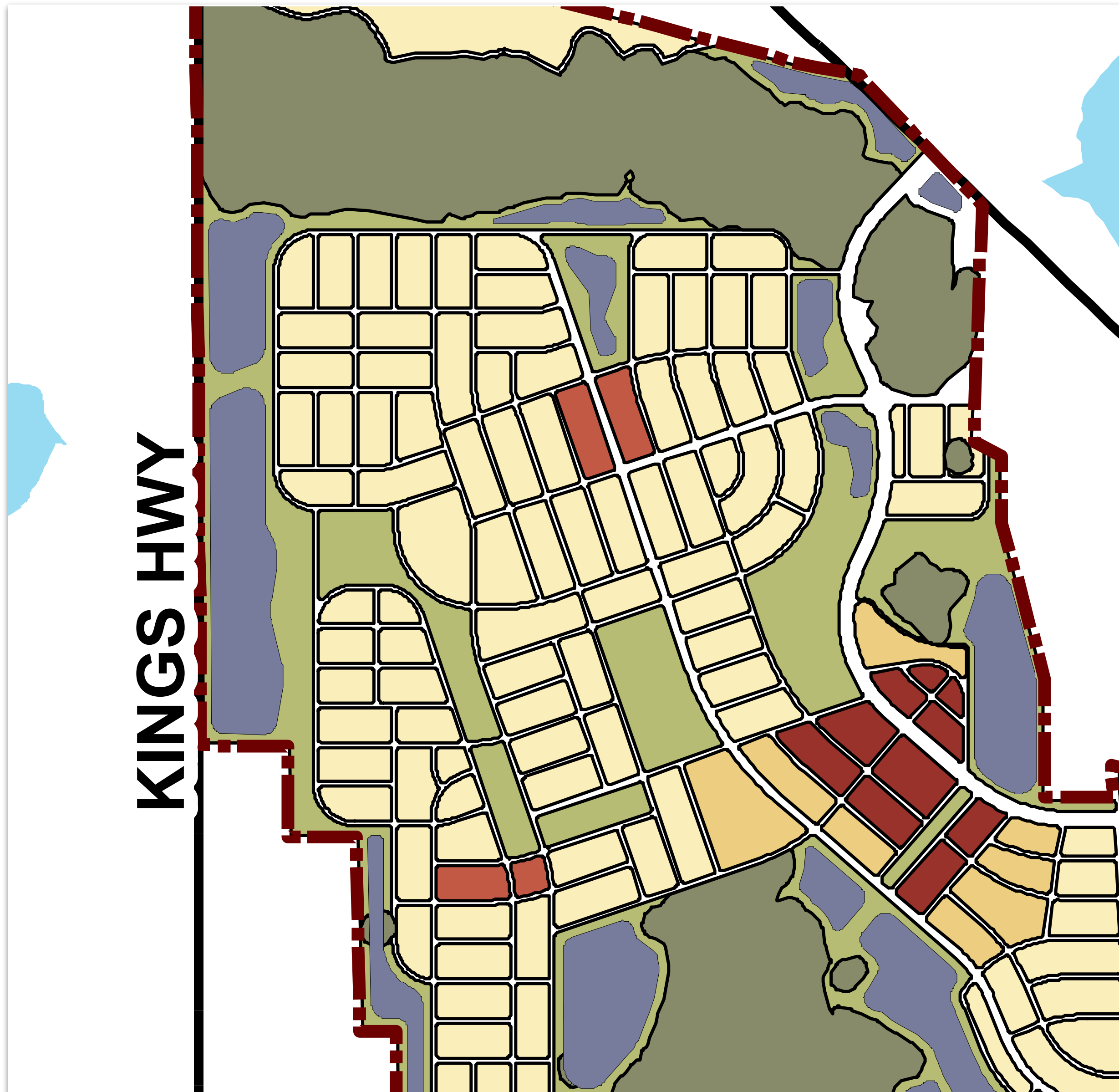


“[An applicant is entitled] to a ministerial approval of Concept Plans and the associated Development Plans which are prepared consistent with the framework elements as demonstrated on SLT Maps 2, 3, and 4. ... Any adjustments made shall be the minimum required to address the condition or circumstance necessitating a change.”

