



OAK RIDGE

SECTOR PLAN



Accepted by Leon County Board of County Commissioners, September 20, 2005
Accepted by the City of Tallahassee City Commission, September 28, 2005



Woodville Highway approaching Tallahassee, 1920s.
Source: Florida Photographic Collection.

Purpose of the Oak Ridge Sector Plan

The Oak Ridge Sector Plan was produced from the various interests of the neighborhoods to clarify a set of common goals and aspirations for the community.

At the initial community meeting, the participants were asked to identify their desires for the future of the Oak Ridge Sector. Citizens at the initial workshop prioritized these topics into two categories:

Primary Issues

1. Make the policies in the Comprehensive Plan work without the need for annexation. This relates mainly to the sewer extension policy.
2. Construct more site-built homes and fewer apartments and mobile homes.
3. Streamline permitting to reduce red tape (the codes are too restrictive and exceptions should be made for the Southside).
4. Get the City and County to work together.
5. Locate City, County, and State buildings on the Southside.

Secondary Issues

1. More homeowners associations are needed and neighborhoods need to be protected.
2. Code enforcement (too much in some places, too little in others).
3. The need for jobs on the Southside.
4. The lack of retail commercial in the area.
5. Sidewalks are needed.
6. Existing roads need to be paved.
7. There is a need for parks in the area.
8. Areas of isolated flooding need review.



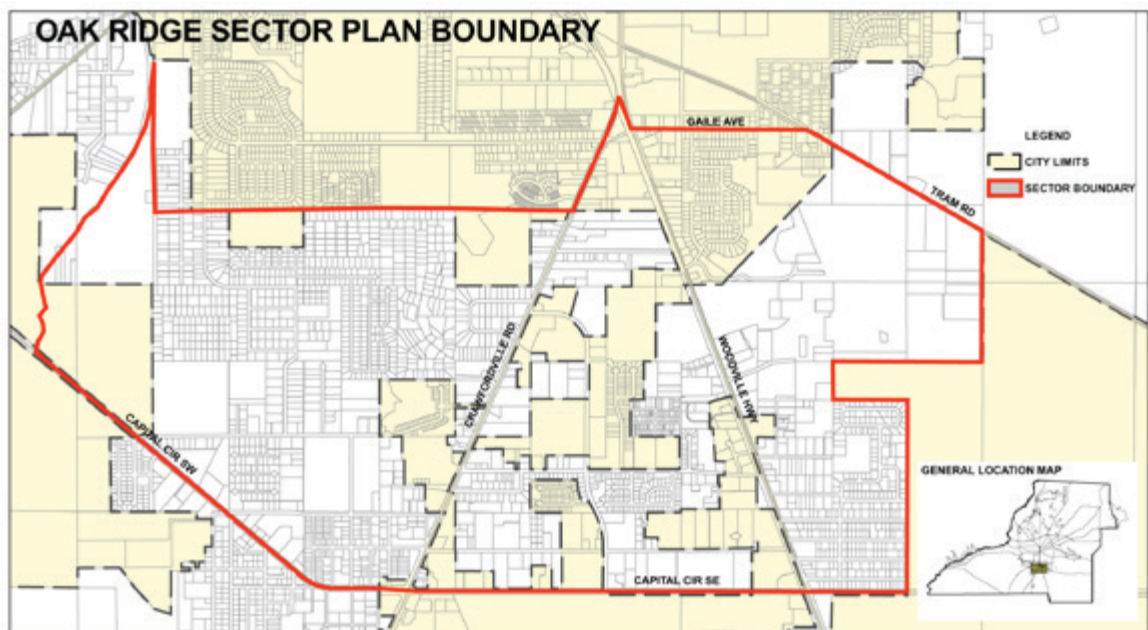
The Oak Ridge Sector

The Oak Ridge Sector is unlike the other sector planning areas of South Monroe, West Pensacola, Capital Cascade, and Lake Bradford—about 70% of the Oak Ridge Sector lies outside City limits, even though nearly 75% of the Southern Strategy Area is within City limits. The City areas consist of several irregular portions that are connected to the rest of the City outside the Oak Ridge Sector boundary.

The Oak Ridge Sector includes a diverse mixture of single-family (SF) and multi-family (MF) residential, mobile home (MH), and industrial park (IP) subdivisions:

Alameda Heights	(SF)	Landmark	(SF)
Annawood	(SF)	Novey Industrial Park	(IP)
Belair	(SF, retail, office)	Oak Crest	(SF, MH)
Blackjack Ridge	(MH)	Oak Ridge South	(small lot SF)
Bonanza Park	(MH)	Pine Lakes	(MH, SF)
Capital City Estates	(SF, MF)	Rainbow Acres	(MH, SF)
Crawfordville Trace	(small lot SF)	Rainbow Road	(MH, SF)
Crossway Industrial Park	(IP)	Scenic Meadows	(MH, SF)
Crown Ridge Estates	(MH, SF)	Southfork	(MH, SF)
Holland	(SF)	Vekoske Acres	(large lot MH)
Hollandale	(SF, MF)	Woodside Heights	(SF, retail, comm.)
Lakewood	(SF)		

Annexation is a controversial subject within the Oak Ridge Sector. In 2002, a City-initiated referendum was held in the Oak Ridge Sector regarding the potential wholesale annexation of the “Southern Triangle” (the area bordered by Crawfordville Road, Woodville Highway, and Capital Circle Southeast). Voters rejected the measure by a margin of almost 3:1. At that time, only about 12% of the area within the Southern Triangle was within City limits. However, since the referendum voluntary annexations have enlarged this proportion so that about 45% of the acreage within the Southern Triangle is now within City limits.



