

Land and Homes

LAND USE

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is located on the southern edge of the Eglin Reservation, approximately ten miles northeast of Fort Walton Beach.¹ This growth area is expected to receive 273 households as part of the BRAC growth that will occur. The growth area has many attributes that may appeal to military families that are similar to those offered in Fort Walton Beach, including proximity to the Eglin Reservation, high-ranking schools, location along the Choctawhatchee Bay, and residential character. The following section will analyze the growth area's ability to accommodate the expected location of military personnel and families associated with the JSF and the 7 SFG(A).

Existing Land Use

Low-density residential makes up the most common existing land use in the Niceville /Valparaiso Growth Area at 32.5 percent. The majority of the land south of SR 20 is primarily low-density residential. There are scatterings of medium/high-density residential throughout the area as well; however no major concentrations of this type of development exist today. There are several large tracts of vacant land near the low-density residential areas, which could possibly be used for building additional housing units to support the incoming military families. Vacant land composes the third largest existing land use within the growth area, with over 2,000 acres.

The second largest land use in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is institutional. This category contains things such as schools, municipal buildings, and other government facilities. A portion of northern Niceville and some of the outlying unincorporated areas include land that is a part of Eglin Reservation. For this reason, this category skews the data somewhat in terms of analyzing the amount of land available for different land

¹ The City of Valparaiso is shown on the mapping for contextual purposes, however it is anticipated that households will predominately relocate to Niceville or the unincorporated areas of Okaloosa County which are part of the growth area.

uses, since cities cannot typically manage land uses that are a part of a military reservation.

Commercial uses are located along the main transportation corridor of SR 20. There are several golf courses, open space, recreation, and conservation areas throughout the growth area that make up roughly eight percent of the land use. The largest of these areas are located in the northern and eastern portions of the growth area. The area lacks any large mixed use areas.

Table F2.1 illustrates the existing land uses in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area. Existing land use patterns in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area are illustrated on **Map F2.1**.

Future Land Use

The City of Niceville does not currently maintain electronic versions of its future land use maps or data, therefore the future land use information used in this section was derived from the city's 2008 EAR. The EAR grouped low-density and medium-density residential into one category called "Residential". This is the largest future land use in the city, accounting for over half of the land. The total acreages listed in **Table F2.2** for each category of future land use are approximate since the data is not available electronically. Niceville is expected to remain a predominately residential city, which will draw residents seeking that community feel.

Based on future land use designations in the unincorporated portions of the growth area, low-density residential accounts for over 1,440 acres, while mixed-use accounts for over 2,250 acres. Recreation / conservation and open space areas account for an additional 1,638 acres, while commercial use is limited to 39 acres.

Vacant Land

Niceville is mostly built and does not have an abundance of vacant land. However, according to Niceville's June 2008 adopted EAR and accounting for factors that would limit development, the city has a maximum theoretical development of 1,348 residential units. Calculations of vacant land and residential densities showed that of these, 890 units would be low-density, 432 units would be medium-density, and the remaining 12 units would be mixed use. In a real world application, this number would likely be lower as it does not account for setbacks, parking, conservation easements, or other land development requirements. These vacant parcels are scattered throughout the city and some are already platted in existing subdivisions. The largest

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concentration of vacant parcels is found in the northern half of Niceville.

The unincorporated portions of the growth area contain 911 acres of vacant land, most of which is located north of Rocky Bayou Road, immediately east of the Niceville city limits. A portion of this area is currently being considered for annexation and subsequent rezoning with the intent of developing a large scale planned neighborhood. A few vacant parcels are scattered throughout the residential areas in surrounding Rocky Bayou.

Table F2.1: Existing Land Use– Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

Land Use	Niceville Acres	Valparaiso Acres	Unincorporated Acres	Total Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture	0	0	517	517	4.1%
Commercial / Office	237	82	284	602	4.8%
Industrial	29	20	13	62	0.5%
Institutional	743	1,024	2,238	4,005	31.9%
Low-density Residential	1,399	442	2,240	4,081	32.5%
Medium / High-density Residential	68	36	70	174	1.4%
Mixed Use	4	0	0	4	0.0%
Recreation / Conservation / Open Space	167	55	799	1,020	8.1%
Undesignated	1	0	0	1	0.0%
Vacant	873	227	911	2,011	16.0%
Water	35	0	59	94	0.7%
Total	3,555	1,887	7,130	12,572	100.0%

Note: This table was compiled based on information obtained from the Okaloosa County Assessor.

Sources: Okaloosa County, Matrix Design Group 2009

Table F2.2: Future Land Use in Acres – Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

Land Use	Niceville Acres	Valparaiso Acres	Unincorporated Acres	Total Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture	47	0	0	47	0.1%
Airport Compatibility		0	0	0	0.0%
Commercial	422	104	39	565	1.7%
Industrial	6	118	1	126	0.4%
Institutional	178	3	65	246	0.8%
Low Density Residential	1,809	766	1,462	4,037	12.4%
Medium/High Density Residential		130	476	606	1.9%
Military		728	20,385	21,113	65.0%
Mixed Use		0	2,256	2,256	6.9%
Undesignated / Other	829	56	348	1,233	3.8%
Recreation / Conservation / Open Space	285	192	1,638	2,115	6.5%
Water		8	117	124	0.4%
Total	3,576	2,106	26,788	32,469	100.0%

Source: 2008 Evaluation and Appraisal Report of the City of Niceville Comprehensive Plan, Adopted June 10, 2008

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In the southeastern portion of the growth area (known as Bluewater Bay) additional vacant parcels as scattered throughout the residential areas as well as adjacent to the commercial corridor along FL 20. **Map F2.2** illustrates the pattern of vacant land, highlighting future land use designations, for the portions of the growth area where data is available.

Exclusionary Areas

The majority of the lands directly east of Niceville, between the city and Eglin Reservation's boundary, are considered natural exclusion areas in the form of conservation and open space, however there is currently some development that exists within it. The other common facets of the natural exclusion are 100-year flood plains, which are found along the coastal areas throughout the growth area. In the growth area, natural exclusion areas account for around 52 percent of the land.

The largest piece of municipal / government land is just southeast of Niceville along SR 20. Ownership exclusionary lands compose just under five percent of the growth area. The remaining land southeast of Niceville is mostly already built out with residential, commercial uses and golf course and recreational areas. There is a small amount of developable land within this growth area; however the largest clustering of non-excluded land is within northern Niceville.

Due to its proximity to the airfield at Eglin Main Base, the airfield that will be primarily used for the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft; the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area's entire western half is overlaid by military operations exclusion areas, accounting for over 33 percent of the growth area's land. This exclusion is a result of the Joint Strike Fighter noise contour. This includes the entire City of Valparaiso and over half of the City of Niceville. Residential development is not recommended within this military exclusion area, however proper sound attenuation construction standards could reduce noise issues. Approximately 1,800 acres or 13 percent of the growth area has the potential for development. **Map F2.3** illustrates these exclusionary areas.

Existing Land Development Policies

The incorporated jurisdictions in the growth area each have their own comprehensive plan, associated EAR, and land development code which guides the course of development within the city. As identified earlier in this chapter, the unincorporated portions of the growth area

will be developed in accordance with the Okaloosa County Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive plans establish the types of land uses and locations of future development, as well as densities and ground rules for what is needed to develop a certain land use. All jurisdictions were provided with recommendations as part of the Eglin JLUS process for courses of action to take in order to develop certain areas that will be compatible between military operations and resident safety and quality of life.

Comprehensive Plan

Niceville's current Comprehensive Plan is dated from 2000. The plan set forth densities and requirements for new development to be located adjacent to existing infrastructure in order to reduce urban sprawl and develop in a sensible manner. Designations for other uses such as schools are also provided. The following goals, objectives, and policies from the Niceville Comprehensive Plan will play an important role in developing the GMP action plan. Most significantly, like other jurisdictions in the tri-county study area, Niceville has developed policies to limit urban sprawl, encourage infill development, and mandate the provision of services prior to new development.

Goal 7.A Manage the future development of the city in a manner consistent with the ability to provide adequate infrastructure and protect important resources.

Objective 7.A.1 Coordinate future land uses with the appropriate topography, soil conditions and the availability of facilities and services by including regulations within the LDC [Land Development Code] and adopting such code within the time frame specified.

Policy 7.A.1.2 The LDC shall contain specific and detailed provisions to implement this Ordinance including, as a minimum, the following:

- a. Regulation of the subdivision of land;
- b. Regulation of the use of land by zoning districts which implement the land-use categories shown on the future land-use maps;
- c. Ensure compatibility of adjacent land uses;

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- d. Provide for open space;
- e. Protect potable water well fields and sources;
- f. Regulation of areas subject to seasonal or periodic flooding;
- g. Continue to provide for drainage and stormwater management;
- h. Protect the environmentally sensitive lands designated within the LDC;
- i. Continue the regulation of signage;
- j. Implement the Concurrency Management System described in Chapter 6 of this Ordinance; and
- k. Insure adequate, safe and convenient on-site traffic flow and parking.

Policy 7.A.1.3 The City shall integrate land use and water resource planning to verify that sufficient supply of potable water is available at time of development.

Policy 7.A.2.3 New development will be located in conformance with the categories shown on the Future Land Use Maps and with the following standards:

- a. Neighborhood commercial facilities shall be allowed and encouraged in those transitional areas within the City where successful mixed use developments have occurred;
- b. Employment centers will be allowed and encouraged whenever practical, near medium density residential areas so that traffic congestion and circulation is minimized during peak driving times. Any time a new employment center (industrial or commercial activities) is approved for development, satisfactory buffering, set backs and landscape requirements consistent with the City Code shall be required. Further, any time new industrial uses abut existing residential uses a minimum twenty (20) foot green

belt (buffer) shall be required. The size of the green belt shall be determined by the size and characteristics of the project. All employment center projects one (1) acre or less shall be required to have at least a twenty (20) foot green belt. All projects of one acre or more may be required to have up to a fifty (50) foot green belt depending upon the proposed land use and activities associated with the development; and

c. Except as provided in paragraph b above, new industrial development shall locate on, or be connected to, arterial or collector roadways.

Policy 7.A.3.4 The LDC, adopted shall include regulations with the following densities:

a. Low density residential development includes 1.0 dwelling units per gross acre through 6.0 dwelling units per gross acre;

b. Medium density residential development includes from 6.10 dwelling units per gross acre through 15.0 dwelling units per gross acre; and

c. Other land use categories shall be regulated by the height, area and bulk restrictions contained within the City's Zoning Ordinance and the commercial and industrial land use categories shall be governed by floor area ratios as follows:

Commercial = .89

Industrial = .77

d. Compatible uses ancillary to the residential land use categories will be allowed under stipulated conditions;

Objective 7.A.5 Coordinate coastal area population densities with the Okaloosa County Hurricane Evacuation Plan upon adoption of this Ordinance.

Policy 7.A.5.1 Population density shall be limited to those densities reflected on the Future Land Use Maps.

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Objective 7.A.6 The City shall discourage the proliferation of urban sprawl by encouraging re-development consistent with the Future Land Use Maps upon adoption of this Ordinance.

Policy 7.A.6.1 The City shall prioritize its Capital Improvements funding in a manner that generally assigns first priority to the renewal and replacement of existing obsolete or worn out facilities in order to provide infrastructure capacity necessary to private sector development or re-development activities.

Policy 7.A.6.2 The City shall pursue the rehabilitation and reuse of governmental facilities, structures and buildings as the preferred alternative to new construction.

Policy 7.A.6.3 The City shall use its fiscal resources to encourage "infill" development. Note: There is no opportunity for "leap-frog" development within Niceville inasmuch as the City can experience only infill type developments.

Policy 7.A.6.4 Public facilities and services shall be located to minimize their costs, minimize their impacts on the natural environment and maximize their efficiency. Cost alternatives, impacts on the environment and levels of efficiency shall be determined during the design phase and bid process utilized by the City to accomplish the installation or location of public facilities and/or services.

Objective 7.A.7 The City shall insure the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development through provisions within the LDC or acquisition of land by the.

Policy 7.A.7.1 The City shall include land acquisition within its Capital Improvements Element and within its Capital Improvements Program when

necessary to provide public lands for utility facilities.

Policy 7.A.7.2 The City shall continue to require dedication of adequate rights-of-way pursuant to Appendix A of the City Code Article IV, Section 3(13) for use as roadways and by utilities for extensions or improvements.

Objective 7.A.8 The LDC shall allow and encourage the use of innovative land development techniques including, but not limited to, provisions for planned unit development, cluster housing and other approaches to mixed-use development.

Policy 7.A.8.1 The City shall continue to allow the use of the planned unit development technique enacted within Ordinance 590 of the City of Niceville.

Policy 7.A.8.2 The LDC shall contain the Zoning Ordinance and provisions which, at a minimum, contain:

- a. Density, lot coverage requirements and height variations through the provision of two or more zoning districts designed to implement the commercial and/or planned unit development categories;
- b. Sight and sound buffers between residential uses and more intensive uses;
- c. Planned unit developments shall be encouraged to include local or neighborhood convenience facilities within such developments when appropriate;
- d. Cluster housing pursuant to Ordinance 590; and
- e. The LDC will contain provisions pursuant to Policy 8.C.3.1.

Objective 7.A.9 The City shall identify the land use categories in which public schools are an allowable use and ensure that sufficient land is available in those categories to meet the projected needs for schools, in

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coordination with the Okaloosa County School Board.

Policy 7.A.9.1 The City shall encourage the location of schools proximate to urban residential areas to the extent possible.

Policy 7.A.9.2 The City shall seek to collocate public facilities such as parks, libraries and community centers with schools to the extent possible.

Policy 7.A.9.3 Public schools are an allowable use in the following land use categories shown on the Future Land Use Maps;

- a. Residential (low density and medium density);
- b. Commercial use;
- c. Industrial use;
- d. Mixed use; and
- e. Public lands.

Policy 7.A.9.4 The City will cooperate with officials of the Okaloosa County School Board and other local governments in order to establish school location criteria and identify areas where schools will be needed in the future. The Okaloosa County Comprehensive Plan Committee shall be the vehicle used to facilitate the cooperation herein described.

JLUS

Similar to the other growth areas, the Eglin JLUS provided recommendations for the jurisdictions in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area. The recommendations focused on addressing compatibility issues identified through the JLUS process. The recommendations related to land use were to establish sound attenuation standards for new and existing buildings in areas that experience high levels of aircraft noise; matching compatible land use and development types in areas where aircraft accidents or low-level flight are most common; developing a land acquisition program; and limiting the height of buildings, structures, and objects that could conflict with military operations such as line-of-sight or aircraft flight.

The JLUS also recommends the establishment of three MIPA Zoning Overlay Districts that would cover parts of the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area. MIPA-I would focus on addressing compatibility issues under aircraft safety zones and be located past the ends of the Eglin Main Base airfield runway. This overlay would affect types of land uses allowed. MIPA-II relates to aircraft noise associated with the airfield and would implement sound attenuation construction standards. MIPA-III deals with low-level flight approach areas for aircraft. The area would extend roughly one mile from the Eglin boundary and would focus on limiting density, object height, and nighttime light emissions that could affect aircraft safety. The JLUS also recommends that the cities update their comprehensive plans and land development codes to include specific language aimed at strengthening land use compatibility between the military and surrounding communities.

BRAC EFFECTS

It is anticipated that the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area will absorb six percent of the personnel, dependent, and civilian population that will be coming to Eglin Reservation as part of the BRAC relocation of the JSF and 7 SFG(A). The impacts of this new growth will impact the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area based on the following assumptions:

Single family residential will develop at a density of 3.5 du/ac. This is the midpoint between the 1 du/ac and 6 du/ac density range for the Low Density Residential future land use designation in the Niceville Comprehensive Plan.

Townhouse / condominium residential will develop at a density of 11 du/ac. Apartments will develop at a density of 16 du/ac. Because the Niceville Comprehensive Plan does not separate Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential, and a range was only provided for Medium Density Residential, the lower end of this range, 11 du/ac, was applied to townhouse / condo residential, while the upper end of this range, 16 du/ac was applied to apartment residential.

Level of service for neighborhood parks is set at 2 acres / 1,000 people.

Level of service for community parks is set at 2 acres / 1,000 people.

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Level of service for mini-parks is set at 0.32 acres / 1,000 people.

An estimated 273 housing units will be required to support this new population. If developed as entirely new housing as a variety of product types (single family residential, condominium/townhome, apartment, etc.) it would require approximately 70 acres of land. The expected areas for new growth would occur in the unincorporated areas east of the Niceville city limits and as infill development in existing neighborhoods. However, the fact that the region is already mostly built and has available vacant housing units provides an opportunity for the existing housing stock to absorb a portion of this demand.

The need for commercial space to accommodate the new population can be calculated based on a generally accepted standard of 24 square feet per person of commercial space. The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area will receive an estimated 625 people, which equates to the need for approximately 16,500 square feet of commercial space. It is expected that this space can be accommodated through existing commercial vacancies or through new infill or mixed use developments.

*Due to unavailability of electronic future land use and zoning data, the summary table of potential new housing units shown for the other GMP growth areas could not be completed for the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address the issues identified in this section, a list of recommendations was created to assist the Cities of Niceville and Valparaiso and Okaloosa County within the growth area to efficiently manage the land development and growth in order to ensure the land uses can accommodate the incoming BRAC personnel and still maintain a standard quality of life. The following presents the major issues of the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area, as well as a discussion of the issue and resulting recommendation to address the issue. These recommendations are organized in a table format and presented in the Executive Summary (located in the Introduction of this document). The table format includes information related to responsibility, priority, funding, cost, and monitoring to achieve implementation of each recommendation.

Table F2.3: Niceville / Valparaiso Dwelling Unit Demand and Supply

Type	Anticipated BRAC Demand	Dwelling Unit Yield on Vacant Land (Incorporated)	Dwelling Unit Yield on Vacant Land (Entire Growth Area)
Single Family Homes	153	N/A	N/A
Duplex, Townhomes	27	N/A	N/A
Mixed Use Residential (Apartment/Condo)	93	N/A	N/A
Total	273	838	3,229

*Unit count based on 80 percent of the total acreage being built out as dwelling units.

* As of October 2009

Source: Haas Center and Matrix Design Group, 2009

Issue 1

Potential for incompatible development associated with the BRAC realignment in areas specified in the Eglin AFB JLUS. There is an expressed need to implement the JLUS.

Discussion 1

The JLUS recommendations related to land use were to establish sound attenuation standards for new and existing buildings in areas that experience high levels of aircraft noise; matching compatible land use and development types in areas where aircraft accidents or low-level flight are most common; developing a land acquisition program; and limiting the height of buildings, structures, and objects that could conflict with military operations such as line-of-sight or aircraft flight.

The JLUS also recommends the establishment of three MIPA Zoning Overlay Districts that would cover parts of the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area. MIPA-I would focus on addressing compatibility issues under aircraft safety zones and be located past the ends of the Eglin Main Base airfield runway. This overlay would affect types of land uses allowed. MIPA-II relates to aircraft noise associated with the airfield and would implement sound attenuation construction standards. MIPA-III deals with low-level flight approach areas for aircraft. The area

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would extend roughly one mile from the Eglin boundary and would focus on limiting density, object height, and nighttime light emissions that could affect aircraft safety. The JLUS also recommends that the cities update their comprehensive plans and land development codes to include specific language aimed at strengthening land use compatibility between the military and surrounding communities.

Recommendation 1.1

Develop notification procedures between jurisdictions and the Eglin Reservation for new developments in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area that may be incompatible with military operations.

Issue 2

The comprehensive plans for Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County could benefit from revisions that explicitly address the land use interface and functional interaction with the projected growth at the Eglin Reservation.

Discussion 2

The preparation and adoption of the Eglin Joint Land Use Study provides numerous recommendations to promote land use compatibility within proximity to the Eglin Reservation boundary. One of the recommendations is to prepare Small Area Studies that will provide a palette of recommended land uses and compatible development guidelines to be utilized in targeted areas where Military Influence Planning Areas (MIPAs) have been developed. Once prepared and adopted, an amendment to the respective comprehensive plans can be accomplished to ensure the Small Area Studies are implemented as the adopted growth area guidance by the City or County.

Recommendation 2.1

Explore the feasibility of developing a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program for Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County.

Recommendation 2.2

Encourage new development in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area to occur in locations where infrastructure and facilities exist or in areas where capital improvements are already planned and approved.

Issue 3

The scale of the GMP Study Area creates impedance to coordinated development.

