

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Chuck Varadin, Marion County Growth Services Department Director

CC: Ken Weyrauch, Marion County Growth Services Department Deputy Director

From: Blair Knighting, AICP; Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Date: 8/30/2024

Subject: Strategy for Identifying and Designating Planned Service Areas (PSA)

The purpose of this memo is to outline the criteria for identification and designation of Planned Service Areas within unincorporated Marion County, FL.

Existing PSA Policies:

The existing 2045 Comprehensive Plan PSA language is as follows:

OBJECTIVE 3.2: PLANNED SERVICE AREAS

By June 30, 2022, Planned Service Areas shall be established on the Future Land Use Map series to promote the efficient and cost effective development of utility services and to discourage urban sprawl.

- 1. The county shall develop PSA's within certain areas designated for higher density development and establish priorities for extension of services to each area.*
- 2. Represents designated areas where regional utility service (water and sewer) will be available. Development is encouraged in the PSA because of the availability or future availability of infrastructure to accommodate development.*
- 3. Higher density development is permitted and encouraged within the PSA.*
- 4. The county shall not subsidize development beyond the boundaries of the Planned Service Area.*
- 5. New development proposed in the PSA shall be allowed only when central water and sewer are provided.*

Policy 3.2.1: Incentive Programs

The County will create incentives to make development within the PSA desirable and cost affordable. Such incentives may include but are not limited to expedited review processes, retrofitting existing development, increased density bonuses, tax incentives, impact fee structuring and pre-zoning of vacant, underutilized lands to achieve planned densities.

Policy 3.2.2 Limitation on the Extension of Central Utilities

The County shall limit the extension of central potable water and sanitary sewer service outside of the UGB and PSAs except (a) where existing urban densities (e.g. subdivisions) were constructed without central water and sewer, and for which the County determines the provision of central utilities is desirable to promote water conservation or aquifer and springs protection or (b) to connect to an existing urban area. Extension of centralized water or sewer systems outside of the Urban Growth

Boundary or Planned Service Areas in order to provide services to existing urban areas or redundancy in the system shall not be construed as justification for increased densities or intensities adjacent to such systems, or otherwise outside of the Urban Growth Boundary.

Policy 3.2.3 Periodic Review

The County will review and update PSAs based on capital improvement plans at least one time every five years.

PSA Definition

The existing PSA policies do not necessarily define a PSA. Therefore, the first step in the evaluation process was to propose a definition that is unique to Marion County. Below is the proposed Planned Service Area (PSA) definition:

An area hub where a concentration of infrastructure (roads, utilities, and parks and recreation amenities) is in place, or can feasibly be in place, making it an efficient and effective location to encourage growth and development, especially a mix of uses such as residential, employment, and commercial. PSAs can be located inside or outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

Based on the above definition, this memo will discuss prerequisites, qualification criteria, the designation process, and the benefits of PSAs, and the next steps including suggestions for additional candidate sites.

Why is the County considering PSAs?

Benefits to Marion County

Focusing commercial and higher density residential investment in a specific area like a PSA can benefit the County by:

- Efficiently serving new development with existing infrastructure which reduces the demand for infrastructure expansion and increasing the number of users contributing to the cost of maintaining existing infrastructure.
- Diverting development pressure from rural areas.
- Allowing for shorter trips between residential areas and businesses reducing the wear and tear on roadways and reducing transportation costs for residents.
- Expanding opportunities for walking or biking trips which further reduces transportation costs to individuals and the County.
- Guiding new development toward areas with utility access.
- Create a focal point/place that establishes a type of central place to support and create a sense of community for existing and future development in the surrounding area.
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How Would the County Identify a PSA Candidate?

Potential PSAs are identified based on whether they meet all prerequisites and some additional qualifications.

Prerequisites:

Each PSA study area is required to meet all prerequisites.

