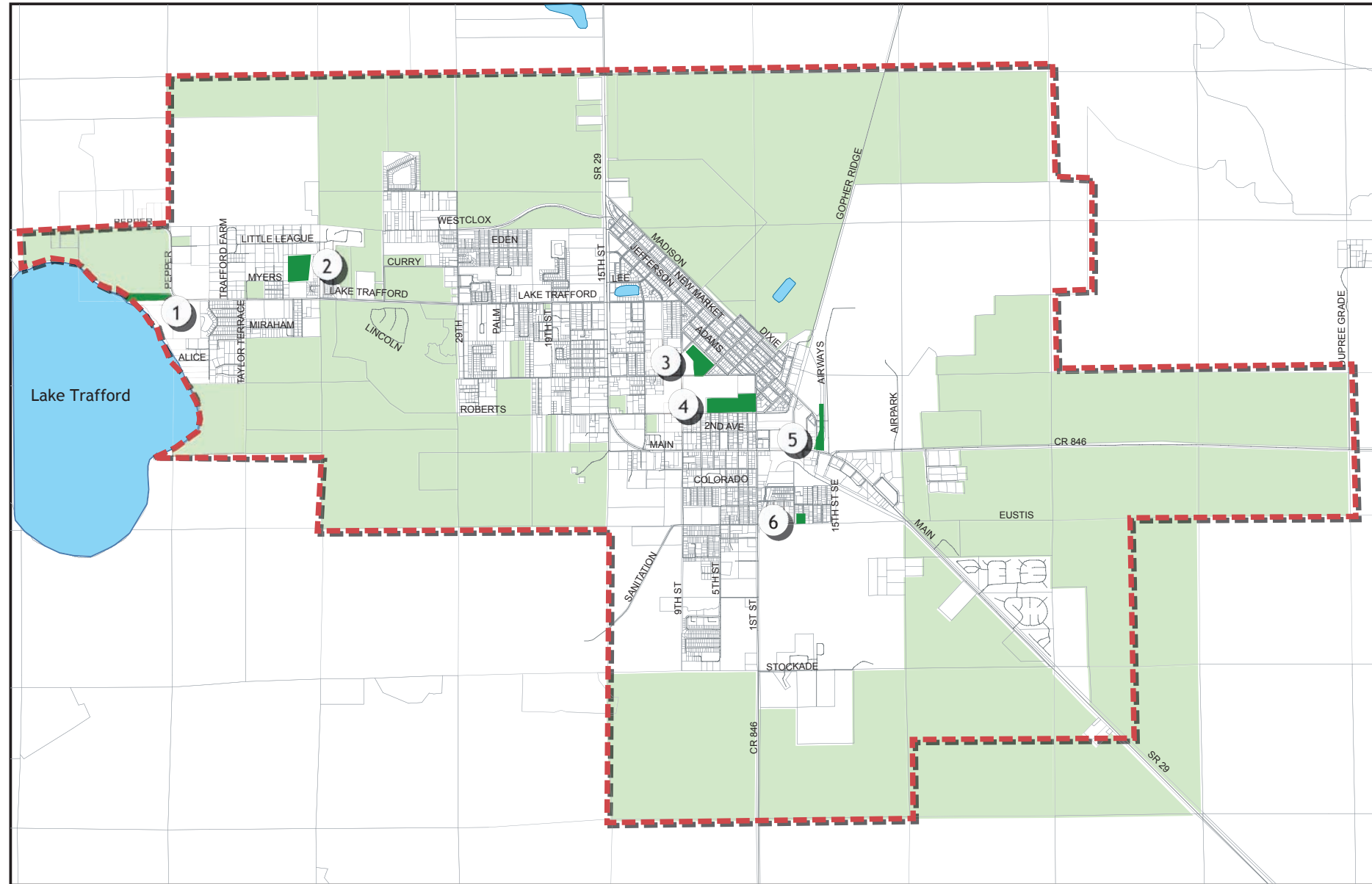


Map 12 Parks and Recreation Areas



**Legend**

- Immokalee Study Area
- Parks
- Agricultural Lands
- Water Bodies

- 1 Ann Olesky Park
- 2 Tony Rosbough Community Park
- 3 Immokalee Sports Complex
- 4 Immokalee Community Park
- 5 Tradeport Park
- 6 South Immokalee Park

