

# PINE HILLS LAND ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### INTRODUCTION

As one of Orange County's oldest neighborhoods, Pine Hills is at a critical juncture. The neighborhood has the opportunity to rebuild and become a stronger community with a defined sense of place, unique identity, cultural diversity and stable neighborhoods. Conversely, Pine Hills and its citizens could continue with the status quo which will likely result in continued disinvestments and declining quality of life. The choice is clear, the status quo is simply not an option. Rather, the community has spoken and defined a vision for becoming a truly great neighborhood.

The Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan presents the existing conditions analysis, community vision, issues and opportunities, and a preliminary design concept for the future of Pine Hills. In addition, it outlines several action steps that the community of Pine Hills must take to turn its vision into a reality.

### Impetus for the Plan

The Pine Hills Community Council (PHCC) and the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division (OCNS) organized to engage the neighborhoods of Pine Hills in a land use planning process to prepare a land analysis and

strategic plan for the Greater Pine Hills area. Pine Hills residents established the PHCC in 1976 and its members have a long history of promoting the quality of life for all Pine Hills citizens. Over the past decade, transitioning land uses and an increasingly diverse and growing population has led to negative impacts on traffic, pedestrian safety, businesses, schools, and neighborhoods.

In March 2003, the PHCC applied for a ReNEW Grant through the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division. The ReNEW (Residents and Neighborhoods Empowered to Win) program supports and assists citizens and organizations in improving the physical and social qualities of neighborhoods by providing grants. The PHCC was awarded the Neighborhood Planning Grant for the development and implementation of a small area or neighborhood strategic plan. In addition to funding from ReNEW, the Orange County Board of Commissioners selected Pine Hills as a Safe Neighborhood in 2000. The Safe Neighborhood Program is a tool for revitalizing Orange County's older and transitioning communities and assists residents and community stakeholders in reclaiming communities before crime and deterioration create blighted conditions. The Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan is one of the major actions made possible by the funding sources noted above.

### REGIONAL CONTEXT

Pine Hills is located in the northwest section Orange County, and is generally bounded by Apopka-Vineland Road to the west, Clarcona-Ocoee Road to the north, Pine Hills Road to the east, and the East-West Expressway to the south. Pine Hills is anchored by a strong residential community, predominantly single family, and is home to nearly 66,000 residents in 22,000 households. Pine Hills' population accounts for roughly 7 percent of Orange County's population, and just over 6 percent of Orange County's households.

Pine Hills is well connected to Central Florida through its location as the western boundary of Orange County and as the eastern boundary to the City of Ocoee. Pine Hills residents have access to employment and services in Orange County and the Cities of Orlando and Ocoee. Several major employment centers are located within close proximity to Pine Hills, including downtown Orlando, the theme parks, Health Central Hospital, and several retail and service providers along major arterials including

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State Route 50/ West Colonial Drive, Silver Star Road, and Hiawasse Road.

As one of Orange County's oldest neighborhoods, Pine Hills has felt the impacts of becoming an increasingly smaller portion of a rapidly growing county. Though growing in population, Pine Hills has not grown as quickly as Orange County or other neighboring municipalities. In fact, much of Pine Hills is built-out, with little room left for any significant new residential development.

***The future of Pine Hills rests with identifying and implementing community redevelopment opportunities.***

## **REGIONAL TRENDS**

Several regional trends have affected Pine Hills. First, Central Florida has experienced a surge in new housing development. Families and newcomers are choosing to move into newer homes in newly developed areas of the region. Second, there have been substantial recent investments to downtown Orlando and the surrounding neighborhoods. Central Florida residents are recognizing the value of investing in properties within close proximity to the central city, and are choosing to purchase real estate in

these neighborhoods. Third, housing choices are heavily influenced by the school district ratings and FCAT scoring, and communities such as Winter Park have scored very high in recent years – causing demand for housing in highly-rated school districts to increase. Conversely, Evans High School in the center of Pine Hills has scored low in recent years.

Orange County is projected to continue growing rapidly through the next decade, and for that reason Pine Hills is well positioned to share in that growth for several reasons. First, Pine Hills already has the infrastructure to support redevelopment. Second, Pine Hills is in close proximity (10 miles) to downtown Orlando and other key employment centers. Third, major transportation connections are present, including connections to several bus routes and regional highways.

***By targeting investments and making strategic improvements to the infrastructure and aesthetics, recognizing the role Pine Hills can have within the region and focusing on quality-of-life, Pine Hills can fulfill its place in Orange County as an important residential community.***

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Pine Hills has historically been a stable neighborhood in terms of population, which has increased by 24 percent between 1990 and 2000. However, growth in other areas of Orange County have competed with Pine Hills, causing Pine Hills' share of county population to decrease slightly, and further causing retail and employment to relocate. This trend has resulted in an underserved population with residents forced to travel outside of the neighborhood for many services. This increased need for travel places unnecessary pressure on Pine Hills' already crowded road network.

Several unique features differentiate Pine Hills from other Orange County neighborhoods. One feature is the diversity. The past decade has seen a substantial increase in minority populations in Pine Hills. Another feature is the high rate of home ownership. Pine Hills' rate of home ownership is considerably higher than in Orange County as a whole, resulting in more stable neighborhoods.

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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***The size and makeup of Pine Hills' population is similar to that of a small city. Other central Florida cities have populations comparable to or smaller than the Pine Hills neighborhood.***

## LAND USE ANALYSIS

Development patterns and socioeconomic characteristics make a profound statement about the character of a place. These features come into play in both a physical sense and through perception; both of which affect civic pride and the level of private investment. In Pine Hills, the strength of the community lies within its close-knit neighborhoods, churches, and public institutions. Proximity to thriving commercial and employment centers like downtown Orlando position Pine Hills well for future economic investment.

However, years of declining private investment have left a legacy of underutilized parcels, vacant or unsightly buildings, and limited commercial uses that presents an image of neglect. Commercial corridors such as Silver Star Road and Pine Hills Road provide examples of how land use patterns can inhibit the marketability of an area both physically and aesthetically, and through negative perceptions

associated with these uses. The proliferation of incompatible land uses and low-quality commercial uses lend to the negative aesthetics of the area, inhibiting new economic investment.

Of particular concern are the land uses along Pine Hills Road south of Silver Star Road. These lots were originally single-family residences that were converted to commercial or professional office when Pine Hills Road was widened. The average lot size is 50 feet by 150 feet, making the conversion from residential difficult. Most requests are for daycares, churches, restaurants or beauty salons - an attempt to fill a need for basic neighborhood services. ***This trend indicates a disconnect between available land and the need for services in Pine Hills.***

## THE VISION

A "top ten" list of the plan goals, or vision statements, was developed from an analysis of issues (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and extensive input from the community. These ten principles were used throughout the neighborhood planning process to guide the data collection, recommendations and strategies. It should be noted that these statements are in no particular order, each being an equally important piece to the total vision.

***1. Maximize the quality of commercial space, particularly at major intersections and along commercial corridors.***

***2. Improve pedestrian and vehicular access between residential and commercial land uses through appropriate regulatory changes in zoning and urban design standards.***

***3. Zoning and future land use should reflect the current market and community land use needs, as well as accommodate future regional population projections.***

***4. Coordinate all planning efforts (city, county, MPO, state, etc.) that affect Pine Hills, especially with regard to transportation planning.***

***5. Make aesthetic improvements throughout the neighborhoods and in commercial areas.***

***6. Develop a neighborhood focal point, or downtown, for Pine Hills residents, workers, and visitors to shop, recreate, and gather for community functions. This focal point***

ideally should contain a community facility or government building such as a library, post office, or school.