- **Utility Access:** Any candidate site must have access to sanitary sewer and potable water service connections. To limit negative impacts on water quality and quantity, increased density/intensity in these areas should be contingent on connecting to sewer and water infrastructure.
- **Road access:** Any candidate site must have access to an arterial or collector road.
- **Land Availability:** Vacant land, underutilized land, or already developed lands that are likely candidates for redevelopment, or a combination of the two.

Qualification Criteria

A candidate site that meets the prerequisites and some of the Qualification Criteria may be eligible as a PSA (with a Comprehensive Plan Amendment). The Board will be required to approve the designation of each PSA.

- Sufficient residential population to support the commercial spaces OR sufficient land appropriate for new residences to be built.
- Connectivity of adjacent road system within 2,000 feet of the core area, with multiple entrances and throughways to allow for vehicle circulation.
- Non-vehicle interconnectivity between the potential PSA and the surrounding residential areas.
- Existing parks and recreation or identified locations for future parks and recreation (including but not limited to pocket parks, open space, passive recreation, and connection to existing trails).
- Market demand to support commercial and/or higher density residential development within the planning horizon.
- The PSA should not be divided or separated from the majority of potential customers by major barriers such as wetlands or collector (or higher) roadways.
- The core area should have large enough parcels or the ability to assemble enough parcels to ensure the development of the area is feasible to one or a group of developers.

Other Characteristics and Design Opportunities

- PSAs should be compact design and/or developed to minimize transportation impacts and avoid overly broad increases in development capacity. It is anticipated the PSA sizes with range between 20 and 200 acres. Twenty acres is anticipated to be a minimum viable size for a PSA. Such a PSA would rely on neighboring residential for customers. In a 200-acre PSA, most residents within the study area should be within a 10-minute walk of the core area of the PSA and the PSA would include substantial residential development. Larger PSAs could be divided into subareas.
- Subareas may include:
 - A core area planned for retail, office, apartments, and other mixed uses. The core area should be adjacent to main thoroughfares and should have contiguous developable parcels. The core should not exceed 80 acres to ensure walkability to services and amenities within the core area

- Core areas may be surrounded by a transition area which would comprise of a total of 200-acres. This transition area offers a buffer between the proposed core and established single family residential neighborhoods. This area would permit medium density residential, including “Missing Middle” typologies like duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhomes, and small lot single family.
- Utilities. Central Utility Availability is required, ideally with services in place, scheduled in Capital Improvement Plan (CIP's) or through formal agreements. While central water and sewer services are more attainable, central sewer services can be challenging. Due to the sensitive nature of the placement of existing sewer and water services, the exhibits attached do not show where sewer and water service are available. The chosen areas are confirmed to have access to these services, even if they do not show on the exhibits. Sewer mains are mostly concentrated around County roads like Maricamp Rd and Del Webb Blvd to US-27 to the Southeast, and CR 484 to Marion Oaks Manor in the Southwest.

Exhibit A also shows areas that are identified as having ideal PSA sites, which will be in more detail in the rest of the exhibits.

How Would the County designate a PSA?

Once a PSA candidate has been identified, the following next steps would be undertaken:

1. Once a PSA location is determined, at least two (2) public engagement workshops with the surrounding properties should be conducted.
2. Revise the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to indicate the area that is proposed for a PSA.
3. Within six (6) months of a PSA designation, a Special Area Plan for each PSA should be drafted which would:
 - a. Define the PSA area boundary including subareas,
 - b. Define a vision including an illustration of potential build-out,
 - c. Define maximum density/intensities within the PSA or its subareas,
 - d. Establish dimensional standards for new development,
 - e. Establish design standards for new development including street and architectural design criteria
 - f. And including any other relevant criteria the County may deem necessary
4. A draft of the Special Area Plan should be presented at a public workshop with opportunities for community input.
5. A PSA and the accompanying Special Area Plan, once reviewed by County staff and modified based on community input, would be subject to BCC vote.
6. Once the PSA and Special Area Plan is approved by BCC, a developer may submit a PUD application for areas within the PSA. The PUD application shall demonstrate it meets the criteria in the Special Area Plan.