-Osceola County Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element, Policy 3-1.2.1

“The South Lake Toho Conceptual Master Plan represents one approach for achieving the desired buildout scenario for South Lake Toho [A]n alternate conceptual master plan may be prepared for the South Lake Toho area and proffered to the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners for consideration. Approval of an alternate conceptual master plan is dependent upon a showing that the proposal supports and furthers the buildout scenario and desired urban form”

-Osceola County Comprehensive Plan, Future Land Use Element Policy 3-1.14



East Lake Tohopekaliga Development Program from Osceola County Comprehensive Plan



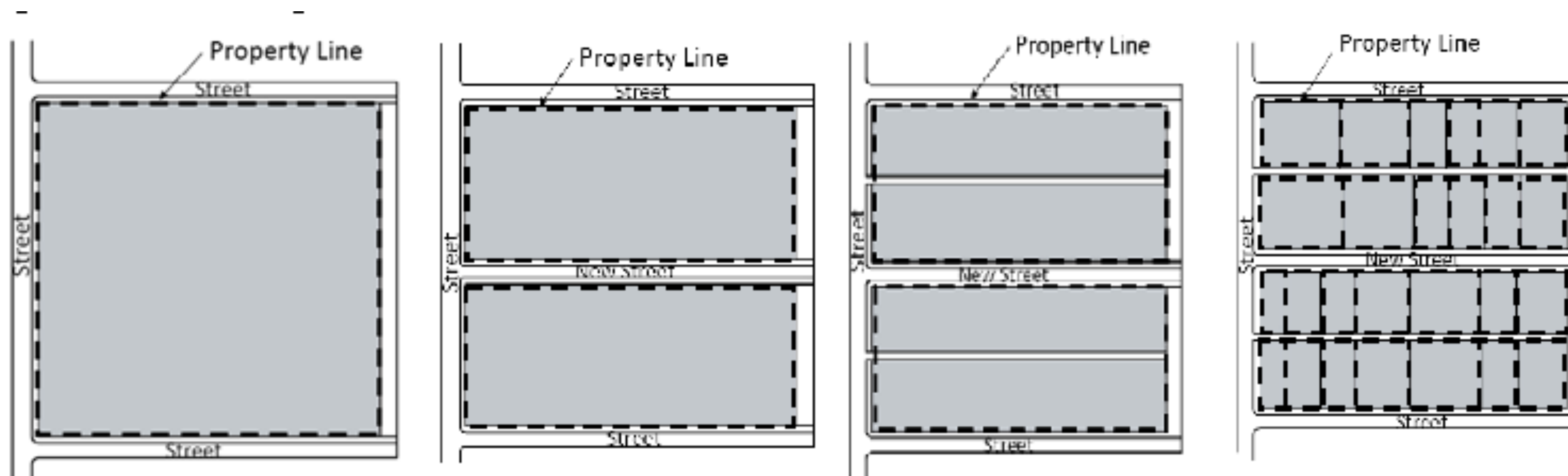
Portion of completed development. Image Credit: Google Maps

