



# **Indian River County 2020 Comprehensive Plan**

## **Chapter 1**

# **Introductory Element**

**Indian River County Community Development Department  
Adopted: September 13, 2005**

**Supplement 7 (Entire Element); Ordinance 2005-037**



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## **Introduction**

The Indian River County Comprehensive Plan is a product of the most ambitious planning effort in the county's 72 year history. Mandated by the State Comprehensive Planning Act of 1985, the comprehensive plan addresses the many issues and problems associated with growth management.

The Introductory Element provides a summary of much of the information and data. As such, this element provides background information concerning the historical development of the county and information common to, and necessary for, the development of the individual elements of the plan. A brief overview of previous planning efforts in the county and the general requirements and process of this planning initiative are also included.

## **Location**

Indian River county is located on the east coast of Florida in the Treasure Coast Region. The County is bounded by Brevard County on the north, the Atlantic Ocean on the east, St. Lucie County on the south and Osceola and Okeechobee counties on the west. The county seat of Vero Beach is approximately 135 miles north of Miami, 140 miles east of Tampa, 100 miles southeast of Orlando and 200 miles south of Jacksonville. (see figure 1.1)

In addition to the City of Vero Beach, there are four other municipalities in the county: the City of Sebastian, the City of Fellsmere, the Town of Indian River Shores and the Town of Orchid. Nearly two-thirds of the population resides in the unincorporated portion of the county. More than 90% of the county's residents live along the coast within 10 miles of the Atlantic ocean.

The general land formation of the county is coastal lowland. This is a relatively flat area with elevations of less than 25 feet above mean sea level. The key physical features of the mainland area of the county are the St. Johns Marsh in the western portion of the county, the Ten Mile Ridge in the central part of the county, and the Atlantic Coastal Ridge in the east. An offshore barrier island extends the entire length of the county separated from the mainland by the Indian River Lagoon. The natural and physical features of the county are discussed in detail in the Conservation, Coastal Management and Future Land Use Elements of the comprehensive plan.

## **Planning History**

Early planning efforts in Indian River County were not as formalized nor did these early plans have the force of law that current regulations possess. These endeavors were undertaken by civic and business committees and sought solutions to individual problems or were confined to specific projects. The first formalized regulation was the 1957 Zoning Ordinance, which created districts,

provided for the regulation of the use of land, and placed restrictions on the intensity of those uses. On May 29, 1975, the county adopted a comprehensive plan, as a guide and advisory tool in the regulation and control of private property. The legal control of development was still to be vested in the zoning, platting, and other specific ordinances adopted by the county.

Also in 1975, the state enacted the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act, which required the designation of a local planning agency as well as the development of a comprehensive plan. In response to that act, the Board of County Commissioners, in 1982, adopted a comprehensive plan that did have the force of law. Zoning, subdivision, and other land use regulations were required to conform to that comprehensive plan. In addition, amendments to the comprehensive plan were subject to review by regional and state agencies and could be submitted only twice annually. Finally, the Board of County Commissioners designated the Planning and Zoning Commission as the local planning agency.

The state expanded the scope of the comprehensive planning requirement in Florida with adoption of the 1985 Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act, commonly referred to as the Growth Management Act. In 1986, the act was further refined with the requirements set forth in rule 9J-5 of the Florida Administrative Code. These actions established a top down planning process in Florida, a process in which plans were developed first at both the state and regional levels. Consistent with state law, local governments had to develop and must maintain adopted comprehensive plans which are consistent with both the intent and specific objectives set forth in the state and regional plans.

On February 13, 1990, pursuant to the requirements of the Growth Management Act, Indian River County adopted its current comprehensive plan. The Growth Management Act and rule 9J-5 recognize that changing circumstances may necessitate amendments to comprehensive plans. Therefore, amendments to the plan are allowed when certain criteria are met. Since plan adoption, Indian River County has amended its plan several times. Those amendments have ranged in significance from minor text changes to substantial future land use map changes.

Another provision of state law recognizes that periodic assessment and evaluation is a required part of the planning process. For that reason, each of Florida's local governments is required to submit an adopted Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) to the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Generally, local governments with 1992 populations of more than 2,500 persons must submit their EAR's to DCA approximately seven years after plan adoption. Indian River County's EAR was adopted on December 17, 1996 and transmitted to DCA on December 20, 1996.

The EAR identified many changes necessary to update the plan to reflect new data, changes in state law, and new circumstances in the community. Those changes were incorporated into an EAR based

plan amendment, which was adopted in 1998, and resulted in a major update of the county's comprehensive plan.

Under rule 9J-5, county plans must contain the following elements and sub-elements: Future Land Use; Transportation; Housing; Sanitary Sewer, Solid Waste, Stormwater Management, Potable Water; Natural Groundwater Aquifer Recharge; Coastal Management; Conservation; Recreation and Open Space; Intergovernmental Coordination; and Capital Improvements. Other elements may be included at the option of the local government. The Indian River County plan also includes an Introductory Element and an Economic Development Element.

In addition to establishing the required components of a local comprehensive plan, rule 9J-5 establishes minimum criteria for the preparation, review and compliance determination of comprehensive plans. These requirements recognize that local governments will play a major role in accomplishing state and regional goals and policies. The regulations also mandate that local plans be based on the review and analysis of existing conditions, projected population and service demand, projected cost of service provision, and sources of revenue for the community.

### **Planning Process and Public Participation**

In addition to meeting the technical requirements of preparing a comprehensive plan, local governments must provide opportunities for local citizens and property owners to participate in the development and adoption of the plan.

In January 1988, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Public Participation Plan to be used in the preparation of the county's comprehensive plan. That multifaceted plan provided for public education, public input during plan preparation and development, public hearings during the adoption process and general provisions to be followed throughout the planning process. The education component required the development of this Introductory Element of the plan as well as the presentation of this information to the public.