7. Focus on business attraction and retention, and diversifying the economic base of Pine Hills.

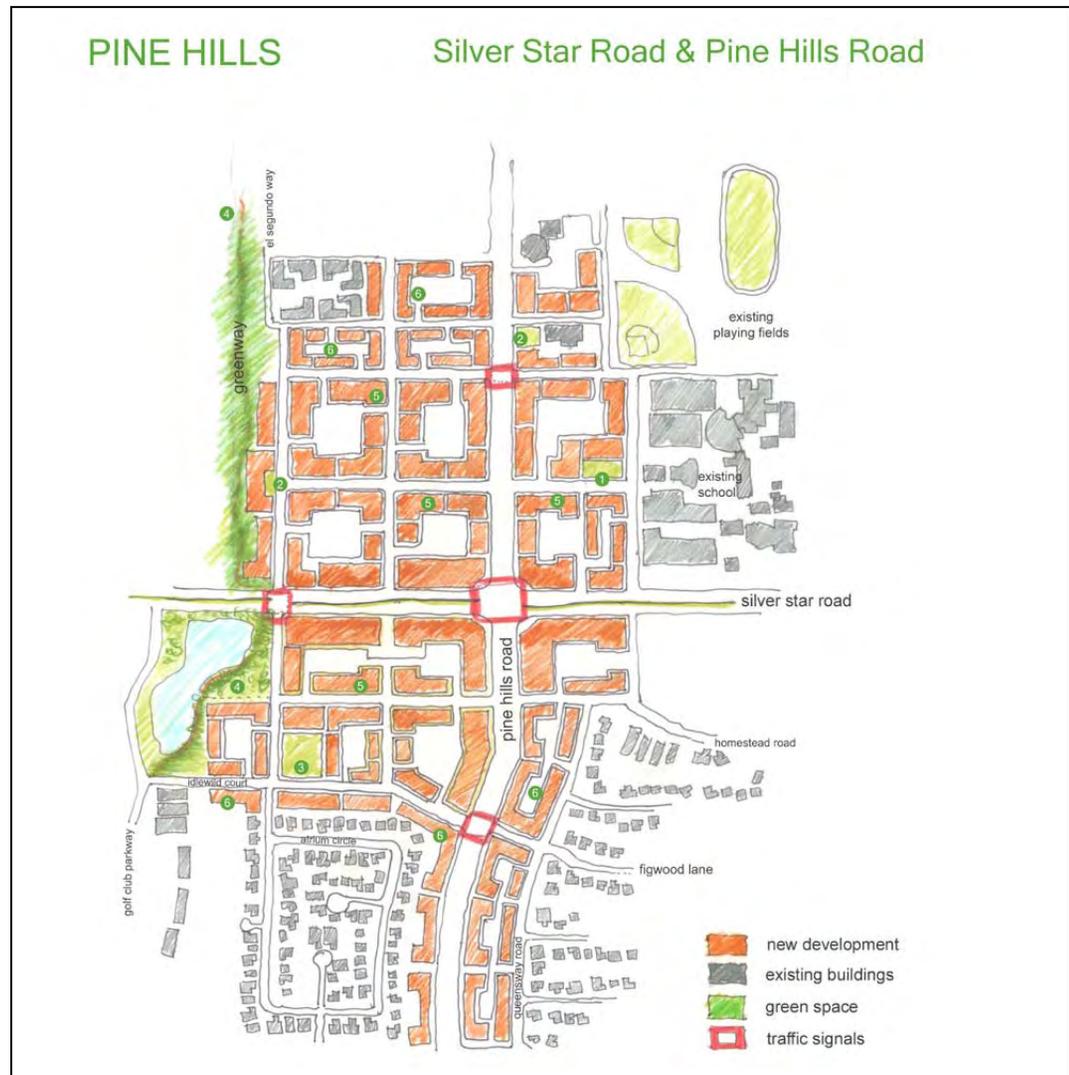
8. Identify sites and strategies for redevelopment.

9. Support homeownership through showcasing Pine Hills' housing stock and promoting programs and education for potential homeowners.

10. Ensure quality community facilities that add to the quality of life and work to attract and retain residents, including providing parks and recreation opportunities, ensuring access to good schools, public safety, and government services.

### The Design Concept

The design concept for Pine Hills emerged from the community's vision and serves as the framework for completing a more detailed master plan. The primary focus of the design concept is the development of a Town Center at



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the intersection of Pine Hills Road and Silver Star Road. The strategy presented here outlines a conceptual, phased implementation plan for redevelopment of the Pine Hills/ Silver Star Road intersection. The strategy begins with the establishment of a location for a loop road, and ends with a new, fully interconnected street system that provides a framework for commercial, civic and residential redevelopment.

## A PLAN FOR ACTION

The final element of the Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan is the Action Plan which contains the steps the community and Orange County need to take to begin the process of place-making and neighborhood building for this important and unique neighborhood. The steps, detailed in Chapter 4 of this report, are outlined below.

**Step #1:** Officially recognize the Pine Hills Town Center; Designate the Town Center on the future land use map.

**Step #2:** Create a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) to facilitate and foster redevelopment in the community.

**Step #3:** Prepare the Pine Hills Town Center Master Redevelopment Plan.

**Step #4:** Identify and initiate funding and implementation strategies; Identify and form strategic partnerships with potential funding partners; Identify financial resources and development incentives; Initiate implementation guidelines and regulations.

**Step #5:** Monitor development and plan implementation.

**Step #6:** Seek out ongoing neighborhood enhancements. For example, establish an ethnic museum and cultural center; develop a creative marketing strategy; promote a theme for Pine Hills; and build neighborhood gateways.

## DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan is organized in the following manner:

**Chapter 1** provides an overview of existing conditions and an overview of demographic and land use trends.

**Chapter 2** outlines the community's vision for Pine Hills, which was developed through a series of public workshops and an analysis of existing conditions.

**Chapter 3** presents the main issues and goals of the plan.

**Chapter 4** presents the critical action items to achieve the vision.

**Chapter 5** provides guidelines for future planning and implementation of the community vision.

# PINE HILLS LAND ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLAN

## 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

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### REGIONAL CONTEXT

Pine Hills is located in the northwest section Orange County, and is generally bounded by Apopka-Vineland Road to the west, Clarcona-Ocoee Road to the north, Pine Hills Road to the east, and the East-West Expressway to the south. Pine Hills is anchored by a strong residential community, and is home to nearly 66,000 residents in 22,000 households. Pine Hills' population accounts for roughly 7 percent of Orange County's population, and just over 6 percent of Orange County's households.

Pine Hills is well connected to Central Florida through its location as the western boundary of Orange County and as the eastern boundary to the City of Ocoee. Pine Hills residents have access to employment and services in Orange County and the cities of Orlando and Ocoee. Several major employment centers are located within close proximity to Pine Hills, including downtown Orlando, the theme parks, Health Central Hospital, and several retail and service providers along major arterials including State Route 50/West Colonial Drive, Silver Star Road, and Hiwassee Road.

As one of Orange County's oldest neighborhoods, Pine Hills has felt the impacts of becoming an **increasingly smaller portion of a rapidly growing county**. Though growing in population, Pine Hills has not grown as quickly

as Orange County or other neighboring municipalities. In fact, much of Pine Hills is built-out, with little room left for any significant new residential development. The future of Pine Hills rests with fostering new redevelopment opportunities.

Several regional trends have affected Pine Hills. First, Central Florida has experienced a surge in new housing development. Families and newcomers are choosing to move into newer homes in newly developed areas of the region. Second, there have been substantial recent investments to downtown Orlando and the surrounding neighborhoods. Central Florida residents are recognizing the value of investing in properties within close proximity to the central city, and are choosing to purchase real estate in these neighborhoods. Third, housing choices are heavily influenced by the school district ratings and FCAT scoring, and communities such as Winter Park have scored very high in recent years – causing demand for housing in highly-rated school districts to increase. In recent years, Evans High School has been among the lower-scoring schools in the region.

Orange County is projected to continue growing rapidly through the next decade, and for that reason Pine Hills is well positioned to share in that growth. First, Pine Hills already has the infrastructure – water, sewer, and roads – to support redevelopment. Second, Pine Hills is in close proximity (10 miles) to downtown Orlando and other key employment centers. Third, major

Commonly Used Acronyms

- PHCC**  
Pine Hills Community Council
- OCNS**  
Orange County Neighborhood Services
- PHSNP**  
Pine Hills Safe Neighborhood Partnership
- ReNEW**  
Residents and Neighborhoods Empowered to Win
- BCC**  
Orange County Board of County Commissioners



## 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

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transportation connections are present, including connections to several bus routes and regional highways.

By targeting investments, making strategic improvements to the infrastructure and aesthetics, recognizing Pine Hills' role in the region, and focusing on quality-of-life for residents, Pine Hills can fulfill its place in Orange County as an important and desirable residential community.

### DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

Pine Hills has historically been a stable neighborhood in terms of population, which has increased by 24 percent between 1990 and 2000. However, growth in other areas of Orange County have competed with Pine Hills, causing Pine Hills' share of county population to decrease slightly, and further causing retail and

employment to relocate. This trend has resulted in an underserved population with residents forced to travel outside of the neighborhood for many services. This increased need for travel places unnecessary pressure on Pine Hills' already crowded road network.

