

COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

CENTERS & COMMUNITIES

CORRIDORS

Briefing Book

CENTERS & COMMUNITIES

NOTE: Information is preliminary and subject to change



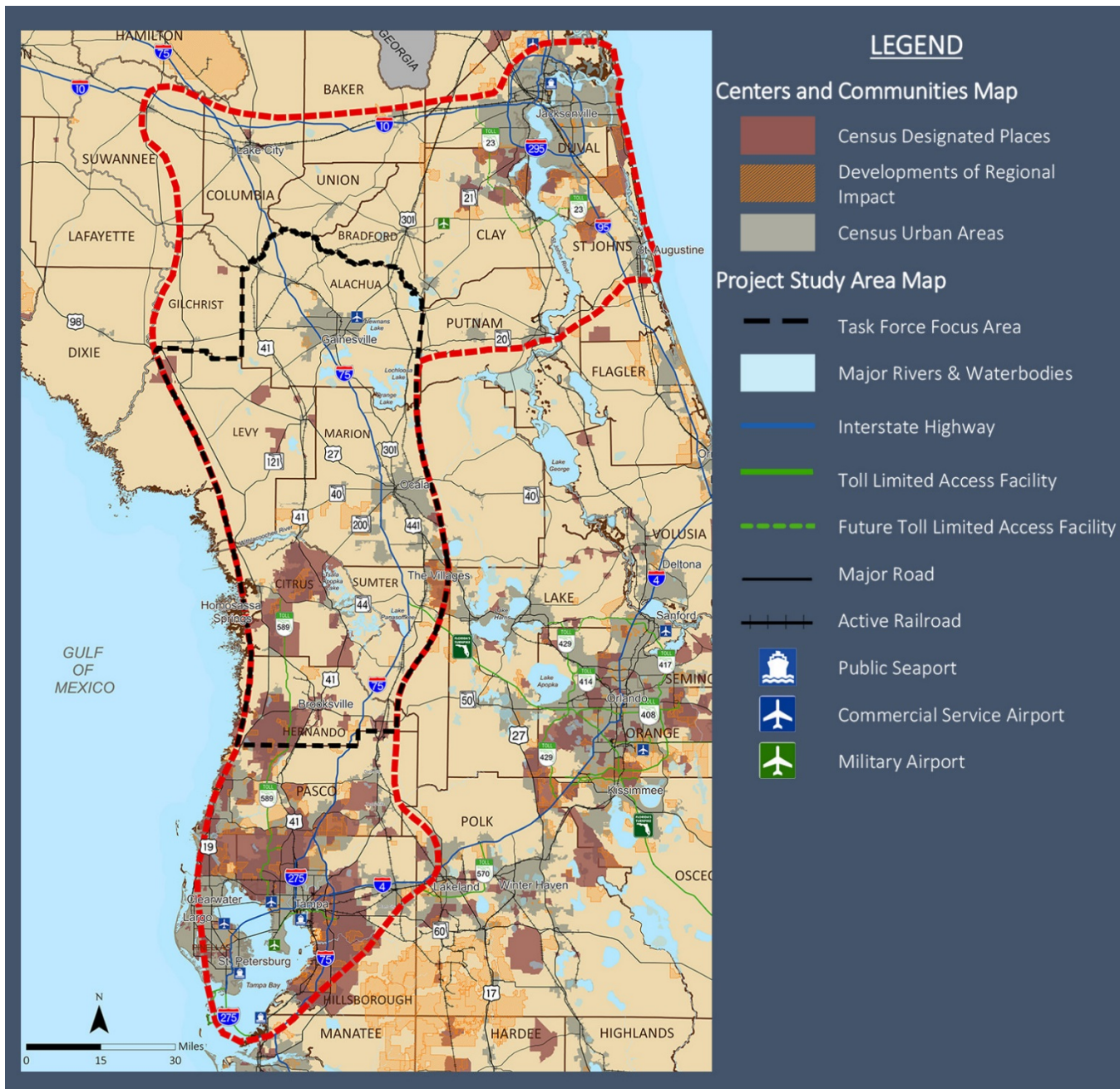


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Centers and Communities

The I-75 Relief Task Force was initiated to evaluate the potential for enhanced and new multimodal and multiuse transportation corridors between the Tampa Bay region and I-75 in North Central Florida, with an Initial Focus Area including Alachua, Citrus, Hernando, Levy, Marion and Sumter counties. Issues that may influence decisions about future transportation corridors include the location, characteristics, and growth of existing and planned communities, as well as the location and growth of key industry clusters.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has appointed the I-75 Relief Task Force to develop consensus recommendations on maximizing existing and developing new high-capacity transportation corridors serving the Tampa Bay, North Central Florida, and Northeast Florida regions.

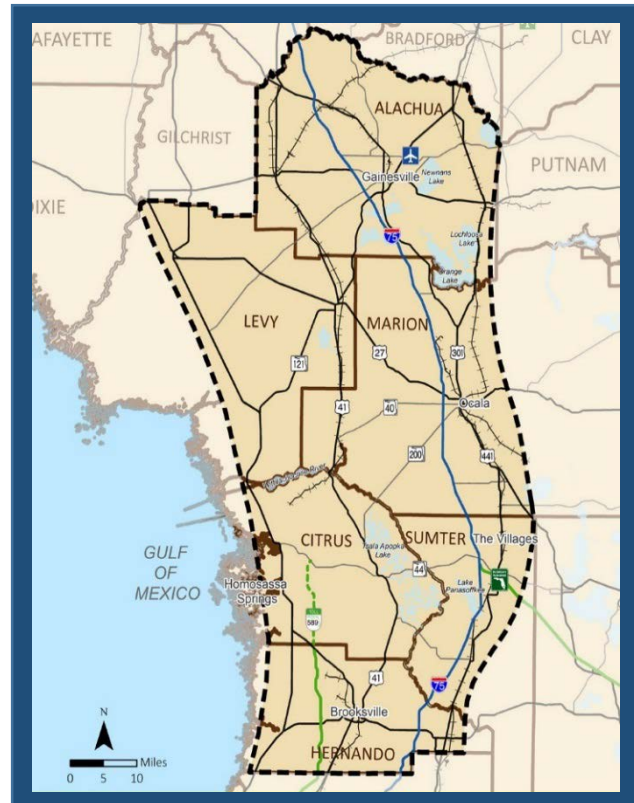
The Task Force’s **Initial Focus Area** comprises six counties to the north of Tampa Bay and along and to the west of Interstate 75 (I-75): Alachua, Citrus, Hernando, Levy, Marion and Sumter. The Task Force also is considering broader connectivity issues over 19 counties between Tampa Bay and Northeast Florida.

Among other activities, the Task Force is charged to:

- **Identify opportunities and constraints** related to environmental resources, land use and development, property rights, economic development, quality of life, and other statewide and regional issues that should be considered in planning for future transportation corridors in the Initial Focus Area;
- **Recommend the purpose and need** for high-capacity, high-speed transportation corridors in the Initial Focus Area with emphasis on providing relief to I-75, increasing safety, improving statewide and regional connectivity, and enhancing economic development opportunities;
- **Recommend a range of alternatives** for accomplishing the purpose and need and the approach that should be used for narrowing these alternatives;
- **Recommend corridors** to be incorporated into regional and local long-range plans and to be advanced into future stages of project development; and
- **Recommend a proposed implementation plan** for moving forward with the recommended corridors.

The 4 Cs Framework

The I-75 Relief Task Force is modeled after the [East Central Florida Corridor Task Force \(ECFCTF\)](#), which was created by Executive Order in 2014 to develop



Initial Focus Area

recommendations for future transportation corridors in Brevard, Orange, and Osceola counties. One of the objectives is to build on the ECFCTF best practices, by following **a framework for well-planned transportation corridors to improve mobility and connectivity for people and freight, while helping to preserve Florida’s natural resources and environmentally sensitive lands, support economic development, promote high-quality development patterns aligned with local visions, and facilitate emergency evacuation and response.** The I-75 Relief Task Force also builds on the vision and goals of the recently updated [Florida Transportation Plan \(FTP\)](#), the long-range transportation plan for all of Florida.

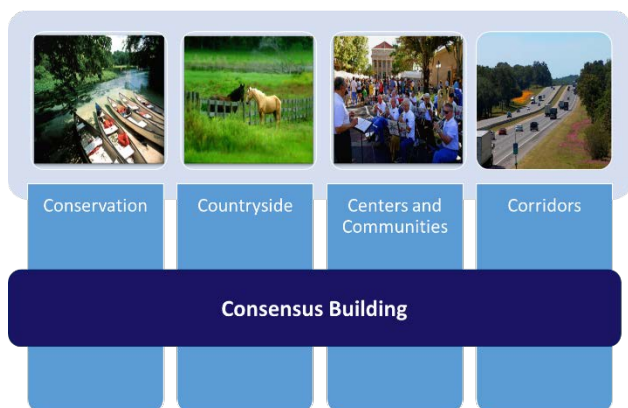
Drawing from both of these efforts, the I-75 Relief Task Force has adopted a framework organized around four themes, known as the 4Cs:

- **Conservation** — including lands, wildlife and habitat, waters, air, and other natural resources;
- **Countryside** — including small towns, villages, and other rural settlements as well as farms, forests,

mines, and other economically valuable rural lands;

- **Centers and communities** — including population centers ranging from small towns to large cities, as well as economic activity centers; and
- **Corridors** — including roads, rail, trails, pipelines, utilities, and other ways of connecting centers and communities.

The Task Force, supported by public input, will build consensus across all four of these areas.



Definitions of Centers and Communities

“Centers” and “communities” are broad terms that refer to the developed portions of the Initial Focus Area. Centers and communities refer primarily to **population centers**, ranging from villages and small towns to medium to large cities. Also important are **employment centers**, which include concentrations of industrial and commercial development, as well as transportation hubs, universities, research laboratories, attractions, and other economic assets.

Overview of this Briefing Book

This Briefing Book is one of four in a series that provides an overview of each “C” for the I-75 Relief Task Force Initial Focus Area. The Briefing Book is intended to help identify opportunities, constraints, and alternatives to support the Task Force’s deliberations, as well as to support the Task Force’s efforts to solicit and consider input from government agencies, property owners, agricultural interests, business and economic development organizations, environmental organizations, and residents of the Initial Focus Area.

The Briefing Book is organized with these key sections:

- **Policy Framework**, documenting established federal, state, regional, and local policies that are essential to planning for the region’s centers and communities;
- **Population Centers**, documenting demographic trends and the location and characteristics of the Initial Focus Area’s villages, towns, cities, and urban areas;
- **Employment Centers**, documenting trends and conditions in the Initial Focus Area’s economy, including the location of major economic assets; and
- **Summary of Opportunities and Constraints**, highlighting opportunities and issues that may impact the work of the Task Force.

Throughout this document, hyperlinks to online resources are included. The hyperlinks are indicated by an underlined blue text. For example, clicking on [I-75 Relief](#) will route you to the project website.

Content Development

This Briefing Book was developed through:

- Review of federal, state, regional, and local policies and plans;
- Research of prior studies conducted in this area;
- Coordination with staff of state, regional, and local agencies; and
- Input received from the Task Force at its initial meetings.