To provide overall direction in the process of developing the plan, the Board of County Commissioners appointed the Planning and Zoning Commission as the designated local planning agency. The Board of County Commissioners also directed existing county boards and commissions, including the Planning and Zoning Commission, to provide direct input in the development of individual elements of the comprehensive plan. The Board also acknowledged the role of the county planning staff and other civic and professional groups and organizations.

Among the Planning and Zoning Commission's responsibilities were: establishing broad goals; reviewing staff and other advisory group reports; conducting public meetings and hearings; and

recommending the comprehensive plan or comprehensive plan amendments to the Board of County Commissioners.

Complementing the role of the Planning and Zoning Commission, existing county boards and commissions were assigned primary responsibility for the development of individual elements. The groups were selected on the basis of their interest and technical knowledge of the issues associated with various individual elements. As existing advisory bodies to the county, these groups also possessed knowledge of county policies and regulations. The responsibilities of those primary review groups were: reviewing staff drafts and reports; conducting public meetings; and recommending draft elements to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Other civic and professional groups were also encouraged to participate in the development and review of the comprehensive plan by participating in the formal public review process as well as conducting their own review.

The planning staff had the responsibility of providing the necessary coordination and support throughout the development and review of the plan. That included: conducting research and analysis; preparing and presenting draft elements and reports; and conducting public meetings and workshops.

Upon completion of the elements, the formal adoption process began. Pursuant to the requirements of Florida Statutes, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing and made its recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The County Commission then conducted a public hearing and transmitted the plan to DCA for state review.

As structured, the public participation plan provided for the availability and inspection of documents by the public; the solicitation and encouragement of the public to provide written comments which were incorporated into the public record; and the provision of public notice of all public meetings, workshops and hearings. Other efforts to keep the public informed included the issuance of press releases, the availability of staff to provide information, and the maintenance of records pertaining to public review.

Consistent with state law, plan amendments have been processed in a manner similar to the plan adoption process.

Development of the EAR followed largely the same process as the development of the comprehensive plan. That process is outlined in the EAR Public Participation Plan, which the Board of County Commissioners adopted on August 8, 1995. Consistent with state law, the Planning and Zoning Commission, as the designated local planning agency, was primarily responsible for

developing the EAR. Similar to the plan development process, county boards and commissions provided direct input in the development of the EAR for individual elements of the comprehensive plan.

When all the EAR elements were complete, the Planning and Zoning commission approved the proposed EAR. Following two public workshops, the adopted EAR was approved by the Board of County Commissioners at a public hearing. The EAR recommended amendments to the plan were adopted through the regular plan amendment process.

## **Population**

One of the key components of any successful long-range planning effort is the reliability of the assumptions used to assess future conditions or needs. In the development of a comprehensive plan, an understanding of the future population and the forces, which influence population growth, is essential. Before projecting the future population, however, it is necessary to first analyze historic population levels and current population estimates and the trends, which will direct the future.

The following analysis addresses Indian River County's past, present, and future population characteristics. As structured, the population section focuses on three aspects: historic population, current trends, and population projections. Each of these builds upon the other to provide the foundation upon which the comprehensive plan rests. The historic population provides insight to the development and growth, which has resulted in the current status of the community. Together with the current assessment, past trends provide the basis for formulating population projections.

The focus of this comprehensive plan is the unincorporated portions of the county. Although the municipalities and small areas of the county possess different demographic characteristics, which make them unique, the availability of reliable data for small areas of the county is limited. For that reason, this analysis will focus primarily on the county as a whole. In addition to the three aspects mentioned above, this analysis will include a comparison of Indian River County with the state and region.

Since the geographic areas to be studied will remain constant throughout the analysis, the following definitions are in order. The Treasure Coast Region (Treasure Coast, Region) is comprised of Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, and Palm Beach Counties. Any reference to Indian River County shall include the entire county unless specified as the unincorporated county. The unincorporated county excludes the five incorporated municipalities (Vero Beach, Sebastian, Fellsmere, Indian River Shores, and Orchid). Census Designated Places (CDP) are small areas within the county so designated by the US Bureau of Census. As defined by the census, a CDP is a densely settled population center without legally defined corporate limits or corporate powers. These areas contain a

residential nucleus with a city-type street pattern. In addition to those areas defined above, several others of local importance have also been added. These areas do not meet the criteria for official designation, but have experienced significant development and population growth. All areas are depicted in map form in the Small Area Population section of this analysis.

### **Historic Population**

The historic population of Indian River County from 1930 to the present is shown in Table 1.1. This chart also provides the numerical and percentage increase of population for each 10 year period. The data indicate that Indian River County has experienced tremendous growth since its formation in 1925.

Overall, the county's population has experienced a nearly a 19 fold increase, from 6,724 in 1930 to over 126,796 in 2004, a growth rate of approximately 4.05% per year\*. This growth has not been constant over the years. In the early years of the county, 1920 to 1950, Indian River County's population increased at an average rate of approximately 2.88% per year. The population did, however, nearly double from 6,724 persons to 11,872 persons during that time.

In the fifties, the County experienced rapid growth, doubling from 11,872 in 1950 to 25,309 in 1960. During this time, the population increased 113%, an annual rate of 7.86%.

County growth slowed considerably in the 1960's, to an annual rate of 3.58%. Despite a growth rate half that of the previous 10 years, the population experienced a sizable increase of 10,683 persons.

**TABLE 1.1  
HISTORIC POPULATION 1930 - 2004, INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**

Year	Population	Numerical Increase	% Increase
1930	6,724		
1940	8,957	2,233	33.2
1950	11,872	2,915	32.5
1960	25,309	13,437	113.2
1970	35,992	10,683	42.2
1980	59,896	23,904	66.4
1990	90,208	30,312	50.6
2000	112,947	22,739	25.2
2004	126,796	13,849	12.3

\* Annual growth rates reflect the result of compounding. For example, a population with a 5% annual growth rate will double in approximately 14 years.

