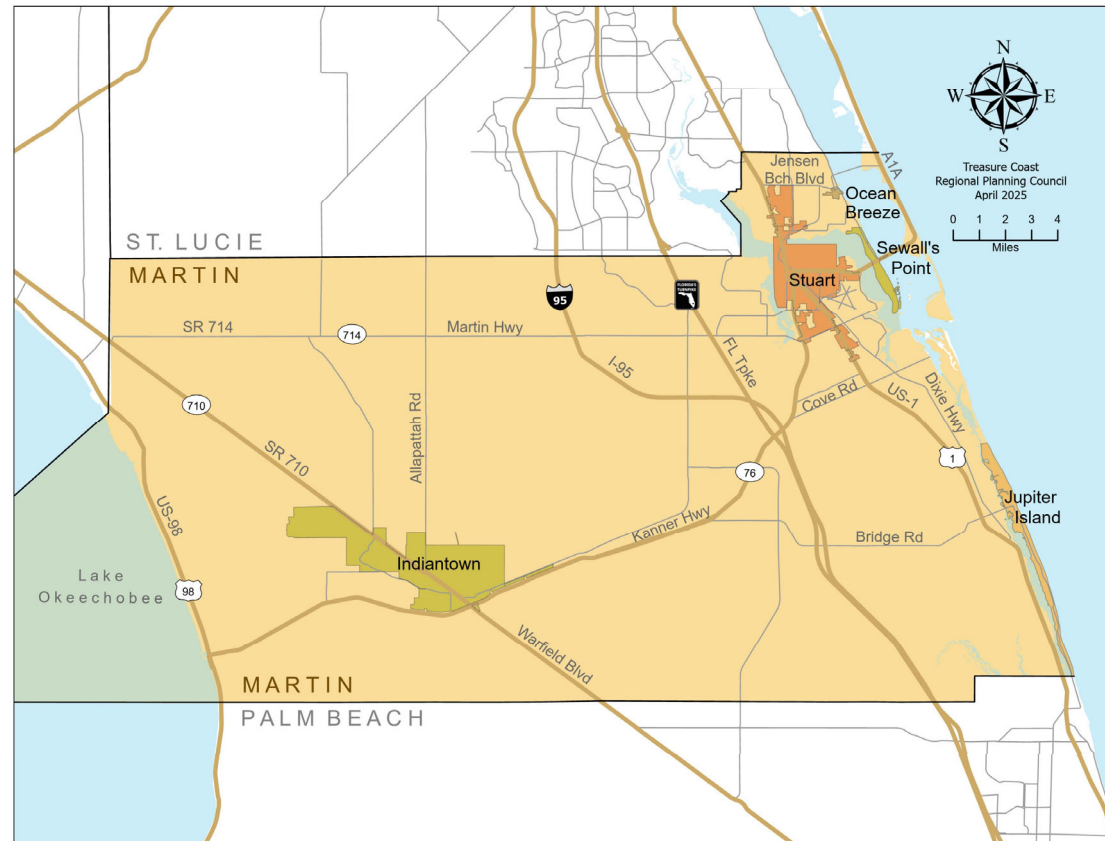


# Martin County Western Lands Studies

- Summary of prior studies, especially Goals and Strategies
- Status of the Strategies
- Map of Preserve Areas
- Other Ideas from Other Places
- Strategies not Undertaken (Yet)
- Potential Next Steps



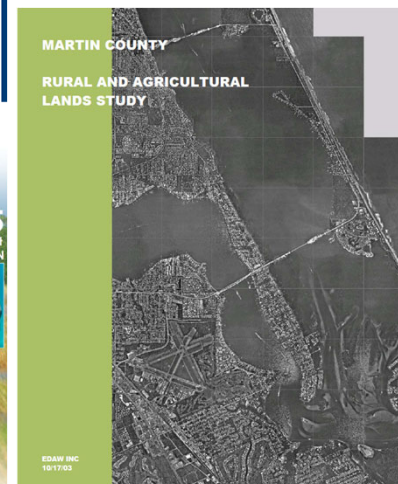
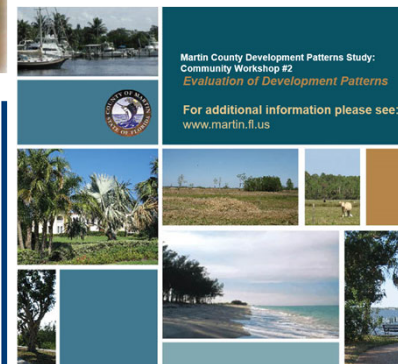
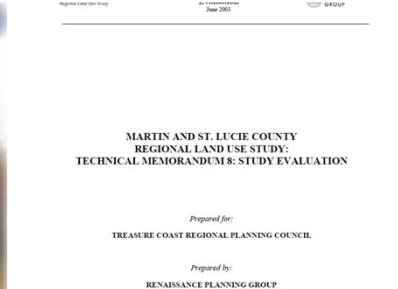
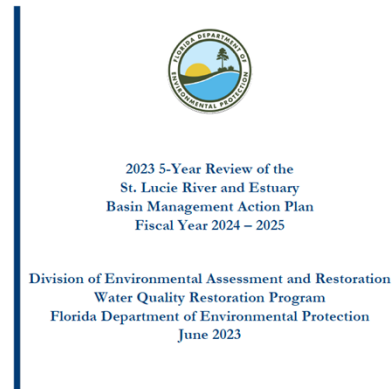
# Past Western Lands Studies