**Prepared By:**  
 the RMPK group

**Source:**  
 Collier County Property Appraiser GIS Data, 2005

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

There are currently six parks located in the Immokalee Master Planning Study Area managed and maintained by the Collier County Parks and Recreation Department. Map 12 identifies the community's recreational facilities, natural areas and open spaces, including these listed below:

**1. Immokalee Community Park:** Located on Immokalee Drive adjacent to the Immokalee High School, the park covers an area of approximately 23 acres. The amenities in this park include baseball fields, basketball courts, a playground, a tennis court, a four-wall racquetball court, restroom facilities, and a picnic shelter.

**2. South Immokalee Park:** Located on School Drive, this 3.2-acre park accommodates the American Legion building. Park facilities include a sand volleyball court, a basketball court, a playground, and a multipurpose field.

**3. Immokalee Sports Complex:** The Immokalee Sports Complex is a 14-acre facility located on Escambia Street at the Immokalee Middle School site. The facility is considered a community park and includes a gymnasium, two soccer fields, a game room, a fitness center, and an aquatic facility with heated pools.

**Immokalee Master Plan**

Immokalee, Florida





Fig. 2.7 Immokalee Public Park



Fig. 2.8 South Immokalee Park



Fig. 2.9 Tradeport Park



Fig. 2.10 Tony Rosbough Community Park Welcome Sign

**4. Tony Rosbough Park:** Located on Little League Road, this park covers an area approximately 6.8 acres wide and offers two baseball fields.