*Source:* U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research

In the seventies, the County's population increased by over 23,000 persons, an average annual rate of 5.23%.

During the 1980-1990 timeframe, the growth rate of the County slowed to approximately 4.86% per year; however, the numerical increase was the largest recorded. The growth rate slowed further during the 1990-2004 timeframe to approximately 4.05%.

Both the State and the Treasure Coast Region have also experienced rapid population growth. Table 1.2 provides the population of Indian River County, the Treasure Coast Region and Florida since 1960. During this period, the county and region have grown five times in size, with the region slightly outpacing the county. Both areas grew faster than the state, which tripled.

**TABLE 1.2  
POPULATION 1960 - 2000  
Indian River County, the Treasure Coast, and Florida**

	Indian River County	Treasure Coast	Florida
1960	25,300	309,600	4,951,600
1965	31,300	397,800	5,961,600
1970	36,000	463,900	6,791,400
1975	46,300	640,900	8,485,200
1980	59,900	787,900	9,747,100
1985	76,400	986,800	11,287,900
1990	90,208	1,204,782	12,938,071
1995	100,261	1,346,259	14,149,317
2000	112,947	1,563,564	15,982,824

Source: U.S. Census of Population & University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research

**TABLE 1.3  
PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN POPULATION**

	Indian River County	Treasure Coast	Florida
1960-1965	24.9	28.5	20.4
1965-1970	13.9	16.6	13.9
1970-1975	28.6	38.2	24.9
1975-1980	29.4	22.9	14.9
1980-1985	27.6	25.3	15.8
1985-1990	18.1	22.1	14.6
1990-1995	11.1	11.7	9.4
1995-2000	12.7	16.1	13

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

During the period from 1960 to 2000, the population of Indian River County increased by 346.4%, the Treasure Coast by 405% and the state by 222.8%. While these figures are impressive, closer examination is needed to understand the rapid growth and determine the trends that have occurred. Because data for the period from 1960-2000 are available for 5 year periods, much of the analysis will address 5 year intervals. For the 8 periods, percent increases for Indian River County averaged 20.8% compared with 22.7% for the Treasure Coast, and 15.9% for Florida. All three areas experienced declines in the 5 year rate of growth from 1965-1995. For all periods, except the most recent period, 1995 - 2000, Indian River County's 5 year growth rates have been higher than Florida, indicating overall a faster growth rate than the State as a whole. When compared with the Treasure Coast, Indian River County rates were greater than those for the Treasure Coast only for the 1975-1980 and the 1980-1985 periods.

Since 1984, however, the county's growth has fallen below the pace of the region. Therefore, the county's share of the regional population has declined. At the same time, the county has experienced higher percentage increases of population than the state, or nearly identical percentage increases of population as the state, resulting in an overall increase in the county's share of the state population total.

**TABLE 1.4  
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SHARE OF POPULATION GROWTH  
OF THE TREASURE COAST AND FLORIDA**

	Indian River County Pop. Change (Thous.)	Treasure Coast		Florida	
		Pop. Change	IRC % of Change	Pop. Change	IRC % of Change
1960-65	6.0	88.2	6.8	1,010.0	0.6
1965-70	4.7	66.1	7.1	829.8	0.6
1970-75	10.3	177.0	5.8	1,693.8	0.6
1975-80	13.6	147.0	9.3	1,261.9	1.1
1980-85	16.5	199.0	8.3	1,540.9	1.1
1985-90	13.8	218.0	6.3	1,650.3	0.8
1990-95	10.1	141.5	7.1	1,211.5	0.8
1995-2000	12.7	217.3	5.8	1,833.5	.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Compiled by Indian River County Planning Division

These analyses indicate that, compared to the 1970-1985 period, the pace of growth in the state, region, and county, for the 1985-2000 period, slowed. The outlook for Indian River County is continued growth, although at a slower pace than experienced in the late 70's and early 80's. While outpacing the state growth rate through 1995, and approximately equaling the state growth rate between 1995 and 2000, Indian River County will continue to grow at a slightly slower pace than the more urban areas of the Treasure Coast.

**Components of Population Change**

Population growth is the result of two processes: natural growth and migration. Natural growth consists of births minus deaths. A population with a high proportion of younger persons and/or a high birth rate is likely to have a positive natural growth, whereas a population with a high proportion of older persons and/or a low birth rate is likely to experience a negative natural growth. Migration on the other hand is the movement of people from one location to another. Many factors contribute to the decision to relocate to another area: economic, health, climate, and family, to name a few. Table 1.5 identifies the components of growth in Florida, the Treasure Coast Region, and Indian River County.

The table indicates that the proportion of growth due to net migration is high throughout the state, region, and especially the county. Review of historical data indicates that, while migration is declining as a growth factor for the state and region, it is increasing for Indian River County.

<b>TABLE 1.5</b>				
<b>Components of Population Change 1990 - 2000</b>				
	<b># of natural increase</b>	<b>% of natural increase</b>	<b># of net migration</b>	<b>% of net migration</b>
Indian River County	-2,554	0%	25,293	100%
Treasure Coast	9,113	2.5%	349,662	97.5%
Florida	448,216	14.7%	2,596,091	85.3%

Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research

## Characteristics of the Population

This section examines the current socioeconomic characteristics of the population. Since the decennial U.S. Census is the traditional and most reliable source of these data, much of the data are 1990 figures. Where more current and reliable data are available, they have been included. Also, comparisons between the county, the region, and the state are presented.

### Age

The data in tables 1.6 and 1.7 show the numerical and percentage breakdown of the County's population by age. All age groups increased in size in each 10 year census period, except for the 20-34 year old age group. Despite the fact that nearly all age groups increased in size, there are differences which can be observed. The most notable is the oldest age group, 65+; this group nearly doubled in each period, resulting in a 99 fold increase. By contrast, the two youngest groups combined (ages 19 and under) have increased by a factor of only 9.