What is the Result of Being Designated a PSA?

Typical Design Standards

The County can determine whether to establish general, minimum, and bonus development and design criteria for all PSAs or to establish separate standards for each PSA. These standards would apply to parcels that opt in to participate in the PSA and provide a consistent built environment.

Typical development standards include:

- Buildings:
 - Requirement to connect to existing water and sewer infrastructure
 - Alternative dimensional standards
 - Architectural standards for multi-family and non-residential development
 - Boundary transition standards that include lower building heights, lower intensities, and larger buffers at the edges of the PSA
- Streets and sidewalks:
 - Commercial or higher density residential portions of a PSA should have direct access from arterial collector roads and not rely on access from residential streets.
 - Minimum street connectivity
 - Pedestrian and multi-modal focused street design standards
 - Driveway location and width standards
 - Sidewalk requirements for new development to increase pedestrian connectivity between different uses
 - Requirements for walkways from public sidewalks to building entrances and within larger sites
- Landscaping:
 - Tree planting standards for streets and lots
 - Alternative landscape standards for site development
- Parks and recreation:
 - Structured open spaces.
 - Active recreation areas for residents inside the PSA, and from outside.
 - Smaller developments may be allowed to provide a “payment in lieu.”

Development Capacity and Incentives

The intention of concentrating new development within PSAs will require adjustments to development entitlements within new PSAs. This may provide an incentive for new private investment. To the extent that the County wants to promote PSAs in areas with challenging development economics, financial incentives may be appropriate. Given the large number of vacant lots in and around some of the eligible PSA areas, financial incentives may be required.

The County could follow one of a few options to establish development rights within PSAs.

- The County could proactively increase the permitted density and intensities on all parcels within each PSA study area.
- The County could create a process for applicants to opt into the PSA standards and request associated increases in density/intensity at the time of application, potentially using Transferrable Development Credits as part of the mechanisms.
- Within the Special Area Plans, the County may offer more flexible development standards including
 - Lower parking minimum standards
 - Increased building heights for mixed-use structures
 - Expedited permit review times
 - The County could create pre-approved building plans that meet the Special Area Plan requirements to further expedite the permitting process and result in a desired design

- Decreased setbacks and increased lot coverage which are more indicative to walkable environments
- Considerations for specialized structures, such as mixed-use structures or central parking garage facilities.

Either approach to development capacity must be accompanied by different or more flexible land development standards appropriate for the new densities and intensities. This would be satisfied by the Development and Design Standards described above.

Other incentives:

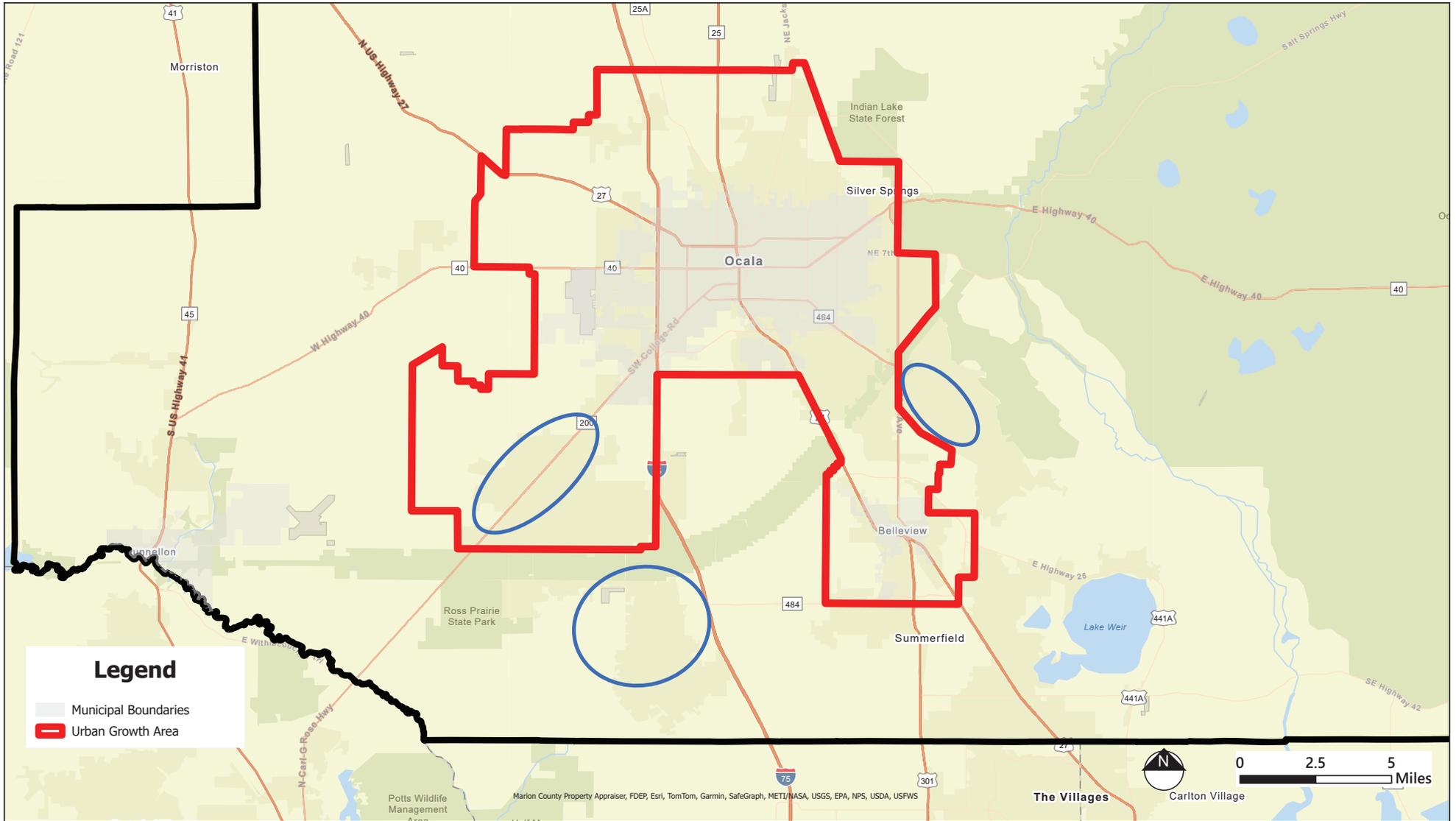
- Reduced impact or utilities connection fees.
- Public-Private costing sharing option if utilities are needed to be extended short distances, possibly related to the type of utility infrastructure - water, gravity sewer, or sewer force mains..
- Grant options to target specific types of development such as a Retail or Food/Beverage Fund (example: [City of Jacksonville Retail Grants](#)).
- A TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District that uses the excess taxes from property value to be used within the TIF area to invest in the district which could include streetscape improvements, building renovations, neighborhood parks, and public-private partnerships.
- Establish a retail sales and use tax deferral program for the conversion of underutilized property into PSAs.