Discussion 3

The total GMP Study Area covers the counties of Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton, and includes 16 incorporated communities, each with their own land use plans, zoning codes, and comprehensive plans that govern land use and growth. This causes difficulty when trying to develop a unified plan to encourage land uses and growth that will intertwine with each other and military operations at the Eglin Reservation.

Recommendation 3.1

Develop strong communication and participation opportunities among all GMP participating jurisdictions with special emphasis placed on the six identified growth areas.

Recommendation 3.2

Develop new and strengthen existing working relationships among Niceville, Valparaiso, Okaloosa County, and Eglin representatives to avoid and mitigate incompatible land uses along the installation's boundary. This can be accomplished through enhancing existing processes and policies.

Recommendation 3.3

Publish an annual review of approved rezoning and subdivision plats, and monitor the progress of development through platting, permitting, and Certificate of Occupancy stages.

Recommendation 3.4

All GMP participating jurisdictions should engage in a formal cross-jurisdictional review of major development plans and significant rezoning.

Recommendation 3.5

Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County should be encouraged to consider the GMP in their development review activities.

Issue 4

The lack of region-wide cooperation diminishes the ability of capital improvements to keep pace with development.

Discussion 4

Due to the size and area covered and the number of individual jurisdictions within the GMP Study Area, it is

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difficult for the various communities to develop joint capital improvement plans that may serve more than one jurisdiction. Identifying ways to encourage this joint planning effort may help to reduce costs and incompatibilities between jurisdictions and the military.

Recommendation 4.1

Develop a capital improvements priority plan including all GMP growth areas to encourage accountability at the regional level for accommodating development in a sustainable, well managed manner.

Recommendation 4.2

Encourage the timely expansion of water and sewer services in areas consistent with the policies set forth in Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County's comprehensive plans.

Recommendation 4.3

Encourage Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County to develop their capital improvements programs with consideration of the GMP, and to fund adequate operation and maintenance costs prior to the expansion of community facilities.

Recommendation 4.4

Locate public facilities according to the need, population density, accessibility and compatibility with adjacent uses and guidance from the GMP and Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County's future land use policies.

Recommendation 4.5

Evaluate existing capacities in existing organizations or create a new organization to implement and monitor the recommendations included within the Tri County Growth Management Plan, and other related regional planning, infrastructure, or economic development efforts that currently exist or may be prepared in the future.

Issue 5

The potential for future managed growth could jeopardize the health of the natural environment.

Discussion 5

The current pattern of growth within the Niceville/Valparaiso Growth Area is generally low density, where development consumes larger amounts of land than it would if compact building designs and denser urban corridors were developed. By spreading out with lower density development, more land is used

up that could be preserved as open or natural space that would promote a healthier environment, not only for quality of life purposes, but also to promote better draining, stormwater runoff, and minimize flooding in areas where water cannot properly drain.

Recommendation 5.1

Enhance incentives and support for the acquisition of high value land for conservation.

Recommendation 5.2

Establish density increases as an incentive for donation of private land to governmental or non-profit agencies for conservation in designated growth areas.

Recommendation 5.3

Continue to support the implementation of the Northwest Florida Greenway Corridor program.

Recommendation 5.4

Identify new and additional opportunities to develop linkages between the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area and regional recreation areas. Tie local policies for parks and open space to regional planning efforts.

Recommendation 5.5

Review Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County's requirements for open space and enhanced landscaping. Establish additional requirements or amend existing regulations to optimize conservation and open space amenities.

Recommendation 5.6

Use public meetings about development options to educate community members on density and compact building options.

Recommendation 5.7

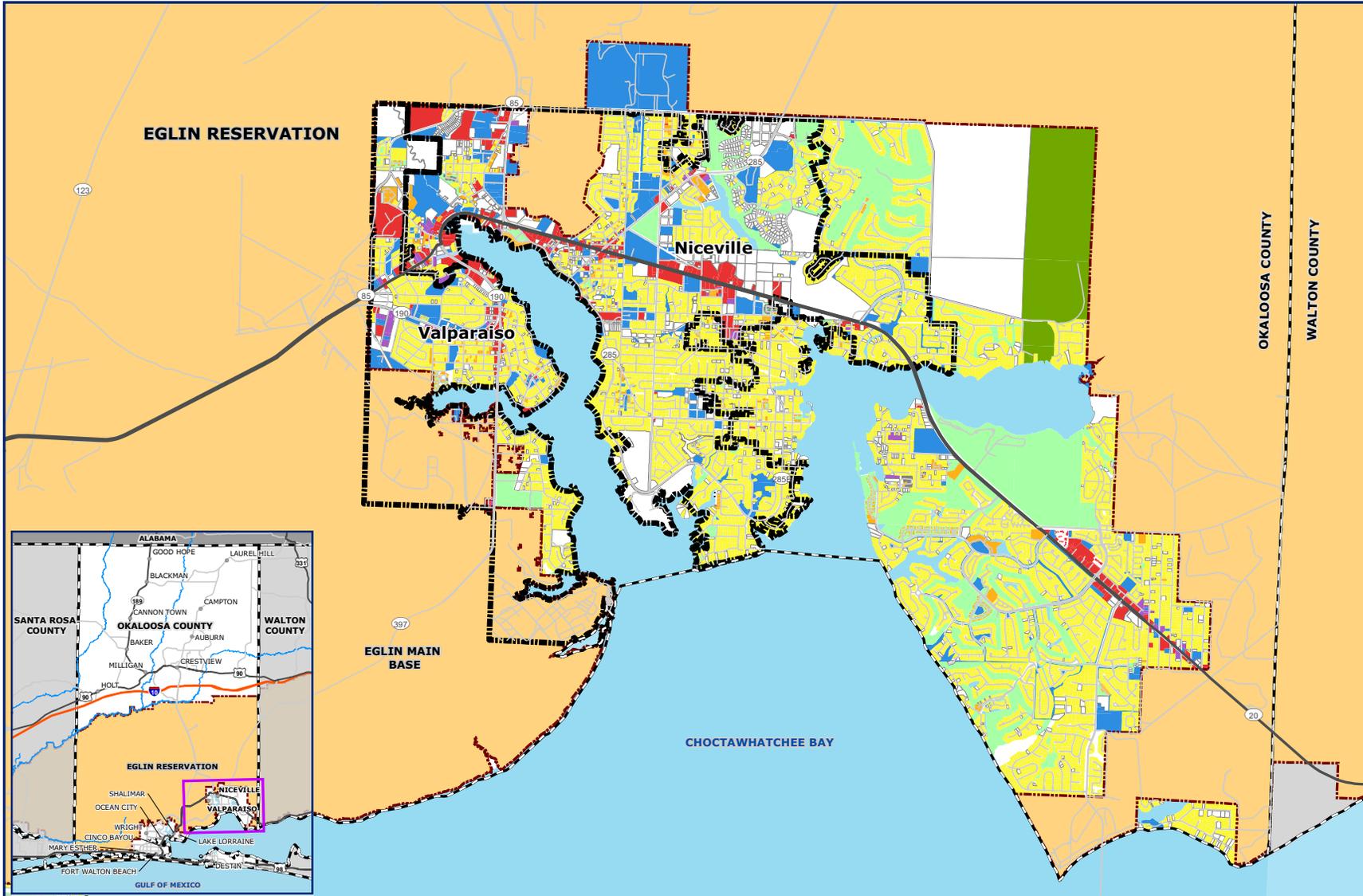
Use density bonuses to encourage developers to increase floor-to-area ration (FAR).

Recommendation 5.8

Support regional planning efforts among all GMP growth area jurisdictions to encourage compact communities.

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Please see next page.



Legend

Land Uses

- Low Density Residential
- Medium/High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Agriculture
- Recreation/Conservation/Open Space
- Vacant
- Water
- Undesignated
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- Eglin Installation Boundary
- River
- Interstate 10 (I-10)
- Highway
- Secondary Road
- Railroad

Prepared by:

HDR

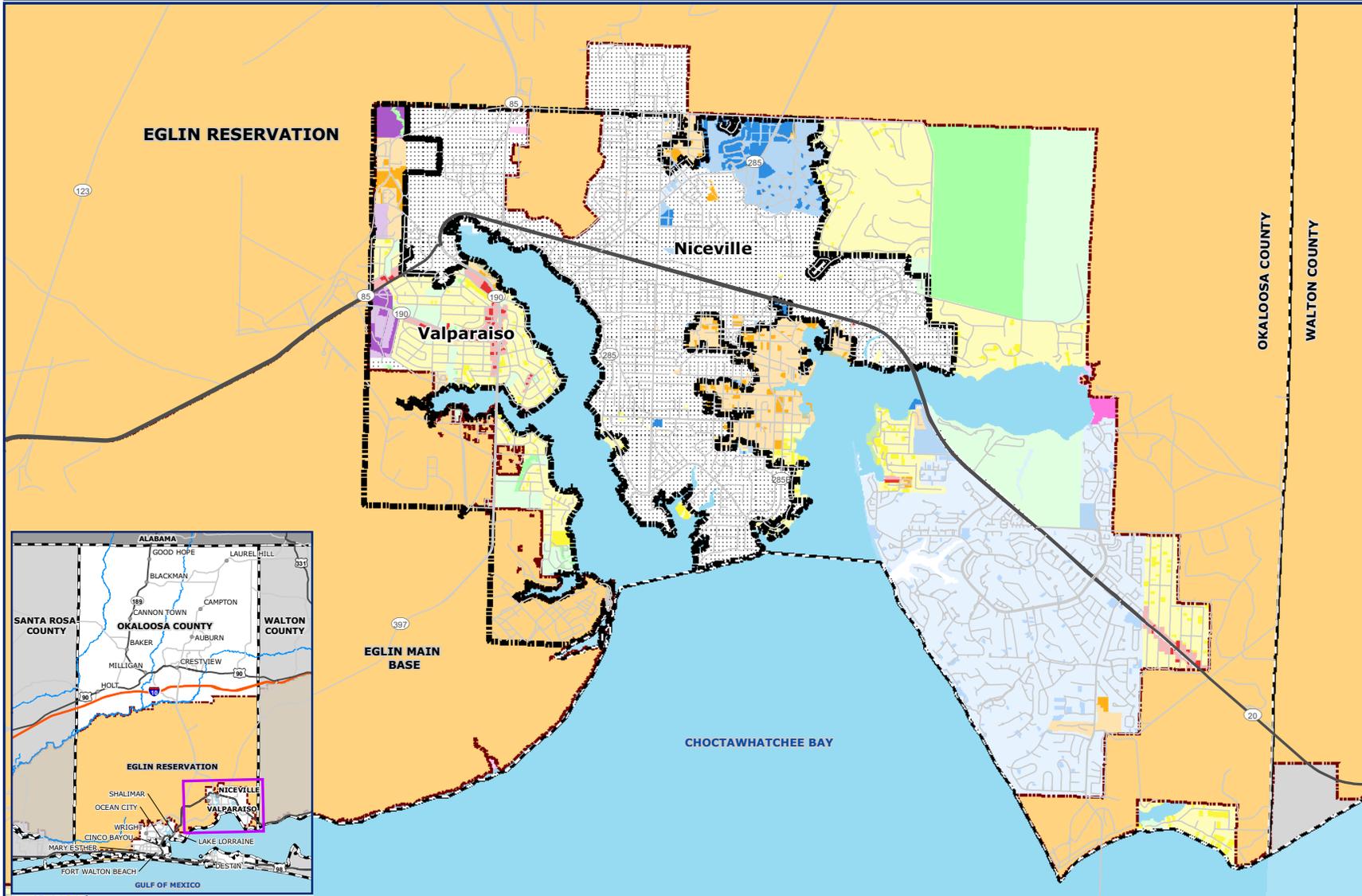
Matrix Design Group Inc.
Integrated Design Solutions

Haas Center
for Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Map F2.1: Existing Land Use - Niceville/Valparaiso



ExistingLandUse_Okaloosa_Niceville_20100326_RGR.pdf



Legend

Land Uses

- Low Density Residential
- Medium/High Density Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial/Office
- Industrial
- Military
- Institutional
- Recreation/Conservation/Open Space
- Water
- Undesignated

City Limits
 County Boundary
 Egin Installation Boundary
 River
 Interstate 10 (I-10)
 Highway
 Secondary Road
 Railroad

Note: Future Land Use data for Niceville not available.

Prepared by:

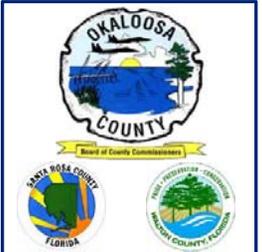
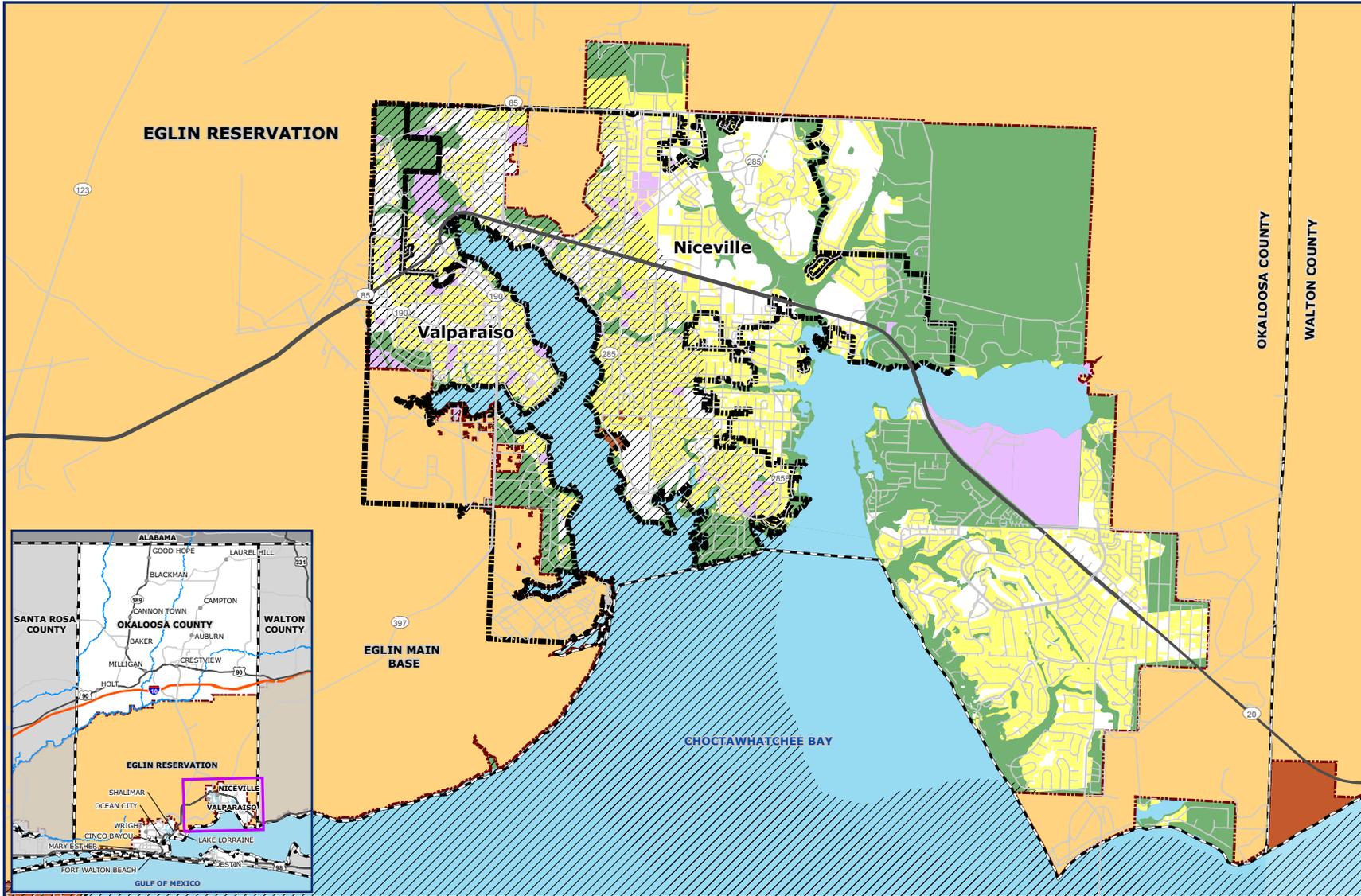
HDR

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Integrated Design Solutions

Haas Center
for business and community development

Map F2.2: Vacant/Future Land Use Analysis - Niceville/Valparaiso

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MILES

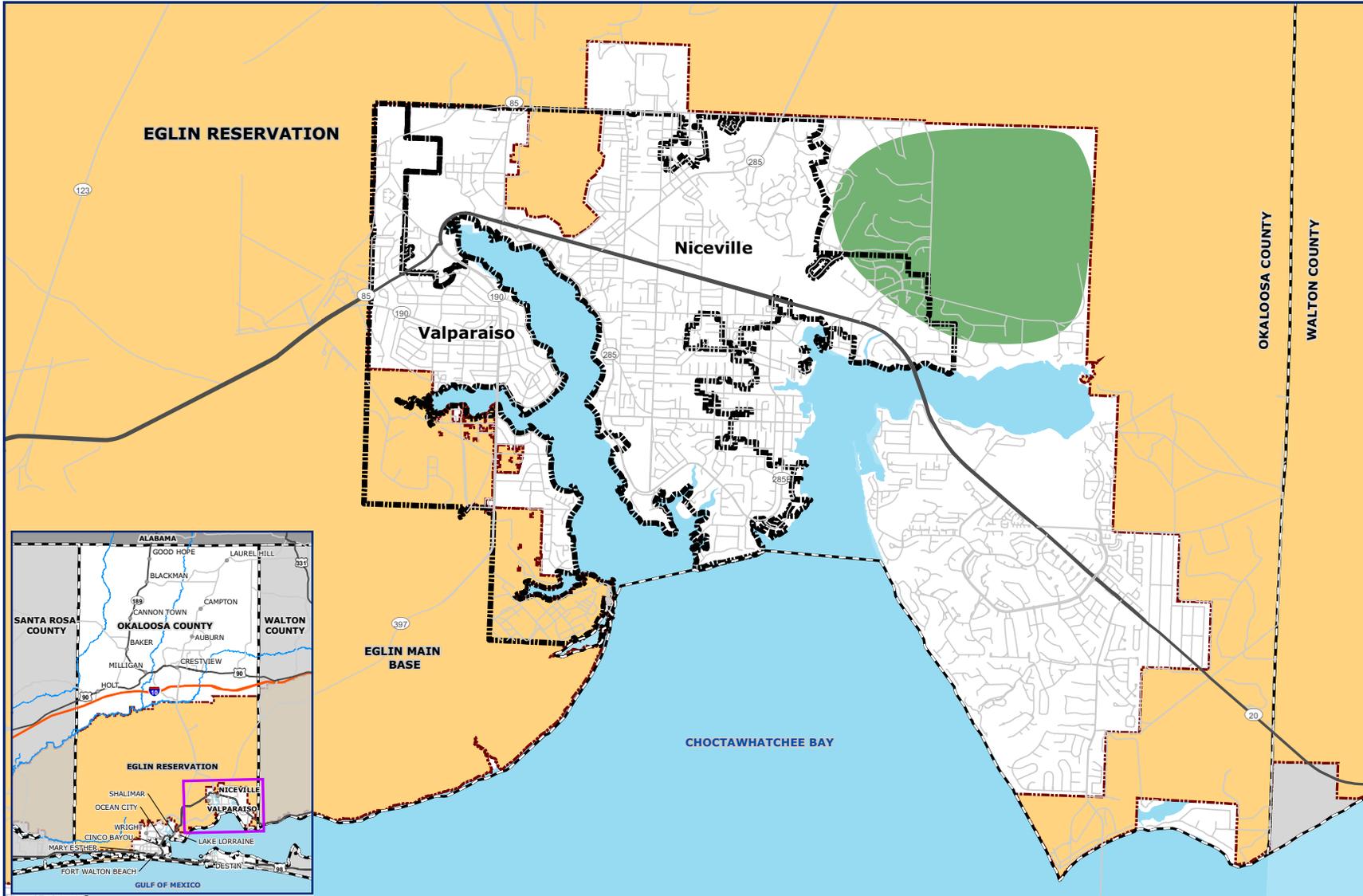


- Legend**
- Military Exclusion
 - Natural Exclusion
 - Land Use Exclusion
 - Ownership Exclusion
 - Military Influence Planning Area (MIPA)/Military Aviation Zone (MAZ)**
 - MIPA/MAZ I
 - MIPA/MAZ II
 - MIPA/MAZ III
 - Developable Area
 - City Limits
 - County Boundary
 - Eglin Installation Boundary
 - River
 - Interstate 10 (I-10)
 - Highway
 - Secondary Road
 - Railroad

Prepared by:

Map F2.3: Exclusionary Areas - Niceville/Valparaiso





- Legend**
- Area Conducive to Future Growth
 - City Limits
 - County Boundary
 - Eglin Installation Boundary
 - River
 - Interstate 10 (I-10)
 - Highway
 - Secondary Road
 - Railroad

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Map F2.4: Potential Areas of Focus Growth - Niceville/Valparaiso



FocusGrowth_Okaloosa_Niceville_20100326_RGR.pdf

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

HOUSING

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

Located adjacent to the Eglin Reservation, and providing easy access to most on-base locations, Niceville provides another alternative for military personnel to reside. The City offers an assortment of housing types and sizes. Rental prices are lower than the County.