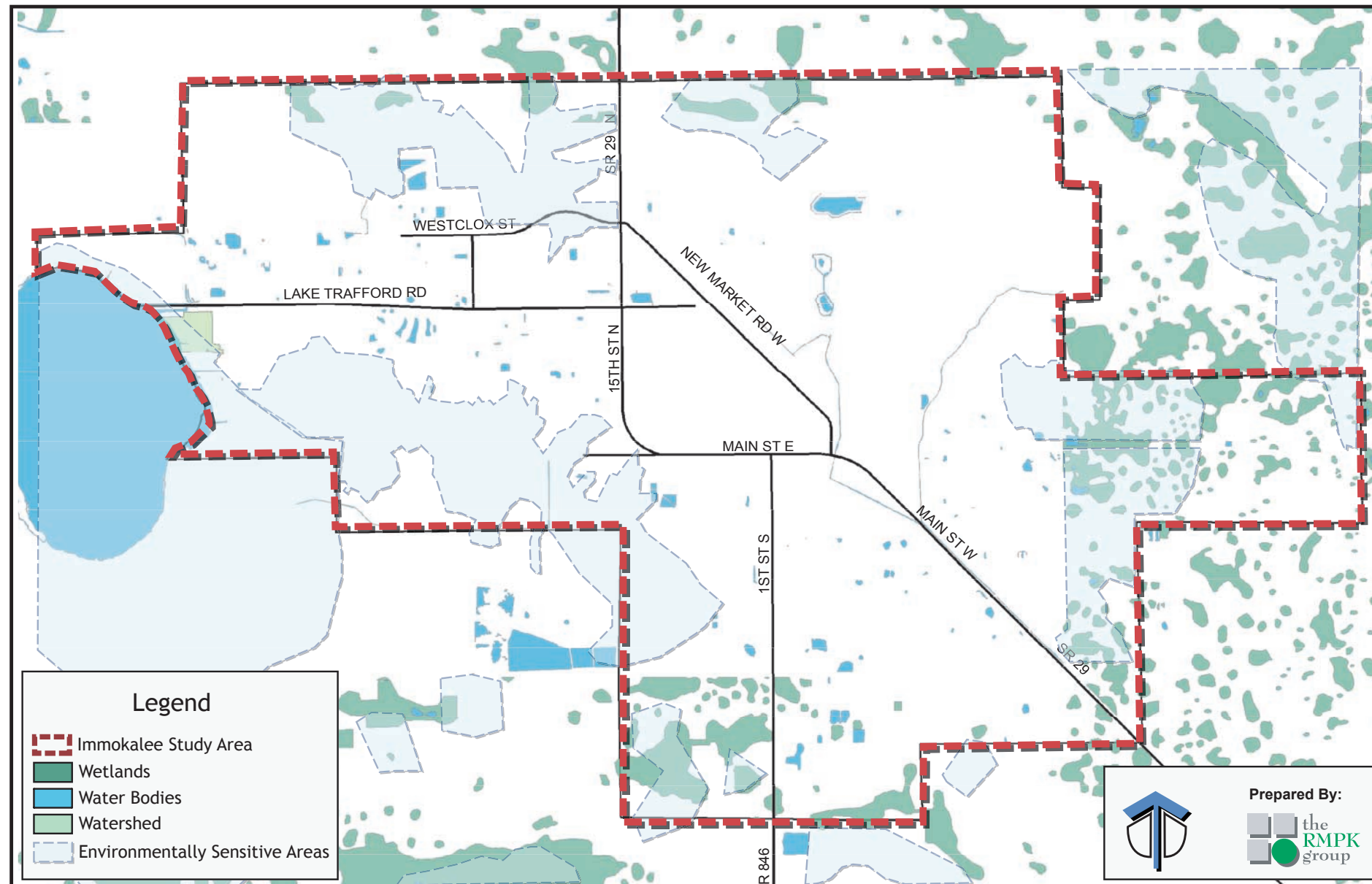
**5. Tradeport Park:** The park is located next to the Florida Tradeport and covers an area of 5 acres. The park is a relatively passive facility containing picnic facilities, benches, and observation points.

**6. Ann Olesky Park (formerly Lake Trafford Park):** Ann Olesky Park, located at the end of Lake Trafford Road, is a 2-acre park that includes a 200-foot pier, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Trafford, the only freshwater lake in Collier County.

In addition to these parks, the local schools provide recreation areas to the Immokalee community. However, there exists a need to provide additional recreational facilities since there are relatively few neighborhood parks serving the high percentage of children (34% of the total population) under the age of 14.



Map 13 Environmentally-Sensitive Areas



Immokalee Master Plan Immokalee, Florida

Source:  
Collier County Property  
Appraiser GIS Data, 2005

0 700,400 2,800 4,200 5,600  
Feet

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Map 13 identifies ecologically sensitive areas in Immokalee, including freshwater marshes, wetlands and swamps. Future development in the Immokalee Study Area must be sympathetic to certain environmental concerns in the area, including wetland and aquifer recharge area preservation and the conservation of habitat for the endangered Florida panther.

An environmental master plan was prepared in 1996 for the Florida Tradeport. Noise and wastewater impacts were identified as environmental threats posed by the presence of the tradeport, and six state- or federally-listed endangered birds and animals were identified as present in the Tradeport area. Approximately 12% of the Tradeport area (not including the actual Tradeport itself, but including adjacent wetlands) was identified as “impacted” in the environmental report. Impacts were primarily related to wastewater runoff and related contamination. Despite this, existing land-uses around the Tradeport were deemed appropriate for the area. In March 2004, 211 acres of the Tradeport area were designated by the state as an official brownfield.

