

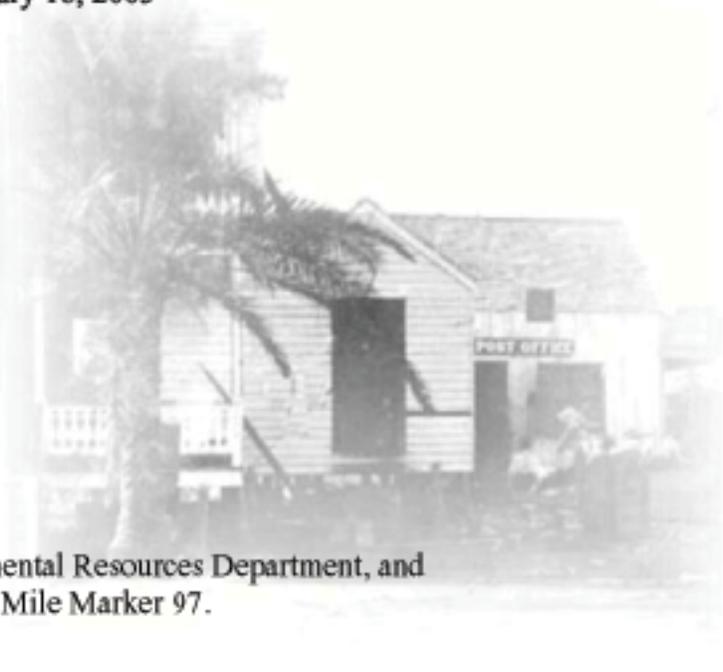


*Livable CommuniKeys
Master Plan*

*Tavernier Creek
To
Mile Marker 97*

An island community rich in history and character

February 16, 2005

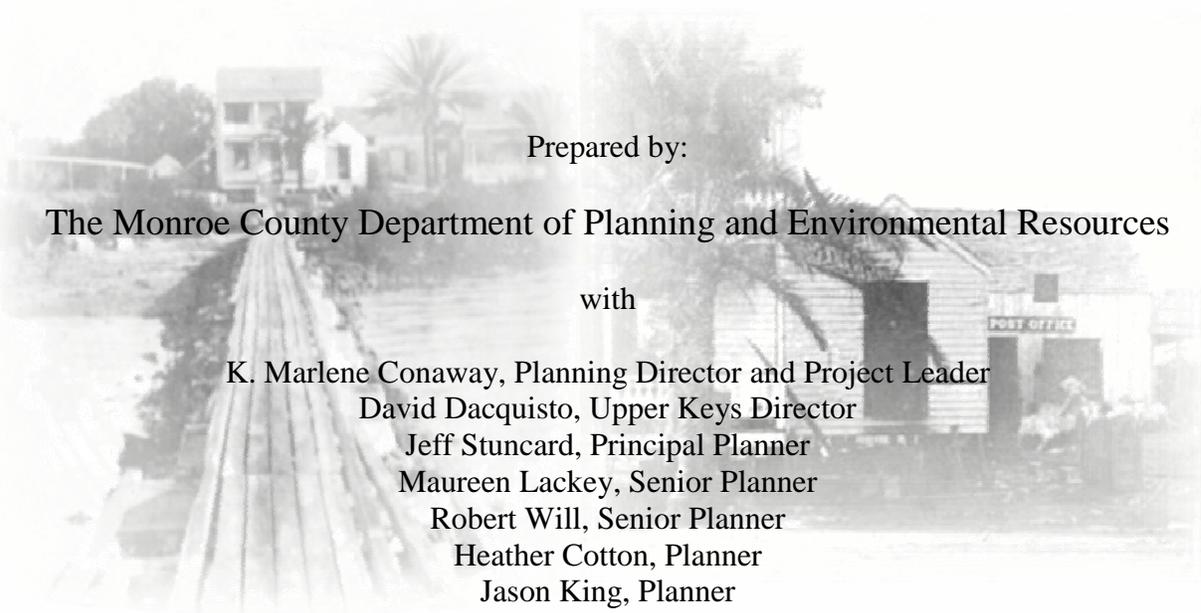


A Coordinated Effort By:
Monroe County Planning & Environmental Resources Department, and
the Community of Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97.



**MASTER PLAN
FOR TAVERNIER CREEK BRIDGE
TO MILE MARKER 97**

2004-2024



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The Monroe County Department of Planning and Environmental Resources

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Community Vision

We envision the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Planning Area as:

An island community committed to preserving its heritage, natural setting and stands of native tropical hardwood hammocks, with improvements to the visual character of the U.S. 1 corridor, limited redevelopment of commercial properties, and neighborhoods where residents have access to the water and recreational facilities.

Executive Summary

The Livable CommuniKeys Program is the local community planning initiative of the Monroe County Planning Commission and the Planning & Environmental Resources Department. The Livable CommuniKeys program is the forum in which community and redevelopment plans that offer a clear direction for each community's future are prepared. This Master Plan has been created for the planning area of Tavernier Creek Bridge to approximately Mile Marker 97 of unincorporated Monroe County. Over the last four years, the residents and property owners of the planning area have met with Monroe County Planning Staff to identify the needs and desires of the community for future development and preservation of the planning area.

Objective 101.20 of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan states that "Monroe County shall address local community needs while balancing the needs of all Monroe County communities. These efforts shall focus on the human crafted environment and shall be undertaken through the Livable CommuniKeys Planning Program." The Planning Department, with Policy 101.20.1, was charged with the task of designing a Community Master Plan for the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 area.

The creation of this document involved coordination with local agencies and reports already created such as the Stormwater Master Plan, Monroe County Seven Year Roadway and Bicycle Path Plan, Monroe County Wastewater Master Plan, Florida Keys Scenic Highway and Overseas Heritage Trail, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census Reports and District Six FDOT projects and others. This plan utilizes current conditions for the following areas: Land Use; Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Community Facilities, Environmental Resources; Economic Development and Tourism; Historic, Cultural, and Archeological Resources; and Housing and Community Design and Streetscape for the planning area. With this report, staff will proceed to implement the goals for this particular island community to guide future development and redevelopment including the protection of existing residential and commercial areas.

The theme throughout the LCP is one of protection for the natural environment, preservation of the historic elements of Tavernier and guided development and growth in a manner that is compatible with community goals.

The LCP introduced several new concepts and new strategies to implement the goals identified through the plan development process:

- Adopt and utilize the tier system to categorize land according to environment sensitivity in order to guide protection and acquisition of land by the county.
- Evaluate non-conforming land uses to determine appropriate designation and continue to utilize the Land Use District Map and supporting Future Land Use map to evaluate individual properties.
- Preserve the natural environment by adopting a tier map system, limiting clearing for new construction to maintain tree cover and increasing the native hammock buffer areas adjacent to US 1. Designate MM 91 to Burton Dr. as a "Community Center" with guidelines and standards including the "Commercial Enhancement Plan" that protect and compliment the town of Tavernier's historic context.

- Protect the integrity of Tavernier’s Historic District by researching and clearly identifying the boundaries of the district and by providing guidelines and standards that manage future development and protect historic resources and the natural environment.
- Recognize the shortage of housing for employees, maintain and improve the existing stock of affordable housing in combination with the development of new employee housing as part of the development or redevelopment of commercial buildings constructed at a village scale under the design guidelines and standards established for the area.
- Plan for new commercial development based on an inventory and analysis of existing commercial uses and future needs assessment.
- Recognize the importance to the community and economy of existing marina facilities encouraging redevelopment to meet existing health and environmental standards and protect existing legally established commercial uses located within the shoreline setback by providing an opportunity to rebuild in the existing footprint if destroyed.
- Coordinate efforts of the Florida Department of Transportation and the county to promote a safer pedestrian and bicycle environment and to mitigate the affect of U.S.1 traffic on residential neighborhoods.
- Protect, maintain and acquire public shoreline as part of a county wide parks and recreation master plan that includes a range of passive and active recreational opportunities.
- Maintain community involvement in the implementation of the plan by providing progress updates and creating a committee to advise the Planning Commission on project proposals within the identified corridor.

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Note: The totals on different tables and within the text may not be identical because of the different data sets used to generate them. The primary differences are because of rounding, the inclusion of bay-bottom in the base numbers or changes in the tax rolls. The differences, for the most part, are less than five percent (5%).

Acronyms

ADID	Advanced Identification of Wetlands
ALS	Advanced Life Support
BOCC	Monroe County Board of County Commissioners
CARL	State of Florida Conservation and Recreational Lands Program
DCA	Department of Community Affairs
EAR	Evaluation and Review
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FDCA	Florida Department of Community Affairs
FDEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FKAA	Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority
FKCCS	Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study
FKERTF	Florida Keys Environmental Restoration Trust Fund
FLUM	Future Land Use Map
FWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
HCC	Historic District Commission
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
IS	Improved Subdivision
LCP	Livable CommuniKeys Program
LOS	Level of Service
MCLA	Monroe County Land Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NROGO	Non-Residential Rate of Growth Ordinance
PUV	Private Upland Vacant Parcel
PVA	Population Viability Analysis
ROGO	Residential Rate of Growth Ordinance
SFWMD	South Florida Water Management District
SMMP	Monroe County Storm water Management Master Plan
SOR	State of Florida Save Our Rivers Program
SSMP	Monroe County Sanitary Sewer Master Plan
TDR	Transferable Development Rights
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TRE	Transferable ROGO Exemptions

Introduction

The Livable CommuniKeys Program is a community-driven planning effort to address the very specific needs of unique island communities within the Florida Keys. The overall goal is to determine the appropriate amount, type and location of additional development within the LCP planning area. The LCP process includes community participation through a variety of methods. This process generates a community vision, assesses the needs of the community with goals and objectives. The objectives are evaluated for feasibility within the current regulatory and physical framework for how well they fit the community vision. A Master Plan contains the specific development layout for the LCP planning area as well as action items that must be implemented to achieve the development and community vision. The Master Plan is a working document that is continually scrutinized and updated by the community and planning staff.

Relationship to Comprehensive Plan

The Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1993 and became effective in its entirety in 1997. It contains the guiding goals, objectives and policies for implementation of growth management actions over the 20-year period covering 1990 through 2010. Some of the actions apply equally throughout Monroe County such as the need for adequate solid waste disposal facilities or the allocation of building permits limited by hurricane evacuation clearance times. Other actions, while applying countywide, vary in their importance by locale. Actions such as the need for preservation of historic resources or the planning of recreational facilities take on different meaning in different local communities up and down the Keys. There are also local needs that are not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan at all such as community goals towards beautification.

The Master Plan does not replace the Comprehensive Plan but focuses on the very specific needs of the local community. It is also a proactive planning tool rather than a strict regulatory document in that it identifies actions needed to meet the community's needs and goals. The Master Plan is attached as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. Some existing Comprehensive Plan policies will not be affected at all by the Master Plan. Other existing policies may be modified for consistency or entirely replaced by the Master Plan. The Livable CommuniKeys Program and Master Plan development are outlined in the comprehensive plan in Policy 101.20.1 which states:

“Monroe County shall develop a series of Community Master Plans. Master Plans will be developed in accordance with the following principles:

1. Each Community Master Plan will contain a framework for future development and redevelopment including the designation of growth boundaries and future acquisition areas for public spaces and environmental conservation;
2. Each Community Master Plan will include an Implementation Strategy composed of action items, an implementation schedule, and a monitoring mechanism to provide accountability to communities;

3. Each Community Master Plan will be consistent with existing Federal and State requirements and overall goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan to ensure legal requirements are met. While consistency with the goals of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan is paramount, the 2010 Plan will be updated and amended where appropriate;
4. Each Community Master Plan will be closely coordinated with other community plans and other jurisdictions to ensure development or redevelopment activities will not adversely impact those areas;
5. Each Community Master Plan will include appropriate mechanisms allowing citizens continued oversight and involvement in the implementation of their plans. Through the Community Master Plans, programs for ongoing public involvement, outreach, and education will be developed;
6. Each Community Master Plan will include a Capital Improvements program to provide certainty that the provision of public facilities will be concurrent with future development;
7. Each Community Master Plan will contain an environmental protection element to maintain existing high levels of environmental protection as required in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan;
8. Each Community Master Plan will include a community character element that will address the protection and enhancement of existing residential areas and the preservation of community character through site and building guidelines. Design guidelines for public spaces, landscaping, streetscaping, buildings, parking lots, and other areas will be developed through collaborative efforts of citizens, the Planning Department, and design professionals reinforcing the character of the local community context;
9. Each Community Master will include an economic development element addressing current and potential diversified economic development strategies including tourism management. The preservation and retention of valued local businesses, existing economies, and the development of economic alternatives will be encouraged through the process;
10. Each Community Master Plan will contain a Transportation Element addressing transportation needs and possibilities including circulation, safe and convenient access to goods and services, and transportation alternatives that will be consistent with the overall integrity of the transportation system not resulting in negative consequences for other communities; and
11. Each Community Master Plan will be based on knowledge of existing conditions in each community. The Planning Department will compile existing reports, databases, maps, field data, and information from other sources supplemented by community input to document current conditions; and
12. Each Community Master Plan will simplify the planning process providing clarity and certainty for citizens, developers, and local officials by providing a transparent framework for a continuing open dialogue with different participants involved in planning issues.”



Figure 1.1 Location/boundary map of the planning area.

Relationship to State Legislation

A Comprehensive Plan is required to be adopted by Monroe County under Florida Statute 163 and must be compliant with the required format and minimum content listed in the Florida Administrative Code (FAC 9J-5). The Master Plan will be adopted as a modification of the existing Comprehensive Plan and the Florida Department of Community Affairs will review the modification for compliance with the applicable statutes and codes. This review will likely be most focused in areas where Master Plan policies replace existing Comprehensive Plan policies and serve as the Evaluation and Review (EAR) for this planning area.

Master Plan for Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97

This Master Plan covers the area from the Tavernier Creek Bridge at approximately Mile Marker 91 to Mile Marker 97. The geographic boundaries of the planning area are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Offshore Islands

The Florida Keys archipelago from Tavernier Creek to MM 97 consists of Key Largo and additional scattered islands including Tavernier Key and Pigeon Key with other offshore islands such as Butternut Key, Dove Key and Rodriquez Key in the vicinity.

While not specifically part of the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan, offshore islands are a vital facet of the Florida Keys natural environment. In recognition of the important part they play, off shore islands are afforded special protection under Policy 102.7.2 and Policy 102.7.3 of the 2010 Master Plan which limits development potential on offshore islands. The Monroe County Land Development Regulations further limit development on offshore islands affording them another level of protection through Sections 9.5-122.3 Evaluation criteria, 9.5-262 Maximum residential density and district open space and 9.5.347 Open space requirements amongst other provisions.

Island Geology

This island community extending from Tavernier Creek Bridge to approximately Mile Marker 97 is comprised of Key Largo Limestone, formed from ancient reefs, which are extremely porous. The geological processes that formed the reefs and the Florida Keys as we know them today began in the Pleistocene Period. During this era, melting glaciers raised sea level to where water covered much of the Florida peninsula and all of the area that is now the Keys.

The warm temperatures and shallow waters that covered this area were ideal for coral growth. Scientists have discovered that the Keys developed into a nearly continuous coral reef tract from the area that is now Miami to the Dry Tortugas. Core samples show massive hard corals and point to a larger, denser coral reef system than the living reef that now lies off our shores. When the last Ice Age struck, about 28,000 years ago, sea levels dropped drastically, and the Keys, as well as the Florida Bay, were transformed into swamp, then dry land. Then, about 11,000 years ago, water levels moderated to approximately current levels, leaving the Keys exposed and filling Florida Bay.

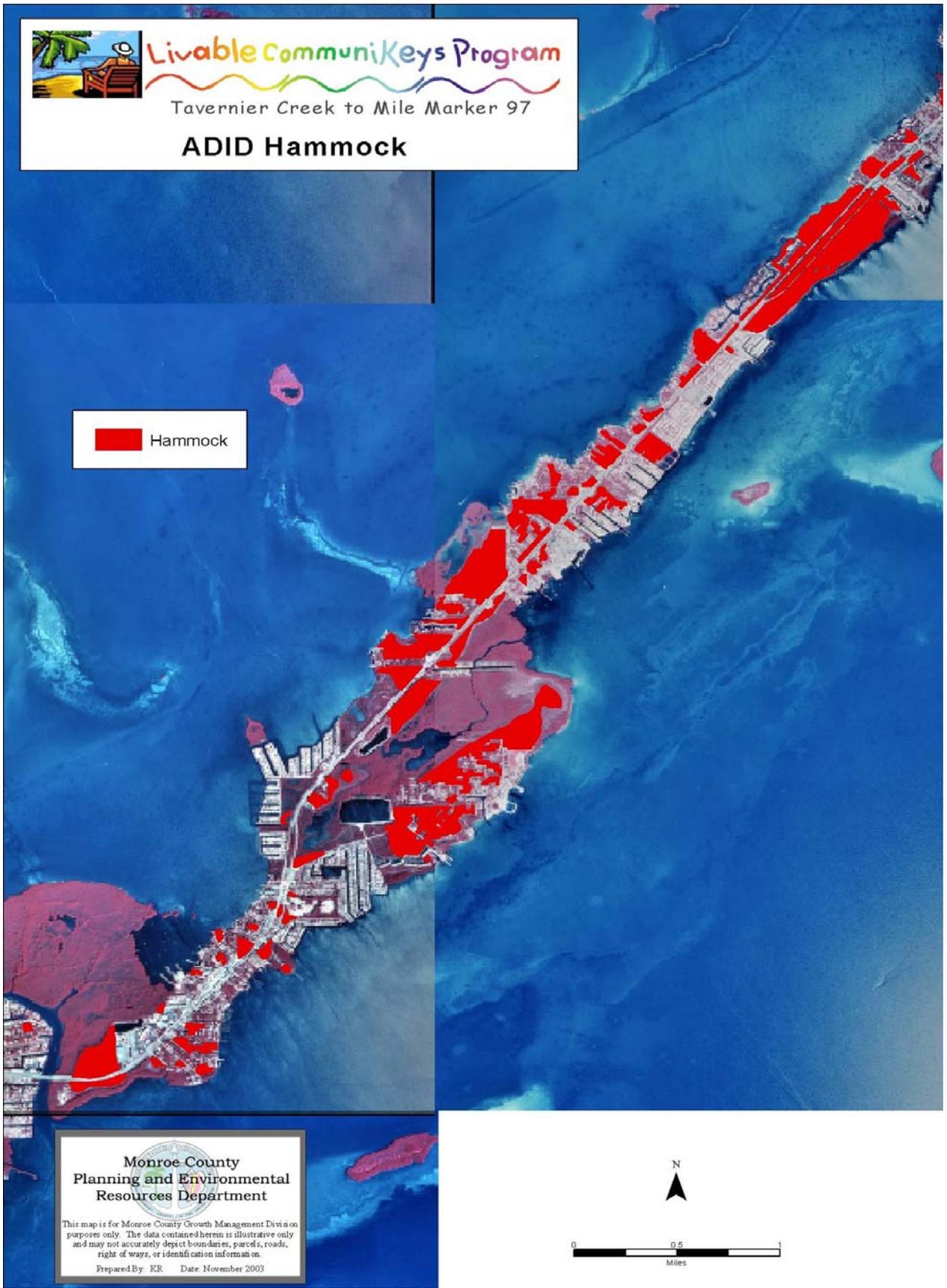


Figure 1.2 Aerial map indicating hammock areas.

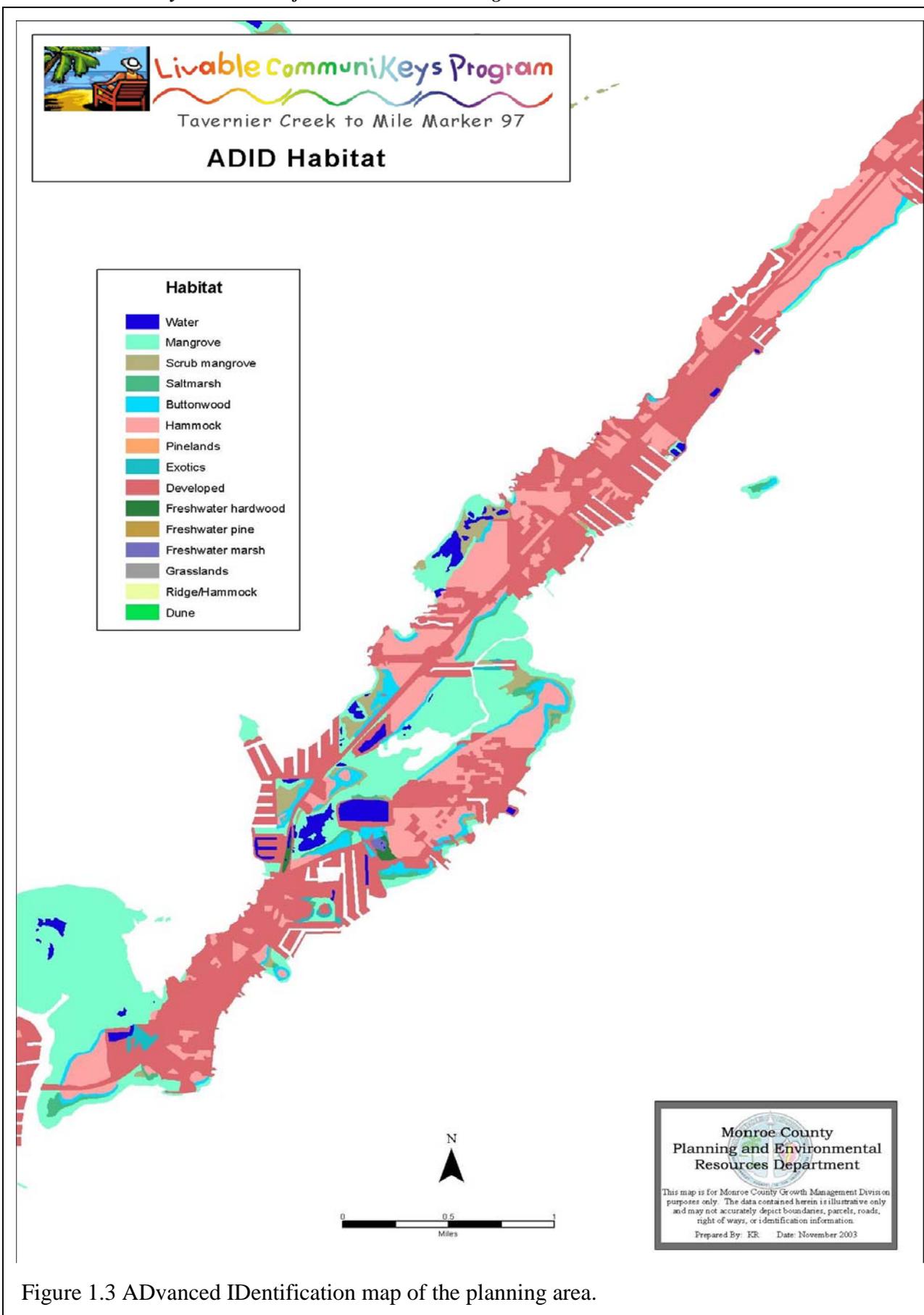


Figure 1.3 ADvanced IDentification map of the planning area.