Several unique features differentiate Pine Hills from other Orange County neighborhoods. One feature is the diversity. The past decade has seen a substantial increase in minority populations in Pine Hills. Another feature is the high rate of home ownership. Pine Hills' rate of home ownership is considerably higher than in Orange County as a whole, resulting in more stable neighborhoods. Consistency in the population age is also a noteworthy factor. Often, communities that are suffering economically have experienced losses in the younger population cohorts. This is not the case in Pine Hills, as the largest population cohort is 25 to 44. This trend also presents an important economic opportunity, as a built-in workforce resides in Pine Hills should employers choose to locate or expand their businesses there.

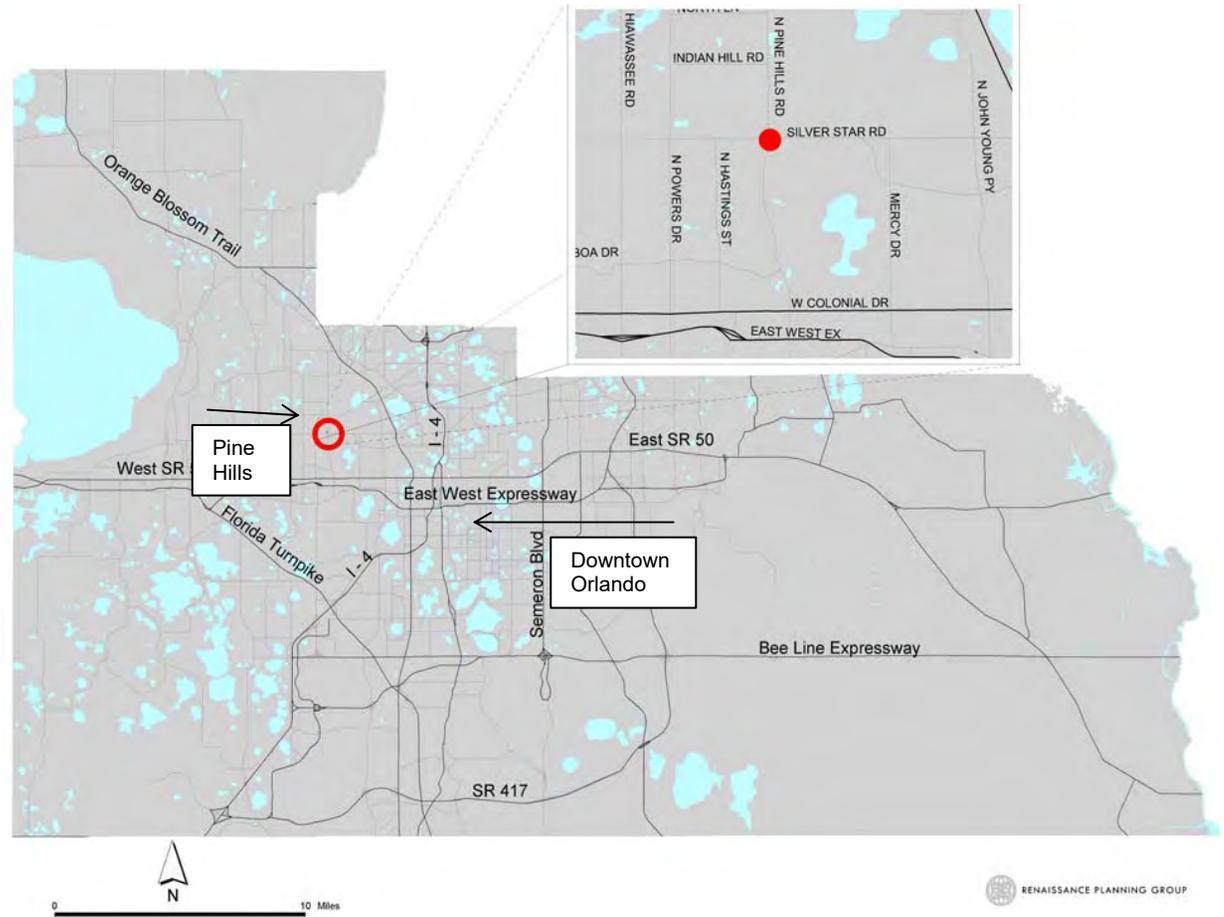
Perhaps the most important factor is the potential of Pine Hills to redevelop and grow. The diverse population, neighborhood stability, and young population are ingredients of a successful neighborhood. Orange County population will

continue to grow, and Pine Hills has an opportunity to share in that growth. Orange County recently released its consultant report on Smart Growth, which encourages infill and redevelopment as a remedy to sprawl. Investing in Pine Hills should be a key strategy in Orange County's efforts to reduce sprawl and enhance the quality of life for County residents.

The size and makeup of Pine Hills' population is similar to that of a small city. Other central Florida cities have populations comparable to or smaller than the Pine Hills neighborhood.

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

This figure depicts Pine Hills as it is situated in the region. As evident in this figure, Pine Hills is well connected to the region through major roadway connections, and is located in close proximity to downtown Orlando.



*Who lives in Pine Hills?*

**Total Population**

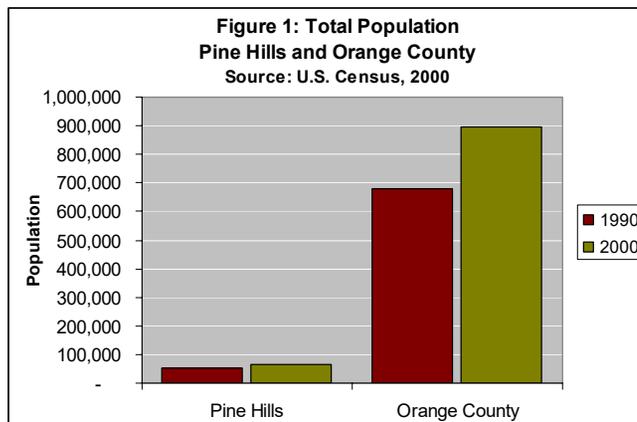
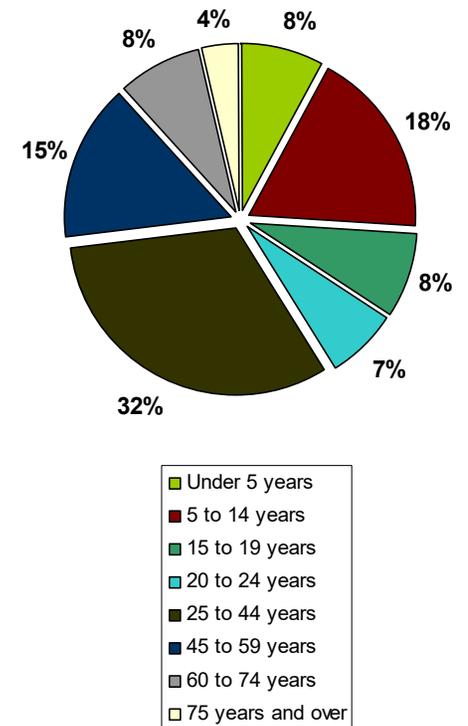
Orange County's population increased from 114,950 in 1950 to 896,344 in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, Orange County experienced a 32.3 percent growth rate and experienced an increase of 218,853 residents. About 75 percent of the increase occurred in unincorporated areas such as Pine Hills.

Pine Hills has also experienced population growth over the last decade. Population in Pine Hills increased by 24 percent between 1990 and 2000. However, despite this increase in population, Pine Hills' share of County population remains at approximately 7 percent.

**Age**

Pine Hills and Orange County have comparable age characteristics for each age cohort. It is significant that the 25 to 44 years of age group is the largest age group in Pine Hills and Orange County, as this age group is most likely to have a family with young children and is often in the market to purchase a single-family home. Many of those in this age group are first-time homebuyers and are likely to have children enrolled in the Orange County public school system. This group is likely looking for stable neighborhoods with good housing stock, quality schools, and access to amenities and services.

