

AN OVERVIEW  
OF EXISTING AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT TRENDS  
ON

# **Siesta Key**

*Prepared by:*

THE SARASOTA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

*June 7, 1979*

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## PREFACE

Siesta Key is a desirable place to live and visit and has been since long before the first bridge from the mainland was built in 1917. Since that time, development, first on the north end, then in the "village," and then spreading along the Gulf shore, has been steady and, during the past 25 years, quite rapid. The Sarasota Board of County Commissioners has been aware of this growth and its associated impacts and, on several occasions in the past, has taken a strong and positive action to address these growth impacts.

For example, Siesta Key was the first area in the unincorporated County to be zoned. (This action, in 1955, preceded the remainder of the County by almost four years.) Much of the central portion of the Key was zoned R-3 (Multiple Use Residential) as a means to control the potential proliferation and development of all kinds of commercial enterprises. In the mid-Sixties, the Board reduced the maximum density allowed in the R-3 zone district from 36 to 24 units per acre. Later, in 1973, the density was again reduced, this time to a maximum of 13 units per acre. In 1975, when a completely new zoning code was adopted, this 13 du/a (dwelling units per acre) density was again established as the highest density allowed on the Key. Finally, the Board has, during the past several years, imposed development moratoria when utility capacities failed to keep pace with development and to prevent indiscriminate construction during the creation and adoption of a Gulf Beach Setback Ordinance.

Based upon the County's past concerns about the welfare of Siesta Key and its residents, it is quite reasonable for the Board once again to turn its attention to the Key and to examine existing policies and regulations within the context of recent development. That--continuing concern and positive action--is the key.

ZONING

*Clarify*  
*2010*  
*[160]*  
*Including land lying within City of Sarasota?*  
*NO*

*ZONING FIGURES DO NOT INCLUDE CITY PORTION, HOWEVER, ALL CITY PROP. ZONED FOR SFR.*

Siesta Key encompasses 2050 acres of property, 1744 of which are zoned for some form of residential activity; the remainder being commercial, governmental, conservation-oriented, or internal waterways. The majority of the Key (1198 acres) is zoned for single-family lots and would allow, theoretically, up to 3740 dwelling units. Another 546 acres are zoned "multi-family" and would, again theoretically, allow 6582 units for a total theoretical potential of 10,322 units. The specific zoning tabulations are shown by Table Z-1 (below) and indicate that the 465 acres zoned RMF-3 constitute 85% of the 546 acres zoned for multi-family uses and 27% of the total 744 acres residentially zoned land on the Key.

TABLE Z-1.: EXISTING ZONING

District	Area (acres)	Density (du/acre)*	Dwelling Units**
RSF-1 (Single-family res.)	504	2.5	1260
RSF-2 ( " )	643	3.5	2250
RSF-3 ( " )	51	4.5	230
RMF-1 (Multi-family res.)	64	6.0	384
RMF-2 ( " )	17	9.0	153
RMF-3 ( " )	465	13.0	6043
OPI (Professional)	6	-	-
CG (General Commercial)	42	-	-
CI (Intensive Commercial)	2	-	-
GU (Government)	79	-	-
OUC (Conservation)	12	-	-
<b>T O T A L S</b>	<b>1885</b>	<b>5.48*</b>	<b>10,322**</b>

\*developable density permitted by zoning  
 \*\*theoretical figure based on maximum utilization of all land at maximum density allowed in zone district

SOURCE: Department of Planning records.

13  
 Figure Z-1 (page 3) shows the generalized zoning on the Key and indicates that the majority of the highest density zones (RMF-1, RMF-2, and RMF-3) are located in the west-central portion of the Key with other smaller areas near the southern end of the Key.

Most of Siesta Key is now developed. Department of Planning records indicate that no vacant multi-family tracts remain undeveloped or uncommitted (no plats approved). However, approximately 80 smaller, vacant lots are zoned multi-family. Four hundred lots zoned single-family also remain vacant (see Figure L-1, which is on page 5). Together, these vacant parcels represent a development potential of 560 units. <sup>-160 UNITS</sup> <sup>[+ 30]</sup> <sup>[590]</sup>

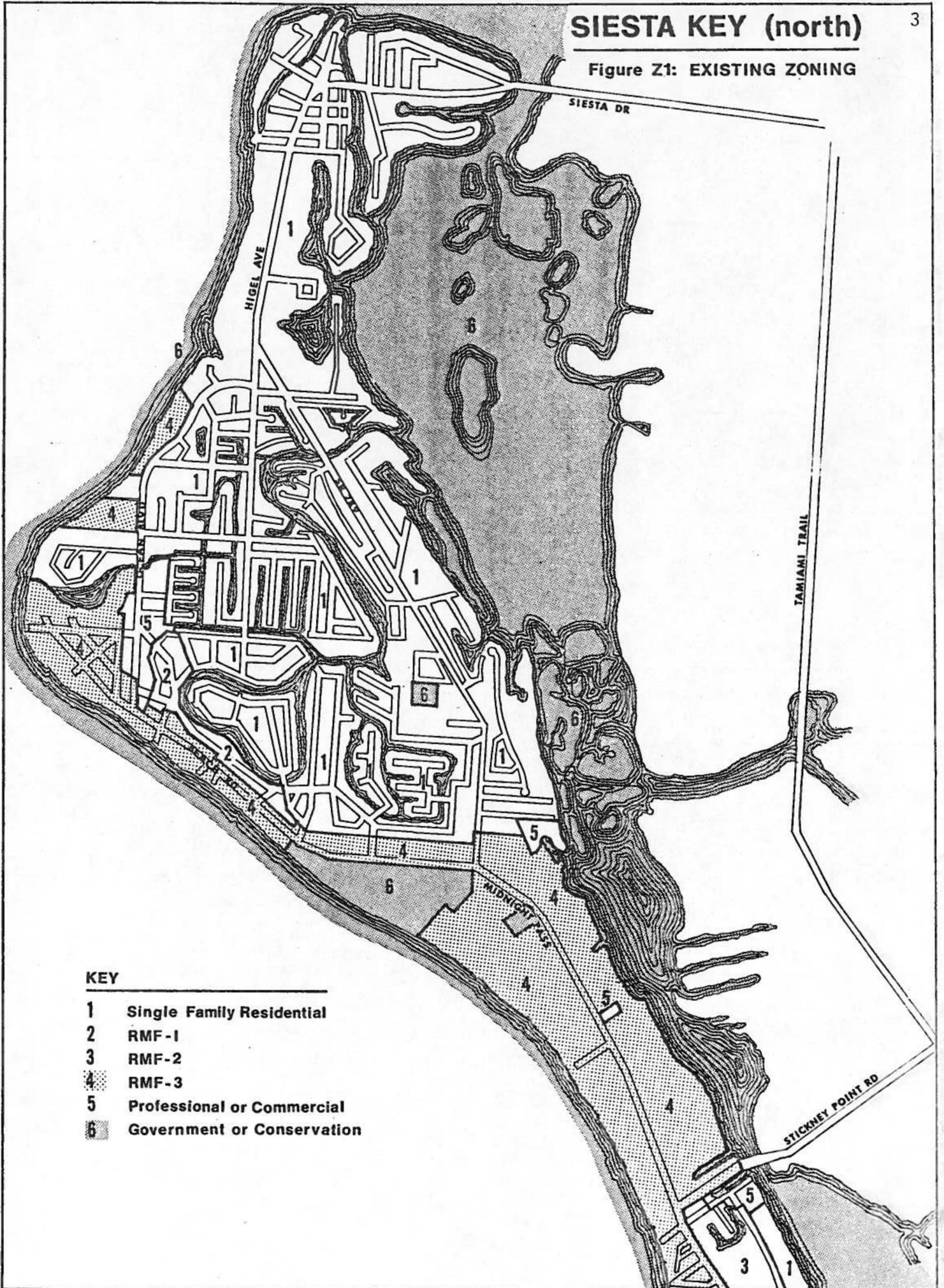
In assessing total potential development, however, it would be misleading to count only vacant land. Many parcels have structures either developed to less than their zoning potential or nearing the end of their economic life. A "windshield survey" of the Key taken on June 5, 1979, found that about 66 acres of such potentially re-developable land containing 532 existing units and some non-residential structures are located in areas zoned RMF-3. These properties, which are depicted on Figure L-2, could be re-developed to contain 858 units--a net increase of 326 units. (It should be noted that, for the purpose of this study, all tracts were included, even though some may require variances from the Gulf Beach Setback Ordinance to allow construction.)

