

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

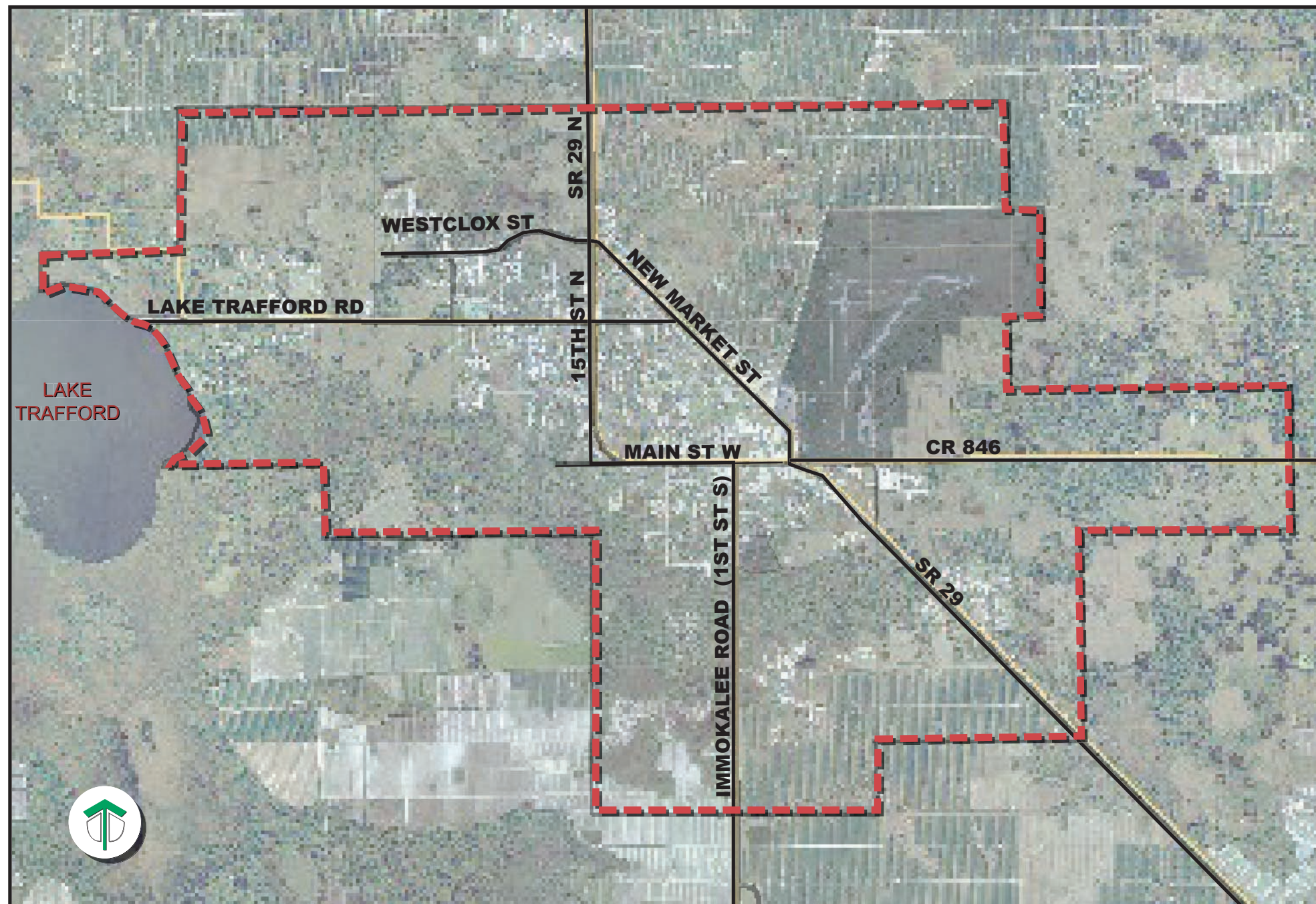


Fig 1.1 Immokalee Master Plan Study Area

INTRODUCTION

The Immokalee Census Designated Place (CDP), located in the northeastern part of Collier County, Florida, is approximately 40 miles northeast of Naples on Immokalee Road (CR 846). State Road 29 connects Immokalee to Fort Myers 35 miles to the northwest. In this report, the Immokalee Master Plan Study Area consists of the Immokalee Urban Area, a region of about 27 square miles (Fig. 1.1). The entire urban area of Immokalee has recently been identified as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern (see Governor’s Executive Order Number 06-34, page 29). “Immokalee” and “Study Area” are used interchangeably throughout this report to refer to the Immokalee Master Planning Study Area.

This report describes the context of the Immokalee Study Area in Collier County, and will be the foundation for the community’s Master Plan update. Chapter 1 provides a demographic summary of the Immokalee Study Area. Chapter 2 provides an inventory of existing conditions, future land use patterns, land development regulations, and includes a summary of previous plans and studies relevant to the Study Area. Inventory resources include previous planning studies, interviews with city staff, residents and business owners, Collier County Property Appraiser GIS data, and U.S. Census data. Chapter 3 is an analysis of the information presented in the Inventory chapter augmented by firsthand site observations. The analysis describes the Study Area’s assets, opportunities, and issues of concern, providing guidance for subsequent master planning.