Community involvement

The 2,200 property owners in the sector were sent invitations to participate in the first community meeting. The initial community meeting for the sector plan was held in November 2002, shortly after the annexation referendum. There were five additional meetings conducted during 2003–04. In all, these meetings involved approximately 100 individuals from the community. The meetings included pertinent discussions by staff of various City and County departments: County Parks and Recreation, City Public Works (regarding alignment of Capital Circle SE), County Growth and Environmental Management (permitting process, mobile home replacement policy, code enforcement), and City Water and Sewer Utilities. Following the series of meetings, a questionnaire was sent to all prior participants of the Oak Ridge Sector Plan effort to allow individuals the chance to respond anonymously on the topics collectively identified in the meetings. The response rate was 22%, half from City residents and half from County residents.

The serpentine City/County division within the Oak Ridge community causes differentiation in standards and rules. This separation appears especially acute regarding regulations for providing public facilities. However, the division has allowed greater diversity for residents to opt for higher or lower levels of service (and costs) for various public facilities. As a result, there are several vicinities where developments with sewer mains and paved roads are adjacent to developments with septic systems and unpaved roads. The terms of sewer provision are such that:

- For existing residential areas outside City limits, sewer service can be provided at the request and expense of the applicant.
- Sewer cost is 37½% greater outside City limits.
- The City does not give subsidies or rebates outside City limits.
- If sewer becomes available to an area outside City limits, a household does not have to connect until the existing septic system fails. If there is septic system failure and sewer is available, the household will be required to connect.

There is agreement among Oak Ridge Sector residents and merchants advocating the City and County governments to work more cooperatively together in the community, especially near the City/County boundary. Based on the six community meetings and the anonymous follow-up questionnaire, the community emphasized the following actions for what is needed to help its neighborhoods and businesses to prosper:



Recommended Strategies

1. Team up with County, City, and School District to use Oak Ridge Elementary for neighborhood recreational uses.

There are few areas for active recreation in the Oak Ridge Sector: (see Oak Ridge Area Facilities map):

- Flagg Street Park (1/2 acre) and Brent Drive Park (1 acre) are small active County parks on the southeastern edge of the sector
- City active parks nearby lie outside the sector: Ruthenia Park (3 acres, by Lake Munson) and Capital Park (57 acres, north side of Tram Road)
- Only 30% of Oak Ridge Sector's residences are within ½ mile of an active park

The type of facility that appears to be needed would be an area where children can play supervised sports, but creation of a new active park would be difficult. The County does not acquire or develop new active recreation facilities, so any additional active park would need to be located within City limits. But much of the City portion of Oak Ridge is non-residential. Moreover, Policy 1.2.1 of the Parks and Recreation Element calls for a "build-out" population of 5,000 within a ½-mile radius as a locational criterion for a new local park.

Recommendations

- ▲ Establish a partnership between City Parks and Recreation Department, School Board staff, and the Oak Ridge Elementary School principal to determine the feasibility of using the school playground for neighborhood recreation opportunities in the Oak Ridge Sector planning area.
- ▲ Work in partnership with the City and School Board to establish a City/School Board Joint Use Agreement with Oak Ridge Elementary School. Such an agreement would require authorization from the City Commission by means of the Parks and Recreation Department, in cooperation with the Leon County School Board, and the principal of Oak Ridge Elementary School. *
- ▲ Develop strategies to incorporate active recreational uses in current parks.
- ▲ Consider opportunities for homeowners associations to acquire and/or maintain their own small active parks. This could include flood prone small parcels in residential neighborhoods.
- ▲ Pursue creation of a prospective park through the Conservation and Recreational Lands (CARL) program. Explore the possibility of using karst areas as potential park sites. The public purpose criteria for CARL projects are established in §259.032(3), F.S.:
 - o Conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands that contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna, native species habitat, endangered or threatened species, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests.

* Supports Objective 1.5 of the Education Element (cooperation in the shared use of community facilities).

- o Promote water resource development that benefits natural systems.
- o Provide areas for natural resource based recreation and other outdoor recreation on a site compatible with conservation purposes.
- o Preserve significant archaeological or historic sites.
- o Conserve urban open spaces suitable for greenways or outdoor recreation compatible with conservation purposes.