Information in this report may support involvement of resource agencies, public and other stakeholders in development of purpose and need and range of alternatives. This document is available to the public and is intended to serve as support documentation for collaborative planning decisions which may be adopted in future analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

POLICY FRAMEWORK

State, regional, and local policies and plans create the framework for planning the future of the centers and communities in the Initial Focus Area.

State

Florida's [State Comprehensive Plan](#), adopted in Section 187.291, Florida Statutes, identifies high-level policies in several areas related to centers and communities, including housing, property rights, land use, urban and downtown revitalization, economic development, and transportation.

Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes, commonly referred to as the [Community Planning Act](#), describes the role, processes, and powers of local governments in establishing and implementing comprehensive planning programs to guide and manage future development.

The [Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development](#), developed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity in collaboration with other state agencies, regional planning councils, and other partners, pursuant to Subsection 20.60 (5)(a)4, Florida Statutes, defines goals, objectives, and strategies for Florida's economic development. Key strategies include:

- Strengthen collaboration and alignment among state, regional, and local entities;
- Develop regional talent and innovation clusters that bring together concentrations of businesses and skilled workers in growing industries;
- Strengthen Florida's economic regions and connect resources across regions to build Florida as a globally competitive "megaregion"; and
- Position Florida as a global hub for trade, visitors, talent, innovation, and investment.

The Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), developed by the Florida Department of Transportation in collaboration with state, regional, and local partners, defines the state's transportation vision and policy framework. The [FTP Policy Element](#) identifies goals related to supporting Florida's global economic competitiveness and supporting quality places to live, learn, work, and play. Specific objectives include:

- Provide transportation infrastructure and services to support job growth in transportation-dependent industries and clusters;
- Increase transportation connectivity between Florida's economic centers and regions;

Guiding Principles for Planning the Future of Florida's Transportation Corridors: Centers and Communities

- Improve connectivity for transportation and other infrastructure to established and emerging regional population and employment centers.
 - Locate major transportation corridor improvements and, if needed, new facilities in areas targeted for growth in regional and local plans. When planning enhanced or new transportation corridors that are intended to support new population and employment centers, ensure that these new centers support regional and community visions including:
 - Compact development in both urban centers and adjacent areas;
 - Mixed-use development with integration of residential and commercial uses;
 - Open space, parks, greenways, agricultural areas, and buffers between centers; and
 - "Green" community designs that support a reduced urban and environmental footprint, such as reduced water consumption.
 - Plan and develop transportation corridors in a manner that improves connectivity to and enhances the quality of existing communities and previously approved developments, while avoiding or minimizing adverse impacts on these communities and developments. When a corridor and a center or community intersect, plan and design the corridor so that its purpose and scale is compatible with that of the center or community.
-
- Increase transportation connectivity between Florida and global and national trading partners and visitor origin markets;
 - Plan and develop transportation systems that reflect regional and community values, visions, and needs; and

- Provide convenient, efficient accessibility to the transportation system for Florida’s residents and visitors.

Regional and Local

In addition, centers- and communities-related decisions are guided by key regional and local plans, including:

- **Local government comprehensive plans**, which define policies and strategies to guide future growth and development;
- **Strategic regional policy plans**, which are developed by Florida’s regional planning councils to serve as long-range guides for the physical, economic, and social development of a region; and
- **Comprehensive economic development strategies**, which are developed by Florida’s regional planning councils in their capacity as federal economic development districts to guide the economic development of a region.

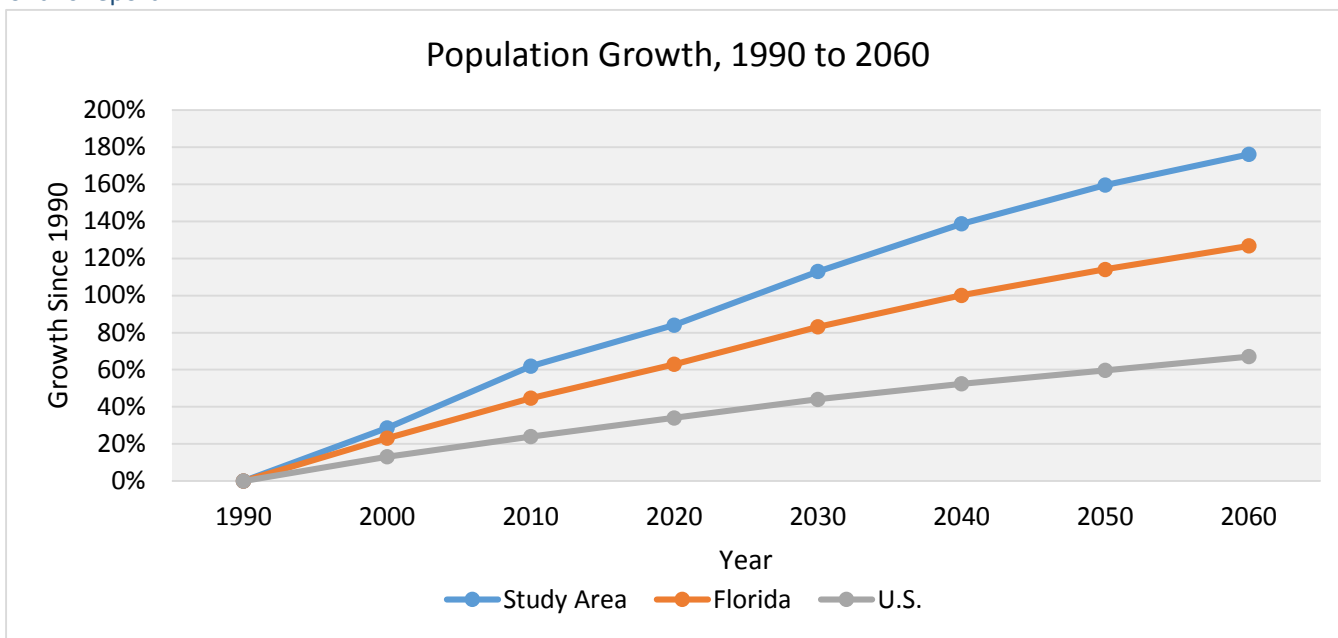
Key local policies are discussed in detail in later sections of this report.

POPULATION CENTERS

The Initial Focus Area counties have a combined population of nearly 1.1 million residents in 2014.¹ About seven of out of every 10 residents lived in an urban area in 2010, compared to nine out of every 10 residents statewide.²

Marion and Alachua are the two largest counties, combining for 55 percent of the Initial Focus Area’s population. Levy County has the smallest population.

The six counties’ population increased from 635,000 in 1990 to nearly 1.1 million in 2014, with increases in all six counties (chart on page 5). Marion County had the largest absolute increase, with more than 140,000 net new residents during that period. Sumter County, led by growth of retirement communities including The Villages, had the largest percentage increase in population (nearly 250 percent). The combined population of the six counties is projected to grow to 1.8 million by 2060.³ The largest increases are anticipated in Sumter and Marion counties.

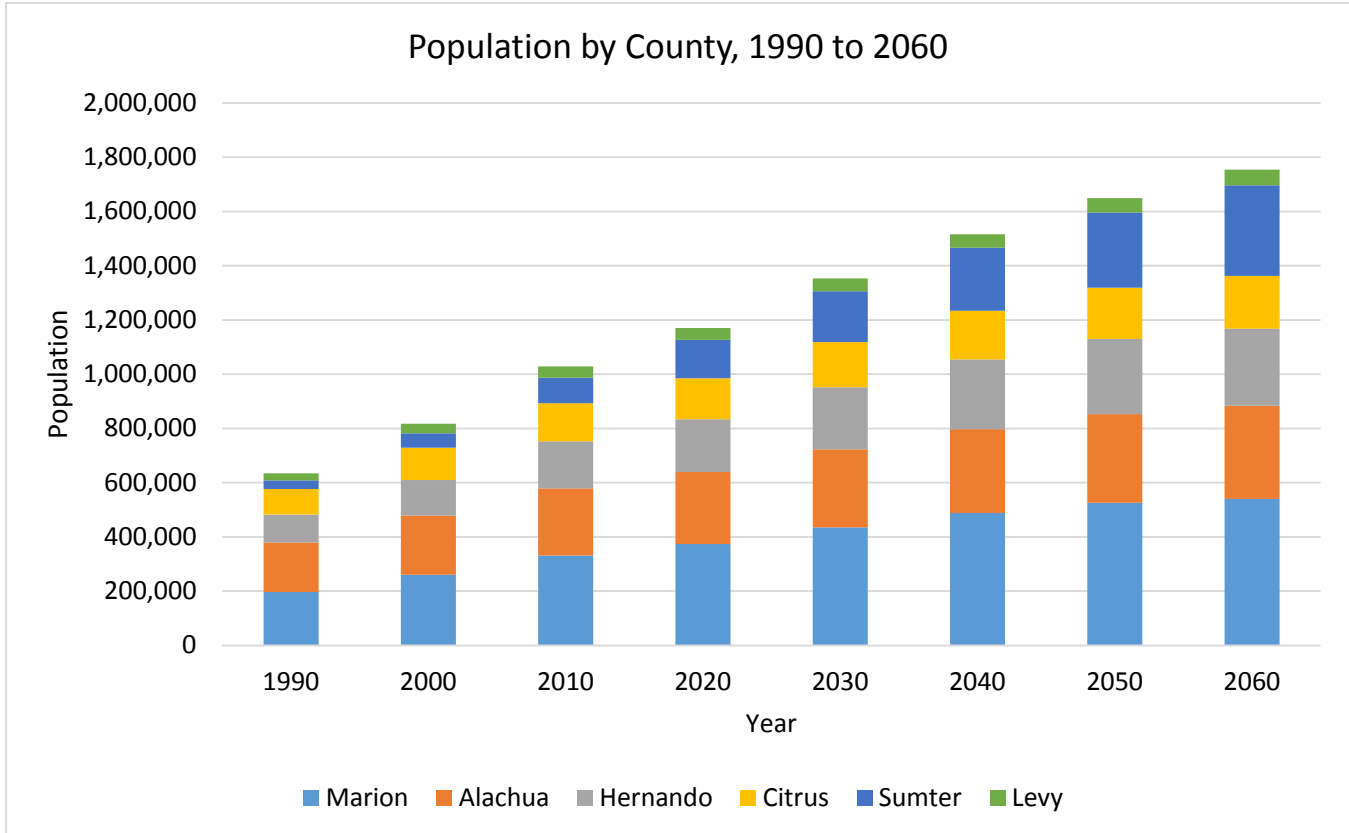


Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2040 medium-range forecast, extrapolated to 2060 by the Florida Department of Transportation.

¹ University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2014 population estimates.

² U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

³ University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2040 medium-range forecast, extrapolated to 2060 by the Florida Department of Transportation.



Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2040 medium-range forecast, extrapolated to 2060 by the Florida Department of Transportation

Age Composition

The six counties have diverse demographic characteristics (chart on page 6). Sumter County has the highest median age of any county in the state (66 years in 2014), meaning that more than half of its population is over the age of 66. Alachua County has one of the lowest median ages in the state (31.2 years in 2014); reflecting the large number of college students in the county, nearly 42 percent of its population was under the age of 25.⁴

Per capita income increased from \$32,400 in 2000 (in 2014 dollars) to \$35,100 in 2005, and has maintained relatively constant since.⁵

The six counties have pockets of both wealth and poverty. About 12 percent of the households in the six counties reported income of more than \$100,000 in 2014, below the statewide average of 18 percent (chart on page 6). About 30 percent of households earned less than \$25,000, above the statewide average of 24 percent.⁶ About 19 percent of the population was living in poverty in 2013, up from 13 percent in 2000.⁷

Income Characteristics

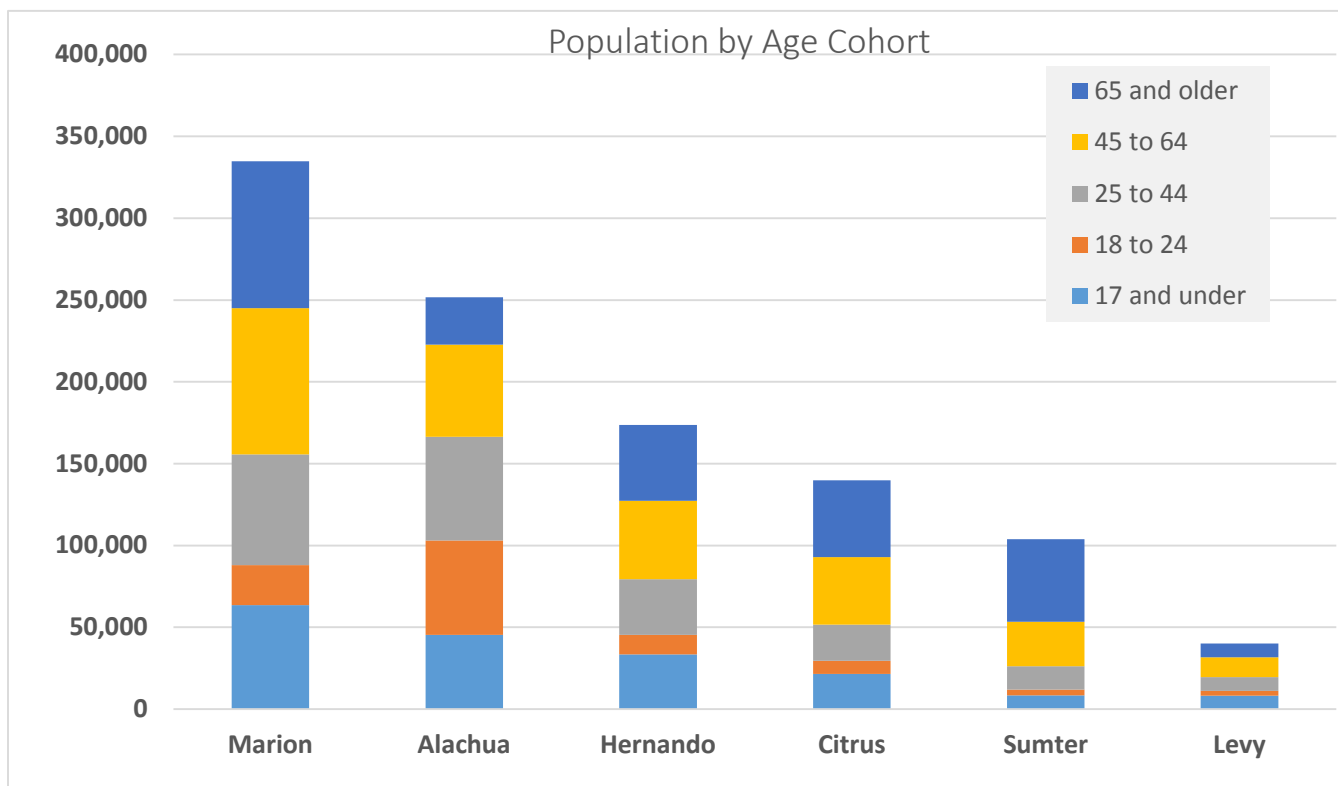
Personal income per capita in the six counties was \$34,700 in 2014, below the state average of \$42,700.

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

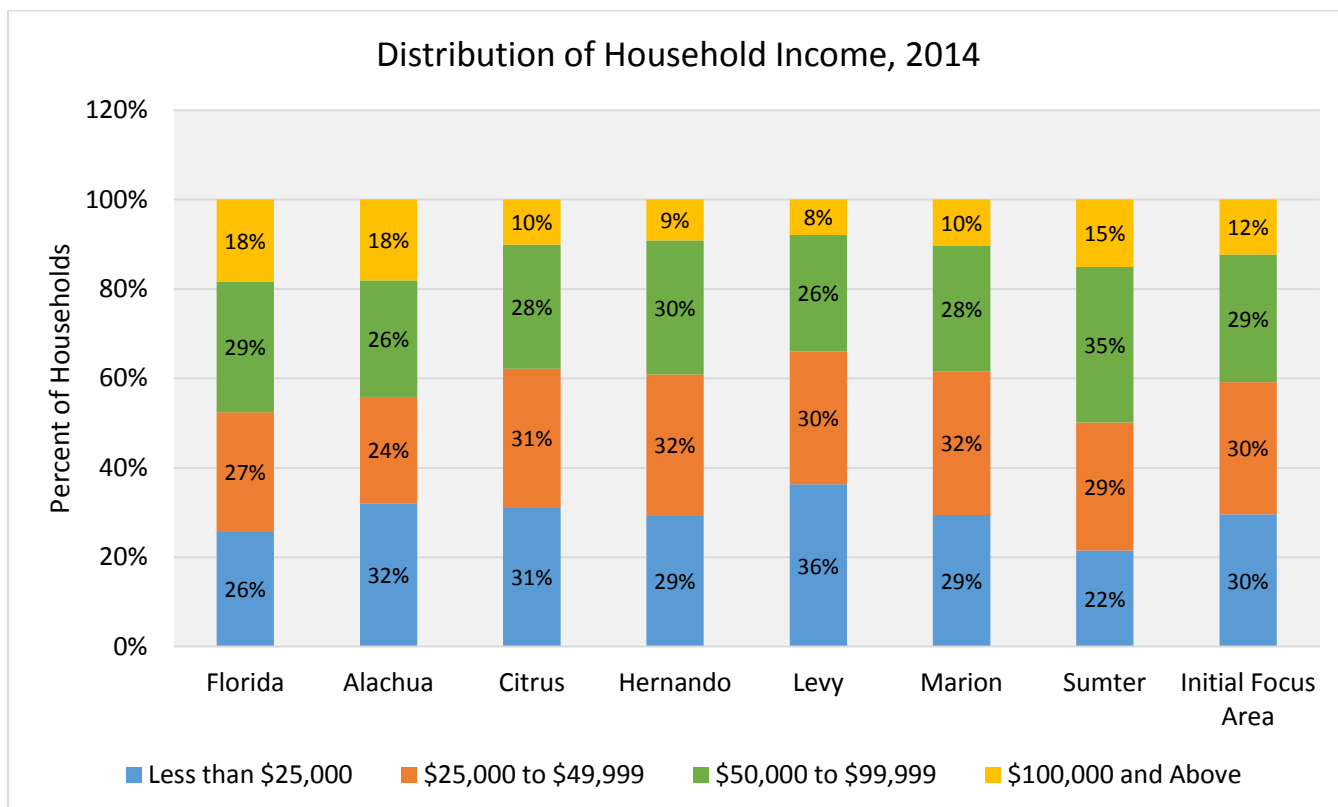
⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Incorporated Municipalities

The six counties include a total of 31 incorporated municipal governments of which 26 are within the Initial Focus Area boundary. The incorporated municipal governments range from villages and small towns to cities (map on page 8). These include two large cities: Gainesville (2013 population: 127,488) and Ocala (53,491). Within the Initial Focus Area boundary, the incorporated municipalities include 8 villages or towns with populations of less than 1,000: LaCrosse and Micanopy in Alachua County; Weeki Wachee in Hernando County; Fanning Springs and Otter Creek in Levy County; McIntosh and Reddick in Marion County; and Coleman in Sumter County. Seven other municipalities have population between 1,000 and 2,000.⁸

Unincorporated Areas

Each county includes significant population in unincorporated areas, which may include a mix of urban and rural character. Alachua County is the only county in the Initial Focus Area where a majority of residents live in incorporated municipalities. In contrast, more than 80 percent of the population in Marion and Sumter Counties and more than 90 percent in Citrus and Hernando Counties live in unincorporated areas. Between 2010 and 2014, population in the unincorporated areas grew 1.5 percent, compared to 1.0 percent for the unincorporated areas.⁹ Fast-growing communities like The Villages are not formally incorporated at this time. Unincorporated areas with significant population concentrations are identified as Census-designated places. These include large portions of Citrus and Hernando Counties (map on page 9).

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 population estimates.

⁹ University of Florida, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, 2014 population estimates.

¹⁰ The U.S. Census Bureau defines an urban area as a densely settled core of census tracts and/or census blocks that meet minimum population density requirements, along with adjacent territory containing non-residential urban land uses as well as territory with low population density included to link outlying densely settled territory with

Urban Areas

The number and size of urban areas in this region has increased over time.¹⁰ There are portions of five urbanized areas in the Initial Focus Area today:¹¹

- Gainesville, located in Alachua County (2014 population: 190,335);
- Ocala, located in Marion County (159,846);
- Spring Hill, located primarily in Hernando County but including a small portion of Pasco County (150,346);
- Lady Lakes-The Villages, located in portions of Sumter, Lake, and Marion Counties (124,412); and
- Homosassa Springs-Beverly Hills-Citrus Springs, located primarily in Citrus County but including a portion of Marion County (80,749).