<b>Year</b>	<b>5 &amp; Under</b>	<b>6 - 19</b>	<b>20 - 34</b>	<b>35 - 64</b>	<b>65+</b>	<b>Total</b>
1930	729	2,009	1,711	1,940	334	6,724
1940	766	2,535	2,770	2,770	616	8,957
1950	1,323	2,871	4,115	4,115	1,046	11,872
1960	2,794	6,476	8,493	8,493	3,529	25,309
1970	2,824	9,861	11,578	11,578	6,251	35,992
1980	3,837	11,674	20,392	20,392	12,224	59,896
1990	4,918	14,447	15,929	30,322	24,592	90,208
2000	5,259	18,772	14,859	41,085	32,972	112,947

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population

**TABLE 1.7**  
**PERCENT OF POPULATION BY AGE**  
**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**

Year	5 & under	6 - 19	20 - 34	35 - 64	65+
1930	10.7	29.9	25.5	28.9	5.0
1940	8.6	28.3	25.3	30.9	6.9
1950	11.1	24.2	21.2	34.7	8.8
1960	11.0	25.6	15.9	33.6	13.9
1970	7.9	27.4	15.2	32.2	17.3
1980	6.4	19.5	19.6	34.1	20.4
1990	5.5	16.0	17.7	33.6	27.3
2000	4.7	16.6	13.1	36.4	29.2

Source: U. S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population  
Compiled by Indian River County Planning Division

The percentage of the total population contained in each age group provides a better indication of the aging of the population. Once again, the most obvious trend occurs in the over 65 age cohort. This group has consistently commanded a larger share of the population and has increased from just 5% of the total in 1930 to over 29% in 2000. The only other group that has increased is the 35-64 age group, which has grown from 28.9% in 1930 to 36.4% in 2000, or an increase of 7.5 percentage points. The three youngest age groups have all declined as a percent of the total population. The age group in the workforce, those between 20 and 65, has remained fairly consistent over time, with 54.4% in 1930 and 51.3% in 1990, and dropping to 49.5% in 2000. Therefore, the pre-school and school age population, those under 20, have lost ground to the elders. This age group represented 21.3% of the total in 2000 compared with 40.6% in 1930, despite a numerical increase of more than 21,000 persons.

Indian River County's population is older than that of Florida. The median age of the county population in 2000 was 47.0. By comparison, the median age in Florida was 38.7 years. In fact, Indian River County's median age was the 9th highest of the 67 counties in Florida. Additionally, as illustrated in Table 1.8, the median age of the county is rising faster than that of the state.

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Florida	32.3	34.7	36.3	38.7
Indian River County	34.5	39.6	43.8	47.0
Martin County	39.6	43.0	44.3	47.3
Palm Beach County	35.5	40.2	39.8	41.8
St. Lucie County	31.4	34.0	37.7	42.0

Source: Bureau of Census, Census of Population; BEBR

**Race**

The racial makeup of the County population has also changed over time. As indicated in Table 1.9, the percentage of blacks has decreased from 28.7% of the population in 1930 to 8.2% in 2000. The white population increased from 71.3% in 1930 to 87.4% in 2000. In addition to these groups, the 2000 census lists 4,940 persons or 4.4% of the County population as other races. These include American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, and those identifying themselves as two or more races others. In contrast, from 1990 to 2000, the proportion of the population of Florida that is black increased slightly from 13.7% to 14.6%

	White	%	Black	%	Other	%
1930	4,793	71.3	1,931	28.7	--	--
1940	6,288	70.2	2,669	29.8	--	--
1950	9,180	77.3	2,962	29.0	--	--
1960	19,920	78.7	5,380	21.3	9	--
1970	29,409	81.7	6,514	18.1	69	0.2
1980	51,172	85.4	7,765	13.0	959	1.6
1990	81,418	90.3	7,660	8.5	1,130	1.3

2000	98,754	87.4	9,253	8.2	4,940	4.4
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Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population

**Education**

Educational achievement is measured by the number of years of school completed by adults over 25 years of age, as reported by the U.S. Census. Achievement levels are broken down into three categories: Elementary School, High School, and College. The High School and College groups are further broken down to those that completed 1-3 years and those that graduated. Achievement levels recorded are the highest level (years completed) reached by an individual.

	Elementary 0-8 years	High School, 1-3 yrs.	High School Graduate	College, 1-3 years	College Graduate
IRC 1980	16.4	16.9	33.8	17.4	15.5
IRC 1990	7.1	16.5	30.6	26.7	19.1
IRC 2000	6.3	12.2	29.1	29.4	23.1
FL 1980	17.6	15.7	35.0	16.8	14.9
FL 1990	9.5	16.1	30.2	26.0	18.3
FL 2000	5.5	12.0	29.1	29.6	23.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population

The table shows that the educational attainment level in the county is slightly lower than that of the state as a whole. The data also indicate that the educational attainment level in the county increased from 1990 to 2000. In 1990, 76.4% of the county's over 25 population had at least a high school education. By 2000, that figure had risen to 81.6%; a slightly smaller increase than the state as a whole, which increased from 74.5% to 82.5%.

**Income**

Comparisons of income utilize three income indicators: per capita income, household income, and family income, as well as incidence of poverty.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	% change 1997-2000
IRC	33,496	34,852	35,900	36,874	10.1
FL	24,869	26,161	26,978	28,366	14.1
US	25,412	26,893	27,880	29,760	17.1
St. Lucie	19,688	20,525	20,993	22,261	13.1
Martin	36,956	38,773	40,229	41,693	12.8
Palm Beach	37,284	39,182	40,172	41,945	12.5

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis and 2004 Florida Statistical Abstract.

Indian River County's per capita income compares favorably to the nation and the state. In the 90's, the county has consistently been above the nation and the state; however, the margin of difference is decreasing.