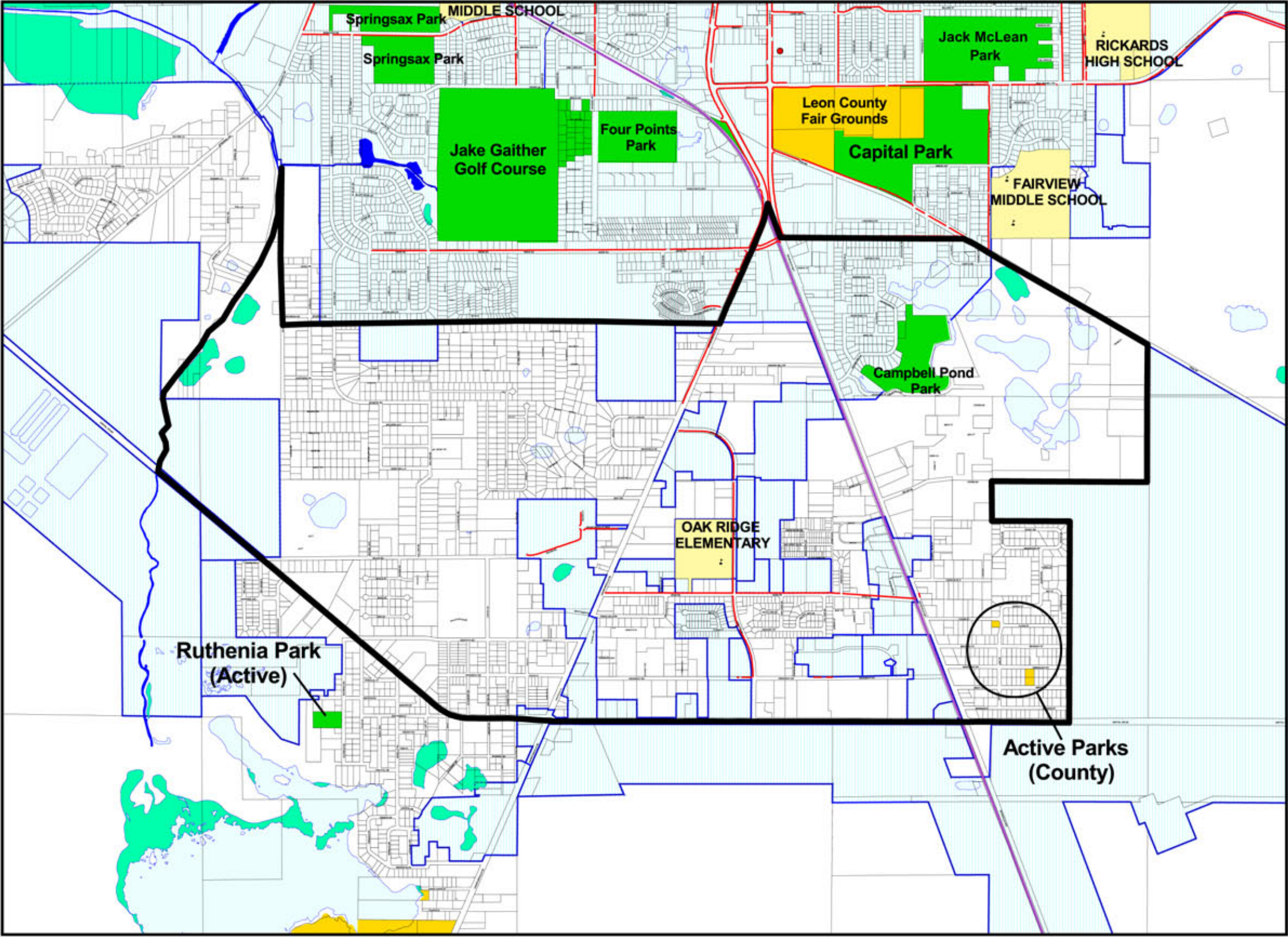


Woodside Heights, east of Woodville Highway and north of Capital Circle SE, is one of the few neighborhoods in the Oak Ridge Sector with easy access to active parks (Flagg Street Park and Brent Drive Park).



St. Mark's Trail along Woodville Highway augments bicycle access to the eastern portion of the Oak Ridge Sector.

Oak Ridge Area Facilities



Legend

- Fire Station
- + Redcross
- ⌚ School
- School Land
- County Park
- City Park
- St. Marks Trail
- Sidewalks
- Sector boundary



2. Promote placing any new government buildings on the Southside.

Some government facilities are already located across the Southside. Currently, the State Office Warehouse storage facility and Oak Ridge Elementary School on Shelfer Road are the most prominent government buildings within the Oak Ridge Sector.

Recommendations

- ▲ Modify site selection processes to give preference to sites for any new government buildings and facilities located within the Oak Ridge Sector area and Southern Strategy Area.
- ▲ Promote public investment of infrastructure needed in the area to attract desired federal, state, or local government facilities.



Vacant acreage with Industrial land use designation along Woodville Highway at Ross Road. The Oak Ridge Sector includes about 20% of Leon County's acreage with the Industrial Future Land Use category (which allows heavy industry). About 13% of this Industrial acreage in the Oak Ridge Sector is vacant, compared with about 20% countywide.



Commercial development along the north side of Capital Circle SW abuts the Apilachicola National Forest on the south side of the road.

3. Promote more job opportunities on the Southside and encourage additional retail and commercial development.

The desire for increased employment opportunities and a wider array of neighborhood commercial choices is not just limited to the Oak Ridge Sector, but is part of the ongoing concern over languishing employment and business development in the Southern Strategy Area. There are only a few small areas within the Oak Ridge Sector with retail and office uses (see Existing Land Use map). The imminent widening of Capital Circle SW & SE will improve access to the Southside and foster conditions more conducive to additional retail and commercial development.