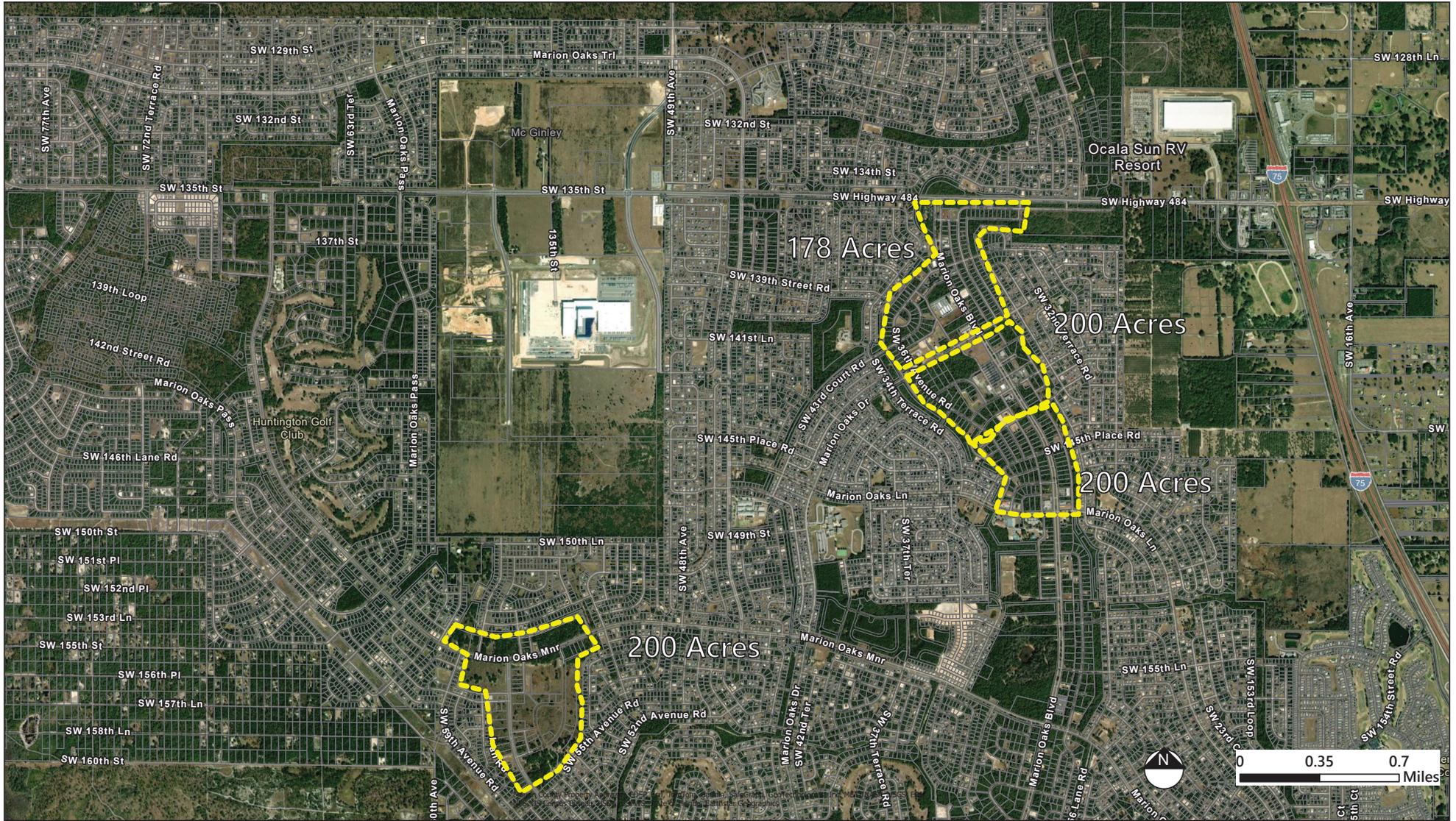
Next Steps

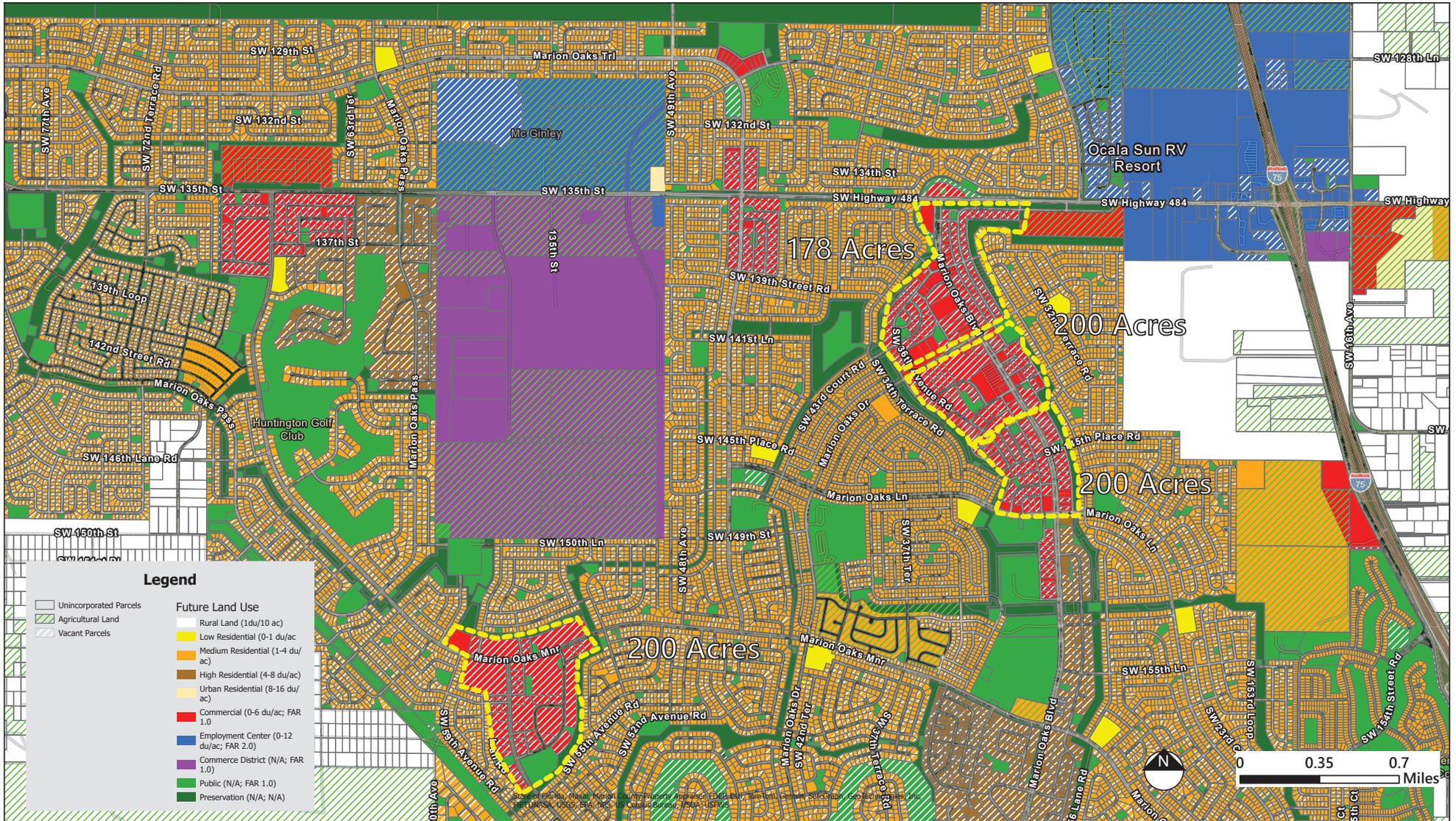
- Add policies establishing the process for designating a PSA to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Prepare a Special Area Plan and engage the public on one or more pilot study areas to designate a PSA(s).
- Amend the Comprehensive Plan to include designated PSA(s) and associated policies including development capacity.