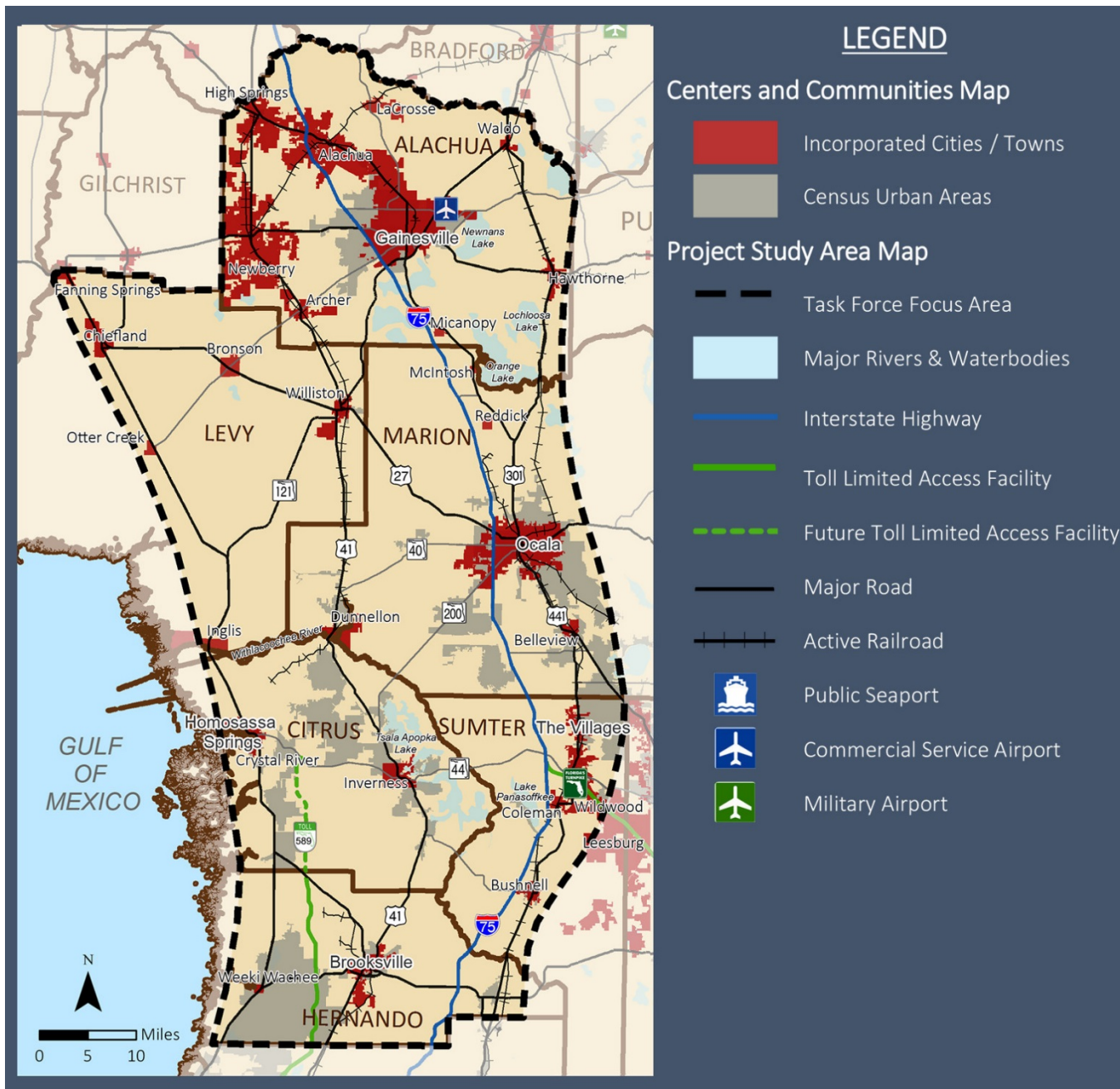
Homosassa Springs-Beverly Hills-Citrus Springs was designated as an urbanized area following the 2010 Census, and The Villages-Lady Lakes was designated following the 2000 Census. The remaining urbanized areas have expanded over time (map on page 10).

The Initial Focus Area also includes nine urban clusters with population between 2,500 and 50,000 residents:

- Alachua (Alachua County);
- Bushnell (Sumter County);
- Crystal River (Citrus County);
- Lake Panasoffkee (Sumter County);
- Marion Oaks (Marion County);
- Ocala Estates (Marion County);
- Rainbow Lakes Estates (Marion County);
- Ridge Manor (Hernando County);
- Sugarmill Woods (Citrus County), and
- Williston (Levy County).

the densely settled core. Urban areas with population of 50,000 or more are designated as urbanized areas; urban areas with population of 2,500 to 50,000 are designated as urban clusters. 2014 population estimates are from the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research with analysis by the Florida Department of Transportation.

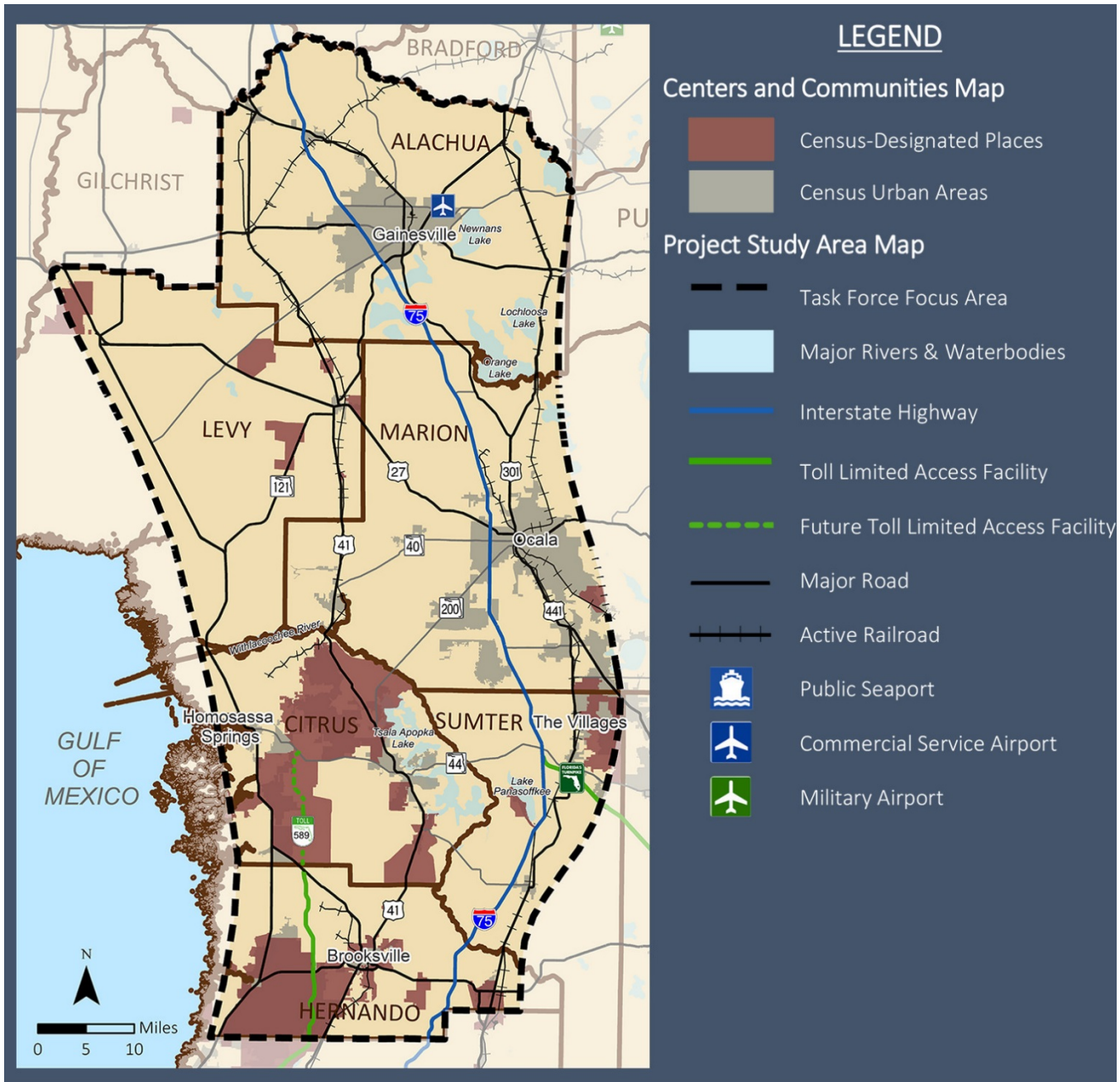
¹¹ The Leesburg-Eustis-Tavares urbanized area, which is primarily located in Lake County, includes a small portion of Sumter County.



Existing Communities: Incorporated Cities and Towns

The Initial Focus Area counties include 31 incorporated municipalities, including the cities of Gainesville and Ocala and 11 villages or towns with population of less than 1,000 residents.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Existing Communities: Unincorporated Areas

Each county includes significant population in unincorporated areas, which may include a mix of urban and rural character. More than 80 percent of the population in Marion and Sumter Counties and more than 90 percent in Citrus and Hernando Counties live in unincorporated areas. During the past few years, population in the unincorporated areas has expanded more rapidly than in the incorporated areas.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Urbanized Areas: 1990 to 2010

Approximately seven out of every 10 residents live in an urban area, compared to about nine out of 10 residents statewide. Homosassa Springs-Beverly Hills-Citrus Springs was designated as urbanized area following the 2010 Census, and The Villages-Lady Lakes was designated following the 2000 Census. The remaining urbanized area boundaries have expanded over time

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Environmental Justice

For federal actions, Executive Order 12898 requires Environmental Justice for minority and low-income populations. The fundamental principles presented by FHWA require a review of the ethnic distribution and economic status of the Initial Focus Area as shown on the map on page 12.

"There are three fundamental environmental justice principles:

- To avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations.*
- To ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.*
- To prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations."*

Often environmental justice thought to be the addressing the potential for disproportionate direct impacts to the community. But, improved economic opportunities and enhanced transportation options with improved multimodal and transit choices are also critical. Whether improving an existing corridor or setting a new route, the character of the community and transportation and communication needs of the area must be considered.

Planned Developments

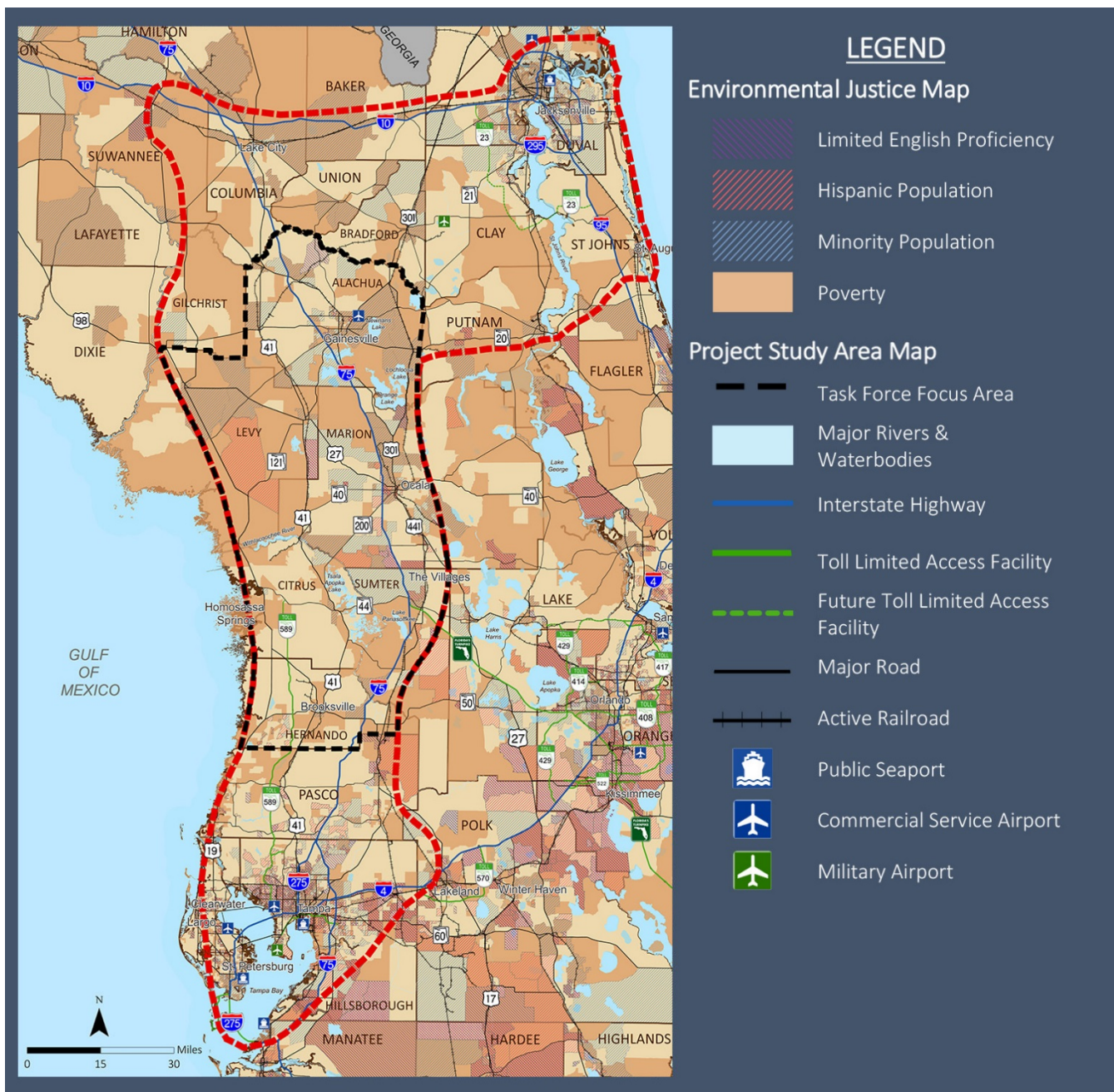
A variety of future developments are planned or underway in the six counties. These include developments defined under state law as Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), as well as county-specific processes. A DRI is a development that, because of its character, size, or location, would have a substantial impact on the health, safety, or wealth of more than one county, pursuant to Section 380.06(1), Florida Statutes. Many of the DRIs are located within or adjacent to existing urbanized areas (see map on page 12 for DRIs in the six counties that are approved or pending a notice of proposed change).