Despite proximity to the Base, much of the City of Valparaiso is located in the military air operations safety zones and the entire City is located within the 65 dnl noise contour. The City offers a wide variety of housing types and sizes, which are suitable for Base personnel. Although Valparaiso does not have as many rental units as other nearby cities, its rental rates are generally lower than other growth areas.

It is estimated that the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area will need to accommodate 273 total households, of which 180 will purchase and 119 will rent, due to the BRAC realignment. The housing stock of Niceville mirrors the County's with over 70 percent built after 1970, while only about 54 percent of Valparaiso's was built after 1970 (**Table F2.4**). Construction of the housing in Valparaiso has remained relatively constant since the 1950s, with the number built in any decade ranging from 348 to 416. The total built during that period is over 1,800 or approximately 94% of the City's total housing stock.

HOUSING STOCK

The City of Niceville has approximately 5,500 households. Over 70 percent, almost 4,000 are identified as owner-occupied, as shown in **Table F2.5**. The home values and median sales prices are slightly higher than the County, by about seven percent. This may be due in part to the relatively new housing stock, but is also impacted by the waterfront residential offerings in the community. The median rent was marginally less than the County's,

however there are not as many rental options in Niceville as there are in other areas of Okaloosa County.

Within the City of Valparaiso, there are about 2,000 housing units, approximately 70 percent of which are owner-occupied, which is slightly higher than the County average. **Table F2.5** shows that Valparaiso's average home value is about 14 percent lower than the County and its median sales price is approximately 13 percent lower, both of which are similar to Fort Walton Beach. The median rent in Valparaiso is 20 percent lower than the County.

Table F2.5: Niceville and Valparaiso Housing Stock Factors

	Niceville	Valparaiso	Okaloosa County
Owner-Occupied	3,956 (72%)	1,377 (69%)	52,476 (67%)
Rental	1,546 (28%)	630 (31%)	26,427 (33%)
Total Households	5,502	2,007	78,903
Average Single-Family Home Value (2008)	\$224,393	\$182,374	\$208,345
Median Sales Price (2007)	\$243,420	\$182,461	\$209,420
Median Rent (2000)	\$559	\$480	\$601

**Data obtained from the Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse website (flhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu) October, 2009*

Note: County value is for the entire county and includes the information presented for the cities listed.

HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS

The market for existing resale single family homes in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is characterized by higher prices, yet the shortest number of days on the market, as indicated in **Table F2.6** and on **Figures F2.1 and F2.2**. According to data from October 2009, there are 266 single family houses for sale in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area. The majority of homes for sale range from \$200,000 - \$299,999. The average number of days on the market is 164 days. The median price for

Table F2.4: Single Family Housing Tenure – Niceville / Valparaiso Vs. Okaloosa County (Prior to 2000)

Place	1939 and Earlier	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Okaloosa County	884	1,771	6,724	9,693	16,554	20,889	22,078
Niceville	62	104	380	479	1,432	1,502	987
Valparaiso	41	97	374	416	354	390	348

**Data obtained from the Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse website (flhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu)*

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

a resale home is \$298,000, and 26 percent of the homes for sale are priced over \$400,000, which is due to the presence of waterfront communities. The pricing of homes in this growth area may be a deterrent to a large number of the military families relocating to Eglin, however some families may choose this area for its waterfront location and small community atmosphere. In addition to single family houses, there are 72 townhomes listed for sale, which could provide a less expensive alternative for military households, based on the suitability of the homes (Table F2.6b). These typically have a much higher number of days on the market, however. There are 25 condominiums listed, which are also cheaper than single family homes, and have generally the same number of days on the market at single family homes (Table F2.6c).

Table F2.6a: Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Single Family Resale Housing Characteristics

	Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area
Number of Listings	266
Average Price	\$364,877
Median Price	\$298,000
Highest Price	\$2,292,000
Lowest Price	\$40,000
Average Days on Market	164

Source: Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, October 2009

Table F2.6b: Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Townhome Resale Housing Characteristics

	Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area
Number of Listings	72
Average Price	\$188,654
Median Price	\$164,500
Highest Price	\$399,000
Lowest Price	\$98,500
Average Days on Market	260

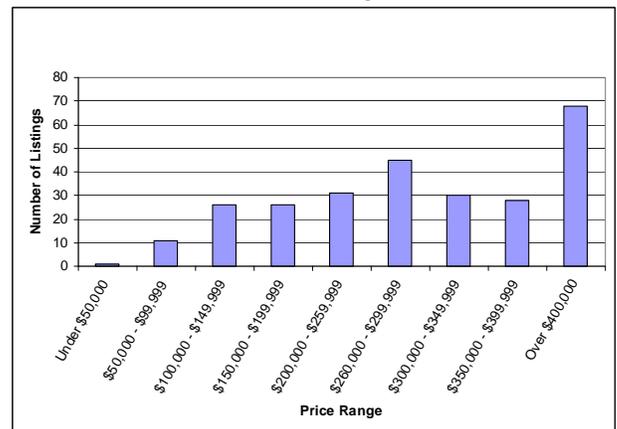
Source: Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, October 2009

Table F2.6c: Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Condominium Resale Housing Characteristics

	Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area
Number of Listings	25
Average Price	\$193,390
Median Price	\$155,170
Highest Price	\$475,000
Lowest Price	\$52,000
Average Days on Market	162

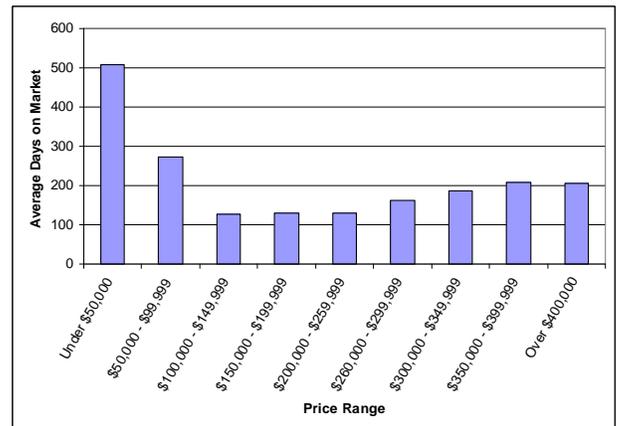
Source: Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, October 2009

Figure F2.1: Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Single Family Home Listings



Source: Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, October 2009

Figure F2.2: Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Single Family Home Listings - Average Days on the Market



Source: Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, October 2009

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Although Niceville does not offer many large vacant parcels, areas immediately outside the City limits contain suitable sized parcels for new subdivisions. One such area is being considered for annexation. Known as Hawk's Landing, the site owned by Ruckel Properties is currently in the process of rezoning and annexation. As currently planned, a portion of its uses are incompatible with the recommendations of the Eglin JLUS. The rezoning proposes 83 units on a portion of the 1,100 acre parcel located northeast of the Niceville city limits. The same developer is currently selling new homes in Phase 6 of the Swift Creek Development. Phase 6 offers 72 lots that are approximately one-third to one-half-acre in size and are priced between \$99,000 and \$132,000. There are approximately 100 lots to be sold which will be released in future phases of the Swift Creek Development. **Figure F2.3** illustrates the price ranges for rental homes in the Niceville Growth Area.

Figure F2.3: Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Single Family Homes for Rent



Source: Matrix Design Group, November 2009²

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the existing housing market, there are an estimated 1,183 vacant lots in existing subdivisions and an additional 49 lots in undeveloped subdivisions as illustrated in **Map F2.5**. As stated earlier, annexation opportunities could add an additional 1,000 lots in undeveloped subdivisions. Additionally, an estimated 3,993 single family units and 6,051 multi-family units

could be developed on vacant land already zoned for residential use.³ Beyond this entitled availability, it is estimated that 6,123 units could be developed on vacant land that has a future land use designation of low density residential (LDR) and 1,394 units could occupy vacant land that has a future land use designation of medium (MDR) to high density residential (HDR).⁴

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area contains over 5,300 owner-occupied housing units with 363 single family homes, townhomes, and condominiums currently for sale.
- Over 850 building permits were issued for new housing units between 2000 and 2008.
- The average age of the housing stock may be attractive to military families who, due to deployment, often prefer homes which require less maintenance.
- The existing inventory will not only meet the demand for rental units but will provide a supply for future BRAC and/or organic growth.
- An existing inventory of 266 single family homes are listed for sale with a median price of \$298,000. In addition, an estimated 1,183 vacant lots are available in existing subdivisions, so the 180 households expected to purchase a home in Niceville should have a wide variety of homes within their budget.
- Due to the location within the noise contours and safety zones, Valparaiso may not prove to be a suitable option for households relocating to the growth area, creating a negligible change in population for the community.

Table F2.7 lists a summary of the housing supply and possible future availability.

² Several data sources were used to compile the data for this table including the Florida Multiple Listing Service and the following websites: http://www.realtyhouse.com/allarea_listings.htm; http://flhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu/a/profiles?action=results&nid=4600#afford_housing_need; <http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/DCP/publications>; <http://www.eflora.com/profiles/CountyReport.asp?CountyID=27&Display=all>

³ Based on density per/zone at an 80 percent buildout

⁴ Based on comprehensive plan future land use densities and an 80 percent buildout.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Table F2.7: Summary of Housing Supply in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

	Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area
BRAC Population	625
BRAC-induced Total Households	273
Total Single Family, Townhome and Condo Homes Listed for Sale	323
Total Vacant Lots in Existing Subdivisions	1,183
Total Platted Lots in Undeveloped Subdivisions	49
Total Possible New Multi-Family Units Based on Zoning	6,051
Total Possible New Single Family Units Based on Zoning	3,993
Total Possible New Multi-Family Units Based on Future Land Use	1,394
Total Possible New Single Family Units Based on Future Land Use	6,123

Source: Matrix Design Group 2009

Notes: Available Housing Units include current homes listed on the resale market as of November 2009. Total lots in platted and undeveloped subdivisions were determined based on GIS information and confirmation with jurisdictions. New units based on future land use were based on the stated Comprehensive Plan densities in Chapter 4, Land Use, and an 80 percent buildout of gross acreage. New units based on zoning were measured based on the same assumptions

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address the issues identified in this section, a list of recommendations was created to assist the incorporated communities and respective counties within the six identified growth areas to successfully accommodate the number incoming BRAC-related households requiring either homes to purchase or rent. The following presents the major issues of the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area, as well as a discussion of the issue and resulting recommendation to address the issue. These recommendations are organized in a table format and presented in the Executive Summary (located in the Introduction of this document). The table format includes information related to responsibility, priority, funding, cost, and monitoring to achieve implementation of each recommendation.

Issue 1

The provision of housing has been impeded by lack of rehabilitation resources, workforce initiatives, incentives, cross-jurisdictional coordination and interconnectedness among key departments.

Discussion 1

While housing issues were much more pronounced prior to the current regional economic conditions, the need exists to foster formal rehabilitation programs to invest and preserve the existing mature housing stock within the growth area. While the price of housing has significantly diminished over the last several years it is important to establish the groundwork for the provision of housing that is adequate and available for those that work in each community. The ability to work closely with associated departments and adjacent communities will also help foster a more fluid and streamlined housing development process to meet the market demands for a diverse housing stock in a timely manner.

Recommendation 1.1

Continue to use and augment the Niceville, Valparaiso, and Okaloosa County existing housing elements in an effort to maintain updated policy guidance and direction for the communities in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area.

Recommendation 1.2

Continue to monitor the stages augmentation of JSF, 7 SFG(A) and other future BRAC realignment actions on the regional housing supply market.

Recommendation 1.3

Work with Freedom Communications (in Fort Bragg) to create and continually update a “Welcome to Northwest Florida” ad campaign that offers information to 7 SFG(A) and advertizing for Tri-County businesses to advertize to Fort Bragg personnel and dependents.

Recommendation 1.4

Coordinate with the Automated Housing Referral Network (AHRN) to augment the supply of housing that conforms with BAH allowances / criteria.

Recommendation 1.5

Prepare and adopt Smart Growth principles to be utilized in the review and approval of development proposals for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Recommendation 1.6

Work with financial institutions to relax the typical dearth of financial credentials to be submitted for a home loan.

Recommendation 1.7

Work with condominiums and hotels to utilize their facilities as temporary living expense (TLE) facilities (during off and shoulder seasons) that would allow short term living arrangements for military personnel during their relocation transition.

Issue 2

The cost of housing has escalated based on the significant increases in hazard insurance premiums and property taxes.

Discussion 2

The rise in insurance claims due to recent heavy hurricane seasons and resulting property damage have caused insurance and hazard coverage premiums and prices to rise, which has put a financial strain on homeowners and could affect purchase decisions of potential homebuyers in the future. It has also caused housing prices in some areas to rise.

Recommendation 2.1

Evaluate options to reduce the cost of homeowner insurance.

Recommendation 2.2

Work with residents who may be facing foreclosures to assist them in developing marketing packages to transmit to relocation specialists at Fort Bragg for incoming 7 SFG(A) personnel and families.

Issue 3

There are a large number of vacant lots located within developed subdivisions and undeveloped platted subdivisions that could be used to add to the existing available housing stock.

Discussion 3

There are an estimated 1,183 vacant lots in existing developed subdivisions and 49 vacant lots in undeveloped subdivisions that could be developed to add to the local housing stock.

Recommendation 3.1

Review and monitor development impact fees that have been collected on improved subdivisions. Consider rebating a portion of such fees to the project developers to incentivize housing development.

Recommendation 3.2

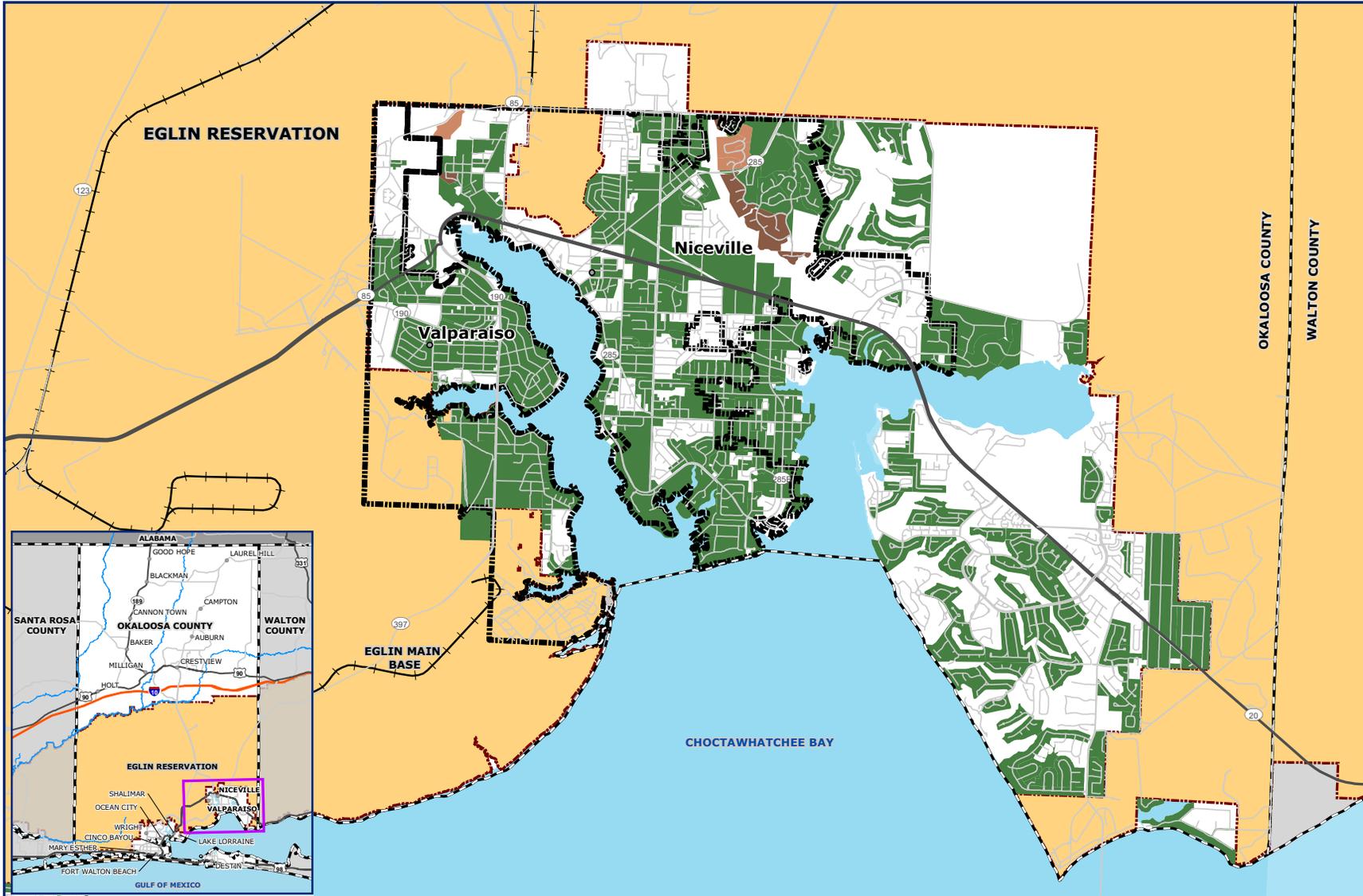
Coordinate with existing and foster public / private partnerships to construct homes on existing platted subdivisions / improved lots. Work with realtors, brokers and developers to create and distribute marketing packages. Utilize local Chambers of Commerce to distribute materials.

Recommendation 3.3

Partner with public / private housing providers to identify and implement procedural, financial, and/or cost sharing incentives to construct housing on infill properties.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Please see next page.



Legend

Development Status

- Unimproved
- Improved / Vacant
- Partially Developed
- City/Town
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- Eglin Installation Boundary
- River
- Interstate 10 (I-10)
- Highway
- Secondary Road
- Railroad

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Map F2.5: Subdivision Status - Niceville/Valparaiso



DIVIDER

Support Infrastructure

TRANSPORTATION

This section covers transportation issues within the Niceville / Valparaiso growth area. For analysis of transportation issues in Okaloosa County please see the transportation section within F1. Okaloosa – Crestview.

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

The Cities of Niceville and Valparaiso are located to the east of Eglin Main Base along the Choctawhatchee Bay. Generally, this area is bordered to the west, north and east by Eglin AFB and to the south by the Bay. This area is anticipated to absorb approximately 275 households associated with BRAC actions. This area has good access to Eglin Main Base through the East Gate via SR 397. This area generally is served by the SR 85 and SR 285 corridors to the north; SR 20 to the east; SR 293 to the south; and SR 85 to the west. The Northwest Florida State College is located in Niceville on College Boulevard. The 275 BRAC households are projected to generate approximately 266 p.m. peak hour trips, distributed across the roadway network. The Cities should continue to coordinate with the County and FDOT to identify common needs and priorities relative to addressing BRAC impacts, particularly along the SR 85 corridor.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Roadway

Currently (2007), SR 85 between SR 397 and the SR 20/SR 85 north intersection is deficient in the peak hour direction based on the adopted LOS capacity threshold established in the comprehensive plans of the various jurisdictions in his area and as reported in the TPO's congestion management handbook. SR 123, SR 20 from SR 285 to SR 293 (Mid-Bay Bridge) and SR 293 from SR 20 to Destin are currently deficient based on the adopted LOS standard. When reserved trips from other proposed by not yet built development projects were considered, no additional deficiencies were identified.

Transit

Okaloosa County Transit (OCT) provides public bus services to the regional area as discussed in the Okaloosa County Section. The only route that currently operates

within the Niceville Valparaiso area is the Fort Walton Beach/Crestview Express (Route 14) that runs along SR 85 between Fort Walton Beach and Crestview with a few intermediate stops, including stops at Niceville Community Center and Northwest Florida State College. This route began service in October of 2006. OCT allows all military residents to ride free. Active duty, retired, and dependants riders need only show the driver a military ID card when boarding the bus.