This report concludes with four appendices with supplemental information. Appendix A summarizes the focus group meetings occurring in fall 2005 and January 2006. Appendix B describes the goals, objectives and policies of the Immokalee Area Master Plan of 1997 and the Immokalee Redevelopment Area Plan of 2000. Appendix C includes additional maps for reference, and Appendix D lists social service agencies in Immokalee.



Fig. 1.2 Historic photos of Immokalee

Source: www.floridamemory.com

A BRIEF HISTORY

Immokalee's history begins with the Calusa indigenous peoples - the first recorded inhabitants of the Immokalee area - and the Miccosukee indigenous peoples, who called the area "Gopher Ridge" for the large, local gopher tortoise population. First permanently settled as Allen's Place in the 1870s, the town was renamed Immokalee (Seminole for "my home") in 1897. Upon Collier County's formation in 1923, Immokalee had 74 residents. Agriculture was then, and continues to be, the economic foundation of this community.

In the 1920s, the Atlantic Coast Line Railway and a paved highway were built through Immokalee. These transportation routes allowed the town and surrounding area to develop into an important regional economic center, with agriculture and ranching soon expanded by timbering and drilling.

Immokalee developed a reputation as the winter vegetable capital of the country with the decline of timber and oil in the 1930s and 1940s. Until recently, the mild year-round climate in the region and urbanization of coastal farmland elsewhere in Florida maintained Immokalee's importance in the production of tomatoes, peppers, and other perishable vegetables for markets across the continent. But the economic value of agriculture in Immokalee began to decline somewhat with the corporatization of the farming industry, a poor growing season in 1989-1990, and the advent of free trade under NAFTA (which created greater competitive pressures from other warm-climate growing regions). While agriculture will continue to form an integral part of the regional economy, Immokalee today is in the process of forging a new place for itself and the region in the early years of the 21st century.

Fig. 1.3 Population Growth
 Source: U.S. Census Table DP-2
 Collier County 2003 Economic,
 Demographic and Social Profile

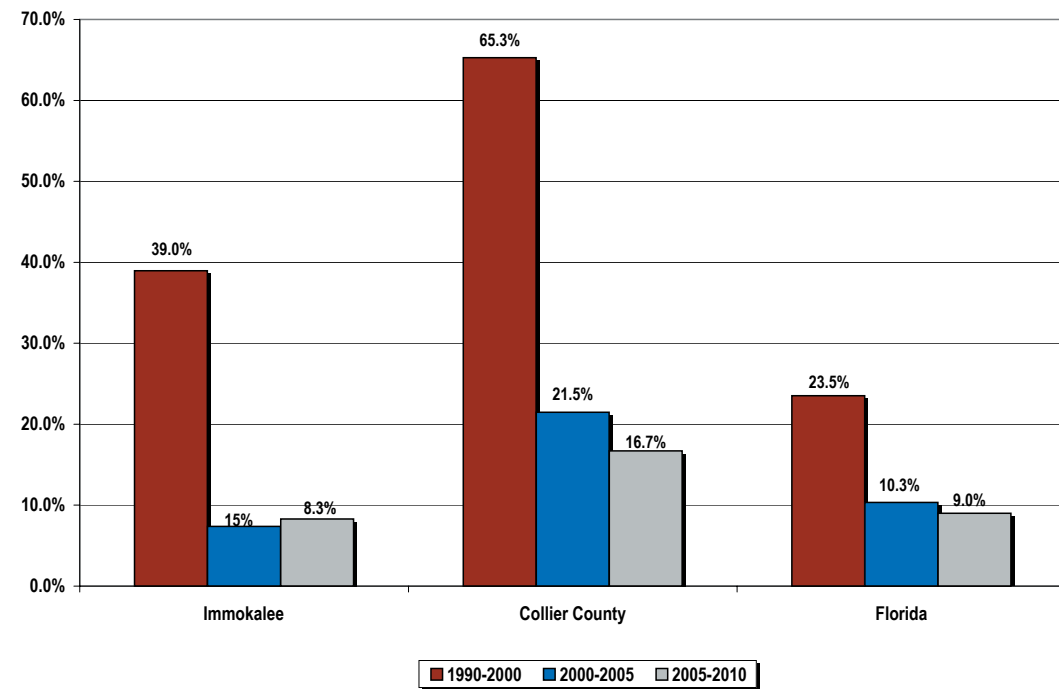


Table 1.1 Permanent and Seasonal Populations

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2, Collier County 2003 Economic, Demographic and Social Profile, Collier County Comprehensive Planning Growth Management Plan

Population Type	1990 Census	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	Build Out Population
Permanent Population	14,120	21,976	25,291	104,483
Seasonal Population (Estimated)	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Total Population	29,120	36,976	40,291	119,483

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section presents a review and analysis of selected demographic and socio-economic characteristics for the Immokalee Study Area including population trends, household characteristics, employment, and income. Sources used include U.S. Census Data Table DP-2 (2000), U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, the Collier County 2003 Economic, Demographic and Community Profile, and the Collier County Property Appraiser GIS database. The data analysis serves as the foundation to identify existing issues and opportunities as well as develop an understanding of future trends within the Immokalee Study Area. This section is intended to provide a snapshot of demographic and economic characteristics within the Study Area.