**Figure 2: Pine Hills, Breakdown of Population Age**



# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

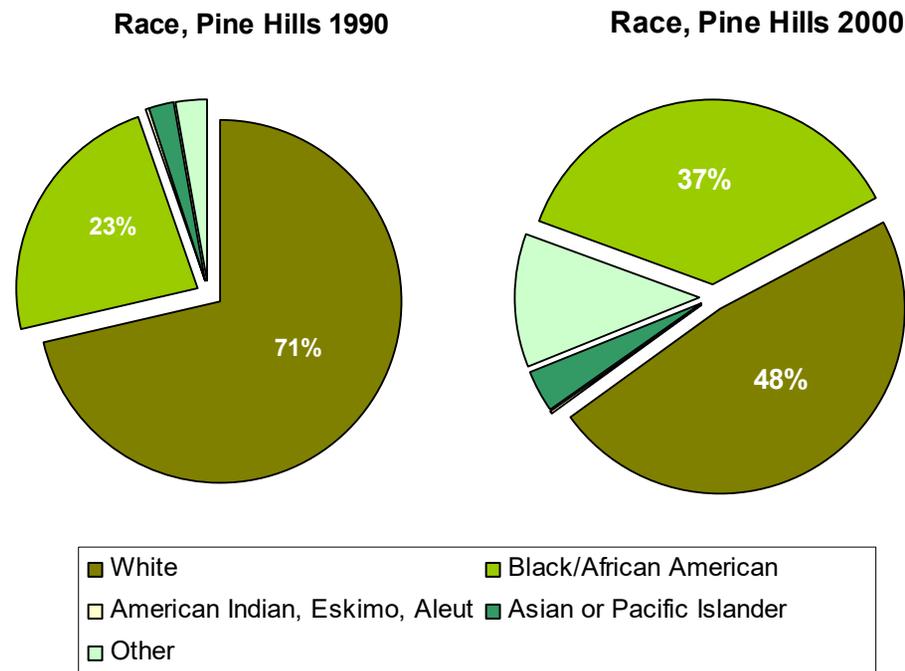
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## Race and Ethnicity

Between 1990 and 2000, Pine Hills experienced significant changes in racial and ethnic composition. From 1990 to 2000, Pine Hills' African-American population increased by 153 percent, compared to a 58 percent increase of Orange County's African-American population. In 2000, approximately 19 percent of Orange County's African-American population resided in Pine Hills. Similarly, the Hispanic population in Pine Hills increased by 115 percent and Asian and Pacific Islanders increased by 101 percent over the last decade.

The increased diversity in racial and ethnic composition is attributable to several factors. First, Pine Hills has a high level of regional accessibility. Second, the housing stock is moderately priced when compared to neighboring communities such as Metro West and College Park. Finally, Pine Hills is rich in community and faith-based organizations that support newcomers of various ethnic backgrounds, making it an attractive destination for new immigrants.

Figure 3: Comparison of Racial Composition, 1990-2000, Pine Hills



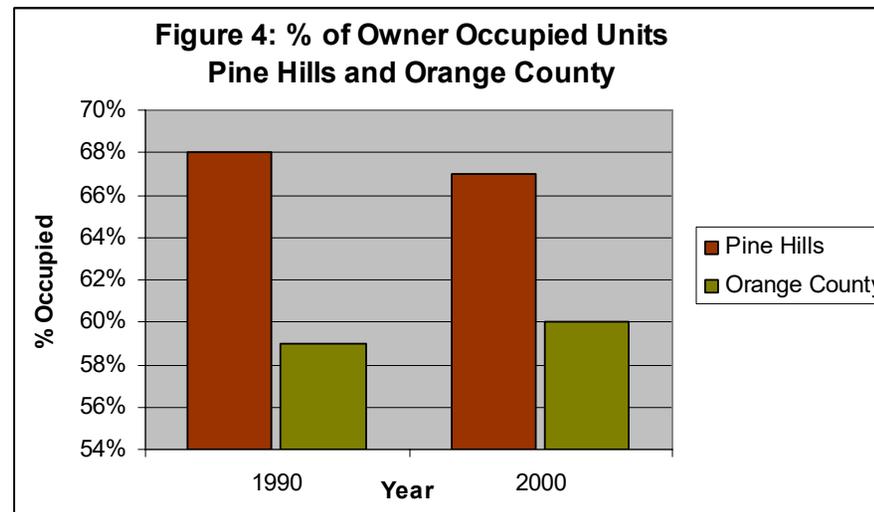
## Housing

Pine Hills comprises just over 6 percent of the total households for Orange County. The number of households in Pine Hills did not increase at the same rate as in Orange County. This reflects the shift in households from Pine Hills and other older neighborhoods of Orange County into the newer housing that is developing in other parts of Orange County. Approximately 95 percent of the housing units in Pine Hills are occupied, which is comparable countywide with 93 percent occupied housing units. A high rate of occupied housing units is an important indicator of neighborhood stability.

Of the total occupied housing units in Pine Hills, about 68 percent are owner occupied and 32 percent are renter occupied. These percentages are slightly higher than the Orange County owner-versus-renter tenure with 60 percent owner and 40 percent renter. Again, this measure is a strong indicator of neighborhood stability.

Over the past decade, while Orange County saw a 34 percent increase in single-family dwellings, Pine Hills experienced only a 15 percent increase. Despite this, Pine Hills' share of single-family detached housing still comprises nearly three-quarters of the total housing stock,

which is significantly higher than Orange County's share of single-family detached housing, which is below 60 percent. This is largely due to the high number of large apartment complexes with over ten units throughout Orange County, whereas Pine Hills has relatively few large apartment complexes. Multi-family housing in Pine Hills comprises smaller-scale apartments containing three to nine units. Interestingly, this category has seen a significant increase in Pine Hills since 1990, from 134 units to over 2,000 units.



# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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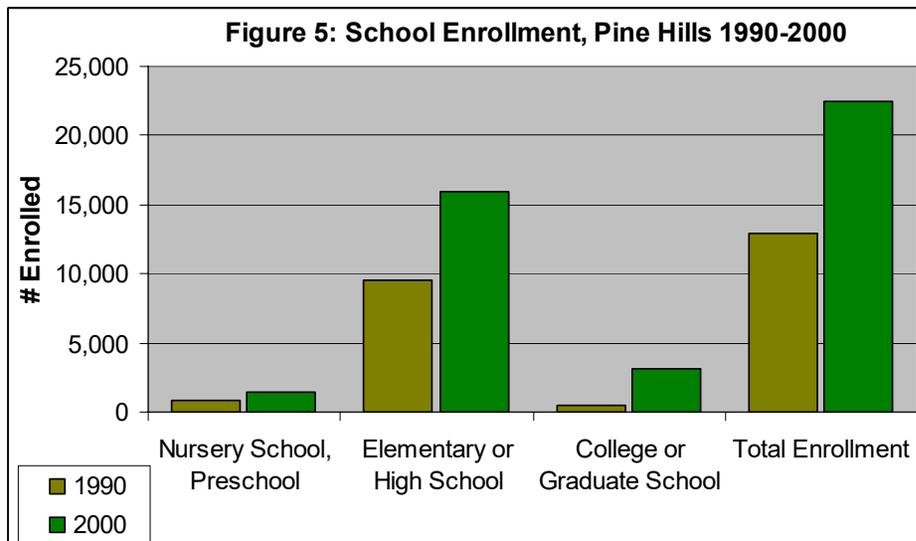
## Education

School enrollment in Pine Hills has nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000. The most substantial increase is in college or graduate school enrollment, which increased by 555 percent. This increase surpassed Orange County, which experienced a 35 percent increase in enrollment. This rate of enrollment indicates a high demand and may present a market opportunity for private schools or technical colleges to locate in or expand to Pine Hills.

## Population Projections

Over the next 30 years, Orange County is expected to be the fastest growing county and will be the fourth largest county by population size in Florida, with a population of 1.6 million to 1.9 million by 2030. Based on a moderate growth projection, the county is projected to experience a 26 percent rate of growth each decade between 2000 and 2030, and ultimately add roughly 900,000 people. This growth rate would nearly double Orange County's total population by 2030.

About 71 percent of the total county population will live in unincorporated areas such as Pine Hills. The “younger workforce,” those aged 20 to 44, will comprise the largest share, 38 percent, of the 2030 population. The older workforce, persons aged 45 to 64, is expected to double its population size to over 380,000 persons, and will generally maintain its 20 to 21 percent share of the total population. These growth projections have important implications for Pine Hills in terms of housing stock, public facilities such as schools and parks, and employment. It is expected that Pine Hills will experience population growth, but the rate of growth – or Pine Hills’ share of Orange County’s growth – will be determined by the availability and condition of housing and public school performance.



## LAND USE

Pine Hills is located in unincorporated Orange County. However, a portion of the study area – known hereafter as the “target area” (the ½-mile radius of the intersection of Pine Hills Road and Silver Star) – falls within the City of Orlando boundary. For the purpose of this analysis, the city’s land uses and zoning districts were combined with the county information.