In 2002, a study was prepared for the Rural Lands Stewardship Program that recommended the use of transfer-of-development-rights (TDR’s) privileges for owners or potential developers of agricultural and environmentally-sensitive lands (see Previous Plans and Programs, page 29). This study will have great ramifications for future development patterns in the region. The study provides an inventory of agricultural and environmentally-significant land in Immokalee and can be viewed in its entirety on the Collier County website.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Community initiatives undertaken by various organizations have provided training and other programs for the migrant, low-income, and/or agricultural workforce that is starting to lead to an improved quality of life for Immokalee residents and a diversification of the local economic base. These programs address a wide range of social development issues including, but not limited to, childcare, adult education, affordable housing, employment assistance, disaster response, and second-language training. Some of the largest organizations providing these services include the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), Habitat for Humanity of Collier County, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Immokalee Interagency Council, Agency for Workforce Innovation, Career and Service Center of Collier County, and Empowerment Alliance of Southwest Florida.

The following is a brief list of some community initiatives within the Immokalee area (a complete list of community agencies in Immokalee is available in Appendix D on page 85):

- **Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Head Start:** Comprehensive child-development programs that serve children from infancy to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. The programs, managed by RCMA, strive to increase the school preparedness of children in low-income families.
- **RCMA's Community Learning Centers:** Offer free or affordable education to rural, low-income communities by remote technology, culturally sensitive teachers, and more.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Involved with the construction of Independence, an affordable housing community located near the intersection of Lake Trafford Road and Little League Road.
- The **Community Redevelopment Agency** of Immokalee has undertaken various projects that have strengthened projects by other organizations. The following is a list of some of the CRA's accomplishments (both independently and cooperatively achieved in association with other agencies) in the Immokalee Study Area:
  - A \$15,000 investment in drainage improvements on 5th Street.
  - Support for a \$60,000 in streetlight installations along Main Street funded by a Community Development Block Grant.
  - Funding for 40 single-family homes in South Immokalee, secured by the Empowerment Alliance.
  - USDA-funded dormitory apartments in South Immokalee, secured by the Collier County Housing Authority.
  - Initiation of the Immokalee Housing Initiative.
  - Provision of approximately \$200,000 for utility and road enhancements throughout the Immokalee Study Area.
  - Assisting Freeman & Freeman Construction, Inc. in constructing seven affordable housing units in areas opened up for development along Tenth and Clifton Streets.
  - Assisting Cypress Construction with construction of three affordable housing units on Clifton Street and 49 new affordable homes in Jubilation.



Figs. 2.11, 2.12 Habitat For Humanity Housing Project Under Construction on Little League Road



Fig. 2.13 RMCA Headquarters on Main Street



Fig. 2.14 Main Street Streetscape Improvement

## PREVIOUS PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Summarized here are plans, programs and projects developed in Immokalee over the past 15 years. These projects offer helpful information about previous development goals for Immokalee and lay the foundation for future master planning efforts.

### IMMOKALEE AREA MASTER PLAN (1997)

The Master Plan was created by the Collier County Planning Department and adopted by the County Board of Commissioners in 1991 and updated in 1997. Several amendments have been made to the Master Plan since then, and it continues to serve as the foundation for planning activity in the Immokalee community (please refer to Appendix B document on page 66).

Six goals highlighted here from the original Master Plan provide direction for future population, housing, and economic growth and administration of the natural environment:

1. Enhance and preserve the quality of life for Immokalee residents and business owners, natural beauty, environmental quality and small-town character, stable neighborhoods, and status as an urban hub for the surrounding agricultural region.
2. Create an environment in which all working, disabled and retired residents, and their immediate resident families, will have a reasonable opportunity to procure safe, healthful, and affordable housing consistent with the desired development character of the area as identified in the Immokalee Master Plan.
3. Continue to plan for the protection, conservation, management of its natural resources as dictated in the growth management plan.
4. Provide ample high quality and diverse recreational opportunities typically provided by the public in a community the size of Immokalee, for all Immokalee citizens in a cost efficient manner.
5. [Provide a] future land use pattern that shall be supported by a network of roads, pedestrian ways, and bikeways that maintain Immokalee's small-town character, yet achieve efficient and safe traffic movement.
6. Enhance and diversify the local economy of the Immokalee community.

