

# Orange County Vision 2050 Explainer + Fact Sheet



## Why is Orange County updating its development rules?

If you've ever sat in traffic — and let's face it, you have — you've probably wondered with frustration why the congestion is so bad.

Certainly, the increasing population hasn't helped. Orange County has grown by more than 530,000 people since 2000. But what you probably don't realize is that the County's own development rules, which have been around since the 1950s, have also played a factor.

The County's outdated way of managing growth has contributed to several problems: congested roadways, vehicle emissions, rising housing prices, non-walkable communities, and more.

With Orange County's population expected to increase by 500,000 people by 2050, it's time for the county to better prepare for the future in a smarter and more sustainable way with new development rules called Orange Code. In conjunction with Orange Code, the County is also amending its state-required Comprehensive Plan, which is being renamed "[Vision 2050](#)." This serves as a guide for growth and development for the next 25 years.

## Shaping the future

For as long as most folks can remember, the County has kept things like homes, shops, offices, and restaurants separate. This separation of uses has created sprawling communities, and it's why it feels like you can't do anything without a car! Hello, traffic jams.

With Vision 2050 and Orange Code, the County is focusing more on the look, shape and architecture of buildings instead of how the buildings are used. This will create more walkable destinations where people can live, work, play and learn. In some instances, using cars may become an option rather than a necessity.



Together, Vision 2050 and Orange Code help ensure a smart and sustainable development framework that directs growth to the right places. They also promote the community's desire for a more interconnected street network and accessibility to affordable housing options.



### **What areas of Orange County are best suited for new growth?**

A key element of Vision 2050 is to direct growth to the right places. That means preserving established suburban neighborhoods, rural places and natural spaces. It also means directing most new development to the urban sector, which is where 44% of the future population growth in Orange County is expected to go. These “targeted sectors” include high population centers in unincorporated Orange County, such as areas around the I-Drive tourism corridor, near UCF, along Semoran Blvd. and near downtown Orlando.

### **How does Vision 2050 address housing affordability?**

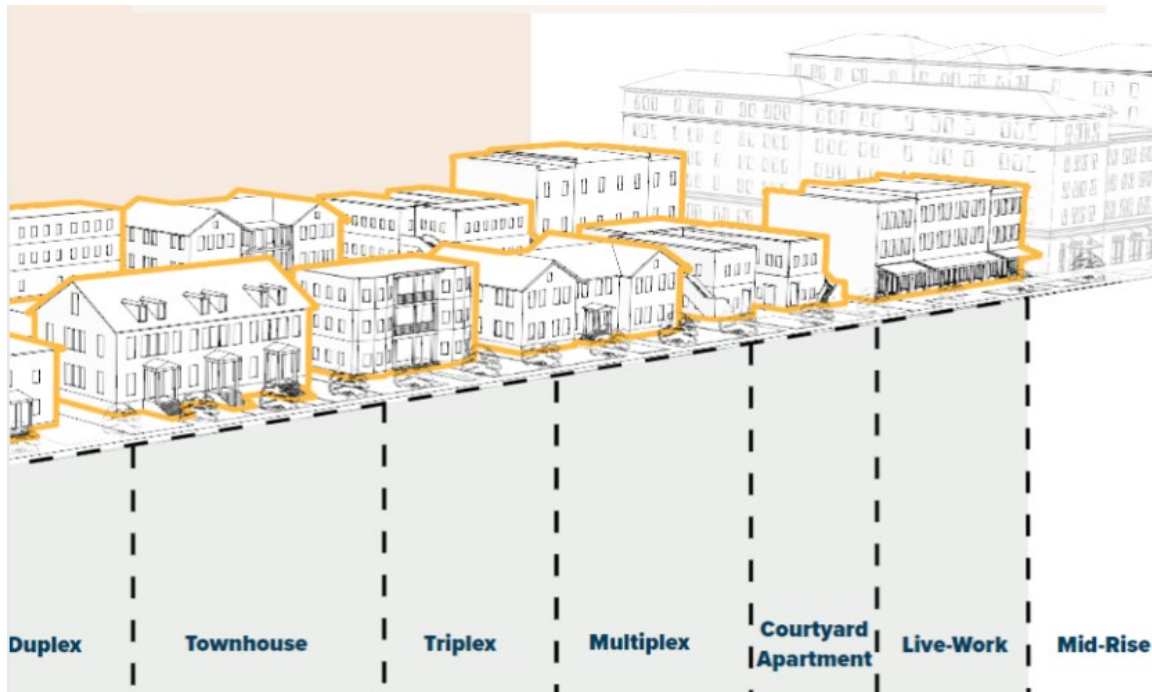
The National Low Income Housing Coalition’s Gap Report estimates that Florida has the second worst housing affordability rate in the country, with only 23 affordable and available rental homes per 100 extremely low-income renter households. Affordability is even worse within the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford Metropolitan Area at 15 affordable and available units per 100 extremely low-income families. The report also estimates that within the Metropolitan Area, 89 percent of this same extremely low-income group is severely cost burdened.