city of Gainesville

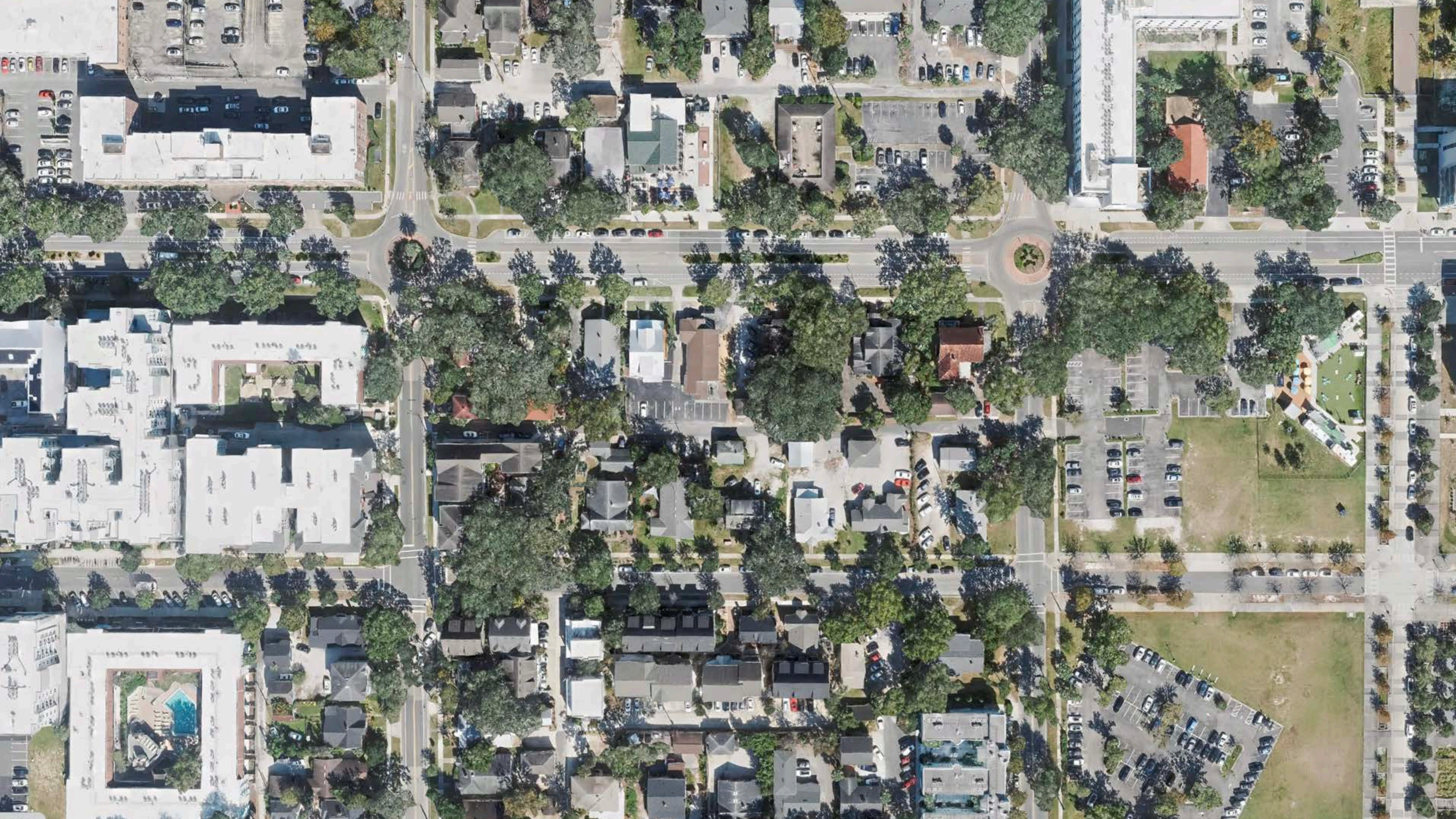
“

Maximum block perimeters are defined Table V-2 for each transect. When development cumulatively includes 50% or more of the total project area, it shall be required to include new local streets or urban walkways and the resulting block(s) shall not exceed the prescribed maximum block perimeter. Figure V-1 below depicts a recommended approach to breaking down large blocks to provide a new street grid on a large site.

-City of Gainesville, Land Development Code, Section 30-4.13



”



An aerial photograph of a residential development. A semi-transparent orange rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image. The background shows various buildings, parking lots, and green spaces. The text '575'' is positioned at the top of the orange rectangle, and '270'' is positioned on the left side. At the bottom of the orange rectangle, the text 'Perimeter=1,690 feet' and 'Area=3.6 acres' is displayed.