Near Shore Waters

The shallow waters near the shore are composed of a series of interconnecting and interdependent natural habitats. These include fringing saltmarsh/buttonwood or transitional, fringing mangroves and sea-grass, meadows as well as hard-bottom regions, patch reefs and bank reefs. The areas' ecosystem, as well as other areas throughout the Florida Keys, supports a diverse assemblage of species, including those which are commercially and recreationally important, unique to the area or spatially limited due to habitat constraints.

Hammock Types

Tropical Hardwood Hammocks can be very dense and support many types of Keys' wildlife. Tropical Hardwood Hammock is found only in the Keys and some parts of Miami-Dade County, the more diverse hammocks are primarily located in the Keys. The Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area has vacant as well as developed lands with Tropical Hardwood Hammock. These hammocks are either low elevation (below five feet mean sea level) or high elevation (above five feet mean sea level). The elevation of land, with the associated salinity of the soil, creates two different types of forests. Those hammocks with lower elevations and saltier soils typically have smaller trees, while higher elevation forests typically can get larger trees and a wider variety of plant species.

Large areas of hammock, some vacant and some developed residentially, are located within the Harris Ocean Park Estates and Palma Sola Subdivisions, near U.S. 1 at Mile Marker 92 Ocean side, Mile Marker 94 ocean and bayside, within Lime Grove Estates both ocean and bayside and at the northern end of the planning area, in Key Largo Narrows.

ADID Wetlands Classifications

ADvanced IDentification of Wetlands (ADID) studies were performed within the planning area. Larger wetlands are mapped within the following platted subdivisions in the area: Largo Beach, Ocean Park Village, Palma Sola, and unfilled platted lots within Hammer Point. There are also wetlands identified within Lime Grove Estates, and large wetland tracts adjacent to Hammer Point and Sunset Acres, as well as Oceanside north of Burton Drive at Mile Marker 93. Other individual wetland lots are scattered throughout the planning area. Figure 1.3 illustrates the habitat within the planning area.

Endangered Species

The Monroe County Endangered Species Animal Maps identify five separate areas of federally designated endangered species habitat within the planning area. These are the Palma Sola subdivision, the isolated hammock north of Harry Harris Park, the hammocks on both ocean and bay side at Mile Marker 94, bay side at approximately Mile Marker 94.3-95, and both ocean and bay side at Key Largo Narrows at the northern end of the planning area. All of these marked habitat areas indicate that the White Crowned Pigeon is known within the area, and the other five potential species are the Indigo Snake, the Key Largo Woodrat, the Key Largo Cottonmouse, the Miami Black Head Snake and the Schaus' Swallowtail Butterfly.



Livable CommuniKeys Program

Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97

Historically Significant Sites

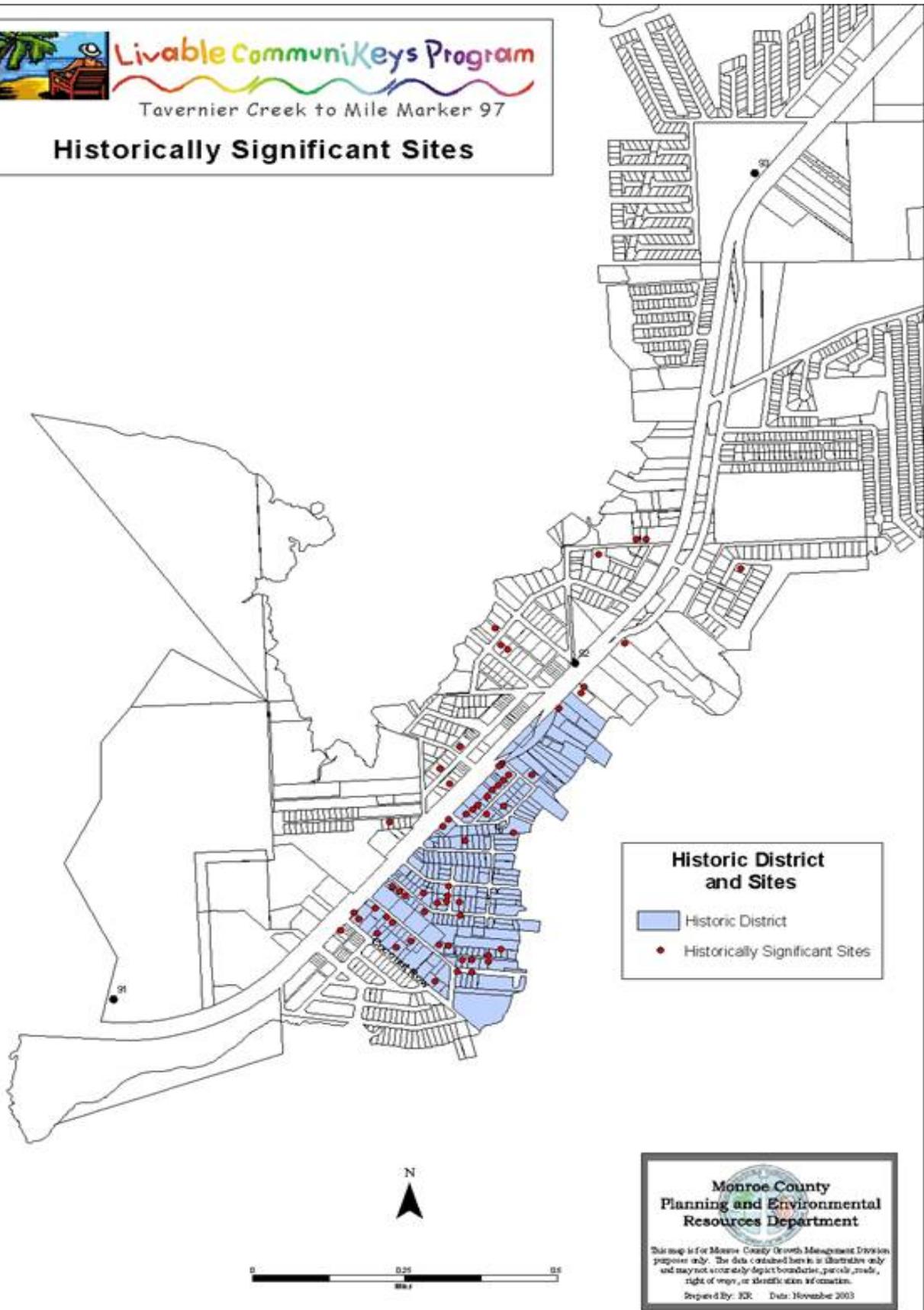


Figure 1.4 Historic overlay district with historically significant sites.

Historical and Cultural Context

The history of this Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area is the culture that created the island community. Limes, tomatoes, pineapples and tropical fruits qualified Tavernier as a farming community in the early 1900's. Hurricane destruction and the advent of Flagler's Railroad resulted in the demise of the farming industry with a corresponding change to a commercial fishing trade in the historical area.

As a result of continued efforts, by local organizations and residents, to maintain the historical resources within Tavernier much of the community remains contextually intact. A historic overlay designation, known as "Historic Tavernier", was established in the planning area with adoption of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. It is one of the most unique and well-preserved historic communities in unincorporated Monroe County. The community includes a mixture of historic structures located on the ocean side between Coconut Row to the south and just beyond mile marker 92 to the north. Several historical structures within the community are located along U.S. 1 (Overseas Highway) and are currently occupied by commercial uses. A majority of the historic structures are residential homes nestled in the neighborhood that extends behind the commercial area. The purpose of the historic overlay designation was to protect Tavernier's historic resources in accordance with Objective 104 of the Comprehensive Plan. Prior to the designation, the historical homes and businesses located within the area were lost or in danger of being compromised as a result of increased pressure from new development. It is evident that current development in the outer fringes of the historic community does not fit within the context of the community character.

The planning area also consists of an assortment of archaeological and cultural resources. To the south of Tavernier Historic District and on the ocean side is a large parcel of land between Ocean Boulevard and Tavernier Creek Bridge, which is known as Tavernier Creek Hammocks. The Land Authority recently donated the parcel of land to the State of Florida with the intent that it be preserved as a conservation area. Aside from its more apparent environmental qualities, the land holds rich historical, cultural, and possible archaeological resources. The Tavernier Creek Hammocks has indisputable ties to the history of the Upper Keys. According to a local report, the area around Tavernier, like that of much of the Upper Keys, was a thriving community of farmsteads focused on the production of pineapples, tomatoes, and other vegetables which were exported to the mainland. Tavernier was a sparsely populated area with large tracts of land being utilized for cultivation. The Tavernier Creek Hammocks was once one of these thriving farmsteads, which extended behind what is today the Tavernier Town Plaza. After a series of irreparable events in the early 1900's, attention turned towards commercial fishing as a source of income. Tavernier Creek became an essential route between the Atlantic Ocean and the Florida Bay, and a central location to establish business and residence. Tavernier steadily became a thriving multifaceted community that offered an abundance of services and opportunities.

In addition to the farm on the Tavernier Creek Hammock parcel, the site includes a cistern of unknown origin, and the location of an old ball field. The ball field was a popular area for community activity. It was located on the southern end of the property until being relocated adjacent to the Old Tavernier School between 1930 and 1940. The Tavernier Creek Hammocks is sig-

nificant to local heritage and is an attractive location for sustainable improvement in a manner which can enhance social value, spark economic opportunity, provide an educational and recreational resource for residents at a minimal cost while protecting and preserving the integrity of the existing environment.

The primary method of protecting resources in the planning area has been through the establishment of a historic overlay, land acquisition, and the designation of historic places and sites. According to a report produced by GAI consultants, fifty-three (53) historical sites have been identified as significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

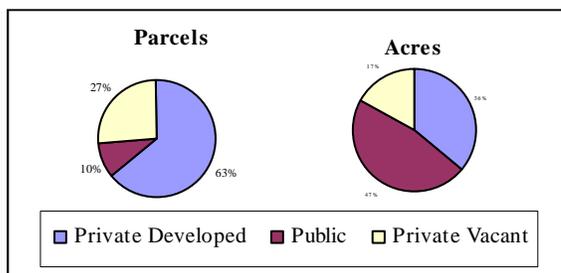
Land Use

The planning area contains most of the uses that are needed to support a small thriving community. The residential community is primarily single family and mobile homes, although there are a couple of condominium complexes. Commercial uses are primarily located on U.S. 1 with the largest concentration in the MM 91 to MM 93.5 area. Services and light industrial uses (boat repair, garages, construction companies, etc.) are concentrated bayside in this same general area, although, a mix of uses can be found throughout the U.S. 1 corridor. Water dependent uses such as marinas and boat rentals and water economically enhanced activities such as restaurants and hotels are located on the Florida Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

Table 1.1 Public and private vacant and developed lands

	Parcels	Acres	Percent of Total
Private Developed	2,912	623	35.8
Public	442	822	47.2
Private Vacant	1,210	295	17.0
Total	4,564	1,740	100.0

Source: Monroe County Planning Department



The Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area consists of 1,740 acres divided into 4,564 separate parcels and lots. Six hundred and twenty three acres are developed, leaving 1,117 acres vacant. The majority of this acreage is in public ownership: 822 acres. The remaining vacant 295 acres are in private ownership.

In order to determine the potential for future development in the planning area a vacant land analysis was undertaken using the County Geographical Information System (GIS) and the data from the property appraisers files. The majority of vacant lands in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area are publicly owned; 822 acres. There is a total of 295 vacant acres in private ownership divided into approximately 1,210 parcels, 660 of which are lots zoned for single family or mobile home construction. Nearly one hundred and seventy (170) of these lots and most of the parcels are in the designated Natural and Conservation area and are slated for acquisition. Part of the four hundred and ninety (490) lots remaining in the planning area may be inappropriate for development because of fragmented hammock areas or wetlands.

Many of the non-residential properties, which appear as undeveloped in the property appraisers data base are currently being used as storage lots or parking for existing businesses. Of the 110 vacant commercial parcels (20 acres) there are only 40 truly available parcels and five of these are in the Natural Resources and Conservation Area. However, a number of the existing sites are under utilized and are ripe for redevelopment.

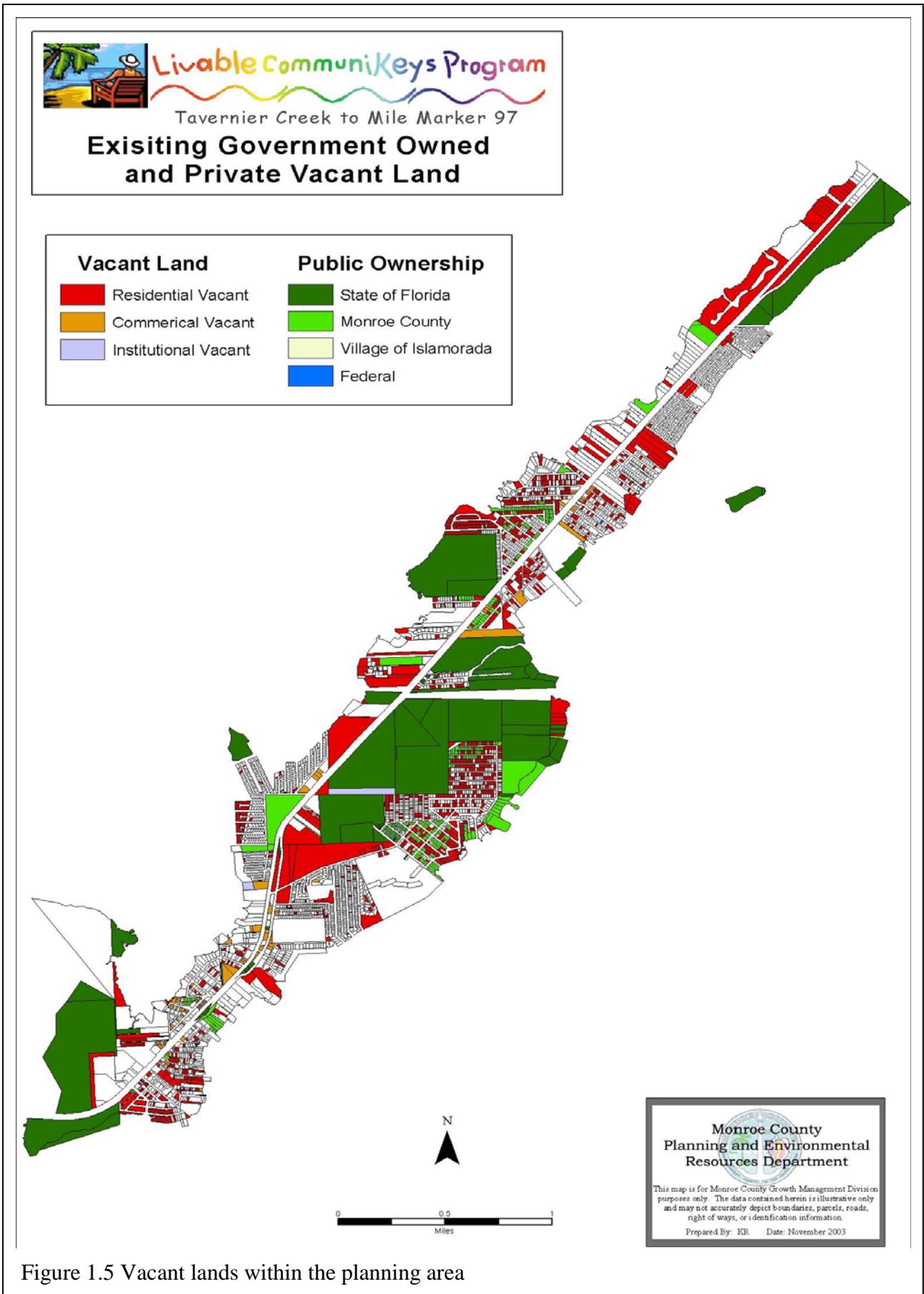


Figure 1.5 Vacant lands within the planning area

Demographics

The demographic information included in this Master Plan was taken from the 1990 and 2000 Census. The data indicate that the permanent population of the planning area has declined more than ten percent (10%) from a population in 1990 of 4,301 to a population of 3,852. The decrease in population occurred while housing units counted in the Census increased by 235 units, a 7.3% increase. The shift in housing in the planning area is towards more seasonal occupancy (seasonal includes all types of second vacation home uses). In 1990, 998 units or 31% of the planning areas 3,206 housing units were only used on a seasonal basis. In 2000 1,455 units, 42% of the total housing units, were for seasonal use, an increase of 457 seasonal units.

The Census Bureau statistics identified a decrease in the total number of rental units in the planning area in the ten years between 1990 and 2000, from 681 rental units (606 rented, 75 for rent) to 560 rental units (520 rented, 40 for rent) in 2000, a decrease of 121 rental units. This decrease in actual numbers of rental units, even with an increase in the number of total housing units reflects an increase in seasonal/weekend owners. Single family residential homes account for 42% of the residences in the planning area. The remainder of the residential units is multi-family dwellings (4%), condominiums (24%) or mobile homes (30%). The decrease in permanent households and rental units in this planning area of primarily small houses and mobile homes illustrates the problem with the loss of affordable employee housing county-wide.

The planning area's permanent population of 3,852 residents is split evenly between males and females. The numbers of individuals living permanently in the area have decreased for all age groups, with the largest decrease in the 21 to 54 year old age groups (15%). The over 55 age group and the under 20 have decreased by 7.6% and 4.15% respectively.

	Census Blocks 9706 (1,2,3) and 9707			County		
	1990	2000	Percent Change	1990	2000	Percent Change
Persons	4,301	3,852	-10.4	78,024	79,589	2.0
Male	2,219	1,948	-12.2	40,976	42,327	3.2
Female	2,082	1,904	-8.5	37,048	37,262	0.6
0-20	780	748	-4.1	15,786	15,464	-2.1
21-54	2,055	1,749	-14.9	40,601	42,591	4.7
55-85	1,466	1,355	-7.6	21,637	21,534	-0.5
Households	1,971	1,755	-11.0	33,583	35,086	4.3
House units	3,206	3,441	7.3	46,215	51,617	10.5
Persons per occupied housing unit	2.03	2.19	7.9	2.24	2.23	-0.4
Occupied houses	1,971	1,755	-11.0	33,583	35,086	4.3
Renter occupied	606	520	-14.2	12,729	13,186	3.5
Vacant houses	1,235	1,686	36.5	12,632	16,531	23.6
For rent	75	40	-46.7	2,010	1,663	-20.9
For sale	71	67	-5.6	943	759	-24.2
Not occupied	34	30	-11.8	560	304	-84.2
Seasonal	998	1,455	45.8	7,928	12,628	37.2
Other	57	93	63.2	1,191	1,177	-1.2

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

Population Projections

The permanent population in the planning area is 3,852 residents living in 1,755 households. Future population projections are made for a locality to provide government with the amount and timing of growth for which services and facilities will be needed in the future. Making population projections for the County is difficult. Normally to project future populations the availability of land designated for development is considered along with the rate of development of new homes, the numbers of households, which will result from development and the persons per household. In a planning area such as this, where the permanent population decreased by 10% while housing units increased by 7%, projecting future populations becomes very difficult.

ROGO is the system whereby residential permits are issued in Monroe County. Since 1992 when ROGO was started approximately 70 permits have been issued in the planning area. With more than six hundred lots in the planning area appropriately zoned for development of single family homes and land zoned for commercial uses which can be developed for employee housing there is available land for residential development. The current County and State emphasis on providing housing for the local workforce indicates that there will probably be an increase in allocations for affordable housing. For this projection it is determined that new development over the next twenty years will either continue at the same rate of the last ten years or increase by a maximum of 50% over the next 20 years. Therefore, between 140 and 210 new housing units will be constructed in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area by the year 2024.

The percentage of permanent housing units of the total will most likely continue at the current percentage (51% permanent households) or decrease over the next 20 years. Using 51% for the calculation results in a projection of 70 to 110 new housing units constructed in the planning area will be for permanent residents. This will increase the permanent population by between 155 and 234 persons if the household size continues to be 2.19 persons per household. The total permanent population will increase to between 4,010 and 4,085 persons. If the percentage of seasonal to permanent units continues to increase at the rate experienced between 1990 and 2000 the number of permanent households will be reduced by 10% and the permanent population will decrease. With the opportunities for providing employee/affordable-housing units in the planning area the potential for maintaining a larger percentage of the additional units as permanent housing has increased.

The County is required by Florida Statutes to plan for and provide adequate public facilities and services to the “functional population”, which is a combination of the permanent, seasonal, and transient populations. By the year 2024, the new housing units constructed in the planning area will require service for an increase in the functional population of between 310 and 460 persons.

Income

The 2000 Census income statistics for the planning area report that nearly half of the households earn less than \$40,000 annually and 63% earn less than \$50,000. While 3% earn more than \$150,000 annually. In 1990, 75% of the permanent residents earned less than \$50,000 annually. The largest decrease in numbers of households was in the below \$20,000 annual income level, which decreased by 39%. It is impossible to tell from the statistics if this decrease in the lowest income levels is because of improving salaries and total income or if it reflects the change in the population to more seasonal and less rental units.

Based on the 2000 U.S. Census figures, the median income for this planning area’s residents is \$42,830, which is comparable to the County median income of \$42,283.