Pine Hills is approximately 9,000 acres with about 1,200 acres within the City of Orlando and 7,800 acres within Orange County (excluding acreage of right-of-way). Existing land use, future land use, and zoning district data for Pine Hills is summarized below.

Development patterns and socioeconomic characteristics make a profound statement about the character of a place. These features come into play in both a physical sense and through perception; both of which affect civic pride and the level of private investment. In Pine Hills, the strength of the community lies within its close-knit neighborhoods, churches, and public institutions. Proximity to thriving commercial and employment centers like downtown Orlando position Pine Hills well for future economic investment.

However, years of declining private investment have left a legacy of underutilized parcels,

vacant or unsightly buildings, and limited commercial uses that presents an image of neglect. Commercial corridors such as Silver Star Road and Pine Hills Road provide examples of how land use patterns can inhibit the marketability of an area both physically and aesthetically, and through negative perceptions associated with these uses. The proliferation of incompatible land uses and low-quality commercial uses lend to the negative aesthetics of the area, inhibiting new economic investment.



*Figure 6: Image of vacant gas station at the Pine Hills/Silver Star intersection*

Major land use issues in Pine Hills include:

- The absence of a well-defined center with accessible civic or public spaces;
- The perception of crime and failing public schools that limits the neighborhood’s potential;
- Separated and automobile-oriented land uses;
- A lack of viable commercial uses like movie theaters, full-service restaurants, and high-end retail stores requiring residents to travel to neighboring municipalities or beyond to satisfy their shopping and social needs; and
- Commercial buildings that do not fit the scale of the wide arterial streets, contributing to a high-speed, unfriendly pedestrian environment.

### *Existing Land Use*

The largest existing land use in Pine Hills is single-family residential, with roughly 53 percent, or 4,786 acres of the study area.

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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As previously described, Pine Hills is a residential community. Parcels along major arterials that connect Pine Hills to the region have developed commercially, some with neighborhood services, others with services on more of a regional scale. Several shopping plazas are located in Pine Hills, many out-dated or partially vacant. Most recently, a large plaza at the intersection of Hiawassee Road and Silver Star Road saw the closing of a K-Mart (consistent with the closures of K-Marts nationwide) and the closing of a Publix. Other smaller strip plazas have been plagued by vacancies as well as simple wear and tear from age.

Of particular concern are the land uses along Pine Hills Road south of Silver Star Road. These lots were originally single-family residential uses that were converted to commercial or professional office with the widening of Pine Hills Road. The average lot size is 50 feet by 150 feet, making the conversion difficult. Most of these requests for daycares, churches, restaurants or beauty salons were granted, though they do not meet several of the development standards of the zoning, discussed later in this section.



Figures 7 & 8 (above): Images of Pine Hills Road; Examples of conflicts between land use and transportation

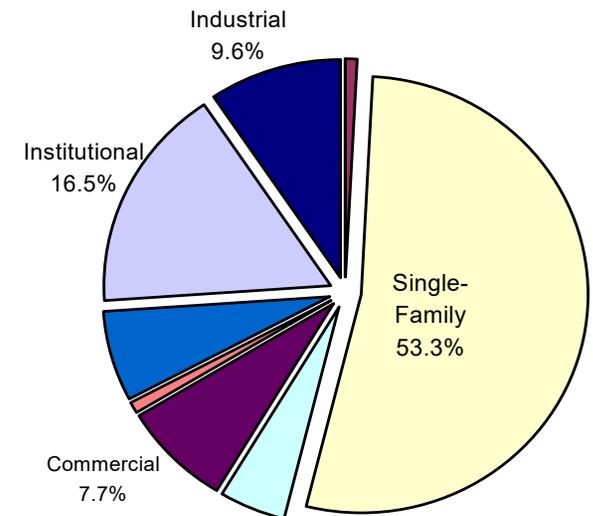


Figure 9: Existing land use

### *Future Land Use*

The future land use of a piece of property is defined in the Orange County's Comprehensive Plan and designated on its Future Land Use Map, which provides a range of allowable uses for future development. The Future Land Use Map designates the long-range desired use of properties within the county, and the Comprehensive Plan policies and standards determine how property may be developed.

A majority of the parcels in the Pine Hills neighborhood is classified as Low Density Residential (LDR), comprising roughly 59 percent or 5,400 acres. This is slightly higher than the existing single-family land use.

### *Zoning*

There are 16 zoning categories applied in Pine Hills. The most prevalent zoning district is R-1, Single-Family Residential. At approximately 5,100 acres or 56 percent, R-1 zoning accounts for more than half of the study area.

Over the past five years, Pine Hills stakeholders have actively made requests for special exceptions or variances to the existing zoning in the study area. The following outlines some of the trends in special exceptions and rezoning

requests for Pine Hills Road near Silver Star Road:

- Most requests for Special Exceptions were in R-1A or P-O zones for other uses. Many requests are for rezoning from R-1A to P-O. The most common of these were beauty salons, churches, daycares, and restaurants.
- Parking is a major issue on Pine Hills Road. Many requests are for fewer parking spots and/or to substitute gravel parking for paved parking
- Conversion of homes to businesses on substandard lot widths (usually 55 or 65 feet versus 85 feet) and smaller overall lot size (usually between 7,000 and 8,500 square feet versus 10,000 square feet); also, setbacks smaller than the standard 10 feet are common requests
- Most requests are granted. In the past five years, two rezoning requests were denied. One involved changing a portion of land from low industrial to heavy industrial, and one involved changing from one commercial zoning to another.

The major intersections in Pine Hills, particularly the Target Area Intersection, have commercial

zoning that have attributes limiting redevelopment. For example, the Retail-Commercial (C-1), General-Commercial (C-2) and Wholesale-Commercial (C-3) zoning districts require a minimum 25 foot front yard setbacks. This large setback limits the building placement thereby affecting parking and pedestrian activity. Smaller setbacks allow for buildings being close to the street providing a safer and more pleasing pedestrian interface while directing parking conflicts to behind the building. In addition, the minimum parcel size of 6,000 square feet for C-1, 8,000 square feet for C-2 and 12,000 square feet for C-3 may prevent a mixture of commercial uses.



*Figure 9: Pine Hills Road – Example of small lots currently in non-residential use*

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

## TRANSPORTATION

### Neighborhood Mobility

Pine Hills is well connected to the county and the region through its extensive system of roads and access to major regional highways. Table 1 presents prominent study area roadways and traffic volume information. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) was compared from 1999 to 2003. Many roads in the study area have experienced significant increases in traffic between 1999 and 2003, most notably North Lane and Powers Drive between Clarcona-Ocoee and North Lane. Pine Hills Road has also experienced an increase in traffic volume on some segments.

Table 1: Transportation Connections in Pine Hills

Road	Segment	Lanes	AADT, 1999	AADT, 2003	% Change
Balboa Dr.	Apopka Vineland to Hiawassee	2	11,095	7,819	-30%
Balboa Dr.	Hiawassee to Pine Hills	2	5,397	6,218	15%
Clarcona-Ocoee Rd.	Hiawassee to Powers	4	24,633	29,526	20%
Clarcona-Ocoee Rd.	Powers to Pine Hills	4	26,514	27,637	4%
Hiawassee Rd.	Silver Star to Balboa	4	39,509	39,441	-0.2%
Hiawassee Rd.	Balboa to W. Colonial	4	39,478	44,783	13%
Hiawassee Rd.	W. Colonial to Old Winter Garden	4	30,099	38,239	27%
Mercy Dr.	Silver Star to Country Club	2	12,614	18,099	43%
North Lane	Powers to Pine Hills	2	3,965	11,039	178%
Pine Hills Rd.	Balboa to W. Colonial	4	39,546	37,856	-4%
Pine Hills Rd.	Clarcona-Ocoee to North Lane	4	24,842	28,277	14%
Pine Hills Rd.	North Lane to Silver Star		36,345	39,606	9%
Pine Hills Rd.	Silver Star to Balboa		34,039	39,365	16%
Powers Dr.	Silver Star to W. Colonial		13,667	11,338	-17%
Powers Dr.	Clarcona Ocoee to North Lane	2	7,341	10,609	45%
Silver Star Rd.	Apopka-Vineland to Hiawassee	6	25,716	28,595	11%
Silver Star Rd.	Pine Hills to Princeton	4	42,598	35,746	-16%
Silver Star Rd.	Hiawassee to Pine Hills	6	41,307	36,662	-11%
W. Colonial Dr.	E. of Kirkman	6	51,378	43,788	-15%
W. Colonial Dr.	Hiawassee to Kirkman	4	44,583	51,970	17%
W. Colonial Dr.	Apopka-Vineland to Hiawassee	4	39,376	47,099	20%

Source: Orange County Annual Traffic Count Reports, 1999 and 2003

## Transit

Lynx provides transit service within Orange County and Pine Hills. There are nine bus lines that operate within Pine Hills including Lines 20, 25, 30, 37, 48, 49, 54, 301, and 302. All major community facilities in Pine Hills are served by Lynx, and Lynx operates a transfer station at the Park Promenade Plaza on Hiwassee Road at Silver Star Road.