In addition to DRIs, large portions of the Initial Focus Area, particularly in Citrus and Hernando Counties, have vested development rights and entitlements that predate the DRI process. Some of this area is already platted and has local road, water, and sewer infrastructure in place.

County Policies

Five of the six counties have established urban or municipal growth or service boundaries as part of their comprehensive plans (map on page 13):

- Alachua County's** urban development focuses on the City of Gainesville in the center of the county and extends along the US 441 corridor. Additional incorporated communities such as Archer, Newberry, and High Springs are located in the western portion of the county along the US 27 corridor. The 2030 Future Land Use Map (FLUM) defines an Urban Cluster that sets a boundary for urban growth in the unincorporated area. The FLUM also designates an Urban Service Area within the built up portion of the Urban Cluster to promote healthy, compact mixed use centers served by a multimodal transportation system. The Comprehensive Plan identifies policies for high-intensity activity centers and traditional neighborhood and transit-oriented development. The Celebration Pointe development at the interchange of I-75 and Archer Road is a recent example of a compact, mixed use development in the county.
- Citrus County's** existing and future developed areas primarily are located in the Central Ridge of the county. Historic incorporated cities and towns are located along major road corridors such as US 19, US 41, and SR 44. The County has defined a Planned Service Area to focus future urban growth in an area that generally runs east/west from Crystal River to Inverness. The county identified 10 regional activity centers. In the western part of the county, these include three centers along US 19: Seven Springs Regional Medical Center, Crystal River, and Homosassa Springs. In the Central Ridge area, these include Citrus Springs, Beverly Hills, CR 486/CR 491, CR 491 corridor, and Lecanto. In the eastern part of the county along US 41, these include Inverness and Floral City.



LEGEND

Environmental Justice Map

- Limited English Proficiency
- Hispanic Population
- Minority Population
- Poverty

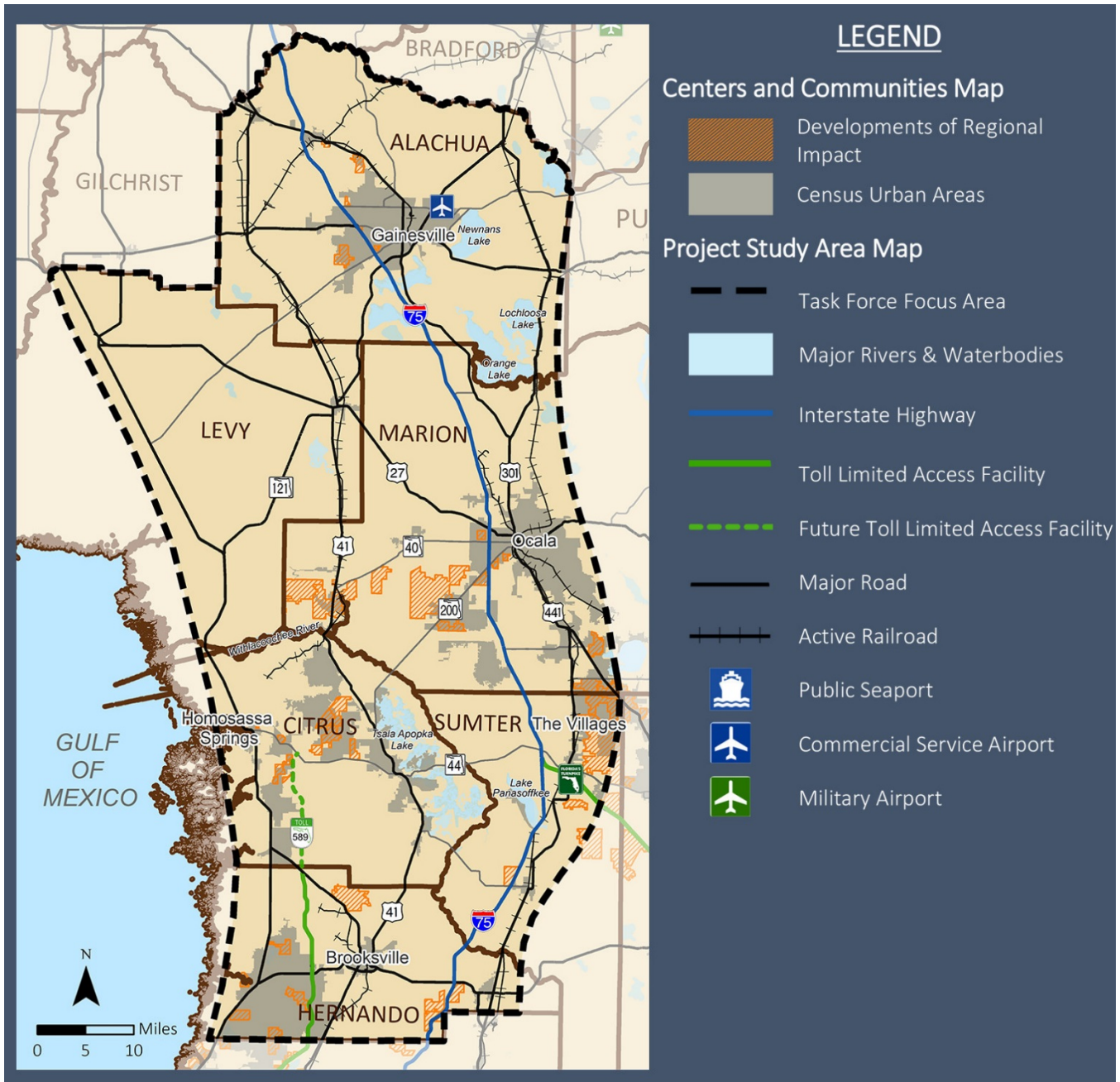
Project Study Area Map

- Task Force Focus Area
- Major Rivers & Waterbodies
- Interstate Highway
- Toll Limited Access Facility
- Future Toll Limited Access Facility
- Major Road
- Active Railroad
- Public Seaport
- Commercial Service Airport
- Military Airport

Environmental Justice Characteristics

Each county has some areas with limited English proficiency, Hispanic and minority populations, and higher than the state average for poverty. To gain meaningful input, translating materials into the native languages and providing native language translation are to important factors. Also, considering the economic status for the population is critical to ensure the transportation needs are met with any project that may result within the Initial Focus Area.

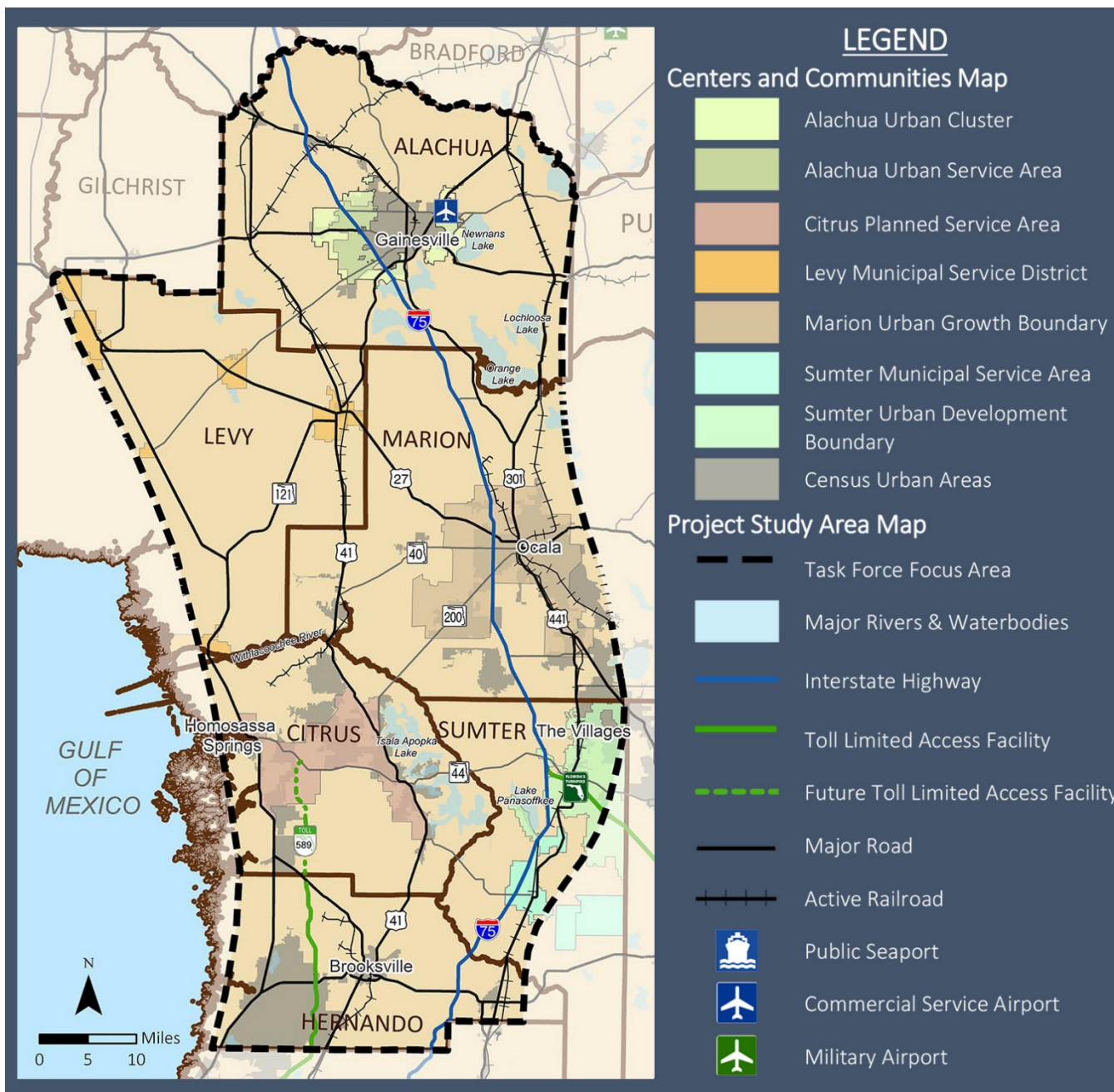
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Planned Developments

Developments of Regional Impact are planned or underway in all six counties. Many of the DRIs are located in or adjacent to existing urbanized areas.