Table 1.3 Annual Household income for the planning area

	Census Tract 9706 (1,2,3) & 9707		Monroe County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Total Households ¹	1,971	1,755	33,583	35,086
Median Household Income (\$)	30,231	42,830	29,351	42,283
Household Income				
Less than \$20,000	585	355	10,642	7,254
\$20,000 - \$39,999	686	539	11,648	9,057
\$40,000 - \$49,999	212	209	3,406	3,870
\$50,000 - \$74,999	258	292	4,435	6,974
\$75,000 - \$99,999	117	166	1,341	3,632
\$100,000-\$150,000	64	124	1,109	2,411
More than \$150,000	48	70	1,030	1,908

1. Actual total household figures for the planning area are estimates calculated with population demographic data.

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

Land Acquisition

For many years, the concurrent need for natural resource protection and relief to regulated land-owners has been a recognized problem throughout the Keys. Agencies who are participants and have been intermediaries in the acquisition of some of the sites within the Florida Keys Ecosystem project are The Nature Conservancy, Monroe County Land Authority (MCLA), State of Florida, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and South Florida Water Management District. In the early 1990s a priority acquisition plan that focused on remaining habitat and preservation of wildlife movement corridors was developed. All of these agencies can conduct acquisition activities essentially anywhere within the administrative boundaries that encompass the entire planning area. Their focus in the past has been on natural lands, usually on acreage parcels, that have higher wildlife habitat value.

Acquisition of land through the Florida Keys Ecosystem project includes most of the remaining unprotected Rockland hammocks (tropical hardwood hammocks) in the Keys. It is important habitat to many rare plants and animals and consists of 17 sites in the Upper and Middle Keys encompassing the remaining fragments of unprotected tropical hardwood hammock greater than 12.5 acres. The project includes habitat for migratory birds, the state-threatened white-crowned pigeon and 34 species of rare vascular plants and 34 rare animals. All the project sites are threat-

ened by intense development in the Keys.

Within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 planning area, there are three areas which are part of this project: Dove Creek (498 acres, several large ownership's, remaining subdivided-187 acres acquired through MCLA), Tavernier Creek (83 acres, one major ownership), and Key Largo Narrows (one major ownership-acquired through MCLA).

Additional parcels in public ownership include: the former Ragen Tract (Tavern Towne Hammock); lands near the former Cooke Barrow Pit, Oceanside at Mile Marker 92; the former Unger tracts located ocean side at Mile Marker 94 and bayside at Mile Marker 94.5; the former Richardson tract bayside in Lime Grove Estates at Mile Marker 96; and the former DeCarion/Roberts Tract, also known as Curry Cove, at the Key Largo Narrows, Mile Marker 97 Oceanside.

In addition to public agency purchase of private property, purchases of private lots have been made by ROGO applicants to garner additional "points" towards an allocation under the county's dwelling unit allocation system. These properties have been deeded to Monroe County.

Publicly owned lands account for 840 acres, nearly 50% of the vacant land in the planning area, and 440 of the 4,565 vacant parcels.

Comprehensive Plan Goal 105

This Comprehensive Plan amendment was designed to refocus land acquisition efforts, conserve natural resources and direct future development to infill areas in coordination with the Livable CommuniKeys Program. The proposed Tier System consists of a set of over-lay maps and regulations directing growth to infill existing subdivisions and commercial areas and identifying those areas, which should be acquired for conservation and density reduction. The System has a major role in the implementation of this Master Plan and the FKCCS. The mapping of the land outside of mainland Monroe County into one of three tiers provides a focus for acquisition and guidance to the public of areas most appropriate for development.

Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I) are designated to conserve and protect significant environmental habitat and provide for restoration and connection of fragmented habitat patches. Development is severely restricted and the vacant lands are included in County, State and Federal acquisition and conservation boundaries.

Transition Areas (Tier II) are designated to offer an alternative to developing fragmented habitat areas and to help reduce low-density sprawl. Subdivisions in this area are less than fifty percent (50%) built out. These areas are often appropriate for future development but because of the low density are also appropriate for a County density reduction program. This is a cooperative program between existing residents of the area and the County to acquire lots and either sell them back to the neighbors or maintain them as open space. New development is discouraged, but allowed with restrictions in the amount of permitted clearing. The current acquisition program is expanded to include vacant platted subdivision lots in this Tier.

Infill Area (Tier III) is designated for redevelopment and infill of new development. Development is encouraged in these subdivisions that are more than fifty percent (50%) built. Full infrastructure is present or in future plans. Community Centers may be designated and become eligible as receiver sites for Transfer of Development Right (TDR) and corresponding higher density.

The Tier system has been used as a tool in developing this Master Plan to estimate the development potential and amount of land acquisition required in the planning area. The map (Figure 1.6) and table (Table 1.4) present the distribution of parcels under the working draft Tier System in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area. The actual Tier Maps will be adopted as a zoning overlay after additional refinement.

	Tier I		Tier II		Tier III	
	Parcels	IS/URM Lots	Parcels	IS/URM Lots	Parcels	IS/URM Lots
Private Vacant Residential	500	170	280	245	275	245
Private Vacant Commercial ¹	6		8		100	
Public Land	400		6		30	
1. 72 of these lots are being used for parking and storage						
Source: Monroe County Planning Department						

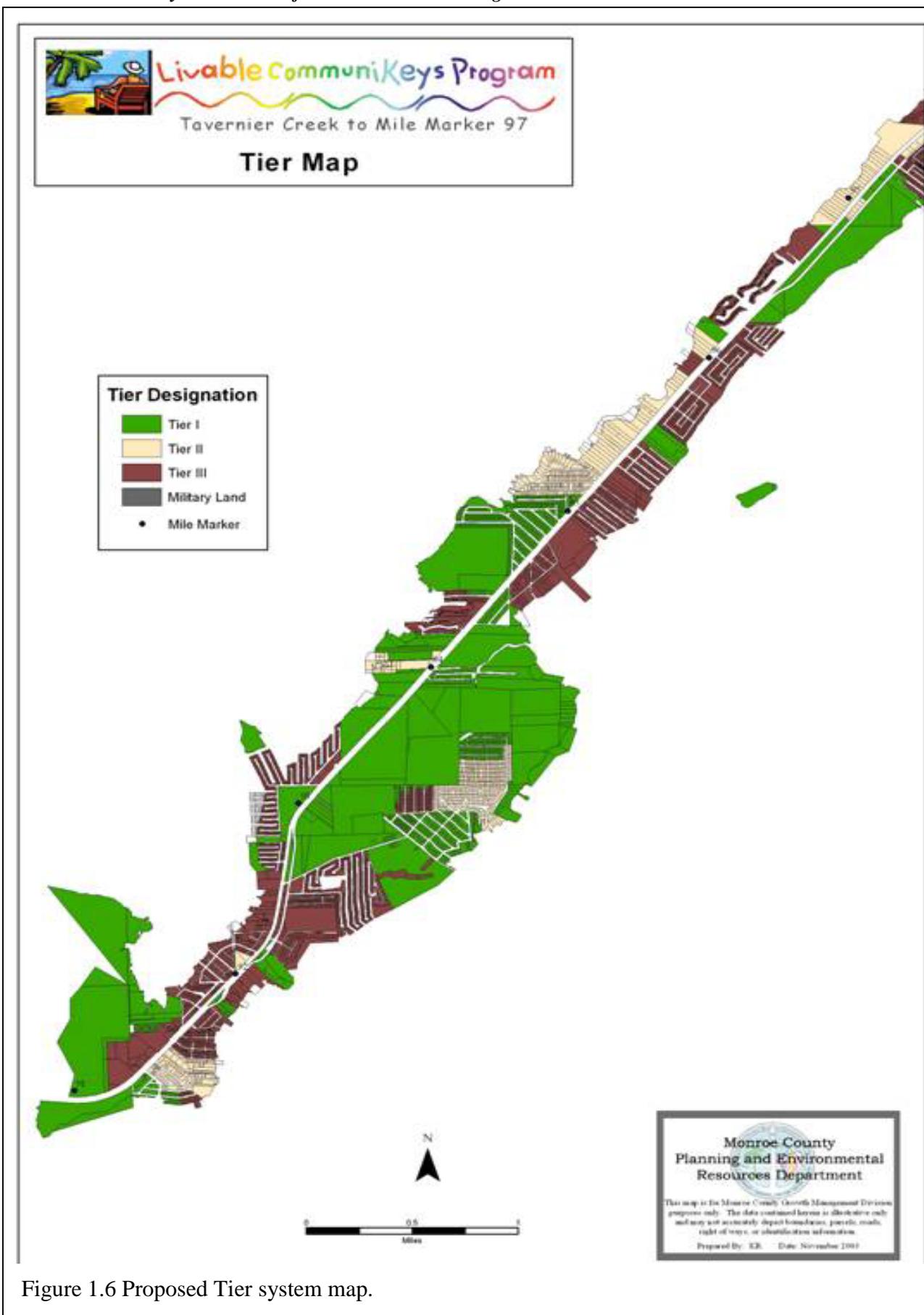


Figure 1.6 Proposed Tier system map.

Development Context and Constraints

Listed below for reference purposes are the primary existing development constraints from Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97. All of these constraints apply countywide but their particular application to this planning area is discussed below.

ROGO: As of the date of this report, the residential rate of growth ordinance (ROGO) allocates 42 total units (market rate plus affordable) annually to the Upper Keys. Permits for the planning area will continue to be limited and allocated with the rest of the Upper Keys under ROGO. Since the inception of the Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO) in 1992, sixty-three permits for new homes, including five affordable houses, have been issued and constructed in the planning area. Three applicants aggregated lots to receive extra points in the ROGO system decreasing the overall potential density. There are currently 17 ROGO applications awaiting allocation awards. Two of the 17 applications have received points for lot aggregation, further reducing the potential units.

Approximately 25% to 30% of the remaining vacant lots are environmentally sensitive and will receive negative environmental points in ROGO and have therefore been avoided by potential ROGO applicants.

NROGO: “NROGO” is the acronym for “Non-residential Rate of Growth Ordinance” under which the construction of new or expanded commercial uses is regulated. The amount of new and expanded commercial space permitted is tied to the level of residential development permitted, which is 239 square feet of commercial space per residential unit allocated. NROGO does not allocate commercial space by Keys sub-area but does so Keys-wide on a semi-annual basis.

To date, there have been no NROGO applications for any projects between Tavernier Creek Bridge and Mile Marker 97.

Florida Keys Carrying Capacity Study (FKCCS): Implementation of the FKCCS is required in the work program in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The FKCCS is being used to modify the ROGO and NROGO and this may affect the number and location of residential permits that can be issued in the future county wide.

Summary of the LCP Planning Process

Community Vision

We envision the Tavernier Creek Bridge to MM 97 Planning Area as:

An island community committed to preserving its heritage, natural setting and stands of native tropical hardwood hammocks, with improvements to the visual character of the U.S. 1 corridor, limited redevelopment of commercial properties, and neighborhoods where residents have access to the water and recreational facilities.

The community vision was written taking into consideration the responses received from the community at workshops, in the survey of the residents and landowners, and in the U.S. 1 business survey between MM 91 and MM 93.5.

LCP Citizen Participation Process

Three major public workshops and meetings held on March 1, 2001, September 20, 2001, and March 26, 2002 facilitated the LCP planning effort providing an opportunity for direct participation of the community with planning staff and each other. In addition surveys were used to try and gain a broader understanding of the concerns and desires of the members of the community who did not attend the meetings. The survey was included in the second of three newsletters that were mailed to all residents, property owners and interested parties. An additional survey was sent to businesses in the area to gain a better understanding of the issues of importance to the commercial segment of the population. From this outreach, the key community issues were identified and a community vision formulated.

Community Issues

As a result of the many forms of feedback from residents, evaluation of the planning area and analysis of the existing conditions, several issues were identified by the Community:

1. Maintain the existing small town community "island" character of the area.
2. Preserve the remaining significant natural lands.
3. Recognize the uniqueness of and preserve the Tavernier Historic District.
4. Limit additional new commercial development while providing opportunities to redevelop existing commercial structures.
5. Increase opportunities for local community involvement in planning issues.
6. Improve and expand existing water access and provide additional shoreline access for the residents.
7. Protect the existing water-related/dependent uses such as restaurants, marinas, and commercial fishing and permit rebuilding if destroyed in the footprint.

Planning Issues and Objectives

From the start of the planning process and throughout the development of the Existing Conditions Report and this Master Plan a number of planning issues and objectives have been identified and considered in the development of this plan. Following in no specific order of importance:

- Reduce impacts on safety and traffic movement from the highway and unlimited access development patterns.
- Provide opportunities for affordable/employee housing for the residents of the community.
- Reduce land use conflicts from non-conformities.
- Provide for flexible building setback and parking standards within the U.S. 1 corridor to reflect the historic development patterns.
- Explore alternative parking solutions for conforming and non-conforming commercial uses.
- Identify and protect existing water dependent uses, both environmental and economic, recognizing that the waters of the Keys are why people want to be here.
- Maintain and increase opportunities for water access for the community.
- Find ways to reduce the impact on the residential community from the large numbers of tourists that travel through the area on U.S. 1.
- Increase the land acquisition program to preserve the remaining high quality hammocks and wetlands in the planning area.
- Work with the neighborhoods in a cooperative effort to purchase hammock areas that create their “sense of place”.
- Preserve the character of historic Tavernier, including the setting and context.

Because many of the planning concerns involved issues specific to the U.S. 1 corridor area, the Planning Department contracted for a Corridor Enhancement Plan which was funded by FDOT. Two public workshops were held specifically to address aesthetic and planning issues within the corridor area from Tavernier Creek to approximately MM 94.5. The first workshop was held on October 23, 2003 with a follow up design and planning workshop on December 4, 2003. Many of the ideas and recommendations which resulted from these workshops and the Tavernier Corridor Enhancement Plan are integrated into the LCP master Plan.

The Livable CommuniKeys Program (LCP) is a community-driven planning effort aimed at determining the amount, type and location of additional development appropriate for the planning area and is directly tied to the Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan through adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. The need and budget for community facilities and services are identified to serve the existing community and any growth that may occur. The Monroe County Department of Planning and Environmental Resources have provided the professional guidance and expertise in drafting the plan.

Format of Master Plan Elements

There are thirteen elements in this Master Plan. Each one focuses on an issue of heightened importance to the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Planning Area. The format for these elements is different from the comprehensive plan because this Master Plan is a culmination of the LCP process, not a starting point. Therefore, the community and planning staff have already reviewed and analyzed much of the available data about the island and they have been through a planning process whereby “problems” (questions, issues and uncertainties) have been identified and needs have been verbalized.

The Master Plan provides the tools for problem solving by fulfilling three basic tasks:

- Statement of the goals of the LCP process as it applies to the planning area.
- Redefined analysis of specific community and planning needs to fulfill the goals.
- Identification of strategies and action to meet the needs.

Goals

Each element states a specific planning goal designed around the major topics to be addressed through the LCP process such as growth and redevelopment, economic viability, environmental protection, and community character.

Current Conditions Summary

Information specific to the planning area is available in the Existing Conditions Report. Some information was also provided during the LCP process in newsletters and workshops. Demographics, inventories of community facilities, and land ownership patterns are examples of information presented in this section.

Analysis of Community Needs

The problem, issue or shortfall in the community or environment and the opportunities are stated here. These have been identified either by the community or by the planning staff. The community includes the affected public, stakeholders, and elected officials and they have identified needs to the planning staff in a variety of ways: workshop participation, mail surveys, meetings, phone calls, and letters. The planning staff identified additional needs either through planning analysis of existing information, professional judgment based on observations of data or conditions, or coordination with facility or service providers.

Strategies and Action Items

As part of the Master Planning process the planning staff has identified and evaluated possible strategies for meeting each need. The possible strategies were also evaluated relative to one another to identify conflicts and to identify opportunities for one strategy to fulfill multiple needs. In this way a final set of strategies was completed. Action items were then developed towards implementation of each strategy.

The plan is therefore written in the form of goals, strategies and action items rather than goals, objectives and policies as in the Comprehensive Plan. Where strategies and action items replace current comprehensive plan policies, this is noted and action items for deleting or modifying those policies are included in the applicable element. It is very important to note that this plan will be an addendum to the Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Plan remains in full effect in the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area.

The plan format is illustrated in the flow chart in Figure 1.7. The flow chart starts with an individual need identified in the plan. A comprehensive strategy for meeting the need is formulated based on the information in hand. If the information in hand is sufficient to implement the strategy the action items for implementation can be written directly into the Master Plan. If not, an action item can be written to procure new information or further analyze existing information. Note that new information not only feeds back into implementation but may reveal new strategies, may redefine the need or may even reveal new needs. To be a meaningful and current implementation tool over the entire twenty-year planning horizon, the Master Plan must include this iterative process of problem solving that monitors success and identifies changing conditions and new issues. It must also allow for timely response and tracking of progress towards problem solving.

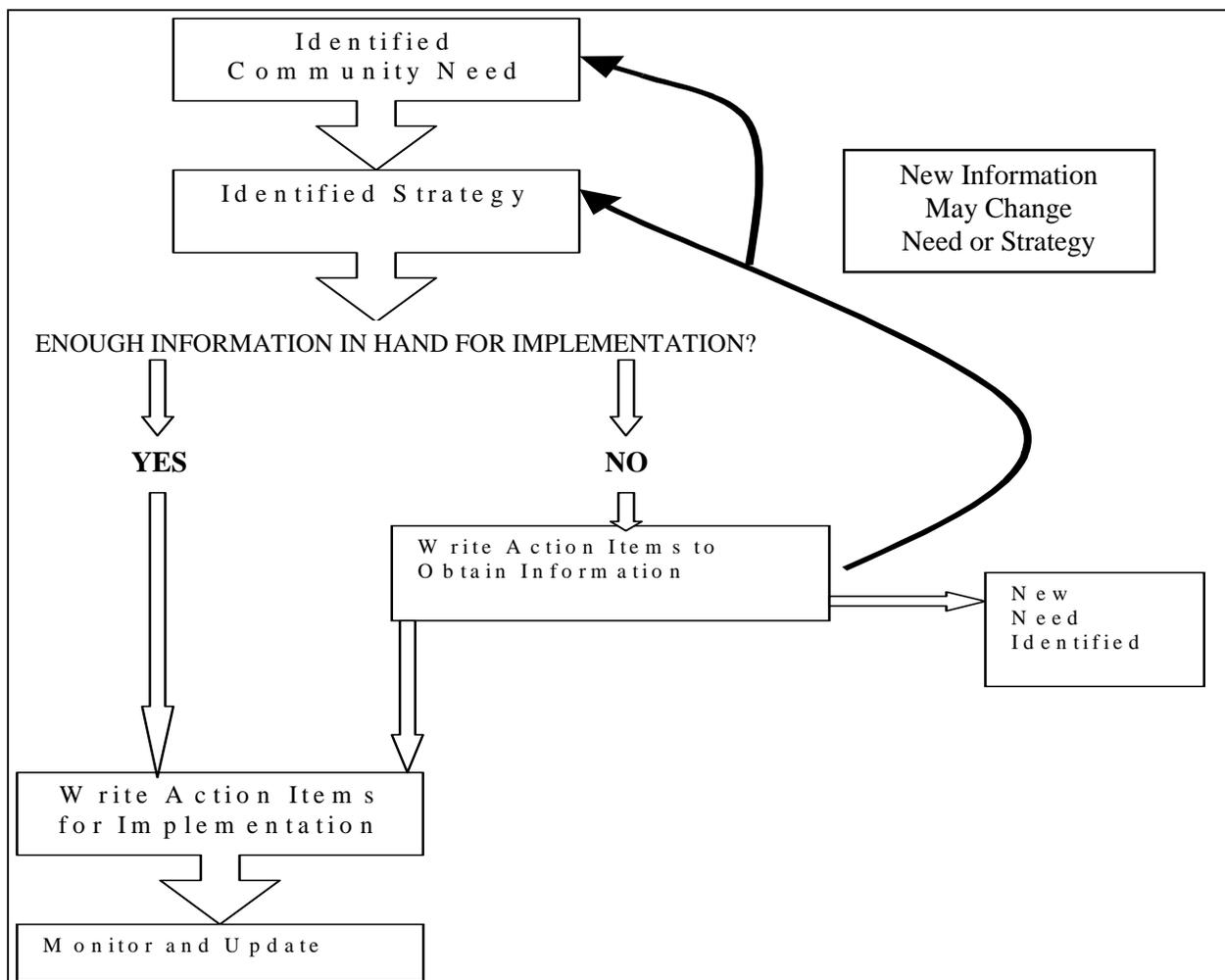


Figure 1.7 Flow chart illustrating Master Plan process.



***LAND USE AND
REDEVELOPMENT ELEMENT***



GOAL ONE

DIRECT FUTURE GROWTH TO LANDS THAT ARE MOST SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT, PREVENT SPRAWL INTO LESS DEVELOPED AREAS AND ENCOURAGE PRESERVATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.

Current Conditions Summary

The community of Tavernier Creek to MM 97 is an older developed community. The majority of the areas appropriate for development have been developed. Therefore it is understandable that approximately 45% of the vacant privately owned parcels in this planning area are in the designated Natural Resource and Conservation Area (Tier I). The area contains several larger parcels and totals 150 vacant acres; 50% of the remaining vacant privately owned acres.

The 490 IS/URM lots outside the Natural Resource and Conservation area (Tier II and Tier III) are those most likely to be developed in the future. However some of these IS/URM lots may contain wetlands or fragmented hammock areas or they may be the yard of a developed lot. The more than one hundred vacant commercial parcels in the property records without structures are primarily parking lots or driveways of existing businesses. The actual potential new commercial development sites are much lower approximately forty parcels.

It is projected that between 140 and 210 new single family housing units may be constructed in the planning area over the next twenty years. With a total of 660 platted IS/URM lots plus 360 vacant parcels which permit residential uses, there are a large number of lots and parcels that will not receive a permit. According to the estimates at least 80% of the vacant lots and parcels in the planning area will not receive a permit for a new residential use during the twenty-year planning horizon. If a portion of the new residential units are built as multi-family employee housing on commercially zoned parcels the number of single family lots not receiving permits in the 20 year planning horizon will increase.

Goal 105 was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners to direct the County's future development to infill areas in existing subdivisions and commercial corridors and to focus the acquisition program towards preserving wetlands and the important terrestrial habitat areas. The goal also addresses the need to reduce the over-all numbers of lots and privately owned vacant lands in the County with a program to purchase fragmented hammocks and vacant lots in subdivisions that are less than fifty percent (50%) built (Tier II). These lots may be sold back to the adjacent neighbors or be held jointly by the community or remain in County ownership as a reserve for birds and small wildlife.

Discouraging sprawl is accomplished as much by maintaining existing uses on scarified lands as it is in preventing development from moving into undeveloped areas. The planning area has a number of uses that are nonconforming because of the Land Use District they are located in. Lawfully established residential uses that are over-density or are in a land use district that does not allow residential uses are made conforming under recent amendments to the Comprehensive

Plan and the Land Development Regulations. Non-residential uses that are non-conforming do not have that same protection and may not be replaced if more than fifty percent (50%) destroyed. Redevelopment of the property is prevented because the non-conformity may not be expanded. Currently there are non-conforming retail uses, professional buildings and restaurants.