When compared to the four county region, Indian River County is 3rd overall behind Palm Beach County and Martin County. St. Lucie County is the only one of the four Treasure Coast counties with an income below the state average.

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN DOLLARS			MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME IN DOLLARS			% OF PERSONS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL			% OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
IRC	15,101	28,961	39,635	17,607	33,569	46,385	12.3	8.7	9.3	8.3	5.9	6.3
FL	14,675	27,483	38,819	17,280	32,212	45,625	13.5	12.7	12.5	9.9	9.0	9.0
US	16,841	30,056	41,994	19,917	35,225	50,046	12.4	13.1	12.4	9.6	--	9.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population

Table 1.12 provides family and household income and the incidence of poverty for families and individuals. Just as with per capita income, household and family incomes in Indian River County were reported above state levels for 1979, 1989, and 1999. While both household and family incomes were higher than the state within Indian River County, the margin of difference above state levels, decreased in both categories during this period. Both the state and the county, however, remain below the nation with respect to median family income.

In contrast, the rate of poverty among families and persons in Indian River County remained below state and national levels. In fact, the rate of poverty among families remained lower at both the state and county levels than at the national level.

**Households**

The number of households and average household size can greatly impact land use planning in a community. A household is defined as the person or persons occupying a dwelling unit. Therefore, as the average household size decreases, the number of households or required dwelling units increases relative to the population.

Table 1.13 shows the number of households and persons per household. Because the average number of persons per household has decreased, the number of households have increased at a rate faster than the population as a whole.

Year	Households (IRC)	% Change	Persons/ House-Hold (IRC)	% Change	Persons/ House-Hold (FL)	% Change
1950	3,653	--	3.19	--	--	--
1960	8,247	125.8	3.05	-4.4	--	--
1970	12,329	49.5	2.90	-4.9	2.90	--
1980	23,331	89.3	2.49	-14.1	2.55	-12.1
1990	38,057	63.1	2.33	-6.4	2.46	-3.5
2000	49,137	29.1	2.30	-1.3	2.52	2.4

Source: U.S. Census of Population, & University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research

The average household size is decreasing in the United States due to several factors. Families are having fewer children and delaying the birth of children; young adults are no longer living with parents but moving out on their own, and older persons are living longer and not returning to their children in their later years. Combined, these factors have led to a decrease in the average household size. As indicated in Table 1.13, the average household size in Indian River County, already less than the state's, is decreasing. The pace of that decrease, however, slowed down in the eighties, and even further slowed in the nineties.

### **Population Projections**

Population projections are an essential tool in any planning activity. For land use planning, the amount of population growth determines future requirements for housing, transportation, recreation, schools and other public and private facilities and services. Using a population projection that is too low will likely result in failure to adequately identify and fund future county facility needs (i.e. roads). Conversely, using a population projection that is too high will result in identifying needs that will occur beyond the forecasted time period. A population projection is, therefore, an attempt to provide an accurate forecast of the future population. As with any other forecast, the reliability of a population projection depends on the accuracy of data, the projection methodology and the assumptions used.

In Florida, most county comprehensive plans and long range transportation plans rely on countywide population forecasts prepared by the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR). The BEBR population forecasts include "Low", "Medium", and "High" forecasts by county in five year increments. Section 9J-5.005 of the Florida Administrative Code states that BEBR medium series projections should be utilized by communities for their planning activities. Alternatively, Section 9J-5.005 also states that a community may use its own projections, or BEBR low or high series projections, provided sufficient documentation or analysis is provided justifying the choice.

While most communities use the BEBR medium forecasts, some Florida counties have determined that the BEBR "medium" forecast does not adequately reflect anticipated growth. This conclusion is supported by the findings contained within the BEBR population study titled *Projections of Florida Population by County 2003 - 2030* (BEBR February 2004). That study provides a summary of the methodologies applied to develop the low, medium, and high forecasts. These forecasts begin with four statistical models, from which a total of eight projections are made. The highest and lowest projections are excluded from consideration, and the medium forecast is calculated by taking the average of the six remaining projections. The low and high projections are included "to provide an indication of uncertainty surrounding the medium projections". The report further states that; two-

thirds of all county forecasts should fall within the low and high forecasts. According to BEBR's own analysis, 22 of Florida's 67 county forecasts do not match BEBR's medium population forecasts, and will not even be within the range of the low and medium forecasts. Additionally, the report states "Given Florida's population growth history, the probability that a county's future population will be above the high projection is greater than the probability that it will be below the low projection."

For Indian River County, BEBR medium series projections reflect an average growth rate of 1.7% through the year 2030. This projected county growth rate is lower than what recent historical data indicate. For instance, Indian River County's 2003 growth rate was 2.5%, while the county's 2004 growth rate was 4.6%. In fact, the growth rate within Indian River County over the past five years has remained above 2.10%.

It is expected that the growth trends occurring within Indian River County over the past five years will continue through 2030. This conclusion is supported by a recognition that there is an increasing scarcity of developable land in southeast Florida. As a result, population is moving northward into Indian River County in search of cheaper housing and land. In addition, it is commonly recognized and understood that the "baby boom" generation is reaching retirement age and that many of the retirees are moving to the sunbelt states, including to Florida, and Indian River County.

As a traditionally agricultural area, Indian River County has a large mass of available vacant land that can accommodate growth from the south and growth from the north. In fact, the county has recently been experiencing an increase in the number of rezoning requests, proposed housing projects, and potential developer inquiries. This, coupled with the large inventory of existing platted lots within the county from approved development projects, including existing platted lots dating back to the 1950's and 1960's, indicates that there will continue to be available space for future population growth.

Given the combination of national and regional demographic trends, recent development activity, and the availability of land, a linear regression analysis was determined to be the best approach to evaluating population growth within the County. The analysis was performed with population growth over the past five years (2000 – 2004 time period) being the independent variable. The resulting analysis yielded an average growth rate of 2.1% through 2030, a rate which is higher than the BEBR medium forecast of 1.7% for the same period. Table 1.14 includes the BEBR medium series projections as well as adjusted numbers based on recent trend analysis.