While the current transportation model is not capable of modeling transit, transit service between stops in the Niceville area and Main Base would be anticipated to potentially reduce demand on the congested corridors in this area. Potential transit service/rideshare service to Duke Field / 7 SFG(A) should be considered as a future option to provide trip capacity on the SR 85 corridor. Recent town hall meetings on this subject indicate there is community support and interest from the various agencies to provide transit service to Eglin; however, cost and security issues must still be resolved. The Cities should explore opportunities to partner with Okaloosa County, OCT, Santa Rosa County, WFRPC, Escambia County Area Transit and Eglin Air Force Base to explore the possibility of express bus service or other transit/rideshare between their respective residential areas, Eglin Main Base, and Hurlburt Field. Transit in these areas could provide an alternative mode for those working at Eglin. The OCT 10 year Transit Development Plan incorporated into the TPO's L RTP included service expansion in the Niceville/Valparaiso area, including service to Eglin.

Bicycle Pedestrian

The Okaloosa-Walton TPO Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was updated in 2007 and identifies both existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and priorities for future bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The study is a resource for Okaloosa and Walton County citizens, planners, developers and political leaders wishing to incorporate pedestrian and bike-friendly design into their neighborhoods and cities. The Okaloosa-Walton TPO L RTP Cost Feasible Plan identified 21 needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements as cost feasible by 2030, four in this area as shown in **Table F2.8**. The Cities/Towns should consider adopting a Complete Streets policies for local and collector roads, and this policy should also be considered and included in the local land development regulations. Streets must consider the needs of all the potential users, not just the automobile. In addition to providing route choice for the traveling public, streets

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Table F2.8: Bicycle Pedestrian Projects – 2030 LRTP

Cost Feasible Bicycle / Pedestrian Projects			
Rocky Bayou Dr	Forrest Rd	Huntington Rd	Sidewalks on North Side of Rocky Bayou Drive
SR 293 (White Point Rd)	Mid-Bay Bridge	SR 20	Sidewalks on both sides of the road
Montana Avenue	John Sims Pkwy	Grandview Ave	Sidewalks on both sides
Grandview Ave	John Sims Pkwy	Jasmine Avenue	Sidewalks on both sides

(Source: 2030 Okaloosa-Walton TPO LRTP)

must also provide for mode choice. Incomplete streets may not only discourage travel by alternative modes, but may be hazardous for non-auto users. A complete streets policy will ensure that facilities for all modes are required as part of the initial planning, design and construction (or reconstruction/resurfacing) of all roadway facilities. Provisions for all modes should be incorporated in the improvements recommended in this study.

2016 LOS AND DEFICIENCIES

The Niceville growth area analysis projected multiple roadway segments would be deficient by 2016. This included the segments identified as deficient today, but also SR 20 from SR 85 to SR 285, and SR 85 from College to SR 123. Existing plus reserved trip deficiencies and projected 2016 deficiencies are shown in blue and red, respectively, on **Figure F2.4**. **Table F1.23** included previously on page F1.79 shows the 2016 analysis for all Okaloosa County roadways. Those within the Niceville Growth area are shown in light red. Six of these facilities are projected to operate at LOS F.

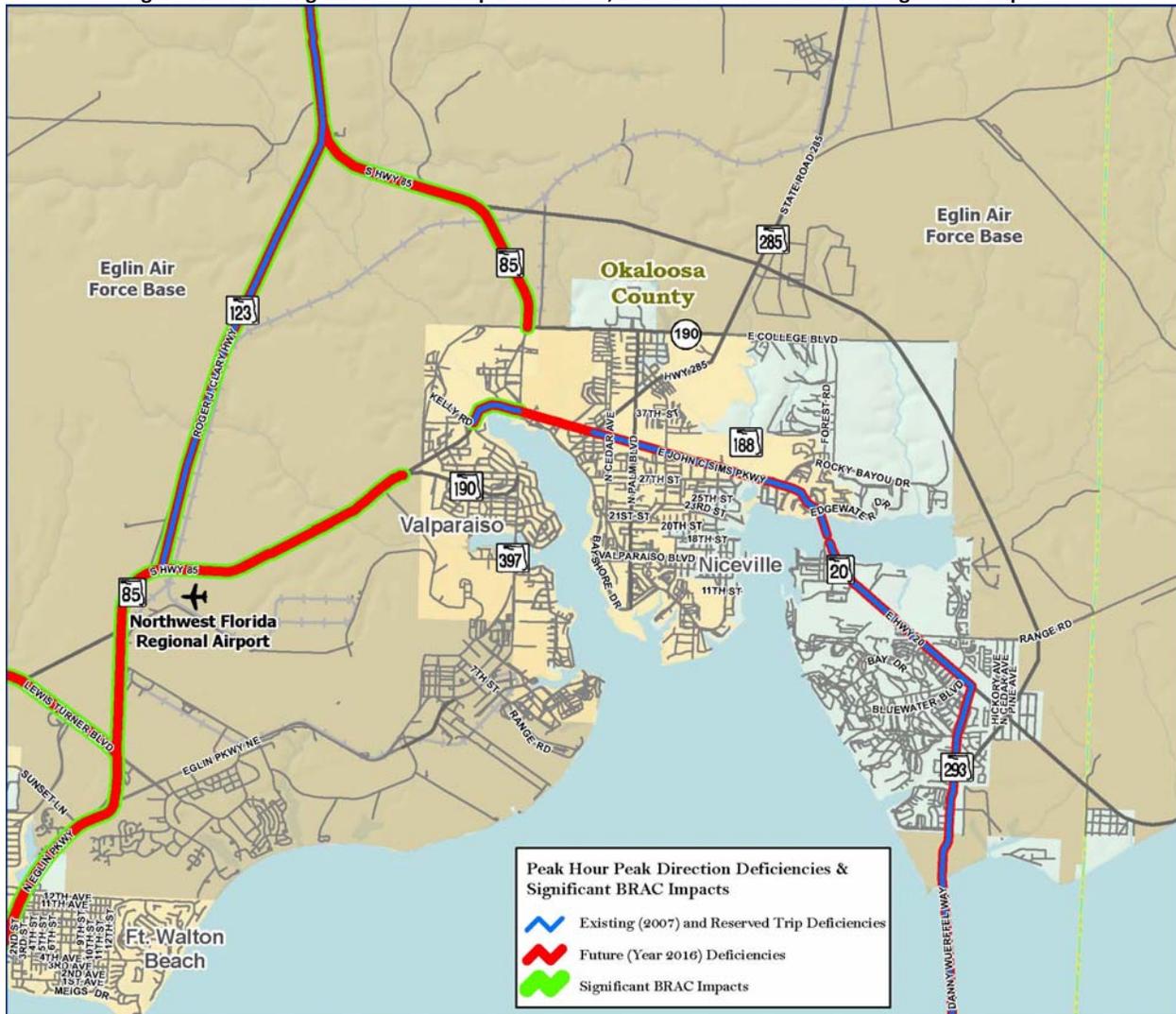
BRAC IMPACTS

For the purposes of this analysis, BRAC impacts were considered to be significant where trips related to BRAC actions are projected to consume 5% of the capacity of the roadway segment at the adopted LOS service volume. This threshold was chosen based on its use for similar types of studies conducted for Developments of Regional Impact (DRI's). Within the growth area, there are 7 significantly impacted roadway segments, 3 of which are anticipated to fail. Three of these significantly impacted roadways, all occurring on SR 85 from Government Avenue to SR 85 N, are projected to fail by 2016. The other significant impact occurs on SR 397 from SR 85 to SR 190. Roadways that are deficient and are projected to be significantly impacted by BRAC are shown in **Figure F2.4**. Based on this analysis, 5 of these deficiencies are projected to occur regardless of BRAC

implementation. The additional significant deficiencies are anticipated to occur on SR 85 from SR 20 to College Boulevard.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Figure F2.4: Existing and Reserved Trip Deficiencies, 2016 Deficiencies and BRAC Significant Impacts



RECOMMENDED PROJECTS/POLICIES

The following policies and projects are recommended to be implemented to assist in addressing BRAC impacts. Some of the recommended policies are general in nature and would benefit the area and region and are not targeted to a specific area or roadway. Roadway, transit and bicycle pedestrian improvements are recommended to address those facilities that are projected to be deficient and to experience significant BRAC impacts. Most of these recommended improvements are needed regardless of BRAC implementation. The Niceville Growth area has limited through arterials due to the boundaries created by the water of the Choctawhatchee Bay and the Eglin AFB Reservation.

Currently the Mid-Bay Bridge authority is in the process of construction a new limited access toll facility along the southern edge of Eglin AFB, on the north eastern edge of Niceville. This new facility influences traffic patterns in the model. The long term goal of the NFTA is to have this tolled facility extend west to SR 87 and east to CR 77, where it would connect to the Gulf Coast Parkway. When complete this improvement is anticipated to act as parallel reliever route for portions of US 98, SR 20 and SR 85. Only the portion of this facility that is currently planned for construction within the next three years (to SR 85) was included in the model

Additional modeling analysis has been conducted to determine if the connecting this beltway to SR 87 to the

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

west would provide additional traffic shift and benefit to the Niceville area roads. This was especially important for that portion of SR 85/SR 20 between their intersection near Bayshore Drive and the intersection a by with SR 397. This segment of SR 85/SR 20 creates a bottleneck at this location, and experiences congestion. Given that this segment is already 6 lanes and given the environmental constraints in this area, is unlikely to be easily widened to 8 lanes. The new facility would provide an additional multi-lane alternative to the SR 20/SR 85 east-west route through Niceville. Based on this additional analysis, a bypass, with multiple connections to existing network, overall provided more 'relief' to the regional roadways in terms of the number of roadways that would be projected to operate deficiently. Based on this analysis and its results, the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector was determined to provide more benefit overall, and would not impact as much of the existing built environment. Additional study of the extension of the Mid-Bay Bridge connector would be necessary to determine the potential impacts to the natural environment and to identify potential alignments and connections.

Recommendations for demand management types of studies and improvements are made for the congested corridors in this built out area. Efficient signalized intersection operations are dependent on optimized signal timing plans. Coordination between signals is critical to improve traffic flow, particularly with closely spaced intersections. As traffic patterns change, the timing of signals will also need to be adjusted to optimize the capacity of the existing roadway.

Today, the preferred communication methods for interconnecting signals for coordination include fiber optic, wireless LAN, ethernet cable, ether over copper and twisted pair. The latter two options have a more limited capacity, however. The interconnection allows a master controller to operate several signals, and in addition can be used to monitor and control signal timings from a central traffic management center, which would allow timing modifications to be made remotely if needed. If there is existing communication lines located along the corridors having existing traffic signals, the cabinets can be connected. Also, where there are relatively short distances between several of the existing signals, wireless LAN are emerging as a low cost alternative to fiber optic and other "wired" interconnect options.

Signal timings should continually be modified and upgraded. Industry standards suggest signal timings should be updated every 3-5 years, or anytime signification traffic patterns change signal timings need to be adjusted. Because the traffic patterns near military bases have been known to change frequently it may not be feasible to modify signal timings often enough with the resources available. To resolve this ongoing maintenance issue, it is recommended to incorporate adaptive traffic signals.

Adaptive traffic signals have the ability to react and change signal timings in response to traffic conditions in real time. This is possible through monitoring and surveillance of vehicles on each approach of an intersection, and real-time adjustments to the signal timing, including not only phase green time but also cycle lengths. The new technology is simple to install and works with most existing traffic controllers. Detection and controller upgrades typically cost about \$25,000 per intersection, which can allow for years of highly optimized intersection operations. Interconnection is required for adaptive control so traffic conditions can be communicated between controllers. A wireless LAN connection could be used depending on the number of signals that need to be operated. This recommendation is consistent with the priority given to ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) in this area. This type of project may need to be coordinated with other efforts to implement ITS in the County.

The second type of improvement falls into corridor management or congestion management. The recommendations include conducting or updating studies similar to the one previously conducted for US 98 in Fort Walton Beach. The frequency and spacing of median openings and driveway connections that currently exist along the many arterial corridors in urban areas can create additional vehicle conflict points and driver uncertainty, especially when coupled with a lack of turning lanes, geometric deficiencies and high vehicle travel speeds. The potential interaction of vehicles at all of the access points can significantly impede the flow of traffic along a corridor. The purpose of the corridor management reports or studies is to develop an access management plan that includes recommendations for near-term, low-cost physical improvements that will enhance safety and traffic operations within the corridor. This type of plan or study would provide recommendations for connections outside of the right-of-way in order to reduce the number of short distance

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

trips on the arterial. As opposed to determining access modifications at isolated locations along the study corridor, the recommended modifications should be developed using a system-wide approach. A key component is to develop a plan that balances both mobility and access. As stated in the FDOT Publication *Managing Our Highways "Median Improvements"* -"The primary function of an arterial on the State Highway System is to move people and goods throughout Florida. A secondary function is to provide access to local roads and adjacent land uses."

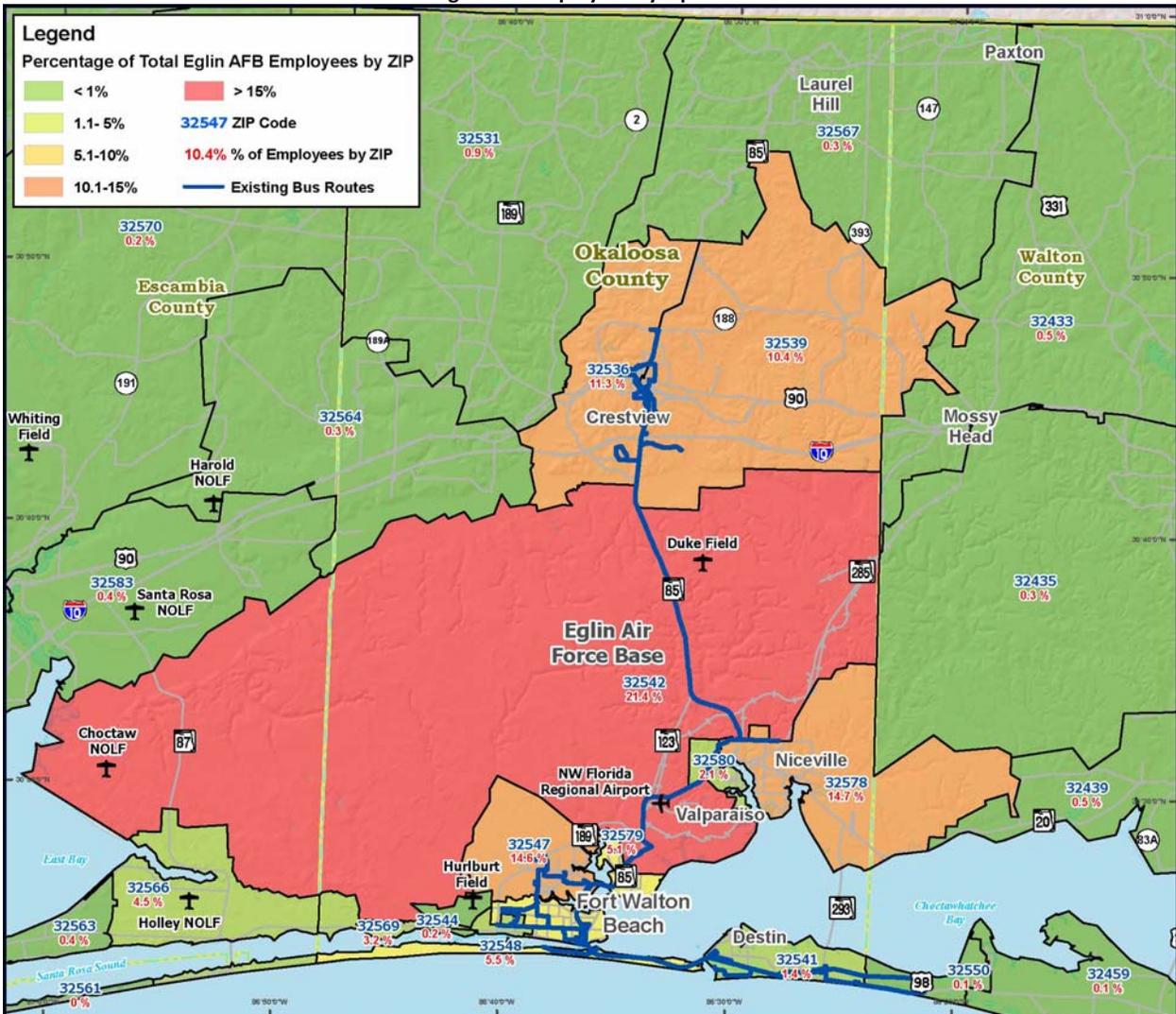
The focus of safely and efficiently moving people from one place to another is the primary function of many of the arterials in this area. However, the current condition of access on these corridors may not promote high mobility. These types of studies attempt to balance the intended primary function of the roadway (to serve a higher degree of mobility) with the needs of existing and proposed adjacent development to access the roadway. An additional component of the CMR may include recommendations of general corridor management and land use/zoning strategies to help preserve the function of the arterial. These strategies would be intended to guide future development and redevelopment along the corridor.

Figure F2.5 shows the distribution of Eglin AFB employees by zip code overlaid with the existing transit routes. As shown in this figure, the two zip codes that generally constitute the Niceville/Valparaiso Growth Area (32580 and 32578) house approximately 17% of those employed by Eglin AFB. This area has limited transit service, and it does not provide access to the base. Based on this percentage it would seem there is potential for express transit service to Eglin AFB from this growth area. Currently the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) in Tampa Florida runs two very successful express transit routes to MacDill AFB, Route 24x and Route 25x. HART also runs two general routes on base, Routes 4 and 36, which run with hourly frequency. The express routes run only in the AM and PM peak periods. Drivers for these buses must have clearance to enter the Base, and all buses are stopped and ID's of passengers are checked. Those who might be on the bus need to exit at the stop immediately prior to the base if they do not have clearance to enter the base. These passengers may re-board the bus after it exits the base. HART runs these bus routes, however, the Base purchases monthly passes from HART and provides them to base personnel free of charge. This existing service at MacDill AFB may

serve as an example or prototype of method to provide service to Eglin AFB.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Figure F2.5:
Eglin AFB Employees by Zipcode



F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

The following bullets summarize the specific policy or project recommendations for the Niceville/Valparaiso growth area. The recommended improvements listed below are shown on **Figure F2.6**.

Short Term Recommendations (within next 18 months)

- Coordinate with the various local governments to develop a uniform concurrency management system. Establish a committee with representatives from each local government, or coordinate with the TPO's Staff and Technical Advisory Committee to develop a uniform concurrency implementation system and traffic study requirements for measuring impacts of committed development on area roadways. The Lake~Sumter MPO has worked with each of its member local governments to develop standard traffic study requirements and contracts with all of its member governments to provide concurrency tracking and monitoring on a regional level. The Volusia County MPO has also developed a uniform traffic study methodology for concurrency applications that is being used by its member governments.
- Incorporate the mobility goals of the region, area and neighborhoods in the development of the various MIPA's and small area studies recommended by the JLUS. These goals should include consideration of the needs of all users and modes, as well as the need for connectivity and access between uses and areas.
- Consistent with smart growth principals, future studies or studies resulting from the JLUS should consider the potential for clustering and mixed use to create live work play areas that would allow for less dependence on the automobile and would promote transit and rideshare opportunities.
- Create and implement a "complete streets" policy. Streets must consider the needs of all the potential users, not just the automobile. In addition to providing route choice for the traveling public, streets must also provide for mode choice. Incomplete streets may not only discourage travel by alternative modes, but may be hazardous for non-auto users. A complete streets policy will ensure that facilities for all modes are required as part of the initial planning, design and construction (or reconstruction/resurfacing) of all roadway facilities. Incorporate provisions for all modes in the improvements recommended in this study.

Provisions for all modes are consistent with smart growth policies and provides additional benefits to the area in terms of quality of life, safety, livability and sense of place.



A "complete street" includes provisions for safe, efficient, and convenient travel by all modes.