- The 2020 Vision For a Sustainable Martin County (1999)
- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (2000)
- Martin-St. Lucie Regional Land-Use Study (2002)
- Rural and Agricultural Lands Inventory (2003)
- Rural Lands Symposium (2003)
- Sustainable Treasure Coast (2005)
- Development Patterns Study (2007)
- Land Protection Incentives Amendment (Valliere Amendment) (2008)
- St. Lucie Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) (2013)
- Rural Lifestyle Land Use Presentation by TCRPC (2022)
- Martin 2040: The Western Lands Study (2024)

**LAND PRESERVATION INCENTIVE AMENDMENT**  
The following text contains changes approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 21, 2007 for transmittal to the Department of Community Affairs.

New section 4.4.E.7 (4.4.E.7 pertains to natural resource protection).

7. Objective. Martin County shall create opportunities for the permanent preservation of contiguous open space, environmentally sensitive land and agricultural land uses while maintaining residential capacity as it existed on January 1, 2007. For the purposes of Section 4.4.E.7, and supporting paragraphs, the definition of open space, found in Section 9.4.A.11., CGMP, shall not include roads, highways and their median strips and berms. This objective is intended to encourage the conveyance of fee simple title of land listed for public acquisition by state, regional or local agencies as part of established conservation programs to state, regional or local environmental or government agencies or land trusts. Lands listed for acquisition include, but are not be limited to, land designated for public acquisition under the Save Our Rivers program, the Florida Forever program, the County's conservation land program, the Indian River Lagoon, North Palm Beach, and the Lake Okeechobee portions of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP), as well as Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.



## 2020 Vision for a Sustainable Martin County - 1999

Relevant Links: <https://www.ordinancewatch.com/files/localgovernment/localgovernment15608.pdf>

Goal #	Project Name	Goal Description	Goal Type	Status	Responsible agency
<b>Overall Vision  </b>					
VSMC-01	Vision	Preserve Wetlands, Critical Uplands			
VSMC-02	Vision	Preserve, Strengthen Agriculture			
VSMC-03	Vision	Contain Development through the Urban Services Boundary (USB)			
VSMC-04	Vision	Create Livable Communities (within the USB) • Vibrant city, town, village centers that serve surrounding neighborhoods, with a max. 4 story building height • Strong Neighborhoods • Extensive system of local streets, sidewalks, and bikeways • Strategically located, high quality schools, libraries, post offices and other public buildings • Functional, attractive infrastructure • Extensive system of parks, greenways and open spaces • Strong development standards re: density, height, aesthetics		These vision statements have been partially implemented through established Community Redevelopment Areas, septic to sewer projects and continued implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.	
<b>Guiding Principles/ Indicators  </b>					
VSMC-05	Conserve & Recycle Precious Community Resources	Indicators: Ratio between recycled vs. landfilled material Ratio between renewable/ non-renewable energy use % Urban Services Area dedicated to parks and open space	Environmental	Partially tracked  The 2020 FDEP Report mentions: 300,048 landfilled tons and 253,524 recycled tons <a href="https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Martin_2020_0.pdf">https://floridadep.gov/sites/default/files/Martin_2020_0.pdf</a>	Utilities, Growth Management, Parks and Recreation, and Solid Waste Department
VSMC-06	Use Resources Efficiently	Indicators: Change in agricultural water consumption Gross/ per capita energy use Gross/ per capita water use	Environmental	Partially tracked	Utilities and FPL
VSMC-07	Protect & Enhance Natural Resources Land & Wetlands	Indicators: % of environmental lands managed % of protected land/ conservation area, public park # of acres of restored wetlands # of septic tanks in critical areas Water: Water quality index measured at specific sites # of diseased fish reported Air: Air quality index measured at specific sites	Environmental	Partially tracked  Environmental lands managed: 35,000 Total conservation lands: 70,000-100,000 acres Acres of restored wetlands: 6,700 acres (Allapattah Flats) + 4,000 acres (Culpepper Ranch in progress) Septic tanks in critical areas: 3,500 converted, 4,000 ongoing, 3,000+ planned. Water quality, diseased fish, and air quality tracked by FW/C and FDEP.	Environment
VSMC-08	Foster community belonging, unique sense of community	Indicators: # of gateway/ entrance signs	Land Use	Gateway signs have been established for each of the Community Redevelopment Areas.	CRA and Property Appraiser