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity



Urban Boundaries Identified in County Comprehensive Plans

Five of the six Initial Focus Area counties have defined urban or municipal growth or service boundaries as part of their comprehensive plans.

Source: Counties' Comprehensive Plans

- **Hernando County's** urban areas are located in the south central portion of the county (along the US 19, Suncoast Parkway, and US 41 corridors) and the City of Brooksville in the center of the county. The county does not formally establish an urban boundary, but its plan includes policies intended to focus urban growth and protect rural and conservation areas. Major DRIs and planned developments are located in Spring Hill, at the interchange of I-75 and SR 50 in the southeastern portion of the county, and in former quarry areas along US 98 in the north central portion of the county.
- **Levy County** is primarily rural in character, with large sections designated for forestry and agriculture. Cities and towns are located at highway crossroads. Levy County designates seven Municipal Service Districts (MSD) as areas for urban expansion: Bronson, Cedar Key, Chiefland, Fanning Springs, Inglis-Yankeetown, Otter Creek, and Williston. Within these areas, urban densities and intensities are allowed and urban services are provided or encouraged.
- **Marion County's** urban areas primarily are located in the center of the county around Ocala and along Interstate 75, US 441, and SR 200 to the south of Ocala. An urban growth boundary comprises these existing urban areas as well as additional areas in the southern portion of the county where DRIs and other planned developments anticipate significant growth. Buildout of DRIs in Marion Oaks and On Top of the World would create additional residential growth in the southeast and south central portions of the county. Dunellon is a small city in the southwestern corner of the county, with emphasis on eco-tourism and recreation.
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- **Sumter County** has five cities and the large and growing unincorporated area around The Villages. Urban areas are located in the eastern portion of the county and along major roads such as I-75 and Florida's Turnpike. The Villages DRI is near buildout but additional planned developments in the northeastern portion of the county, such as Wildwood Springs, Landstone, and Southern Oaks are targeting similar demographic groups. Growth

within and between these planned developments is anticipated to continue to increase population in this portion of the county. An Urban Development Area comprises those lands that are or are expected to become urban through 2035. Municipal Service Areas are approved between the County and the Cities of Bushnell, Center Hill, Webster, and Wildwood.

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

The six Initial Focus Area counties accounted for nearly 318,000 jobs in 2014.¹² Alachua County (120,300) and Marion County (94,500) together account for more than two out of every three jobs in the six counties – larger than their combined share of population, which points to their role as regional employment centers.

Employment in the six counties increased more than 50 percent between 1990 and 2015, tracking the region's strong population growth and outpacing the state and national averages. The recession was milder than for the state as a whole, although 2014 employment totals remained below the 2005 levels in every county except Sumter (charts on page 15).

The largest industries in the Initial Focus Area counties are health care, retail trade, and educational services (chart on page 16). Together they employed 47 percent of workers in 2014.¹³ These industries are more concentrated in the Initial Focus Area counties than in the rest of the state or nation.

Health care has seen the largest increase in employment, 38 percent over the past 10 years. Administrative services and accommodations and food services also experienced large increases in employment (37 percent and 29 percent, respectively). Construction employment decreased 15 percent during this period.

Key industries tend to cluster together in areas with access to skilled labor, business partners, and needed infrastructure (map on page 17). Manufacturing activity is spread throughout the region with concentrations in the large urban areas as well as along

¹² US. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

¹³ US. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

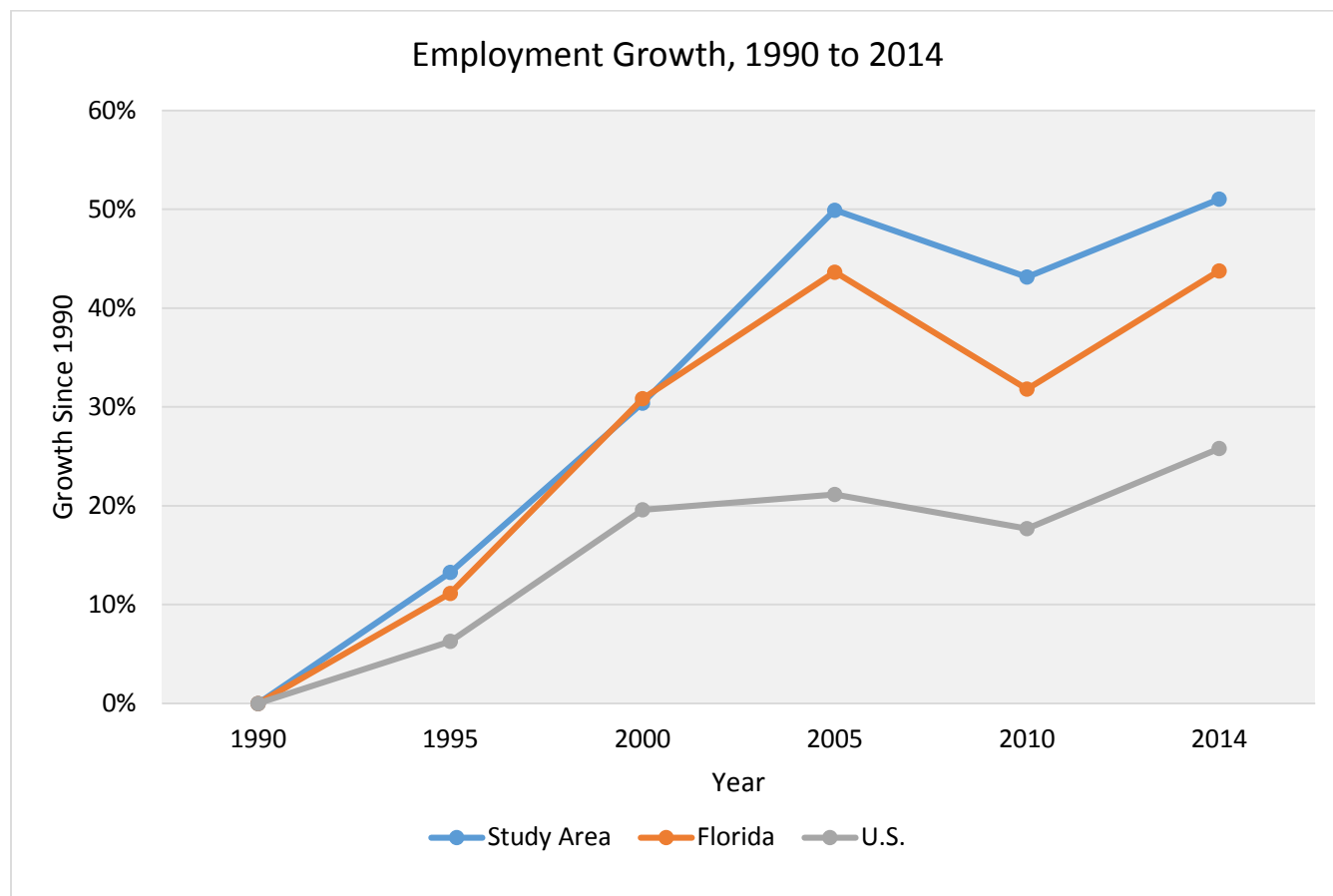
the I-75 corridor. Historically, the manufacturing sector has been oriented toward food and forest products. More recently, technology-related research and manufacturing has expanded in Gainesville, Ocala, and other parts of the region. Florida’s High-Tech Corridor Council, which began by linking the counties along Interstate 4, now includes 23 counties as far north as Alachua.

Logistics and distribution is emerging in importance as well. A series of distribution centers has developed along the I-75 corridor in Wildwood, Ocala, and Gainesville. These distribution centers generally cater to the Florida market, including food, beverages, and consumer goods. With anticipated growth in trade through Florida’s seaports and airports, Sumter and Marion Counties both are exploring plans to develop intermodal logistics centers and other distribution facilities close to major highway and rail corridors.

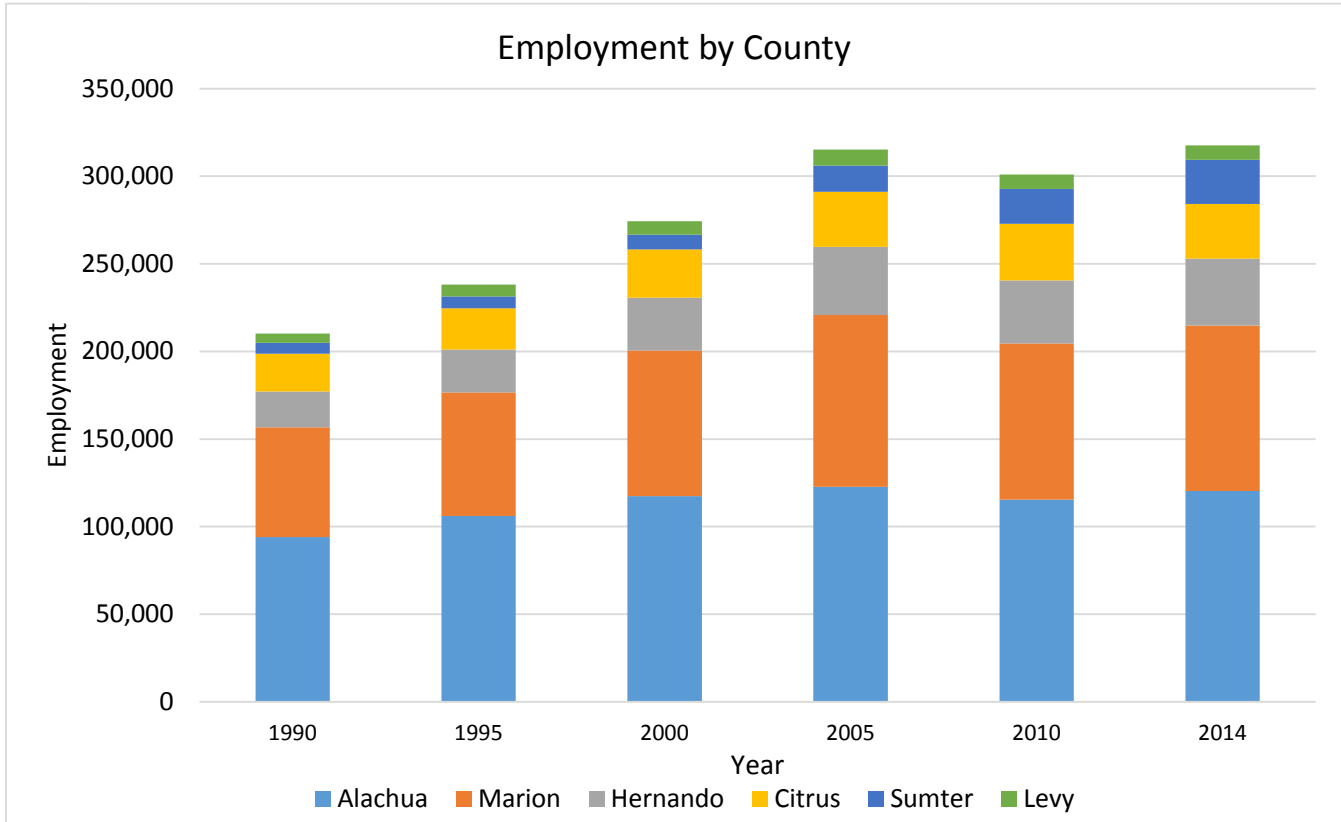
Health care employment is spread throughout the region, with key concentrations in the urban centers. Educational employment also is spread throughout the region, with overall totals dominated by the University of Florida in Gainesville.