In addition, 287 units have been approved under preliminary plats in the RMF-3 area, although permits have not been issued. Finally, 250 permits have been issued thus far in 1979. These pending and permitted units (for 537 units) are considered "committed."

In summary, Table L-1 shows existing and potential residential development in dwelling units on Siesta Key as of May, 1979. (Table L-1 may be found at the top of page 9, following the various maps mentioned in the text to this point.)

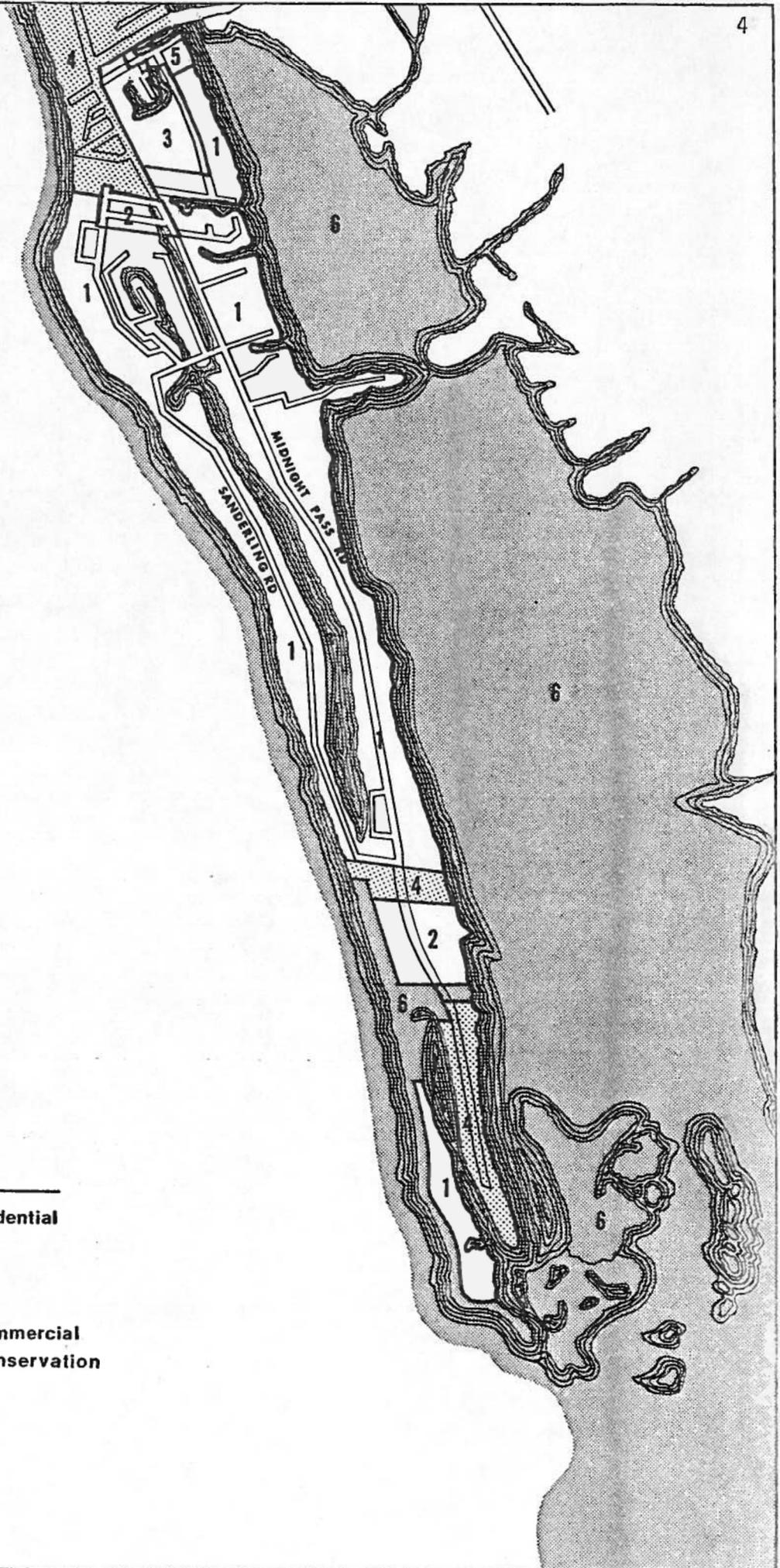
# SIESTA KEY (north)