This analysis places Census 2000 block level data against the Immokalee Census Designated Place for the purposes of statistical analysis in this section. A Census Designated Place (CDP) is a densely settled concentration of population that is not within an incorporated place but is locally identified by name. Please refer to the Immokalee Census 2000 Map in Appendix C on page 75, which shows the boundaries of the CDP area and the blocks within the Study Area boundary as defined by the 2000 Census data.

POPULATION TRENDS

Fig. 1.3 illustrates the estimated population change in Immokalee and Collier County between 1990 and 2010. According to U.S. Census data, the Study Area grew in permanent population from 14,120 residents in 1990 to 21,976 residents in 2000 (representing approximately 9% of Collier County's total population of 251,377). Today, the Study Area is home to 25,291 persons¹, representing an increase of 15% between 2000 and 2005. The Collier County Residential Build-Out Study anticipates an eventual population of over 104,000 residents in Immokalee in the future, although no expected year is given (Table 1.1). The overall population increase in Immokalee can be attributed to several factors. First, Immokalee reflects trends similar to regional growth patterns with a projected population increase by 65% in Collier County, representing an addition of almost 185,000 residents by 2015. Second, the County in cooperation with the private sector partners has approved several housing projects that will increase the availability of housing. Third, the regional development in the area surrounding the Study Area, including the planned Ave Maria township and the Serenoa DRI, is expected to have a significant impact in stimulating activity within the Study Area. It should be noted that these population estimates are based on Certificate of Occupancy (2001) data and 1990 Census persons per dwelling units, and calculated by Collier County planning staff.

Immokalee's agricultural economy depends greatly on seasonal labor. According to the Collier County Planning Staff estimates, Immokalee grows by approximately 15,000 people during the peak winter growing and harvest season (Table 1.1), representing an increase of approximately 84% of the permanent population figures.² The estimated seasonal population for Immokalee in 2005 was 40,291.

As illustrated in Fig. 1.3, Immokalee experienced a 15% increase in total population between 2000 and 2005. The growth is slower than the change experienced by Collier County (21.5 %) or the State of Florida (10.3 %) during the same time period. Between 1990 and 2000, Immokalee's population trends mirrored Collier County's growth patterns, but at a slower rate than the County. Immokalee's population increased from 14,221 residents in 1990 to 21,296 residents in 2000, representing a 39% increase. Collier County witnessed an increase by 65.3% during the same time period.

Notes:

¹ The projections are calculated using the growth rate provided by the Collier County Planning Staff projections in the Collier County 2003 Economic, Demographic and Community Profile

² The seasonal population for the Immokalee Planning Community was obtained from the State Department of Labor and Employment Security and the Collier County Planning Staff. The staff has increased this figure to 15,000 after the year 1992 to reflect the anticipated growth of the citrus industry.

Table 1.2 Racial Distribution

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 DP-2, U.S. Census Block-Level Data

Note: U.S. This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

* Non Hispanic population minus Haitian population = 9.3% of estimated 2005 total population

Race/Ethnicity	1990	1990 (%)	2000	2000 (%)	2005
White	7,518	53.8%	8,858	40.3%	38.9%
Black	3,386	23.3%	3,626	16.4%	18.1%
Asian	56	0.4%	76	0.4%	0.4%
American Indian	148	1.0%	204	1.0%	1.0%
Other	3,012	21.4%	9,212	41.9%	41.6%
Total	14,120	100.0%	21,976	100.0%	100.00%
Hispanic	9,396	66.1%	15,767	71.1%	81.5%
Non Hispanic*	4,724	33.9%	6,580	28.9%	18.5%
Haitian*	N/A	N/A	1,948		9.2%

Table 1.3 Nativity

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Nativity and Place of Birth	1990	1990%	2000	2000 (%)
Native	10,373	73.5%	10,526	55.0%
Born in United States	N/A	N/A	10,371	98.5%
Born outside of United States	N/A	N/A	155	1.5%
Foreign Born	3,747	26.5%	8,884	45.0%
Naturalized Citizen	896	6.3%	1,647	18.5%
Not a Citizen	2,851	20.2%	7,237	81.5%
<i>Entered 1990 to March 2000</i>			5,129	

Table 1.4 Languages Spoken

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Language Spoken at Home	1990	1990 (%)	2000	2000 (%)
Population 5 years and over	12,499	100.0%	17,430	100.0%
English Only	3,901	31.2%	3,781	21.7%
Language other than English	8,598	68.8%	13,649	78.3%
Spanish	7,360	58.8%	11,055	63.4%
Speak English less than "very well"	4,535	36.3%	8,644	49.6%

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1.2 shows that approximately 40.3% (8,858) of the Study Area's population is identified as White, while 16.4% (3,626) is identified as Black or African American. Approximately 42% of the Study Area's population is identified as some other race.¹

Race is a self-identification data item in which respondents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. People who felt they fell into none of those categories could choose the "other" option, or they could indicate a combination of more than one race. These categories differ from 1990 principally because Asian has since become a separate category and because multiple races was not an option ten years ago. In general, the Census Bureau defines ethnicity or origin as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.²