Analysis of Community Needs

Property Rights

There are a large numbers of vacant privately owned lots and parcels in the County. The County needs to work with landowners to acquire those lots that are least appropriate for future development. This is only fair to the landowners who will not receive a permit in the twenty-year planning horizon.

Goal 105

The Tier maps need to be finalized and adopted for the planning area to give a clear understanding of where development is appropriate and where the County should be concentrating acquisition efforts. With the State taking additional responsibility for acquiring the Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I), the County needs to be purchasing land to reduce the over-all numbers of lots in the planning area.

Nonconforming Uses

There are non-residential uses and structures within the planning area that are inappropriately classified in regard to land use designation. These buildings often contribute to the character and economic vitality of the planning area and need to be evaluated to determine if the land use designation should be changed. As a result of the non-conforming status of many of these structures, material improvements or enlargements to the site is extremely difficult, thus the structure is not improved and many times the building is left vacant.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 1.1

Designate the entire planning area into Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I), Transition Area (Tier II) or Infill Areas (Tier III) as appropriate.

Action Item 1.1.1: Prepare Tier System Overlay Map for the planning area based on Goal 105 and established planning criteria and principals for designation of each Tier area and public involvement.

Action Item 1.1.2: Adopt the Tier system map separate from but as an Overlay of the Land Use District Map. The Tier System Overlay Map shall be used primarily to focus acquisition efforts in Tier I and Tier II and to guide development to appropriate areas in Tier II and Tier III.

Strategy 1.2

Follow the public acquisition strategy, detailed in Strategy 6.2, to purchase land from willing sellers in the planning area to preserve important upland habitats and reduce the large number of parcels in the planning area, which will not receive a permit in the twenty year planning horizon.

Strategy 1.3

Review and evaluate the land use designation of lawfully established non-conforming land uses and structures within the planning area to determine appropriate designation.

Action Item 1.3.1: Promote community character, establish conformance and resolve land use issues by identifying and changing the land use designation on parcels of land containing non-conforming uses and rezone as appropriate.

Action Item 1.3.2: Discourage the continuance of nonconforming uses that are determined in the review to be inappropriate for the area in which they are located.

Strategy 1.4

Continue to utilize the Land Use District Map and Supporting Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to regulate land use type, density and intensity on an individual basis within the planning area.

Action Item 1.4.2: Adopt the following parcel-specific revisions to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) category and Land Use District Map:

1. Change the designation of parcels identified with real estate parcel numbers: 566000.000000, 566240.000000, 477140.000000, 566120.000000, 477150.000000, 477160.000000, 477170.000000, 477210.000000 and 477180.000000 planning area from Improved Subdivision (IS) to Mixed Use (MU) on the Land Use District Map and from Residential Medium (RM) to Mixed Use Commercial (MC) on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
2. Change the designation of parcels identified with real estate parcel numbers 476750.000000, 476760.000000, 476770.000000 and 476780.000000 which are owned by Monroe County from Improved Subdivision (IS) to Native Area (NA) and on the Future Land Use Map from Residential Medium (RM) to Residential Conservation (RC).
3. Change the FLUM designation of parcels identified with the following Real Estate numbers: 555880.000000; 556090.000000, 556080.000000, 555860.000000, 555910.000000; 555890.000000; 555960.000000; 555970.000000; 555850.000000; 555840.000000; 556010.000000; 55830.000000; 556020.000000; 555820.000000; 556040.000000; 556030.000000; 555990.000000; 556070.000000; 556000.000000; 556060.000000, and 556050.000000; which are within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 Master Plan planning area from Mixed-Use Commercial (MC) to Residential Medium (RM). The purposed change will prevent an established, built-out neighborhood area with no commercial uses from being considered an area slated for commercial use pursuant to the FLUM. It is of note that Real Estate numbers: 555940.000000, 555950.000000 and 556100.000000 are not listed on the FLUM as Mixed-Use (MC) and were not included.
4. Change the Future Land Use Map designation of parcels identified with the following real estate numbers from Residential Medium (RM) and Residential High (RH) to Mixed-Use Commercial (MC): 482310.000000 and 482320.000000.

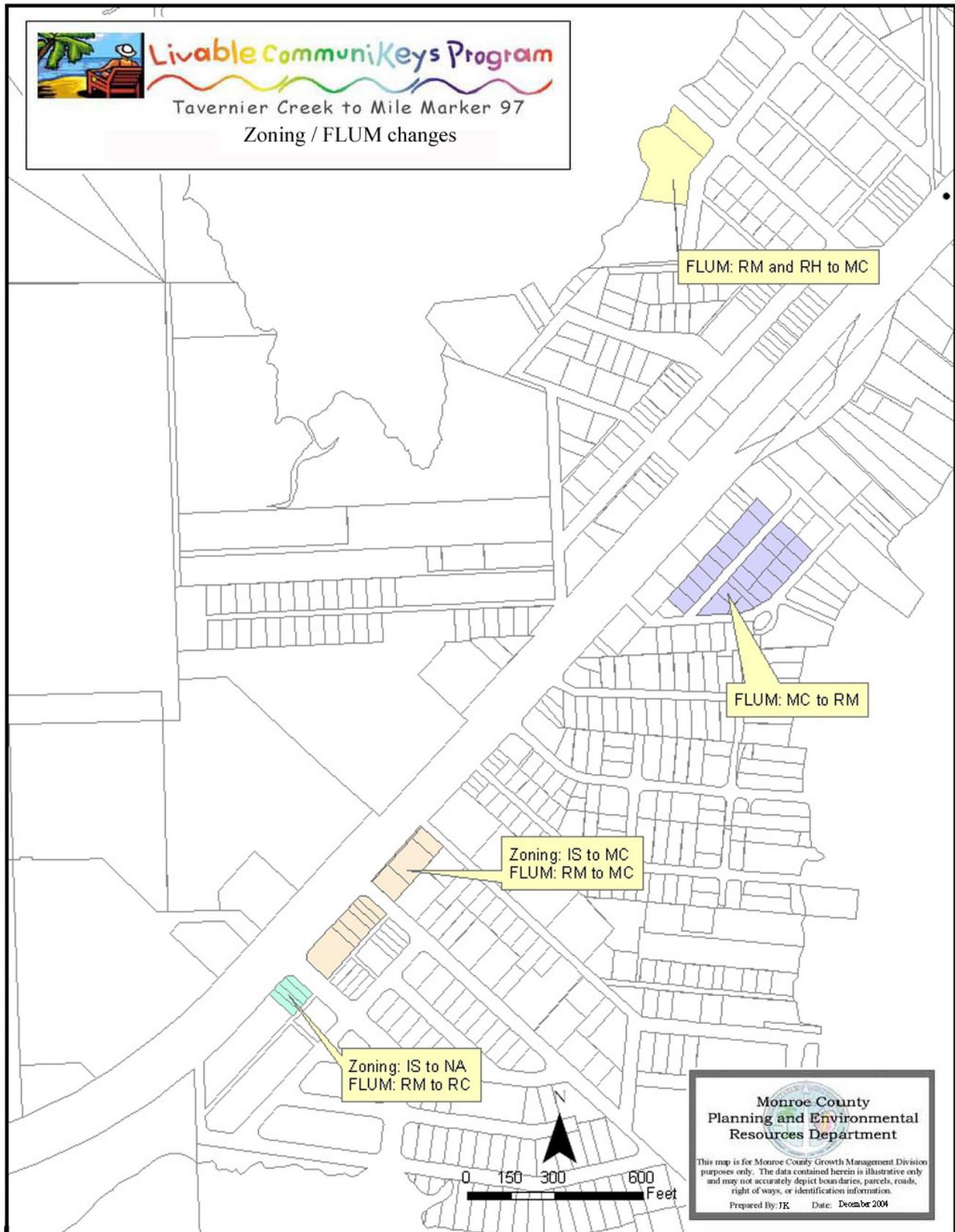


Figure 2.1 Map of Zoning and FLUM changes



COMMUNITY CHARACTER ELEMENT



GOAL TWO

PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE QUALITIES OF NEIGHBORHOODS BETWEEN TAVERNIER CREEK BRIDGE AND MILE MARKER 97 - ITS SMALL TOWN UNIQUE CHARACTER, LUSH NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND WATER ORIENTATION.

Current Conditions Summary

The words “small town” serves to both paint a picture and suggest the atmosphere of the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 planning area. This planning area is not extremely diverse, but has many interesting neighborhoods with their own individual identities. From the historic “conch-style” construction, to the mixed use neighborhoods and large commercial center in the traditional town of Tavernier, to the hammock in the northern end of the planning area, a defining characteristic are the green spaces which separate uses and provides privacy to the neighborhoods.

The major land use in this island community is native habitat, both upland hammocks and wetlands. The natural areas surround the residential neighborhoods giving to each a unique “sense of place”. The tall native trees are in contrast to areas in the lower Keys where the vegetation is low or was mostly removed during construction activities. The hammock provides a buffer for the residential neighborhoods from the noise and motion on U.S. 1. The hammock stand in the median of U.S. 1 contributes to the over-all environmental and scenic quality of the planning area.

The development pattern is reflected in the proposed Tier Map designations. The infill areas, Tier III, are the existing neighborhoods with more than 50% of the existing lots developed. Tier I contains the larger natural areas, greater then four acres, providing the major divisions between neighborhoods. The smaller patches of fragmented hammocks throughout the area and large Suburban Residential lots with hammock on U.S. 1 are designated Tier II.

Citizens of this planning area during the workshops and responding to surveys identified the proximity to the water, natural environment and open (green area) space as the main qualities they liked about living in this planning area. Preservation of the natural environment and small town “island” character are the qualities identified as most important.

Analysis of Community Need

Development Patterns

Preserving the existing development patterns in this planning area - neighborhoods separated by green space – is of primary importance to the residents. There is also much support for maintaining the tall trees within the neighborhoods. Continued support by citizens of this area for the protection and preservation of these qualities is critical in the implementation of the Master Plan.

U.S. 1 Buffer and Median

The natural vegetated buffer along U.S. 1 and in the median needs to be preserved. The vegetation not only buffers the residential neighborhoods from the major highway in the Florida Keys, but also provides a feeling of a green belt between the traditional towns of Tavernier and Rock Harbor/Key Largo. Expanding the natural vegetation along the roadway would enhance and provide additional buffer to the road and the neighborhoods.

Tier Maps

A mechanism needs to be instituted to identify those areas more appropriate for infill (Tier III) development and other areas that need to be preserved (Tier I) in a natural state. Monroe County is already in the process of developing the Tier Maps pursuant to countywide Smart Growth Initiatives adopted in Goal 105 of the Comprehensive Plan. Any permitted development in the Tier II areas needs to be carefully controlled to consider the character the fragmented hammocks which contribute to the character of this planning area.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 2.1

Limit clearing for new construction to maintain the tree cover in the neighborhoods and along the U.S. 1 corridor area.

Action Item 2.1.1: Amend existing habitat analysis policies and regulations to designate all lots in Tier I in this planning area as automatic high quality and limit clearing to a maximum of twenty percent.

Action Item 2.1.2: Amend existing habitat analysis policies and regulations to designate all lots containing hammock areas in Tier II and Tier III in this planning area, whether old or re-growth, as automatic moderate quality and limit clearing to a maximum of forty percent.

Action Item 2.1.3: Cluster new development on lots adjacent to U.S. 1 between Tavernier Creek and MM 97 away from the roadway maintaining the maximum amount of existing vegetation, even if the quality of the hammock would dictate clustering the development closer to the road under Sec. 9.5-345(f).

Action Item 2.1.4: Prohibit the transfer of development rights (TDRs) to increase density on lots zoned Suburban Residential (SR) with upland native vegetation that are less than 20,000 square feet in size.

Strategy 2.2

Prepare and adopt a Tier System Map for the planning area designating the boundaries of Tier I, Tier II and Tier III lands as described in Comprehensive Plan Policy 105.2.1 and prioritize areas in Tier I for acquisition to maintain the terrestrial environment and Tier II for local character and environmental quality.

Action Item 2.2.1: Acquire Tier I lands, adjacent to publicly owned land, to preserve the major divisions between neighborhoods as well as preserve the most significant environmental habitat.

Action Item 2.2.2: Prioritize the vacant fragmented hammock patches in Tier II, which are not currently protected with a conservation easement, for acquisition by the County. These fragments are an important character element of the planning area.

Strategy 2.3

Increase the native hammock buffer areas adjacent to U.S. 1.

Action Item 2.3.1: Coordinate with Florida Department of Transportation to plant the median of U.S. 1 and any excess right-of-way that does not currently contain hammock, with native vegetation between MM 93 and MM 97.

Action Item 2.3.2: Require landscape buffers in this section of U.S. 1 to be planted with native plants.

Action Item 2.3.3: Encourage existing businesses between Mile Markers 93 and 97 to provide native landscape buffers on their properties.

GOAL THREE

DEFINE, MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY CHARACTER FROM MM 91—MM 93.5 .

Current Conditions Summary

Community character was a major point of discussion and planning focus during the LCP process. While the planning area (MM 91- MM 97) as a whole is defined by the native terrestrial habitat Mile Marker 91 to 93.5 has its own unique identity. Defining the community character meant many things to LCP workshop participants and survey respondents including recognition of the unique natural character, maintaining the area's historic character and moderate pace, and enhancement of community gathering areas for conducting business, socializing and recreation.

Homes for the residents of the town are primarily small single family houses or mobile homes; some built as early as the 1920's and 1930's. Larger homes, built more recently, are beginning to fill in the shoreline and replace some of the traditional "conch" style homes. Small mobile homes are also being replaced by "double-wide" or stick built houses. However, the essential character of the area remains one of small homes nestled along the shoreline or within the upland hammocks.

In October 2003 Monroe County proceeded with a design planning process for the commercial corridor area for Mile Marker 91 to 93.5. The charrette was a facilitated community discussion during which design concepts were developed and graphically assembled at the meeting for immediate reaction.

Analysis of Community Needs

Parking and Setbacks from U.S. 1

When U.S. 1 was widened to four lanes through this planning area many existing businesses lost much of their parking and setback from the roadway. The businesses became non-conforming as to parking and setbacks, this presents a problem when they try to redevelop or when new owners try and start a new business.

U.S. 1 and Major Street Beautification

The idea of the Main Street element introduced and evaluated during the LCP process drew some support in the community with ideas for beautification of U.S. 1 and the commercial center of the island. Circulation and ease of accessibility for the human population was integrated into the beautification element during the corridor enhancement charrette process.

Commercial Building Design Guidelines

There may be support for design guidelines for new and replacement buildings. Tavernier is a "historic community" with many remaining examples of early "conch" construction. Recommendations for design guidelines will be included in the Corridor Enhancement Plan. Care should also be taken to ensure that design requirements do not stifle a positive redevelopment momentum.

Scale of Residential Construction

While there is general support in the community for limited additional residential construction, there is concern that new construction should be of the general scale of existing homes. This issue is not in relation to the larger single-family homes being built in the town, but in relation to the potential for employee housing projects that may be proposed in the area. In particular there was opposition to multi-family "garden apartment" type of units.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 3.1

Recognize and protect the existing mix of land uses in the U.S. 1 corridor area as the character that defines planning area.

Action Item 3.1.1: Designate a “Community Center” from MM 91 to Burton Dr. pursuant to Policy 105.2.15 where Tier III infill and incentives for redevelopment will be encouraged.

Action Item 3.1.2: Require that any new development or redevelopment approved within the designated US Highway 1 Community Center, meeting the following criteria, be consistent with design standards established pursuant to Action Items 3.2.3 and 3.3.3:

1. Any new or expanded non-residential structures of greater than 2,500 square feet in floor area;
2. Any new or expanded outdoor retail sales;
3. Any new residential structure containing more than three units or redeveloped residential structure containing more than three units that involves a change in floor area, building height, or configuration of building footprint;
4. Any new transient residential structure or redeveloped existing transient residential structure that involves a change of floor area, building height, or configuration of building footprint.

Action Item 3.1.3: Prohibit the designation of new commercial land use districts beyond that contained in this Master Plan in order to protect the existing viability of the US 1 Corridor Area and Community Center and to prevent the further sprawl or strip commercial zoning.

Action Item 3.1.4: Prohibit the following new uses or change of uses within the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 planning area: 1) Commercial retail high-intensity uses that generate above one hundred and fifty (150) average daily trips per one thousand (1,000) square feet; 2) Storage areas as a principal use; 3) Outdoor retail sales on a vacant lot and any new or expanded outdoor retail sales associated with structures of less than five hundred (500) square feet of floor area.

Action Item 3.1.5: Enact a temporary moratorium on all development meeting the threshold for design review and approval in Action Item 3.1.2 until adoption of design standards for the US Highway 1 Community Center are adopted or six months after the effective date of this Master Plan, whichever comes first.

Action Item 3.1.6: Require that any development or redevelopment approved within the designated Tavernier Historic Overlay District (Figure 3.1), to include the areas designated as the Existing Historic District and Proposed Historic District, meeting the following criteria, be consistent with design standards and in compliance with regulatory controls established pursuant to Strategy 4.1:

1. Any structure that is designated by Monroe County as a historic resource;
2. Any structure identified by “The Final Report Historic Architectural Survey of Unincorporated Areas of Monroe County Florida (2003)” prepared by GAI Consultants Inc.

Action Item 3.1.7: Enact a temporary moratorium on all development meeting the threshold for design review and approval in Action Item 3.1.6 until the adoption of design standards and regulatory controls for the Tavernier Historic Overlay District are adopted or six months after the effective date of the Master Plan, whichever occurs first.

Strategy 3.2

Develop and adopt a Commercial Corridor Enhancement Plan for the U.S. 1 Corridor Area between MM 91 and MM 93.5.

Action Item 3.2.1: Define the U.S. 1 Community Center as the area from MM 91 to Burton Dr. It is the focus of community activity due to the dominant land use pattern of commercial and other non-residential uses. A program of planning for this area shall be continued and accelerated.

Action Item 3.2.2: Generate a Corridor Enhancement Plan, based upon the corridor enhancement planning process which includes ideas for improvement of traffic and pedestrian/bicycle movement, parking, beautification, and incorporation of parks/open space.

Action Item 3.2.3: Develop and adopt design standards and design guidelines for development within the U.S. 1 Corridor Area and the Community Center.

Action Item 3.2.4: Provide incentives for property owners on U.S. 1 to make landscaping and building improvements and bring signs into conformance with the Enhancement Plan.

Strategy 3.3

Adopt a zoning overlay for the designated Community Center defined in Action Item 3.2.1 and specific Land Development Regulations for that overlay.

Action Item 3.3.1: Provide alternative parking options for businesses such as a municipal parking lot.

Action Item 3.3.2: Provide “contextual” setbacks to preserve the historic character of the area and remove existing non-conformities.

Action Item 3.3.3: Define the elements that contribute to the community character of Tavernier and adopt Design Guidelines for development and redevelopment so the qualities of the community are preserved.

Action Item 3.3.4: Prohibit new storage lots on U.S. 1 within the planning area in order to enhance the community character of the U.S. 1 Corridor Area.

Action Item 3.3.5: Require existing commercial parcels proposed for Employee Housing density bonuses be developed consistent with the design standards adopted pursuant to Action Items 3.2.3 and 3.3.3.

Action Item 3.3.6: Encourage small businesses, that are not of historic quality, on U.S. 1 to add employee apartments; either attached or on the property if construction can be accomplished within the design guidelines for the commercial corridor.

Action Item 3.3.7: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic non-residential structures for employee housing being careful to maintain the historic qualities of the structures.

GOAL FOUR

PROTECT AND ENHANCE HISTORIC, CULTURAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES WITHIN TAVERNIER TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE COMMUNITY'S UNIQUE CHARACTER.

Current Conditions Summary

The Comprehensive Plan contains standards for recognizing, designating, protecting, and preserving historic structures within the county (Objective 104), which are further implemented through current Land Development Regulations (Article VIII). Monroe County has stipulated specific procedures for protecting historic, cultural and archaeological resources in the development review process. Under current regulations all new proposed development in the ROGO and NROGO system carry significant bonus or penalty points for projects, which either have an adverse or positive affect on a historic structure or known archaeological resource. In addition, the County coordinates with other agencies and organizations to maintain a current inventory of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources. The County has worked closely with the Tavernier Historic Group and the Historic Florida Keys Foundation to identify current and potential places and sites for future preservation within the planning area. In addition, during the past 20 years, three independent cultural resource surveys have been completed with the planning area. The most recent survey was conducted in July 2003 by GAI Consultants.

At the request of the county, GAI consultants completed an architectural survey of all unincorporated areas and an evaluation for listing sites in the National Register of Historic Places and/or Monroe County Landmarks. The survey included a detailed list of properties located within the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area as well as specific recommendations for the area. Of all the properties surveyed, fifty-three were identified as being eligible for national historic designation. Currently, eight of those properties are designated as Monroe County landmarks and seventeen are listed as Monroe County Historic Landmarks. In addition to the importance of each individual site and/or structure, the consultants recognized Tavernier as being collectively significant and recommended that it be nominated as a district on the National Register of Historic Places. Other recommendations include, completing a comprehensive survey every 5 to 8 years, establishing a marker program, conducting a comprehensive review of the historic preservation ordinance, as well as developing and adopting historic architectural design guidelines for historic properties or those contributing to historic districts.

The primary method of protecting such resources in the planning area has been through the establishment of a historic overlay, land acquisition, and the designation of historic places and sites. The designation process requires the owner of a property proposed for historic designation to voluntarily submit an application requesting the designation. The Historic Preservation Commission reviews the application based on criteria in the LDRs and recommends either approval or denial to the Board of County Commissioners. Only those properties approved for historic designation are subject to the requirements of the ordinance and review by the Historic Preservation Commission. A certificate of appropriateness is required before a permit may be issued on the property. Forty-eight historical places and sites have received local, state, and/or national designation as of adoption of this master plan.

Analysis of Community Need

Protection of Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

The Comprehensive Plan and LDRs contain policies regarding the voluntary designation and protection of historic, cultural, and archaeological resources. There is a need to specifically address the resources within the planning area with specific focus on protecting the integrity of the historic district. Standards are needed that will protect the historical structures, as well as the current landscape and public infrastructure. Coordination between multiple agencies needs to take place to ensure that conservation areas are permanently protected from development.