Recommendations

- ▲ Work with the Greater Tallahassee and the Capital City chambers of commerce to determine whether there is a labor market for increased job opportunities and sufficient demand for additional development within the Oak Ridge Sector.
- ▲ Promote the concepts of the Southside Economic Development Plan, which was presented in 2004 by AngelouEconomics. This plan addresses obstacles and opportunities for revitalizing the Southern Strategy Area, emphasizes working with the community to develop a plan for redevelopment, and links regional development with Southern Strategy Area sector planning development.
- ▲ Promote the Oak Ridge Sector as a Southside environment for nurturing entrepreneurial and non-franchised business. Unlike an independent business, the owner of a franchise unit must pay franchise fees and comply with the franchiser regarding constraints on how the unit may be operated. The main shortcoming of franchising is the difficulty of adapting the franchised brand to the local market. The Oak Ridge Sector currently is a reasonably priced setting conducive to homegrown, non-retail and wholesale oriented business.



Flea Market Tallahassee along Capital Circle SE provides a Southside retail-resale marketplace. The widening of Capital Circle SW & SE will improve access to the Southside and foster conditions more conducive to additional retail and commercial development.



Skandia Window Fashions at the corner of Crossway and Ross roads. Headquartered in Tallahassee with an additional manufacturing facility in San Diego, Skandia is a full-line window-covering manufacturer that grew from the back room of a dress shop over 35 years ago to become one of the largest manufacturing facilities in Leon County.



Novoy Industrial Park along Woodville Highway. The Oak Ridge Sector provides a reasonably priced setting conducive to homegrown wholesale trade and services.



GreenLeaf Auto Recyclers (formerly Garry's Auto Salvage) on Woodville Highway. The Oak Ridge Sector has a cluster of automotive service and salvage-related businesses.

4. Discourage development of apartments and mobile homes.

The community expressed concern that the area had a sufficient number of apartments, whose residents tend to be transitory (see Existing Land Use map).

- 39% of existing residential units are single-family detached units
- 43% of existing residential units are mobile or manufactured homes (compared to 18% for the Southern Strategy Area and 9% for Leon County)
- Only 5% of the sector's vacant area is zoned for multi-family housing

The community did not believe additional apartments would complement neighborhood stability in Oak Ridge. However, manufactured housing and apartments are an affordable alternative to single family site-built housing. A mix of housing types can provide affordability for community residents and gives individuals the chance to reside in the vicinity through various stages of life.

Recommendations

- ▲ Consider initiating a Comprehensive Plan map amendment to recognize additional eligible neighborhoods as Residential Preservation.
- ▲ Given the existing number of mobile homes presently in this community and the County's mobile home replacement policy, identify strategies discouraging zoning changes (such as additional R-5 & MH zoning) that potentially increase acreage for mobile homes.
- ▲ Use supplementary design standards for multi-family development.
- ▲ Identify strategies to encourage home ownership and avoid population displacement.



Briarwood Manor multi-family housing complex along Shelfer Road across from Oak Ridge Elementary School. Only 5% of the sector's vacant area is zoned for multi-family housing. There is agreement in the Oak Ridge Sector community to team up with the County, City, and School District to use the school for neighborhood recreational uses.



Springwood mobile home park on Ballard Road. Over 40% of existing residential units in the Oak Ridge Sector are mobile or manufactured homes.