## Pedestrian/Bicycle

The neighborhoods of Pine Hills are well equipped with sidewalks, which is an advantage over many newer neighborhoods in the region that have no sidewalks. The commercial corridors also have sidewalks. There is room for improvement on many of these sidewalks; many lack a green buffer protecting the pedestrian from the roadway, and others have open drainage that can be a danger to pedestrians.

## Corridor Analysis

Silver Star Road, the impetus for this study and the main east-west commercial corridor defining Pine Hills, is a high speed, high traffic road. The speed limit is 45 miles per hour. The corridor has numerous points of conflict from small

commercial parcels with individual access. There are also multiple apartment complexes located on Silver Star. State Road 50 (SR 50), or West Colonial Drive, is similar in character to Silver Star Road. Like Silver Star, SR 50 is a high speed, high traffic commercial corridor.

Pine Hills Road, the main north-south corridor that defines this study, is a wide, high speed arterial with a center two-way left turn lane. The land uses on Pine Hills Road are primarily residential or residential converted to business, such as day care centers. The historic residential character of this corridor has left the conditions of numerous smaller parcels with individual driveways fronting on an arterial roadway. Pine Hills Road also has a bicycle lane, which is not currently appropriate as the presence of driveways every 50 to 75 feet presents major safety conflicts for bicyclists and pedestrians.

In the 1980s, the County Planning and Zoning Commission became concerned about traffic safety along Pine Hills Road as an increasing number of parcels were converted from residential to offices and commercial. Many parcels were approved for rezoning to office with the understanding that two parcels had to share a driveway. This policy was not successfully enforced, and property owners found ways to get around the requirement. This issue eventually

disappeared from the radar, and the Planning and Zoning Commission has not required parcels share access in over eight years. This policy has created a dangerous situation along Pine Hills Road where business patrons often have to back up into a five-lane road to exit.



Figure 10: Pine Hills Road Corridor

## PROPOSED ROADWAY PROJECTS

### Orange County

Orange County is proposing improvements for North Pine Hills Road from Silver Star Road to North Lane. The proposed improvement concept is to provide intersection and median improvements to

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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Pine Hills Road at Silver Star Road, Belco Drive (including the realignment of Evans High School Access Drive) and the Londonberry/ Danny Boy realignment with the Seville Place Apartments entrance.

## Florida DOT

Currently there is one Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) road project proposed within the Pine Hills area at Silver Star Road. A \$270,000 grant in fiscal year 2004/2005 will pay Florida Power to install street lighting along the 2.3 miles from Hiawassee Road to Dardenelle Road. Median modifications are also proposed along this same section and are funded for construction in fiscal year 2004/2005 at an estimated cost of \$720,000.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### *Neighborhood Elements*

Pine Hills has all the ingredients of a successful neighborhood – schools, libraries, parks and recreation. These elements are described below.



*Figure 11: Evans High School, Silver Star Road*

## Schools

There are 10 public schools serving the Pine Hills neighborhoods, including two senior high schools, two middle schools, five elementary schools and one exceptional school. Several schools have some capacity available for future growth, while others have exceeded capacity and rely on portables to meet demand. Overall, current enrollment is slightly under capacity. However, projected Orange County growth trends indicate a need for additional capacity in Orange County schools by 2030 due to the increasing population of school age children.

## School Age Projections

The population of students in the county will double, adding about 167,000 students to Orange County Public Schools over the next 30 years. Elementary school-aged students are forecasted to have a growth rate of 28 to 32 percent per decade and are projected to add about 2,800 to 4,000 new students in each decade. Middle school-aged students will have a growth rate of 13 to 18 percent per decade and are projected to add about 5,600 to 6,800 new students to Orange County schools in each decade. High school-aged students are projected to have a growth rate of 26 to 30 percent per decade and are projected to add about 15,000 to 23,000 new students in each decade.

## Public Library

There is one public library located within Pine Hills. The Hiawassee Library is located in the Park Promenade Shopping Center at the intersection of Hiawassee and Silver Star Roads. The library is approximately 12,500 square feet. The national level of service standard is 0.5 square feet of library space per capita. The Pine Hills neighborhood requires approximately 33,000 square feet of

library space to serve the population; indicating a shortfall of 20,500 square feet. The Orange County Public Library currently rents the Hiwassee facility, and the lease will be up in by 2008. The West Oaks Library in Ocoee is approximately 2.5 miles from the Hiwassee facility and competes with the Hiwassee branch for circulation.



Figure 12: Park Promenade Plaza, Hiwassee Branch Library

The success of the Hiwassee Library may depend on other anchor uses in the Park Promenade Plaza. The Plaza recently lost its two main anchors – Publix and K-Mart. A

location more accessible to Pine Hills residents may be a key to the library’s future success.

### Parks and Recreation

There are three recreational facilities serving Pine Hills residents including Barnett Park, Orlo Vista Park, and Rolling Hills Little League. There is one boat launch facility located at Lake Lawne within Pine Hills.

Recreational acreage demand for the Pine Hills area can be calculated using the County’s adopted parks level of service. The standard for calculating the necessary acreage of neighborhood parkland is 1.7 acres per 1,000 people. The standard for calculating the necessary acreage of community parkland is 7 acres per 1,000 people. This equates to a recreational acreage need of approximately 112 acres for neighborhood parks and 461 acres for community parks, or a total acreage of 573 acres.

**Pine Hills has a total parkland shortfall of 388 acres.**

The West Orange Trail is a 22-mile multi-use paved trail that connects the City of Apopka with Lake County. The Trail has several “stations” or “outposts” along the way that provide a resting

area and parking. Though the West Orange Trail does not intersect Pine Hills, it is a regional facility with stations close to the study area. The Apopka-Vineland Outpost is the closest station, located about eight miles from the intersection of Pine Hills Road and Clarcona-Ocoee Road. The station is equipped with parking, picnic, and equestrian facilities.

Through its capital improvement program, the County has programmed funds for a neighborhood trail, to be known as the “Pine Hills Trail,” in the Pine Hills target area, oriented north-south, and located west of Pine Hills Road.

### Non-Public Facilities

The Wayne Densch YMCA is located on North Hastings Street. The YMCA also operates the Pine Hills YMCA on Jennings Road. The Wayne Densch facility has a complete wellness center; gymnasium; baseball diamonds; Spirit, Mind and Body Center; and is currently developing the Field of Dreams Project - a multipurpose field to be used for outdoor concerts, soccer, softball and flag football. The Pine Hills/ Jennings YMCA has a pool and two soccer fields.

# PINE HILLS LAND ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2. COMMUNITY VISIONING

### INTRODUCTION

### ISSUE SUMMARY

The challenges and opportunities identified in Figure 13 were developed through careful analysis of information gathered at the consultant meetings with the community, the analysis of existing conditions, and a review of previous studies. The top half of the graphic contains a map that is color-coded to coordinate with the text on the bottom half of the graphic.

***When conducting an analysis of issues and opportunities, it is important to look at each issue as a potential opportunity.***

For example, Pine Hills experiences heavy traffic volume on a daily basis. This is a serious issue as it inhibits safety due to high speeds. However, the high traffic volume also has implications for retail development. Retailers can employ strategies to attract drivers and increase their customer base.