Design Guidelines for Historic District

The Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations do not address specific design guidelines for historical districts. There is a need to create such guidelines specific to Old Historic Tavernier to maintain and enhance the integrity of the district. New development and substantial improvements have been permitted to occur without regard to the architectural style of the district. Potentially, as development continues to occur in such a way that it does not harmonize with the current character the integrity of the historic district may be lost. These design guidelines should be coordinated with the Corridor Enhancement Plan.

Design Review Committee

There is a need to expand the historic preservation functions of the Historic Preservation Commission to oversee all development activities within the planning area. All development activities that occur within the historic district impact the over-all value of the district and should be designed to reflect the historic character of the area.

Evaluation and Monitoring Resources

Recently, a survey of existing and potential historic resources has been conducted. There is a need to update the existing inventory of resources on a regular basis as the number of buildings and/or sites reach the 50-year threshold for designation eligibility. In addition, there is a need to maintain coordination between the county and other agencies to ensure that regulations for historic designation, preservation and conservation are being met and to limit the overlap in activities.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 4.1

Protect the future integrity of Tavernier's Historic District by adopting ordinances that clearly define the boundaries of the district, commit to preserving the historic qualities of the district and provide guidelines for all future development activities in the district.

Action Item 4.1.1: Expand the boundaries of the Historic District to include all properties highway to ocean from the current Historic District Overlay southern boundary through to Tavernier Creek and the adjacent property to the north in addition to the current historic overlay.

Action Item 4.1.2: Adopt the expanded boundaries of Tavernier Historic District, as an overlay on the Future Land Use Map and the Land Use District Map.

Action Item 4.1.3: Prepare and adopt historic design guidelines and regulations that specifically define the architectural and contextual qualities and criteria that shall be followed for all development, remodeling and redevelopment projects within the District.

Action Item 4.1.4: Investigate the option of expanding the authority of the Historic Preservation Commission to review, approve the design of and issue a *Certificate of Appropriateness* for any building permit applications in the Tavernier Historic District for exterior improvement or interior improvement if cited as significant to the properties designation.

Action Item 4.1.5: Investigate the expansion of the boundaries of the Historic District to include additional areas of historic importance.

Strategy 4.2

Coordinate with the Florida Departments of Transportation, Environmental Protection, and Community Affairs, local agencies, the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority, Keys Electric, Key Largo Waste Treatment District and the South Florida Water Management District to ensure the continuing protection, maintenance and improvement of the historic area.

Action Item 4.2.1: Work with coordinating agencies to investigate the potential of creating a passive pedestrian accessible recreation area at the Tavernier Creek hammocks site, bayside, to be incorporated into the county-wide Overseas Heritage Trail Plan.

Action Item 4.2.2: Work with the Florida Department of Transportation to maintain current pavement widths. In addition, on local streets discourage finished curbs and gutters, and instead encourage grassy or stone lined drainage ditches or natural swales where needed.

Action Item 4.2.3: Coordinate with Public Works to discourage the act of tree topping and/or major pruning along public right of way within the Historic District.

Action Item 4.2.4: Acquire hammock lands within the Historic District to maintain the context of the historic community character.

Action Item 4.2.5: Encourage all agencies to work with the Historic Preservation Commission when considering improvements or changes to any public facility in the Tavernier Historic District; they will need a Certificate of Appropriateness to do improvements.

Strategy 4.3

Provide recognition and definition to the Tavernier Historic Overlay District.

Action Item 4.3.1: Establish a voluntary Historic Marker Plaque program for historic homes that are identified as a local, state, and/or national historic, cultural, or archaeological resource.

Action Item 4.3.2: Erect a historical marker on both north and southbound lanes upon enter-

ing the Historic Tavernier District.

Action Item 4.3.3: Prepare an application to nominate the area defined as “Historic Tavernier” for designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Action Item 4.3.4: Create and establish an identification system within the Monroe County Building Permit Tracking system in order to identify historic or contributing properties, which will ensure the protection and proper maintenance of such properties.

Action Item 4.3.5: Require that any development, remodeling or redevelopment approved within the designated Tavernier Historic Overlay District (Figure 3.1), to include the areas designated as the Existing Historic District and Proposed Historic District, meeting the following criteria, be consistent with design standards and in compliance with regulatory controls established pursuant to Strategy 4.1:

1. Any structure that is designated by Monroe County as an historic resource;
2. Any structure identified by “The Final Report Historic Architectural Survey of Unincorporated Areas of Monroe County Florida (2003)” prepared by GAI Consultants Inc.

Action Item 4.3.6: Enact a temporary moratorium on all development meeting the threshold for design review and approval in Action Item 4.3.5 until adoption of design standards and regulatory controls for the Tavernier Historic Overlay District are adopted or six months after the effective date of this Master Plan, whichever occurs first.

Fiscal Implications and Anticipated Capital Improvement Projects

The major fiscal implications found within the Community Character Element are those of land acquisition for the preservation of natural resources and of neighborhood character within the historic district and other neighborhoods within the planning area. The plan calls for all vacant, privately owned parcels designated as Tier I to be considered for acquisition using state or county funding resources. Additionally, the plan calls for the acquisition of several fragmented hammock patches Tier II areas in order to preserve community character and protect the patches from being further divided. While these actions are specifically defined as a part of this element, they are a part of the larger acquisition program described in the Environmental Protection Element.

The Community Character Element also specifically mentions the acquisition of hammock parcels in the historic district to preserve the habitat and character of the area. There are approximately 30 parcels which fall under this category, all to be designated Tier II or Tier III. Tier II parcels are accounted for in the Environmental Protection Element, however, the Tier III parcels are not. The approximate assessed value of the 30 parcels in the historic district is \$600,000.

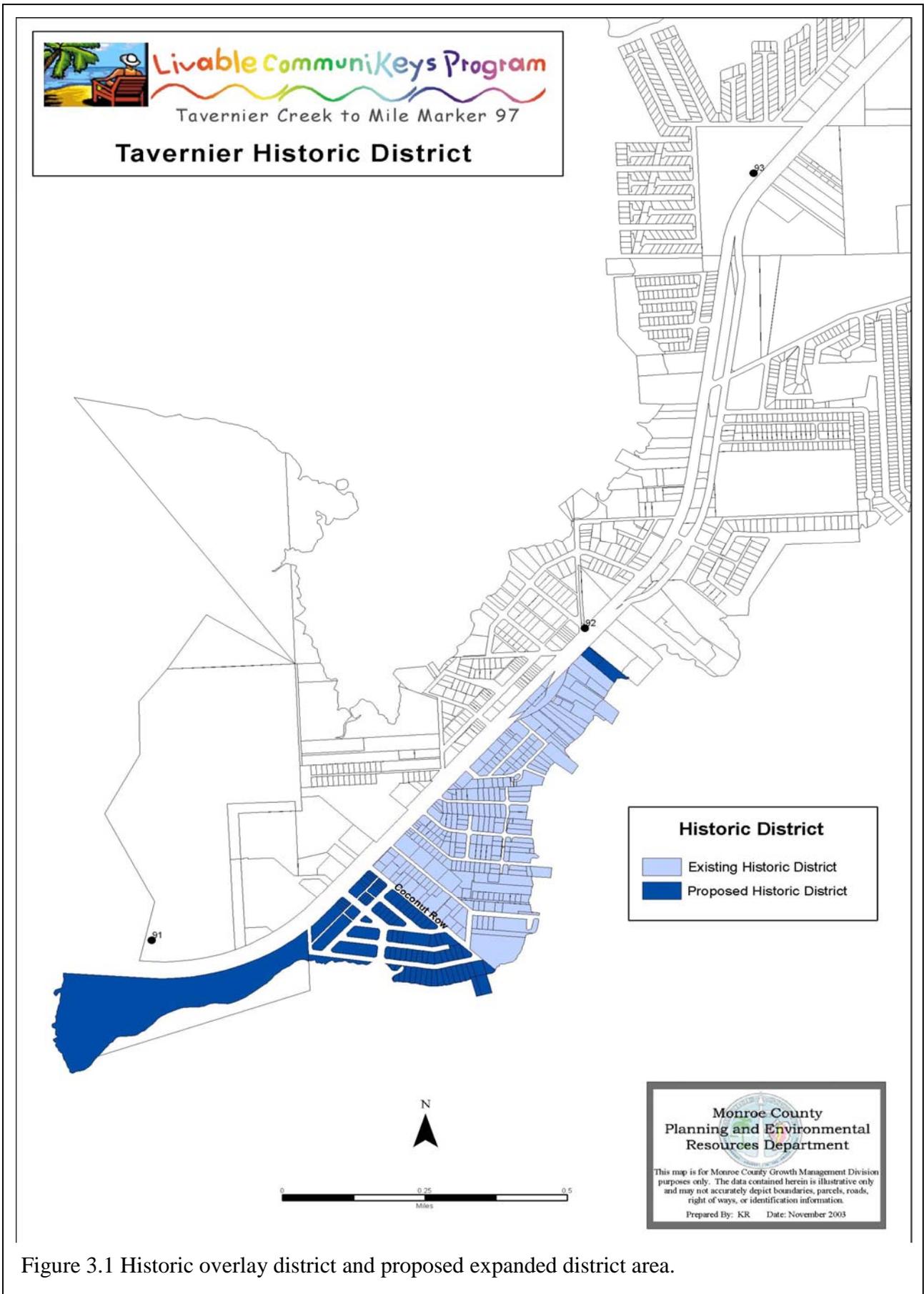


Figure 3.1 Historic overlay district and proposed expanded district area.



HOUSING ELEMENT



GOAL FIVE

MAINTAIN THE AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS AND THE WORKFORCE WHILE PRESERVING THE CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.

Current Conditions Summary

This planning area has traditionally been a working community from the early farmers and fishermen to the firemen, teachers and service workers who lived within the area. In the last ten years the demographics of the area has changed with a decline in permanent population of more than 10%, from 1,971 persons to 1,755 persons. The largest decline in population was in the 21 to 54 age group, (15%); the prime working years.

Housing units have increased, according to the Census Bureau, by 235 units, while permanent housing has decreased by 11%, 216 units. This includes a decrease in rental units of 121 units. The change in household types living here permanently is also evident when income level comparisons are made in the U.S. Census for the 1989 to 1999 periods. The median household income for the planning area in 2000 was \$42,830 (the medium income level county-wide was approximately \$42,283). There was a decrease of 380 households making less than \$50,000 a year in the ten-year period and an increase of 164 households making more than \$50,000 a year. Of the sixteen business owners or managers in the planning area who responded to a Planning Department survey in June 2002, none indicated that their employees were paid more than \$40,000 a year and most of their employees lived outside the planning area.

With the upward trend of more seasonal units in the area, the cost of existing housing for the year-round resident is also increasing. According to census figures, 50% of the residents in owner-occupied units and 50% of the residents in rental units in the planning area spend more than one fourth of their monthly household income on housing expenses alone. According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the median owner-occupied dwelling unit in the planning area is valued at \$226,000. Discussions with realtors in the area provide an estimate that the selling price of homes in the area has increased by approximately thirty percent (30%) a year for the last two years. The number of renter occupied housing has decreased since 1990, while rentals have increased within the county as a whole. The median rent within the planning area is \$715.

Approximately one third of the dwelling units in the planning area are mobile homes. These have traditionally been an economical alternative for both the workforce and retirees to live in the area. A windshield survey of areas zoned URM, which allow both mobile homes and detached residential units, has resulted in what appears to be an increase of stick built or modular construction and a corresponding decrease in mobile homes over the last few years. According to Building Department records, within the past ten years only 16 mobile homes have been replaced with single family residences, but over half of those have been in the last two years, indicating an increasing trend at mobile home replacement. However, within the past ten years a total of 41 mobile homes have been upgraded to newer models but have not been replaced with single family homes.

Figure 4.1 Shows the existing housing types within the planning area.

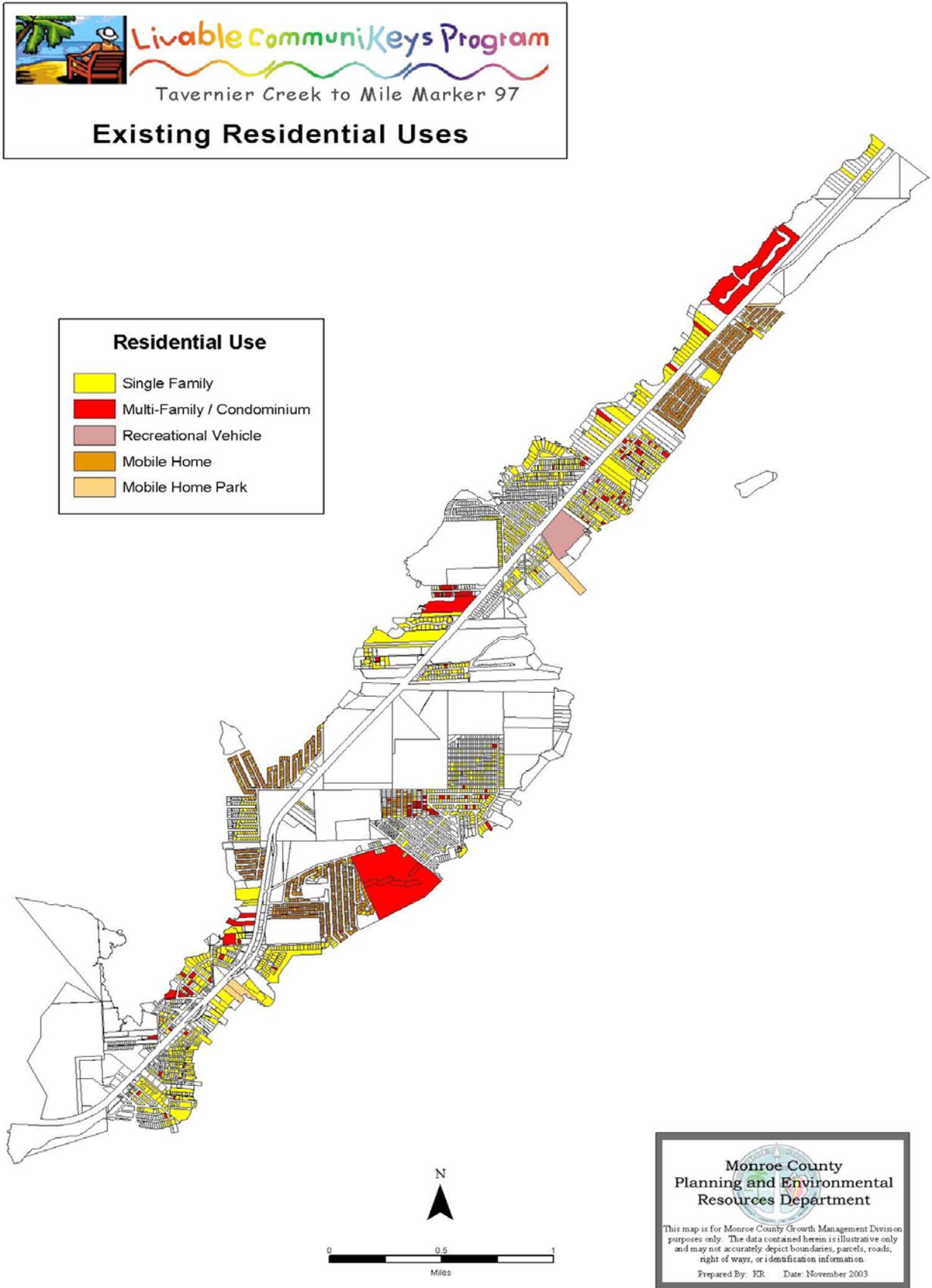


Figure 4.1 Existing residential areas with the planning area.

Analysis of Community Need

Affordability of housing units

The continuing need for maintaining and increasing the availability of affordable housing in the area was a concern expressed in the workshops and surveys by some respondents. The occupancy trend in the planning area is towards more seasonal and weekend residents. Housing costs are rising beyond the affordability of the current permanent residents. When homes are sold, at current prices, they are out of the range of affordability for many of the permanent residents of the community and those who would like to live near where they work. Therefore when most people sell their homes it is to move out of the Florida Keys as they can not afford to purchase another house.

Mobile Homes

Housing costs for a mobile home are typically less than that of a single-family dwelling or condominium. As these units are sold they are often purchased by seasonal residents and either demolished and rebuilt as more expensive units or only used on a part time basis. Sustainability of the existing affordable units in the area may also require protection of the existing mobile homes.

Housing types

Residents have expressed concerns that affordable housing developments will not fit into this historic community of small conch style houses and mobile homes. They do not see their community as wanting any additional garden style apartment complexes, which are being used in other areas to provide affordable housing in the County. More than 60% of the respondents to the Planning Department community survey supported architectural design guidelines.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 5.1

Promote employee housing above and in conjunction with commercial buildings in the Community Center Overlay district, as this planning area has capacity to add some employee-housing units based on the commercial floor area ratio of the different commercial parcels.

Action Item 5.1.1: Work with businesses in the area when they are ready to develop and re-develop to identify if the site could also be used to provide employee housing and explain the county incentives for providing affordable employee housing.

Action Item 5.1.2: Redevelopment projects will come into compliance with landscaping and bulk regulations so far as practicable.

Strategy 5.2

Encourage the development and redevelopment of commercial and mixed-use zoned land for employee housing.

Action 5.2.1: Investigate opportunities to acquire commercial properties of sufficient size for the construction of employee housing units with the County owning the land in perpetuity.

Strategy 5.3

Maintain and improve the existing stock of affordable housing.

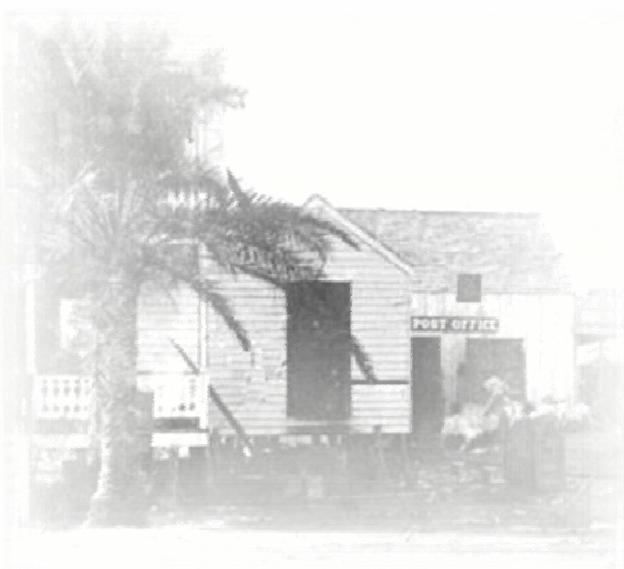
Action Item 5.3.1: Continue and expand the existing programs of the Monroe County Housing Authority to assist first time home buyers purchase housing in the planning area.

Action Item 5.3.2: Identify current mobile home parks that serve as affordable workforce housing and determine if it would be appropriate for the county to acquire and maintain them as affordable housing.

Action Item 5.3.2: Investigate reducing the permit cost of the replacement of mobile homes to encourage existing units to upgrade and remain affordable.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ELEMENT



GOAL SIX

PRESERVE, MANAGE, AND RESTORE WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE NATURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA, TAKING CARE TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE AND PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND TO ACQUIRE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.

Current Conditions Summary

Environmental protection within the planning area has primarily been implemented using the following mechanisms environmental design criteria in the Land Development Regulations, discouraging development in environmentally sensitive areas through the ROGO point system and acquisition of terrestrial and wetland habitat.

Natural resource land management activities within the planning area have focused on management of undisturbed habitat or restoration of disturbed habitat areas. Traditional habitat management within the planning area has usually included the following activities: land protection (i.e., from dumping, roaming domestic animals, poaching, etc.), eradication of invasive exotic vegetation, habitat restoration through replanting of disturbed areas. These activities are best suited to unpopulated or sparsely populated areas. Until recently most agencies have generally avoided the acquisition of platted, improved subdivision lots, whether they contained natural habitat or not. The application of management activities to subdivision lots presents additional problems, primarily due to concerns of neighbors. The amount of work needed to manage small fragmented subdivision parcels has made the cost-benefit ratio seem less attractive in the scheme of a management program that covers thousands of acres.

The Natural Resource and Conservation areas (Tier I) Map is based upon all areas of hammocks greater than four acres or undeveloped parcels adjacent to natural areas which provide a buffer and can be restored. There are approximately 500 parcels of privately owned land in Tier I in the planning area designated for acquisition. Most of the designated endangered species habitat is also included in this mapped area, with the exception of turtles and wetland species, which receive protection on a site-by-site basis.

The majority of the smaller fragmented hammocks isolated by surrounding development are mapped in the Transition Area (Tier II). They are not of the same high quality of the Natural Resource and Conservation Areas, but they provide habitat for songbirds and small animals and contribute to the quality of the neighborhoods.

Wetlands are also protected. The degree of protection is dependent on the quality of the wetland. High quality undisturbed wetlands, regardless where they are located, are classified as “red flag” and may not be disturbed for development activities. Disturbed wetlands may be filled and developed; the mitigation for the development activity is based on the quality of the wetland on the site.

The natural environment is of critical concern to most of the residents of the planning area. Preservation of the natural resources in the area was recognized by a large majority of the respondents as important in maintaining the quality of life and character of the planning area.

Analysis of Community Needs

Habitat Management Implementation.

There is a need to plan for organized habitat management of lands acquired for conservation purposes. The county has not traditionally engaged in natural lands management in the past and has only recently dedicated one employee position to this activity. Therefore, efficient habitat management will likely be accomplished through heavy coordination with existing management entities operating within the planning area. There is a need to anticipate future management needs based upon habitat acquisition goals and to determine how the county will handle expanding management responsibilities.

Protection of Hammocks.

All remaining hammocks of four acres or greater are included in the Conservation and Natural Areas (Tier I) Overlay Map and need to be protected as high quality habitat. Further protection is also needed for smaller habitat parcels (Tier II), which may be within partially developed neighborhoods. The habitat classification system used to determine open space requirements should be modified to reduce allowable clearing on lots with habitat.

Public Lands

A large amount of acreage in this planning area approximately 840 acres is in public ownership. The boundaries for Conservation and Resource Lands (CARL) need to be expanded to include all of Tier I and be designated for State acquisition. The County should concentrate acquisition efforts on the Tier II fragmented habitat areas.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 6.1

Create and adopt Tier System Land Use District Overlay Maps for the planning area depicting the locations of Tier I, Tier II and Tier III lands as described in Comprehensive Plan Policy 105.2.1.

Action Item 6.1.1: Draft the Tier I overlay to follow the Conservation and Natural Areas boundary. Tier I will include all contiguous hammock areas above four acres and restoration areas between fragmented hammocks to increase the hammock size and buffers where possible.