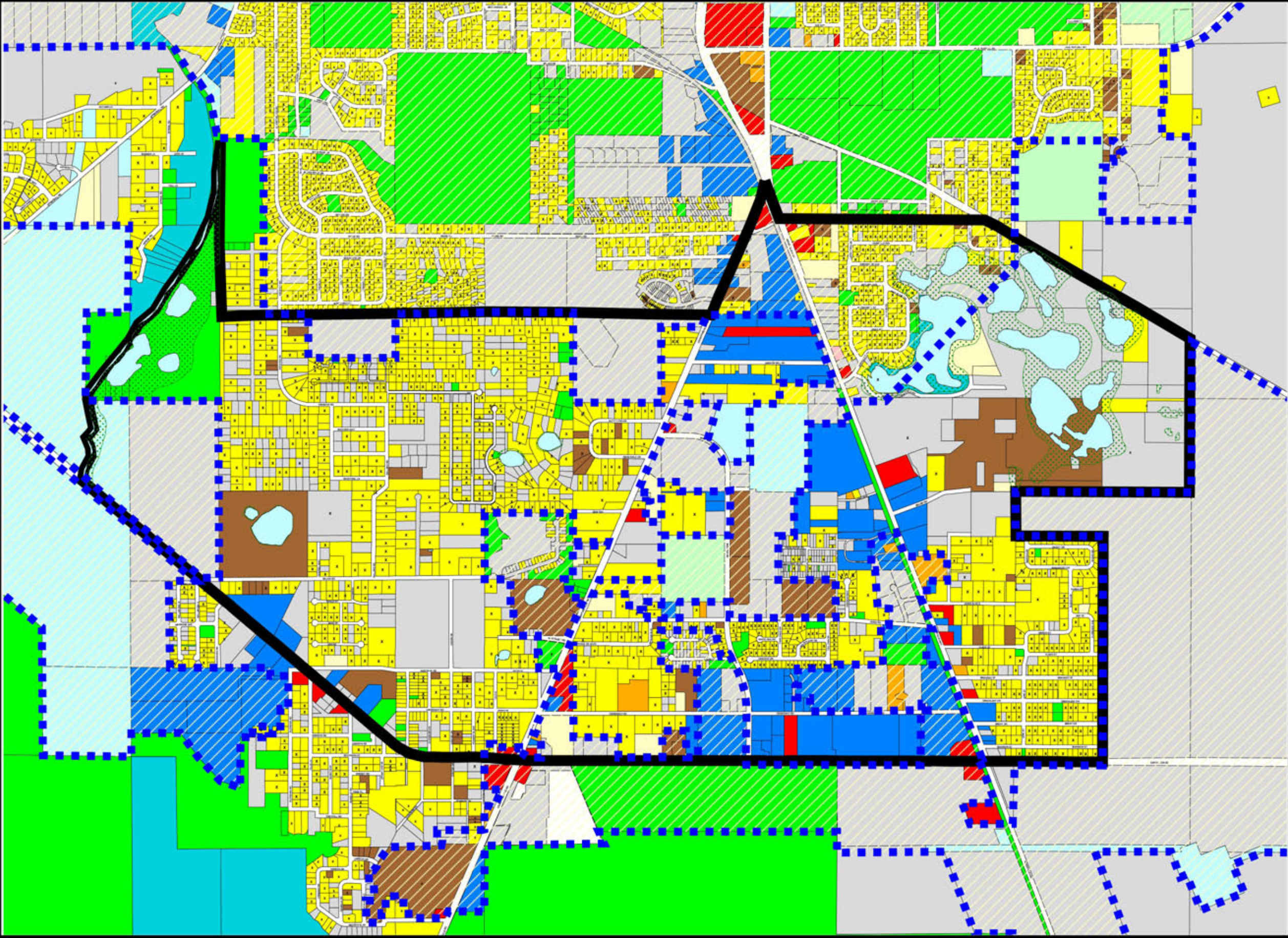


The Cascade Village mobile home park on Balkin Road is an example of the assorted residential development styles occurring within Oak Ridge. Originally developed in the 1960s, it has about 180 units in the unincorporated area but has paved drives and sewer mains



Mobile home residence in Pine Lakes subdivision. Manufactured housing and apartments provide an affordable alternative to single family site-built housing. A mix of housing types can provide affordability for community residents and gives individuals the chance to reside in the vicinity through various stages of life.

Oak Ridge Area Existing Land Use



Legend

- Sector Boundary
- Inside City Limits

Existing Land Use 2003

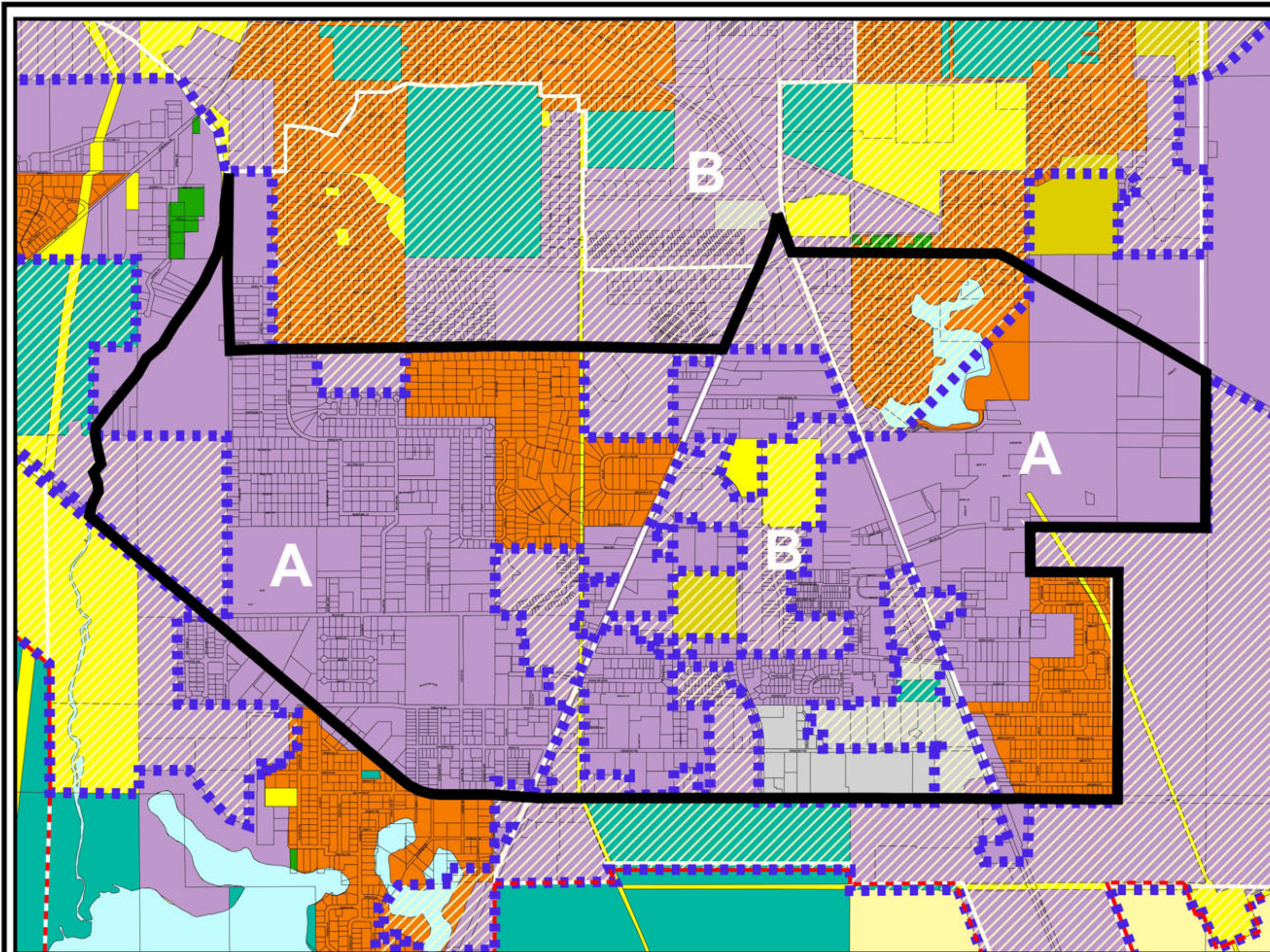
- Single Family/Mobile Home
- Multi-Family/Mobile Home Park
- Motel/Hospital/Clinic
- Retail
- Office
- Warehouse
- Gov. Operation
- School
- Open Space
- Religious/Non-profit
- Water
- Vacant