Attractions are spread throughout the region, although the hotels, restaurants, and supporting businesses tend to be concentrated in the urban areas.

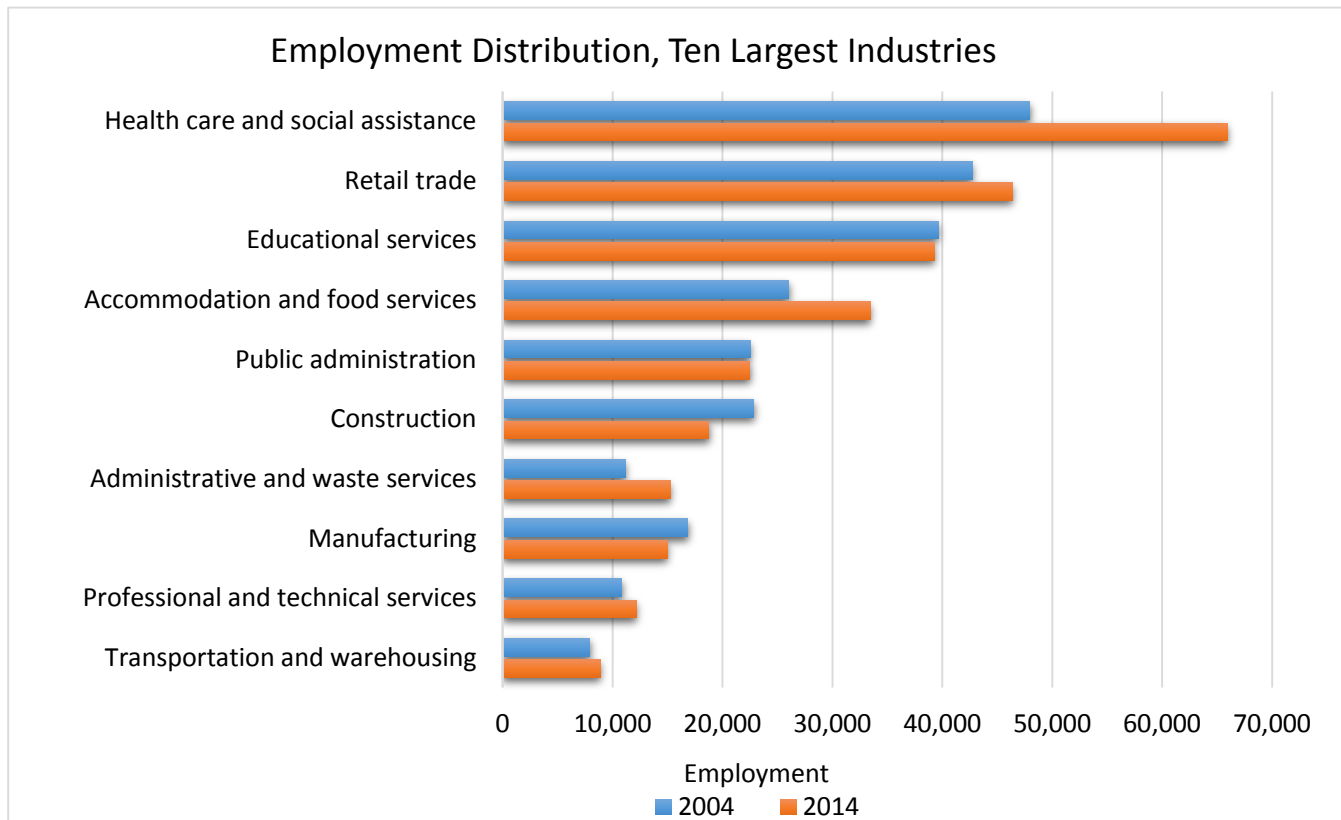
Regional and local economic development plans anticipate additional growth in the existing urban areas and in strategic locations along transportation corridors. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) developed by the regional planning councils identify potential sites for future investment and catalytic projects (map on page 18).



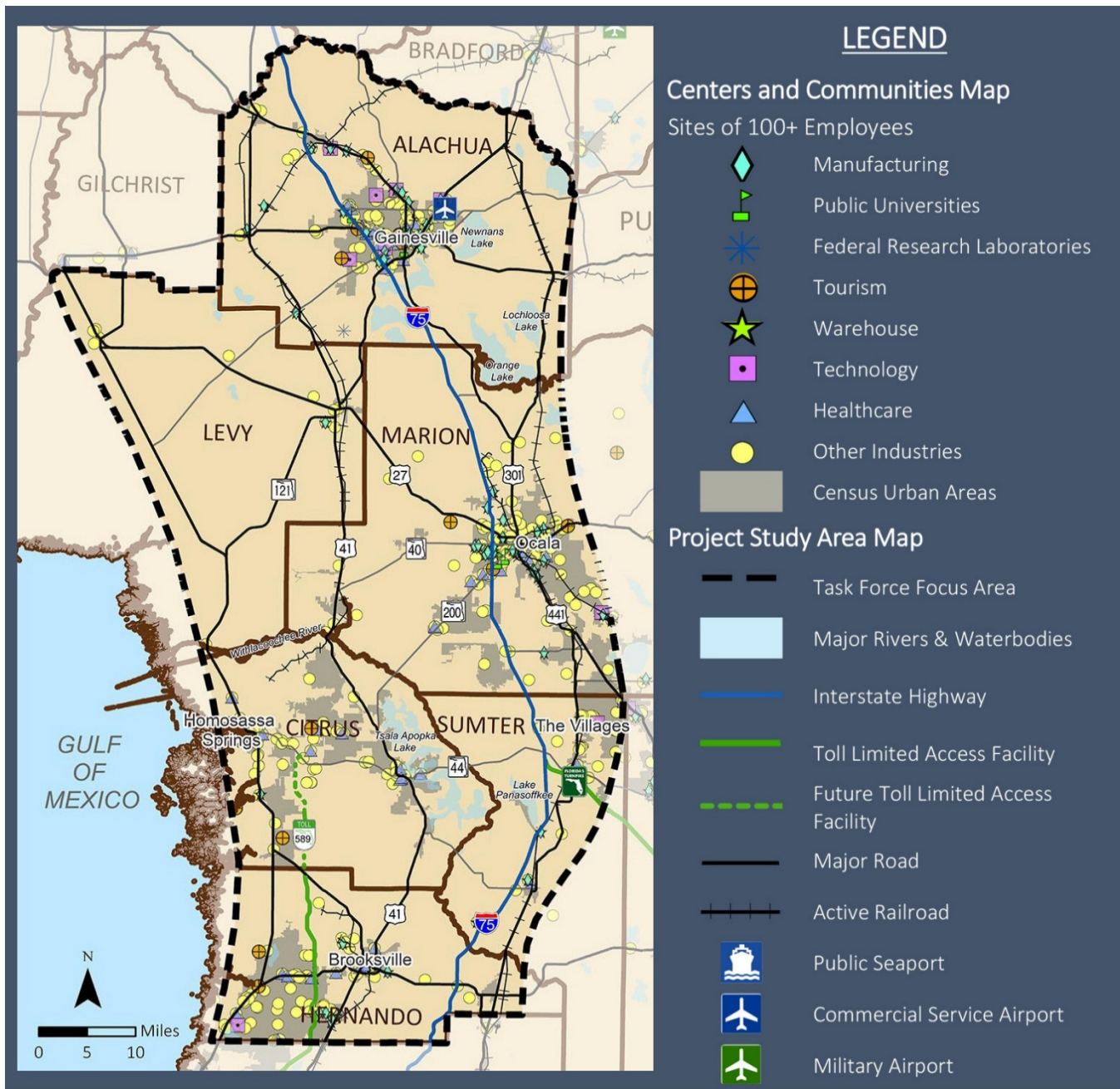
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



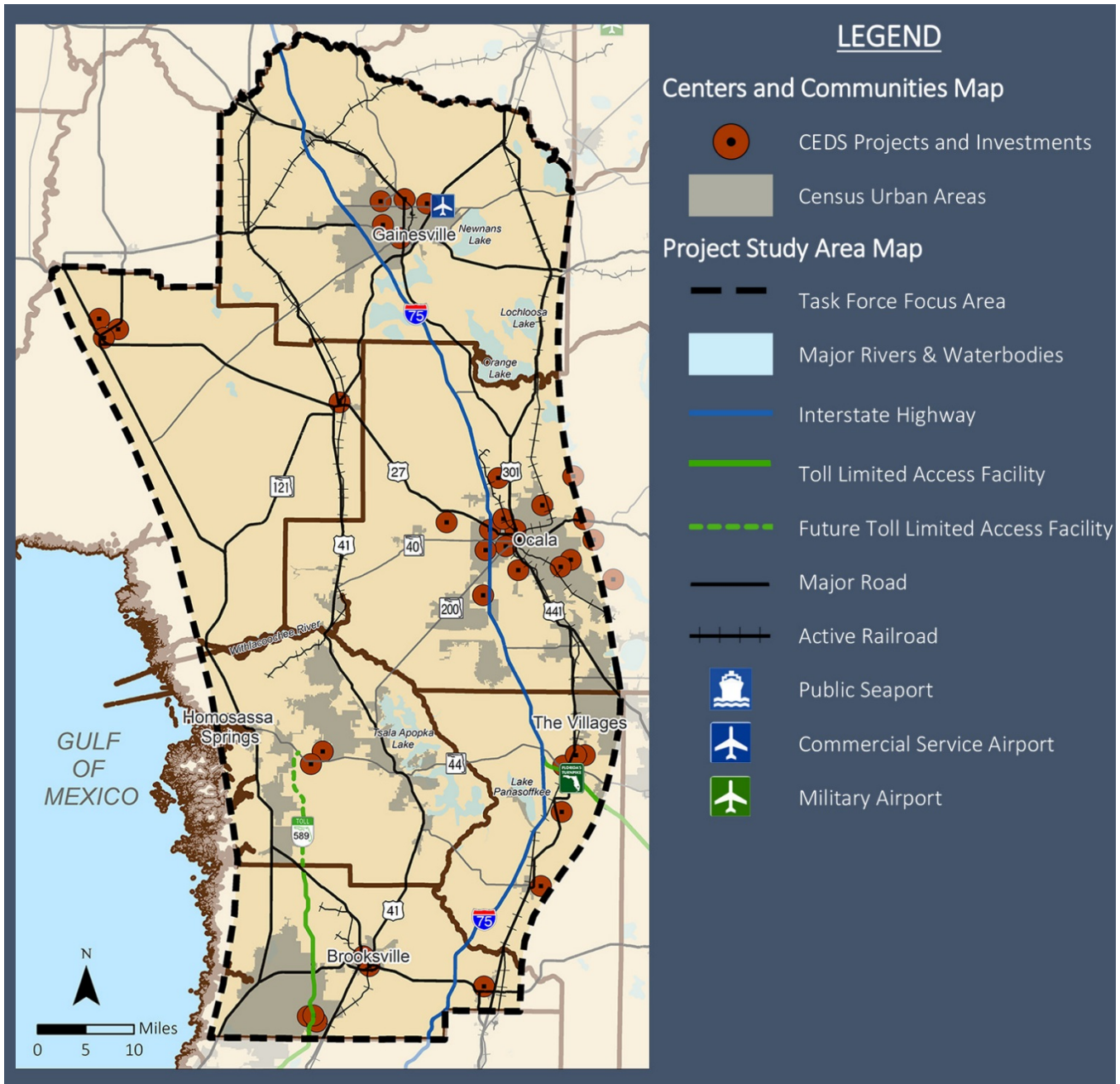
Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