Action Item 6.1.2: Draft the Tier II overlay areas that include the smaller hammock patches isolated by surrounding development, which provide habitat for songbirds and small animals and contribute to the quality of the neighborhoods.

Action Item 6.1.3: Draft the Tier III overlay areas to contain subdivisions that are mostly built out and appropriate for infill development.

Strategy 6.2

Prepare an acquisition strategy, coordinating with state agencies, to acquire parcels with the highest habitat value first.

Action Item 6.2.1: Prioritize the acquisition of Tier I lands over Tier II and Tier III lands.

Action Item 6.2.2: Encourage the State of Florida to revise the CARL boundaries within the planning area to correspond with the coverage of Tier I as depicted on the Tier System Overlay Map for the purpose of prioritizing State purchases.

Action Item 6.2.3: Coordinate with the state to acquire the lands within the Natural Resource and Conservation Areas (Tier I).

Action Item 6.2.4: Prioritize the County acquisition program to Tier II lands and wetland parcels in Tier III if the State accepts primary responsibility for Tier I acquisition.

Action Item 6.2.5: Identify lots and parcels in the Transition Areas (Tier II) with fragments of hammock and/or wetlands for public acquisition in close coordination with neighborhood groups.

Action Item 6.2.6: Provide the highest priority for acquisition in Action Item 6.2.5 to those parcels with neighboring property owners or communities who want to partner with the county to purchase the lot and/or will take responsibility for maintenance and protection of the resource.

Action Item 6.2.7: Acquire as the third priority those scarified lots in the Transition Area (Tier II), which will be acquired for density reduction. Those communities and/or neighboring property owners who wish to partner with the county in the acquisition process will receive a higher priority for acquisition.

Action Item 6.2.8: Prepare criteria to be applied in determining which properties will receive the first offers in the Transition Areas (Tier II).

Strategy 6.3

Identify and pursue existing and new means of retiring development rights.

Action Item 6.3.1: Amend the administrative relief and beneficial use provisions of the Comprehensive Plan to require purchase of land for Tier I applicants and to allow purchase or issuance of a permit for Tier II and Tier III applicants as appropriate.

Action Item 6.3.2: Encourage density reduction through lot aggregation on Tier II and Tier III lands.

Action Item 6.3.3: Coordinate with the local community and/or neighboring homeowners acquiring upland hammock lots in Tier II with the objective of sharing the purchase costs and deeding ownership and maintenance responsibilities to the community and/or neighbors.

Strategy 6.4

Formulate and carry out a plan for habitat management of lands acquired for conservation purposes.

Action Item 6.4.1: Offer any lands purchased by the County adjacent to State owned lands to the State for management.

Action Item 6.4.2: Identify and prioritize conservation lands under County ownership and management for implementation of management activities and anticipate future management needs based upon the projected acquisition timing of properties.

Action Item 6.4.3: Identify and prioritize management activities such as fence removal, invasive exotic vegetation control, control of free roaming pets and habitat restoration.

Strategy 6.5

Reduce the permitted clearing of Hammock lots.

Action Item 6.5.1: Amend existing habitat analysis policies and regulations to designate all lots containing hammock areas in Tier II and Tier III in this planning area, whether old or re-growth, as automatic moderate quality and limit clearing to a maximum of forty percent.

Fiscal Implications and Anticipated Capital Improvement Projects

As with the capital costs outlined in the Community Character Element, the capital costs involved in the Environmental Protection Element revolve around the acquisition of sensitive habitat for the protection of the natural environment and character of the communities. The plan recommends that the state revise the acquisition boundaries to include Tier I properties to become priority for the state to purchase. There are approximately 392 vacant Tier I parcels in the planning area under private ownership that are outside of the state preservation boundaries. The approximate assessed value of these parcels is \$1.5 million

The plan also calls for the acquisition of Tier II parcels with fragments of hammock and/or wetlands by the county or through public-private partnerships with the local neighborhoods. The cost of implementing this action of the plan is unclear at this time, as the location and amount of parcels which fulfill the above criteria is unknown. However, the intent was to keep the cost low to both the county and the partnering neighborhood groups by forming a partnership. The benefit to the county is the protection of sensitive habitat and a reduction in density, while the neighborhood retains the benefit of the natural and historic character.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



GOAL SEVEN

SUSTAIN THE EXISTING COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES AND ENCOURAGE REDEVELOPMENT OR INFILL BETWEEN MM 91 AND BURTON DRIVE AND DISCOURAGE ADDITIONAL STRIP DEVELOPMENT OF THE U.S. 1 CORRIDOR.

Current Conditions Summary

There are approximately twenty-four industrial and manufacturing businesses in the planning area. Most of these are small businesses employing one or two people. They include home-based occupations or mobile repair services and are located primarily between MM 91 and MM 93.5. Types of industrial businesses in the area are boat repair, fabrication and other home-based occupations or mobile repair services. The need to inventory and consider the redevelopment of water-dependent and water-related uses is included in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan in Objective 212.1 and Chapter 9J-5.12 of the Florida Administrative Code.

Commercial retail is concentrated along the U.S. 1 corridor area. There are approximately 180 commercial businesses identified in the property appraiser's records in the planning area including a major shopping center, restaurants, specialty shops, and professional, construction and service related offices.

Tourist housing is an important economic activity in the planning area, providing jobs and customers for the restaurants and specialty shops in the area. Eight motels, with 270 rooms, provide for transient visitors to the area. An additional 160 units may be rented for "vacation rentals" in the gated community of Ocean Pointe. There are four Recreation Vehicle (RV) Parks with 113 approved recreational vehicle spaces for the camper. Key Largo Ocean Resort, the only park area zoned Recreation Vehicle (RV) and restricted to transient uses, is currently going through an amendment process to permit permanent dwelling units.

Analysis of Community Needs

Nonconforming Uses

There are non-residential uses and structures within the planning area that are inappropriately classified in regard to land use designation. These buildings often contribute to the character and economic vitality of the planning area and need to be evaluated to determine if the land use designation should be changed. As a result of the non-conforming status, material improvements or enlargements to the site is extremely difficult to make, thus the structure is not improved and many times left vacant. This discourages redevelopment of existing commercial buildings.

Appearance of the Business District

There have been some recent redevelopment projects which have used many elements which reflect the community character through upgrading commercial structures and landscaping in the business district over the last few years. There needs to be a way to assure that future redevelopment and infill projects reflect the community character of the planning area. An improved business district will attract additional customers to the area.

Impact of industrial uses on adjacent homes

Many of the industrial type uses in the mixed-use district are operated without consideration of the neighboring homes. These businesses should be encouraged to clean up or be shielded from residential neighboring properties.

Parking and Setbacks from U.S. 1

When U.S. 1 was widened to four lanes through this planning area many existing businesses lost much of their parking and setback from the roadway. The businesses became non-conforming as to parking and setbacks, this presents a problem when they try to redevelop or when new owners try and start a new business.

RV Park Conversions

With ROGO limiting the allocation and permitting of new residential and transient residential units RV Parks are being converted to un-permitted permanent residential dwellings, which do not meet the building code or fire safety requirements. One such park, zoned RV, in the area is currently going through an amendment process to change the zoning to permit permanent residents. Other Parks are being redeveloped as hotels or motels. The loss of these available spaces will reduce the variety of overnight stay options for visitors to this area of the Florida Keys.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 7.1

Consider the over-all economic viability of the planning area when reviewing the land use designations of lawfully established non-conforming land uses and structures in Strategy 1.3.

Strategy 7.2

Maintain and enhance economic activity and opportunity within the U.S. 1 corridor.

Action Item 7.2.1: Inventory and analyze the characteristics of existing commercial uses within the corridor and expansion potential in order to project the likely rates and amounts of commercial space needed over the planning horizon.

Action Item 7.2.2: Use the results of the county wide economic study to assist in determining future commercial used trends and needs into the twenty-year planning horizon. This information may also be used to retain the marketability of existing business uses and commercial structures.

Action Item 7.2.3: Investigate the feasibility and economic effects of a Formula-Retail Establishments Ordinance.

Strategy 7.3

Encourage redevelopment of obsolete non-residential structures and uses within the planning area.

Action Item 7.3.1: Examine and revise, where appropriate, the existing regulations regarding nonconforming uses and structures to encourage redevelopment of existing properties consistent with the Corridor Enhancement Plan and community vision.

Action Item 7.3.2: Ensure that new commercial design guidelines do not create a burden on existing businesses with the potential for redevelopment.

Action Item 7.3.3: Explore ways of easing some of the financial burden of redevelopment such as county and state funding of landscaping within the designated Historic District and along U.S. 1.

Action Item 7.3.4: Encourage existing businesses within the mixed-use areas to provide landscaping or opaque fencing to buffer their operations from adjacent residential neighbors.

Strategy 7.4

Recognize the importance of the availability of the tourist housing, hotels, motels, condominiums and RV Parks in the planning area to the over-all economic stability of the business community.

Action Item 7.4.1: Use the results of the county wide economic study to assist in determining future tourism housing trends to project the need for hotels, motels, tourist housing and RV Parks over the twenty-year planning horizon.

Action Item 7.4.2: Inventory and analyze the RV Parks in the county to determine their continuing viability under the existing regulatory structure in the County, and the demand for rental spaces and the economics of continuing.

Action Item 7.4.3: Implement, where appropriate, the results of the RV Park study including regulatory changes.

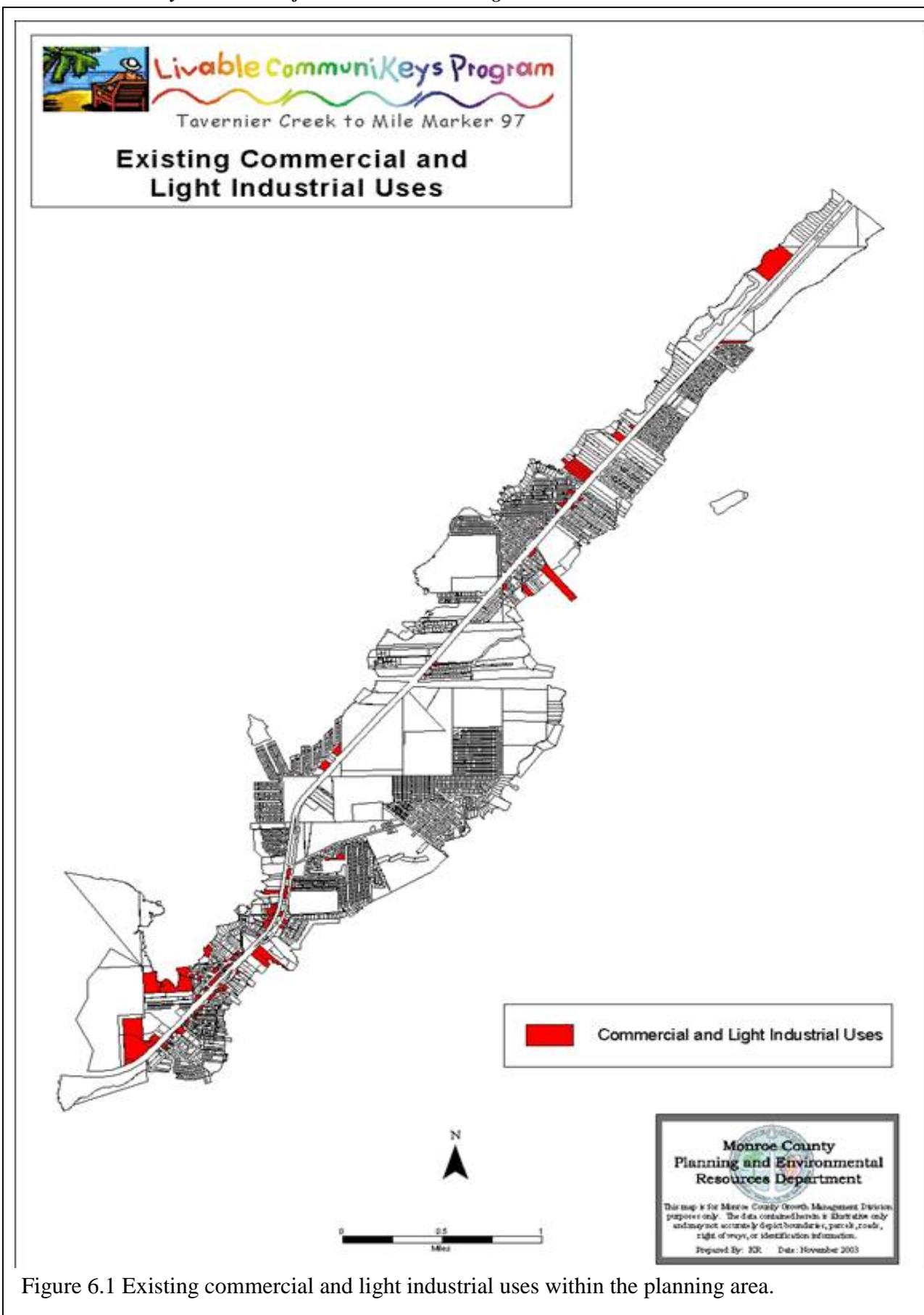


Figure 6.1 Existing commercial and light industrial uses within the planning area.

GOAL EIGHT

RECOGNIZE WATER-DEPENDENT AND WATER-RELATED COMMERCIAL USES AS A PRIMARY SOURCE OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA.

Current Conditions Summary

Citizens place a high value on water-dependent or water-related uses. For the recreational and commercial boaters alike, marinas, restaurants, bait and tackle shops that surround the shoreline in the planning area are as important as the gas and convenient stores that dot U.S. 1. The services provided by businesses located on land that support water-related activities are reliant economically as well on the water in the planning area. The need to inventory and consider the redevelopment of water-dependent and water-related uses is included in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan in Objective 212.1 and Chapter 9J-5.12 of the Florida Administrative Code.

Water-dependent uses include marinas, commercial fishing, boat launching facilities and beaches. Water-related uses include concession stands, bait and tackle shops and fish houses. Hotels and restaurants that are located on the water while not water dependent or related as in the traditional definition are economically enhanced by the location on the water.

Restaurant seating and bars and concessions that are located within the shoreline setbacks and on docks within the planning area are economically enhanced and dependent on their location in close proximity to the water. These uses do not conform to the current environmental protection regulations.

Water-related and water-dependent commercial uses in the planning area and their primary Real Estate Numbers include:

- Blue Waters Marina (RE 488970, 489135-004300)
- Mangrove Marina (RE 479170, 90340)
- Curtis Marine (RE 489110)

Water-related/economically enhanced because of a location on the water:

- Snappers Restaurant (RE 492290)
- The Weston Hotel (RE 91190)
- Island Bay Resort (RE 490150)
- Bay Breeze (RE 451210)
- Stone Ledge Motel (RE 88640)
- Dove Creek Lodge (RE 492340)
- Popp's Motel (RE 88590)
- Travel Trailer Town (RE 486850.0002)
- Coconut Inn (RE 482310, RE 482330)

Analysis of Community Needs

Commercial Uses on the Shoreline

Restaurants and motels are often financially dependent on their location on the water, because of the attraction the water provides to potential customers. Current setback regulations may make it impossible for many of these uses to redevelop if destroyed. The requirements may also make it impossible to substantially improve the facilities. There is a need to protect these uses.

Marinas and Mooring Field

The four marinas in the planning area are needed water access points for the residents of the community. No new marinas should be permitted, but redevelopment and expansion of existing marinas could be encouraged if environmental regulations are followed. There is an identified need for a mooring field within the planning area and Community Harbor has been a recommended area for such a use.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 8.1

Protect existing commercial uses that are located within the shoreline setbacks.

Action Item 8.1.1: Inventory the existing commercial uses on the shoreline and document, which uses are currently within the shoreline setback.

Action Item 8.1.2: Amend the Land Development Regulations to permit existing commercial uses to remain within the shoreline setbacks as long as storm water is managed and shoreline vegetation maintained.

Action Item 8.1.3: Prohibit new commercial uses within the shoreline setback unless permitted as accessory uses.

Action Item 8.1.4: Assure accessory uses permitted within the shoreline setback are properly managed to protect near shore waters.

Strategy 8.2

Recognize the importance to the community and economy of existing marina facilities.

Action Item 8.2.1: Encourage redevelopment of existing marinas, adding pump out facilities and controlling storm water run-off to meet existing health and environmental standards.

Action Item 8.2.2: Allow expansion of existing facilities and non-livaboard boat slips, if the density does not exceed that permitted in the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs.

Action Item 8.2.3: Prohibit the permitting of new marinas in the planning area.

Action Item 8.2.4: Encourage the implementation of a mooring field at Community Harbor, utilizing Mangrove Marina as the shore side management facility. The need for a mooring field in this location was identified in the 30 July 2002 Preliminary Planning Document for a Keys-Wide Mooring Field System.

Strategy 8.3

Discourage the development of non-water-dependant commercial uses on appropriately zoned waterfront properties.



TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT



GOAL NINE

PROVIDE FOR ALL CITIZENS OF THE PLANNING AREA A SAFE AND VIABLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM VIA U.S. 1, COUNTY ROADS AND THE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN TRAIL.

Current Conditions Summary

The inventory of existing roads, bridges and facilities for Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 includes U.S. 1 as the principal highway with numerous local and two collector roads serving the many subdivisions. While U.S. 1 is the only state-maintained road in this planning area, Monroe County maintains 19 miles of county roads in the planning area. The Florida Department of Transportation maintains the one bridge, Tavernier Creek Bridge. U.S. 1 is a four-lane highway within the planning area, with one traffic signal at Ocean Boulevard, the location of Tavernier Towne Shopping Center and Mariner's Hospital, a major commercial center.

This U.S. 1 roadway segment, in addition to the county roads in the planning area has a Level of Service (LOS) 'A'. This LOS is the considered the highest standard achievable.

There is a taxi cab service available in this planning area as well as a public bus system. The Dade-Monroe Express transit system provides public transportation from Florida City to Marathon. This is a contracted service provided through the Miami-Dade Public Transit System.

Sidewalks and curb ramps are currently provided along U.S. 1 on the bayside lanes from the Tavernier Creek Bridge to Sterling Drive and on the Oceanside lanes from the Tavernier Creek Bridge to the Tavernier Hotel at MM 91.8. Curb ramps have been recently completed on U.S. 1 by FDOT to provide compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Many destinations in the southern end of the planning area are easily accessible in a few minutes by walking and bicycling.

The existing pathways for non-motorized travel on U.S. 1 are part of the Overseas Heritage Trail, a multi-agency collaboration between the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Transportation, Monroe County and local governments. The Overseas Heritage Trail planned adjacent to U.S. 1 from Key West to Key Largo will provide alternative transportation and recreational opportunities for citizens and visitors to the Florida Keys.

The existing pathway within the study area is found on the bayside lane of U.S. 1 from MM 97 to 96.5, at this point, the trail crosses U.S. 1 and continues adjacent to the oceanside lane to the Tavernier Business District at approximately MM 92. The trail is envisioned to be widened to between 8 feet or 10 feet to accommodate two-way traffic. Current design guidelines suggest that a bike path should be provided on both sides of the roadway to discourage bicyclists riding against traffic.

In addition to the pathways on U.S. 1, The Monroe County 1997 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan calls for new paths on Westbound U.S. 1 from Mockingbird Road (MM 95.5) to Tavernier Creek Bridge. A bike lane has been constructed by Monroe County Public Works on the north side of Burton Street and First Street, providing access to Harry Harris Park.

In this planning area, trail designers will evaluate the use of the West side to provide a facility for two-way traffic. Environmental and existing development constraints may reduce the width in some areas to 8 feet.

Analysis of Community Needs

Bicycle and Pedestrian Traffic

Bicycle and pedestrian traffic in this planning area is largely contained within neighborhood boundaries because of the difficulty of safely crossing U.S. 1. The community has suggested an additional traffic signal, although it would constrain traffic on this four-lane segment.

Transportation Concerns

At the first community workshop 43% of the respondents to the question of “what they like least about living in the islands” replied with a transportation issue – traffic congestion, noise and speed, need for acceleration/deceleration lanes, lack of adequate public transportation, need for more bike paths, road widening on county roads and alignment, etc.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 9.1

Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation to implement measures to mitigate the impact of U.S. 1 traffic on the residential neighborhoods.

Action Item 9.1.1: Explore the potential of replanting excess right-of-way in native vegetation providing a visual and sound barrier along U.S. 1.

Action Item 9.1.2: Consider and implement different types of traffic calming devices to improve the flow of local automobile, bicycle and pedestrian traffic within the U.S. 1 corridor.

Action Item 9.1.3: Conduct traffic study and analysis of traffic calming methods to reduce speed limit through Town Center including narrowing of drive lanes, on-street parking, and additional landscaping.

Strategy 9.2

Promote safer pedestrian and bicycle travel through signalized crossings.

Action Item 9.2.1: Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation to provide a marked crosswalk with intelligent transportation system technologies such as: count-down signals, illuminated pushbuttons, or other appropriate devices capabilities at the signalized intersection in front of the Tavernier Towne Center (RE 89910.0001 and surrounding).

Strategy 9.3

Improve bicycle/pedestrian environment on neighborhood streets.

Action Item 9.3.1: Coordinate efforts of FDOT, County Engineering Department, and Planning Department to delineate safe bicycle/pedestrian routes through the neighborhood.

Action Item 9.3.2: Initiate landscaping program on designated bicycle/pedestrian routes, if necessary.

Strategy 9.4

Encourage bicycle/pedestrian traffic between residential and commercial areas.

Action Item 9.4.1: Work with all commercial and business owners and operators to encourage the incorporation of bicycle parking onto existing sites and in future development plans.

Action Item 9.4.2: Identify and develop safe bicycle/pedestrian routes between residential and commercial properties, which could include using aesthetic signs to mark bicycle/pedestrian routes.

Strategy 9.5

Promote bicycle and pedestrian friendly design.

Action Item 9.5.1: Develop guidelines with suggestions for bicycle/pedestrian friendly design during redevelopment and development of commercial properties.

Strategy 9.6

Implement the recommendations of the Monroe County Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan.

Action Item 9.6.1: Seek funding to implement the findings of the Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan for the construction of a bike path on the bayside from approximately MM 92 to 97 to complement the existing bike path/sidewalk on the oceanside.

Strategy 9.7

Improve pedestrian safety on side streets and U.S. 1.

Action Item 9.7.1: Coordinate with FDOT to stripe crossings of side streets with U.S. 1.

Strategy 9.8

Improve amenities for transit users.

Action Item 9.8.1: Seek funding to provide bus shelters at regular bus stops.