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






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Oak Ridge Future Land Use




legend

-  City Limits
-  Urban Service Area
- Future Land Use**
-  Industrial
-  Institutional Education
-  Institutional Government
-  Mixed Use
-  Open Space
-  Open Space Stormwater
-  Rural
-  Residential Preservation
-  Water
-  Mixed Use

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5. Additional neighborhood and/or homeowners associations

There is a desire among certain neighborhoods to form neighborhood and homeowner groups and cooperate for the improvement of their neighborhoods.

Recommendations

- ▲ Improve facilitation between interested neighborhoods in the Oak Ridge area and City of Tallahassee Neighborhood and Community Services and Leon County Housing and Human Services in forming homeowners associations.



Single-family residential housing in Holland subdivision. Around half of the single-family residences in Oak Ridge were built during the 1950s and 1960s.



Single-family residential housing along Patty Lynn Drive (Holland subdivision, unincorporated). There are few neighborhood associations in Oak Ridge, either in the municipal or in the unincorporated areas.

6. Explore the economic capability of paving of roads.

The cost of improving a road with an impervious surface to current public road standards can be too expensive for lower income areas. There are about 50 miles of roadway surface that traverse the Oak Ridge Sector, with about 18% consisting of unpaved roads (see Water/Sewer and Unpaved Roads map). Paving roads in existing residential areas should increase the marketability of the area and likewise property values. The City and County both have programs to help neighborhoods in paving their roads:

- County: requires property owners to pay all costs, with a majority of the community agreeing to the paving.
- City: pays half the cost of road paving, with property owners paying the other half. Requires all affected property owners agree to the paving. There are no City-maintained unpaved segments within the Oak Ridge Sector.

Capital Improvements

The County's five-year schedule of capital improvements includes the following projects within the Oak Ridge Sector:

- Road improvements for Rainbow Acres, one of six subdivisions included in the \$500,000 allocation in the 2/3-2/3 Program for FY '06-'10 to bring the subdivision's road into the County inventory for maintenance.
- \$200,000 budgeted in FY '09 for realignment of the intersection at Gaile Avenue with Tram Road so that the roads intersect at right angles. The project also includes related stormwater infrastructure.
- \$200,000 budgeted for FY '09-'10 for the development of a public trail and greenway system along the Lake Henrietta/Lake Munson portion of the Master planned Capital Cascades Greenway. Improvements include trailheads, public parking, and other public access features.

There are also several other transportation improvement projects within the Oak Ridge Sector in progress:

Transportation projects in the Oak Ridge Sector

Road	From	To	Status
Intersection Projects			
Crawfordville Rd.	At Slash Pine Lane		Southbound right turn lane; Construction funded through FY 07/08
Pedestrian and Street Safety/Bicycle Projects			
Campbell Connector	Jack McLean Park	St. Marks Trail	Federal surface transportation program
Crawfordville Rd.	Rivers Rd.	Four Points Intersection	Sidewalk and Bikeway facility
Four Points Trail Head	At Four Points Intersection		Construction funded for FY 05/06
Roadway Widening			
Capital Circle SW	Orange Ave.	Crawfordville Rd.	2 to 4 lanes; final analysis and evaluation is next phase
Capital Circle SW & SE	Crawfordville Rd.	Tram Rd.	2 to 6 lanes; design is next phase
Crawfordville Rd.	Four Points Intersection	North of Munson Slough	4-lane divided facility, const. underway
Woodville Hwy.	Tram Rd.	Capital Circle SE	2 to 4 lanes; final analysis and evaluation is next phase