### Pine Hills Land Analysis & Strategic Plan Issues Plan

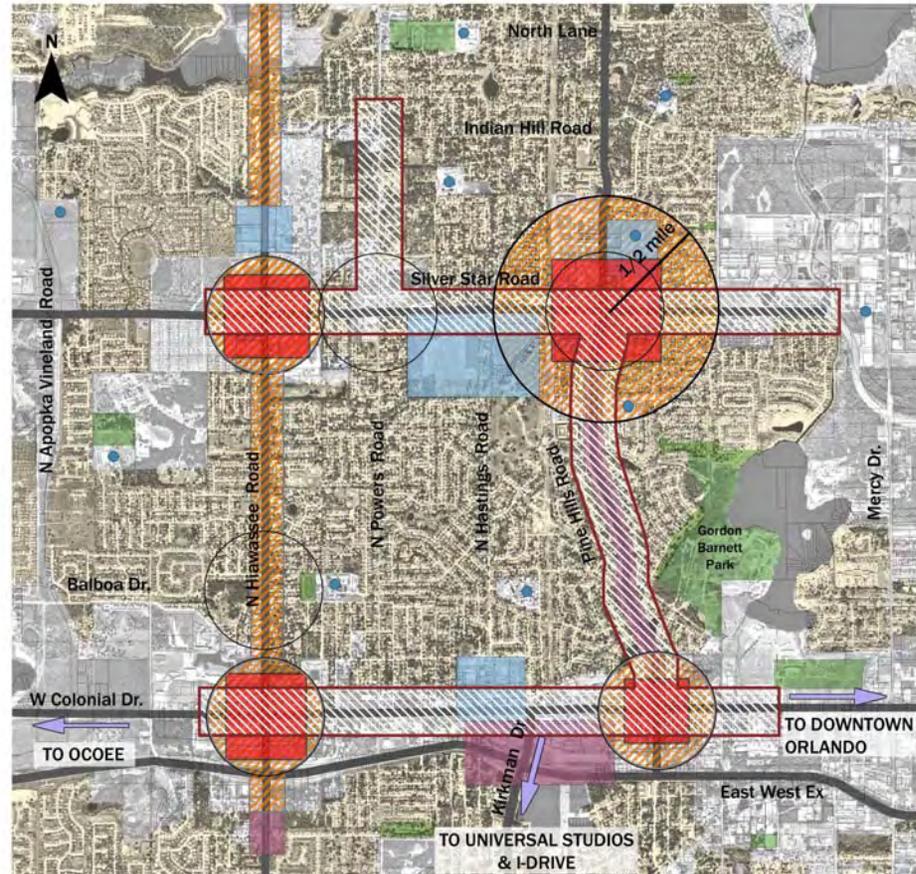


Figure 13: Issues Plan

## 2. COMMUNITY VISIONING

### OPPORTUNITIES



#### Regional Access: Access to Employment Centers:

Pine Hills is well connected to the county and the region through its extensive and comprehensive system of roadways and major regional highways including SR 50 and the East-West Expressway. Pine Hills is also located near major regional employment centers, including downtown Orlando, Health Central Hospital in Ocoee, the theme parks, and major retail and service providers on major arterials.



#### Redevelopment Potential:

High visibility intersections have become local eyesores, but present important opportunities for redevelopment. The intersections of West Colonial Drive and North Hiawassee Road, West Colonial Drive and Pine Hills Road, Silver Star Road and Pine Hills Road, and Silver Star Road and North Hiawassee Road are all important candidates for redevelopment as major community focal points.



#### Quality Housing Stock:

With rising real estate prices throughout the region, particularly in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to downtown Orlando, Pine Hills has the potential to become the next frontier in urban housing stock. The housing stock in Pine Hills is of high quality – the homes and lots are large, the neighborhoods are stable, and the infrastructure is in place. Many of the homes are older, providing a sense of character and neighborhood.



#### Schools: & Civic/Neighborhood Services:

Pine Hills has all the ingredients of a thriving neighborhood. Residents are well served by community facilities and services, and there are many civic services available to residents. These services include the Hiawassee Branch Library, the Wayne Densch YMCA, and a variety of churches and worship centers of multiple denominations, and a new community center currently under construction. Three park and recreation facilities offer recreational opportunities including organized sports, programs and activities for youth and families.



#### Focal Points:

The intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star Road was identified as a key intersection of the community in terms of possessing the most issues, the most opportunity for redevelopment, and its role as a neighborhood activity center and gateway. Supporting this center is a series of neighborhood-level activity centers (encompassing 1/4 mile). Through redevelopment and proper design, these intersections could be re-invented as neighborhood activity centers serving as attractive community focal points or gateways, and offer services to residents and passer-bys. The key is to make these centers viable through promoting accessibility and smart design.

### CHALLENGES



#### Corridor Management:

The evolution of major corridors through Pine Hills has been "reactive" rather than "proactive." With growth in surrounding communities such as Ocoee, through-traffic on Silver Star and SR 50 has increased at a rate where the land uses could not progress. The lack of an overall corridor management plan for these sections of road has created a dangerous and unpleasant community gateway. Mitigating these problems should be done in a strategic, phased manner.



#### Vacant Structures:

Vacant structures and parcels conglomerate at major neighborhood intersections. Abandoned gas stations, vacant storefronts and vacant large-scale retail uses have created a negative visual element to the area, contrasting sharply with and depreciating the attractive high-quality neighborhoods. These vacancies have also forced residents to shop in other localities for certain services. This has affected traffic and quality of life.



#### Negative Visual Elements:

Several major road corridors within Pine Hills have evolved from residential roadways to arterials. Consequently, several negative visual elements have taken over including numerous curb cuts, lack of landscaping or buffers, excessive signage, open drainage and limited pedestrian amenities.



#### Traffic/Pedestrian Safety:

The high volume of traffic and lack of bicycle and pedestrian amenities has led to a number of conflicts. The speed of traffic, multiple curb cuts, wide and unstructured aprons, and open parking along certain roadways limit bicyclist and pedestrian usage and safety. More specifically, major intersections lack sufficient pedestrian crossing, and bus stops lack bus pullouts.



#### Incompatible Land Uses:

Pine Hills Road was originally a residential road that has evolved into an arterial. Primarily south of Silver Star, the road has experienced the conversion of single-family homes. The lots, which are mostly 50 feet X 150 feet, are limited in their conversion to commercial uses due to the shallow depth of the lot. Though this section of road has a bicycle lane, pedestrian/bicycle safety is a major concern. Parking is also a concern, since these converted lots do not have enough room for sufficient parking. Many of the converted lots have become day care centers, which have a common peak time, resulting in queing and traffic problems on Pine Hills Road.

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This section describes the public meetings and public input gathered to form the basis of this planning effort. Renaissance Planning Group obtained public on several occasions, and all meetings with the public included a core group of residents serving on the Pine Hills Community Council and Orange County Neighborhood Services. Each meeting is described below.

### MEETING #1

On Monday, April 12, 2004, Renaissance Planning Group staff met with the Pine Hills Community Council to discuss the project schedule and deliverables.

The Pine Hills Community Council also took part in two priority issues identification exercises to determine their perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within their community and specifically the study area located. Using the nominal group technique, participants were asked to write down their perspectives of the weaknesses and threats the Plan should address, which they then ranked. The second exercise asked participants to identify strengths and opportunities within the

Pine Hills neighborhood. A summary of each exercise follows:

## PRIORITY ISSUES

### IDENTIFICATION EXERCISES

QUESTION: From your perspective, what are the weaknesses and threats that the Pine Hills land analysis and strategic plan should address? What can this plan do to make Pine Hills a stronger place to live, work, and recreate?

#### Top Ranked Issues:

- 12 = Schools – Access, performance, districts, gerrymandering;
- 10 = Business retention;
- 10 = Safety – Lighting (traffic & lighting);
- 9 = Land locked shopping centers;
- 8 = Lack of focal point/core commercial area;
- 5 = Redevelopment of major intersections;
- 5 = Too much retail space underutilized;
- 5 = Bus stops – Location, pull-offs, non-signal stops affects crossings (6-lanes);
- 4 = No follow up with homeowner programs – maintenance;

- 3 = Zoning failures – antiquated zoning
- 2 = Landscaping;
- 2 = Types of retailers/location (e.g. pawn shops);
- 2 = Too many apartments – Transients;
- 1 = Transportation planning coordination especially state and county; and
- 1 = Perception of Pine Hills.

#### Other Important Issues:

- Reuse or demolition of existing, vacant buildings;
- School crosswalks/ islands;
- Speed of traffic;
- Increasing right-of-way (e.g. NE corner Pine Hills/Silver Star) – affects usability;
- Pass through traffic (e.g. Balboa instead of SR 50) – SR 50, Silver Star, Hiawassee, Pine Hills – regionally viewed as major arterials;
- Shared recreation space with schools;
- Silver Star/Princeton road striping;

## 2. COMMUNITY VISIONING

- Area lacks ability to secure amenities;
- Insufficient greenspace (recreation);
- Lack of major tenants (corporate);
- Not a city, community discretion on funds that are spent (e.g. maintenance); and
- Fire station area – How is pedestrian traffic going to move, pedestrian/shopping center mix.