Figure Z1: EXISTING ZONING



# SIESTA KEY (South)

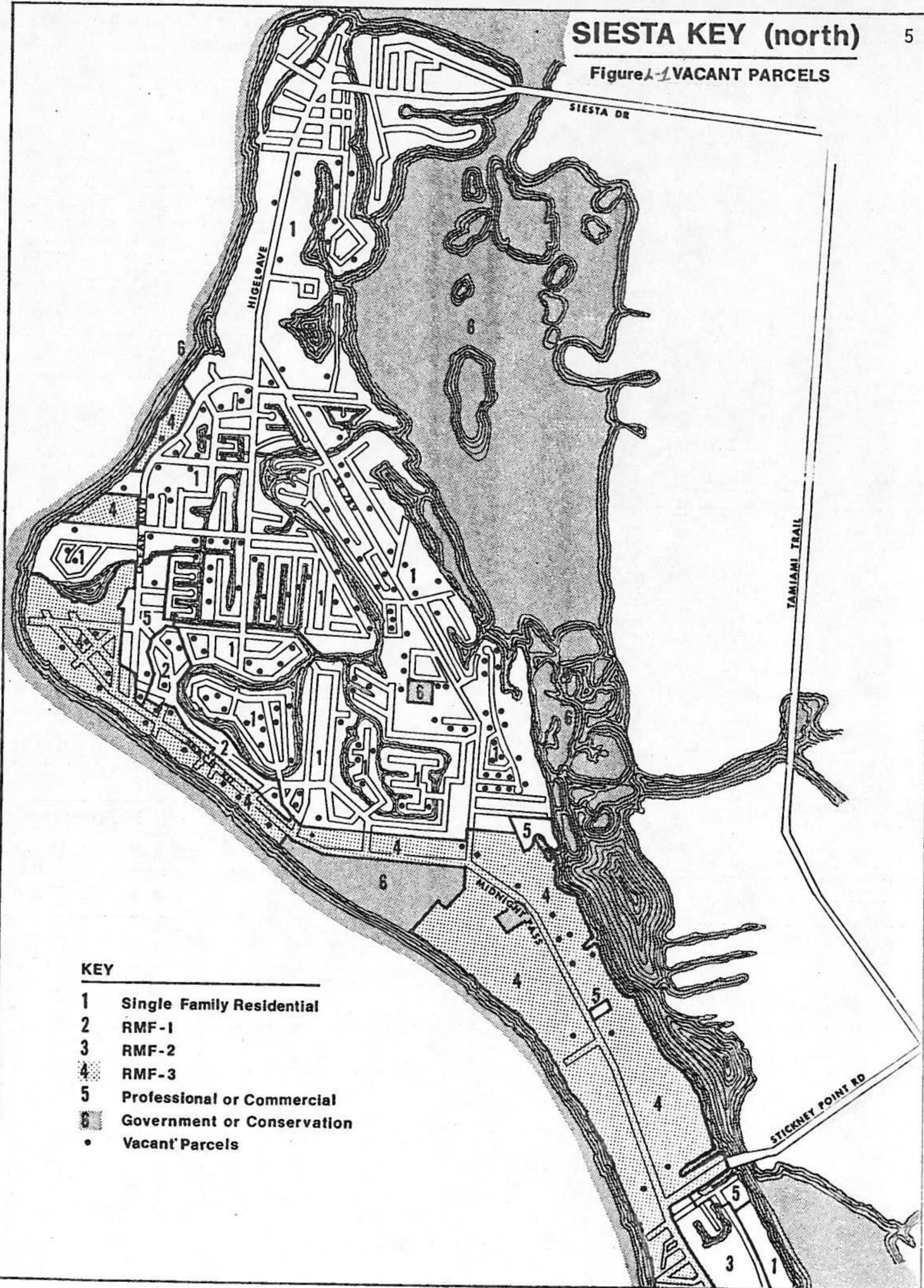
Figure Z1: EXISTING ZONING



## KEY

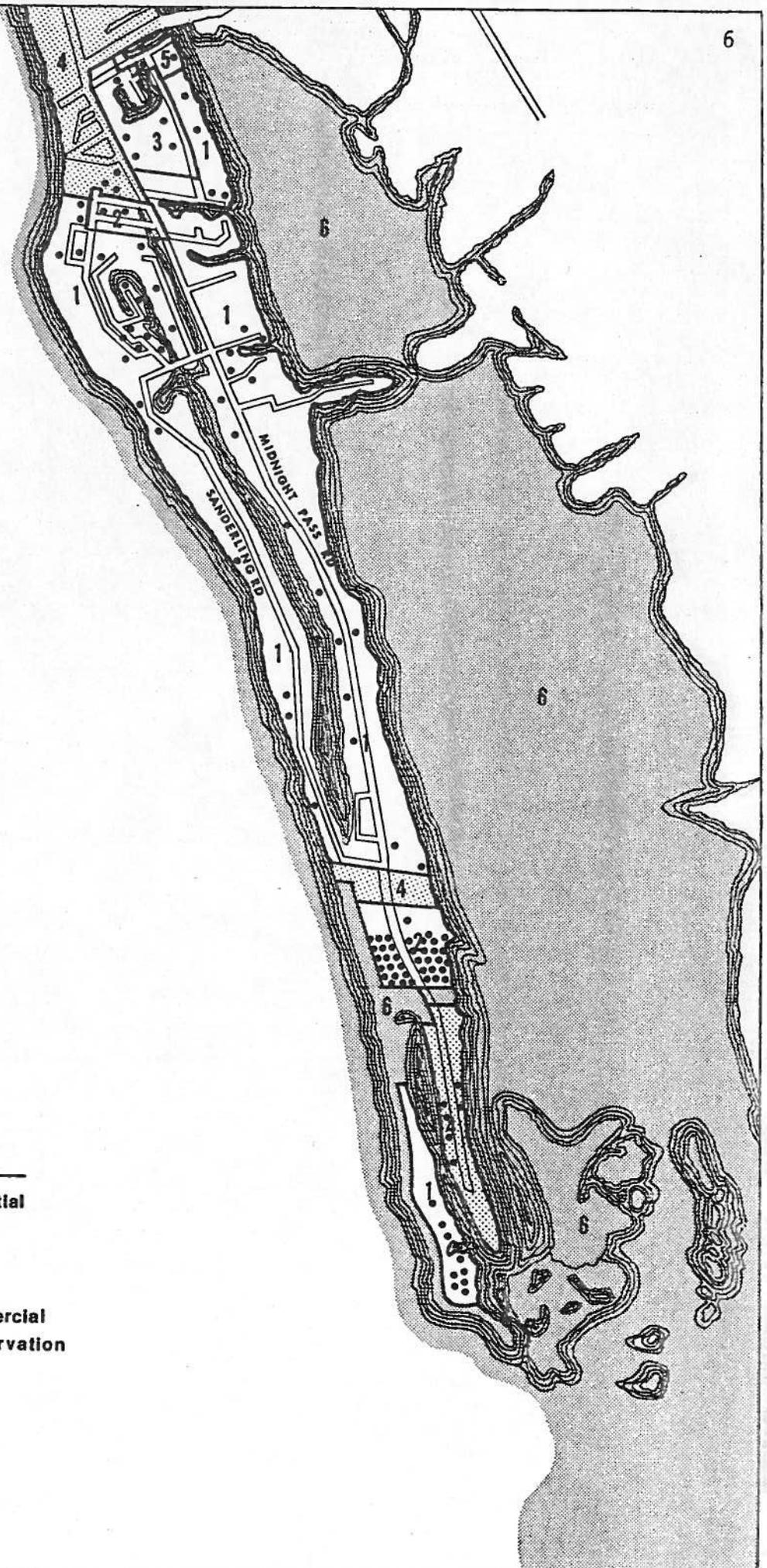
- 1 Single Family Residential
- 2 RMF-1
- 3 RMF-2
- 4 RMF-3
- 5 Professional or Commercial
- 6 Government or Conservation