# Status of Goals and Strategies

- The 2020 Vision For a Sustainable Martin County (1999)
  - Meaningful progress through land acquisition, CRA establishment, design standards
  - Key sustainability indicators never fully implemented
- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (2000)
  - Significant progress on important projects (Allapattah Flats, C-44)
  - Other projects partially complete or in planning
- Martin-St. Lucie Regional Land-Use Study (2002)
  - Enhanced multimodal infrastructure and redevelopment underway, plus new mixed-use communities like Newfield realized
  - Minimal connectivity requirements and lack of financial incentives for infill
- Rural and Agricultural Lands Inventory (2003)
  - Land inventory and agriculture economic analysis complete, plus wetland and upland protection policies
  - No TDR program, no comprehensive agricultural zoning framework, limited local agriculture incentives
- Rural Lands Symposium (2003)
  - Progress in preserving agricultural lands
  - No early engagement for farmers, limited local financial incentives, need to integrate into planning

# Status of Goals and Strategies

- Sustainable Treasure Coast (2005)
  - Clustering tools, Rural Lifestyle designation, and wetland buffers advanced. Preserved 71,000 acres in Florida Wildlife Corridor
  - No TDR system, no rural preservation acreage targets, no payment for Ecosystems Services, no comprehensive agricultural viability strategy
- Development Patterns Study (2007)
  - Need to address 20-acre and 5-acre sprawl patterns and incentives for clustering
- Land Protection Incentives Amendment (Valliere Amendment) (2008)
  - Adopted to encourage permanent preservation
  - Never been used due to procedural complexity and lack of meaningful incentives
- St. Lucie Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) (2013)
  - Substantial progress on nutrient reduction and water storage goals (tens of thousands of acres)
  - Agricultural nutrient loading remains a challenge
- Rural Lifestyle Land Use Presentation by TCRPC (2022)
  - Adopted in 2022, amended in 2024. Atlantic Fields (1,500 acres with 70% preserved as open space) and Calusa Creek Ranch (3,902 acres with 91% preserved as open space)
  - Any strengthening constrained by SB 180