**TABLE 1.14  
POPULATION PROJECTIONS  
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
IRC Adjusted	142,166	158,744	175,322	191,900	208,478
BEBR	139,100	151,500	163,700	175,400	186,200

*Source:* University of Florida, BEBR, Mid-Range Projections 2004; Indian River County MPO

As with any projection, the probability of error increases as the projection horizon year is extended. It is also difficult to make assumptions about a population 20 years in the future.

Because of the importance of migration to the growth of Indian River County, there are many economic, social, and political factors at the local, state, regional, national, and global level that could impact the decision of individuals or businesses to relocate.

An examination of the county, regional and state projections reveals that several factors should be considered in preparing projections for the future. In the future, growth will be a major factor with which local government and the state must contend. By the year 2030, Indian River County will add approximately 81,682 residents or nearly 3,315 additional residents per year. By that time, the four county Treasure Coast region will increase from about 1.9 million to nearly 2.7 million residents. With respect to the state, the Census Bureau projects that Florida will likely become the third most populous state with over 20 million residents, by 2025. During this period, the county will increase at a faster pace than the state and the region.

Throughout the planning period, the percentage change of population for Indian River County will be higher than both the state and the region. This percent will decline for all three areas over time.

The basic assumption which forms the basis of these projections is that present demographic trends will continue. These include a continued reliance on in-migration for population growth and a resulting influx of many retirees. Birth rates in the U.S. have declined since the 1950's and are expected to continue to decline. The result of this will be slower U.S. population growth with an aging of the population. Those over 65 have shown a desire to relocate to locations, which offer the high quality of life, which is often associated with the mild climate and relatively low cost of living. These are characteristics applicable to Florida.

Indian River County's population growth, therefore, is expected to continue to be fueled by in-migration, with a great many of these being retired persons.

<b>TABLE 1.15 POPULATION PROJECTIONS INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, TREASURE COAST, AND FLORIDA</b>			
	<b>Indian River County**</b>	<b>Treasure Coast*</b>	<b>State*</b>
2010	142,166	1,942,000	19,397,400
2015	158,744	2,123,900	21,000,800
2020	175,322	2,304,800	22,588,000
2025	191,900	2,478,400	24,104,900
2030	208,478	2,637,900	25,494,600

Source: \*University of Florida, BEBR, Mid-Range Projections 2004; \*\*Indian River County MPO

<b>TABLE 1.16 PROJECTED PERCENTAGE RATE OF CHANGE INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, TREASURE COAST, AND FLORIDA 2010-2030</b>			
	<b>Indian River County**</b>	<b>Treasure Coast*</b>	<b>Florida*</b>
2010-2015	11.70%	9.40%	8.30%
2015-2020	10.40%	8.50%	7.60%
2020-2025	9.50%	7.50%	6.70%
2025-2030	8.60%	6.40%	5.80%

Source: \*University of Florida, BEBR, Mid-Range Projections 2004; \*\*Indian River County MPO

<b>TABLE 1.17 PROJECTED POPULATION CHANGE INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, TREASURE COAST, AND FLORIDA</b>			
	<b>Indian River County**</b>	<b>Treasure Coast*</b>	<b>State*</b>
2010-2015	16,578	181,900	1,603,400
2015-2020	16,578	180,900	1,587,200
2020-2025	16,578	173,600	1,516,900
2025-2030	16,578	159,500	1,389,700

Source: \*University of Florida, BEBR, Mid-Range Projections 2004; \*\*Indian River County MPO

## Seasonal and Functional Population

To accurately determine demand for services and to comply with state law, the comprehensive plan estimates not only the resident population of the county, but also the functional (or effective) population of the county. The functional population is the resident population plus the seasonal population. This population is utilized as needed within the comprehensive plan. In some instances, the county has utilized the permanent population rather than the functional population. For example, the establishment of some level of service standards requires the use of permanent population, while the establishment of other level of service standards requires use of both resident and seasonal population.

The seasonal population is composed of those persons who visit or reside in the county for a period of less than 6 months. This group includes tourists, migrant farm workers and other short-term and long-term visitors.

The seasonal population used in the development of the comprehensive plan is not intended to provide an enumeration or total count of persons who visit Indian River County throughout any given year, but rather to provide an estimate of the potential peak seasonal population. The seasonal population figures presented in this document are intended to provide the maximum one day potential that is likely to occur during the high season winter months.

In the past, Indian River County has accommodated a significant seasonal population that is expected to increase in the future. Factors that contribute to the seasonal population growth include the mild climate and natural resources that are a result of the south Florida coastal location and a wide variety of recreational and social activities.

While not developed as a major tourist area, Indian River County can be expected to have an increasing number of tourists in the coming years. Some of the factors contributing to the growth of tourism are the ideal winter climate; access to beaches, water facilities and other recreation facilities; and proximity to other major attractions in the state.

Agriculture has been a key component of the local economy. The seasonal nature of citrus production has required the use of migrant labor during the peak harvesting season.

The balance of the seasonal population is the short-term and long-term visitor/resident drawn to the county for many of the same reasons as tourists. Many of these people are of retirement age, and can be expected to increase as this segment of the U.S. population increases.

To determine seasonal population, the county calculated the peak season populations of lodging establishments (hotels and motels); recreational vehicle (RV) parks and campgrounds; visitors with family, friends, and relatives; migrant labor camps; and part-year residents.

**Lodging Establishments**

To estimate the number of persons using county lodging establishments during peak season, the following formula was used.

*number of units X peak season occupancy rate X average number of persons per occupied room*

Through a study based on census and survey data, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) projects the number of hotel/motel units in the county. Those projections are made in five year increments beginning with 1990.

Based on a 1987 survey conducted by the County's Planning Division, the peak season occupancy rate was estimated to be 90%. Research indicates that the average number of persons per occupied room is 1.8.

