

1975

**LAND  
USE  
PLAN**

COUNTY COMMISSION

John M. Saba, Jr., Chairman  
Irving G. Snyder, Vice Chairman  
William A. Muirhead  
Andrew Sandegren  
Larry Rhodes

PLANNING COMMISSION

Frank D. Burgmann, Chairman  
J. B. Townsend, Vice Chairman  
Mabry Carlton, Jr.  
Joseph R. Roach  
Ernie J. Newman  
James R. Noe II  
Lois C. Jones  
Albert Yates

Robert Stinnett, Attorney

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Edward S. Hoyt

PLANNING STAFF

C. Philip McGuire, Planning Director

Current Planning Division

H. M. Place, Principal Planner  
Jeff Randell, Planner III  
Jerry Gray, Planner II

Long Range Planning Division

Jan Ollry, Planner III  
Dennis B. Wilkison, Planner II  
Mary C. Langeland, Planner I

Operations & Research Division

Walter Elwell, Principal Planner  
Norbert Musial, Planner II (Systems Analyst)  
Gail Kelly, Junior Programmer

Graphics Section

Robin Tardiff, Planner I  
Priscilla Koppe, Draftsman II  
Billy Brooks, Planning Aide

Information Section

Greg Fagan, Planner I  
Lois Pottkamp, Planning Aide I  
Marie Pearce, Planning Aide I

Secretarial Section

Charlotte Hall, Senior Secretary  
Inger Manning, Secretary III  
Barbara Peterson, Secretary I, Receptionist

SARASOTA COUNTY

LAND USE PLAN

Prepared  
April 25, 1974

Adopted  
March 13, 1975

This Element is prepared by the Long-Range Planning Division of the Sarasota County Planning Department as part of the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan.

F O R E W O R D

Beyond a critical point within a finite space, freedom diminishes as numbers increase. This is as true of humans in the finite space of a planetary ecosystem as it is of gas molecules in a sealed flask. The human question is not how many can possibly survive within the system, but what kind of existence is possible for those who do survive.

Pardot Kynes

Frank Herbert, Dune. Ace Books, Inc., New York  
New York. (1965), p. 505

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Plan Function . . . . .	1
Purpose and Intent. . . . .	2
General Design Plan for Urban Areas . . . . .	3
Recommended General Design Plan . . . . .	9
General Plan Policies . . . . .	13
Plan Specifics . . . . .	24
Plan Categories . . . . .	26
Appendix A: Thoroughfare Plan. . . . .	A-1

## SARASOTA COUNTY LAND USE PLAN

### Plan Function

The currently developing Comprehensive Plan for Sarasota County includes the following six major substantive planning elements:

1. Population;
2. Community Facilities;
3. Housing;
4. Environment;
5. Economic Factors;
6. Land Use.

Each of these elements plays its own particular role in the Comprehensive Plan, and yet must develop in a coordinated, cohesive manner.

Of the six Comprehensive Plan Elements, Land Use is the most easily identifiable and has the most direct and immediate impact upon the physical development pattern within the county. The Land Use Plan will formally establish policies to guide the amount and distribution of various land uses and intensities of development. It will also serve as the master guide in creating and maintaining a zoning map for Sarasota County until the various other Comprehensive Plan Elements are individually approved. Each of these will be utilized on their own merits and to modify this Land Use Plan as necessary and appropriate.

While the importance and impact of the Land Use Plan cannot be overemphasized, it is essential that it remain conceptual in nature, however specific it may be designed. The

Land Use Plan must be able to change as social and economic patterns evolve, in order to remain realistic and useable. Concomitantly, as a land use plan is changed, the resultant zoning ordinance must be changed, since zoning is an implementing tool of the Land Use Plan. As general changes are incorporated into a land use plan, the dependent zoning ordinance must be changed in a very specific and precise manner, since a land use plan involves general patterns and areas while zoning involves individual parcels and detailed, specific standards.