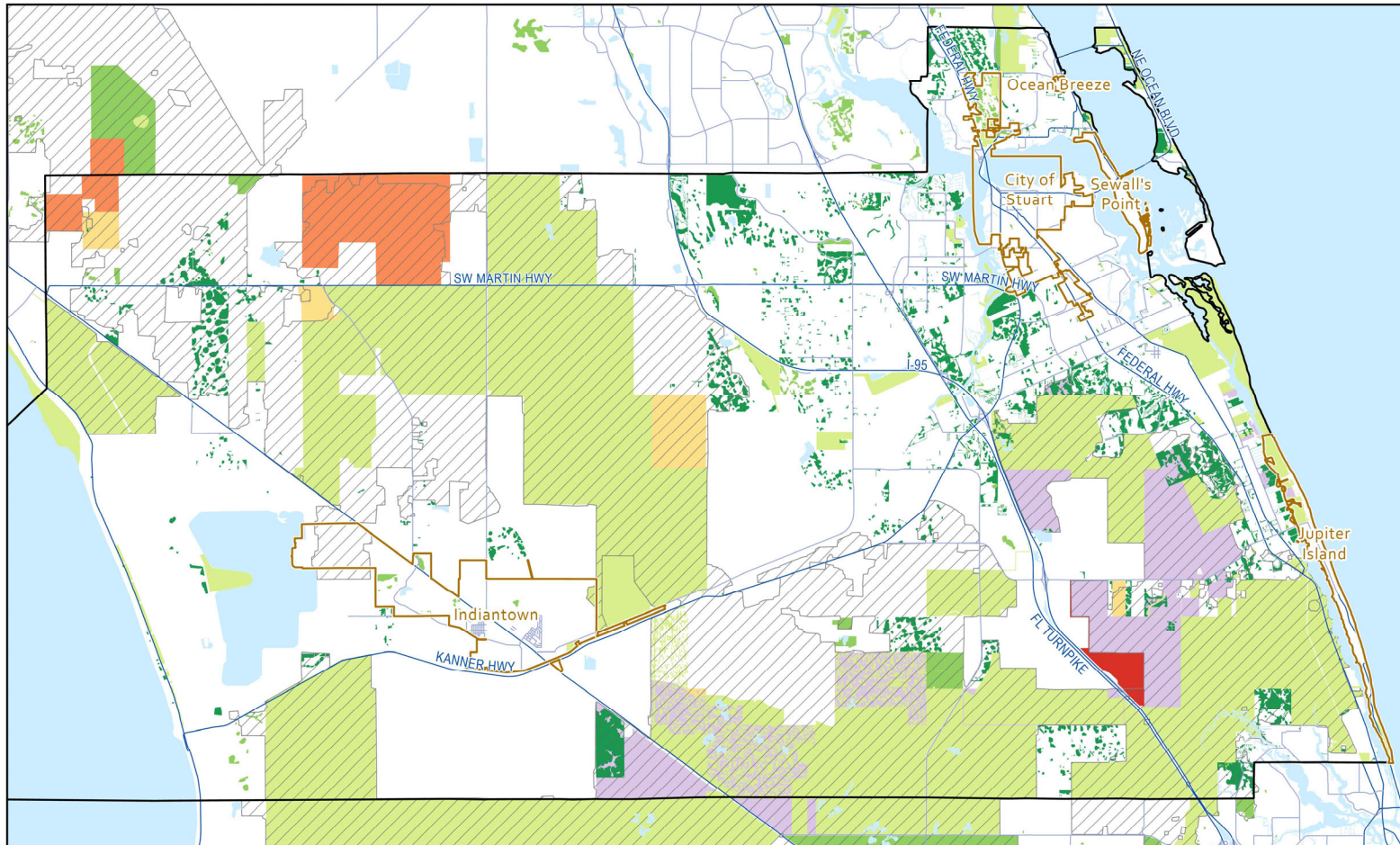
# Status of Goals and Strategies

- Martin 2040: The Western Lands Study (2024) (1000 Friends, Guardians of Martin County, UF)

Progress using sales tax revenue through Martin Forever to preserve land, discouraging development without infrastructure, and investing in septic to sewer conversions

Unclear ability to accommodate all growth within existing urbanized areas in light of existing policies for infill



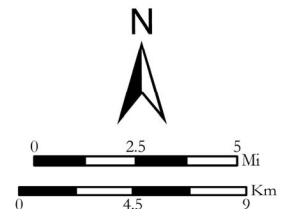


## Martin County Preserve Lands

- |   |                                       |              |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Preserve Areas (Martin County GIS)                                | Florida Wildlife Corridor             | County       |
| South Florida Water Mngmt District (SFWMD) Conservation Easements | Rural Lifestyle Agricultural Easement | Municipality |
| Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI)                            | Rural/Family Lands Protection Program |              |
| FL Forever Projects   | Existing                              |              |
|   | Proposed                              |              |

2025

Source: 2025 FNAI, SFWMD, FL Dept Ag Rural/Family Lands Protection Program, Martin County GIS



# Other Ideas from Other Places

- Strong Agricultural Zoning and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Programs – shifting development away from farmland, directing growth towards areas with urban services

Montgomery County, Maryland

Sonoma County, California

King County, Washington

Loudoun County, Virginia

- Major Public Acquisition Tools – dedicated revenue sources can secure large blocks of open space, safeguard watersheds, and reinforce strong urban-rural boundaries

Boulder County, Colorado

Marin County, California

- Effective Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Programs – long term stability created when landowners are compensated for keeping land in agriculture

Lancaster County, PA

Dane County, WI

Highly effective approaches seem to be those that use multiple tools, tailored to the specific circumstances



# Challenges and Gaps in Implementation

- Tracking and Metrics – sustainability indicators from the 2020 Vision remain uncoded, with no countywide monitoring in effect. Some metrics not obtainable (private data).
- Agricultural Preservation – no TDR program or comprehensive agricultural zoning. Incentives limited and underutilized.
- Smart Growth Implementation – many recommendations from Development Patterns Study and Regional Land Use Study, like form based codes and infill incentives, not fully implemented.
- Planning Integration – several studies never formally adopted or integrated into regulations, they are just policy recommendations.
- Water Policy Gaps – BMP adoption incomplete, septic to sewer conversions are slow due to the expense.

# Next Steps / Implementation Priorities

The County does NOT need another Western Lands study at this time. Instead, implement the strategies already proposed.

- Codify and Unify Planning Vision
  - Enforceable Policy
  - Sustainability Indicators
  - TDR Framework
  - Conservation Land Database (all types) with priorities, agriculture goals, recreation
- Formalize and Enhance Agriculture Sustainability Tools
  - Transfer of Development Rights
  - Agriculture Land Retention Incentives – predictable and appealing to landowners
- Enhance Implementation Capacity – dedicate staff to shepherd policy into action and support cross-department collaboration
- Prioritize Smart Growth Mechanisms
  - Encourage infill development
  - Structure Impact Fees to reflect true cost of development – higher fees where infrastructure is lacking
- Improve Public Engagement and Accountability
  - Public dashboard to track plan performance

# Martin County Western Lands Studies

Questions??

