

North-North Tropical Trail Small Area Study



*Historic St. Luke's
Episcopal Church*

**Recommendations of
The North-North Tropical Trail
Citizen Resource Group
Facilitated by
Brevard County Planning and Zoning Office**

**Approved by the Brevard County
Board of County Commissioners
September 25, 2007**

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY



In 2004, the Brevard County Board of Commissioners directed County staff to conduct a Small Area Study for portions experiencing recent growth pressures in Merritt Island. The study has been divided into several sections, or “study areas,” due to size and variety of community issues. Through a series of meetings with Commission appointed Citizen Resource Groups (CRG’s) and the area’s local citizens, each community created their own vision of the future for their study area. The study

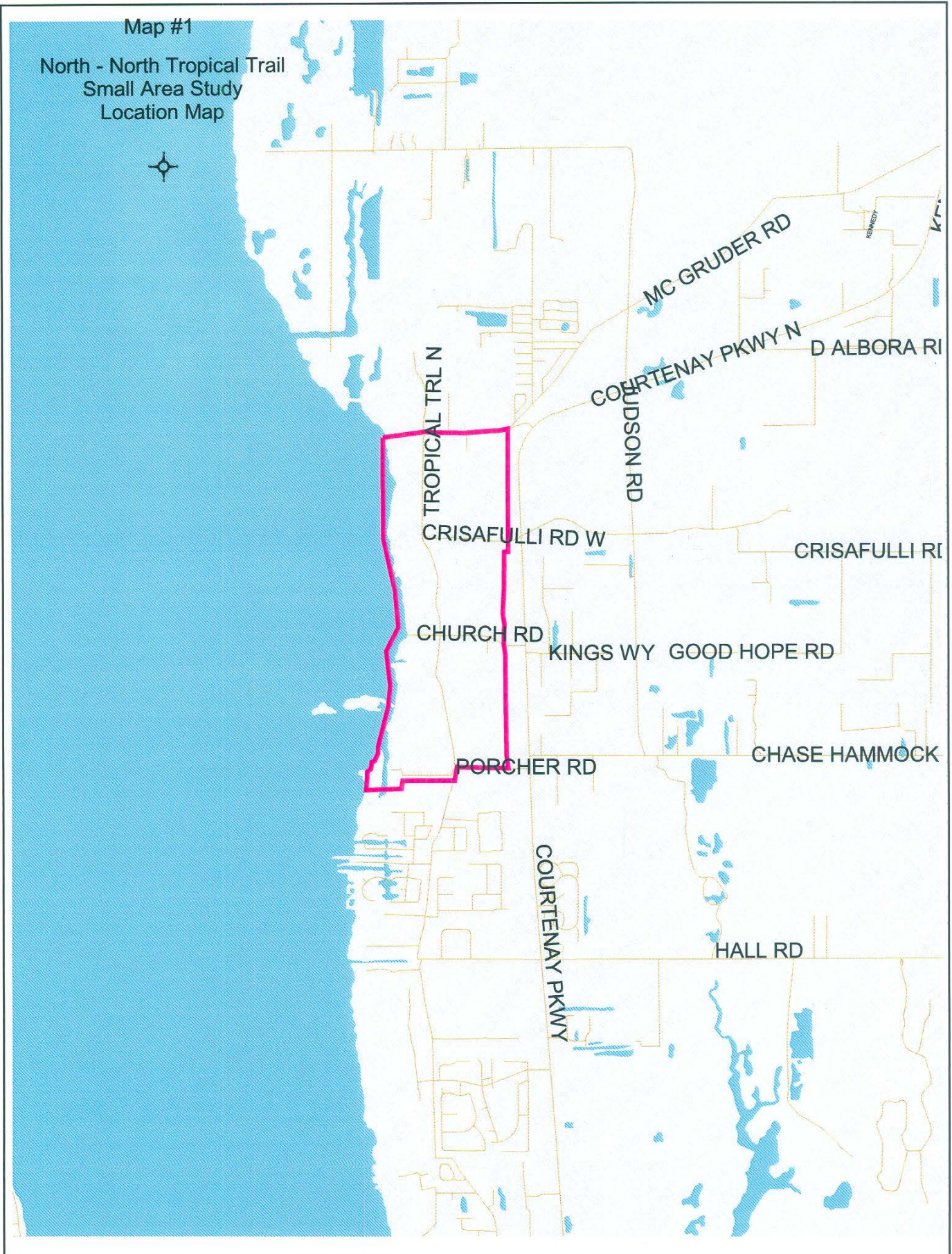
area which this report refers to is located north of the State Route 528, and is approximately bordered by the Indian River Lagoon on the west, by N. Tropical Trail on the north, by Porcher Road and the Treasure Lagoon Development on the south, and by the commercial corridor along Courtenay Parkway (S.R.3) on the east (see Map #1). While reviewing various aspects of the study, this report will present recommendations of the CRG and citizen input as well as suggested Future Land Use Map changes for the area.

THE CITIZEN RESOURCE GROUP

Upon commencement of the study, the Board of County Commissioners appointed a Citizen Resource Group to provide direction of the study through a series of public meetings. This group consisted of five members, along with one alternate. The CRG held public meetings once a month from April to December of 2005. During these meetings, staff from various County departments presented information on specific development related topics in order to better educate the CRG and local citizens on particular issues and to answer any questions that arose during meetings. In addition, the CRG formulated a citizen survey addressing future needs and wants in the community that was mailed to all citizens in the designated study area. This survey, along with comments and concerns from both the CRG and community, were used to develop recommendations regarding the study area’s future growth.

Map #1

North - North Tropical Trail
Small Area Study
Location Map



CHARACTER OF STUDY AREA

The present nature of the area is primarily rural residential (see Map #2). Historically, the land in this area was well known for its citrus fields and farming activities. Since the decline of the citrus industry and the increase in housing and development demands in the County, this area has lost a significant portion of its citrus and farming operations. Nonetheless, this area has remained relatively rural in comparison with other areas of Merritt Island and the County.



Out of the total estimated 658 acres in this study area, approximately 544 acres (83%) have been planned for residential use with 105 existing residences. The majority of the residential zoning provides for large lot development, hence the rural character of the area. The remaining acreage is vacant or still being used as citrus fields and/or farming. Parcels in this area have been divided mostly through flag lots and easements, with lot sizes ranging from .05 acre to 110 acres.



The segment of N. Tropical Trail that lies in the study area is a paved, two-lane road and carries approximately 1,620 average daily trips (segment including Hall Road to Crisafulli Road to N. Courtenay as listed in the 2004-05 Brevard County Traffic Count Program figures). Crisafulli Road and Church Road are also two lane paved roadways located within the study area. State Route 3 (Courtenay Parkway) lies to the east of the study area boundary, and contains a large degree of commercial related land uses.

Courtenay Parkway is a four lane divided highway and has approximately 18,480 trips per day (segment including Hall Road to N. Tropical Trail as listed in the 2004-05 Brevard County Traffic Count Program figures).

The westernmost portion of the designated study area is the Indian River Lagoon shoreline. This area of the Lagoon is classified as Class II waters by the Brevard County Office of Natural Resources. Class II refers to waters designated by the state for shellfish propagation and harvesting, as determined by the State Department of Environmental Regulation. In the Class II waters, a fifty (50) foot shoreline protection buffer is required extending landward from the mean high-water line or the safe upland line.