Immokalee's Hispanic population, the community's largest ethnic segment, represented 66% of the total population in 1990 and 71% of the total population in 2000. Today, 82% of the population is Hispanic within the Immokalee Study Area. In 2000, Immokalee's 15,767 Hispanics represented 32% of Collier County's total Hispanic population of 49,249 Hispanic residents.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, individuals identifying themselves as Mexican and Guatemalan ancestry represented 81% and 6% of the total Hispanic population, respectively. Haitians (at 1,948 persons) and West Indians (at 1,984 persons) accounted for approximately 9% of the total population each.³

In 2000, 45% of the community's total population was foreign-born and more than 80% of these residents were not U.S. citizens (Table 1.3). The rapidly growing Hispanic population in Immokalee has been closely paced by a decrease in the number of residents who speak only English at home; almost two-thirds speak Spanish (Table 1.4). The high percentage of Hispanic residents and language barriers are critical concerns from a social and economic perspective, placing a greater need for social assistance programs and incentives to facilitate assimilation into the local economy. Some of these programs could include citizenship classes, adult education classes, English speaking classes and affordable housing assistance programs.

Notes:

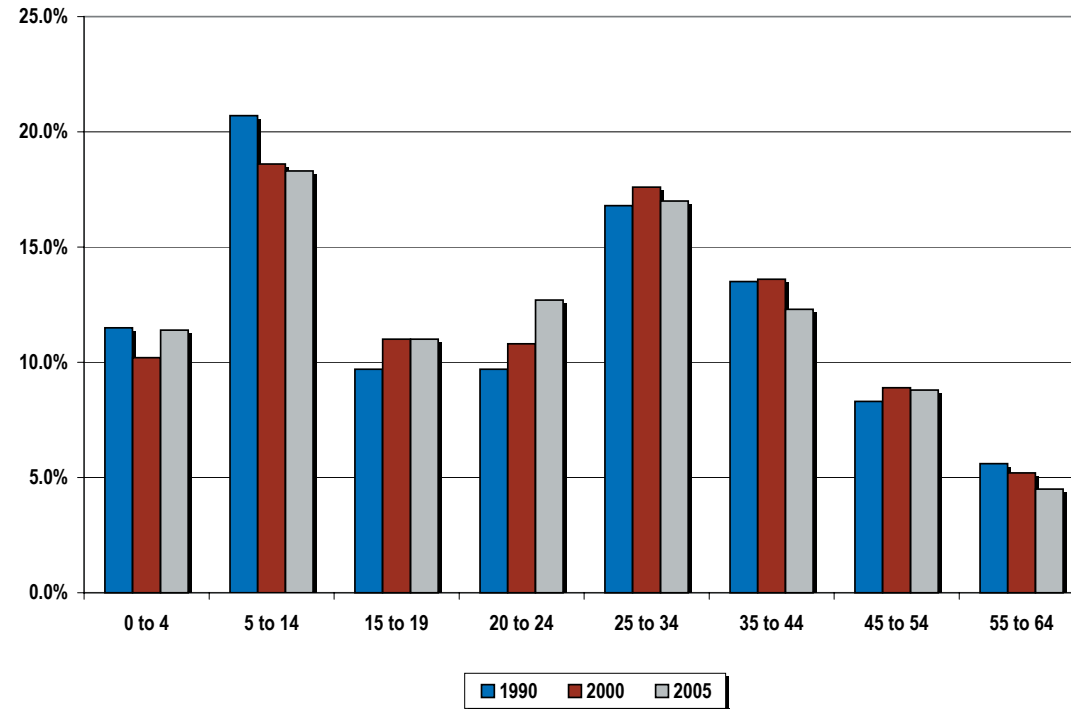
¹ Other Race Includes all other persons not included in the White, Black, American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut and Asian or Pacific Islander race categories. Persons reporting in the "Other Race" category and providing write-in entries such as multiracial, multiethnic, mixed, interracial, Wesort, or a Spanish/Hispanic origin group (such as Mexican, Cuban, or Puerto Rican) are included here.

² Note that The Census Bureau considers "Hispanic" an ethnicity, not a race. Anyone who selected a race on their 2000 Census forms also reported whether they were Hispanic or non-Hispanic.

³ Haitians are included within the Black or African American race in the 2000 Census

Fig. 1.4 Age Distribution

Source: U.S. Census 2000
Table DP-2



AGE DISTRIBUTION

The median age for the Immokalee Study Area was 24.7 years in 2000, a figure significantly lower than Collier County's median age of 44. This low average age skews both the youth- and age-dependency ratios in Immokalee compared to Collier County as a whole (Table 1.5). (The youth dependency ratio is the proportion of persons 15 years old and younger per 100 persons 16 to 64 years old, while the age dependency ratio is the ratio of persons 65 years old and over per 100 persons 16 to 64 years old.)

The total dependency ratio in the Immokalee Study Area was 64.3 in 2000, which implies that there are 64 age and youth dependent persons for every 100 persons of working age in Immokalee. The total dependency ratio in Immokalee is higher than the State (60.9) as a whole but lower than Collier County (69.5). The youth dependency ratio (57.6) is significantly higher than Collier County (28.0) and the State (32.6) pointing to a significant demand for youth educational and training facilities. Dependency ratios for Immokalee, County, and state have remained generally unchanged since the 1990 census.