Considering the above rationale, it follows that the Sarasota County Land Use Plan be derived and maintained with great care since it will substantially affect the physical pattern for remaining planning elements as well as guide consideration of all pending and future zoning and rezoning in the county.

#### Purpose and Intent

This land use plan is intended to be applied within the unincorporated portions of Sarasota County although it considers land use patterns and plans of the several municipalities within Sarasota County and maps reflect those patterns where appropriate.

The plan is based not upon the land necessary to support a projected population but rather upon the necessities of a planned spatial growth considered appropriate to maintain the quality of life in Sarasota County. Further, this land use plan does not directly consider the specific chronology of

numeric population growth, but rather the dwelling unit density and the geographic distribution of that density. Resultant from such considerations will be a potential human holding capacity based upon projected constants and living patterns.

Such an approach will permit population growth controls to be superimposed, if deemed necessary, to direct temporal growth as well as spatial trends.

It is intended that this Land Use Plan be reviewed annually, as required by County Ordinance 72-60, Section 9, in order to refine and modify the Plan as technology and community needs evolve. This Plan is not a final, concrete document, but rather, a compilation of coordinated recommended policies formally approved for official implementation by laws and policies to be established by appropriate governing bodies.

General Design Plan  
for  
Urban Areas

In order to plan for urban growth and land use controls, that portion of Sarasota County currently developed in an urban pattern or committed to such by incorporation, is divided into four urban areas, each centering on an established, relatively self-sustaining community. The respective urbanizations are called: North County Urban Area (Sarasota); Central County Urban Area (Venice); South County Urban Area (Englewood); and Southeast County Urban Area (Warm Mineral Springs-North Port).

"Urban" or "urbanization" shall refer to those areas of Sarasota County in which residential density is more than one dwelling unit per gross acre. All ancillary land uses (parks, open space, commercial, industrial, community facilities, etc.) shall be included in the definition if they are contiguous to, or surrounded by residential development of more than one dwelling unit per acre. All contiguous water bodies shall also be included as urban land but not used for density calculations.

Six alternate general urban design concepts have been considered as possible goals for each of the Urban Areas.\*

They are:

1. Noplan

This approach assumes minimal planning and coordination. There would be no policies for planning or development control. The urban pattern would follow those ideas initiated by developers and little or no coordination among developers or developments would be expected.

Such an approach would probably result in random dispersion of growth away from existing urban areas with considerable "leapfrogging" and many gaps in future urbanizations. Undeveloped land would be consumed at extremely high rates.

\* These concepts based upon those discussed in 1990 Plan of Development, Hillsborough County. August, 1973, Hillsborough County Planning Commission.

The demands placed upon community facilities would be extreme and the demand for wasteful automobile travel would be totally unreasonable.

This is not the type of urban pattern desirable for Sarasota County from either an esthetic, logical, or community standards viewpoint. Sarasota County is already committed to controlled, planned growth and land development. This alternate is therefore rejected.

2. Equal density distribution

This option proposes that urban growth be controlled by an evenly distributed low density zoning in all future urbanized areas. Although this option would somewhat curtail uncontrolled growth, it would probably not provide a population density high enough to support effective community facilities. Continued reliance would be placed on private automobiles with resultant high costs of providing extensive road systems. The extensive development would consume land at a rapid rate and the provision of water and sewers would be costly.

This approach would satisfy some of the community standards within Sarasota County, e.g., low density, single family homes. From a planning, administrative, and logical viewpoint, this approach would

not be the best possible since community facilities would be expensive, common open space difficult to procure, potential growth rates unreasonable, and housing costs relatively high - even for Sarasota County. The resultant demand upon roads would be excessive. Such an approach would almost certainly require strict spatial and temporal growth control. This alternative is not rejected, but will be combined with other options in order to establish balanced growth.