North-North Tropical Trail
Small Area Study
Aerial (2004)

Map #2



FUTURE LAND USE AND ZONING

Current future land use and zoning designations in the study area are primarily residential in nature (see Maps #4 and #5). The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) contains two residential density designations of Residential 1 and Residential 2 (see Table 1.a). The zoning designations contain a variety of residential classifications. These are AU, RR-1, EU, SR, GU, and EU-2 (see Table 1.b).

Table 1.a Existing Future Land Use

Future Land Use Designation	Total Acreage
Residential 1	460.62
Residential 2	219

Table 1.b Existing Zoning

Zoning Classification	Minimum Required Lot Size	Total Acreage
General Use (GU)	5 acres	7
Agricultural Residential (AU)	2.5 acres	429
Rural Residential (RR-1)	1 acre	70.91
Suburban Residential (SR)	½ acre	14
Estate Use Residential (EU)	15,000 s.f.	20
Estate Use Residential (EU-2)	9,000 s.f.	116

Map #4

North - North Tropical Trail
Small Area Study

Legend
Future Land Use

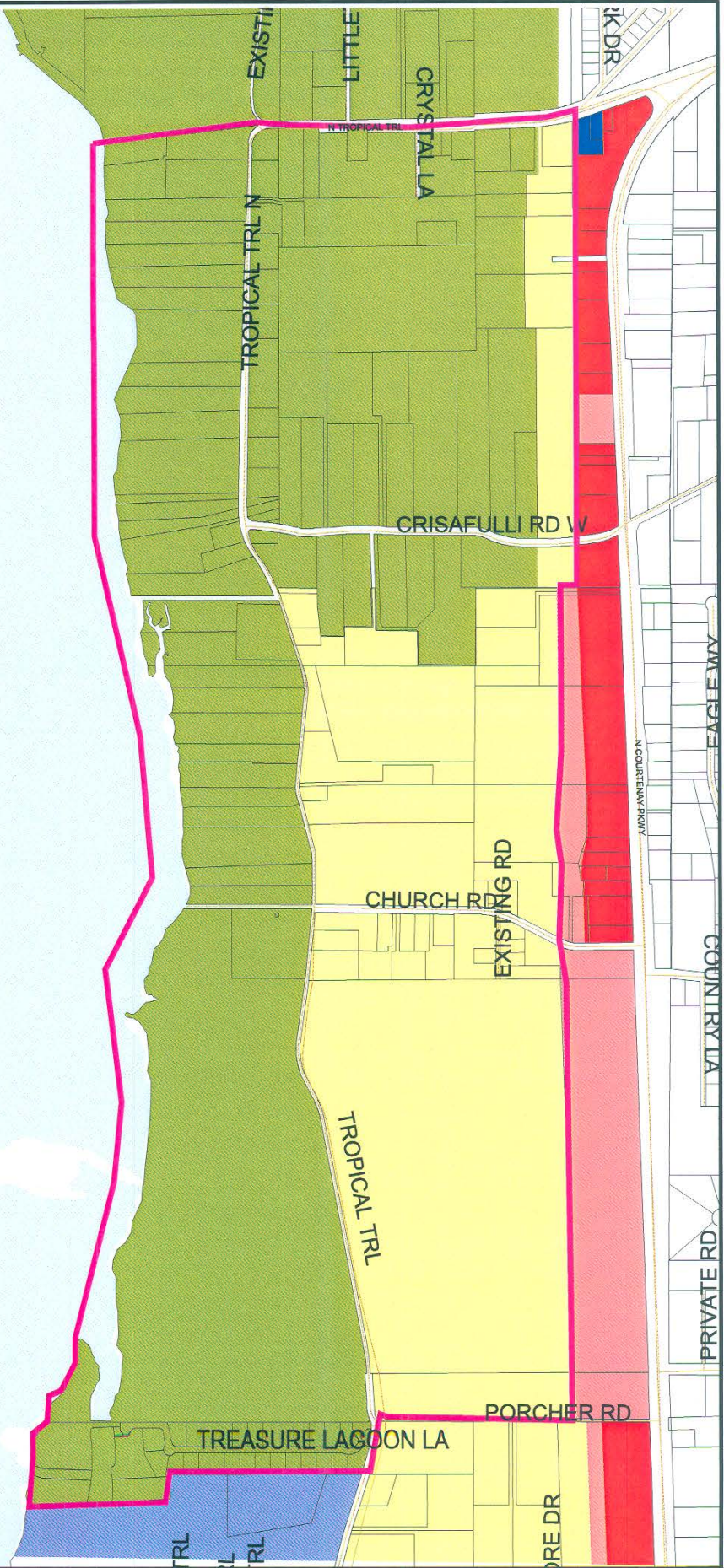
- Community Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Public
- Recreation
- Residential 1
- Residential 2



Scale: 1" = 1000'

Indian River Lagoon

DRAFT
For Comprehensive Planning Purposes
Site specific information should be
obtained from the Brevard County
Planning & Zoning Office. 321-833-2069