EDUCATION

Table 1.6 indicates that 4,007 persons (approximately 29% of Immokalee's population three years old and over) were enrolled in preschool through college in 2000. This is consistent with 1990 data where the same percentage of Immokalee's population three years and older were enrolled in school. While the percentage enrolled in school remained stable, the number of preschoolers increased from 350 in 1990 to 808 in 2000 and the number of college students increased from 224 in 1990 to 394 in 2000. High school enrollment also increased significantly from 3,657 in 1990 to 4,557 in 2000.

Census information presented in Table 1.7 indicates that more than 75% of Immokalee's residents aged 25 years and over do not have a high school diploma and 1,942 residents (approximately 7.8% of the total Immokalee Study Area population) have no schooling.

Table 1.5 Age Characteristics

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

Age Characteristics (1990)	Immokalee	Collier County	Florida
Population 15 and Under	4,911	27,412	2,560,674
Population 16 to 64	8,589	90,131	8,008,609
Population 65 and Older	620	34,556	2,368,643
Total Population	14,120	152,099	12,937,926
Youth Dependency Ratio	57.2	30.4	32
Age Dependency Ratio	7.2	3.8	3
Total Dependency Ratio	64.4	68.9	61.6
Age Characteristics (2000)	Immokalee	Collier County	Florida
Population 15 and Under	7,706	41,562	3,240,557
Population 16 to 64	13,375	148,302	9,934,224
Population 65 and Older	895	61,513	2,807,597
Total Population	21,976	251,377	15,982,378
Youth Dependency Ratio	57.6	28.0	32.6
Age Dependency Ratio	6.7	41.5	28.3
Total Dependency Ratio	64.3	69.5	60.9

Table 1.6 School Enrollment

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

School Enrollment	1990	1990 (%)	2000	2000 (%)
Pre-primary School	350	8.3%	808	14.0%
Elementary or High School	3,657	86.4%	4,557	79.1%
College	224	5.3%	394	6.8%
Total	4,231	100.0%	5,759	100.0%

Table 1.7 Educational Attainment

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

Educational Attainment	1990	1990 (%)	2000	2000 (%)
Population 25 years and over	6,936	100%	9,605	100%
Less than 9th grade	3,653	52.7%	5,351	55.7%
9th - 12th grade, no diploma	1,437	20.7%	1,951	20.3%
High School Graduate	1,185	17.1%	1,559	16.2%
Some College, no degree	332	4.8%	376	3.9%
Associate Degree	106	1.5%	132	1.4%
Bachelor's Degree	120	1.7%	193	2.0%
Graduate or Professional Degree	103	1.5%	43	0.4%
No Schooling Completed	N/A	-	1,942	-

Fig. 1.5 Housing Tenure, 2000

Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

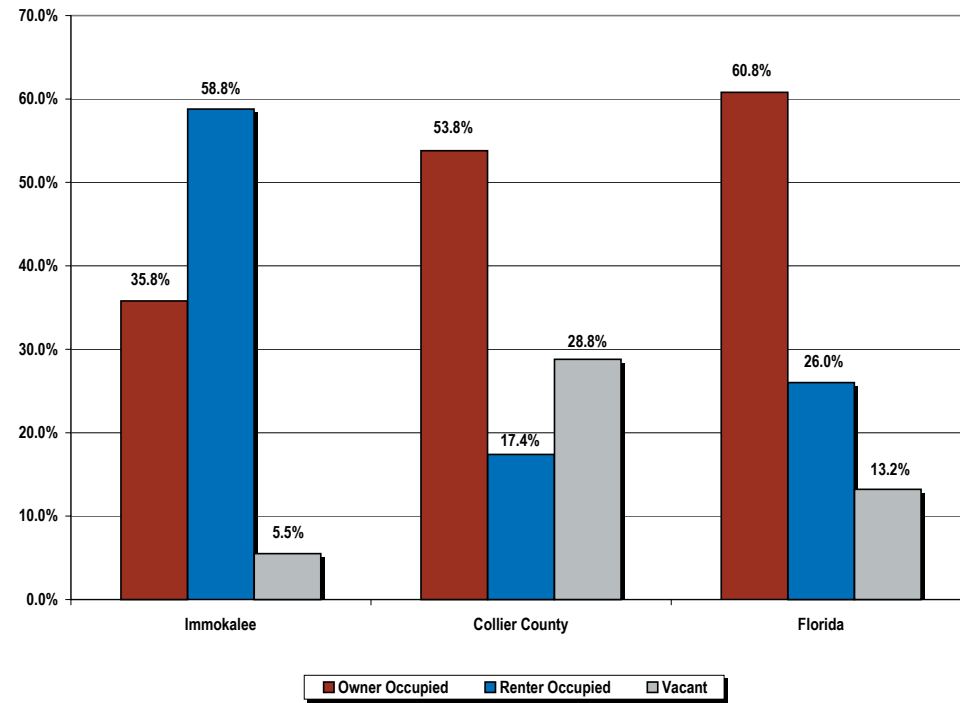
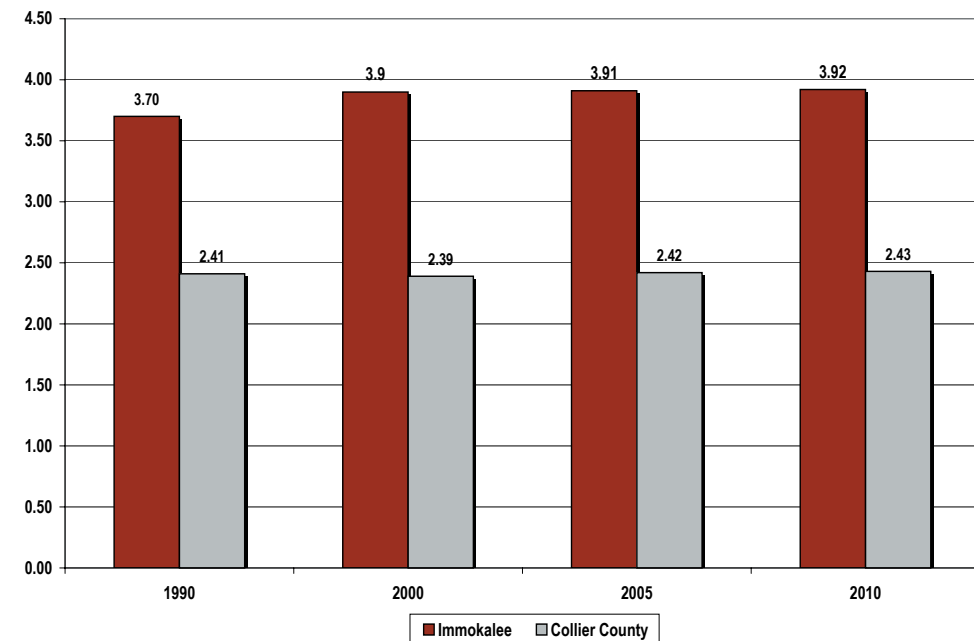