Revisions and updates of this master plan will remain faithful to the principles outlined in the original version.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR A PROPOSED AUTORACING COMPLEX IN IMMOKALEE

Prepared in 2000 by Bernard Weinstein, Ph.D, and Terry Clower, Ph.D of the Center for Economic Development and Research (University of North Texas), this study projected the economic impact of an autoracing facility in Immokalee. It references the Master Plan's stated goal of local economic diversification.

The study examined the popularity of drag racing on inactive runways at the Florida Tradeport and suggested that it would be economically feasible to develop a larger facility. The report acknowledged motorcar racing as the nation's most popular and fastest-growing spectator sport, and provided estimates for the number of jobs that would be created, a cost/benefit analysis of building a new facility, and economic spinoff projections in other industries.

The study concluded that a new autoracing facility, along with the existing Seminole Casino and the development of a new hotel, could serve as a catalyst for economic diversification in Immokalee. Activities like these will be an important part of the future economic and tourism diversification of the community.

### IMMOKALEE AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Immokalee Area Redevelopment Plan was created by the Collier County Community Redevelopment Agency in conjunction with Immokalee residents. The plan was adopted by the County Board of Commissioners in 2000 and serves as a guide for the physical and economic revitalization of Immokalee.

In order to designate the Immokalee area as a redevelopment area, a finding of blight had to be made by the Collier County Board of County Commissioners. This finding was made on March 14, 2000 and ratified by Resolution 2000-82. The following describes the conditions in Immokalee that permitted a blight designation to be made:

1. Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout.
2. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.
3. Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.
4. Deterioration of site or other improvements.

In classifying Immokalee as a candidate for redevelopment, the County has improved the justification for redevelopment programs that can improve the economic and social conditions of the community. These programs will be addressed in detail in the update of the Immokalee Master Plan.



**HOUSING INITIATIVE STUDY**

The Immokalee Housing Condition Inventory study was conducted by staff from four departments in the Community Development and Environmental Services Division of Collier County. The two-phase inventory, completed in 2004, was conducted to serve as a tool for Financial Administration and Housing Department and Code Enforcement in developing programs and priorities.

Phase 1 was an analysis of mobile home parks. This study, which aimed to identify and remove substandard mobile home units, discovered that there were 72 mobile home parks in Immokalee. Phase 2 was an assessment of housing conditions in the community, excluding mobile home parks. Of 3,558 dwelling units examined, 833 of them (23% of the total) were substandard in quality or worse. 287 units were identified as “deteriorated”. Deteriorated homes require major repairs to one or more of the following defects in order to allow the dwelling to meet minimal shelter standards:

- Broken or missing materials in small areas of exterior wall or roof
- Badly weathered appearance
- Indications of rotting
- Open pockets in exterior walls

One hundred and nineteen units were identified as “dilapidated”. Dilapidated housing units do not provide safe or adequate shelter and have one or more of the following critical structural defects that are generally considered beyond rehabilitation:

- Inadequate or missing original construction
- Severe damage due to fire or weather
- Holes in large areas of the roof

The data from this study will allow various housing assistance programs to make more informed decisions and serve as a baseline for similar studies in the future. For this report’s purposes, the findings of this study will help influence the revisions to the Immokalee Master Plan and identify critical areas of concern with substandard housing.

**FAST TRACK PROGRAM**

The Collier County Board of County Commissioners promoted the establishment of a “fast-track” program to expedite the processing of land-use applications for targeted industries in the County. It was the intent of the Board to qualify permit applications certified by the Economic Development Council of Collier County (EDC) for an expedited review and identify such projects as EDC “fast track” projects.