North - North Tropical Trail Small Area Study

Legend Zoning Categories

-  AU
-  BU-1
-  EU
-  EU-2
-  GML
-  GU
-  RR-1
-  SR

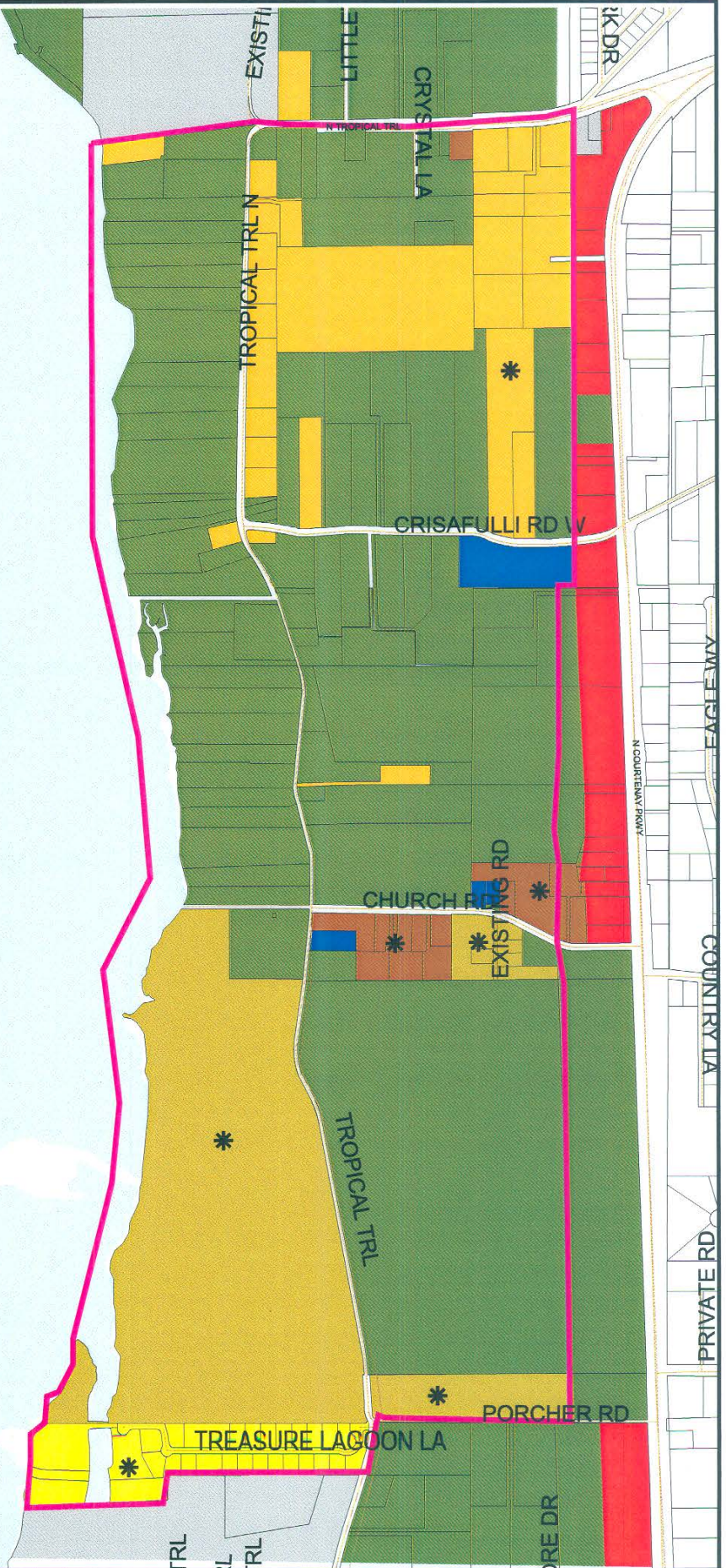
 Binding Development Plan



Scale: 1" = 1000'

Indian River Lagoon

DRAFT
For Comprehensive Planning Purposes
Site specific information should be
obtained from the Brevard County
Planning & Zoning Office. 321-633-2069



THE CITIZEN SURVEY

In August of 2005, the CRG asked staff to create a survey to ascertain the needs and wants of the community regarding future development and growth in the study area. The survey was sent to citizens located in the South-North Tropical Trail Small Area Study. Out of a total 134 surveys mailed, 34 surveys were returned to the Brevard County Office of Planning and Zoning.

The survey contained six questions ranging from general demographic information to future land use issues. In addition, many citizens provided additional comments and/or suggestions (see Appendix A). The following are some findings of the survey:

- The number one reason people chose to own property in the study area was for the rural character. The next two most common responses were lot size and neighborhood character.
- Top current concerns included: preservation of rural character, preservation of green space/native plants/trees, wildlife conservation, traffic congestion, flooding/drainage, and preservation of the Indian River Lagoon.
- Top future concerns from citizens included: traffic congestion, speeding/traffic safety, flooding/drainage, preservation of rural character, preservation of Indian River Lagoon, and preservation of green space/native plants/trees.
- Respondents were least concerned with the current and future availability of sidewalks and school capacity.
- Respondents would like to see more agricultural (farming, horses, cattle, citrus, etc.) uses encouraged in the study area.
- Respondents would like to see higher density residential development discouraged in the study area.
- Most respondents feel that the maximum density for the entire study area should be 1 unit per 2.5 acres.

Many respondents expressed their support for the study and provided additional comments and/or suggestions primarily emphasizing the desire to preserve the rural character of the area. These can be found in Appendix A. In addition, a few citizens mailed letters regarding the small area study that can be found in Appendix B.

THE CITIZEN RESOURCE GROUP FUTURE LAND USE MAP REVISION

During their November 2005 meeting, the CRG had a workshop meeting and created a proposed Future Land Use Map for the study area. Because the area contains a wide mix of existing lot sizes and densities, the CRG divided the study area into sections and used several different Future Land Use Map designations (see Map # 6). The breakdown is as shown in table 2.a :

Table 2.a Existing and Proposed Future Land Use Comparison

Existing FLU	Proposed FLU
Residential 1.....461 acres	Residential 1.....95 acres
Residential 2.....219 acres	Residential 2.....14 acres
	Residential 1:2.5....548 acres

As can be seen from the above chart and Map #6, the results reinforce the desire by the CRG to maintain a rural, large lot residential community.

THE CITIZEN RESOURCE GROUP OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At their monthly meeting in October 2005, the CRG began their workshop for developing recommendations for the Small Area Study report. The group used the 13 categories as listed in the County’s Comprehensive Plan and formulated the following recommendations:

1. The County shall take permanent action to alleviate flooding in the study area. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Implementing a FUNDED stormwater management plan for study area
 - The outfalls under State Route 3, at Chase Hammock and W. Crisafulli; expand, upgrade and maintain vegetation.
 - The area along W. Crisafulli Road & Church Road.
 - Area in and around intersection of Porcher Road and N. Tropical Trail