Action Item 9.8.2: Investigate a circular transit route within the planning area.

Strategy 9.9

Improve driver safety through the Tavernier area.

Action Item 9.9.1: Work with the Florida Department of Transportation to complete the turn lane improvements and intersection improvements for the Tavernier area.

Action Item 9.9.2: Work with the Florida Department of Transportation, private business owners and the community to improve the delineation of driveway access for businesses in the median at about MM 92.5 (Dairy Queen [RE 490210.0001], Shell Man [RE 490210], etc.).

Fiscal Implications and Anticipated Capital Improvement Projects

Of the many potential projects that are outlined in the Transportation Element, only a small number would fall under the financial responsibility of the county because most of the work proposed is within the U.S. 1 corridor area where money for improvements may be obtained from FDOT. There is approximately \$250,000 worth of safety improvements that are planned for the Overseas Heritage Trail for which a funding source has not yet been identified, however the DEP and National Park Service, along with FDOT are partners and may provide sources of funding.



PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT



GOAL TEN

ENHANCE EXISTING PARK FACILITIES AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ACTIVE AND PASSIVE LAND-BASED RECREATION AND PROTECT SHORELINE ACCESS FOR WATER BASED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Current Conditions Summary

Currently, there are two parks within the planning area that are appropriately identified as county owned public recreational facilities. These facilities are actively used by both residents and visitors. Harry Harris Community Park is the oldest and largest of the two parks. It is a 16.4 acre activity-based recreational facility located at Mile Marker 92.5, which offers ball fields, basketball courts, restrooms, picnic shelters, boat ramps, swim area, and a playground. Old Settlers Park is a 3.2 acre neighborhood facility which offers light activity and some passive recreation. Although it implies “old”, the Old Settlers Park was established in October 1996 and is located within the Historic Overlay of Tavernier. It is a quaint neighborhood park that offers a small trail, butterfly garden, pavilion, and a playground. Both parks provide beautiful ocean vistas that capture the Florida Key’s unique environment.

There are a number of “pocket-parks” maintained by the county and a few sites throughout the planning area that are slated to become parks in the future. Currently, there are two county owned sites, Sunset Point and Sunny Haven that are existing parks, however they remain primarily undeveloped. These locations are less than an acre in size and support residents and visitors within walking or biking distance. Currently, there are plans to improve the boat ramp and include a dock and kayak launch at the Sunset Point Park. Another two acre parcel located at Mile Marker 95.5 bayside, known as Varadero Beach, is entirely undeveloped, and slated to become a passive pedestrian oriented park.

The name Varadero means ‘boatyard’ in Spanish. The county-owned property at mile marker 95.5 was named in reference to the popular resort location on the Peninsula de Hicacos in Cuba, which attracts vacationers from all over the world. Unlike the 12 mile peninsula in Cuba, Varadero Beach in the planning area offers pedestrian access to the bay for swimming. It is designated as a motor boats prohibited zone within 300 feet of the shoreline in the cove. This code was enacted in order to protect natural aquatic resources and ensure the protection of the health, safety, and quality of life for both residents and visitors.

In addition to participating in land-based recreation, many residents and visitors spend their leisure time engaged in recreational activities on the water or at its shoreline. The Monroe County Comprehensive Plan specifies in Goal 213 that the county shall ensure adequate public access to the beach or shoreline consistent with public need and environmental constraints. Due to the high demand for residential waterfront property and the significant focus on development, public access to the shoreline has become severely limited. Within the planning area, Harry Harris Park offers the most ideal location for water-based activities. The community park offers two boat ramps, parking for boat trailers, swim area, and locations for fishing along the shoreline.

The high volume of boating activity during weekends, peak season, and holidays creates difficult parking conditions. The large volume of traffic at Harry Harris Community Park, has convinced some community members to seek alternative locations for water-based activities and shoreline access.

There are four county owned parcels with shoreline access, as well as twelve locations where access exists at the end of local streets. These locations have been utilized for launching boats, windsurfing, and fishing. These locations offer no parking and are only large enough to serve the surrounding neighborhood.

Along with the number of locations for land and water based activities, there is an existing bike

Table 8.1 Public Shoreline Access Points			
Name	Access	Description	Possible Use
Beach	Ocean	Natural shoreline	> Access to Sunny Haven Public Park > Pedestrian and bike access > Swimming and fishing > Non-motorized boat access
Carribbean Ave.	Dove Creek	Natural shoreline	> Non-motorized boat access > Bike and pedestrian access > Undesignated parking on shoulder of road > Fishing
Jo-Jean Way	Bay	Surfaced boat ramp	> Deep water access for boats (no parking) > Pedestrian and bike access > Non-motorized boat access > Fishing
Lobster Ln.	Ocean	Un-surfaced boat ramp	> Deep water access with perimeter canal > No parking > Bike and pedestrian access > Fishing
Lowe St.	Ocean	Natural shoreline	> Deep water access no boat ramp > Pedestrian and bike access > Fishing
North Sunrise Dr.	Ocean	Eroding fill	> Pedestrian and bike access > Non-motorized boat access > Fishing
Ocean View Dr.	Ocean	Natural shoreline	> Pedestrian and bike access > Non-motorized boat access > Fishing
Sunrise Dr.	Ocean	Surfaced boat ramp	> Deep water access for boats (no parking) > Pedestrian and bike access > Non-motorized boat access > Fishing

Source: Monroe County Planning Department

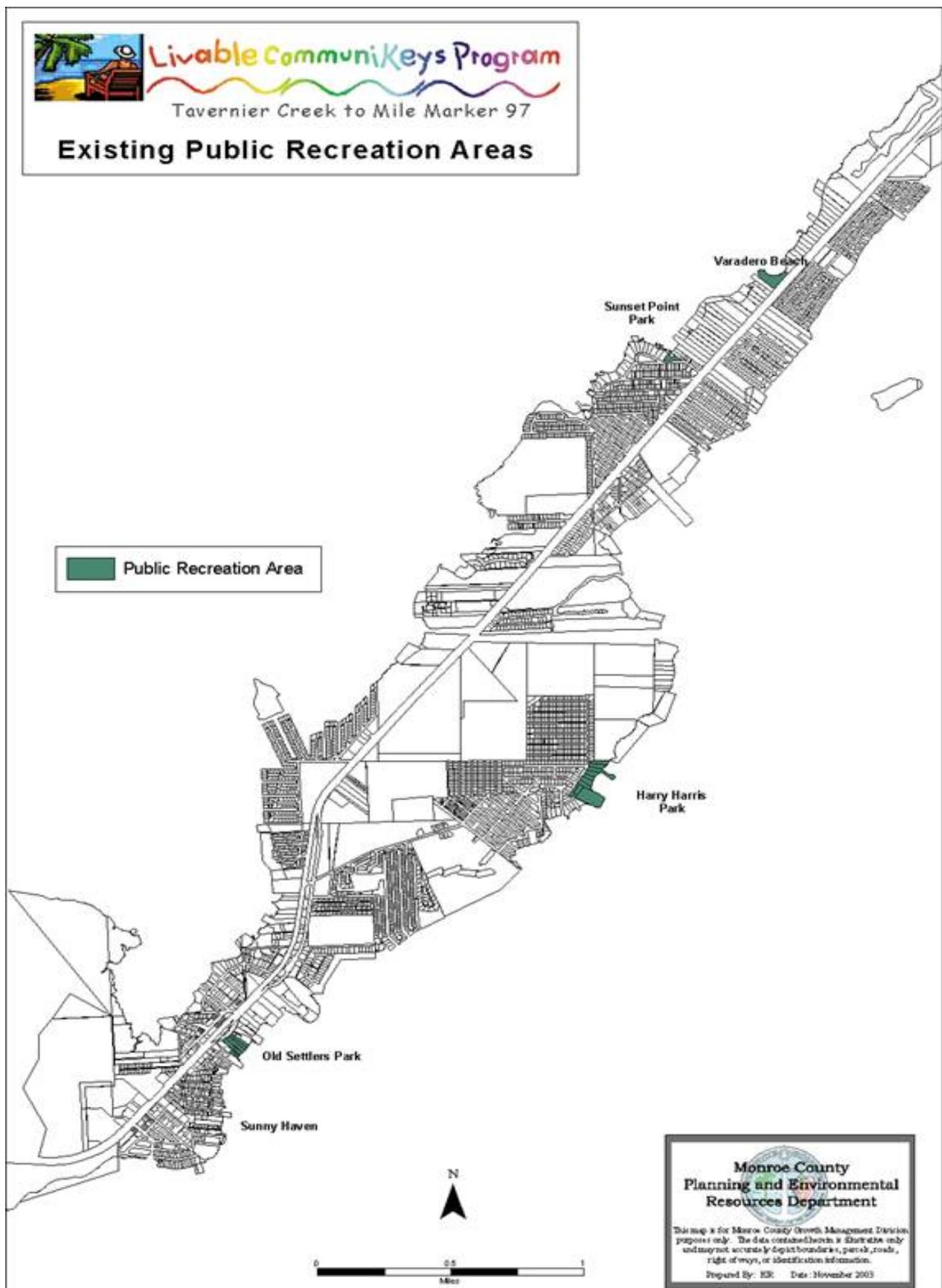


Figure 8.1 Existing public parks and recreation areas.

path that abuts the U.S. 1 corridor. Currently, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is in the process of enhancing the bike path through the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail Program. It accommodates bike and pedestrian oriented leisure activities, as well as providing alternative modes of transportation. Finally, there are a number of private businesses and homeowners parks sprinkled throughout the community that supplement the variety of recreational opportunities.

Analysis of Community Need

Enhance Recreational Services and Infrastructure

During the LCP process, the public expressed an interest in having a public pool and a community center among the recreational services provided within their community, as well as the need to update the current facilities at Harry Harris Community Park. Due to the lack of available land and geographical constraints, Harry Harris Park is an ideal location to provide a wider range of services. Existing neighborhood recreation areas, Sunny Haven, Sunset Point, as well as other potential sites should be evaluated for utilization and the need for new or updated facilities. A network of trails and waterways designed to connect both community and neighborhood parks together would create a comprehensive recreational system for all ages with diverse interests to enjoy.

Expand Passive Resource-Based Recreational Opportunities

There is a lack of accessibility and circulation for passive recreation within the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area. Passive recreation differs from activity-based recreation in its focus on type of activity and geographical location and size. Passive recreation activities occur within particular natural and/or cultural settings. These parks are typically developed through a series of linear winding paths and/or circulation systems, which differ from activity-based recreation that is more conducive within large unobstructed open areas. Passive resource-based recreation areas are typically located within conservation lands, which provide a dual benefit for the community. These locations offer a recreational amenity while effectively maintaining the preservation of an ecosystem.

Protect and Increase Public Shoreline Access

During the Livable CommuniKeys Process, protecting and increasing public access to the shoreline was indicated as a priority within the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area. Public access is limited, and therefore a majority of residents and visitors must rely on county-owned parks to gain access. There is a need for the county to designate or acquire public lands for the primary purpose of providing shoreline access with facilities to accommodate water-based activities.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 10.1

Provide a balanced and comprehensive park and recreation system available to the community.

Action Item 10.1.1: Receive and review the results from the county wide parks and recreation master plan currently being conducted in order to identify opportunities within the planning area.

Action Item 10.1.2: Allow for the upgrade of current facilities at Harry Harris Community Park to accommodate needed changes and evolved interests.

Action Item 10.1.3: Develop and/or enhance the facilities at Sunset Point and Sunny Haven to provide additional recreational opportunities for residents and visitors within walking and/or biking distance. This may include passive and/or active recreational uses such as green space, boat ramp, volleyball court, playground and similar uses.

Action Item 10.1.4: Identify locations and prioritize land acquisition for small local “pocket-parks” in neighborhoods, which do not have existing public or private recreational facilities within walking distance of the residents being served.

Action Item 10.1.5: Coordinate with state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, as well as other private and public entities to ensure that passive and active recreational opportunities are being provided to all users, in conformance with standards adopted by the American Disabilities Act.

Strategy 10.2

Develop a system that will guide the acquisition, design, and development of county owned public parks and recreational facilities within the Upper Keys to ensure that the future needs of the community are being met.

Action Item 10.2.1: Establish a Parks and Recreation Forum for the Upper Keys, including representatives from public and private agencies as well as interested citizens who are responsible for overseeing parks and recreation development and to ensure the delivery of effective and efficient services.

Action Item 10.2.2: Build and foster meaningful public and private partnerships within the community to ensure equitable distribution of services throughout the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 planning area.

Action Item 10.2.3: Prioritize development and services which will maximize the number of opportunities while accommodating the needs of all users.

Action Item 10.2.4: Utilize available resources and potential funding opportunities to fund capital improvements projects to enhance parks and recreation facilities, services, and operational support.

Strategy 10.3

Enhance current passive recreational areas to provide adequate accessibility and outdoor education opportunities to all users, while maintaining the sensitive natural and cultural resources within the planning area.

Action Item 10.3.1: Provide a variety of appropriate quality passive recreational activities and outdoor educational opportunities where consistent with overarching environmental conservation responsibilities.

Action Item 10.3.2: Design and establish trail improvements to blend with the natural environment. Provide improvements and management practices in sensitive habitats adequate to protect the natural resources.

Action Item 10.3.3: Advocate responsible stewardship of natural resources through the development of an interpretive educational program within passive recreational areas.

Action Item 10.3.4: Prioritize the acquisition of public recreational lands to maximize the preservation of scenic vistas, undeveloped views, and access to water resources.

Action Item 10.3.5: Provide a trail system off U.S. 1 corridor, with posted access points and passive recreational facilities to accommodate appropriate uses that connect existing and future parks to the greatest extent practical.

Action Item 10.3.6: Incorporate historically significant sites into the design and development of parks within the Tavernier Historic Overlay district to promote cultural education and awareness.

Strategy 10.4

Protect and maintain all existing public shoreline access points within the planning area.

Action Item 10.4.1: Identify potential shoreline access points and parcels within the planning area.

Action Item 10.4.2: Do not allow abandonment of county-owned land with access to the shoreline.

Action Item 10.4.3: Reclaim county-owned public shoreline access points.

Action Item 10.4.4: Survey the community to determine the need for minor improvements that will enhance recreational opportunities.

Action Item 10.4.5: Identify and post signage at all public access points.

Action Item 10.4.6: Work with interested residents to provide low-impact amenities at public access points within their neighborhoods.

Strategy 10.5

Make additional shoreline access available to the public, which offers opportunities for safe and diverse water-based activities while protecting the integrity of the natural environment and the residential community character.

Action Item 10.5.1: Make the acquisition of land with shoreline access a priority between Tavernier Creek and Mile Marker 97.

Action Item 10.5.2: Coordinate work and activity with other agencies and groups, including but not limited to the Florida Keys Overseas Paddling Trail Program, Monroe County Marine Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the DEP Division of Recreation and Parks, to further ensure harmony and consistency with the overall protection and preservation of beaches and shoreline within the county.

Action Item 10.5.3: Implement appropriate mechanisms for regulating boating activities located within 300 feet of county owned public land with shoreline access in order to provide appropriate locations for diverse water-based recreation activities and to ensure public safety and environmental protection.

Action Item 10.5.4: Develop a pedestrian/bicycle park at the property recently purchased by the county at MM 95 (a.k.a. Varadero Beach).

Fiscal Implications and Anticipated Capital Improvements Projects

The Parks and Recreation element outlines numerous potential capital improvement projects, from the acquisition of pocket parks to the improvement to existing facilities and shoreline access points. However, to determine costs of the proposals outlined in the plan, the types of facilities the community wants must first be determined. The ongoing Parks and Recreation Master Plan process will shed some light on what improvements or acquisitions need to take place, but until the time that specific projects are identified, a cost estimate is not possible.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT



GOAL ELEVEN

PROVIDE ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES TO SERVE THE EXISTING AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE TAVERNIER CREEK TO MM 97 PLANNING AREA

Current Conditions Summary

Sanitary Wastewater and Storm Water Management

Certain public facilities are already planned including sewer and storm water management facilities. The Monroe County Sanitary Wastewater Master Plan sets out priorities for provision of advanced wastewater treatment to the county for “hot spots” where collection and centralized treatment systems are recommended. Facilities are required to be available by 2010 in order to fulfill Comprehensive Plan and Florida Law mandates. Even if these schedules fall behind it is safe to assume that these facilities will be built within the twenty-year planning horizon of this Master Plan. Major subdivisions slated for service include Harris Ocean Park, Palma Sola, Sherrill Park, Hammer Point Park and area along U.S. 1.

The Storm Water Management Master Plan contains mainly regulatory and nonstructural improvement recommendations for handling storm water. The plan identified needed retrofit projects in the planning area, they were not considered either a high or medium priority. Listed projects include the Pipe at the end of Jo Jean Way in Community Harbor and the intersection of Burton Drive and U.S. 1. Localized flooding in areas with large parking lots are a problem throughout the Keys.

Schools

The school age children in this planning area attend school in either Islamorada or Key Largo. Monroe County, over the last ten years has been an area of “losing” school population. In this planning area persons below age twenty decreased by four percent. Currently there are approximately 522 school age children (ages 5 to 17) in the planning area. Population projections for the planning area estimate an additional 155 to 234 persons over the twenty-year planning horizon. If 20% of these persons, as represented in the 2000 Census, are below twenty (20) years old it will result in an additional thirty (30) to forty-seven (47) students by 2024. The percentage of seasonal units in the area may continue to increase, which will reduce the actual number of school age children.

Public Water Supply

The Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority provides public water to the planning area, there is sufficient capacity allocated to service the proposed population increase.

Monroe County Fire Rescue Services

Monroe County Fire Rescue Services oversee the operations of career and volunteer fire/rescue and emergency medical service in unincorporated Monroe County. Monroe County and the study area from Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 95 is well served by the Tavernier fire station located in Tavernier at 151 Marine Avenue, Tavernier, MM 92. The Key Largo fire station serves the study area from MM 95 to MM 97.

The Tavernier fire rescue station is staffed 24/7 by two (2) full time paid fire fighter/paramedics augmented by volunteer fire fighters. The Tavernier fire rescue station is provided with the fol-

lowing equipment: two (2) Advanced life support (ALS) ambulances, two (2) fire engines and one (1) ladder truck with ninety-five (95) ft. ladder extension. The Fire Rescue Services Department will respond to emergency calls with one (1) ALS Ambulance staffed by one (1) firefighter/paramedic and one (1) firefighter/emergency medical technician, and one (1) fire engine staffed by one (1) firefighter/paramedic. Planned upgrades to the Tavernier fire rescue station will provided improved living accommodations for crew and a more efficient station design.

Fire rescue uses 2000 to 3000 gallon water tankers to compensate for issues concerning the location and supply of water for fire suppression. The water tankers are used to transport water for fire suppression to the fire. Additional tankers are brought on scene as needed. The existing four (4) inch water pipes throughout much of the planning area have inadequate water pressure for fire suppression. The Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority is replacing the four (4) inch pipe with six (6) inch pipe when repairs are made. The six (6) inch pipe is sufficient for fire suppression. Additional water for fire suppression is made available through fire wells consisting of six (6) inch pipe extending ninety (90) feet into the ground to salt-water. Salt-water wells provide an acceptable supply of water for fire suppression. Fire Rescue Services annually inspects each fire well to determine if it can supply sufficient water for fire suppression.

Monroe County Fire Rescue Services has a mutual aid agreement with the Islamorada Fire Department. If a structural fire occurs within the study area the Tavernier fire station works cooperatively with the Islamorada Fire Department and the Key Largo fire station to suppress the fire.

Monroe County Fire Rescue Services is the primary emergency medical services ambulance provider for the Tavernier Creek to MM 95 area. North of MM 95 ambulance services are provided by the Key Largo Ambulance. Emergency medical services will respond emergency medical calls with one (1) ALS Ambulance staffed by one (1) firefighter/paramedics and one (1) firefighter/emergency medical technician.

The Fire Marshal's office working with the Monroe County Building Department provides analysis and review of proposed construction plans to identify fire related concerns and to build fire safety into the finished project. The Fire Marshal's office also provides for yearly fire safety inspections of commercial properties and assembly occupancies.

Other Public Facilities and Services

Other public facilities and services are provided to the community from adjacent facilities in the Village of Islamorada and/or Key Largo, including libraries, a senior center, sheriff's substation and county office buildings.

Analysis of Community Needs

Wastewater and Storm Water Management Facilities.

According to the Sanitary Wastewater Master Plan and Storm Water Management Master Plan these types of facilities are scheduled to be installed in the planning area within the twenty-year planning horizon. Collection systems will be installed in the right-of-ways of existing roads. Although the timing of these facilities is laid out in their respective plans implementation of both plans has fallen behind schedule. There is also a need to re-evaluate projected sewer and storm water layouts in relation to new development patterns introduced through this Master Plan.

Water Supply for Fire Suppression

There is a need to continue the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority upgrade program of the water distribution system that is replacing four (4) inch pipe with six (6) inch or larger pipe and to identify areas where saltwater wells can be installed to assure sufficient water is available for fire suppression.

Response to Emergency Calls, Location and Building Identification

It is sometimes difficult for Monroe County Fire Rescue, fire suppression and emergency medical services, to locate an emergency call location due to inadequate addressing on buildings. There is a need for all buildings to be identified and addressed in locations clearly visible from the street. Fire rescue recommends six (6) inch numbers in contrasting colors to the background. Law enforcement has a similar issue and would also find this helpful.

All Facilities and Services

The public needs to be assured that there will be sufficient public facilities to serve the current and projected population throughout the twenty-year planning horizon.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 11.1

Continue to prepare a yearly report detailing the adequacy of public facilities in the County and highlighting specific areas where inadequacies exist or areas that approaching inadequacy.

Action Item 11.1.1: Present the report to the Planning Commission at the Key Largo Planning Commission meeting so the public is made aware of any inadequacies and any plans for improving service to the area.

Action Item 11.1.2: Coordinate closely with the Board of Education, Fire Marshall, Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority, the Key Largo Sewer Authority and other agencies and organizations providing services and facilities to the planning area.

Strategy 11.2

Increase the availability of water for fire suppression.

Action Item 11.2.1: Bring all residences to within 800 feet of a fire hydrant and all commercial uses within 500 feet of a fire hydrant by working with the Monroe County Fire and Rescue and the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority as the two agencies continue to install hydrants and replace aqueduct pipes.

Action Item 11.2.2: Identify priority areas for pipe upgrading based on a fire needs assessment conducted by Monroe County Fire Rescue Services and work with the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority to include priority areas into their work plan.