Source: CRTPA FY 2005-2009 Transportation Improvement Plan



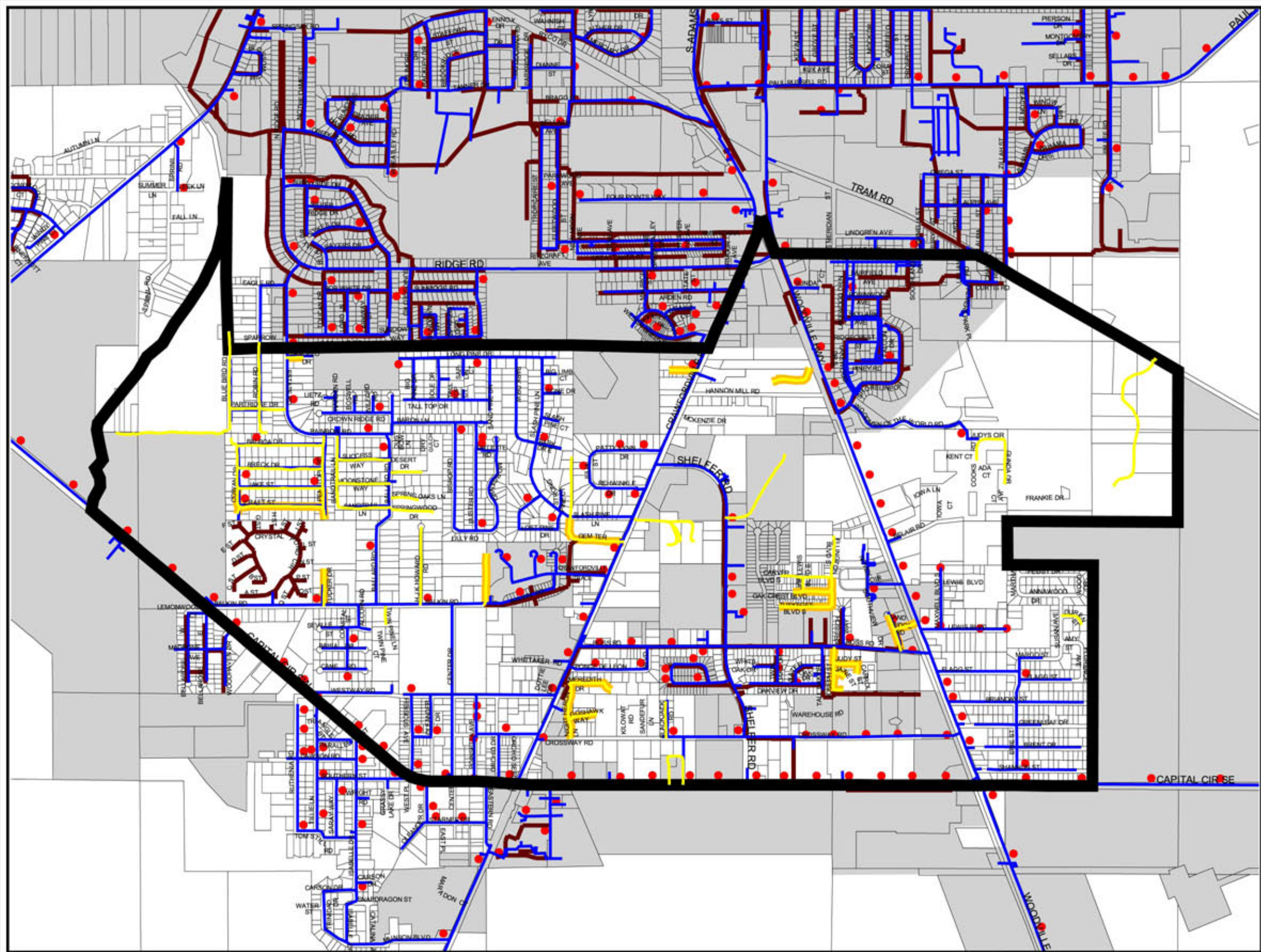


A 1950s-era residence on Crawfordville Road at Moonlit Trace (unincorporated area). Of the 50 miles of roadways that traverse the Oak Ridge Sector, about 18% consist of unpaved roads. Moonlit Trace lies within 500 feet of the City's Wilson Green subdivision, which has paved streets and sewer service.

Recommendations

- ▲ Coordinate between the City of Tallahassee and property owners to consider the advantages of paving remaining unpaved private roads lying within the City limits in the Oak Ridge Sector. Such an effort could initially focus on unpaved private road segments within the Southern Triangle (e.g., Meredith Drive, Night Heron Lane, Sand Ridge Drive, Southview Drive, and Straw Lane).
- ▲ Encourage the community to continue working together with the County on a priority paving list to develop a long-range plan for the paving of roads in the unincorporated Oak Ridge area. The majority of these roads are within two subdivisions: Rainbow Acres, and Oak Crest. The homeowners within Rainbow Acres have already petitioned the County to pave Cowan Drive, Craft Street, and Penelope Road, and the project is on the County's five-year schedule of capital improvements.
- ▲ For the remaining private roads, facilitate coordination between the County and property owners to consider the advantage of paving remaining unpaved private roads. Identify strategies encouraging property owners to keep the ability for future upgrade to public road standards, should a paving contractor be hired to install an initial impervious surface. These private unpaved roads include: B J Cox Road, Blackthorn Trail, Carrol Street, Jane Street, Joseph Street, Judy Street, Kestrel Way, Moonlit Trace, McNeill Boulevard (the portion maintained by the County is already paved), Oak Crest Boulevard, and Tangelo Drive.
- ▲ Identify strategies to develop a cost participation program or identified money source to help make it feasible for neighborhoods to participate in paving roads in the unincorporated area.

Oak Ridge Water / Sewer and Unpaved Roads



Legend

-  Unpaved Roads
-  Water Main
-  Sewer Main
-  Hydrants
-  Inside City Limits
-  Unpaved Roads near water/sewer Mains

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Septic prevalence in the Oak Ridge Sector

The Oak Ridge Sector accounts for 80% of septic system usage within the Southern Strategy Area and 7% within the Urban Service Area (see table below and Oak Ridge Septic Tanks and Soil Suitability map). Although extension of sewer service was identified as an important issue, there was a general lack of agreement among Oak Ridge Sector participants regarding the objective. Some participants were not interested in being connected to sewer and believed the cost would be too great, especially for residents that do not intend to annex into the City. Others were interested in an eventual sewer connection, but only if in the long run there would be only a nominal cost differential between sewer service and septic maintenance. Still others were interested in a more immediate sewer connection when property is adjacent to areas already served by sewer. The more accepted suggestions were to make use of City programs that give property owners a subsidy for sewer connection, and to give areas already zoned for commercial uses priority in connection.