575'

270'

Perimeter=1,690 feet

Area=3.6 acres

The image features a dark blue background with a central graphic. The graphic consists of three overlapping, slightly irregular rectangular frames. The outermost frame is light blue, the middle one is orange, and the innermost one is dark blue. Centered within the dark blue frame is the text "Orange County" in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

Orange County



ORANGE COUNTY FLORIDA



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025-2050 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

Adopted June 3, 2025

PREPARED BY:
ORANGE COUNTY PLANNING, ENVIRONMENTAL
AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
ORANGE COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION



Based on SmartCode




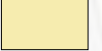





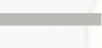
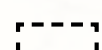
Extensive update of comprehensive plan and land development regulations

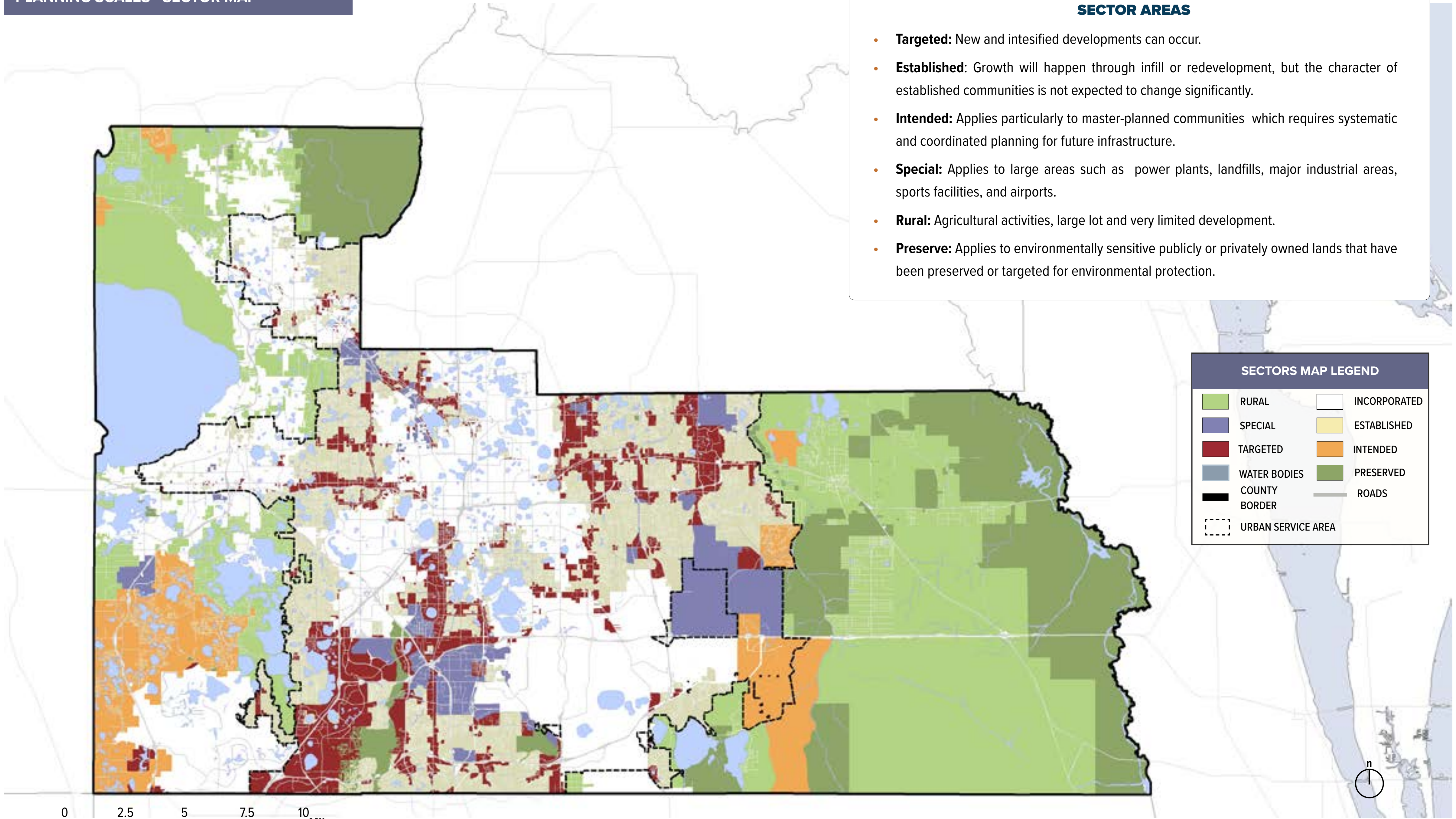
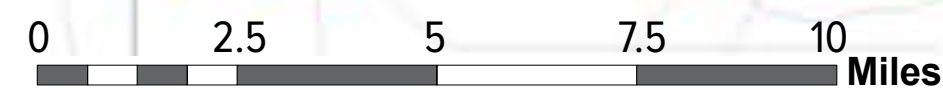
On hold due to state moratorium on comprehensive plan amendments