Action Item 11.2.3: Identify necessary fire well and hydrant locations during construction plan review and make necessary fire wells and hydrants a requirement of construction plan and building permit approval.

Action Item 11.2.4: Continue the program of the Fire Rescue Services to inspect salt water

wells annually to determine continuing suitability as a supply of water for fire suppression. Order repair or replacement of fire wells as necessary.

Strategy 11.3

Protect the public health and safety by requiring that all buildings be identified with street numbers of at least six (6) inches in height in contrasting colors to the background placed in a location clearly visible from the street so they can be located in case of an emergency.

Action Item 11.3.1: Require that all buildings be addressed using numbers of at least six (6) inches in height placed in a location clearly visible from the street as part of the review for new construction and remodeling projects and as a condition of building permit approval.

Strategy 11.4

Develop new and expanded public facilities to the level necessary to adequately serve existing and future development over the twenty-year planning horizon. Public facilities development shall also be consistent with the Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

Action Item 11.4.1: Install a sanitary sewage treatment system in accordance with the Monroe County Sanitary Wastewater Master Plan. Components may include centralized or cluster facilities for collection and treatment, all of which shall be developed on disturbed and/or scarified uplands or in existing rights-of-way. The projected sewage treatment requirements for the planning area should be revisited and confirmed to be consistent with the final development plan adopted pursuant to the Master Plan.

Action Item 11.4.2: Allow installation of stormwater treatment systems in accordance with the Monroe County Stormwater Management Master Plan. Any facilities installed for centralized collection and treatment should be developed on disturbed and/or scarified uplands or in existing rights-of-way.

Fiscal Implications and Anticipated Capital Improvement Projects

The largest known public facilities project to be undertaken by the County over the 20 year planning horizon is the provision of sanitary sewer services to the planning area. According to the Sanitary Wastewater Master Plan (SWMP) the planning area is the ranked fifth out of 21 'hot spots' in the Upper Keys in order of importance for the installation of sanitary sewer facilities. Currently the County is working on the number two ranked 'hot spot' in the Upper Keys. The Key Largo Wastewater Treatment District is the deciding body for the provision of wastewater service to the planning area. The SWMP estimates that the Tavernier regional wastewater collection system will cost approximately 8.6 million dollars.

Additionally, improvements to the Tavernier Fire station are moving forward as of the writing of this plan including renovation of the existing structure and the addition of living quarters. The budgeted amount for the Tavernier fire station is \$600,000.

Community Involvement Element
Livable Community Keys Master Plan for Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97



GOAL TWELVE

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE LOCALIZED SENSE OF COMMUNITY, WHICH ENCOURAGES CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE LIVABLE COMMUNIQUEYS PROGRAM (LCP) MASTER PLAN

Current Conditions Summary

The community has demonstrated their interest in planning for the future of the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 planning area by attending workshops, community meetings, responding to surveys and sending correspondence to the planning department concerning what they wanted to achieve in this planning process. Continuous community feedback has allowed staff to gain an understanding of the needs and desires of the community. The community interest has kept the project on track moving forward toward the Vision.

Four Livable CommuniKeys News Letters were written and distributed to all residents of the community and to property owners who may live in a different location. The newsletters were an outreach effort to the community, as a whole, to assure that everyone had an opportunity to become informed about the issues being addressed. Each of the three LCP workshops was well attended by interested residents and business owners in the area.

Policy 101.20.1 of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan directs that the LCP Master Plans be developed following certain principles. Principle Two states that the community master plans will include a monitoring mechanism to provide accountability to the communities. Principle Five directs that “each Community Master Plan will include mechanisms allowing citizens continued oversight and involvement in the implementation of their plans. Through the Community Master Plans, programs for ongoing public involvement, outreach, and education will be developed.”

Analysis of Community Needs

Continuing Community Involvement

Mechanisms need to be developed to assure that the citizens of this planning area are kept informed and have an opportunity for meaningful comment on plan implementation and required LDR text amendments and progress on the corridor enhancement plan.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

Strategy 12.1

Provide updates to the community on all aspects of plan implementation and the status of public projects in the planning area.

Action Item 12.1.1: Work closely with the County communications office to distribute information through press releases and the “hot topics” page on the web site.

Action Item 12.1.2: Continue to provide speakers to civic and service organizations to discuss LCP Master Plan issues.

Action Item 12.1.3: Publish and distribute a public newsletter on a periodic basis to provide community awareness and update on the progress.

Strategy 12.2

Establish a committee to advise the Planning Commission on project proposals within the identified corridor.

Action Item 12.2.1: The Board of County Commissioners shall appoint five to seven Committee members to include representatives from the business community, the general citizenry, and design professionals to serve as volunteers reviewing and commenting on plans for projects and improvements along the corridor.

Action Item 12.2.2: Specify procedures for Committee review of development and redevelopment proposals concerning conformance to the architectural guidelines in the Tavernier Corridor Enhancement Plan.

Action Item 12.2.3: Hold all meetings of the Committee in a public forum and advertise the date and agenda following the Florida “Sunshine” Law requirements.

Action Item 12.2.4: Support the Committee by having the planning department provide technical and secretarial staffing, mailings, advertising, and preparation of Committee reports.

Strategy 12.3

Develop a detailed staff work program to implement the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan.

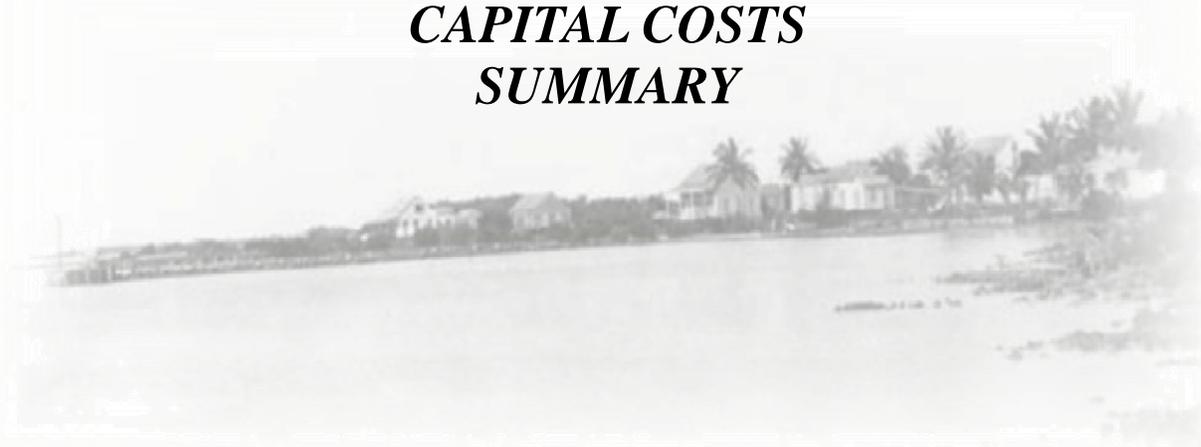
Action Item 12.3.1: Prioritize Action Items and develop a timeline completion.

Action Item 12.3.2: Involve the community in reviewing the prioritization during a Planning Commission public meeting.

Action Item 12.3.3: Monitor progress on the work program by preparing a yearly report to the Board of County Commissioners and the Community.



CAPITAL COSTS SUMMARY



Capital Costs Summary

While there are significant capital costs to fully implementing the Tavernier Creek to Mile Marker 97 Livable CommuniKeys Plan, the majority of them will be shouldered by the state and federal government, or are unknown at this time due to the need for further community input.

Table 11.1 below outlines the known and potential capital costs which are outlined in various element of this plan. The table indicates an approximate cost as well as the source of funds (if known at this time).

Table 11.1 Estimated cost of capital improvements		
Project	Cost	Source of Funds
Tier I Acquisition	\$ 1,500,000	Unidentified
Tier II and Tier III Hammock lots	\$ 600,000	Unidentified
Overseas Heritage Trail	\$ 250,000	FDOT/DEP/National Park Service
Wastewater Treatment Facilities	\$ 8,600,000	Sources outlined in SWMP
Total Cost of Capital Improvements	\$ 10,950,000	

The major fiscal implications found within this plan are based upon the proposed acquisition of environmentally significant lands within the planning area. Within the Historic District boundaries (including the proposed expanded historic boundary), there are approximately 30 vacant, private parcels Tier II and Tier III that contain fragments of hammock with a taxable value of approximately \$600,000. There are roughly 392 private, vacant Tier I parcels targeted for acquisition within the entire planning area with an approximate assessed value of \$1.5 million.

Of the many potential projects that are outlined in the plan, only a limited number are defined enough to estimate a cost.

Glossary

This glossary is intended to supply general definitions of planning terms and is not intended to serve as a legal reference.

Acquisition Areas – Land identified for public acquisition by County, state and federal governmental agencies including land to be acquired as part of the land acquisition program and smart growth initiatives of the Monroe County 2010 Comprehensive Plan and Livable CommuniKeys Program to secure for conservation and passive recreation purposes privately-owned environmentally sensitive lands, to limit sprawl by retiring development rights on privately-owned vacant lands and to acquire land for affordable housing.

Action Items – Comprehensive plans and plans such as the Tavernier Creek to MM 97 Master Plan are written in a way that goes from the general to the specific. Issues are identified, strategies are developed to explain what you are going to do to address the issue and action items are developed that tell you how the strategy will be carried out.

Active Recreational Facilities - Facilities, which provide for organized leisure-time activities requiring equipment and taking place in a prescribed places, sites or fields such as a tennis court, racquetball court, basketball court, spa/exercise room, playfield/playground, miniature golf course, golf course and fitness course.

Addendum – This is an addition or supplement to the Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan. You will usually find the Addendum at the end of a report or plan and it provides additional explanation of terms and will often provide the background information that supports statements made in the main body of the report or plan.

Adaptive Reuse – The development of a new use for an older building or for a building originally designed for a special or specific purpose. Adaptive reuse is particularly useful for preserving historic structures.

Affordable Housing - Housing with a controlled sales price or rent within the means of a low to moderate-income household. Allocations for affordable housing are divided into 50% for those making less than the medium income (currently \$57,200) and 50% for those making 120% of the medium income. The Planning Department requires a yearly report of the income of occupants of rental units and the income of a buyer upon the sale of an owner occupied unit.

Archeological and Cultural Resources – Resources that embody and reflect the county's historical, cultural, archeological, and architectural heritage, as reflected in such individual sites, districts, and archeological areas.

Buffer - Any space that separates uses. For example, buffer yards are required along the front of businesses that are located along U.S.1. The buffer can range from twenty feet to five feet in width depending on the quantity of trees and shrubs planted in the buffer.

Building Footprint - The area under a building.

Built Environment – This refers to the development placed on land and includes streets, commercial buildings and houses. It is the opposite of the natural environment which is land that has not been built upon or changed from the way it was.

Bulk Regulations – Refer to the limitations placed on development and include restrictions on the size and height of buildings and restrictions on the placement of buildings on a site including the distance the building must be placed from lot lines.

Calming Devices - Devices used to slow traffic on residential streets to increase safety and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood. Some examples of traffic calming devices would include stop signs and speed bumps.

Capital Improvements - These are major county funded projects that include road, park, library, public buildings, emergency services and police facilities. They often take years to plan and months to construct.

Certificate of Appropriateness – A “Certificate of Appropriateness” would be granted by the Historic Preservation Commission after reviewing the proposed changes to an historic structure and finding that the changes are consistent with the guidelines established to guide work on historic structures.

Cistern - An artificial reservoir e.g. an underground tank, for storing water collected.

Cluster - A development design technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on a parcel to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas.

Commercial – A land use category that includes businesses intended to serve the needs of the public including services, retail sales and professional services.

Community Center – For the purposes of the Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan the area from MM91 to Burton Dr.. It is the focus of community activity due to the dominant land use pattern of commercial and other non-residential uses.

Community Corridor Area- Refers to the area between MM91 and 93.5 where businesses are concentrated.

Community Center Overlay District – A zoning district that will be applied over and in addition to the existing zoning and that will add specific regulation to areas where mixed-use development will be focused.

Community Character – In general, this refers to the essential characteristics of a community without which that community would lose its unique identity. They are the elements that define a place. The whole of the LCP Plan serves to define the community character in summary the community character for Tavernier Creek Bridge to Mile Marker 97 is defined by the area’s existing small town community island character, the “conch-style” houses, the green spaces that separate uses and its relationship to the water.

CommuniKeys Program – This is a local community planning initiative of the Monroe County Planning Commission and the Planning & Environmental Resources Department. The Livable CommuniKeys program is the forum in which community and redevelopment plans that offer a clear direction for each community’s future are prepared.

Comprehensive Plan - Means the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan, which constitutes the required elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan adopted pursuant to Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes. The comprehensive plan contained a direction to develop “Community Master Plans” to guide development in the Keys. Out of this direction Individual plans have been developed and are being developed for distinct areas of the Keys. The Stock Island plan and Tavernier Creek to MM 97 plans are underway and soon work on the Key Largo Plan will begin.

Conch Style - The common local name given to an early building style of classic Conch Houses of Key West and the Florida Keys, based on American and Bahamian traditions, utilizing available materials to create structures adapted to this climate. Typical examples are small, wood-frame buildings set on piers with front porches. The earliest surviving examples in Tavernier date from the early twentieth century.

Conservation Area – An area that has been set aside for careful preservation and protection by the state or county in order to manage natural resources to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.

Contextual - The interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs. A building or object can be said to be *contextual* if it fits within the environment established by the community character. A home painted purple and gold may be appropriate in Minnesota the home of the Minnesota Vikings but the color choice may be said to be out of context within an area of “conch-style houses” that are predominantly white with green or blue trim. Setbacks and bulk may also be a contextual element in a neighborhood.

Density – The number of dwellings that may be constructed on a property as measured in dwelling units or rooms per acre. In order to determine the actual numbers of dwelling units or rooms that may be constructed, first you must subtract from the property all land that can not be built upon such as bay bottom and wetlands to arrive at the net buildable area of the site. Maximum Net density then refers to the maximum density permitted to be developed on the net buildable acreage with the transfer of development rights (TDR) or bonus for employee housing.

Development - Development means the carrying out of any building activity, the making of any material change in the use or appearance of any structure or land or water, or the subdividing of land into two (2) or more parcels.

Employee Housing - An attached or detached dwelling unit that is intended to serve as affordable, permanent housing for working households, which derive at least seventy (70) percent of their household income from gainful employment in Monroe County and meet the requirements for affordable housing; 20% of the employee housing units may be market rate housing as per sections 9.5-4(A-5) and 9.5-266. (Ord. No. 19-1989, § 1(PD11A); Ord. No. 47-1999, § 2; Ord. No. 003-2002, § 1)

Exotic Vegetation – See *Invasive Exotic*

Garden-Type Apartments – Two or three story multifamily structures generally built at ten to twenty dwelling units per acre, and including related off-street parking, open space and recreation.

Green Space – See *Open Space*

Habitat – The sum total of the natural conditions and environmental factors in which a plant or animal lives.

Hammock – A subtropical forest that is a rare habitat in the Florida Keys, especially those located five (5) or more feet above sea level, with a diverse assemblage of plants and trees and that provides habitat for native birds and mammals.

Historic District – Area identified in the Monroe County 2010 Comprehensive Plan and on the Future Land Use Map as a Historic District because of the historic significance of the area. There is a current Tavernier Historic District designation.

Historic Site (Historic Property) - A location which has been identified as having a special significance to the history, pre-history, architecture or culture of a community. A historic site may or may not have structures on it, its importance comes more from what significant event took place at that location than what is built upon it.

Historic Overlay - A method used to add additional zoning regulations to a specific area which are applied in addition to the standards of the underlying or base zoning. These can be used to add extra protection to areas of historic significance.

Institutional - A zoning designation reserved for uses which serve the recreational, religious, educational, cultural or health needs of the community, including educational and scientific research facilities.

Invasive Exotic - Means non-native vegetation; invasive exotic plants north of the Seven Mile Bridge include Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquinerva*), Australian Pine (spp. *Casuarina*), Brazilian Pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Leatherleaf (*Colubrina asiatica*), and Sapodilla (*Manilkara zapota*).

Land Use – The current uses on the land, whether residential, commercial, industrial, vacant or other.

Lot (also Platted Lot and Recorded Lot) – A parcel of land, that has been legally subdivided and a plat recorded, of at least sufficient size to meet minimum zoning requirements for use, coverage, area and to provide such yards and other open spaces as are required in the land development regulations.

Monroe County Wastewater Master Plan - See *Sanitary Wastewater Management Plan*

Mooring Field - An area, off shore, in which there exists facilities and typically a designation for the purpose of securing watercraft.

National Register of Historic Places - The list of historic properties significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture, maintained by the Secretary of the Interior, as established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Nonconforming Structure - A lawfully existing (permitted) the size, dimensions, or location of which does not comply with all of the current standards and regulations; for example the structure may be built too close to the shore line or it may have been constructed below the flood level.

Nonconforming Use – A use or activity that was lawfully existing (permitted), which because of changes in the standards and regulations, fails to conform to the present regulatory requirements. A business that was permitted and conforming once legal at its location may be made nonconforming if the Comprehensive Plan or Land Use Regulations are changed so that the use is no longer allowed at its present location.

Open Space - That portion of any parcel or area of land or water which is required to be maintained such that the area within its boundaries is open and unobstructed from the ground to the sky.

Ordinary Repairs or Maintenance - The work done to prevent the deterioration of a building or structure, or any part of a building or structure, by keeping the building or structure as nearly as practicable to its condition before any deterioration, decay, or damage.

Parcel – For the purpose of this LCP Plan, parcel refers to any quantity of land that can be defined by location and boundaries and may or may not be legally subdivided and recorded. A lot is a parcel of land, but a parcel of land is not necessarily a lot.

Passive Recreational Facilities (Land-Based) – Facilities which provide for unorganized leisure-time activities that do not require equipment but that take place in nature trails and garden areas are some of the activities that could be described as passive recreational opportunities. They offer an opportunity to enjoy nature and the outdoors without taking part in the type of strenuous activities that are offered by such facilities as ball parks, swimming pools and soccer fields.

Permanent Residential Unit - A dwelling unit that is the home of a permanent, full time resident of the area and counted as such in the census; not a Seasonal Residential Unit or a Transient Residential.

Perpetuity - The state of continuing for a long time or indefinitely.

Planning Area - Specific to this plan the Planning Area refers to the area between approximately Tavernier Creek and Mile Marker 97 that is covered in the *Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan*.

Platted Lot – A lot which is part of a platted subdivision for which the subdivision plat has been recorded in the office of the clerk of the circuit court of the county

Pocket Park – A small park that may be as small as one lot in area which is used for passive recreation or which may contain playground equipment for small children.

Public-Private Partnership - A merging of public and private resources to achieve an end result or product that would be difficult to achieve through public or private activity alone.

Rate of Growth Ordinance (ROGO) - The point system that it used to determine the allocation of residential building permits.

Reconstruction (Historic Structures)– The process of reproducing by new construction, the exact form and detail of a demolished building, structure, or object, as it appeared at a certain point in time.

Renovation or Rehabilitation of Historic Sites - Referring to the sites that have historical or cultural significance, and meaning the act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property that are significant to its historical, architectural, cultural, and archeological values.

Rental Units – Housing occupied by a tenant paying rent to an owner.

Restoration - The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a historic property and setting, as it appeared at a particular period of time, by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

Sanitary Waste Water Master Plan - Adopted in May 2000 by the Board of County Commissioners and in the process of being implemented, the objective of the plan is to provide an equitable, ecologically, sound, and economical implementation strategy for managing wastewater and improving the water quality of the Florida Keys.

Scarified Land - An area that is cleared of native vegetation, or topographically modified such that the land is not presently in a successional sequence leading to the establishment of the vegetative communities that were cleared or disturbed.

Setback – The distance a structure is required to be from the property line, another structure and/or the shore line.

Site – The term is meant to identify a location such as a space of ground occupied or to be occupied by a building.

Sprawl - Growth of urban area that is scattered, unplanned, and unchecked.

Stick Built Houses - Built entirely on-site except that it may include some factory components such as roof and floor trusses, wall panels, door frames, etc.

Storage Area – Sometimes referred to as a “Storage Lot”, storage area is the term used in Land Development Regulations to describe the outdoor storage of boats, campers, equipment, and ma-

materials for more than twenty-four (24) hours. This is considered a light industrial use and does not include waste transfer stations, junkyards or other heavy industrial uses.

Stormwater Master Plan - See *Sanitary Waste Water Master Plan*.

Streetscape - The view along a street from the perspective of a driver or pedestrian, especially of the natural and man-made elements in or near the street right of way, including street trees, lawns, landscape buffers, signs, street lights, above-ground utilities, drainage structures, sidewalks, bus stop shelters and street furniture.

Tier System - Policy 105.2.1 recognizes the Tier System as a means of acquiring land, directing development to infill area, reducing sprawl and meeting the Monroe County Comprehensive Plans smart growth initiatives. The Tier System is categorized into three areas: Natural Area (Tier 1); Transition and Sprawl Reduction Area (Tier 2); and Infill Area (Tier 3).

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) - The County's process through which the rights to develop one lot of land is transferred to another lot. See 9.5-265 of the Land Development Regulations. Generally, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs include the conveyance of development rights by deed, easement, or other legal instrument authorized by local law to another parcel of land and the recording of that conveyance. TDRs are required to achieve Maximum Net Density, and a TDR may be purchased in some Land Use Districts to make a very small lot buildable.

Transient Residential Unit - A dwelling unit with tenancies of less than twenty-eight (28) days duration used for transient housing such as a hotel or motel room, or space for parking a recreational vehicle or travel trailer.

Transient Use - Uses involving a *Transient Residential Unit*.

Vacation Rental - Or vacation unit means an attached or detached dwelling unit that is rented, leased or assigned for tenancies of less than twenty-eight (28) days duration. Vacation rental use does not include hotels, motels, and RV spaces, which are specifically addressed in each district.

Village-Type Design - A design type characteristic of walkable, traditional villages with amenities and services within easy reach. In the Tavernier Plan the term is further defined to control bulk by limiting the construction to single family, duplex or town houses with a maximum of four units per structure.

Water-Dependent Facility - A use that relies on access to open waters to support its activities. An example of this would be a marina, aquatic equipment rental booth, or a waterfront restaurant.

Wetlands - Areas of saturated or flooded soils where there is a prevalence of plants that grow in or are adapted to water, or which require a very wet environment. Wetlands provide important habitats, flood and storm protections, and water quality benefits, and their development is regulated by the federal government.

Workforce Housing - A term sometimes used when referring to employee housing. See *Employee Housing*.