2. Any new installation of sewer lines shall be accompanied by simultaneous installation of reclaimed water lines.

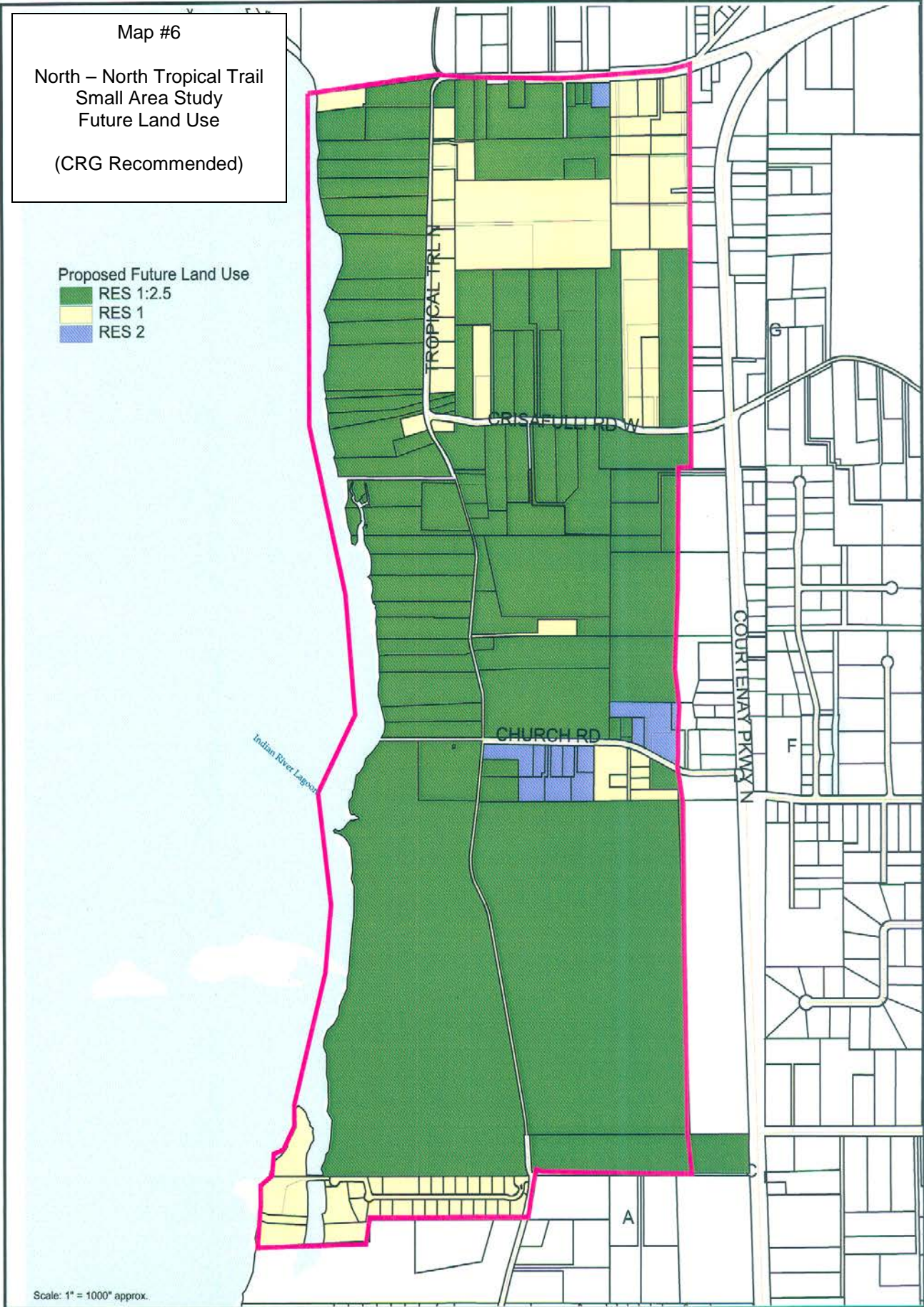
Map #6

North – North Tropical Trail
Small Area Study
Future Land Use

(CRG Recommended)

Proposed Future Land Use

- RES 1:2.5
- RES 1
- RES 2



Staff Comment (Dick Martens): The area north of the barge canal has been designated a mandatory reuse area, which means that reclaimed water lines get installed in subdivisions and site plans that install sewers.

3. Site with Binding Development Plan on N. Tropical Trail (Waters Mark development, Parcel # 23 362700255) shall not be permitted to use septic systems when developed; require sewer use.

Staff Comment (Rick Enos, Randy Hunt): Septic tank approval is a state function and is not the jurisdiction of the County. Concerning sewers, at present the nearest mains are located in Island Lakes Resort, west of North Courtenay Parkway -- about 2/3-mile from Parcel #23's nearest point by air (longer by right-of-way). Florida state law (F.S. 381.0065(2)(a)(3)) requires that service be within 1/4-mile by existing easement or right-of-way before hookup can be mandated for new large developments. However, if existing residents so desire, voluntary extension of public sewer could be considered by the County via creation of a Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU), which would involve financial participation by affected properties.

4. Encourage retention of existing and creation of additional parks and recreational sites within study area.
5. Encourage retention and maintenance of historical sites within study area.
6. The County shall continually monitor the Federal Inland Navigation District site (Parcel # 23 362700752) to ensure that the commitment to maintain water quality in the area is met. The CRG recommends periodic updates to District 2 Commission Office and the North Merritt Island Advisory Board regarding the condition and status of site.
7. Amend the enabling ordinance to require that the North Merritt Island Advisory Board review all future subdivision applications prior to the scheduled "pre-application" meeting.

Staff Comment (Rick Enos): Subdivisions are an administrative function and are not discretionary as are rezonings. This would require an amendment to the enabling ordinance created by the Board of County Commissioners that establishes their duties and responsibilities.

8. The four roadways in the study area have flood drainage, potholes, and deteriorating shoulders. Therefore, these roads require additional repair, maintenance, and improvement. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Addressing flooding and visibility concerns along Porcher and intersection at N. Tropical Trail; stop sign required

- Addressing flooding along W. Crisafulli Road and Church Road
 - Redesigning intersection of Church Road, North Tropical Trail, and State Route 3 for turning access in all directions.
 - Evaluating and revising current study area Level of Service (LOS) of 15,600 trips per day; devise method for determining more accurate LOS for area.
 - Heavy trucks are damaging local roads. Tonnage needs to be limited.
9. The CRG requests that the Open Space Ordinance be excluded from use in the study area regarding any future development, due to concerns about the ordinance's allowable density bonuses and similar incentives.

Staff Comment (Rick Enos): The open space provision provides for the permanent protection of natural resources, which is an objective of the comprehensive plan.

Property owners have the discretion to use this provision which protects the compatibility of adjacent parcels by requiring that lots on the perimeter of the project must match the lot size of adjacent lots.

Despite the CRG's objections to the open space subdivision, it may be preferable to amend the open space subdivision regulations to address any perceived deficiencies than to preclude its use.

This recommendation would require an amendment to Section 62-3000 (Open Space Subdivision).

SUMMARY

The intent of this study is to examine and guide future development in the designated study area through the use of appropriate future land use and zoning designations. In meeting the demands of this future residential growth, these areas must provide the developmental parameters that create a quality environment for area residents, as well as preserve the sensitive nature of the Indian River Lagoon and its surrounding lands. Together with County staff, the North – North Tropical Trail Citizen Resource Group and area citizens created a Future Land Use Map and recommendations for the designated study area in hopes of meeting those future demands.

Appendix A

North – North Tropical Trail Small Area Study 2005 Citizen Survey Results

In August of 2005, a survey addressing the needs and wants regarding future development and growth was sent to citizens located in the North-North Tropical Trail Small Area Study. Out of a total 134 surveys mailed, 34 surveys were returned to the Brevard County Office of Planning and Zoning. The following is a summary of the results. In each question, highest numbers are shown in bold in order to demonstrate trends.

Question #1

What are your reasons for choosing to live or own property in the N. Tropical Trail area? Please check all that apply.

Number of people who chose this reason

Proximity to the Indian River.....	16
Lot Size.....	23
Neighborhood Character.....	23
Rural Lifestyle.....	32
Investment.....	4

Other Reasons:

- *Like living in country.*
- *Privacy*
- *Close to work.*
- *Peace & quiet; simple lifestyle*
- *Proximity to KSC.*
- *Close to KSC*

Question #3

How concerned are you with the current and future condition of each of the following items in your community? Please rate how you feel about each using the following scale:

	1 = not concerned				2 = somewhat concerned				3 = concerned				4=very concerned			
									(Now)				(Future)			
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
a. Traffic congestion:	5	9	10	9	1	0	7	25								
b. Speeding/Traffic Safety:	3	11	8	10	0	4	7	20								
c. Flooding/drainage:	4	8	16	7	0	5	7	21								
d. Preservation of rural character:	1	1	9	22	0	0	5	27								
e. Availability of sidewalks and bicycle paths:	20	10	2	1	17	10	4	2								

f. School Capacity:	14	8	5	4	10	6	4	11
g. Water & Sewer Availability:	7	6	14	1	4	6	8	11
h. Police & Fire Service	9	5	10	3	5	4	13	10
j. Preservation of								
Indian River Lagoon:	4	3	13	13	2	2	6	23
k. Preservation of								
green space/native plants/trees:	1	5	11	17	0	2	7	24
l. Wildlife conservation:	1	5	9	18	0	0	9	24
m. Power Continuity:	3	8	12	11	1	9	7	17
n. Vandalism/Crime:	2	13	9	10	1	3	14	15
o. Road Improvements/Maintenance:	4	9	17	4	2	4	13	14

Question #4

What types of development do you think should be ENCOURAGED in the study area?