SECTOR AREAS

- **Targeted:** New and intensified developments can occur.
- **Established:** Growth will happen through infill or redevelopment, but the character of established communities is not expected to change significantly.
- **Intended:** Applies particularly to master-planned communities which requires systematic and coordinated planning for future infrastructure.
- **Special:** Applies to large areas such as power plants, landfills, major industrial areas, sports facilities, and airports.
- **Rural:** Agricultural activities, large lot and very limited development.
- **Preserve:** Applies to environmentally sensitive publicly or privately owned lands that have been preserved or targeted for environmental protection.

SECTORS MAP LEGEND

	RURAL		INCORPORATED
	SPECIAL		ESTABLISHED
	TARGETED		INTENDED
	WATER BODIES		PRESERVED
	COUNTY BORDER		ROADS
	URBAN SERVICE AREA		



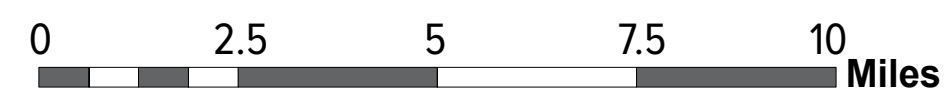
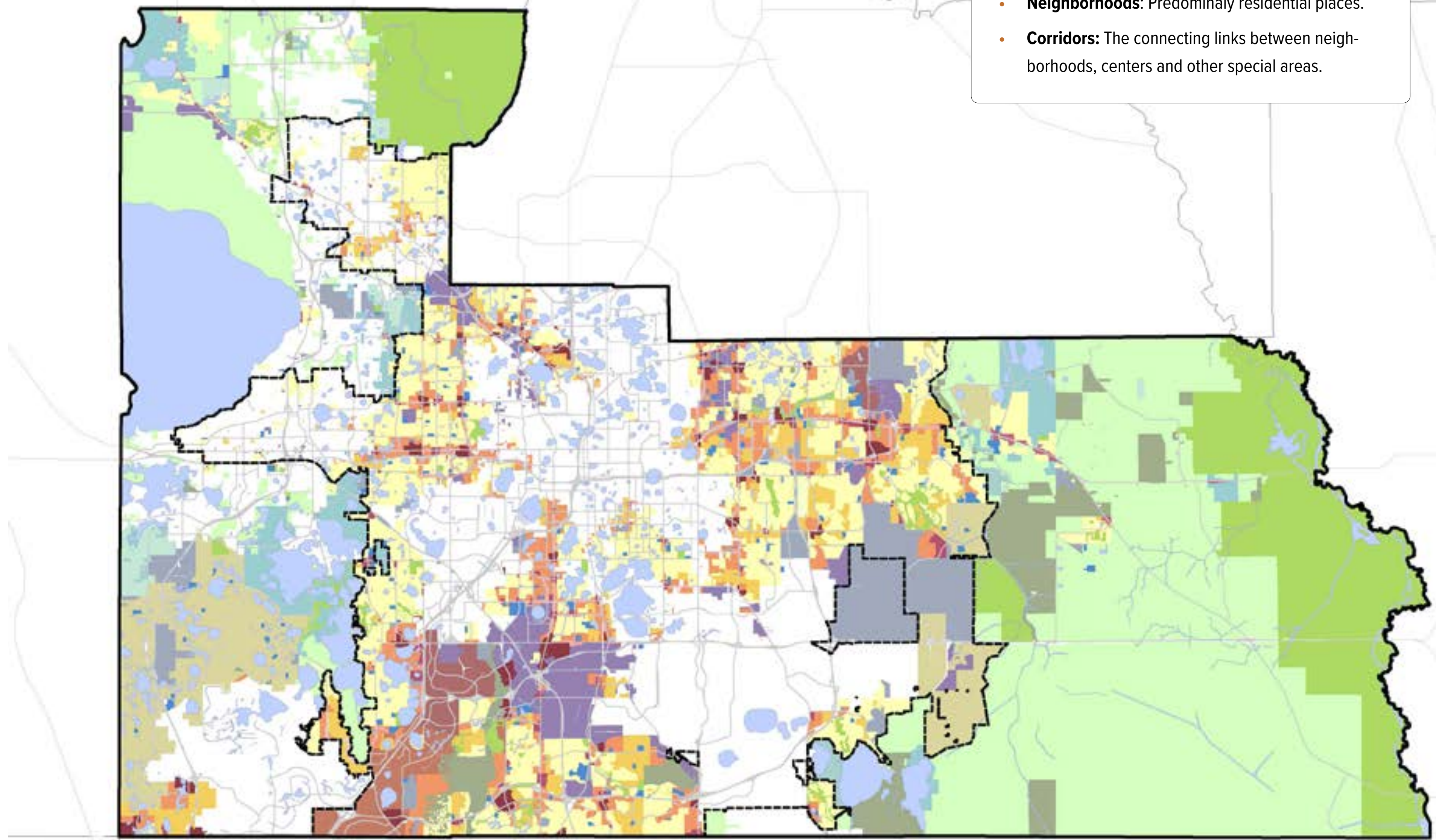
PLACE TYPES

The Vision 2050 includes three major place typologies:

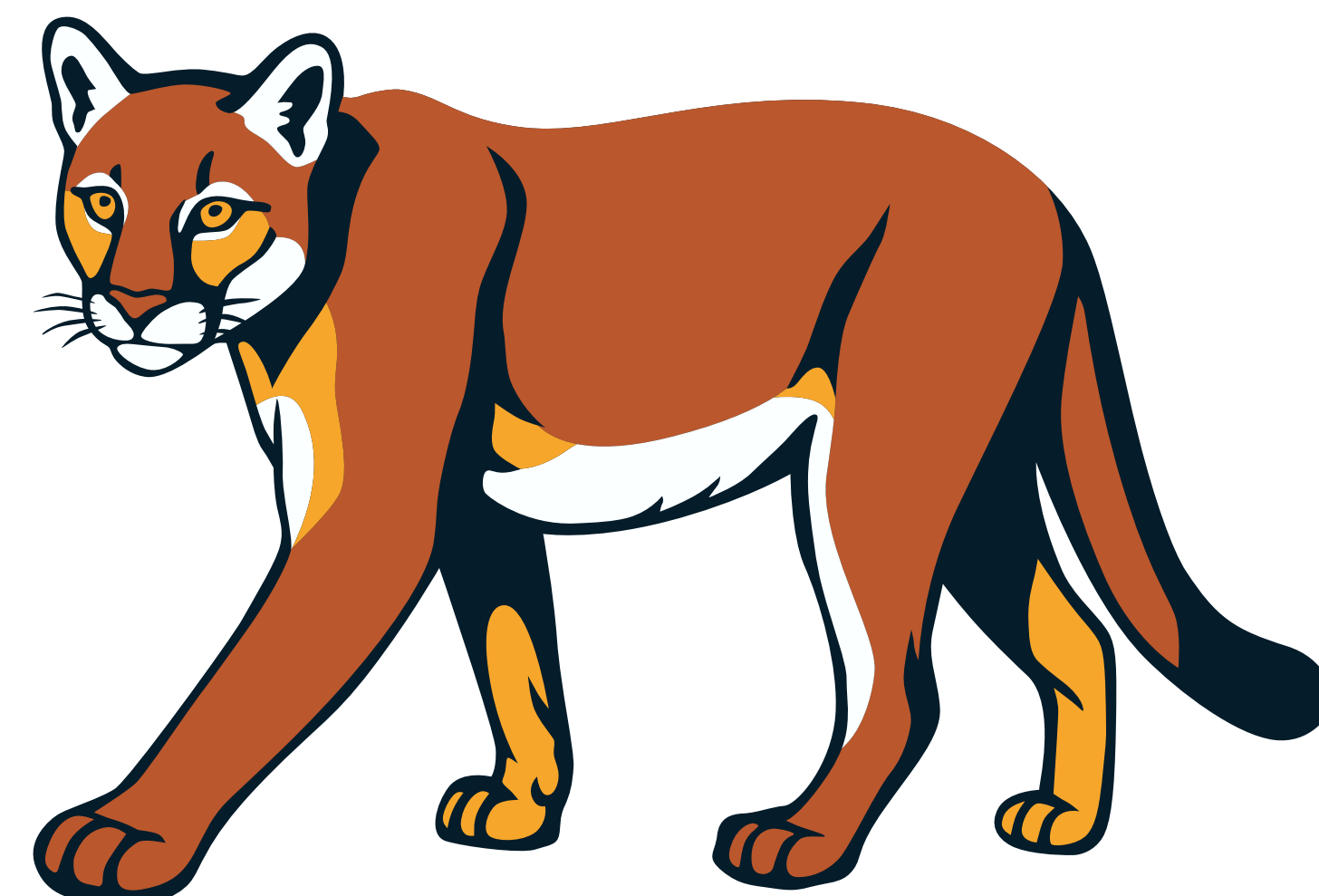
- **Centers:** Denser activity areas.
- **Neighborhoods:** Predominly residential places.
- **Corridors:** The connecting links between neighborhoods, centers and other special areas.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP LEGEND

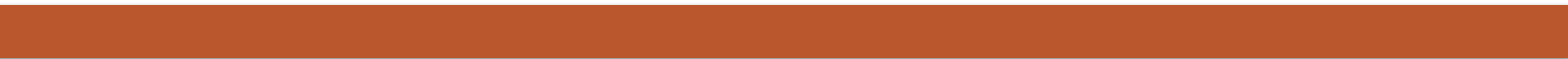
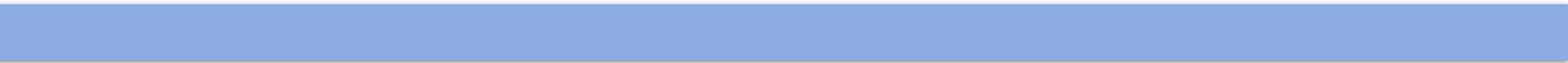
	REGIONAL CENTER
	TOURIST ACTIVITY CENTER
	URBAN CORE
	URBAN CENTER
	NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
	RURAL CENTER
	URBAN CORRIDOR
	MAIN STREET CORRIDOR
	SUBURBAN CORRIDOR
	TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
	SUBURBAN MIXED NEIGHBORHOODS
	SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD
	RURAL SETTLEMENTS 1/1
	RURAL SETTLEMENTS 1/2
	RURAL SETTLEMENTS 1/5
	RS SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL
	RS SUBURBAN MIXED
	RURAL
	INSTITUTIONAL
	EDUCATIONAL
	INDUSTRIAL
	PARKS/ RECREATION/ OPEN SPACE
	PRESERVATION
	HORIZON WEST
	INNOVATION WAY
	AVALON PARK
	LAKE PICKETT
	ROADS
	WATER BODIES
	URBAN SERVICE AREA
	INCORPORATED
	COUNTY BORDER



EDUCATION!