3. Ring-shaped growth pattern

Growth would be accommodated by a series of new communities strung along a circumferential freeway (I-75). A greenbelt could be left between the new community and the existing urban area. This development pattern, however, would still require a radiating highway system to link the rings of communities to the central cities. It would require strong measures to establish and maintain a greenbelt; otherwise the satellite communities could eventually be engulfed by continued urban growth and merged with the central urban masses. Since this pattern would accommodate considerably more people on currently undeveloped land, causing major expansion of urban concentration, and since Sarasota County is oriented along the coastline, this approach is not recommended.

4. Radial growth pattern

Future growth would take place in medium to high density development along major trunk lines of the transportation system such as expressways or rapid transit corridors. This plan could slow down the rate of land consumption and lessen the danger of urban sprawl. It could also reduce the dependence on private automobiles. However, this concept is based on linking all outlying areas with the hub area. It may run the danger of channelling too much traffic into the centers of the cities and without complementing concentric ring roads, it may not provide sufficient direct linkage between the major corridors.

Since Sarasota County is limited by the coastline and existing linear orientation along U. S. 41 and since such development orientation will not be conducive to an open space image, this approach is not recommended.

5. Compact development

This concept would encourage compact development by permitting higher residential density toward the cities and a gradual decrease as the distance from the core areas increases. It would permit future growth to occur in and around the existing urban

centers. The compact development pattern makes economies of scale possible which would greatly reduce the cost of providing community facilities. This option would draw a sharp line beyond which urban growth would not be permitted. This could arouse considerable opposition from development interests and land owners, and the resulting controversy could delay the implementation of this option. This approach would require establishing a relatively strong urban boundary beyond which development would not be permitted. Numeric or proportionate growth controls could be superimposed upon such a spatial control with resultant strict policies for growth. There would probably result an increase in urban density within the urbanizations, but this could be controlled within desirable limits.

The life style, community standards, and existing and proposed regulations within Sarasota County make this alternative a viable one and its combination with other forms of control is recommended.

6. Growth based on environmental limitations

Such an alternative would follow the indigenous natural patterns and would help ensure maintenance of desirable and necessary ecosystem elements as well as provide a system of open space preservation.

Should such an approach be carried to extremes, urban sprawl could result and housing costs rise to undesirable levels. In combination with other approaches, however, this option will lead to excellent results. It is strongly recommended that this approach be utilized wherever possible.

#### Recommended General Design Plan

With the above options in mind, and combining those available community desires with sound planning philosophy, the following proposal is made concerning the general design plan for the four urban areas within Sarasota County.

In order to control the spatial distribution of urbanization within Sarasota County, alternative five, (compact development) is chosen as the basic framework for the Sarasota County Land Use Plan. Blended into this base are the ideas expressed in alternative two (general low density) and alternative six (environmental limitations).

The general intent of this combination is to produce geographically compact, low density urbanizations permitting as much open space and the least environmental manipulations practicably possible and yet be able to provide the best quality community services at reasonable cost to the taxpayer and to minimize wasted human energy in general.

The first step in accomplishing this task is to establish the current urban boundaries of each of the four major com-

munities in Sarasota County. Without delving into the manifold possibilities, the following method has been chosen as the most practicable.

#### Establishing Urban Boundaries

As unit of measure, the half section is chosen. A half section, as mapped in Sarasota County, refers to either the north or south one-half of a section. A half section is therefore, one mile east to west and one-half mile north to south. This is the smallest workable land unit presently available for statistical use. Half sections are easily defined for legal purposes and already established, providing objectivity and fairness to all. Based upon the stated definition of urban, half sections have been declared urban by the following procedure:

- a) All half sections with more than 320 dwelling units (more than 1 dwelling unit per gross acre) are declared urban;
- b) Any half section with approved plats and/or site plans for more than 320 dwelling units is declared urban;
- c) Any half section with 50 percent or more land area devoted to an urban use(s) is declared urban;
- d) All land incorporated into a municipality is declared urban.