- Conduct a local transportation funding study that would include the formation of a committee made of local elected officials, agency representatives and citizens to study and develop recommendations for dedicated local transportation funding options, including funding for transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Coordinate with Okaloosa County Transit, the City of Crestview, the City of Fort Walton Beach, the WFRPC, the TPO and Eglin AFB on transit routes along SR 85 and potential express transit routes to Eglin Main Base.
- Review traffic signal timings in the congested corridors including SR 85 and SR 20.
- Coordinate with FDOT and the Okaloosa Walton TPO to prioritize and fund a corridor management study for SR 20 from SR 293 (Mid-Bay Bridge) to SR 85 at Government Avenue. Although only a small portion of this section of roadway is anticipated to be significantly impacted by BRAC actions, it does provide a critical link from Eglin to this area. The current adopted Long Range Transportation Plan has identified potential funds for projects to implement existing corridor management plans. A project to update the previous corridor management plan is also recommended.
- Complete the PD&E Study for the SR 123 four laning as scheduled sometime in 2010. This project is planned as a four lane facility to accommodate growth, reduce congestion and address serious safety issues. Include

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

intersection improvements/interchange construction at the northern intersection of SR 123 and SR 85.

Mid Term Recommendation (3 to 5 years)

- Begin a PD&E study of needed capacity improvements on SR 85 from College Avenue to Crestview, including:
 - Alternative corridors study between the Shoal River and US 90,
 - 6 lanes or alternative such as HOV, transit lanes or reversible lanes from SR 20 to Shoal River/PJ Adams Parkway.
- Prioritize and implement projects identified in the SR 20 Corridor Management Plan.
- Design and Permit the SR 123 Four Lane project preferred alternative from SR 85 to SR 85.
- Complete the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector Phase III from SR 285 to SR 85, including an interchange at SR 85 and Mid Bay Bridge Connector.
- Continue to support the NWFTCA southern Eglin bypass project (continuation of the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector) west to SR 87 to reduce demand on the regional roadway network including SR 20 and SR 85 through this area.

Longer Term (more than 5 years)

- Construct Mid Bay Bridge Connector from SR 85 to SR 123.
- Implement / construct the preferred alternative from the SR 85 from Shoal River to US 90 alternative corridor study.
- Implement / construct the preferred alternative from the SR 85 PD&E study
- Construct the SR 123 4 lane preferred alternative Although not anticipated to be significantly impacted by BRAC, the Mid Bay Bridge is projected to be deficient by 2016. This project is important to the mobility and safety goals of the region and is consistent with the Mid Bay Bridge Authorities projected needs and plans.

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RECOMMENDED PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

General cost estimates were produced for the recommended projects for each county using the 2009 FDOT District 3 preliminary estimates. The 2009 FDOT District 3 preliminary estimates are not site specific, meaning, the costs developed for this plan should be used for preliminary estimating purposes only and may be subject to change depending upon the location and final design/alignment of the identified projects. FDOT developed the estimates using present day cost, per square foot of deck area, and developed them with the current bid history. Right-of-way (ROW) costs are included for projects outside federally owned land from, but vary widely depending on the location and can be very sensitive to local real estate market impacts. ROW cost calculations are further complicated when project locations have not been finalized. The FDOT generalized cost estimates account for ROW as 1.3% of the construction funding. CEI was accounted for using a generalized 15% increase on the construction cost consistent with District 3 preliminary cost estimates. For Okaloosa County, TIGER Grant application estimates were reported as the project cost where available. Congestion Management Plan or Report estimates were developed by using an average of projected previous report costs for the panhandle to 2009 costs using the Advisory Inflation Factors for Previous Years (1987-2010). This is another document produced by FDOT. Project costs were not developed for recommendations regarding coordination or support with other agencies. Project cost estimates for Milton are included in **Table F2.9**.

The largest hurdle in implementing the transportation recommendations contained in this report will be to identify and secure funding. While several of the policy recommendations are low or lower cost, they still will require prioritization by the local governments and, typically, some cost in terms of staff's time and effort. Recommended projects are exponentially harder to fund, especially during this time of limited revenues and economic recession. **Table F2.10** identifies some potential funding sources for the recommendations. General, rough order of magnitude (ROM) costs were identified for each of the recommendations as was implementation responsibility and general timing of when some of the recommendations might be needed or when they can be accomplished. These items are found in Tab I. Implementation. Many of the identified transportation projects are needed to address current deficiencies; however the cost and timing of these

studies generally will cause them to occur outside of the implementation timeline identified.

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Table F2.9
Project Cost Estimates for Niceville Growth Area

Project	Length (mi)	2009 Estimated Project Cost	Notes/Source:
Widen SR 123 to 4 lanes	5.08	\$77,500,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Alternative corridor study for SR 85 from Shoal River to US 90	4.42	\$5,000,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Widen SR 85 from SR 20 to SR 123 to 6 lanes	4.18	\$13,185,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Widen SR 85 from SR 123 to Duke Field to 6 lanes	5.00	\$36,910,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Widen SR 85 from Duke Field to s/o PJ Adams Parkway to 6 lanes	5.00	\$37,880,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Phase III Mid-Bay Bridge Connector	5.21	\$51,000,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Mid-Bay Bridge Connector interchange at SR 85	---	\$11,300,000	<i>TIGER Grant</i>
Corridor Management Study for SR 20 from SR 293 to SR 85	5.03	\$ 62,895	<i>Average general estimate per mile.</i>
Review traffic signal timings along SR 85 and SR 20	---	\$3,000 to \$5,000 per signal	<i>Average general estimate per signalized intersection. The cost of coordinated signal systems or adaptive control systems is not included in this estimate and could vary widely based on the system chosen on the existing infrastructure.</i>
Park and Rides at SR 85 in Crestview and in Niceville	---	\$ 3,100,000	<i>TIGER Grant estimated \$3,100,00 for construction of new park and ride lots, that cost is used here, however using an existing lot or a shared lot would lower this cost.</i>
Complete the PD&E Study for the SR 123 four laning	5.08	---	<i>Scheduled to be complete in 2010. The study is currently on-going.</i>
PD&E study of needed capacity improvements on SR 85 from SR 20 to US 90	8.60	\$ 3,010,000	<i>FDOT District 3 Generalized Cost Estimates</i>
Construct Mid Bay Bridge Connector from SR 85 to SR 123	5.00	\$ 47,279,507	<i>FDOT District 3 Generalized Cost Estimates</i>

Note: ROW is not required for federally owned areas (i.e. Eglin AFB).

Note: Costs are subject to change pending final alignment, final design, inflation, and location of the project.

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Table F2.10: Recommendations and Potential Funding

Recommendations	Potential Funding
Coordinate with the various local governments to develop a uniform concurrency management system.	Concurrency management is typically funded as a function of the local government planning department. In the state of Florida, concurrency, or requirements for adequate public facilities are required by statute and rule as part of the growth management provisions. The coordination for a uniform concurrency management system would likely be handled by the local planning agency staff. This recommendation will require a local 'champion' to initiate the process and keep it moving forward. If desired, a local agency, such as the TPO or RPC, could offer to be a clearing house for tracking and reviewing this information. Currently the Lake-Sumter MPO in Central Florida performs this function for the local governments in its jurisdiction. This function of the MPO is funded by each local government contributing an amount to the MPO to pay for this service, as established by an interlocal agreement between each local and the MPO.
Create and implement a "complete streets" policy.	This is anticipated to be implemented by existing planning staff, or by existing planning or engineering consultants.
Incorporate the mobility goals of the region, area and neighborhoods in the development of the various MIPA's and small area studies recommended by the JLUS.	This should be incorporated into the scope of service for any of the MIPA or small area studies undertaken by the County.
Consistent with smart growth principals, future studies or studies resulting from the JLUS should consider the potential for clustering and mixed use to create live work play areas that would allow for less dependence on the automobile and would promote transit and rideshare opportunities.	This should be incorporated into the scope of service for any of the MIPA or small area studies undertaken by the County
Conduct a local transportation funding study that would include the formation of a committee made of local elected officials, agency representatives and citizens to study and develop recommendations for dedicated local transportation funding options, including funding for transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects.	The study consultant would need to be funded through the normal local government budget process, such as by ad valorem taxes. It is anticipated that the participation by local government officials and staff would be considered part of their normal responsibilities, participation from citizens or private sector representatives on the committee should be voluntary. The basic cost of such a study should not exceed \$200,000.
Coordinate with Okaloosa County Transit, the City of Crestview, the City of Fort Walton Beach, the WFRPC, the TPO and Eglin AFB on transit routes along SR 85 and potential express transit routes to Eglin Main Base.	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT/FTA transit or rideshare funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers of this area. Developers or area employers may be asked to participate in funding the transit program by purchasing passes for residents or

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Recommendations	Potential Funding
	employees.
Review traffic signal timings in the congested corridors including SR 85 and US 98.	Traffic signal timings plans in general cost between \$3,500 and \$5,000 per signal, depending on the data available. Costs of coordinated signal systems or adaptive signal systems vary widely based on the existing signal infrastructure. Potential funding for these types of improvements include local funding through gas tax or ad valorem taxes. Other potential funding includes the ITS implementation funding identified in the Okaloosa Walton TPO LRTP. In addition, Okaloosa County has an Areawide Traffic Signal System and Traffic Signal Synchronization System Enhancements identified as cost feasible projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan.
Coordinate with FDOT and the Okaloosa Walton TPO to prioritize and fund a corridor management study for SR 20 from SR 293 (Mid-Bay Bridge) to SR 85 at Government Avenue. Although only a small portion of this section of roadway is anticipated to be significantly impacted by BRAC actions, it does provide a critical link from Eglin to this area. The current adopted Long Range Transportation Plan has identified potential funds for projects to implement existing corridor management plans. A project to update the previous corridor management plan is also recommended.	The current LRTP identifies a boxed fund set aside for Corridor Management Plans of \$750,000 per year as part of its cost feasible plan. As with all projects in the LRTP cost feasible plan these boxed funds need to be prioritized and brought into the TIP to be funded by FDOT. Potentially, these studies and any identified projects could be prioritized through the TPO process and then funded through the FDOT work program. Other potential funding sources would include local funds or partnership opportunities with Okaloosa County or the City of Niceville.
Complete the PD&E Study for the SR 123 four laning as scheduled sometime in 2010. This project is planned as a four lane facility to accommodate growth, reduce congestion and address serious safety issues. Include intersection improvements/interchange construction at the northern intersection of SR 123 and SR 85.	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers that might impact this segment at either end of the study area (Niceville or Crestview). Developers may be asked to participate in funding the improvement through a proportionate share program, MSBU, or other impact or mobility fee or exaction.
Begin a PD&E study of needed capacity improvements on SR 85 from College Avenue to Crestview, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Alternative corridors study between the Shoal River and US 90, o 6 l lanes or alternative such as HOV, transit lanes or reversible lanes from SR 20 to Shoal River/PJ Adams Parkway. 	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers that might impact this segment at either end of the study area (Niceville or Crestview). Developers may be asked to participate in funding the improvement through a proportionate share program, MSBU, or other impact or mobility fee or exaction.
Prioritize and implement projects identified in the SR 20 Corridor Management Plan.	Several potential funding sources exist for the types of projects typically identified in a corridor or congestion management plan. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for safety or enhancement dollars to be used to improve intersections or bicycle/pedestrian features. Funding

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Recommendations	Potential Funding
	for signal timing and or coordination activities may be funded through money set aside for ITS implementation. The LRTP Cost Feasible Plan has also identified a boxed fund to implement projects from corridor management plans, but would need to be prioritized through the TPO's TIP process and funded by FDOT
Design and Permit the SR 123 Four Lane project preferred alternative from SR 85 to SR 85	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers that might impact this segment at either end of the study area (Niceville or Crestview). Developers may be asked to participate in funding the improvement through a proportionate share program, MSBU, or other impact or mobility fee or exaction.
Complete the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector Phase III from SR 285 to SR 85, including an interchange at SR 85 and Mid Bay Bridge Connector.	This project is planned as a revenue generating facility to be funded with tolls. As a potential revenue generating facility, it may be possible for this project to utilize revenue bonds, or to obtain grants or credit assistance through the Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Funds (TRTF)
Continue to support the NWFTCA southern Eglin bypass project (continuation of the Mid-Bay Bridge Connector) west to SR 87 to reduce demand on the regional roadway network including SR 20 and SR 85 through this area.	This project is planned as a revenue generating facility to be funded with tolls. As a potential revenue generating facility, it may be possible for this project to utilize revenue bonds, or to obtain grants or credit assistance through the Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Funds (TRTF)
Construct Mid Bay Bridge Connector from SR 85 to SR 123.	This project is planned as a revenue generating facility to be funded with tolls. As a potential revenue generating facility, it may be possible for this project to utilize revenue bonds, or to obtain grants or credit assistance through the Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Funds (TRTF)
Implement / construct the preferred alternative from the SR 85 from Shoal River to US 90 alternative corridor study	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers that might impact this segment at either end of the study area (Niceville or Crestview). Developers may be asked to participate in funding the improvement through a proportionate share program, MSBU, or other impact or mobility fee or exaction.
Implement / construct the preferred alternative from the SR 85 PD&E study	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers that might impact this segment at either end of the study area (Niceville or Crestview). Developers may be asked

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Recommendations	Potential Funding
	to participate in funding the improvement through a proportionate share program, MSBU, or other impact or mobility fee or exaction.
Construct the SR 123 four lane preferred alternative	Several potential funding sources exist for this recommendation. In addition to the traditional FDOT state or federal funding, there is potential for public/private partnerships with the developers that might impact this segment at either end of the study area (Niceville or Crestview). Developers may be asked to participate in funding the improvement through a proportionate share program, MSBU, or other impact or mobility fee or exaction.
Although not anticipated to be significantly impacted by BRAC, the Mid Bay Bridge is projected to be deficient by 2016. This project is important to the mobility and safety goals of the region and is consistent with the Mid Bay Bridge Authorities projected needs and plans.	This project is planned as a revenue generating facility to be funded with tolls. As a potential revenue generating facility, it may be possible for this project to utilize revenue bonds, or to obtain grants or credit assistance through the Toll Facilities Revolving Trust Funds (TRTF)

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

PUBLIC UTILITIES

For public utility analysis of Okaloosa County, please see the Public Utilities section within the F1. Okaloosa – Crestview tab under Support Infrastructure.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area encompasses an approximately six-mile radius, centered on Niceville. The current population within this area is 35,155, comprising 19 percent of the Okaloosa County's population. The growth area consists of the cities of Niceville and Valparaiso as well as unincorporated Okaloosa County jurisdictions. The current population in Niceville is 11,883 residents, Valparaiso 5,684, with the remainder (27,408), residing within the county areas. It is presumed that the anticipated growth associated with BRAC will attract 625 persons who are expected to distribute in a pattern similar to the existing military personnel currently residing within these cities and surrounding

area. The distribution of BRAC induced residents is expected to occur in the following manner; the City of Niceville may receive 34 percent of the population increase, translating to 211 persons; Valparaiso will capture, 17 percent or 104 persons and the remaining 50 percent, or 310 new residents, are expected to settle in surrounding unincorporated county areas.

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Law Enforcement

Law enforcement within the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is provided by the municipal police departments as well as the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. The portions of the unincorporated county area experience a level of service (LOS) of 2.1 officers per 1,000 residents, as shown in **Table F2.11**, this LOS is consistent throughout the county and is utilized for all areas protected by the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. With the anticipated BRAC induced growth of 310 people, an additional officer will need to be added to the Okaloosa County Sheriff's office to maintain the current LOS within this growth area.

Table F2.11: Niceville / Valparaiso Law Enforcement

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Law Enforcement	Existing Population	Existing Personnel	Existing / Future LOS	BRAC Population Increase	Personnel Required
Niceville	11,883	23	1.9	211	0
Valparaiso	5,864	11	1.9	104	0
Unincorporated County	17,408	n/a	2.1	310	1
Total	35,155			625	1

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2005, Demographics Now, 2009, Haas Center 2009, Matrix Design Group, 2010

Table F2.12: Niceville / Valparaiso Fire Protection

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Fire Protection	Existing Population	Existing Personnel Career / Volunteer / Paid by Call	Existing / Future LOS Fire Fighters Per Capita	BRAC Population Increase	Personnel Required
Niceville	11,883	28	424	211	0
Valparaiso	5,864	22	267	104	0
Unincorporated County	17,408	n/a	450	310	1
Total	35,155			625	1

Source: Demographics Now, 2009, Haas Center 2009, Matrix Design Group, 2010

Table F2.13: Niceville / Valparaiso Beach Emergency Shelter

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area	Existing Shelter Capacity	Existing Shelter Demand	BRAC Shelter Demand	Surplus / (Deficit) Shelter Space
Niceville	0	786	14	(800)
Valparaiso	0	388	7	(395)
Unincorporated County	0	1,152	21	(1,173)
Total	0	2,327	42	(2,368)

Source: Florida Emergency Shelter Plan 2008, SRR 2009, Matrix Design Group, 2010

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Based on the existing service ratio of 1.9 officers per 1,000 residents in both Niceville and Valparaiso, no additional officers will be needed to maintain current service levels within Niceville given the addition of 211 residents, while Valparaiso's population will also not increase adequately to adversely affect the existing level of service. Table 9-12 depicts the impact of anticipated military growth on the law enforcement agencies protecting the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area.

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Fire Protection

Niceville and Valparaiso both operate municipal fire departments. Based on the existing levels of service for the each of the jurisdictions as indicated in **Table F2.12**, Niceville and Valparaiso will be able to absorb the expected growth without additional staffing. The fire districts that protect the unincorporated areas of the growth area may need to increase by one firefighter in order to maintain the existing ratio of 367 persons per firefighter also captured in Table 9-13, depending on the specific disbursement of new residents throughout the unincorporated county areas. The response times and station locations are included on the Public Safety – Niceville / Valparaiso **Map F2.7**.

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Emergency Management

Similar to the Fort Walton Beach Growth Area, Niceville / Valparaiso has a significant amount of shoreline along Choctawhatchee Bay. Substantial portions of each City are subject to evacuation within the Zone A and B areas; and the flood threat to these areas is significant. The specific hazard zones and their location within the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area are indicated on the Hazard Area - Niceville / Valparaiso **Map F2.8**.

The 2008 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan lists three facilities that do not currently meet ARC 4496 standards within the growth area, and Niceville and Valparaiso indicate capacity for 918 and 742 spaces, respectively. As indicated in **Table F2.13**, the total deficit for emergency shelter within the growth area will be 2,368. The capacity of 1,658 uncertified shelter spaces within the communities of Niceville and Valparaiso are not indicated in the table. Additionally, there are not any facilities designated within the county areas associated within the growth area, leading to the indicated deficiency of shelter space.

Issue 1: First Responder Training

The influx of soldiers who will have been exposed to and part of combat operations creates the need for specific training of first responders.

Discussion 1

Many local law enforcement agencies indicate there is a need for increased awareness among local law enforcement and emergency personnel regarding interactions with soldiers. Specifically, the 7th SFG (A) will be returning combat experienced troops from deployments that may have created specific issues for these soldiers. Issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and / or traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are increasingly common for soldiers returning from active combat areas. Such conditions may require additional training for first responders in order to properly address and manage the behavioral concerns often associated with these injuries to soldiers. Enhanced police officer training will allow local public safety agencies to successfully engage future calls for service that may include complications arising from battlefield conditions.

Recommendation 1.1

Provide educational information for first responders to increase awareness of the cause and effect of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and / or traumatic brain injuries (TBI). Specifically provide information that allows for an increased understanding of these conditions and the variety of ways it may manifest in behavior that may otherwise be misinterpreted.

Recommendation 1.2

Investigate and invest in specific training for first responders as it relates to recognition and management of calls for service that may be directly or indirectly related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and / or traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

Recommendation 1.3

Coordinate with Base 7 SFG (A) officials to share information that will allow for timely exchanges of information for civilian responders regarding the probability and potential for interactions that may involve soldiers suffering from these conditions. It may be necessary to examine staffing levels and responder experience as a result of the nature of the persons expected to locate in the area as a result of the BRAC realignments.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Issue 2: Law Enforcement Staffing

The increase in population associated with the Fort Walton Beach Growth Area which includes adjacent areas of Okaloosa County will require an additional two sheriff's deputies and one officer in Fort Walton Beach, to maintain existing levels of service within the growth area.

Discussion 2

The increase in population within the Fort Walton Beach Growth Area will directly impact the level of service offered by the Fort Walton Beach Police Department and the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. To maintain the existing level of service for these two jurisdictions additional officers will be required, for both the county sheriff's office and the City of Fort Walton Beach.

Recommendation 2.1

Create an ongoing system to monitor growth and assess the need for staffing based on actual population increases and call for service statistics as they become available. This method of evaluation should be utilized for all jurisdictions within the growth area, as the final location of the relocated personnel will determine the specific needs of the individual departments.