Figure 1-1 VACANT PARCELS



# SIESTA KEY (South)

Figure L1: VACANT PARCELS

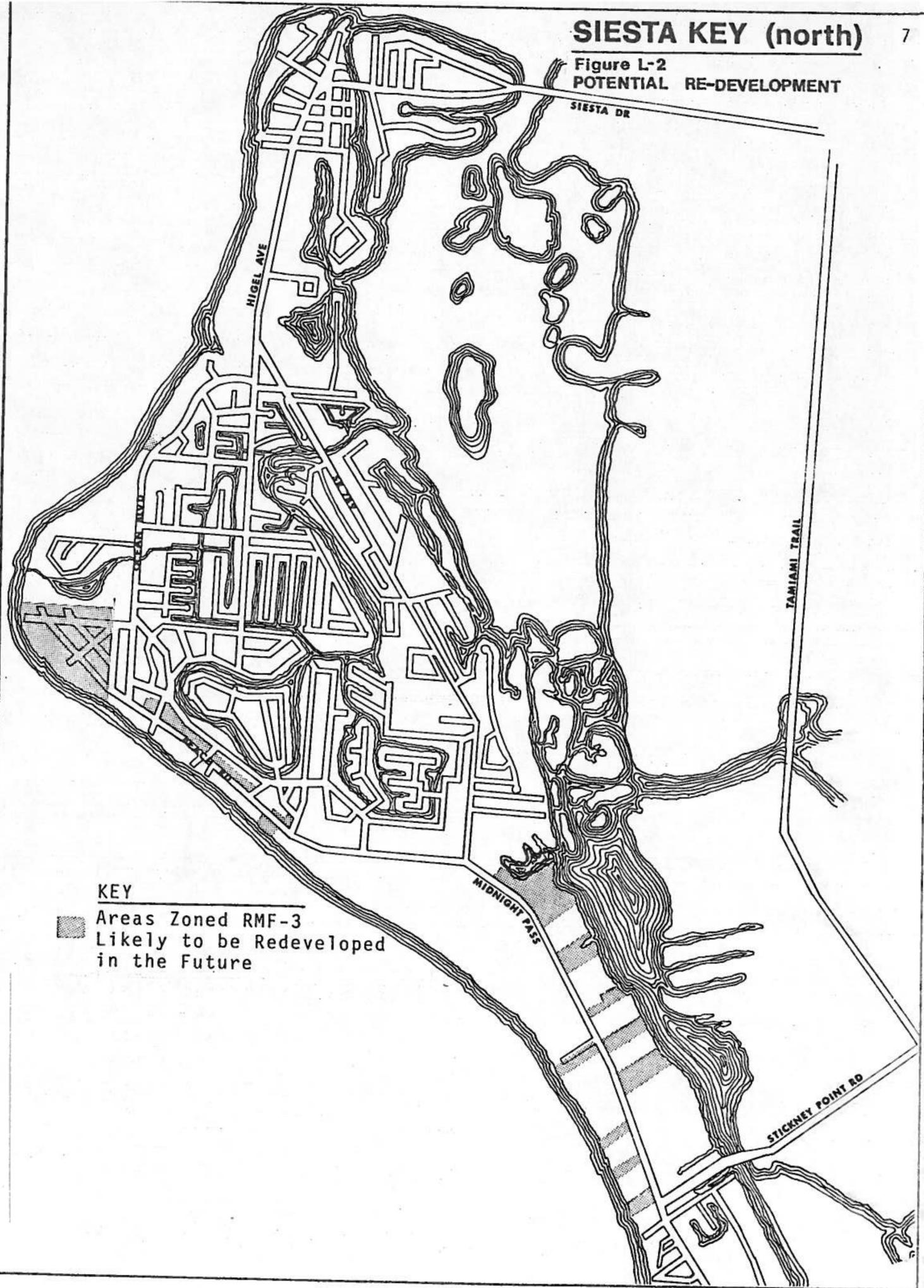


## KEY

- 1 Single Family Residential
- 2 RMF-1
- 3 RMF-2
- 4 RMF-3
- 5 Professional or Commercial
- 6 Government or Conservation
- Vacant Parcels

# SIESTA KEY (north)

Figure L-2  
POTENTIAL RE-DEVELOPMENT



### KEY

- Areas Zoned RMF-3
- ▨ Areas Likely to be Redeveloped in the Future

# SIESTA KEY (South)

Figure L-2 Cont.

POTENTIAL RE-DEVELOPMENT

## KEY

- Areas Zoned RMF-3  
Likely to be Redeveloped  
in the Future

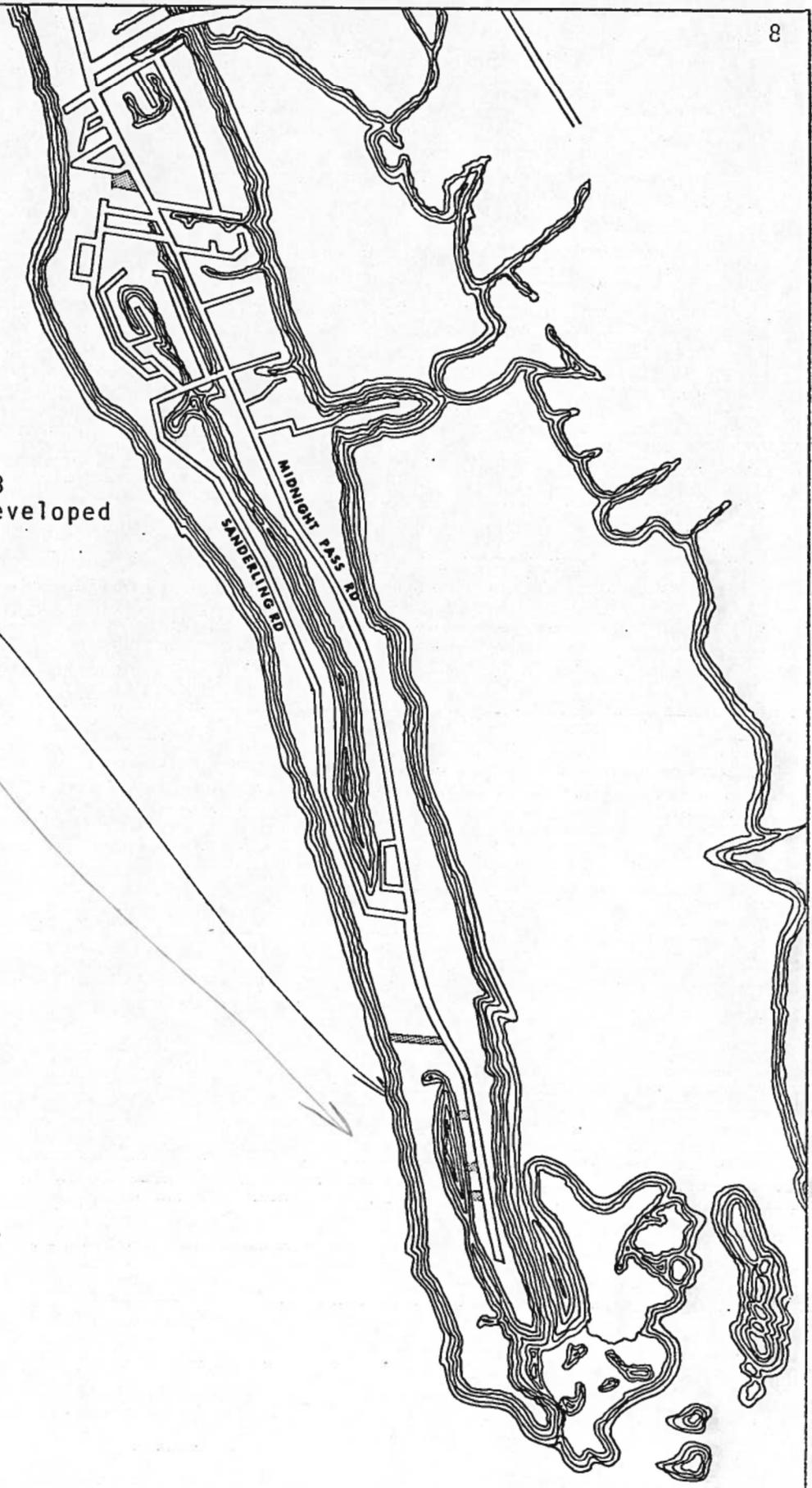


TABLE L-1.: POTENTIAL DWELLING UNITS  
Based Upon Existing, Committed, and Potential Development

Existing Units	7842	[+ 248 = 8090]
Committed Units (platted or permitted)	537	
subtotal . . . . .	8379	[8627]
Potential Units (vacant land)	560	[+ 30 = 590]
Potential Units (redevelopment)	326	
subtotal . . . . .	886	[916]
TOTAL Potential Dwelling Units . . . .	9265	[9543]