Qualifying EDC “fast track” projects must satisfy certain conditions. They must:

- a) Create new or expanded businesses that are “targeted industries” which are defined as businesses that are aggressively pursued for relocation to, or expansion within, the local jurisdiction. They may include, but are not limited to the following industries: aviation, information, technology, biomedical, manufacturing, corporate headquarters, research and development, wholesale trade and distribution, and companies locating or expanding within the Immokalee Rural Federal Enterprise Community.
- b) Provide 150% or more of the current private sector average wage for projects in High Impact Areas, which is a designation given to qualifying economic development projects located outside of Eastern Collier County and the Immokalee Rural Federal Enterprise Community; or 50% the current private sector average wage for projects in the Immokalee Rural Federal Enterprise Community.
- c) Create full-time jobs at the following levels: a minimum of 20 new full-time jobs in the High Impact Areas; or a minimum of 10 new full-time jobs in Eastern Collier County; or a minimum of five new jobs within the Immokalee Enterprise Community.

The fast-track program, despite its title, has shown to be inefficient, as noted by focus group members during the May 24, 2006, meetings. Applications under this program can take up to three years to process. In order for this program to become more effective, the County may wish to look into ways to expedite the application process.

**FLORIDA ENTERPRISE / EMPOWERMENT ZONE**

An Enterprise Zone is a state-defined geographic area targeted for economic revitalization that offers tax advantages and incentives (which may be augmented by local tax breaks) to businesses locating within the zone boundaries.

Immokalee was designated a Federal Enterprise Community in 1999. During the application process for the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community grant, a series of community meetings provided input for a Strategic Plan. The Plan identifies four areas of concern:

- Reduced accessibility of education and/or training
- Weak diversification of the local economic base and lack of higher wage jobs
- The reduced availability of decent and affordable housing
- Lack of community pride

As an Enterprise Community, Immokalee is authorized to receive economic and other assistance that will help it achieve its future growth and revitalization goals. The Master Plan update will encourage Collier County to initiate all available assistance programs now available to Immokalee because of the new designation.

**RESIDENTIAL BUILD-OUT STUDY**

The 2005 Residential Build-Out study analyzed undeveloped lands to determine the location of appropriate future residential development and project growth figures for Immokalee’s permanent population and housing stock. The objective of the study was to project what the dwelling unit and population counts will be at build-out; not to predict when build-out would occur.

The study concluded that the Immokalee Study Area has significant growth potential. Much of the Immokalee area is undeveloped or agricultural land, not unlike the now -urbanized Florida coast of 30 years ago. The study’s projected build-out figures for Immokalee is 38,798 total dwelling units and a permanent population of 104,483, and these figures will be referred to during the Master Plan revision.

### RURAL LANDS STEWARDSHIP STUDY

The Rural Lands Stewardship Study (RLSS) was completed by Wilson Miller, Inc. in the spring of 2002. With input from local residents, the Rural Lands Assessment Area Oversight Committee, Collier County staff, and various experts, this study addressed future environmental preservation goals and devised strategies to ensure future land development would be appropriately sensitive to environmental concerns while consistent with economic goals. The study prepared a series of recommendations that were in turn incorporated into the goals, objectives and policies of the County's Comprehensive Plan (also known as the Growth Management Plan, of which the Immokalee Master Plan is a part). These recommendations have become part of the policy established in the Rural Lands Stewardship Overlay District of the Collier County Land Development Code.

Promoting compact development is considered by the county an appropriate development policy that would serve the economic and environmental goals of the Immokalee Study Area. The RLSS is a transfer-of-development-rights (TDR) program intended to promote just this sort of development. Landowners or developers who forego development rights on environmentally sensitive lands earn the right to build at higher densities than normally sanctioned on land approved for development. In Collier County, the implementation of this TDR program will achieve both the preservation of environmentally sensitive and agriculturally productive lands and the densification of new residential or commercial development that can improve the local economic climate. This program will be greatly encouraged in the update of the Immokalee Master Plan.