You may select more than one item:

Number of people who chose this item

Single family homes.....	17
Parks and recreational facilities.....	15
Agricultural (farming, horses, cattle, citrus, etc).....	26
None.....	7

Other Comments/Types of Development to be Encouraged:

- *Minimum of 2.5 acre lots*
- *Boat Ramp*
- *1 Acre Minimum*
- *No More!*
- *Green Space*
- *Nature Preserves*
- *Keep lot sizes at or more than 2 acres.*
- *Limited Single Family*
- *2 acre lots for single family homes*

Question #5

**What types of development do you think should be DISCOURAGED in the study area?
You may select more than one item:**

Number of people who chose this item

Single family homes.....	12
Parks and recreational facilities.....	2
Agricultural (farming, horses, cattle, citrus, etc.....)	0
None.....	3

Other Comments/Types of Development to be Discouraged:

- *Multi-family dwellings*
- *High-density single family*
- *High-density neighborhood*
- *Subdivisions*
- *Condos, townhomes, apartment bldgs, large scale development and no more density than currently zoned.*
- *Industrial & Commercial*
- *Any high density housing or the type of development at Sunset Lakes.*
- *Multi-family Homes*
- *Multi-family dwellings, Mobile home communities, and any commercial.*
- *Single family homes on less than 1 acre lots.*
- *Multi-family, etc.*
- *Strip Malls*
- *Condos*
- *Any development with less than 1 acre per home.*
- *Reduction of lot sizes*
- *Any Commercial*
- *Subdivisions*
- *High density housing (less than 1 acre/home)*
- *Higher density than currently exists.*
- *Apartments/Condos/Multi-family units*

Question #6

**What residential density maximum(s) would you like to see in the designated study area?
You may select more than one item.**

MAXIMUM DENSITY

AREA	1 unit per 5 acres	1 unit per 2.5 acres	1 unit per 1 acre	2 units per 1 acre
West of North Tropical Trail	6	24	7	1
East of N. Tropical Trail and North of W. Crisafulli	5	21	13	1
East of N. Tropical Trail between W. Crisafulli Rd. and Church Rd.	9	18	12	1
East of N. Tropical Trail Between Church Rd. and Porcher Road.	11	16	10	1

Additional Comments and/or Suggestions:

- We would like this area to remain rural. No more gated communities. Need more landscaping in the median and alongside the roadways. Fewer billboards.
- We want this area to reflect the rural them it has always had.
- If I wanted to live in someone’s backyard, I would never have moved out this far. I’m all for changes, but the right ones. I love living in the country. We don’t have a bit of it left.
- Every single property owner should have absolute rights over their own property. If no right of way exists for their property then one shouldn’t be created. No one’s property should be “taken” or “damaged” without full consent of the property owner. It scares me how fast we are moving towards a state of communism. We are already at a state where you only own your property if the gov’t doesn’t want or need it.
- We would like to see as large lots as possible (between 2.5 and 5 acres or more). Please no more high density neighborhoods.
- We are concerned with some neighboring land owners, who purchased their rural estates along the river for investment purposes, and now want to sell subdivided lots on N. Tropical Trail at the front of their property. This means those living on the river will look into the new backyards. Thank you for taking our input!
- I appreciate the work done by the small area study group.
- No denser than current zoning. The future land use guidelines should be rescinded.
- Ridiculous how much we are out of power!! Power glitches every day.
- We moved here and selected this specific area because we wanted little to zero further development. In the 5 years since we purchased, development has been non-stop! We can foresee that very few people other than the old-timers care anything about this rural lifestyle.

- That being the case, we have no interest of any kind of residential development. There is far too much at the present time. That goes for Mitchell Ellington Park as well. Why do we have this?!
- The roads can't handle much of an increase in density. It is hard enough now for walkers and bicyclists. We have no flooding or drainage problems on the upper end of North Tropical Trail and DON'T WANT ANY. Irresponsible mass development would cause more than water problems. Fix the infrastructure, all of them, before you let any more building begin. When our neighbor cleared his land, untold numbers of animals had to relocate. I would be terribly sad not to see the wildlife, and it will disappear entirely with continued building.
 - I believe this entire study/CRG to be a farce perpetrated by a very few landowners who wish to develop and have (through whatever means) captured Mr. Pritchard's ear. I believe this "proposed" re-zoning is already a "done deal" and I pledge to actively campaign and vote against any public official who supports it.
 - I believe that reducing the amount of acreage per house will cause a lot of problems such as flooding, traffic congestion, etc. I would like to have some privacy without having to be concerned with a subdivision being built next door. The main reason most landowners/homeowners live out here.
 - Please listen to the recommendation of the Citizen Resource Group. These are the people who live in the area. We have all moved to NMI to leave the housing developments in the rest of the County. We love our lifestyle.
 - Leave the area east and west, north of Porcher and south of Church Street, alone. Please, our wildlife in this area is running out of space.
 - The present BDP on the 110 acres on N. Tropical Trail & Porcher is totally unacceptable. Given all our concerns in this area we can not accommodate such a large development without destruction to this unique place. Should this be developed, no less than 2.5 – 5 acres per home site please.
 - I would like to thank the CRG board members who have taken valuable time out of their lives to volunteer time for this study. Hopefully your findings and recommendations will not be construed as "credenza clutter" and will be considered seriously by our County Commission.
 - We moved here looking forward to the quiet rural nature of North Merritt Island. We enjoy our wildlife that abounds here, too. We feel strongly that you should consider the desires of the residents before the profitability of the developers. Increased density creates County problems with traffic, drainage, river health, sewage and other costly considerations.
 - Uncontrolled growth on North Merritt Island, sponsored by the Brevard County Commission, their minions, the Brevard County P & Z Department with the only purpose being to maximize the tax base, is completely unacceptable to residents. Each and every County Commissioner is attached, hard and fast, to the udder of the Brevard County tax payer sucking us dry.
 - Development should require sufficient green space to maintain sense of rural neighborhood.
 - I am greatly concerned about the EU zoning on the 120 acre parcel west of N. Tropical Tr. from Church Rd. to Porcher Rd.
 - Discourage dense populated communities. Our environment and limited evacuation (hurricanes, fires, etc.) cannot handle more people. NO CONDOS! No 3+ story buildings! Watch/limit golf courses due to high usage of toxic chemicals.
 - Some considerations should be made to how many building structures should be allowed on the area being studied.

Appendix B

5900 N. Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, Fl. 32953
321-453-5452
November 3, 2005

NOV 3 2005
- 2005

North - North Tropical Trail Small Area Study
Citizens Resource Group Board
North Merritt Island , Fl. 32953
Simone Spiess, CRG Chair

Subject: North Tropical Trail CRG Study Findings and Recommendations

Dear CRG board members,

I would like to thank you for taking your valuable time to pursue a study of our area. Your participation indicates your concern for our neighborhood and its future. I appreciate your various areas of expertise and I am hopeful for recommendations that will lead to improvements in our neighborhood and a continuance of the life style we have worked hard to create and maintain.