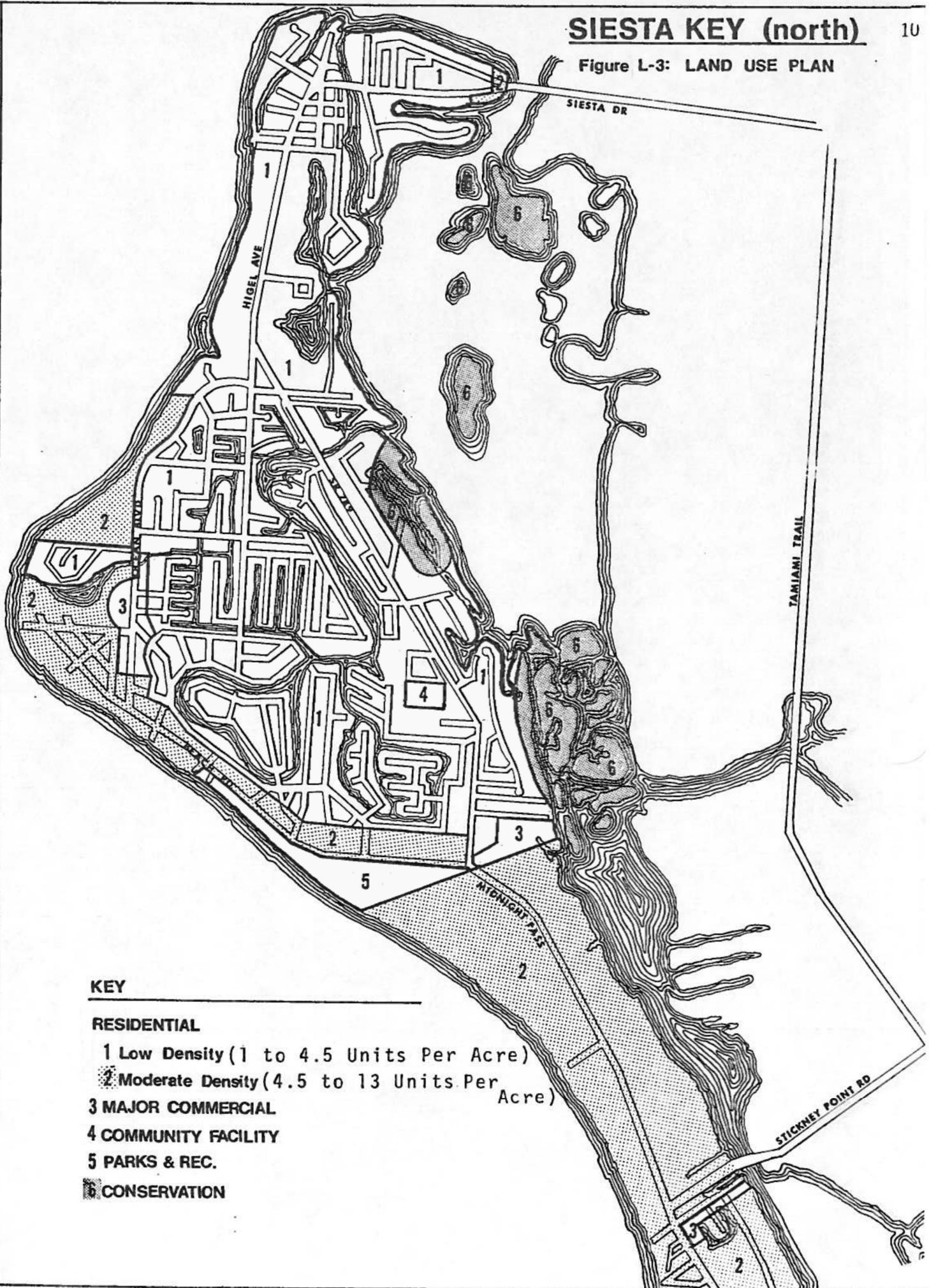
SOURCE: Department of Planning records.

The figure for total potential dwelling units is a practical maximum based upon all existing and committed building permits plus full development of all vacant land and re-development of the 66 acres noted above. This figure is lower--though more realistic--than the maximum dwelling unit count of 10,322 shown on Table Z-1 (page 1), which is based upon maximum utilization of all land at the maximum density allowed in the applicable zone district. The 10,322-unit zoning figure is high, as many parcels are not developed to that full density.

### LAND USE PLAN

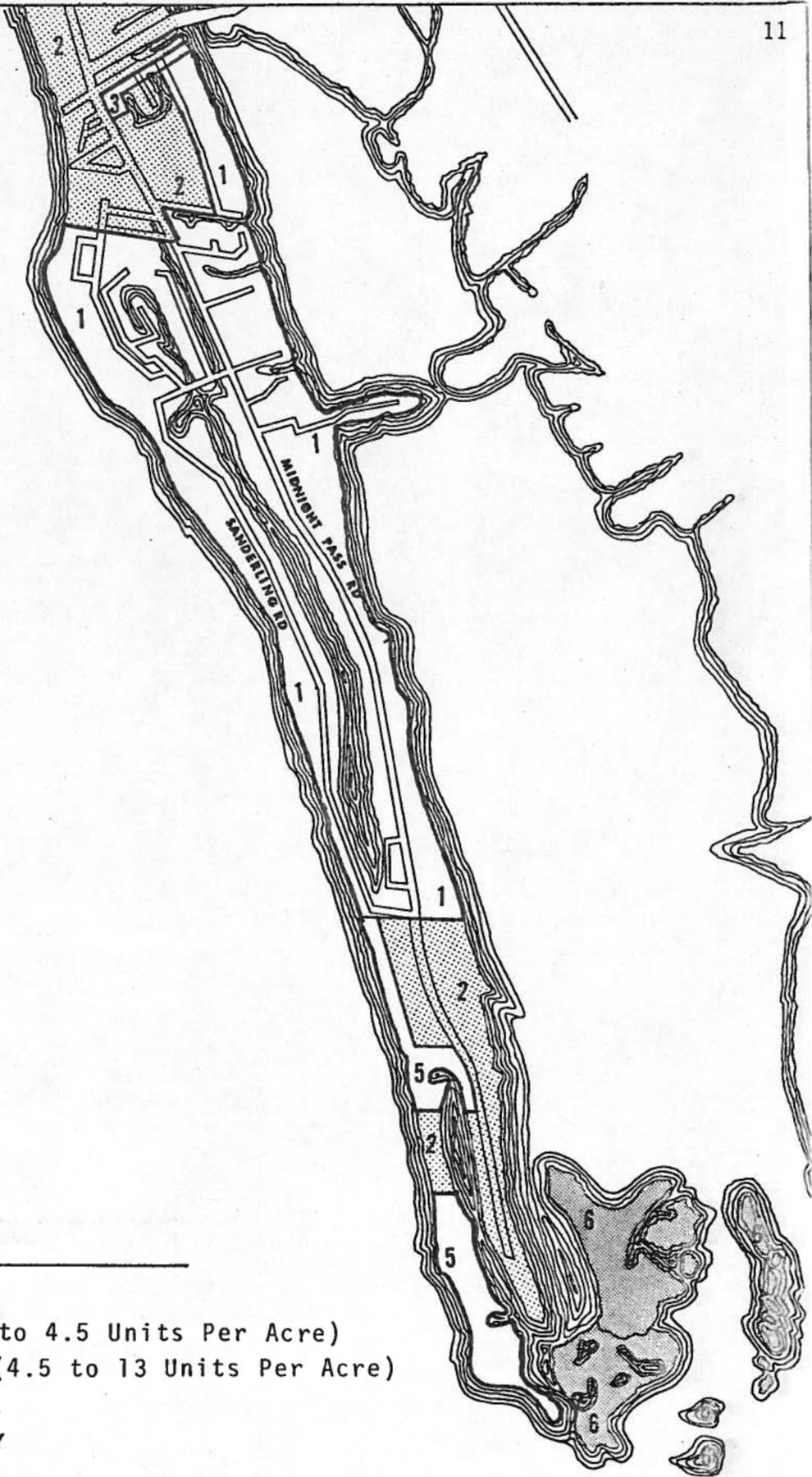
For purposes of reference and comparison, a generalized version of the adopted land use plan is shown in Figure L-3 (pages 10 and 11).

Figure L-3: LAND USE PLAN



# SIESTA KEY (South)

Figure L-3: LAND USE PLAN  
Cont.