Advice?





Develop solutions

Imagine policies and actions that could solve the problem

Evaluate alternatives

Compare solutions based on difficulty, cost, and likelihood of success

Set goals

Describe outcomes in which problem no longer exists

Assess values

Talk to the public

Define problem

Use data, rely on experts, be objective

Take action

Implement one or more solutions

Review progress

Evaluate success, refine selected courses of action, implement appropriate changes, continue to improve



What do you want more of?

Palmetto



Downtown Bradenton



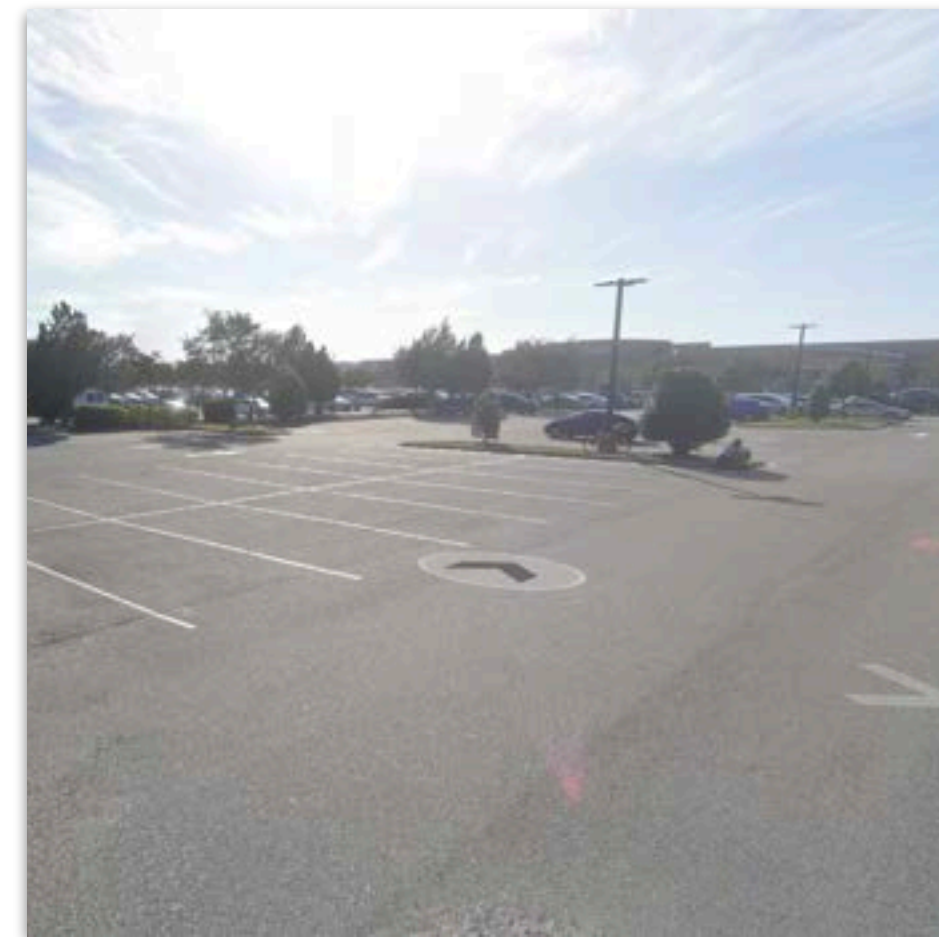
Main Street
Lakewood Ranch



I75 & SR 70



Rangeland Parkway



Don't limit scale to site.

- Region: Plan where Manatee County should grow and where it should not.
- Community: Envision complete and walkable neighborhoods.
- Site: Design sites to welcome people who are walking.

SmartCode is the original model form-based code, is moldable to different needs, and is widely used throughout Florida.

“

“Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.”

-Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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Questions?



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