The several meetings I attended were informative and provided many facts upon which to base sound recommendations. I believe that all the bases have been covered as far as the topics covered. Within those topics, however, I found there was information not fully understood by or available to the subject matter "experts" brought in. And this is where I believe that the true benefit comes in with a Citizens Resource Group. As a group, you live or work in the area of study. I have seen many of you walking the neighborhood, working in your yards or visiting with other neighbors. Many of you have lived in the neighborhood for years and have accumulated "tribal" knowledge of how the neighborhood operates. YOU are truly the "experts" and your recommendations should carry much weight on the decision of the future of our neighborhood.

I, too, consider myself an expert on my neighborhood having lived here for close to 8 years. During that time I have experienced hurricanes, tropical storms, droughts with very nearby fires, extended power outages, 2 major car accidents on my property, amongst other events. As a result of those events, I have taken the initiative to learn more about my neighborhood and how it operates. The following are my recommendations based on my experience and research:

A. The BOTTOM LINE: The area under study can **NOT** safely support any increases in density. **PERIOD.**

B. The Comprehensive plan as it stands today is not appropriate and the build out numbers that it represents would result in safety hazards to the residents.

My rationale for the above 2 statements:

1. Our roads are undersized and in poor maintenance with flooding and damage occurring on West Crisafulli, Church , North Tropical and Porcher roads. All of these roads are necessary for residents. Local services are in danger when they use these roads, especially large vehicles such as school buses. This was very apparent during the last storm event, Hurricane Wilma, which was not considered to be a big event for our area. The more residents that are here, the more damage those roads are going to see. TRANSLATION: NO more increase in Density.

2. Road congestion on SR3 is a problem. The county traffic representative that attended the CRG meeting indicated that the ONLY way to help with this traffic problem was to minimize traffic coming in from the feeder roads. That means less residents coming from our roads.
TRANSLATION: NO more increase in Density.
3. Flooding is prevalent in the area of study. During the last storm event, Hurricane Wilma, water entered homes in the subject area, came up to the doors of several homes and water was even under one home (on piers) for 6 days after the storm. It is guaranteed that older homes septic systems were compromised by this flooding and that septic waters were flowing in these flood areas. This flooding has occurred in the past as well during hurricanes Frances, Jean, Floyd, Tropical Storm Gordon to name a few. More development will just make this worse.
TRANSLATION: NO more increase in Density.
4. Water control in the subject area is also very dependent upon privately owned pumps. During the last storm event, Hurricane Wilma, one pump was not able to be activated in a timely fashion due to technical problems. This caused more flooding than should have occurred with this relatively minor storm event. Until the area can be proven to not have any dependence upon privately owned pumps, then no more development should be allowed. TRANSLATION: NO more increase in Density.
5. Electrical power is also a problem. Area power is supplied by overhead wires. These are frequently going down in storms. There were a couple of circuits during last year's storms that were not repaired for more than a week with each of our 2 major storms. The power also goes out frequently even during non storm events. Until the utilities are upgraded and buried, they cannot support many more increases without affecting existing residents. Note: Some of the residents in the study area are elderly and dependent upon power for life support apparatus. TRANSLATION: NO more increase in Density.
6. Merritt Island was once known for its tropical beauty and interesting agriculture. Many of the residents that live in the subject area grow tropical foods that are consumed by the rest of the Islanders and tourists as well. This is a small economy of tourism. This will be damaged by increases in density. Tropical Fruit trees just can't grow in concrete. TRANSLATION: NO more increase in Density.

The attached photographs of the area illustrate some of the problems discussed above.

In conclusion, the county infrastructure is not sufficient to support any increases in density. Until all of the problems indicated above are worked to completion, then no increases in density should be allowed. The comprehensive plan should revert to what the existing zoning lists for each individual parcel.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these materials.

Sincerely,



Celia Williams

CC: Brevard County Planning and Zoning Office, Viera, FL

CRG Small Area Study – North Tropical Trail

Hurricane Wilma : Flooding on North Merritt Island

October 2005

Summary:

1. According to the local weather experts, Hurricane Wilma was not considered to be a major storm for Brevard County.
2. Large scale flooding occurred on North Merritt Island in the area of the CRG study.
3. Major access roads in the CRG study area experienced serious and damaging flooding:
 - West Crisafulli Road and Church Road
 - Porcher Road had minor flooding
 - The county has known of road flooding in the area since 1997 (Reference PBS & J Study). No corrections have been provided for these problems.
4. Home flooding occurred in the area of the CRG study.
5. A major traffic accident occurred on North Tropical Trail due to a soft shoulder and degraded road conditions.

For further information please contact Celia Williams : 321-453-5452

Page 1 of 6

Hurricane Wilma : Flooding on North Merritt Island: October 2005 West Crisafulli Road



Flooding occurs regularly---every year ---at 3 locations on W. Crisafulli Road. The county has been aware of this since at least 1997. The only “fix” has been the installation of signs and constant repair of pavement which erodes with every flood event. These photos were taken 24 hours after the storm when the waters had receded greatly from peak levels.

Flooding was still present in these areas 1 week later. Page 2 of 6

Hurricane Wilma : Flooding on North Merritt Island: October 2005
West Crisafulli Road



Flooding is still present with deep potholes under the water making it especially dangerous for **school buses** and other large vehicles to traverse. This photo was taken 1 week after the storm. The DOT has placed barricades to close off half of the road.

Hurricane Wilma : Flooding on North Merritt Island: October 2005
Church Road



A portion of Church Road flooded. This flooding also affected 4 homes. Flood waters flowed over Church Road for 2 days. Flooding stayed on Church Road for at least 4 days. Pumping of the grove along Church Road helped to alleviate this problem. This pumping was performed by the local grove owner. This privately owned pump will not always be available to bail out the local homeowners and the county .

Hurricane Wilma : Flooding on North Merritt Island: October 2005



House flooding occurred in the proposed rezoning area.

- Some homes had water intrusion.
- Many homes had water up to their doors.
- Some had water *under* their homes!

Water was under this home for 6 days after the storm.



Hurricane Wilma : Flooding on North Merritt Island: October 2005 North Tropical Trail, just south of Church Road

Dump Truck Accident on Oct 31st, 2005

Inadequate drainage and a poor, narrow road bed has caused N. Tropical Trail to degrade. The shoulders are non-existent and the road is narrow. Even a small misstep can be dangerous.



5794 North Tropical Trail
North Merritt Island, Fl. 32953
November 7, 2005

Simone Spiess, Chair North - North Tropical Trail Small Area Study
Citizens Resource Group Board
North Merritt Island , Fl. 32953

NOV 10 2005

Dear Citizens Resource Group,

We live in the area of study and have lived there for many years. We also attended some of the CRG study meetings for our area. Overall, we found the meetings to be informative, but also discouraging. The subject matter experts brought in were relying on old data and we felt they were not really familiar with our neighborhood. There are some serious problems in our neighborhood that need to be fixed prior to any consideration toward further development.

There are 3 roads that we may use for access to our properties - North Tropical Trail, Church Road, and West Crisafulli Road. All three of those roads are in horrible condition, with crumbling shoulders and potholes. They are also quite narrow and the continued use of large vehicles just ruins these roads even more. The county needs to fix this problem.

Of course, part of the problem with the roads is that routine flooding degrades them. The last storm Wilma caused flooding on Church Road, North Tropical Trail (just south of Church Road) and West Crisafulli Road. Wilma was not even considered to be a major storm event for us, so this proves that flooding is a serious problem that needs to be fixed by the county.