## KEY

### RESIDENTIAL

- 1 Low Density (1 to 4.5 Units Per Acre)
- 2 Moderate Density (4.5 to 13 Units Per Acre)
- 3 MAJOR COMMERCIAL
- 4 COMMUNITY FACILITY
- 5 PARKS & REC.
- 6 CONSERVATION

## EXISTING AND POTENTIAL POPULATION

Growth on Siesta Key has been dramatically faster than for the remainder of the County. Estimates based upon U.S. Census, University of Florida and Department of Planning figures indicate a resident (year-round) population increase of 4999 from 1970 to May, 1979 (5911 to 10,910). This represents an 84.6% increase. Department of Planning estimates, based upon existing and committed dwelling units (8379, from Table L-1--see page 9), set the current "functional" population (year-round + seasonal population; full occupancy; 2.08 persons per unit) at 17,428. [17,944] [11,233]

If the estimated 560 [590] units which would be developed on existing vacant parcels were added to the 326 additional units which could result from re-development (see Table L-1), the existing residential unit count of 8379 [8627] would be increased to 9265 [9543] (again, see Table L-1). Assuming that these units were to be fully occupied during the winter season (at the rate of 2.08 persons per unit), the Key's "functional" population would increase from 17,428 to 19,271 [19,349] (an 10.6% increase). The resident or year-round population would also increase, from 10,910 to 12,128 [12,425] (10.6%). [063]

[ Please note that the dwelling unit counts, current population and projected population figures contained in this report are for the unincorporated portion of Siesta Key. According to the City of Sarasota, there are currently 248 single-family homes on the northern end of the Key within the City. An additional 48 individual lots remain vacant; however, due to City restrictions on buildable lot size, it is estimated that only about 30 new homes could be constructed. Using the rationale stated above, the current functional population of the incorporated portion of the Key is estimated to be 516, and the resident population 323 persons. Population projections based upon maximum buildout would be 62 (functional) and 39 (resident). ]

[ FIGURES INCLUDED IN RED BRACKETS. ]

## TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

### BRIDGE ACCESS TO SIESTA KEY, CURRENT SITUATION

The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Siesta Key has shown considerable increase between 1970 and 1978. Table T-1 depicts average daily traffic (averaged for a whole year) on each of the Siesta Key bridges during 1970 and 1978. In order to provide a point of statistical reference, similar data for traffic on U.S. 41 at the Sarasota-Manatee County line are included.

TABLE T-1.: AVERAGE DAILY TRIPS

<i>Station</i>	<i>Design Capacity</i>	<i>1970</i>	<i>1978</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>% Increase</i>
U.S. 41	43,100	24,981	29,355	4374	17.5
South Bridge	33,400	10,684	17,545	6770	63.4
North Bridge	13,200	11,028	13,536	2508	22.7

SOURCE: Florida Department of Transportation, First District Office (Bartow), May 31, 1979.

As can be seen by Table T-1, traffic on Siesta Key--especially at the Stickney Point Bridge crossing--is increasing at a greater rate than at the control point on U.S. 41. In addition, Siesta Key is strongly impacted by seasonal fluctuations in population. Therefore, in order also to gauge seasonal impact of peak population on traffic circulation, Table T-2 has been provided. This table indicates the amount of traffic for the same locations as Table T-1, during that month of 1970 and 1978 which exhibited the greatest volume of traffic. It is evident that while traffic on Siesta Key has increased during the 1970s, the amount of increase during the peak season has increased even more dramatically (49% and 40% on the key, as opposed to 8% on

U.S. 41.

TABLE T-2.: PEAK MONTH AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS

Station	Design Capacity	1970	1978	Change	% Increase
U.S. 41	43,100	28,209	30,498	2289	8.1
South Bridge	33,400	13,852	20,640	6788	49.0
North Bridge	<del>13,851</del> 13,200	10,851	15,184	4333	39.9

NOTE: Peak monthly traffic counts are average daily vehicles during the month showing the highest counts within a given year (U.S. 41 and South Bridge, 1970, were April; all others were January).

SOURCE: Florida Department of Transportation, First District Office (Bartow), May 31, 1979.

According to volume/capacity figures for 1985, as generated by the Sarasota-Manatee Area Transportation Study (SMATS), the North Bridge average daily trips capacity is 13,200, while Stickney Point Bridge has a capacity of 33,400 trips per day. Comparing these figures to actual accounts in 1978 (Table T-1, on the preceding page), indicates that the North Bridge is operating slightly above its current design capacity, while Stickney Point Bridge (four-lane) is still more than adequate to serve present average daily demands.

When the design capacities of the two bridges are compared to peak loads (Table T-2, above), a different picture emerges. Stickney Point Bridge, during peak season traffic, is operating at nearly two-thirds its design capacity, and the North Key Bridge is carrying approximately 2000 more cars per day than its design capacity.

While the analysis of the current Siesta Key bridge access situation, above, reflects existing conditions, Table T-3 (below) depicts the 1985 projected demands.

TABLE T-3.: 1985 PROJECTED: TRAFFIC (TRIPS) ON BRIDGE ACCESSES

<i>Station</i>	<i>Design Capacity</i>	<i>Projected Average Daily Trips</i>	<i>Projected Peak Daily Trips</i>
(1) U.S. 41	43,100	35,500	36,885
(3) Stickney Point	33,400	29,700	35,135
(10) North Bridge	13,200	13,000	14,586

SOURCE: SMATS volume/capacity figures for 1985 existing-plus-committed system.

Readily observable from Table T-3 is the fact that the ADT (average daily trips) generated are projected to be nearly equal to the design capacity of each bridge by 1985. More importantly, however, the projected PDT (peak daily trips) would be greater than the design capacity of each bridge.

Again, the U.S. 41 figures are presented as a reference point.

(NOTE: The North Bridge SMATS-projected ADT for 1985 is lower than the 1978 actual counts. Although a possibility exists that the various changes to mainland road networks could actually cause a shift in traffic to the South Bridge, a greater likelihood exists that the SMATS population projections assumed a slower rate of growth on Siesta Key than has actually occurred. If this is the case, the 1985 North Bridge ADT projections may be quite conservative and traffic congestion on that bridge could be even greater than projected. Further, it does not appear that the projected increases in the resident or functional population (10.6%) of the Key could be solely responsible for this 1985 traffic increase.)

#### ON-KEY TRAFFIC, CURRENT SITUATION

Although traffic data exist for a number of stations on Siesta Key, information consistent with the needs of this particular study is somewhat limited. Table T-4 (on page 17) reflects the data that is available.

Interpretation of these data indicate that existing traffic congestion problems center around: 1. Midnight Pass Road, north and south of Stickney Point Bridge; 2. Beach Road, near Siesta Beach; 3. Ocean Boulevard, south of Higel Avenue; and 4. the North Siesta Key Bridge. The 1985 SMATS projections suggest that future congestion problems will be greater, although the location of the congestion will shift somewhat (see Table T-4). By 1985, Midnight Pass Road south of Stickney Point Bridge is projected to carry over twice its designated ADT capacity (Station 9). That same road north of the bridge could be carrying about 50% more than its capacity (Station 5). Similarly, Beach Road, near Siesta Beach, and Ocean Boulevard, south of Higel Avenue, would both be somewhat over the ADT design capacity.

If peak ADT is assumed to be approximately 15% greater than average ADT, then the 1985 traffic congestions projected above would be further aggravated during winter months. One further consideration surrounds the use of average daily trips (ADT). Since such figures are averaged over a 24-hour period, they cannot describe rush-hour peaks, bridge openings, or emergency evacuation conditions.