Fig. 1.6 Household Size, 1990-2010

Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2



HOUSEHOLDS

Based on the Certificate of Occupancy data provided by Collier County, the total number of dwelling units in the Immokalee Study Area increased from 4,911 in 1990 to 5,963 in 2000, representing a 21.4% increase. The 2005 projections show an increase of 1,403 units to the community's housing stock, accounting for 23.5% growth from the 2000 estimates. Housing trends in Immokalee are considerably different than those in the rest of Collier County and the State of Florida. Renting or leasing is the dominant housing arrangement in Immokalee, accounting for 58.7% of the total housing stock. The home ownership rate in Immokalee (36%) is significantly lower than the overall ownership rate in Collier County (54%) or the State of Florida (61%) (Fig. 1.5).

The vacancy rate in Immokalee decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000, representing a drop from 835 vacant units in 1990 to 294 vacant units in 2000. Approximately two-thirds of the housing units in the Immokalee Study Area are more than 15 years old, indicating aging housing stock.

Table 1.8 Household Trends

Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

Households	1990	2000	2005	2010
Immokalee Census Designated Place	3,723	4,715	5,079	5,511
Collier County	61,701	102,973	124,445	144,500
State of Florida	5,134,906	6,337,929	6,822,409	7,283,818
Percent Change		1990-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010
Immokalee Census Designated Place		26.7%	7.7%	8.5%
Collier County		66.9%	20.9%	16.1%
State of Florida		23.4%	7.6%	6.8%

Table 1.9 Household Units

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

Dwelling Type	1990	2000
1-Unit, Detached	1,704	2,002
1-Unit, Attached	178	250
2-Unit	347	277
3- or 4-Unit	256	278
5- to 9-Unit	142	373
10- to 19-Unit	101	145
20-Unit or more	205	15
Mobile Home	1,526	1,394
Boat, RV, etc.	48	8
Total Units in Structure	4,507	4,929