Septic system prevalence by planning area, number of known systems

	Oak Ridge Sector	Southern Strategy Area	USA
<i>Within City limits</i>	20	20	549
<i>Within 1000 ft of sewer main</i>	491	606	3,930
<i>Total septic systems</i>	1,164	1,451	16,957

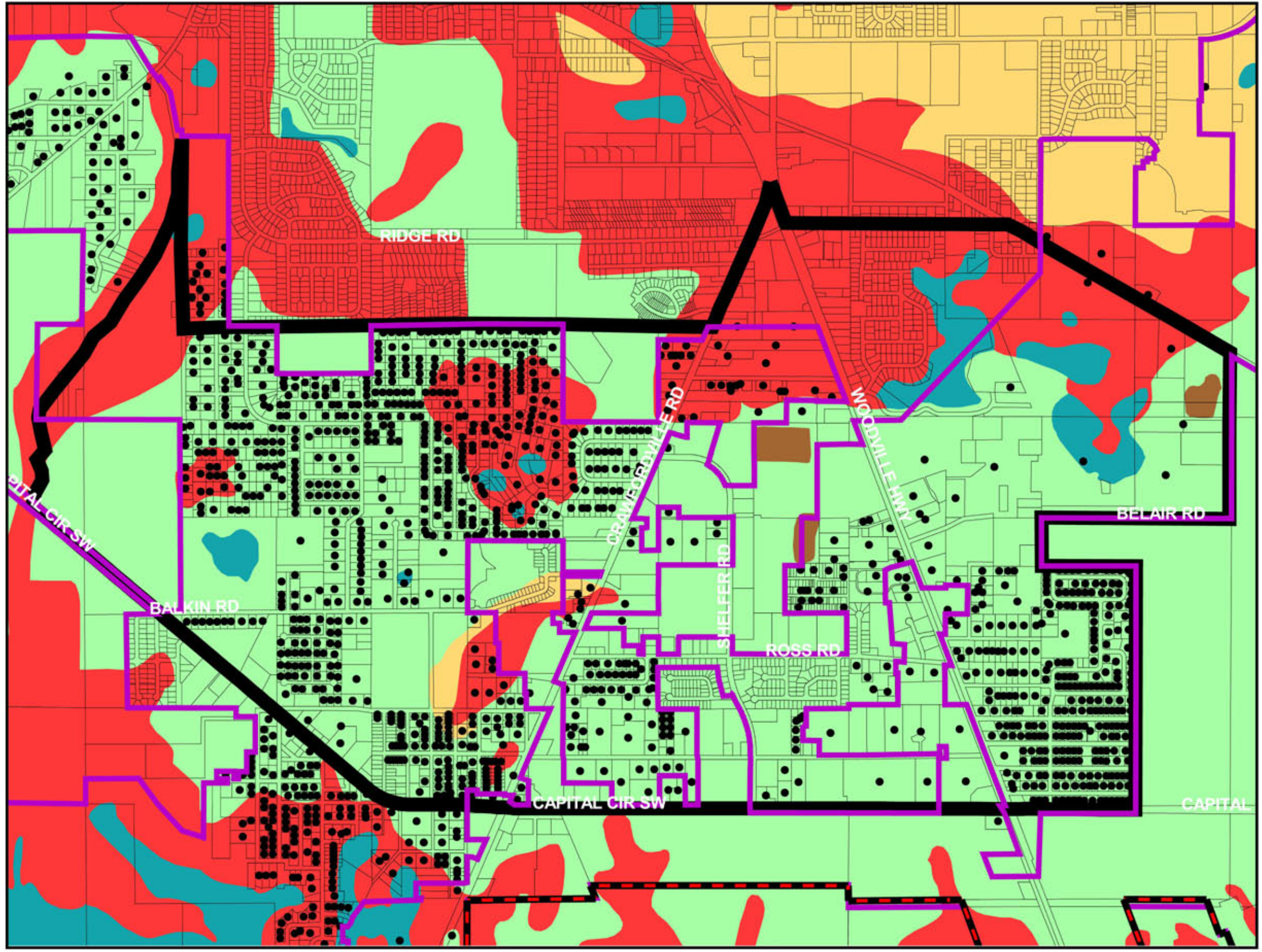
Septic system prevalence by planning area, as percent within each planning area

	Oak Ridge Sector	Southern Strategy Area	USA
<i>Within City limits</i>	2%	1%	3%
<i>Within 1000 ft of sewer main</i>	42%	42%	23%




Septic system prevalence by planning area, as percent within USA

	Oak Ridge Sector	Southern Strategy Area	USA
<i>Within City limits</i>	4%	4%	100%
<i>Within 1000 ft of sewer main</i>	13%	15%	100%
<i>Total septic systems</i>	7%	9%	100%






Oak Ridge Septic Tanks and Soil Suitability



Legend

-  Urban Service Area
-  City Limits
-  Septic Tanks

Septic Tank Suitability

-  Slight Limitations
-  Moderate Limitations
-  Severe Limitations
-  Excavation Pits
-  Submerged

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