Figure T1: TRAFFIC

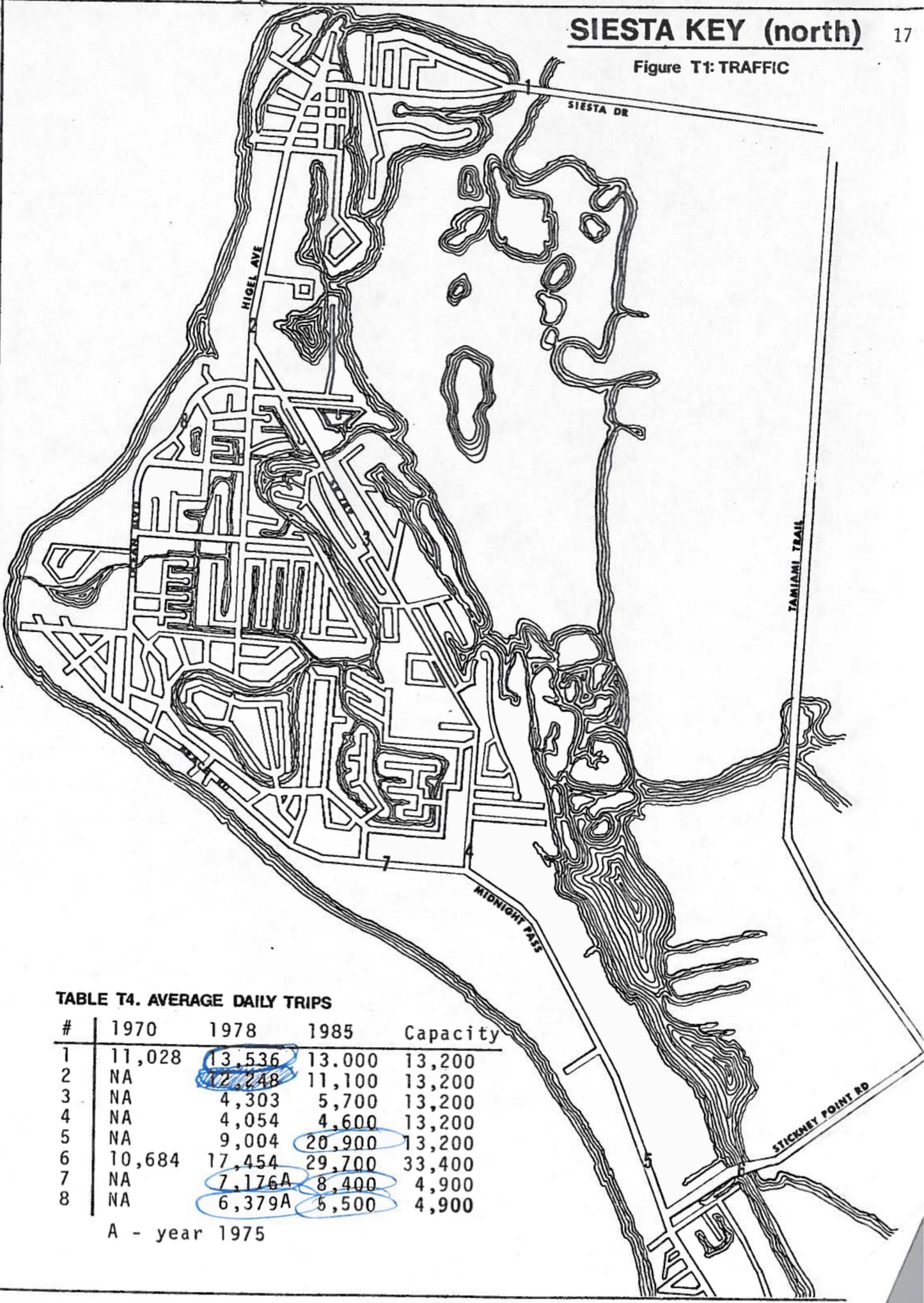


TABLE T4. AVERAGE DAILY TRIPS

#	1970	1978	1985	Capacity
1	11,028	13,536	13,000	13,200
2	NA	12,248	11,100	13,200
3	NA	4,303	5,700	13,200
4	NA	4,054	4,600	13,200
5	NA	9,004	20,900	13,200
6	10,684	17,454	29,700	33,400
7	NA	7,176A	8,400	4,900
8	NA	6,379A	5,500	4,900

A - year 1975

# SIESTA KEY (South)

Figure T1: TRAFFIC cont.

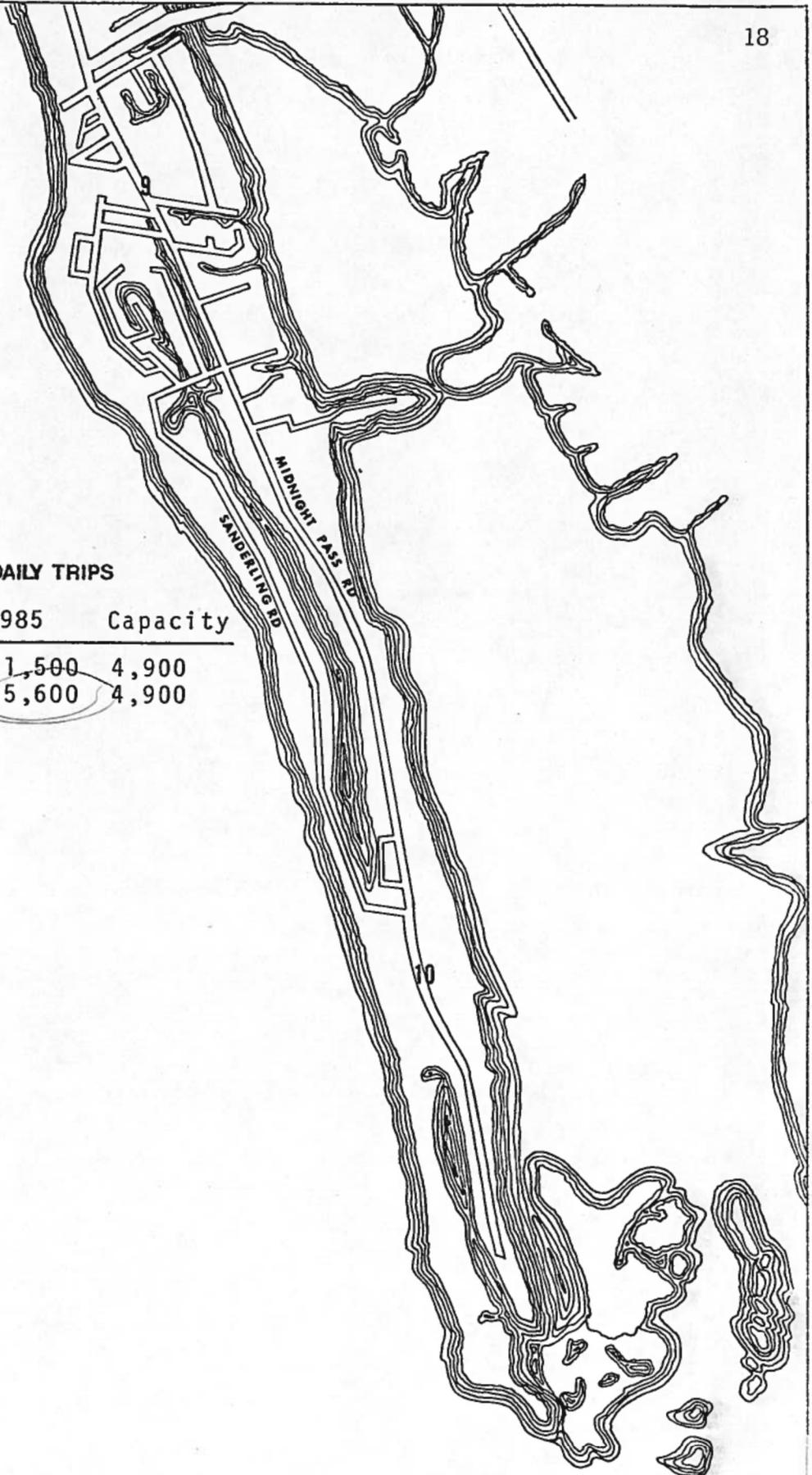


TABLE T4. cont. AVERAGE DAILY TRIPS

#	1970	1978	1985	Capacity
9	5,045 <sup>A</sup>	3,438 <sup>B</sup>	11,500	4,900
10	NA	NA	5,600	4,900

A - year 1974  
B - year 1976

## UTILITIES AND SERVICES

### UTILITIES

Water and sewer services are provided by Siesta Key Utilities Authority (SKUA). Water is purchased in bulk quantities from Sarasota County and is limited only by the ability of the County to provide it. Sewerage is treated in SKUA's own plant on the Key and the Authority indicates a sufficient capacity exists to serve a population of 27,000.