Using these figures, it is estimated that 4,687 persons/day use county lodging establishments during the peak season. Additionally, the county now projects that 6,867 persons/day will use county lodging establishments during the 2020 peak season.

Projections for future hotel/motel visitors during the peak season were calculated using 1987 occupancy rates and persons per room as well as a 10% increase in hotel rooms for each five year period.

<b>TABLE 1.18 HOTEL/MOTEL VISITORS 2010-2020</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Rooms</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>	<b>Persons Per Room</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
2010	3,700	90%	1.8	5,994
2015	3,967	90%	1.8	6,426
2020	4,239	90%	1.8	6,867
2025	4,519	90%	1.8	7,320
2030	4,810	90%	1.8	7,792

Source: Indian River County Planning Division

### Recreational Vehicle Parks and Campgrounds

There were 838 recreational vehicle sites in Indian River County in 1995. A 1987 survey of operators revealed a 3 month peak season from mid-January until mid-April, and full occupancy for the duration. Occupancy of recreational vehicles was almost exclusively couples. Based on that information, it is estimated that there were approximately 1,676 people living in recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds in the county during the 1995 peak season.

In addition, it is projected that approximately 1,762 people will be living in recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds in the county during the 2020 peak season. That projection assumes that the number of recreational vehicle sites in the county will increase by 1% every five years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>Occupancy</b>	<b>Persons/Vehicle</b>	<b>Total</b>
2010	863	100%	2.0	1,726
2015	872	100%	2.0	1,744
2020	881	100%	2.0	1,762
2025	890	100%	2.0	1,780
2030	899	100%	2.0	1,798

Source: Indian River County Planning Division

### Visitors with Family, Friends and Relatives

In addition to those tourists staying in hotels, motels, recreational vehicle parks and camps, it is necessary to estimate the number of visitors to the county seeking lodging with family, friends and relatives. Before being replaced with Enterprise Florida, the Florida Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, conducted random sample surveys of out of state visitors. Data gathered from those surveys were compiled in a report for Florida counties. Among those items questioned are: purpose of visit; type of lodging; mode of transportation into the state; and primary destination by county. These data were used to produce a profile of travelers and visitors to counties. This report, however, was not produced for Indian River County because the number of surveys was not statistically significant in relation to the total for the state. The Division of Tourism, however, did report that lodging information was similar for all southern counties.

For that reason, Brevard County data pertaining to visitors with family, friends, and relatives will be used to estimate Indian River County data pertaining to visitors with family, friends, and relatives. For the first quarter of 1986, lodging with family, friends and relatives in Brevard County represented 110% of lodgings in hotels and motels. Using that ratio, it is estimated that 5,156 people stayed with family, friends, and relatives during the 1995 peak season. Additionally, it is projected that 7,554 people will stay with family, friends, and relatives during the 2020 peak season.

**TABLE 1.20  
VISITORS WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND RELATIVES**

Year	Hotel Visitors	Family, Friends & Relatives Visitors
2010	5,994	6,593
2015	6,426	7,069
2020	6,867	7,554
2025	7,320	8,045
2030	7,792	8,536

Source: Indian River County Planning Division

**Migrant Labor**

Agriculture and citrus production play a key role in the Indian River County economy. Statistics on migrant labor are not available at the county level. Therefore, it was necessary to produce an estimate for the county. To do so, a survey was conducted by the County Agricultural Extension, Florida Employment Service and the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Service. Through these sources, a current estimate of 1000 migrant farm laborers was established for the county for the peak months of February and March. While this figure appears to be low considering the agricultural segment of the economy, several constraints were identified which support this figure. Migrant labor camps in the county are currently licensed for approximately 833 persons. Many of the seasonal farm laborers are year-round county residents. During the peak period, many laborers are bussed into the county on a daily basis from neighboring counties with higher numbers of migrant labor facilities.

It was also assumed that, this figure will remain fairly constant in the future due to continued high demand for citrus products, stable production in the county, changes in technology, and the use of local labor.

**Part-Year Residents**

The final segment of the county's seasonal population is the part-time residents of the county. This group has been characterized as the "snowbirds" who flock south for the winter months and return to their primary residences in the north for the remainder of the year. This group maintains a residence in Indian River County, which is occupied for less than 6 months a year.

Past studies have indicated that the part-year population during the peak season is generally equal to 10% of the resident population. Using that ratio, it is estimated that there were 10,026 part-year residents living in the county during the 1995 peak season. Furthermore, it is projected that there will be 15,840 part-year residents living in the county during the 2020 peak season.

Year	Part-Time Residents
2010	13,550
2015	14,700
2020	15,840
2025	15,941
2030	16,032

Source: Indian River County Planning Division

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Hotel/Motels	5,594	6,426	6,867	7,320	7,792
Recreational Vehicles	1,726	1,744	1,762	1,780	1,798
Family, Friends, and Relatives	6,593	7,069	7,554	8,045	8,536
Migrant Labor	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Part-Time Residents	13,550	14,700	15,840	15,941	16,032
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,863</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>33,023</b>	<b>34,086</b>	<b>35,158</b>

Source: Indian River County Planning Division

Seasonal population estimates and projections are presented in Table 1.22. These figures are subject to influences from both within and outside the county, and will require revision as more timely data become available.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
Resident	142,166	158,744	175,322	191,900	208,478
Seasonal	28,863	31,000	33,023	34,086	35,158
Functional (TOTAL)	171,029	189,744	208,345	225,986	243,636

Source: Indian River County Planning Department

The functional population is the largest population that would be expected to use county services and facilities on a given day. As such, the functional population of the entire county can be determined by adding the resident and the seasonal populations of the entire county. The functional population for the unincorporated part of the county was determined by using the unincorporated county's percentage of the entire county's resident population, and then applying that percentage to the functional population of the entire county.