Fig. 1.7 Median Household Income Trends, 1990-2010

Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

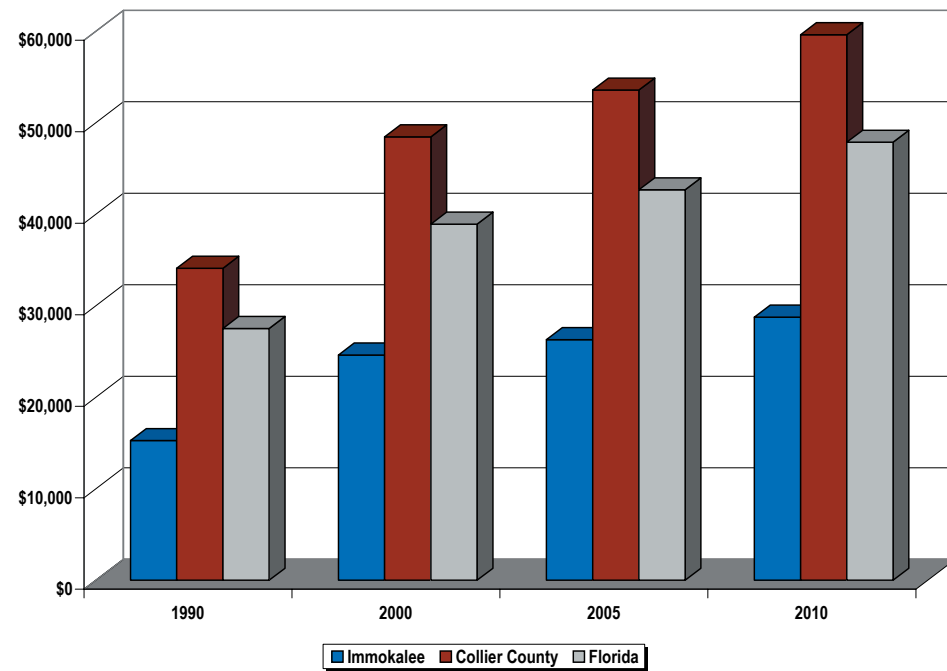
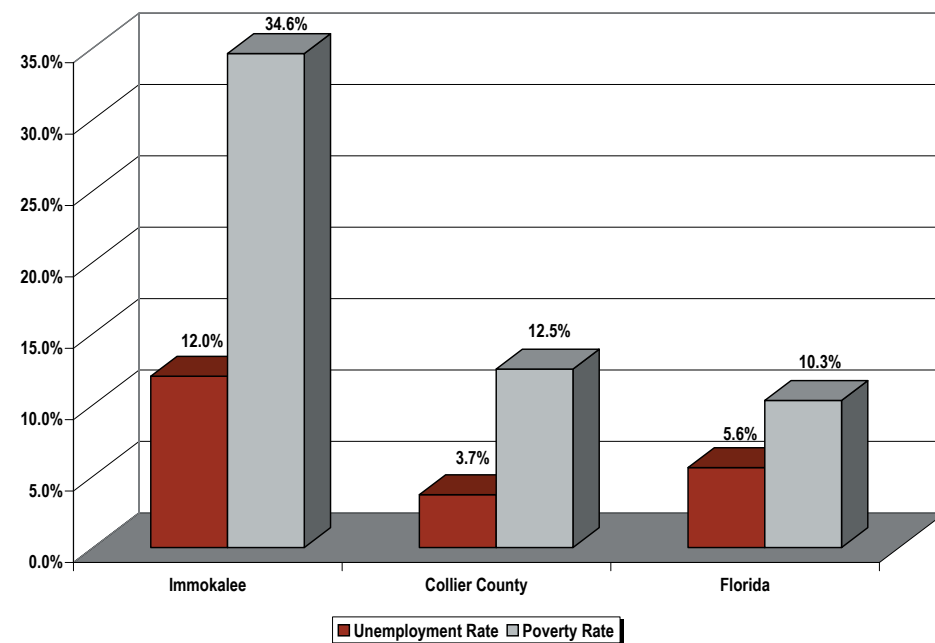


Fig. 1.8 Unemployment and Poverty Rates

Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2



According to the U.S Census 2000 data, there were a total of 5,079 households in the Immokalee CDP (Table 1.8, previous page) of which 4,074 (78%) are family households. There are 2,450 married couple families, out of which 1,672 are married couples with children under the age of 18. There are 1,145 non-family households representing approximately 22% of the total households. Approximately 60% of the households have persons less than 18 years and 13.6% of the households have individuals above the age of 65. Average household size for Immokalee Study Area was 3.9, 1.5 persons greater than the Collier County average (2.4) (Fig. 1.6, previous page). Approximately 17% of the total households are 2-person households and 51.3% of the total households are 4-person households and greater (Fig. 1.6, previous page).

The total household population, as reported by the Census 2000, was 18,395 for the Immokalee Study Area. Based on the Collier County housing unit estimates and projections, the total household population for 2005 is 28,743. In recent years, Collier County has approved several new residential Planned Unit Developments and Site Development Plans that are not represented in the analysis since they are not included in the Census 2000 data, but when completed may greatly increase Immokalee's population. A Residential Build-Out Study in 2005 performed by the County predicted an eventual population in Immokalee of almost 105,000 (see page 28). Appendix D lists recently approved developments to further understand the implications on the local real estate market and Immokalee's development patterns.

INCOME

Per capita and household income in Immokalee increased by more than 50% between 1990 and 2000 (Table 1.10), yet the median household income remains substantially lower than that of the County or the rest of the state (Fig. 1.7). Median household income in Collier County in 2000 was \$48,289, almost double Immokalee's \$24,315. 2005 estimates indicate that while median household income in Immokalee has increased 8% to \$26,340 since 2000, per capita income has declined slightly in that same period.

U.S. Census data (2000) suggests approximately 35% of Immokalee's families were at or below the poverty line in 2000; a rate three times that of the State of Florida (Fig. 1.8).

In 2000 (the most recent year for which data was confirmable), 12% of Immokalee's labor force was unemployed, more than twice the Florida rate and nearly four times the Collier County rate at the time. Approximately 75% of Immokalee's labor force is blue collar (a statistic that may correlate to the fact that more than 75% of Immokalee residents aged 25 and over do not have a high school diploma).

Table 1.10 Immokalee Household Income

Source: U.S. Census 1990 STF-3, U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2, Demographics Now, 2006

Note: This data represents the Immokalee CDP and not the entire Study Area

Income	1990	2000	2005	% Change 1990-2000
Average HH Income	\$20,179	\$32,387	\$29,815	60.5%
Median HH Income	\$15,170	\$24,315	\$26,340	60.3%
Per Capita Income	\$5,561	\$8,576	\$8,221	54.2%