### IMMOKALEE BROWNFIELD DESIGNATION

On March 3, 2004, 211 acres in the Florida Tradeport area received a state brownfield designation. According to the Florida Brownfield Redevelopment Act (Florida Statute 376.79), "brownfield sites are defined as real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by actual or perceived environmental contamination." Brownfields are often an ideal redevelopment opportunity as numerous incentives are available for clean-up and redevelopment activities. Florida, in particular, offers tax incentives for job creation on brownfield sites and reserves 30% of its Quick Response Training program funding for employees of businesses that establish on designated

brownfield sites. This designation will reduce the work and time involved in the approvals process for redevelopment schemes that will enhance the economic potential of the Tradeport and surrounding area.

### GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 06-34

Through Executive Order Number 06-34, authorized February 24, 2006, Governor Jeb Bush has designated Immokalee a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern. This status establishes Immokalee as a priority assignment of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (a program sponsored by twenty-one state and regional economic development agencies). Programs now made available to Immokalee through the REDI include, but are not limited to:

- Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program (Section 288.106 F.S.)
- Quick Response Training Program (Section 228.047 F.S.)
- Quick Response Training for Welfare Transition Program Participants (Section 228.047(8) F.S.)
- Special Transportation Projects (Section 288.063)
- Brownfield Redevelopment Bonus Refund (Section 288.107 F.S.)
- Rural Job Tax Credit Program (Sections 212.098 and 220.1895 F.S.)

Immokalee will benefit from the availability of these new programs, and is strongly advised to take full advantage of this assistance. The revision to the Master Plan will address these assistance programs and how they may expedite the attainment of the economic and social goals of the community.

### MAIN STREET PROGRAM

In September 1996, a series of standards and guidelines were prepared for existing and future businesses in the downtown district of Immokalee. Called the Main Street Program, it was similar in scope and detail to innumerable other design standard policies enforced in towns and cities across the nation.

Architectural and design issues addressed included facades, entryways, doors, windows, canopies and awnings, signage, and more. Guidelines in the document for infill development and building gap replacement were careful to stress the importance of meeting the design code laid out for the rest of Main Street.

The intent of the Main Street Program is to ensure a visual and aesthetic consistency for all structures within the defined Main Street boundary. A unified theme presents a conscientious image to visitors and residents and increases the value of being located in the downtown. During the revision of the Immokalee Master Plan, the future development of the downtown district will be a primary focus, and the standards presented in the Main Street Program document will form a significant part of the revision goals.

### IMMOKALEE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT MASTER PLAN

Recognizing the certain areas of Immokalee are subject to drainage issues and that the community was not built on high ground, Collier County's Stormwater Management Department and the South Florida Water Management District prepared this planning document for Immokalee in 2005. This document catalogued areas of the community where known drainage problems arose from time to time, including Immokalee Drive between SR 29 and Wells Street, Downtown Immokalee between Eustis and Boston Avenues, and Lake Trafford Road around Fish Creek. Improvements recommended by the consulting engineers on the master plan committee included the laying of new drainage pipe and cross-drains in all affected areas, and the construction of a new impoundment pond in the downtown area. These are to be implemented by Collier County starting in 2007.

The recommendations in this stormwater management plan should form an integral part of any revisions to the Immokalee Master Plan.

### COLLIER COUNTY EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORTS

In 1996 and 2003, Collier County prepared, in accordance with state law, evaluation reports that assessed the performance of its Growth Management Plan (GMP) and various components within, including the Immokalee Master Plan which is given special status within the County's GMP. The 1996 report revised the boundaries of Immokalee's subdistricts and added two new ones, but did not advise any other significant changes. The 2003 report reviewed once more the objectives listed in the Immokalee Master Plan and advised minor corrections to various economic policies that no longer applied and rewording of certain objectives or policies to align them with revised county policies or programs. Overall, though, the goals outlined in the Master Plan remain intact. A new evaluation and appraisal report will be due in 2010, at which point the county will review the actions undertaken by a new version of the Immokalee Master Plan.