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
Resident	90,198	100,716	111,234	121,752	132,270
Seasonal	18,312	19,668	20,952	21,626	22,306
Functional (TOTAL)	108,511	120,384	132,186	143,378	154,577

Source: Indian River County Planning Department

**Economy**

The local economy can greatly influence the stability and quality of life in an area. The following data are presented as a description of the Indian River County economy. Indicators of the local economy that are discussed include: unemployment, employment by major industrial sectors and earnings in those sectors. A detailed discussion of the economy is presented in the Economic Development Element.

**Unemployment**

Indian River County's unemployment rate is higher than the state's as a whole. In 2000, the county's average annual unemployment rate exceeded the state's by 2.6 percentage points.

<b>TABLE 1.25 2000 UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INDIAN RIVER COUNTY AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA</b>	
	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
Florida	3.8%
Indian River County	6.4%

*Source:* Florida Agency For Workforce Innovation

The county's unemployment rate is also cyclical. Generally the unemployment rate is higher during the summer months. The cyclical rate is attributed to the seasonal nature of the citrus and tourism sectors.

**Employment**

Employment by major industrial sectors is presented in Table 1.26. These data show the number of persons employed and percent of total employment. From 1995 to 2000 employment increased in all sectors of the economy except agriculture. In 1995 the services sector was already the sector with the largest percentage of employees in the county. The trade sector, which includes wholesale and retail trade, was the next largest. By 2000, the services sector remained the largest, actually increasing its lead over the trade sector. Much of this growth is due to the increasing number of relatively affluent residents who demand more services than the younger working population.

**TABLE 1.26  
EMPLOYMENT BY MAJOR INDUSTRIAL SECTOR  
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY**

	1995		2000	
	Employees	% Total	Employees	% Total
Agriculture	3,865	10.7%	3,505	8.4%
Construction	2,591	7.2%	2,595	6.2%
Manufacturing	2,113	5.9%	3,184	7.6%
Trans/Utilities	650	1.8%	1,025	2.5%
Trade	9,242	25.7%	11,114	26.6%
Finance	1,656	4.6%	1,976	4.7%
Services	11,143	31.0%	13,434	32.2%
Government	4,602	12.8%	4,867	11.7%
Total	35,862	100.0%	41,700	100.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**TABLE 1.27  
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY'S LARGEST EMPLOYERS (2004)**

2004 Ranking	2003 Ranking	Firm/Company	NAICS Major Group	Employees		
				Total	Full-time	Part-time
1	1	School District of Indian River County	Educational Services (NAICS 61)	2,027	2,027	0
2	3	Indian River County	Public Administration (NAICS 92)	1,445	1,373	72
3	2	Indian River Memorial Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	1,373	769	604
4	4	Publix Supermarkets	Food and Beverage Stores (NAICS 445)	931	N/A	N/A
5	5	The New Piper Aircraft	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing (NAICS 336)	688	688	N/A
6	11	Hale Indian River Groves	Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (NAICS 11)	500	175	325
7	7	City of Vero Beach	Public Administration (NAICS 92)	607	555	52
8	9	Sebastian River Medical Center	Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	500	500	0
9	8	Wal-Mart	General Merchandise Stores (NAICS 452)	540	0	0
10	10	John's Island	Accommodation (NAICS 721)	500	250	250
11	13	Winn-Dixie	Food and Beverage Stores (NAICS 445)	440	120	320
12	18	Indian River Estates	Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	306	160	146
13	6	Gracewood Fruit Packing	Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (NAICS 11)	700	140	560
14	16	Visiting Nurse Association	Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)	332	142	190
15	NR	Grand Harbor Management	Construction (NAICS 23)	290	NA	NA
16	14	Disney's Vero Beach Resort	Accommodation (NAICS 721)	375	270	75
17	NR	Macho Products, Inc./MDI	Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33)	200	200	0
18	NR	Flight Safety International	Educational Services (NAICS 611) Technical and Trade Schools (NAICS 6115)	199	153	47
19	20	Graves Brothers	Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (NAICS 11) Crop Production (NAICS 111)	190	65	125
20	19	Dodgertown Complex	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries (NAICS 711)	177	92	85
21	12	Sun Ag, Inc.	Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (NAICS 11)	120	120	0

Source: IRC Chamber of Commerce (2004)

**APPENDIX A**

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY PREVIOUS, PRESENT AND PROJECTED POPULATIONS					
Year	Population	# Increase	% Increase	Seasonal	Effective
1960	25,309	---	---	---	---
1970	35,992	10,683	42.3	---	---
1980	59,896	23,904	66.4	---	---
1990	90,208	30,312	50.6	20,579	110,787
1995	100,261	10,053	11.1	22,545	122,806
2000	112,947	12,686	12.7	24,685	137,632
2005	125,588	13,000	11.2	26,784	152,372
2010	142,166	16,578	13.2	28,863	171,029
2015	158,744	16,578	11.7	31,000	189,744
2020	175,322	16,578	10.4	33,023	208,345
2025	191,900	16,578	9.5	34,086	225,986
2030	208,478	16,578	8.6	35,158	243,636

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION					
Age distribution (2000)			Racial Composition (2000)		
Age	Number	Percent	Age	Number	Percent
Under 5	5,259	4.7%	White	98,754	87.4
6-19	18,772	16.6%	Black	9,253	8.2
20-64	55,944	49.5%	Other	4,940	4.4
65+	32,972	29.2%			
<b>Median Age (2000)</b>	47.0				

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (2000)			
	Grades	Persons	Percentage
Elementary	0-8	5,292	6.3
Secondary	9-12, no diploma	10,299	12.2
	12	24,572	29.1
College	13 -15	24,835	29.4
	16+	19,533	23.1
Income (1999)		Poverty (1999)	
Median Household Income	\$39,635	Persons below poverty level	10,325
Median Family Income	\$46,385		
# of Households (2000):	49,137	Average Household Size (2000)	2.25

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