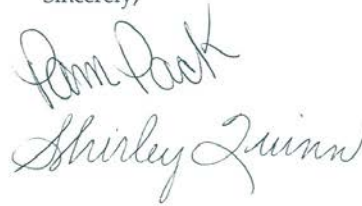
While on the topic of flooding, we are dependent upon a privately owned and operated pump for our surface water control. This pump is located just off SR3 and is operated by Joe Kaplet. If Mr. Kaplet were to stop using his pump, this would put our area of study in deep trouble. During the last storm Wilma this pump was delayed in being activated and water backed up quite seriously in our area. We are confident that there would still be large scale flooding even weeks afterwards if this pump were not working. The county needs to resolve how they are going to handle flooding in areas dependent upon privately owned pumps.

Even during normal weather we have problems with our electrical power. Our power is supplied by overhead wires that are routed through lots of trees and swampy areas. These power wires go down frequently. These utilities will need to be upgraded and buried in order to support any more increases in population.

These are just a few of the major items that need to be fixed. We believe that the comprehensive plan as it stands is not appropriate until all of the problems listed above are fixed. The number of residences that the comprehensive plan indicates will totally overload our area and cause many problems for the existing citizens. We would suggest that the densities on the comprehensive plan be significantly decreased.

Thank you CRG board for taking your valuable time to perform this study.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Pam Cook and Shirley Quinn in cursive script.

CC: Planning and Zoning Office, Brevard County, Viera, Fl. 32940

Page 2 of 2

5800 N. Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, Fl. 32953
November 8, 2005

Simone Spiess, CRG Chair, North - North Tropical Trail Small Area Study
Citizens Resource Group Board
North Merritt Island, Fl. 32953

NOV 10 2005

Subject: North Tropical Trail Study

Dear Ms. Spiess and the board of the CRG,

We appreciate your group taking the time to study our area. Hopefully it will result in some positive action being taken to correct problems that have been present here for years. Being long time residents of our area, we feel qualified to make some recommendations to your board based upon our observations over the years.

The biggest problems in our area are with property flooding, roads, and road flooding. We also experience problems with frequent power outages.

Over the years, our property has continued to flood. Oftentimes we have flooding right up to our door step. This water drains into a large pond, which then empties into a canal and then is pumped out of the neighborhood by a grove pump. If this grove pump stops operation, then water will back up even worse on my property and will certainly enter my home. The county needs to take the use of privately owned grove pumps into consideration when allowing more building. The county also needs to take into account that there are older homes which will be sorely impacted by adjacent over development.

The problems with the roads are both with poor construction and road flooding. The roads were built on old dirt roads that were used as grove access. Road beds were not properly constructed and certainly have not been maintained well enough. The roads are narrow and were not designed for frequent heavy traffic and large vehicles now causing the shoulders to degrade. This is a hazard when you have to pull over to let a large truck go by.

Continued flooding of the roads has caused them to fall apart. West Crisafulli Road is impassible with huge potholes and is still flooded more than a week after the last storm Wilma which was not even considered to be a big storm for Brevard county. Church road is also starting to fall apart as it was flooded during the last storm as well. North Tropical Trail also floods just south of Church road on the bend, and Porcher road floods at its intersection of North Tropical. These roads are now flooding more and more frequently and as a result are falling apart.

Power outages are becoming more and more frequent in our area with the increase in storms and the aging of the equipment. Our power is fed by overhead wires, which are quite old and have already had many splice repairs. The wires are constantly going down causing a hazard and power outages for several hours as a minimum. For last year's storms France and Jeanne power was out for 6-7 days at a time. We really need to have upgraded power, which includes buried lines.

Until the above problems are solved and have been proven to be working properly, then there should be no increases in density. We would like to recommend that the comprehensive plan be changed to lower the densities indicated on the map as our area cannot sustain the number of homes that it would allow.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Willis
Mary Willis

CC: Brevard County Planning and Zoning Office, Viera, Fl

Dana and Linda Noble
270 W. Crisafulli Rd.
Merritt Island, FL 32953
321-459-9386
November 8, 2005

North - North Tropical Trail Small Area Study
Citizens Resource Group Board
North Merritt Island, FL 32953
Simone Spiess, CRG Chairperson

NOV 14 2005

Dear CRG Board Members:

As residents of North Merritt Island for the last 10 years, we have become increasingly concerned about the current trend to re-zone our area from its current zoning of one residence per 2.5 or 5 acres to RR1 and smaller, without attention to the infrastructure. We have attended several NMI Homeowners' Association, Zoning Recommendation Board and County Commission meetings concerning this problem and would like to give you our input about future plans for the neighborhood.

We believe that the following items would have to be addressed prior to any change to the current density of NMI:

1) Schools – The Brevard County School Board has recommended school “freezes” for several schools for the 2005-2006 school year (see enclosure). Three of those schools are in Merritt Island and directly service the NMI area: Merritt Island High School, Jefferson Middle School and Lewis Carroll Elementary School. Lewis Carroll is actually exploring ways to reduce enrollment (see enclosure). Another frozen school is Cocoa Beach Jr/Sr High school which has a number of Merritt Island. There are 6 other elementary schools and Edgewood Jr/Sr High School of Choice. These schools will be maxed out in the coming years if growth continues and no other schools are built.

This overcrowding of our schools needs to be resolved before increasing density in our area.

2) Fire Services - The NMI fire station (Area 40) on North Tropical Trail has two full-time firefighters (one is also a paramedic) (one shift). There are no volunteers associated with this station (see enclosed). When a call comes in for NMI, these men are expected to handle it or get backup from the station in Central Merritt Island (Area 41). Area 40 is also expected to support Area 41 by moving to the Moose Lodge when needed. In respect to medical calls, Area 41 must come to the aid of Area 40, which increases response time and causes the other area fire stations to be on stand-by for Area 40 and so on. This works for small emergencies, but what if a more widespread emergency occurs?

(source: conversation with a volunteer firefighter from Area 41)

Merritt Island has a population of 36,090 (US Census 2000) with 12 firefighters/medics supporting 4 stations.

I have included the following comparisons with other similarly sized communities, chosen at random:

A) **Endicott, NY** - Population 13,038 (US Census 2000) - 36 full-time firefighters

(source: <http://home.stny.rr.com/efire/history.htm>)

B) **Gainesville, GA** - Population 25,578 (US Census 2000) - 56 full-time firefighters/3 shifts

(source: <http://www.gainesville.org/citydepartments.firedepartment.asp>)

This lack of adequate fire protection needs to be resolved before increasing density in our area.

3) Traffic - Has increased significantly in 10 years. Just in the last 2 years, a round trip down Courtenay Pkwy has increased from 30 minutes to 50 minutes between 4 and 6 pm. Frequently, an accident or construction on 528 or 520 will back up traffic in both directions on the Pkwy. I have experienced driving times of 10 minutes between the entrance of Sunset Lakes to the 528 interchange. It was suggested to me by our commissioner that this was "just KSC traffic". Does this mean that we want to add to that traffic, which occurs everyday, without developing roads to handle the traffic? During the crisis of September 11, 2001, workers were backed up for miles on Courtenay Pkwy and 528 trying to get home to their families. I know because I was stuck in traffic trying to reach my children in Merritt Island from my place of employment in Cape Canaveral. If evacuation from Cape Canaveral and KSC was that congested in 2001, what would it be like today?