Issue 3: Fire Protection Staffing

The increase in population in the Fort Walton Beach Growth Area will require additional firefighters to maintain existing levels of service.

Discussion 3

The influx of population into the Fort Walton Beach Growth Area will require that four additional firefighters be added to maintain the existing LOS. Specifically, two of these added firefighters may be required in fire districts in unincorporated Okaloosa County, depending on the particular location and intensity of the projected growth, and one firefighter will need to be added to the City of Fort Walton Beach's department. The pace of growth should be monitored to allow for appropriate staffing at the specific facilities that are impacted by the location of this growth.

Recommendation 3.1

Carefully monitor the population increase to provide additional staff as necessary in appropriate locations to address the specific growth patterns.

Recommendation 3.2

Work with local building officials and real estate professionals to ascertain the locations and intensity of growth within specific areas. Carefully monitor this population increase to provide additional services in appropriate locations to maintain accepted service levels consistent with the specific growth patterns.

Issue 4: Emergency Shelter Capacities

The Fort Walton Beach Growth Area currently exhibits a shortage of emergency shelter space based on existing population.

Discussion 4

The influx of population into the Fort Walton Beach Growth Area will compound the existing shortage of State of Florida approved shelter capacity.

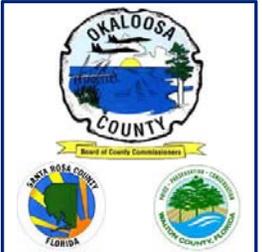
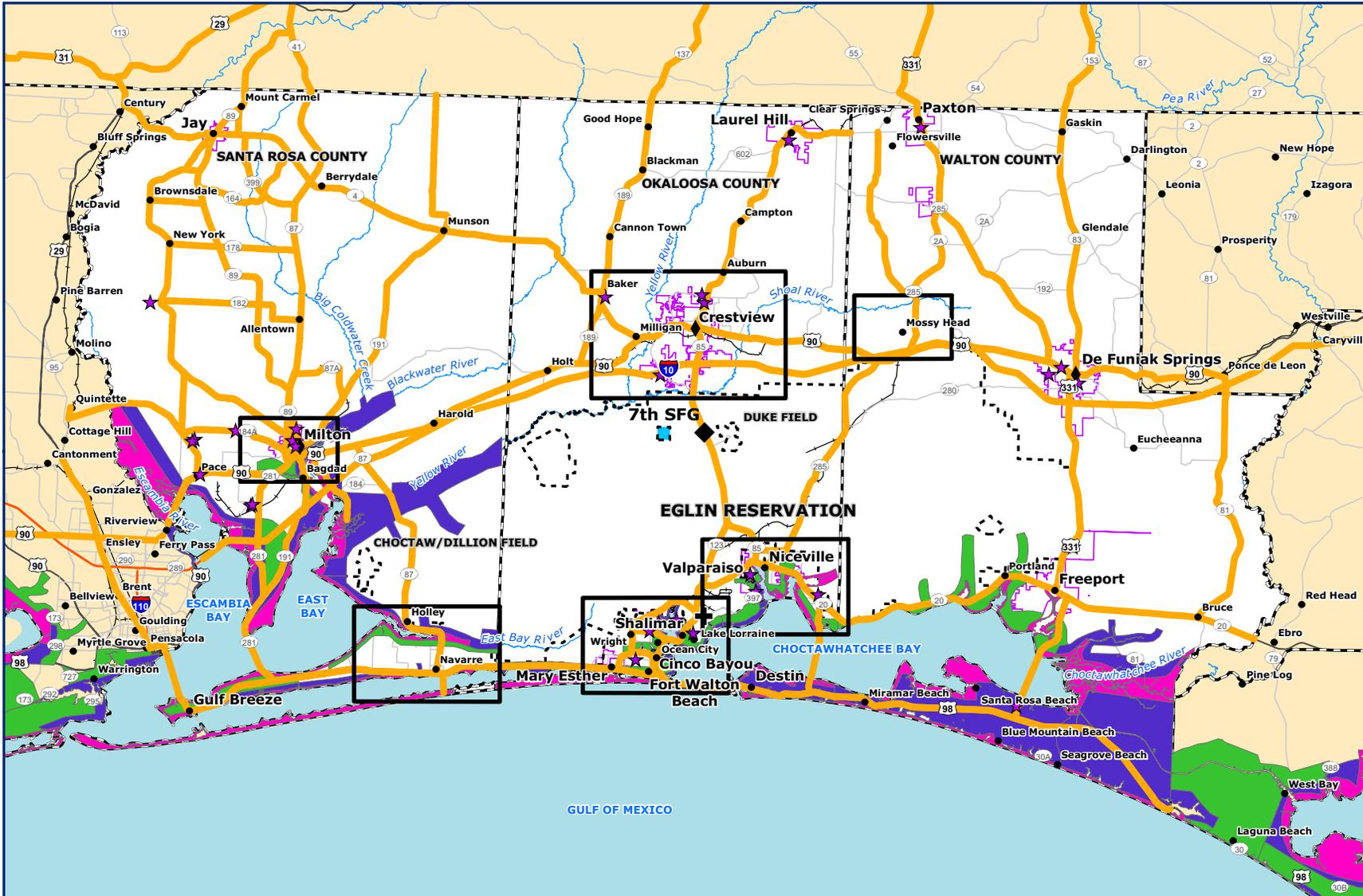
Recommendation 4.1

Continue to address the availability and need for emergency shelter space provided for the county's residents. Work with state officials to verify and certify existing facilities that are currently identified as shelters but do not currently meet the ARC 4496 standards.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Please see next page.

Tri-County Growth Management Plan Okaloosa - Santa Rosa - Walton



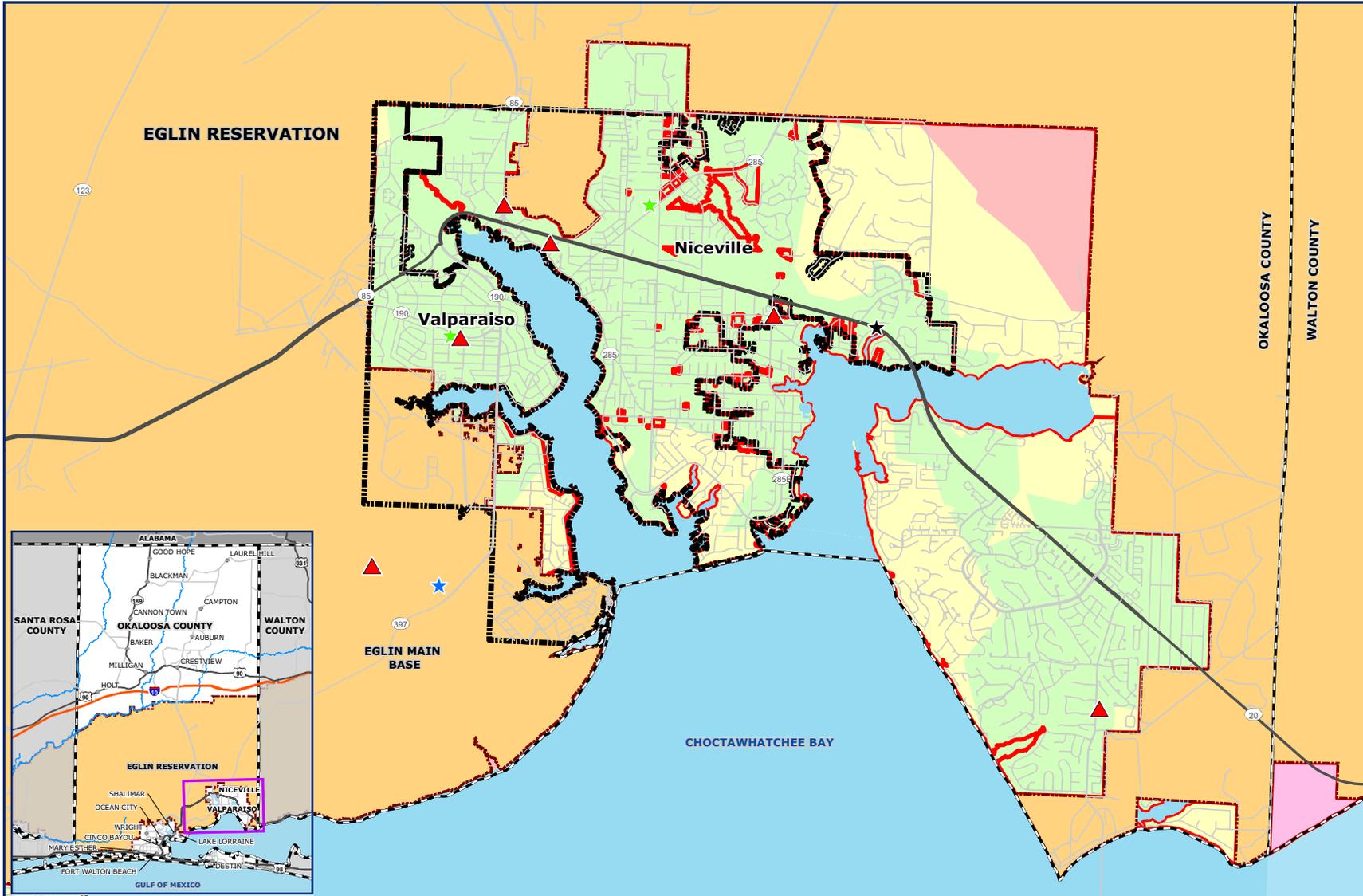
- Legend**
- Outside of Analysis Area
 - Emergency Shelters
 - Evacuation Route
 - Category 1
 - Category 2-3
 - Category 4-5
 - City/Town
 - City/Town (Incorporated Area)
 - County Seat
 - County Boundary
 - Eglin Reservation Main Gate
 - 7th SFG Main Gate
 - 7th Special Forces Group
 - Eglin Installation Boundary
 - Focus Area
 - River
 - I-10
 - Highway
 - Secondary Road
 - Railroad

Sources: Okaloosa County; Santa Rosa County & Walton County; 2008 Florida Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan

Prepared by:

Map F2.6: Emergency Management





- Legend**
- ▲ Fire Stations
 - ▭ Fire Response Area
 - Estimated Fire Response Time (min.)**
 - <5
 - 5-10
 - 10-15
 - >15
 - Law Enforcement**
 - ★ Federal Law Enforcement
 - ★ Highway Patrol
 - ★ Police Department
 - ★ Sheriff's Office
 - Correctional Facility**
 - Correctional Boot Camp
 - Correctional Facility - Contract
 - Correctional Institution
 - Jail
 - ▭ City Limits
 - ▭ County Boundary
 - ▭ Eglin Installation Boundary
 - River
 - I-10
 - Highway
 - Secondary Road
 - Railroad

Prepared by:

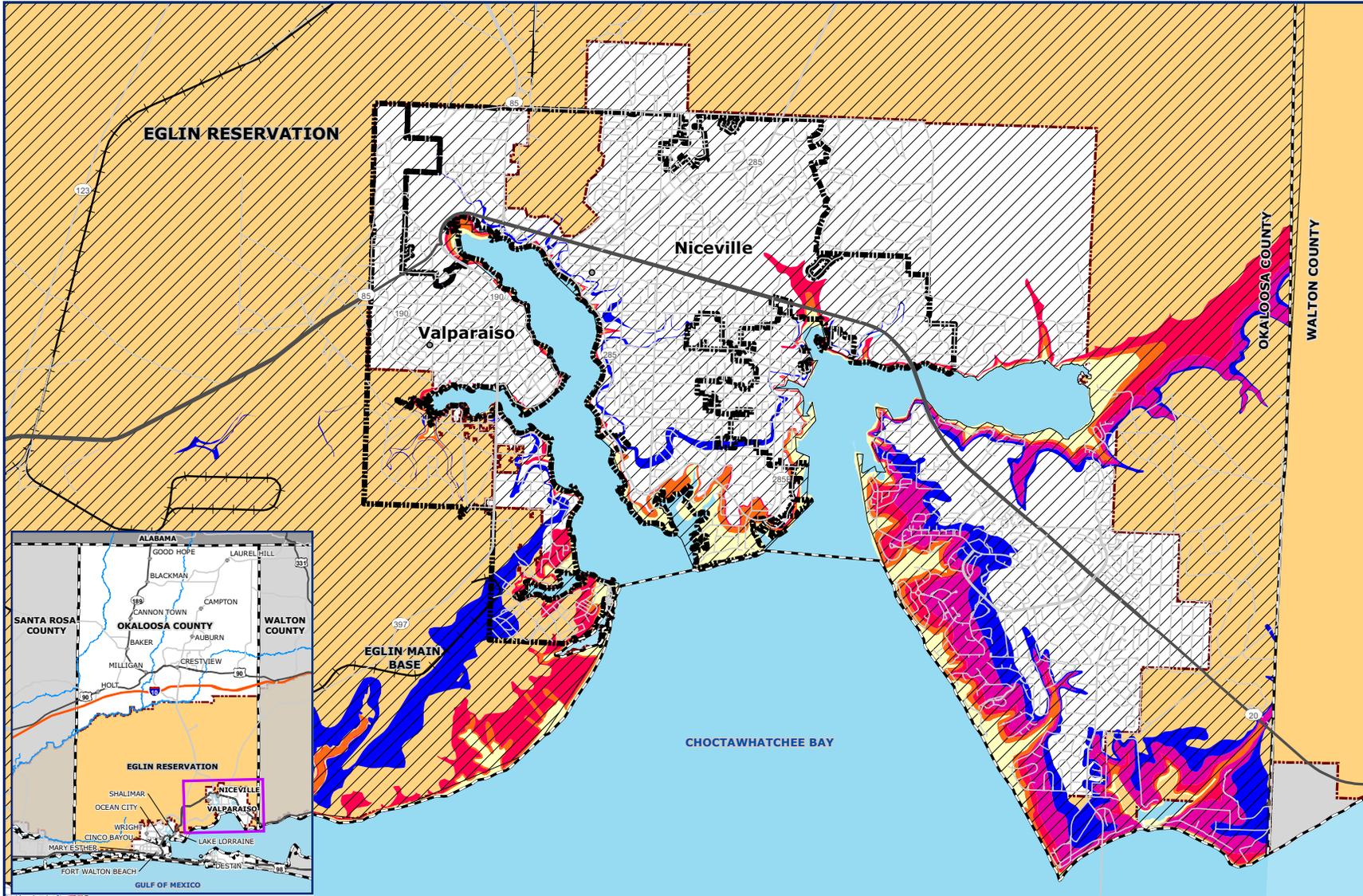
HDR

Matrix Design Group Inc.
Integrated Design Solutions

Haas Center
for Sustainable Communities and Economic Development

Map F2.7: Public Safety - Niceville/Valparaiso





Legend

Storm Surge Zones

- Category 1
- Category 2
- Category 3
- Category 4
- Category 5

Wind Debris Hazard Zones

- 130 MPH Wind Debris
- 140 MPH Wind Debris

• City/Town
 City Limits
 County Boundary
 Eglin Installation Boundary
 River
 I-10
 Highway
 Secondary Road
 Railroad

Prepared by:

HDR

Matrix Design Group, Inc.
Integrated Design Solutions

Haas Center
for Sustainable Communities

Map F2.8: Hazard Areas - Niceville/Valparaiso



DIVIDER

Community Fabric

HEALTH

The health care and social services analysis was done on a county and region-wide level due to the nature of these services. In an effort to not repeat the same information multiple times, this analysis is found under the F1. Okaloosa-Crestview section.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

EDUCATION

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is estimated to receive six percent of the school-aged children associated with the BRAC realignment. The schools within the Okaloosa County School District located in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area will need to accommodate 124 children into the school system by 2015. **Table F2.14** shows the distribution of the students by school level.

Table F2.14: Niceville / Valparaiso Anticipated BRAC Induced Student Distribution

School Type	Students	Percent
Elementary	70	57
Junior High	24	19
High	30	24
Total	124	100

Source: The Haas Center, July 2009

PRIVATE AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area has one Charter school:

- Collegiate High School at Northwest Florida State College, offers courses to students in grades 10-12.

The private schools that are located in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area include:

- Emerald Coast Autism Center – Grades Pre-K-2;
- Agape Christian Academy (Church of Christ) – Grades Pre-K-8;
- Rocky Bayou Christian School (Non-Denominational Religious) – grades Pre-K-12;
- Ashnick Academy – Grades K-12; and
- Desire Street Academy (all Boys) – Grades 7-12.

CAPACITY

No new schools are currently planned for the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area. There are, however, some additions to existing schools that have added new

capacity. Bluewater Elementary School recently added eight new classrooms, creating 160 additional student stations. Edge Elementary School added ten classrooms for an additional capacity of 200 students. Plew Elementary School recently added four classrooms and can accommodate an additional 80 students. In total, all these projects add capacity for 440 students in the growth area elementary schools.

Exhibiting a modest estimated increase of the forecasted BRAC population growth, the schools within the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area are expected to easily accommodate the new student population using existing facilities. The elementary schools have approximately 719 available stations for students. Ruckel Middle School has a capacity of 96 students remaining, while Niceville High School has an available remaining capacity of 471.

Table F2.15 shows the available capacity at each school within the growth area. **Maps F2.9, F2.10, and F2.11** show the locations of each of the Niceville / Valparaiso area elementary, middle, and high schools, respectively, as well as the surrounding area drive times, school ranking, and current remaining capacity at each school, not including recently added student stations.

RANKING

All of the elementary schools and middle schools, as well as the OWC Collegiate High School received an “A” ranking based on the Florida Department of Education School Ranking guidelines. Niceville High School received a “B” ranking based on the guidelines. The high school’s ranking could potentially negatively influence the relocation of military personnel within Niceville / Valparaiso area, based on the location of “A” ranked schools in Fort Walton Beach and Crestview.

DEMAND FOR NEW INSTRUCTORS

Despite the fact that the current facilities are adequate to accommodate the anticipated growth in the student population, additional instructors will be needed by 2015. For the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area schools to be able to maintain state standards for student to teacher ratios, an additional four instructors will be needed to accommodate the estimated 70 new elementary school students; one new instructor will be needed to accommodate the additional 24 middle school students; and two new instructors will be needed to accommodate the additional 30 high school students.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Table F2.15: School Capacity – Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

School Name	Campus Capacity ¹	Current Enrollment ²	Available Capacity ³	Additional Student Stations ⁴	Total Available Capacity ⁵
Bluewater Elementary School	609	704	-95	160	65
Edge Elementary School	541	500	41	200	241
Plew Elementary School	729	605	124	80	204
Valparaiso Elementary School	597	388	209	0	209
Subtotal	2,476	2,197	279	440	719
Addie R. Lewis Middle School	N/A	N/A (461)	N/A	0	N/A
Ruckel Middle School	962	866	96	0	96
Subtotal	962	866	96	0	96
Niceville High School	2,423	1,952	471	0	471
Subtotal	2,423	1,952	471	0	471
TOTAL	5,861	5,015	846	440	1,286

Source: 1: Okaloosa County School District, July 2009
 2: Okaloosa County School District, March 2010
 3: Calculations done by Matrix Design Group
 4: Okaloosa County School District Capital Projects - Schedule of Work Proposed 2009-2010 for Fiscal Years 2009/2010-2013/2014, August 10, 2009
 5: Calculations done by Matrix Design Group

DRIVE TIMES

The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is served by four elementary schools:

- Bluewater Elementary School: Serves the southeastern portion of the growth area
- Edge Elementary School: Serves the northwestern portion of the growth area in Niceville
- Plew Elementary School: Serves the central and northeastern portions of the growth area in Niceville
- Valparaiso Elementary School: Serves the western portion of the growth area in Valparaiso

Drive times to the Bluewater Elementary School tend to be less than ten minutes, with a small portion of its attendance area in the ten to fifteen minute range. The majority of the Edge Elementary School attendance district is less than five minutes, with small portions ranging between five and ten minutes.. The Plew Elementary School drive times are typically less than five minutes or the five to ten minute range. Within the Plew

attendance district, there is a large portion of vacant land in the northeast portion of the growth area, which appears to be undeveloped, that exceeds fifteen minutes. Drive times within the Valparaiso attendance district are typically less than five minutes, with the northern and southern extremes of the district ranging between five and ten minutes.

The Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area is served by two middle schools: Ruckel Middle School serving Niceville, and Addie R. Lewis Middle School serving Valparaiso. The majority of the attendance area in Niceville tends to be less than ten minutes drive time. Parts of the attendance district, generally the southeastern portion of the growth area, are in the ten to fifteen minute drive time range. Similar to the elementary schools, there is the northeastern part of the city that exceeds a fifteen minute drive time. The entire Lewis attendance district within Valparaiso is within a ten minute drive from the school, while a portion of the district in Niceville exhibits a drive time between 10 and 15 minutes.