Those half sections currently zoned to meet the above urban criteria are declared potentially urban. (See Map 1)

The aggregate area of all half sections declared urban or potentially urban and which are contiguous to one of the four urban centers in Sarasota County are declared part of the Urban Area for that respective urban center. (See Map 1)

#### Recommended Urban Containment Policy

It is recommended that no new urban development be approved beyond the current limits of any Urban Area or Potential Urban Area until the gross residential density of that existing Urban Area reaches two dwelling units per gross acre. Further, no urban development should be permitted unless the half section(s) in which it is situated be contiguous with the declared Urban Area. This limitation should not apply to agricultural uses requiring an approval procedure.

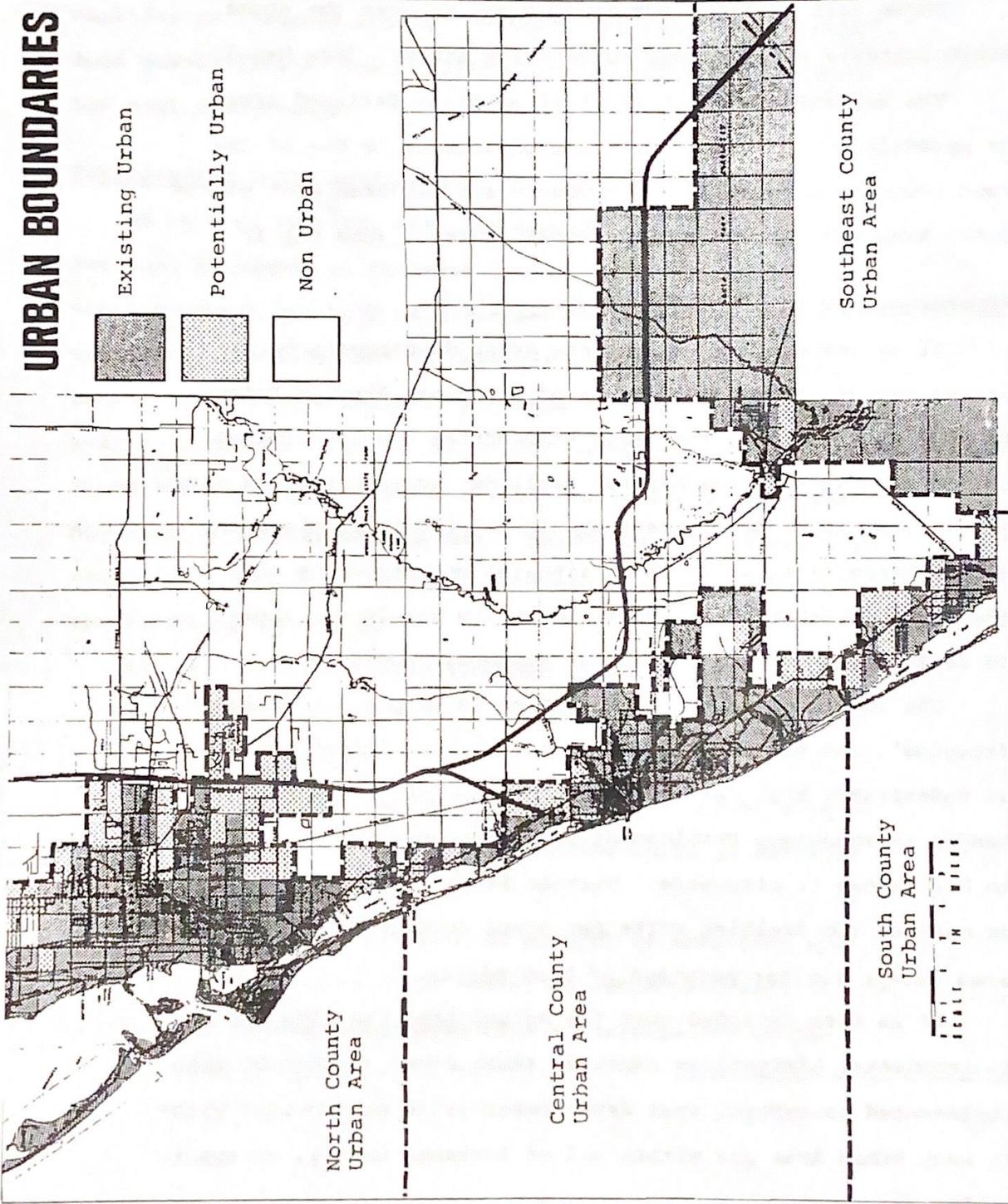
The intent of this recommendation is to prevent "leap-frogging", and uncontrolled urban sprawl but without creating an undesirably high density urban environment. It is not intended to encourage development within the Urban Areas, but to discourage it elsewhere. Neither is it necessary to have as many as two dwelling units per gross acre within the Urban area except for the purposes of this policy.