This lack of adequate roads and traffic management needs to be resolved before increasing density in our area.

4) Seasonal Flooding/Storm Surge - (see enclosures) From the time that we first purchased our property on W. Crisafulli Rd until about 2 years ago, we did not have flooding problems. Our home site was high and dry - in fact, we did not have any special requirements to raise our home or septic system above the lay of the land. The road had standing water on occasion but normally drained away within 24 hours. In the last 2 years, however, flooding has become the norm. This year the road has basically been flooded since June with occasional days of "dryness". And that was before Hurricane Wilma came through. It has not rained significantly since that day, but the road remains flooded. At a community meeting following Wilma, it was revealed that our "dryness" has been due to the efforts of neighbors running 2 pumps to keep us from flooding. One of those pumps froze up during the storm. It does not give most of us a comfortable feeling knowing that the viability of our homes are dependent on one private pump for the whole area. And the standing water on our properties carry potential health risks from mosquitoes, snakes and pollution from our septic systems. Similar conditions are found on E. Crisafulli Rd. and Pine Island Rd. In addition, our road has become treacherous due to the undermining of its structure by continuous water intrusion. The school bus and other large service vehicles cannot negotiate it because of its condition.

We believe our water woes are directly related to the *new development (2002-2005)* of properties south of the Crisafulli Rds. areas (Church St, etc). (count the new homes at source: Brevard County Property Appraiser - Jim Ford website)

The flooding problems need to be resolved before increasing density in our area.

Thank you for taking your time to provide an area study for the purposes of giving us a rationally planned neighborhood that we can enjoy for years to come.

Sincerely,



Dana D. and Linda S. Noble



5900 N. Tropical Trail
Merritt Island, Fl. 32953
321-453-5452
November 9, 2005

North - North Tropical Trail Small Area Study
Citizens Resource Group Board
North Merritt Island , Fl.

NOV 14 2005

Attention: N. Tropical Trail CRG Study Findings and Recommendations

Dear CRG board members,

I would like to express my appreciation of your efforts as members of the Citizens Resource Group Board responsible for the North Tropical Trail Study area. As a board you have been able to capture various viewpoints of our community and organize representatives of our local government to address issues that are affecting us today and surely will affect our future. Clearly a great deal of time (inside and outside of the board meetings) has been invested in this effort to provide information to the community and provide a basis for recommendations regarding the level of development in our future.

The CRG meetings I was able to attend were both informative and educational, some portions showcasing the progressive nature of our county and other portions revealing the bureaucratic nature of our local government. Regardless of what was being covered, it has all been pertinent to this effort. Of course the other critical ingredient is community input and that is the intent of this letter

As a member of the North Merritt Island community for the past 8 years I feel it is important to recognize what aspects were dominant in bringing us here. Two significant interrelated traits: property sizes larger than one acre coupled with unique and varied homes reflecting some of the area's past. North Merritt Island did and currently does exhibit this unique rural character with links to its historic past. As the area has grown, most of this rural character has been maintained and incorporated into creating where we live. The general growth in the area of study was supported by residents that also found these traits appealing and from the survey; this continues to be the sentiment of the community.

Regarding the future growth of the study area I feel the same reasons that prevented overdevelopment (densities higher than current zoning allowances) remains valid today: infrastructure, roads, power, water and the adverse impact to the rural character of the community. An additional consideration needs to be the acknowledgement of general safety concerns associated with living on a barrier island. Based upon my experience(s) as a member of this community, research and investigation of the area, and what has been brought forth by the CRG I offer the following statements identifying why increased density cannot be supported in the study area.

Traveling and walking along our roadways we are introduced to the rural feel of the area. It is aesthetically pleasing but doesn't support increasing the existing build out numbers beyond what is currently allowed by existing zoning. The roads are narrow when considering two-way traffic. The roadways do not include county easements (limiting the ability to easily widen them) and the shoulders are soft. Regarding the shoulders a dramatic example occurred recently where a fully loaded dump truck got onto the shoulder along North Tropical Trail and subsequently flipped onto its side requiring multiple wreckers to remove the vehicle. Additionally, with the edge of the pavement being the property line for most parcels there are numerous areas where pulling off of the road is impossible. Our roads, as currently designed, simply cannot safely support an increase in density.

Similar to the limited ability to upgrade the roadway are limitations experienced with our electrical power. Multiple times throughout the year we will lose power. My personal experience includes power lines lying across our driveway and adjacent to (and occasionally in) the roadway. Access to the overhead power lines is difficult and frequently requires service crews to enter private property. Long spans of the high tension lines are a common sight throughout the study area. Along these spans it is not uncommon to see multiple splices due to previous repairs. Our experience is such that this is not a robust system and that upgrades such as underground power have been dismissed due to costs and the impacts to private property. Actively increasing density will not improve our power capabilities it will only further tax them. In addition to increasing the burden on active power, the impact of outages would be multiplied as well. With no planning to accommodate existing challenges, much less future demands, it is unrealistic to encourage increasing density within the study area.

No established plan has been developed that can support the conversion of North Merritt Island groves to residential properties. Surface and storm water will forever be a concern in this and adjacent study areas on North Merritt Island. Two prominent conditions will always exist – poor drainage and close proximity to the water table. Historically surface water in this area has been managed to support agriculture. We have been fortunate that citrus groves require a delicate balance of water and as a result natural slews, drainage ditches, and mechanical pumps have been incorporated to manage water in the area. As groves stop producing and no longer need to be pumped we experience more detrimental effects of storm water. The pumps are operated by private groves within the limitations imposed by the St. Johns Water Management District. When groves become housing developments the county has no plan for dealing with the water – other than building homes at elevations above the crown of the road. Those of us who are residents already experience water crossing the road and entering our properties. This condition is aggravated by increasing housing. Turning the pumps off, building up fill, and compacting more soil will only exacerbate a condition the county has acknowledged but has not addressed. It would truly be irresponsible to allow an increase in building density above the current zoning classifications.

We live on a barrier island in an area recognized with active annual tropical storm conditions. Recognizing the severe impact of the cyclic storm seasons and the detrimental effects to power, roadways, surface water and real property the responsible approach is to not increase densities above the current zoning classifications. It comes down to thorough comprehensive planning to understand the impacts to an area and mitigate them for the betterment of everyone. Of the items listed above, individually they are concerns but when combined (as occurs during our storm season) the synergistic effect can be devastating. The best way to provide for a healthy community is not to increase density but to remain at density levels consistent with the current existing zoning (or less).

In closing, the area of study can not legitimately support increasing housing densities above our current zoning classification. The concerns identified above, and those of other residents, need to be addressed prior to allowing properties to be rezoned. Regarding the Comprehensive plan it should be revised to, at a minimum, capture the existing parcel zoning or be changed to acknowledge an even lower density classification.

Thank you again for your efforts in this study and the consideration of my views and observations.

Sincerely,



Shaye Williams

CC: Brevard County Planning and Zoning Office, Viera, Fl
Simone Speiss, CRG Chair, North Tropical Trail , Merritt Island, Fl.

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