Two high schools serve the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area: Niceville High School and OWC Collegiate High School (charter school). Niceville High School serves as the traditional high school in the growth area. The drive

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

times tend to range between less than five minutes to between five and ten minute ranges. A small portion in the southeastern portion of the growth area, as well as the southeastern corner of Valparaiso, exhibits drive times ranging from ten to fifteen minutes. There is also the northeastern portion of the City that exceeds the fifteen minute drive time range. OWC Collegiate High School, north of Niceville High School, has approximately the same drive times.

ADULT EDUCATION FACILITIES

Table F2.16 lists the post-secondary institutions, as well as their degree programs and services, within the region surrounding Niceville / Valparaiso. Following the table is a discussion of those facilities that are located within the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

Northwest Florida State College:

Okaloosa-Walton College was created in 1963 as Okaloosa-Walton Junior College. It became Okaloosa-Walton College in 2003. The name was changed to Northwest Florida State College in June 2008. The main campus of the college is sited on 264 acres in the City of Niceville. It also has shared campuses with other institutions in Fort Walton Beach, Crestview, DeFuniak Springs, and has fulltime centers at Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field. Another center is currently under construction in southern Walton County, and is scheduled to be completed in 2010.

Northwest Florida State College is organized into several academic divisions. Some of these include the department of computer engineering, business management, humanities, fine and performing arts, nursing and allied health, mathematics and social science. Northwest Florida State College has a variety of programs, offering certificates, an Associate of Arts degree, a wide range of Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science degrees, and Bachelor degrees in Project Management, Nursing, Elementary Education, Middle Grades Mathematics and Middle Grades Science Education.

Northwest Florida State College is an accredited educational partner for the Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative. This pilot program, instituted by the DOD and Department of Labor, provides funding to military spouses. Eligible candidates receive \$3,000 for one year, with a potential to receive an additional \$3,000 for a second year, to be used towards post-secondary education and training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address the issues discussed previously in this section, a list of recommendations was created to assist the incorporated communities and respective counties within the six identified growth areas successfully accommodate the incoming BRAC-related students through the public and private primary and secondary institutions and anticipated adult education needs at post-secondary facilities within the region. The following presents the major issues of the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area, as well as a discussion of the issue and resulting recommendation to address the issue. These recommendations are organized in a table format and presented in the Executive Summary (located in the Introduction of this document). The table format includes information related to responsibility, priority, funding, cost, and monitoring to achieve implementation of each recommendation.

Issue 1

The increase in student populations in the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area will require additional teachers to maintain state standards.

Discussion 1

The influx of BRAC induced students into the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area school system will require additional instructors to maintain state standards. The student to teacher ratios used in this GMP are based on 2008 data and may have changed slightly due to differences in student enrollment or teachers needed. To maintain state standards, the elementary schools will require four new instructors, middle schools will require one new teacher, and high schools will require two new teachers. Some of these positions could be filled by incoming military spouses or retiring military personnel seeking employment in the area. In total, seven new teachers will be required for the schools within the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area.

Recommendation 1.1

Continue to communicate its open positions within the Okaloosa County School District to the Troops to Teachers program as well as to military relocation specialists who can match experience with respective openings within the district, for both military personnel and their spouses.

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Recommendation 1.2

Allocate funds in the Okaloosa County School District budget to pay salaries and benefits for seven new teachers for the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area schools by 2015.

Issue 2

The presence of the JSF and relocated 7 SFG(A) will provide an initial supply of experienced military spouses (and later military retirees) who will be seeking employment in professions which require a license or certification.

Discussion 2

Many of the military spouses locating within the growth area as a result of BRAC will seek employment opportunities in the health care field near where they live. Oftentimes, obtaining a license is a popular way to do this. There are a variety of certification opportunities offered throughout the area to help military spouses seek employment.

Recommendation 2.1

Ensure that relocation specialists or other personnel have the ability to communicate information related to licensing and certification requirements in the State of Florida to military spouses and retirees desiring a second career.

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

Table F2.16: Post-Secondary Education Institutes in Proximity to the Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area

Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area Location	Programs Offered						Degrees Offered				
	Education	Engineering	Nursing \ Health	Science \ Technology	Business	Liberal Arts	Online Courses	Associates \ Technical	Bachelors Degree	Masters Degree	PhD
Eglin AFB											
Northwest Florida State College				●		●	🔗	●			
University of West Florida	◆			▲	■				▲	■	◆
Troy University				■	●		🔗	●	▲	■	
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University		▲	▲	●	▲			●	▲		
Southern Illinois University—Carbondale	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆						◆
Okaloosa County											
Northwest Florida State College: Niceville		●	●	●	●	●		●			
Northwest Florida State College: Fort Walton Beach	▲		▲		▲				▲		
Northwest Florida State College: Crestview	▲	●	●	▲	●	▲		●	▲		
University of West Florida: Fort Walton Beach	▲	▲	▲	▲			🔗		▲	■	◆
University of Florida Research Engineering and Education Facility (REEF): Shalimar	■		■	■	■		🔗	●	▲	■	◆
Troy University: Fort Walton Beach					◆		🔗	●	▲	■	◆
Okaloosa Applied Technology Center: Fort Walton Beach					●		🔗	●			
Santa Rosa County											
University of Florida: West Florida Research and Education Center										◆	
Pensacola Junior College: Milton		●	●	●	●	●	🔗	●			
Locklin Tech: Milton								●			
Walton County											
Northwest Florida State College: DeFuniak Springs	●	●	●	●	●			●	▲		
Beyond Tri-County Study Area											
University of West Florida: Pensacola	■		▲	▲	▲	●	🔗	●	▲	■	◆
Troy University: Main Campus	▲		▲	■	▲	▲	🔗		▲	■	◆

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

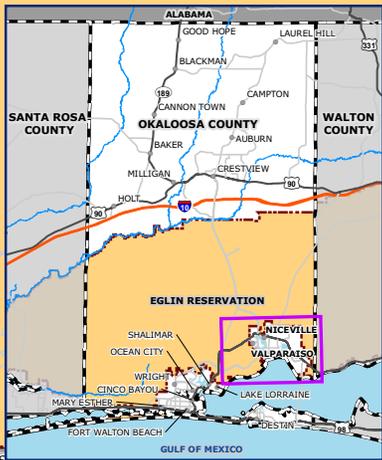
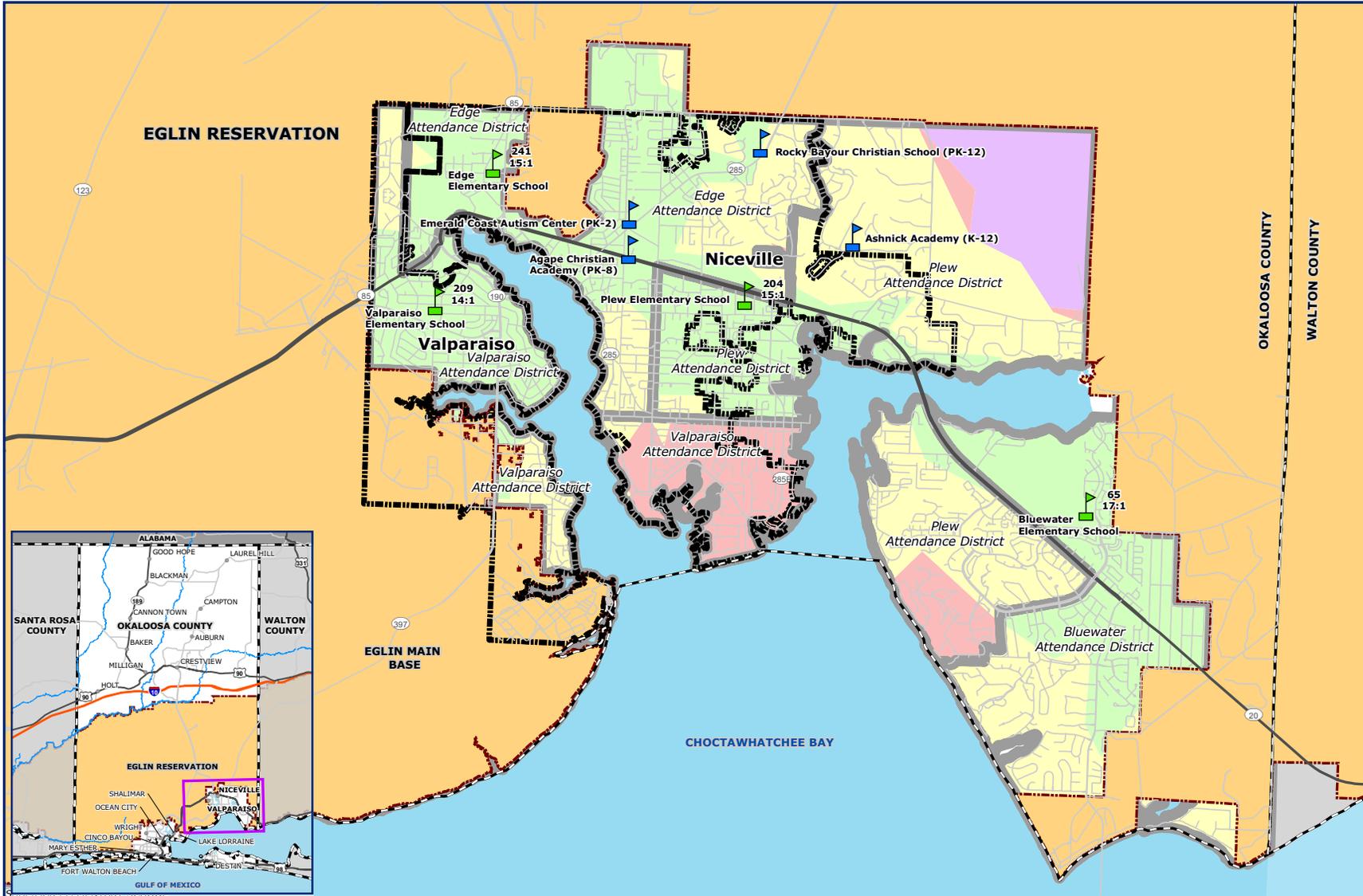
Niceville / Valparaiso Growth Area	Programs Offered						Degrees Offered				
	Education	Engineering	Nursing \ Health	Science \ Technology	Business	Liberal Arts	Online Courses	Associates \ Technical	Bachelors Degree	Masters Degree	PhD
Location											
Troy University: Dothan Campus	▲ ■		◆		▲ ■	▲	📖		▲	■	◆
Troy University: Pensacola (NAS Whiting Field)	▲ ■		◆		■		📖		▲	■	◆
Troy University: Panama City (Tyndall AFB)	■		■	▲ ■	▲ ■		📖		▲	■	
Pensacola Junior College: Pensacola Main Campus		●	●	●	●		📖	●			
Pensacola Junior College: Warrington		●	●	●	●		📖	●			
Pensacola Junior College: NAS Whiting Field		●	●	●	●		📖	●			

Legend:

- 📖 Online Courses
- Associates \ Technical Degree
- ▲ Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- ◆ PhD Degree

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Please see next page.



Legend

School Ranking (Label = Available Capacity & Student Teacher Ratio*)

- ▲ A
- ▲ B
- ▲ C
- ▲ D
- ▲ Private/Charter School (Grades Served)

Estimated School Drive Times (min.)

- <5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- >15

- School Attendance District
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- Eglin Installation Boundary
- River
- I-10
- Highway
- Secondary Road
- +— Railroad

* Student Teacher Ratio based on 2008 data

Prepared by:

HDR

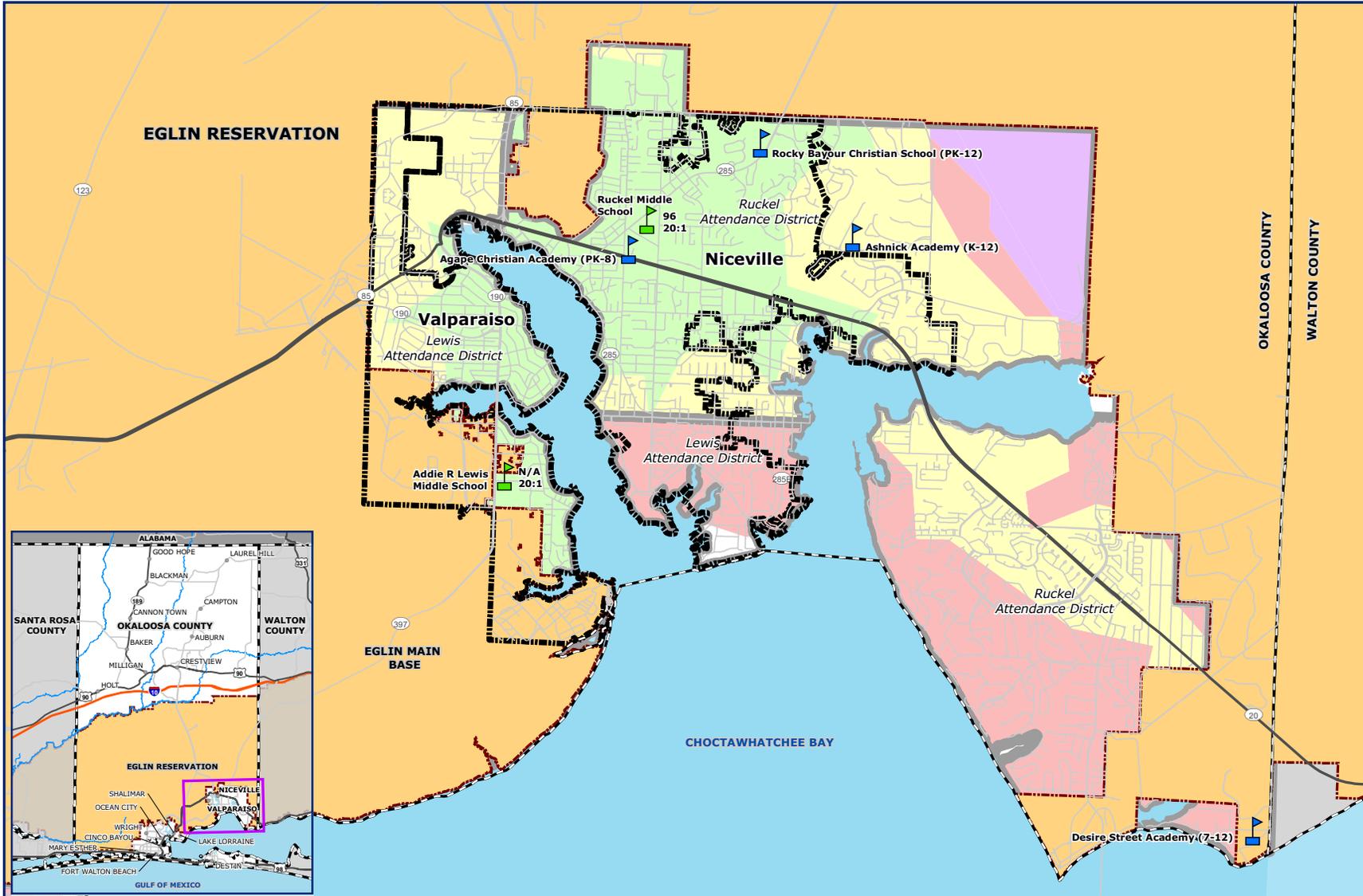
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Map F2.9: Elementary Schools - Niceville/Valparaiso



Schools_Okaloosa_Niceville_Ekin_20100320_RGR.pdf



Legend

School Ranking (Label = Available Capacity & Student Teacher Ratio*)

- ▲ A
- ▲ B
- ▲ C
- ▲ D
- ▲ Private/Charter School (Grades Served)

Estimated School Drive Times (min.)

- <5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- >15

Map Symbols:

- School Attendance District
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- Eglin Installation Boundary
- River
- I-10
- Highway
- Secondary Road
- Railroad

* Student Teacher Ratio based on 2008 data

Prepared by:

HDR

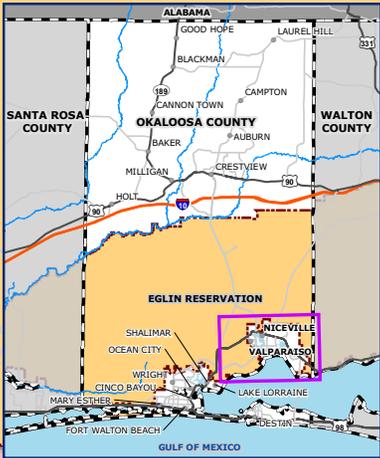
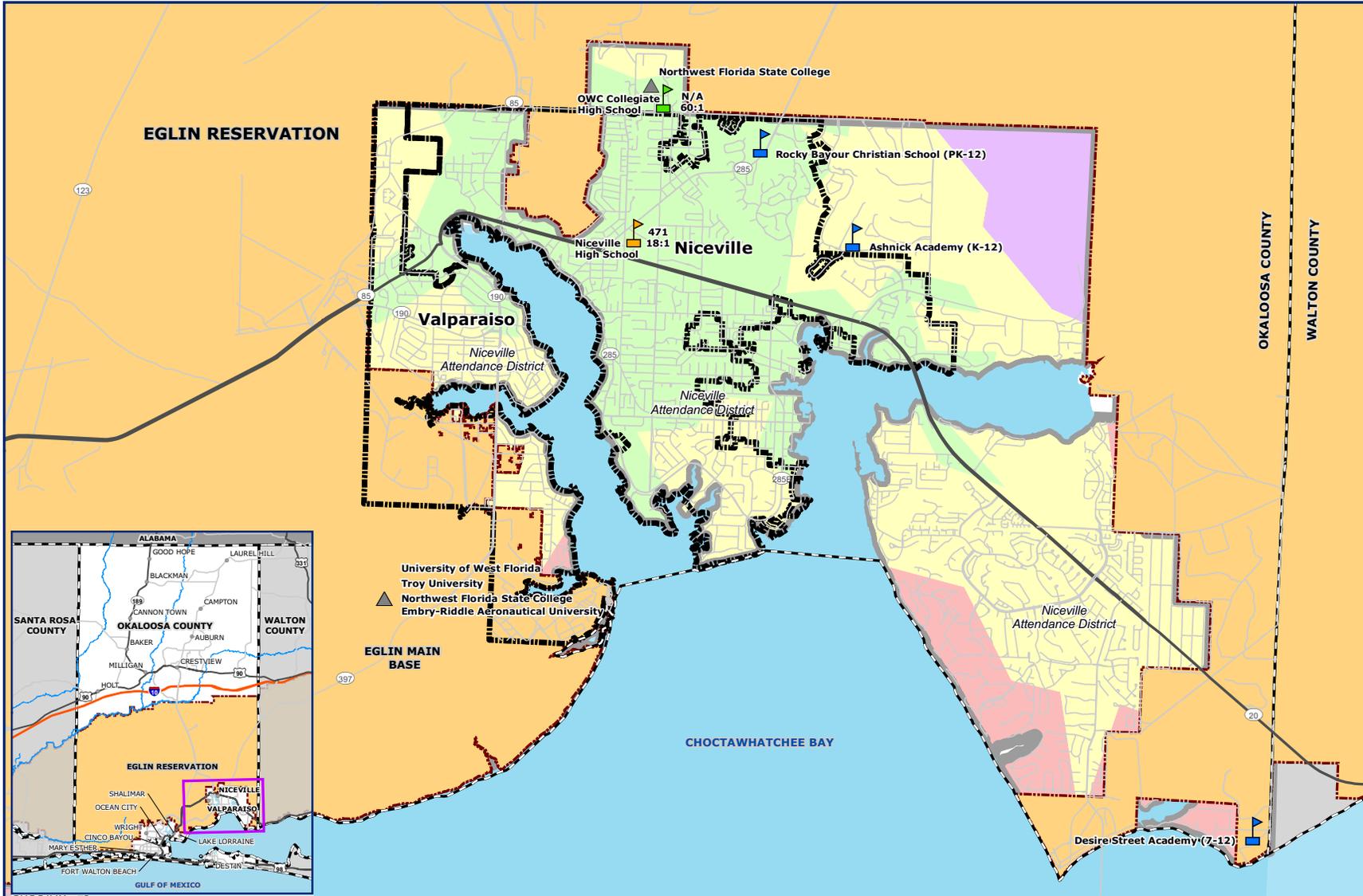
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Map F2.10: Middle Schools - Niceville/Valparaiso



Schools_Okaloosa_Niceville_Mid88_20100320_RGR.pdf



Legend

School Ranking (Label = Available Capacity & Student Teacher Ratio*)

- ▲ A
- ▲ B
- ▲ C
- ▲ D
- ▲ Private/Charter School (Grades Served)

Estimated School Drive Times (min.)