It is also intended that the actual Land Use Plan and Environmental Limitations reports, among other factors be then implemented to control what development is to be provided within each Urban Area and within all of Sarasota County, as applicable.

MAP 1

# URBAN BOUNDARIES

Existing Urban  
Potentially Urban  
Non Urban



South County Urban Area

North County Urban Area

Central County Urban Area

South County Urban Area



The Urban Containment Policy, then, is the general framework upon which the Sarasota County Land Use Plan and resultant implementive ordinances and policies are based.

#### General Plan Policies

The following policies are developed from the adopted Policies for Growth, Milo Smith and Associates, Tampa, Florida, January, 1971. These policies are intended to specifically implement the recommended urban containment policy and to establish policies to develop the land use plan map, upon which the resulting zoning map will be based.

These policies should remain flexible and should be modified when found appropriate. They should nevertheless, be formally adopted and utilized in decision making.

POLICY 1. URBAN DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE PERMITTED ONLY TO THE WEST AND/OR SOUTH OF THE PROPOSED ALIGNMENT OF INTERSTATE 75 IN ORDER TO CONTAIN URBAN SPRAWL AND MINIMIZE THE COST AND ENERGY OF PROVIDING COMMUNITY SERVICES.

- A. Urban growth should be permitted only within the system of major highways and should be timed to develop along with or after the construction of such highways.
- B. Guide urban growth by providing water and sewer systems in prime areas and withholding these facilities from areas in which growth is to be discouraged.

- C. Major land developments approved should result in relatively self-contained communities, demanding as little as possible from existing county residents.
- D. Do not encourage any major new thoroughfares east or north of I-75 except designated evacuation routes.

POLICY 2. ENCOURAGE CONTINUATION OF FOUR DISTINCT URBAN AREAS AROUND RESPECTIVELY: SARASOTA; VENICE; ENGLEWOOD; NORTH PORT, IN ORDER TO PERMIT REALISTIC EXPANSION OF EXISTING URBAN AREAS WHILE REINFORCING LOCAL COMMUNITY IMAGES AND IDENTITIES.

- A. Restrict expansion of utilities and thoroughfares beyond planned urban areas.
- B. Establish the lowest density residential and/or conservation and agricultural zoning at planned urban fringe areas to reduce urban impact and sprawl.
- C. Enforce the objectives of non-urban and ecological value areas especially between the four urban areas.

POLICY 3. ALL PLANNED URBAN AREAS WITHIN SARASOTA COUNTY SHOULD ULTIMATELY BE PROVIDED WITH A FULL RANGE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND URBAN SERVICES.

- A. Require provision of central water and sewer systems in all urban developments. Require such facilities be designed to be compatible with future public systems.
- B. Continue to approve surface drainage plans according to standards within subdivision regulations, with consideration for surrounding land use, and in conformance with all elements of the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan.
- C. Assure adequate land for all community facilities by requiring appropriate land dedication by the developer in accordance with established policies and ordinances.
- D. Continue existing and establish necessary mandatory review procedures with agencies providing needed community facilities.