Major Business and Industry Sites

Major clusters of employment in health care, manufacturing, logistics, technology, and tourism are concentrated in the urban areas. These clusters require efficient, reliable connections to suppliers and customers in other regions, state, and nations.

SOURCE: InfoGroup



Sites Targeted for Economic Development

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies developed by the regional planning councils identify potential investment opportunities and catalytic projects. Many of these sites are located in existing urban areas or along major transportation corridors.

Source: North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council



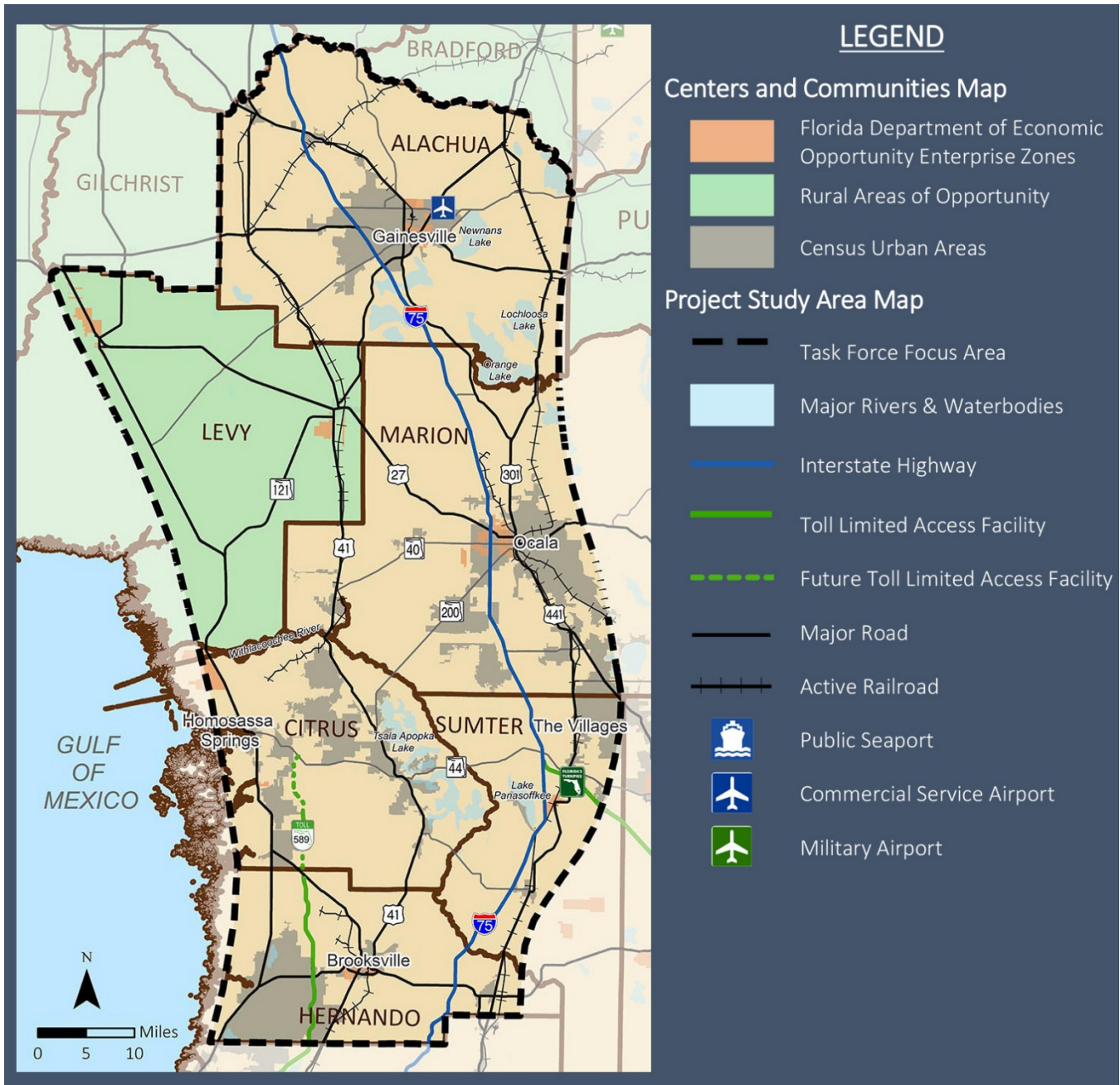
Examples of economic development projects identified in the CEDS or in county plans include:

- **Alachua County** — Key projects emphasize developing research and technology industries, leveraging the presence of the University of Florida and Santa Fe College. These include development of the Innovation Square research park and the Florida Innovation Hub at the University, the Perry Center for Emerging Technologies at Santa Fe College, the University of Florida Sid Martin Biotechnology Incubator in the City of Alachua, and the Progress Corporate Park in the city of Alachua.
- **Citrus County** — The county’s economy traditionally has been oriented toward agriculture, tourism and recreation, and health care and other personal services for the large retiree population. Economic diversification initiatives include the Inverness Airport Business Park and the Citrus County Medical Corridor along CR 491 in Lecanto. The county also is working to develop Deltona’s Holder Industrial Park on US 41 in Holder, which is in the northeastern part of the county.
- **Hernando County** — The county is pursuing multiple economic development projects around the Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport. The county also views the interchange of I-75 and SR 50/US 98 in the southeastern corner of the county as a key future employment centers, and is working on site development and extension of utilities to a 400-acre CSX rail-service parcel. The former quarry area along US 98 in the northwest portion of the county also is viewed as a future employment center.
- **Levy County** — Levy County’s economy emphasizes agriculture, forestry, and recreation. The county is working to expand the economic base by developing a new campus of the College of Central Florida and a new tri-county hospital in Chiefland; and developing the Williston Airport Industrial Park.
- **Marion County** — Building on its location and existing transportation infrastructure, Marion County is actively pursuing initiatives to develop an intermodal logistics center and the Ocala-Marion County Commerce Park (Ocala 489) and to expand Ocala International Airport. Future logistics and manufacturing related employment is targeted at the McGinley Commerce Park in Marion Oaks and

the Marion County Airport. Technology-related employment is targeted at the Siemens Heart of Florida Business Technology Campus in Northern Marion County and through expansion of the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition in downtown Ocala and the College of Central Florida. Projects related to the county’s equestrian and agricultural industries include the Florida Agriculture Center and Horse Park Authority and the North Central Florida Regional Agriculture and Civic Center. Recreation-related development is targeted at the Silver Springs Park and Community Redevelopment Area.

- **Sumter County** — Sumter County’s major project is the Florida Crossroads Industrial Activity Center, combining several sites around the intersections of I-75, Florida’s Turnpike, US 301, and the CSX S line including the Monarch Ranch, Wade Industrial, Mid Florida Distribution Center, and Pike 75 Logistic Center. This is envisioned as a major intermodal logistics center and cluster of distribution facilities serving the Tampa Bay and Central Florida regions. Other key initiatives include developing an agricultural business and research cluster including recent expansions of Central Beef Industries and research and development activities by Agromillora of Florida, Inc.

Levy County has been designated by the Governor and as Rural Area of Opportunity and is eligible for certain incentives and state agency support to facilitate economic development opportunities (map on page 22). Each of the counties also has a designated enterprise zone, a specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalization. Tax incentives are available to businesses that choose to create jobs in these zones.



Opportunities for Economic Development and Revitalization

Levy County has been designated by the Governor and as Rural Area of Opportunity. Each of the counties also has a designated enterprise zone, a specific geographic area targeted for economic revitalization.

Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The Initial Focus Area's centers and communities are a critical foundation of its quality of life and economy. Investments in enhanced or new transportation corridors could support key **opportunities** for the region's centers and communities, including:

- Supporting centers and communities targeted for growth in regional and local plans.
- Supporting growth in visitor activity.
- Improving access to markets for businesses.
- Supporting growth in domestic and global trade and freight flows.
- Reinforcing high tech clusters through connectivity among major universities, research labs, and businesses.

At the same time, planning for enhanced or new transportation corridors must consider the following **constraints**:

- Preserving the quality and character of existing communities.
- Maintaining the connectivity of the local road network that is important to the health of communities.

REFERENCES

State Policies and Plans

[State Comprehensive Plan](#), Section 187.291, Florida Statutes

[Community Planning Act](#), Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes

[Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development](#), Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, 2012

Florida Transportation Plan [Policy Element](#), Florida Department of Transportation, 2015

Regional Plans

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, adopted September 2015

North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, adopted September 2012

North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, Strategic Regional Policy Plan, adopted October 2011

Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, adopted September 2012, updated September 2013

Withlacoochee Regional Planning Council, Strategic Regional Policy Plan, adopted August 1997

Local Plans

Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, adopted April 2011, last amended October 2013

Citrus County Comprehensive Plan, adopted July 2006, last amended May 2012

Hernando County Comprehensive Plan, adopted December 2005, last amended November 2013

Levy County Comprehensive Plan, adopted August 1999, last amended May 2015

Marion County Comprehensive Plan, adopted May 2014, last amended May 2015

Unified Comprehensive Plan for Sumter County/Center Hill/Webster, adopted October 2012, last amended January 2015

Additional Data Sources

InfoGroup business location database

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census and 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2014 population estimates and 2040 population projections (extrapolated by the Florida Department of Transportation to 2060)