Map 1 Land Market Value

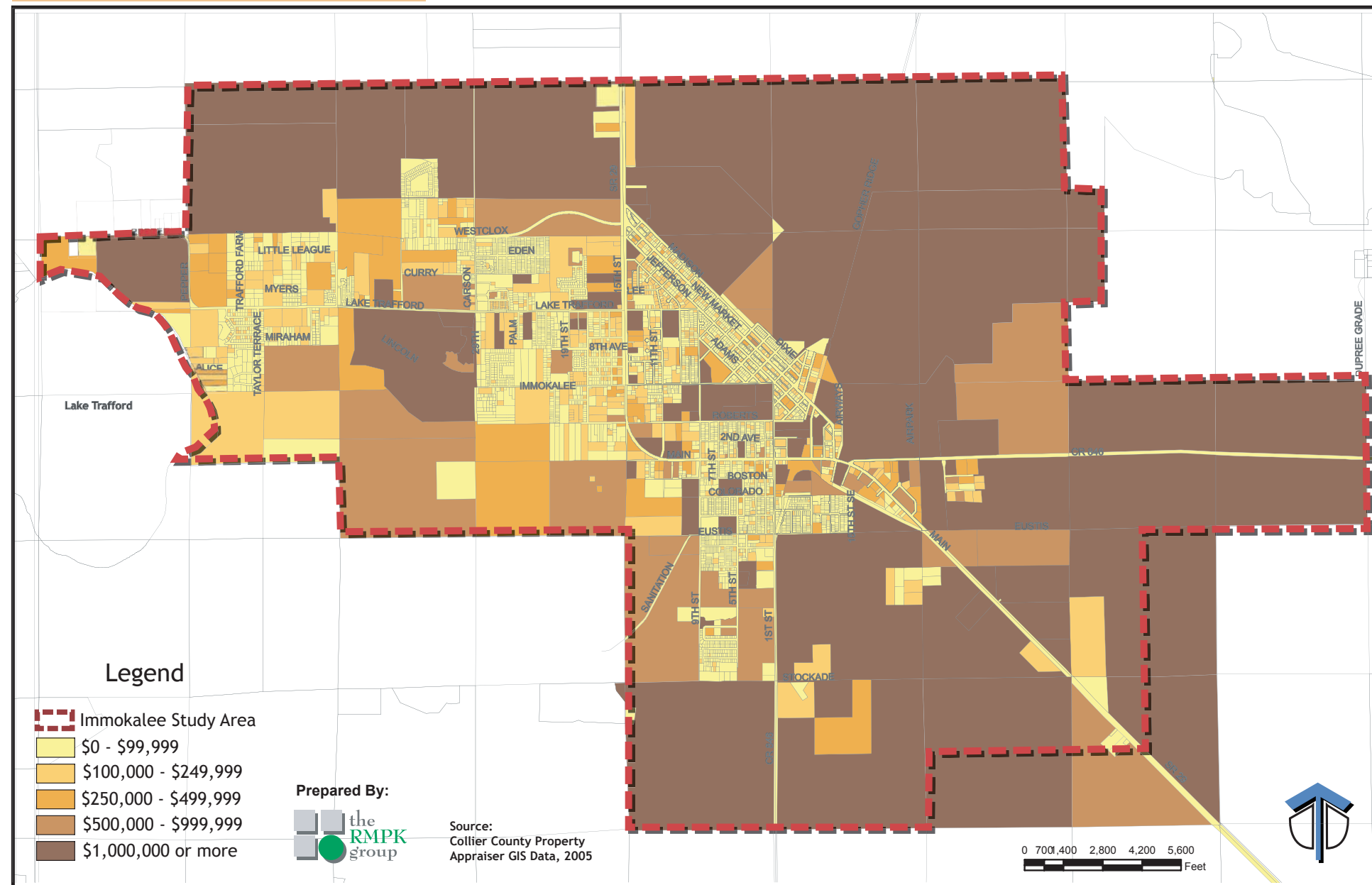


Table 1.11 Housing Values
Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

	1990		2000	
	Median Housing Value	Median Rent	Median Housing Value	Median Rent
Immokalee	\$44,400	\$233	\$68,500	\$406
Collier County	\$120,947	\$496	\$167,457	\$675

PROPERTY VALUES

In 2000, the median value of a home in Immokalee was \$68,500, compared to almost \$167,500 in Collier County as a whole. This depressed value is still a 54% increase from 1990, however (Table 1.11). In the course of a decade, Immokalee's monthly median rent rate increased from \$233 in 1990 to \$406 in 2000, still considerably below the County median rate of \$675.

According to the Collier County Property Appraiser database, almost 69% of the properties in Immokalee have a market value of less than \$75,000 as of 2004 (Table 1.13 and Map 1).

Table 1.12 Total Value of Real Property in Immokalee
Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Year	Taxable Value
1999	\$148,645,590
2000	\$156,720,943
2001	\$176,095,104
FY 03 Budget	\$196,490,394
FY 04 Budget	\$213,367,140
FY 04 Budget Final	\$214,158,072
FY 05 Budget	\$228,019,489
Actual FY 06	\$259,056,291

Table 1.13 Property Values in Immokalee
Source: U.S. Census 2000 Table DP-2

Range	Count	Percent
\$0	95	2.1%
Less than \$15,000	659	14.8%
\$15,000 - \$49,999	1,414	31.7%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	903	20.2%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	447	10.0%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	420	9.4%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	183	4.1%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	107	2.4%
\$300,000 - \$499,999	73	1.6%
\$500,000 - \$999,999	72	1.6%
\$1,000,000 - \$4,999,999	72	1.6%
\$5 Million or greater	17	0.4%