POLICY 4. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SARASOTA COUNTY SHOULD ENCOURAGE A FULL RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES, COSTS, AND DENSITIES WITHIN THOSE LIMITS PERMITTED BY LAW.

- A. Plan permitted higher density zoning in urban centers and at specific high-access areas only.

- B. Discourage high-rise development and medium or higher density zoning, as defined by the Sarasota County Land Use Plan, on the keys.
- C. Restrict residential density in non-urban areas and conservation areas.
- D. Encourage land use for moderate or low cost housing within planned urban areas and at carefully selected rural sites.

POLICY 5. SHORELINE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD OCCUR IN A MANNER WHICH WILL ENHANCE ITS NATURAL CHARACTER, AVOID DAMAGE TO INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS, AND ASSURE AN ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATERFRONT AREAS.

- A. Industrial uses should not be permitted along the shoreline, and only limited, necessary commercial uses should be permitted.
- B. No landfill or dredging activities should be permitted in either the bays or Gulf of Mexico except to maintain existing navigation channels.
- C. Purchase as public lands beach areas and uninhabited bay islands whenever appropriate.
- D. Require ecological surveys setting forth the appropriateness of proposed coastal developments before County approval is granted.

- E. Utilize PUD approach to coastal land development wherever appropriate in order to maintain the best possible control over such developments.
- F. Require sufficient shoreline and sideyard setbacks to insure safety, protect environmental factors, and conserve public shores.
- G. Do not permit bridges or causeways inter-connecting Keys.
- H. Specifically discourage multifamily and hotel/motel development on the Keys.

POLICY 6. COMMERCIAL AREAS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED IN CLEARLY DEFINED COMPLEXES, HARMONIOUSLY RELATED TO SURROUNDING LAND USE, TRAFFIC FLOW, AND THE SARASOTA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

- A. Concentrate commercial uses in specific patterns keyed to locations with high access and related higher intensity uses or service areas.
- B. Buffer major commercial areas with service, office, or related moderate to medium residential uses in order to provide an orderly transition from intense activity to quieter residential areas.
- C. Restrict development of planned shopping centers serving regional and community-wide markets to in-

tersections of arterial streets to improve accessibility for customers and minimize unnecessary traffic.

- D. Neighborhood commercial facilities should be located within a defined neighborhood and situated on a collector street.
- E. Heavy or intensive commercial activities should be concentrated and buffered from residential and open-space uses.
- F. Limit highway oriented commercial uses to those areas already so developed and, where appropriate, remove the zoning from undeveloped strips. Restrict the range of permitted uses to those related to automobile traffic and transient customers.
- G. Require that expressway interchanges be developed as planned units, limiting commercial development to two quadrants.

POLICY 7. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE CLUSTERED IN PLANNED INDUSTRIAL PARKS TO EXPAND WORK OPPORTUNITIES WHILE PROTECTING OTHER URBAN AND NATURAL ELEMENTS.

- A. Encourage all new industrial development within Planned Industrial Developments (PID) for better planning control

- B. Plan industrial parks, as appropriate, in selected areas near I-75 interchanges, along Interstate connectors, and railroads.
- C. Do not approve zoning changes which would scatter individual industrial uses throughout the county.
- D. Locate industrial development so that material and employee movements are efficient and not detrimental to other uses.

POLICY 8. AN OPENSOURCE SYSTEM MUST BE MAINTAINED TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE AND SHOULD RANGE FROM NEIGHBORHOOD TO REGIONAL SCALES. SUCH SYSTEM SHOULD ALSO INCLUDE RECREATIONAL AND CONSERVATION ELEMENTS.

- A. Establish flood zones along coastline and major streams or rivers. Such flood zones should qualify for opensource requirements.
- B. Encourage opensource platting which will retain open character of residential areas.
- C. Consider tax inducements for opensource, conservation, esthetic, and recreational land uses.
- D. Discourage building within swamps, marshes, dunes, and wildlife habitats.