- <5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- >15

- School Attendance District
- Post-Secondary Institution
- City Limits
- County Boundary
- Eglin Installation Boundary
- River
- Highway
- Secondary Road
- Railroad

* Student Teacher Ratio based on 2008 data

Prepared by:

HDR

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Map F2.11: High Schools and Post-Secondary Institutions - Niceville/Valparaiso

QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life can be defined as one's personal satisfaction with the conditions under which one lives (as distinct from material comfort). Recreational and cultural facilities are important factors in the quality of life of an area. These resources include: parks, boat ramps, beach accesses, hiking trails, canoe trails, hunting areas, campgrounds, firing ranges, libraries, museums, performing arts facilities, and historical sites. They can make places more attractive, assist in revitalization, encourage community cohesion, promote health and well-being and support more sustainable development. Growth needs to be managed in such a way as to not put an undue burden on these existing facilities, and thereby negatively affect the overall quality of life in the area.

In order to assess the impacts of growth, an Existing Conditions Atlas was first completed which inventoried recreational and cultural facilities. Based upon the existing conditions found, this Quality of Life Report determines what the existing level of service (LOS) is for the various resources in each focus area, what the impact of the BRAC will be, and provides recommendations on how to manage the impacts of the BRAC growth on recreational and cultural facilities. The LOS standard for each resource is often defined by the city or county comprehensive plan, and thus can vary between cities and counties. For resources without an LOS standard defined in the comprehensive plan for the Cities of Niceville or Valparaiso or Okaloosa County, Florida's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is used. For resources with no defined LOS, an analysis of existing conditions is given.

To determine current LOS and the BRAC impact, population estimates were derived through a few sources. The incoming BRAC population numbers are estimates developed by the Haas Center and are used to determine approximate impacts. The 2009 current population numbers are derived from DemographicsNow. Florida Demographic Estimating Conference data was used for 2008 total unincorporated county population.

PARKS

CITY PARKS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The Cities of Niceville and Valparaiso both designate their park LOS standard as 1 acre per 1,000 people. Niceville has 8 parks totaling 44.98 and Valparaiso has 10 parks summing 24.1 acres. With a population of 11,883 in 2009, Niceville would only require 11.88 park acres. Thus, Niceville is far above its standard. Likewise, Valparaiso had a population of 5,864 in 2009 requiring 5.86 acres, and also far exceeds its standard.

BRAC IMPACTS

The BRAC will have the largest impact on the local parks where the population is anticipated to reside. This impact can be calculated by finding the difference in the minimum acreage required to meet the LOS standard before and after the BRAC.

The estimated BRAC population for the Niceville/Valparaiso area is 625 people and is broken out for this analysis in the same way as the Fort Walton Beach area. Of the military personnel in the area, 87 percent live in Niceville and 13 percent in Valparaiso. This formula allocates 545 people to Niceville and 80 to Valparaiso. These numbers will have a very minimal impact on both municipalities, raising the acres required by 0.545 and 0.08 acres. Both municipalities will continue to have a surplus of park acres after the BRAC build-out.

ACTION PLAN

The Cities of Niceville and Valparaiso are well-equipped in terms of park acreage. This plan recommends that the Cities

- Monitor the location of new housing construction and the need for new athletic programs on a semi-annual basis to accommodate BRAC population.
- Evaluate available vacant land.
- Coordinate with the Air Force and Okaloosa County regarding athletic programs. The programs at Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field are currently well used and will have additional demand with the BRAC population.
- Consider requiring developers to set aside acreage for new residential development. One acre of usable land per 100 dwelling units or 5 percent of the total usable land to be developed

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

is suggested. For developments between 25 and 99 units a fee of \$250 or 435sq ft per unit is suggested. Multi-family developments of 100 units should consider 150 sq ft per unit for recreation land.

COUNTY PARKS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The Okaloosa County LOS standard is 0.6 acres per 1,000 people according to its comprehensive plan. The unincorporated population in 2008 was approximately 117,526 which would mean 70.5 acres of park space would be required to meet the LOS standard. Okaloosa County has 271 acres of parks, far exceeding this standard.

A more recent recreation study, *The Okaloosa County Parks and Recreation System Master Plan*, sets higher standards but has not been incorporated as part of the comprehensive plan. This study used the SCORP standards which are 2 acres per 1,000 for neighborhood and community parks. To meet the SCORP standard, Okaloosa County would require 235 acres of neighborhood and community parks. According to this standard, the County is 162 acres deficient in neighborhood parks and 37 acres deficient in community parks (counting proposed parks). The *Master Plan* provides strategies and recommendations for improving the park system to meet these higher standards. Okaloosa County's Capital Improvements Plan for the fiscal years 2010-2014 allocates funds for the acquisition of land and construction of parks each year.

BRAC IMPACTS

The BRAC will have the largest impact on the local parks where the population is anticipated to reside. This impact can be calculated by finding the difference in the minimum acreage required to meet the LOS standard before and after the BRAC.

According to the LOS standard in the County's comprehensive plan, the BRAC will only require an additional 0.6 acre and the County will still have close to 200 acres surplus after the BRAC build-out. Using this as the standard, the BRAC will not have a significant impact.

If the County were to use the standards from its *Master Plan*, the BRAC would require an additional 1.9 acres for both neighborhood and community parks for a total of 3.8 acres. This would be a relatively small impact since

the County is already very deficient by the SCORP standards.

ACTION PLAN

Using the Okaloosa County comprehensive plan LOS, no additional park acreage would be required to meet the county LOS. However, this plan recommends the County do the following:

- Monitor the location of new housing construction and the need for new athletic programs on a semi-annual basis to accommodate BRAC population.
- Coordinate with the Cities of Crestview, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, and Valparaiso and the Air Force in acquiring new land for recreation, building new facilities, and organizing programs.
- Consider requiring developers to set aside acreage for new residential development. One acre of usable land per 100 dwelling units or 5 percent of the total usable land to be developed is suggested. For developments between 25 and 99 units a fee of \$250 or 435sq ft per unit is suggested. Multi-family developments of 100 units should consider 150 sq ft per unit for recreation land.

EGLIN AFB AND HURLBURT FIELD PARKS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

In addition to the previously discussed parks, Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field have parks open to DOD personnel and guests that will also serve the incoming population. Eglin AFB has 2 active parks, including ball fields and an outdoor recreation center and 6 passive parks. The Eglin AFB Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program offers a youth sports program that is well used and also has a fitness center and community swimming pool both identified as over-used. The use of the pool as an aquatic training facility for military personnel further increases this burden. An additional fitness center is planned to open in fiscal year 2014.

Hurlburt Field has 5 active parks, including paintball fields, a skate park, an aquatic center and softball fields. Hurlburt Field also has 3 passive parks. The Hurlburt Field MWR Program also has a youth sports program that is well used.

BRAC IMPACTS

Eglin AFB does not have a defined LOS standard for parks and recreation, therefore exact impacts in terms of LOS

F2. OKALOOSA – NICEVILLE/VALPARAISO

cannot be easily measured. However, given the information that several of the facilities are well-used or over-used, it can be assumed that the BRAC will impact these facilities.

ACTION PLAN

This plan recommends that Eglin AFB

- Create a LOS standard at least comparable to that of Fort Walton Beach to ensure the high quality of its programs is preserved.
- Expand its existing recreational facilities to accommodate the additional military population. There appears to be vacant land adjacent to the East gate recreation area that could accommodate additional recreational facilities including ball fields.
- Coordinate with the adjacent Cities of Crestview, Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, and Valparaiso and Okaloosa County in acquiring new land for recreation, building new facilities, and organizing programs.

BOAT RAMPS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Florida's SCORP defines the LOS for boat ramps to be 1 lane per 5,000 people. This will be the standard used to evaluate the counties. The County boat ramp analysis includes city ramps and populations.

With a 2009 county population of 183,634, Okaloosa County would require 37 boat lanes to meet the LOS standard. The County currently has 41 boat ramps. Thus, even assuming each ramp only has one lane, the County would still meet the LOS standard.

In addition to the previously mentioned boat ramp facilities, Eglin AFB has 12 boat ramps, at least 9 of which are available for public use.

BRAC IMPACTS

The BRAC adds an additional 2 lanes required to meet the LOS standard. This still leaves the County with a surplus of 2 lanes.

ACTION PLAN

The BRAC will not cause the County to be below its LOS standard so no action plan is recommended.

BEACH ACCESS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Florida's SCORP LOS standard for public beach access is to have a public access every 0.5 mile within 0.25 mile of the beach, and 0.5 acre for every 1,000 people. For this analysis, the 0.5 acre per 1,000 people will be used since that measurement is most relevant to population growth.

Given the estimated population of 183,634 in 2009, Okaloosa County would require 92 acres of beach access. According to its Recreation Master Plan, Okaloosa County has 21 beach accesses/beach parks with 161 acres.

BRAC IMPACTS

The difference the BRAC population would make in the minimum amount of acres required to meet the LOS standard is 4.9 acres. This will be a very small impact, if at all, and would not cause the County to drop below the LOS standard.

ACTION PLAN

Since the County's beach access system will not be noticeably impacted, no action plans are recommended.

HIKING TRAILS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Florida's SCORP standard is 1 mile of trail per every 6,750 people. This is the standard used to measure the LOS of hiking trails in this study.

With an estimated 2009 population of 183,634, the SCORP requires 27 miles of hiking trails. Okaloosa County exceeds this standard with 41 miles of hiking trails including the Florida National Scenic Trail, Florida Trail, Florida Trail Connector and trails located in Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Recreation Area and the Yellow River Water Management Area.

BRAC IMPACTS

The BRAC will not bring Okaloosa County below the LOS standard. The increase in the minimum miles required to meet the LOS standard is 1.46 for Okaloosa County. The County will still have more than enough hiking trail miles to be over the standard.

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ACTION PLAN

Since the impacts are very minimal and the County will exceed the LOS standard, no action plans are recommended.

CANOE TRAILS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There is no SCORP LOS standard for canoe trails and the County does not define a standard in its comprehensive plans.

However, Okaloosa County has 83 miles of designated canoe trails including the Blackwater River State Canoe Trail, the Shoal River State Canoe Trail and the Yellow River State Canoe Trail, providing ample opportunity for canoeing.

BRAC IMPACTS

Since there is no LOS standard for canoe trails, it cannot be determined if the County is deficient or will be deficient as a result of the BRAC.

ACTION PLAN

Because no impacts are determined, no action plan is recommended.

HUNTING

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There are many opportunities for hunting in the tri-county area. This section focuses on the Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) accessible to the public. There is no standard LOS for hunting areas but the three counties have ample space for hunting that exceeds the needs of the existing population.

Spread out over all three counties is Eglin Reservation which has approximately 275,000 acres in 15 management units available for hunting by the general public. These areas are open on a permit basis and are subject to closing by the Air Force due to training and operation activities

In addition to Eglin Reservation, Okaloosa County contains parts of the Blackwater River State Forest and Water Management Area and the Yellow River WMA. Hunting is open in each of these areas with the proper permit, stamp and license according to the season and game.

Table F2.17
Hunting Areas in Okaloosa County

Area	Acres
Blackwater River WMA	58,802
Yellow River WMA	10,833

BRAC IMPACTS

The BRAC may affect the times in which hunting on Eglin Reservation will be permitted. However, hunters can choose one of the other areas should Eglin Reservation be closed to hunting for a period.

Without a LOS standard, it cannot be numerically determined if the BRAC would put a burden on existing resources. However, with so much land available for hunting, it can safely be assumed that the quality of hunting areas will not be affected by the BRAC.

ACTION PLAN

Because there is no LOS standard for this resource, no action plan is necessary.

CAMPING

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

This study looked at camping areas on publicly-owned lands only. Several private campgrounds exist in the tri-county area however, public recreation cannot be guaranteed on those properties in the long-term. The LOS for campgrounds is 1 acre per 6,750 persons as defined by Florida's SCORP. By this standard the acreage of campground required in Okaloosa County is 27.21 acres.

Campgrounds in Okaloosa County include Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park, Henderson Beach State Park, Blackwater River State Forest, Yellow River WMA, Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field. Yellow River WMA allows primitive camping throughout its 10,833 acres in Okaloosa County. The other areas have designated camping sites. Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park includes 42 campsites. Henderson Beach State Park has 60 campsites. Blackwater River State Forest has 66 campsites within Hurricane Lake, South Hurricane Lake, Karik Lake and South Karik Lake. Within Eglin AFB in Okaloosa County there are 10 camping areas with approximately 5 primitive campsites each. These areas include: Anderson Pond, Blue Springs, Carr Landing, Duck

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Pond, Gin Hole Landing, Walton Pond, Metts Bluff, Rocky Creek, Timberlake Pond and Kepner Pond. Additionally, there are two FAMCAMPs at Postal Point and Camp Robbins open to DOD personnel and guests with a combined total of 100 sites. Hurlburt Field also has a FAMCAMP open to DOD personnel and guests with 60 sites. Acreages for these sites are unknown. However, the acreage of Yellow River WMA is enough alone to meet the LOS standard.

BRAC IMPACTS

The tri-county area totals at least 634 designated campsites and camping is allowed throughout the Escambia River WMA, Yellow River WMA and Choctawhatchee WMA which sum 58,070 acres. Because the area has an extensive amount of land available for camping, the BRAC will not impact camping LOS.

ACTION PLAN

No action plan is recommended since there are no impacts to the LOS.

FIRING RANGES

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There are three firing ranges in the tri-county area. These are the Santa Rosa Sporting Clays & Gun Club/FWC, the Shoal River Sporting Clays in Okaloosa County and the Rifle and Pistol Club at Hurlburt Field. The Santa Rosa Sporting Clays Gun Club/FWC and the Shoal River Sporting Clays are open to the public and include outdoor pistol and rifle ranges. The Rifle and Pistol Club at Hurlburt Field is well used and open to DOD personnel and guests only. It includes a 10-lane 45 yard range and a 14-lane 200 yard range.

A new skeet and trap range is planned to open in late 2009 between Hurlburt Field and the Eglin Main Base. There is also a small, privately operated archery range located at Eglin that will close due to BRAC impacts and may relocate to the new facility.

There is no defined LOS standard for firing ranges.

BRAC IMPACTS

With no LOS standard, analysis of the resource is not viable. It is recognized that the BRAC may bring more people to the firing ranges. This may, however, be a benefit for privately-owned ranges. Numerical impacts cannot be determined without an LOS standard.

ACTION PLAN

Because no LOS standard exists for this resource, no action plans are recommended. If firing ranges became overburdened, that would present an opportunity for the private sector to capitalize on the need.

LIBRARIES

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

According to the 2004 Florida Public Library Standards, 0.6 square feet of building area is required per capita to provide the lowest (essential) quality LOS. The Okaloosa County library system is currently operating below this LOS standard.

Table F2.18
Existing Library LOS for Okaloosa County

Area	Sq Ft	2009 Population	Sq Ft / Capita
Okaloosa	90,000	183,634	0.49

The Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative serves residents of Okaloosa County with six participating member libraries including a branch in Crestview, Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Mary Esther, Niceville and Valparaiso. The participating libraries are operated by the cities in which they reside and are financially supplemented by Okaloosa County. Okaloosa County also provides in-kind support such as technology support. Participating libraries are responsible for their own long-range planning.

According to the Library Cooperative administrator, every branch is busy. This is attributable to an overall population increase, population surge in the winter months with the “snow birds” and revenue decrease in recent years resulting in less staff and fewer operating hours.

The Okaloosa County Public Library system is currently operating at about 0.49 square feet per capita, making it about 20,180 square feet short of the state standard.

Other Libraries

Several other libraries are located in the area including Eglin Base Library (Okaloosa County), Hurlburt Base Library (Okaloosa County), Northwest Florida State College (Niceville), Shalimar Library, Troy State University (Ft. Walton Beach) and UWF/OWCC Joint Library (Ft.

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Walton Beach). However, none of these are open to the public except for the Shalimar Library.

BRAC IMPACTS

The Okaloosa County library system will continue failing to meet the state LOS with the BRAC. The current needs of the system based on 2009 population are 110,180 square feet for Okaloosa County. The BRAC population increases will raise the number of square feet required to meet the standard by 5,900 square feet. The estimated BRAC population in Niceville/Valparaiso would add another 375 square feet to the amount required to meet the LOS.

ACTION PLAN

The estimated BRAC impact in the Niceville/Valparaiso area is not expected to be enough to require expansion or construction of a new library. The Cities should coordinate with Okaloosa County in monitoring the location of new housing and population growth and the LOS of the library system.

MUSEUMS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There are eleven museums in the tri-county area. There is no defined LOS standard for museums.

There are nine museums in Okaloosa County. Three of these are located in Fort Walton Beach including the Fort Walton Beach Heritage Park and Cultural Center, the Emerald Coast Science Center and the Fort Walton Beach Art Museum. The Fort Walton Beach Heritage Park and Cultural Center contains the Fort Walton Temple Mound, the Indian Temple Mound, the 1918 Garnier Post Office and the Camp Walton School House. The Emerald Coast Science Center is a hands-on museum geared toward children and includes an astrology program. The Fort Walton Beach Art Museum features American painting, sculptures, pottery and Chinese artifacts and also hosts traveling exhibits.

The City of Destin contains two museums. The Destin History and Fishing Museum offers visitors an exhibit of award winning fish caught locally, a collection of antique rods and reels, the Primose fishing boat built in 1925 and vintage photographs of the area. The Old Destin Post Office contains artifacts, photos and historic objects reflective of the area's early culture.

The remaining museums include the Air Armament Museum on Eglin AFB, the Baker Block Museum, the Heritage Museum of NW Florida in Valparaiso and the Mattie Kelly Arts Center in Niceville. The Air Armament Museum includes a theater, Air Commando-Special Operations exhibit, weapons vault and gift shop. The Baker Block Museum and the Heritage Museum of NW Florida each contain exhibits and collections related to local history, heritage and culture; various collections for research; and a book store and gift shop. The Mattie Kelly Arts Center contains two art galleries showcasing about 20 different international, national and regional exhibitions each year.

BRAC IMPACTS

Since there is no LOS standard, it cannot be determined what the capacity is and if it will be exceeded. With added population, museums may have more visitors. Additional visitors would likely be a benefit to museums by increasing revenues.

ACTION PLAN

Because no LOS standard is defined, no action plans are recommended. Even if the BRAC did cause a noticeable increase in visitors, the best course of action would likely be to hire additional employees or expand exhibits and programs, which could be considered a benefit.

PERFORMING ARTS

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There are four performing arts facilities in the tri-county area. Three are located in Okaloosa County including Mattie Kelly Arts Center, Stage Crafters Community Theatre and Fort Walton Beach Municipal Auditorium. The Mattie Kelly Arts Center has the 1,650-seat Mainstage Theater, the 195-seat Sprint Theater and an outdoor amphitheater that can accommodate up to 4,000. The Stage Crafters Community Theatre offers several plays and musicals throughout the year. The Fort Walton Beach Municipal Auditorium has a 400 plus capacity and is used for performing arts, meetings, seminars and civic projects.

Walton County contains the fourth facility which is the Seaside Repertory Theater located in Seaside. This theater offers several plays and musicals throughout the year and also provides outdoor shows in various locations along the 30-A corridor.

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There is no defined LOS standard for performing arts facilities.

BRAC IMPACTS

Since there is no defined LOS standard, it cannot be determined if the BRAC would overburden performing art facilities. However, if the added population brought more business, that would likely be considered a benefit.

ACTION PLANS

Because no LOS standard is defined, no action plans are recommended. If there were a significant increase in attendance to performing arts functions, it would be likely that the private sector would fill in the gap since there is opportunity for profit.

HISTORICAL SITES

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Historical sites were found and mapped using data from the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). There are 18 sites listed on the NRHP in Santa Rosa County. These sites are mostly clustered in Milton and Gulf Breeze and one is located in the Midwest of the county. In Okaloosa County there are 13 sites on the NRHP located mostly in Fort Walton Beach and Eglin AFB. In Walton County there are 6 NRHP sites with 4 in DeFuniak Springs, one in Eglin AFB and one near Destin.

There is no defined LOS standard for historical sites.

BRAC IMPACTS

Without an LOS standard, numerical impacts cannot be determined.

ACTION PLANS

Because no LOS standard is defined, no action plans are recommended.