

The Future

The next step in ensuring that Hillsborough County's future includes cost effective growth is to stage, phase and tier development by providing incentives for priority areas to maximize existing services. Techniques under consideration to implement these concepts include tools such as minimum densities, differing cost structures, transfers of development rights and designation of priority development areas.



THE URBAN SERVICE AREA

A progressive growth management tool



Fiscally Responsible Growth



Hillsborough County, Florida



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Steady Growth Demands New Infrastructure

Hillsborough County is on a pace to reach 1.3 million residents in the year 2025. The burgeoning population will continue to demand the development of new homes, retail establishments, commercial and industrial land.

Local governments will continue to be challenged daily with providing the roads, schools, parks, water, sewer, police, fire, storm drainage, etc. to accommodate this huge demand while improving the quality of life for existing residents. It is important that as this physical growth happens, local government is mindful of the public costs involved in responding to the service demands.

Directing Growth

In 1993, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners adopted the recommendation of the Planning Commission to put in place a policy that is

accomplishing several goals for Hillsborough County's residents.

An urban service area (USA) was established as part of the long-range comprehensive plan. It focuses growth to a geographically-defined area which is planned for urban services rather than allowing growth to happen where there are few or no planned urban services in the near future.

Though the location of the urban service area appears as a boundary on a map, it is more. It defines a growth management strategy designed to direct growth over the next 20 years. It is also the area inside which the local governments plan to prioritize government spending in order to provide and maximize the infrastructure needed to accommodate new residents in a fiscally sound manner.

The urban service area boundary can accommodate growth within a 20-year planning horizon and has provisions for growth beyond that point as well.

Within the urban service area, infrastructure zones will be established to encourage infill development to further maximize the use of existing infrastructure and create a logical extension of the established urban pattern.

Factoid

By 2025, the population of Hillsborough County's unincorporated areas will grow by 282,659 people—approximately the 2002 population of Tampa.

Goals

The goals of the urban service area boundary are to:

- provide and preserve a choice of lifestyles in Hillsborough County
- construct cost-efficient urban infrastructure such as roads, schools, public safety, etc.
- preserve environmentally sensitive land
- reinvest in existing urbanized areas that might otherwise be neglected
- create higher-density land-use patterns that encourage a mix of use and patronage of multi-modal transportation.

Maintaining Quality of Life

According to the Future Land Use Element of *Future of Hillsborough, The Comprehensive Plan for Unincorporated Hillsborough County, Florida*, the urban service area boundary serves as a means to provide an efficient use of land and public and private investment and contain urban sprawl.

The overall goal is to ensure that the quality of life for residents of Hillsborough County is not diminished as more people come to Hillsborough County to live and work. Quality of life is measured by the availability of appropriate levels of libraries, drinking water, parks, schools, roads, police, fire and other services needed to support a growing population.

In adopting the urban service area, the Board of County Commissioners recognized the need for a tool that could help maintain a quality of life while managing the cost of growth and protecting the county's rich natural resources.

Protecting Lifestyle Choices

The urban services area also maintains the freedom residents have to choose a variety of settings in which to live as the county's population continues to rise. The comprehensive plan, as determined by the Board of County Commissioners, targets three distinct lifestyles — rural, urban and suburban — as desired choices for residents. Currently, residents can live in rural agricultural and rural residential areas that consist of lots over five acres and one acre respectively with great distances between non-residential uses. Others make their homes in the urban and suburban areas of the county. The densities shown on the Future Land Use map, along with the policies contained in the comprehensive plan, help to maintain these distinct styles of development.