Orange County established the [Housing for All initiative](#) in 2019 with the goal of prioritizing short and long-term solutions to address the affordable housing crisis. Vision 2050 aligns with this mission.



Overall, more affordable housing products like townhomes, duplexes and triplexes aren't well promoted under the County's current development framework, and existing development regulations often make it challenging and costly for developers and residents to pursue them.

Vision 2050 and Orange Code will accommodate a broader and more affordable range of housing opportunities consisting of single-family homes, apartments and everything in between.



### **Does Orange Code eliminate Single-Family zoning districts?**

No. However, in certain residential areas other housing options will be allowed, such as duplexes and townhomes. Depending on location, these more affordable housing types may be contingent upon Board approval of a rezoning application. In other existing suburban neighborhoods, Orange Code will continue to recognize predominate single-family zoning districts.

### **Orange County is not alone planning for growth this way.**

Development codes that focus on the look and shape of buildings are called Form-Based Codes. These are becoming more common and have been adopted by more than 387 government jurisdictions nationwide some of which include Miami, West Palm Beach, Denver, Montgomery, Cincinnati, Austin and Nashville among many others, In 2010,

Nashville replaced its conventional zoning with a “Community Character” approach to policy that is based on the look and feel of neighborhoods, centers, corridors, and open spaces. The change has resulted in a 75% increase in taxable value in the districts where the approach is used, compared to a 28% increase in the county over the same period, according to a report by the city.

Orange County already has also adopted Form-Based Codes in the I-Drive District and in other master planned communities such as Silverleaf in Horizon West and in certain Innovation Way communities.

There are also other counties which have adopted Form Based Codes. These include Dona Ana County, New Mexico, Beaufort County, South Carolina, and Marin County, California.



### **Addressing large shopping centers with too much parking.**

As you drive around Orange County, you may notice a lot of old strip malls and shopping centers with large parking lots in the front. This is a result of traditional zoning practices that establish where commercial uses must go.



Whenever businesses within these strip malls close or leave, the County's current development rules make it difficult to redevelop into something else. That means that too often, these properties become sprawling, vacant eye sores.

Under Vision 2050 and Orange Code, the County wants to see these properties in urban areas transformed into live, work and play environments with a mix of housing, shops, restaurants, and offices.



**Who was involved in the Vision 2050 planning process?**

Vision 2050 has been in the works for years and its formulation is based on input from stakeholders, residents, consultants, staff and elected officials.

### Response to Community Priorities:

- Increase neighborhood livability: *Preservation, Protection and Activation*
- Address housing availability, choice, and affordability
- Align public infrastructure with private investment
- Support multimodal transportation and pedestrian-friendly streets
- Promote sustainable development: compact growth and design elements

### Does Vision 2050 encourage urban density everywhere?

No. the Vision 2050 development framework includes a Sector Map that identifies six (6) distinct areas defined by their existing characteristics and development potential. These sectors address new development, where development should be limited, and areas that should be protected or preserved.

#### SECTOR AREAS

- **Targeted:** New and intensified developments can occur.
- **Established:** Growth will happen through infill or redevelopment, but the character of established communities is not expected to change significantly.
- **Intended:** Applies particularly to master-planned communities which requires systematic and coordinated planning for future infrastructure.
- **Special:** Applies to large areas such as power plants, landfills, major industrial areas, sports facilities, and airports.
- **Rural:** Agricultural activities, large lot and very limited development.
- **Preserve:** Applies to environmentally sensitive publicly or privately owned lands that have been preserved or targeted for environmental protection.

### Will Vision 2050 impact my neighborhood?

A guiding principle in the Vision 2050 plan is to protect and strengthen existing neighborhoods while creating healthy and sustainable new communities. This can only be achieved by locating a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses close to

employment centers. While the plan provides for a more efficient use of land in targeted urban areas and promotes densities that support transit and optimizes public utilities and services, it also protects important rural communities and preserves our significant natural resources.

### **Will the community have an opportunity to weigh in on new development projects with Vision 2050?**

The community will continue to be able to provide their input during public hearings and community meetings for any comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings and subdivision plans.



### **When is Vision 2050 scheduled to be voted on by the Board of County Commissioners?**

Vision 2050 is tentatively scheduled to go before the Board of County Commissioners for final adoption consideration on Oct. 29, 2024.

For questions, email [planning@ocfl.net](mailto:planning@ocfl.net)