### FIRE PROTECTION

The South Trail Fire Control District has responsibility for fire protection on the Key. A spokesman for the District indicates some concern for the safety of existing residents due to low pressure in the water mains south of the Pepper Tree Bay Project (600 lbs. pressure at the south end of the Key instead of the required 1000 lbs. pressure), and the difficulty in fighting fires in those buildings between 35 feet and 50 feet in height. Although the District has equipment capable of reaching up to 55 feet in height, this is only possible where the equipment can be located immediately adjacent to the primary structure. In many cases, covered parking or other obstructions prevent this optimum location, thereby reducing the effective reach of the equipment to about 35 feet. In addition, the County Building Code does not now require a "stand pipe" for a fire-fighting water supply in a residential structure of under 50 feet in height.

### ELECTRICAL POWER AND TELEPHONE SERVICE

Representatives of both Florida Power and Light Co. and General Telephone and Electronics Co. indicate that the ability to service whatever demand exists or will exist on the Key has been established.

2 Change  
P. 12 = 12063  
NOT  
18128

P. 22  
DND  
NOT  
73-20  
75-20

### SUMMARY

To summarize, the following qualified observations can be made.

- (a) The existing residential (year-round) population of 10,910 <sup>[12,425]</sup> would be increased 10.6% to 12,064 if all vacant parcels and potential re-development areas were to be developed at the maximum density permitted with existing zoning.
- (b) The existing functional (year-round plus seasonal) population of 17,428 <sup>[17,944]</sup> would be increased 10.6% to 19,271 <sup>[19,849]</sup> if all vacant parcels and potential re-development areas were to be developed at the maximum density permitted with existing zoning.
- (c) If all vacant parcels and potential re-development areas were to be developed at the maximum density permitted with existing zoning, the total number of residential units on Siesta Key would increase from 8379 <sup>[8627]</sup> to 9260 <sup>[9543]</sup>, or 10.6%.
- (d) Neither the existing nor the potential population projected for Siesta Key would adversely impact SKUA's ability to provide sewage treatment.
- (e) Water limitations on the Key are based solely upon Sarasota County Government's ability to provide the potable water.
- (f) The fire protection that can be afforded Siesta Key residents is limited in some areas due to the lack of stand pipes in some multi-storey buildings (35 to 50 feet in height), lack of water pressure in the southern portion of the Key, and the limitation of fire equipment to reach the upper levels of

[11,233]

taller buildings.

- (g) Average daily trips (ADT) on the North Bridge in 1978 exceeded the design capacity of the bridge by 336 ADT. During the peak month (January, 1978), this bridge handled 1984 ADT more than its 13,200 ADT design capacity.
- (h) Average daily traffic on the Stickney Point Bridge during 1978 was 17,454, or 47.7% below the 33,400 ADT design capacity of this bridge. During the peak month (January, 1978), the bridge handled 20,640 ADT, or 38.2% below design capacity.
- (i) The projected 70.2% ADT increase for the Stickney Point Road Bridge by 1985 can only be partially explained by the 10.6% increase in the Key's population (which also assumes the entire <sup>10.6%</sup> ~~11.2%~~ population increase would occur by 1985).
- (j) Congestion problems on the Key's primary roads will increase by 1985. However, as in the case of Stickney Point Bridge, only a portion of the congestion will be attributable to 10.6% increase in the Key's population.

#### APPROACH ALTERNATIVES

Five general approaches to address the potential 10.6% increase in Siesta Key's population have been considered by the Department of Planning. None of the alternatives are site-specific, due to the time and resource limitations placed upon this study.

##### Alternative 1 - Status Quo

Allow existing policies and regulations to remain in effect. Total buildout would result in a 10.6% increase in resident population (from

[11,288] [12,425] [17,944] [19,849]  
10,910 to 12,064), functional population (from 17,428 to 19,271),  
and residential units (from 8379 to 9260).  
[8627] [9543]

Alternative 2 - Permanent Moratorium on the Issuance of Building Permits

This alternative, while desirable in the eyes of many, would be impossible to defend legally.

Alternative 3 - Down-Zoning

All vacant parcels and all land having redevelopment potential could be down-zoned to the lowest density zoning category which could be successfully defended in court. This would result in decreased density, decreased potential population, decreased height limits, and increased open space.

The existing Land Use Plan map reflects "moderate density" for most of Siesta Key, including most of the vacant and the potential re-development areas now zoned RMF-3 (13 units per acre). Since this "moderate density" classification is equivalent to the RSF-4 (5.5 units per acre), the RMF-1 (6 units per acre) and the RME-2 (9 units per acre) zone districts, down-zoning from RMF-3 to one of these other categories would not conflict with the adopted Land Use Plan map. In addition, such down-zonings would be consistent with other stated policies in the adopted Land Use Plan, including Policy 5H, which states: "Specifically discourage multi-family and hotel/motel development on the Keys."

The viability of this alternative should rest totally with the County Attorney.

Alternative 4 - Modification of the Zoning Code

Ordinance 75-38 could be modified to reflect reduced development potentials in all residential zone categories found on the Key. However, such modifications would have County-wide impact, unless handled in a manner similar to Ordinance ~~78-20~~, which would result in considerable administrative problems.  
73-20 Could

### Alternative 5 - Increase Service Levels

Improvement of roads, expansion of beaches, and increases in water pressures, to name just a few, could be implemented in order to reduce the severity of existing deficiencies. The fiscal cost of such actions, as well as the negative by-products of each (for example, better roads and larger beaches would attract even more mainland traffic) are unknown at this time.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

If the Board of County Commissioners is of the opinion that the potential 10.6% population increase may have substantial adverse impacts on Siesta Key, then the Department of Planning would recommend the following.

1. Initiate a one hundred and eighty-day moratorium on the issuance of building permits for the construction of duplex or multiple-family units on the unincorporated area of Siesta Key.
2. Instruct the Department of Planning and the County Attorney to examine the feasibility of rezoning:
  - a. vacant parcels of land upon which more than one residential unit can be built, and
  - b. parcels of land which are presently developed at density less than that permitted by the existing zoning classification.

including  
those  
planned but  
not  
permitted

Rezoning recommendations from the Department and the County Attorney should reach the Board of County Commissioners within ninety days from the beginning of the moratorium. The remaining ninety days would be used to process any rezoning instructions issued by the Board.

3. Instruct the Utilities Department to investigate the water

pressure problems identified by the South Trail Fire Control District and report its findings to the Board.

4. Instruct the Building Construction Department to ascertain whether "stand pipes" in buildings between 35 and 50 feet in height are necessary in order to ensure adequate fire protection and whether the Building Code should be modified to reflect such.
5. Request the Sarasota-Manatee Area Transportation Study (SMATS) Coordinator to determine if the improvement of Midnight Pass Road could be increased in priority on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) without unduly affecting the improvement of other roads in the area.