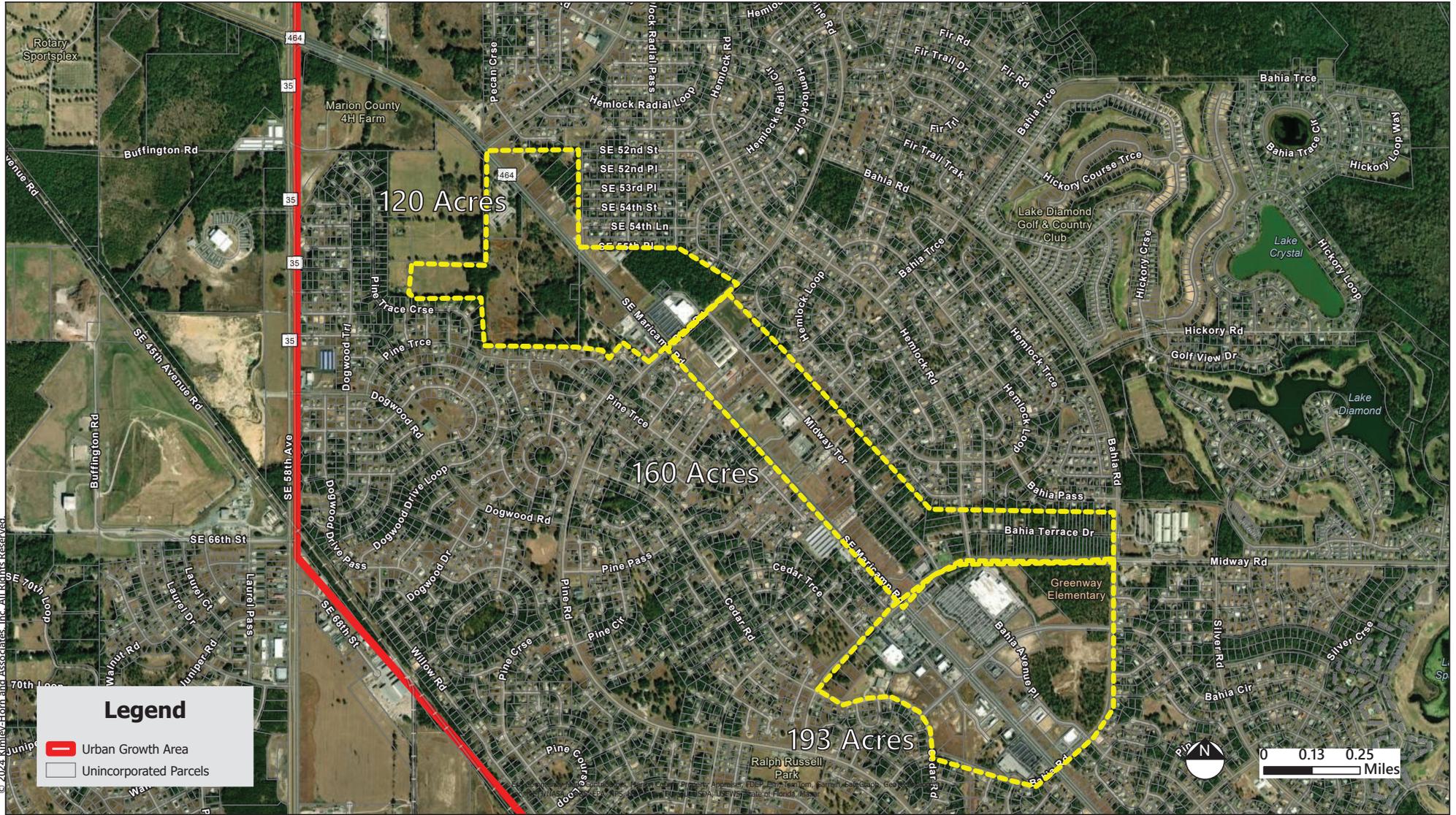
Potential Candidate Sites:

- Marion Oaks Sites (Exhibit B)
 - Marion Oaks contains up to four different PSA sites, with varying sizes. Included are vacant lands and agricultural lands that could be redeveloped.
- Silver Springs Shores (Exhibit C)
 - Silver Springs Shores has three separate potential sites along SE Maricamp Rd. They include Urban Residential Future Land Use, as well as vacant commercial land.
- Southwest Highway 200 southeast of On Top of the World within the Urban Growth Boundary (Exhibit D)
 - This site is within the Urban Growth Boundary along a main thoroughfare, with commercial and a mix of high, medium, and low-intensity residential development. There exists a large agricultural parcel with a Future Land Use of High Residential.









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