QUESTION: From your perspective, what are the strengths and opportunities of the Pine Hills neighborhood? What do you like about living/working in Pine Hills?

### Strengths

- Geographical location in the County, easy access to highways;
- Central location reduces damages from hurricane, which most times originate in the Gulf;
- Values of properties are compatible and reachable for persons beginning as a first time homeowner;
- The ethnic composition of people interact openly and help to expand/ exchange relationship;

- Affordable real estate with ample yards, excellent housing stock;
- General grid layout/ accessibility of neighborhoods;
- Multiplicity of religious organizations;
- Residential community/ many neighborhoods;
- Convenience of location to employment opportunities outside community;
- Long-term residents;
- Wide, tree-lined streets;
- Our small houses are almost as big in square feet as new houses cost two times more;
- Buses run north, east, west and south;
- Bus center at Hiwassee;
- There are no bad parts of Pine Hills, no run down areas;
- Neighborhoods are getting better;
- Friendly people;
- Hilly landscape

### Opportunities

- Redevelopment;
- Talk to community leaders;

- Strategic planning;
- Location, location, location – easy access to downtown & attractions;
- Diversity factor – best representation of all cultures;
- Real estate – structure and stability of the homes;
- History – churches that remain;
- Opportunity to grow if proper planning is done.

### MEETING #2

Orange County Neighborhood Services and Renaissance Planning Group staff held a stakeholders meeting on May 26, 2004, at 6:30 PM, at Evans High School in Pine Hills to begin developing the Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan. The purpose of the stakeholders meeting was to provide a project overview and to identify elements that the community would like to see in Pine Hills. The workshop was attended by Pine Hills residents and business owners, Orange County Neighborhood services staff, Lynx staff, and the consultants. The

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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workshop included a presentation overview of the project, summary of the Kickoff Meeting with the Pine Hills Community Council and two exercises to identify neighborhood elements for the Pine Hills area.

The first exercise was a visual element survey. Attendees looked at various pictures of development around Pine Hills and Central Florida and were asked to write down elements that they liked or disliked within the picture. Examples of the elements they were asked to respond to included signage, landscaping, buffers, curb cuts, lighting, scale, streetscape, parking, fencing, crosswalks, etc. The second exercise asked attendees to respond to a series of discussion questions in writing pertaining to how they would like to see Pine Hills in the future and what may be impeding redevelopment. Summaries of both exercises are below.

## **Pine Hills Redevelopment Plan Survey**

What physical changes would you make in Pine Hills?

- Tear down vacant buildings
- Hinder multi-family development in single-family neighborhoods

- Clean it up, make road improvements, add landscaping
- Rebuild and renovate old houses and buildings
- Landscaping to accent roads – control zoning issue that give area poor look
- Library – build a big building for downtown and education center
- Eliminate overhead light cabling
- Modest traffic calming to slow traffic on Pine Hills Road and Silver Star, greater priority to pedestrians
- Code enforcement of derelict properties and more cops patrolling the area
- Better kept homes and yards, clean streets, street lighting
- Bus service for north end of Kirkman Rd., sidewalks, speed bumps in residential areas, covered bus stops, trash receptacles
- Daycare for low-income families, 24 hour emergency clinic
- More playgrounds and parks, remove pawn shops, daycare cap, demolish empty service stations
- Government assistance in business location

## **Why do you think businesses are leaving or would not want to locate in the area?**

- They believe Pine Hills is not profitable, high crime, poor publicity, media negativity
- Negative activities by youth with too much unstructured time
- They are moving to new shopping centers and better maintained areas
- Unskilled labor

## **What do you think we could offer to businesses to encourage them to stay/come?**

- Code enforcement/ police presence patrolling the area
- Less theft, vandalism, loitering
- Businesses get involved with community and youth
- Offer small business loans and rent breaks to small businesses until they can establish themselves, tax incentives

- Better image, better maintenance of property, and beautify community
- More jobs for younger people
- Bring government offices into empty shopping center

**What are the key opportunities in Pine Hills?**

- Long term residents, potential for retail
- Clean up old unused property, control daycare
- We can become a good suburb of Orlando with locally owned stores. Immigrants can start and build up
- Affordable housing and land for redevelopment from new investment, but need incentives to “break the spell” of negative perception
- Housing, employment, churches, schools, shopping, neighborhoods
- Commercial buildings already built but need face lift, small business that caters to local clientele

**Where are the key opportunities in Pine Hills?**

- Hiawassee and Silver Star, old neighborhoods give identity
- People
- Need look no further than intersection in question; can't we declare it a “brownfield” candidate and a CRA for new money?
- Subdivisions, schools (employment), everywhere, schools (everywhere), shopping along roadways, 25,000 housing units
- All major intersections if access is improved

**What types of businesses should Pine Hills try to attract?**

- Family-owned businesses, more youth/ teen and kid places to recreate after school hours
- More supermarkets, bowling alleys, skating rink, theatres, doctors' offices
- Light manufacturing, police station
- Large business such as Wal-Mart, technical school
- Shopping (not discount low end)
- Business that can be part of tourism industry, 10 minutes from Universal, International Drive

- Office – Office – Office; and restaurants (ethnically diverse but w/ better regulation of cleanliness and appearance – See new “Rose Garden” at North Lane & Pine Hills Road) and shopping center
- Coffee shop, Barnes & Noble, more retail, technical educational branch, west side tech, “village” businesses and professional offices
- Small business' that the local population can use
- Village businesses and professional office, educational types, tech school, medical

**What are the physical and/or regulatory issues influencing redevelopment of the area?**

- Development in place is vehicle oriented, not conducive to walking (risk to walk to stores due to traffic and roadways), bad reputation, “Crime Hills,” run-down image
- They think poor people live here, not middle class

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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- Investment opportunity unknown or avoided due to perception and lack of government focus on our needs – No Planning!
- 1999 landscape codes
- Perception, lack of zoning ordinance, “cooker” setback to back of properties
- Shopping cart containment
- Perception/ reality of area and blighted look

## What is the role Pine Hills could or should play in the region?

- Residential with convenient light retail commercial, walkable, family-oriented communities, not short-term rental
- “Metro North” – use Ocoee, Metro-West, take spill over
- Attractive, appealing family neighborhoods w/ plenty of local jobs (office, retail, food, etc.) to stabilize area
- Professional – medical “village services,” education services, technical or business school, expansion – UCF & VCC programs in Evans High School

## What incentives or programs would help the Pine Hills property owners?

- Incentive to own and live, not rent or short-term residence “on way up”
- Create a flow of traffic to businesses; do not block their access
- Make apartments into condos
- Upgrade schools
- “Brownfield” – CRA – MSTU – special tax incentives to initiate redevelopment, enterprise zone? – Bonded low interest loan programs
- Better zoning, slow down traffic, better crosswalk for pedestrian, better access to shopping areas, new signalized access to shopping centers, marketing to counter bad perception
- “Gray” water for irrigation, grants to install irrigation and landscaping

## What type of form should Pine Hills take?

- Low and medium density residential, walkable to commercial
- Continue as a neighborhood community, but needs a user-friendly, safe, attractive, retail-commercial district, not just another hit & run shopping center

- Newer urbanism area, mixed-use “village concept”, keep residential area
- Medium density/ neighborhood

## What is your vision for Pine Hills - how do you see Pine Hills evolving over the next 10-15 years?

- Small town residential, neighbors who know each other and have long term plans
- An area that looks like it was built after road construction, not overtaken by roads
- Pedestrian-friendly retail area (new urbanist) w/ continued emphasis on single-family, less multi-family
- Redevelopment of shopping areas, redesign of shopping areas, safety issues with pedestrian/bus/car traffic, no land locked shopping areas
- Vibrant aesthetically pleasing with good sight lines in a safe pedestrian friendly area

## 2. COMMUNITY VISIONING

Meeting attendees were also shown a series of photos that were taken of various Central Florida neighborhoods and business districts. Attendees were asked to comment on their “likes” and “dislikes” as they related to the urban form and built environment.

Their comments are summarized below.

### Likes

- Attractive light fixtures
- Presence of sidewalks
- Accessible, clean bus shelter
- Green buffer
- Bus cut outs
- Hidden power lines
- Brick pavers
- Nice building architecture/ facade
- Attractive signage
- Safe roadway features
- Palm trees
- Ambience

### Dislikes

- Visual clutter - too many small signs, above ground utilities, lack of continuity, poles, wires, chaotic sign placement, dingy
- Missing curb cut for pedestrian crossing
- Limited sidewalks, pedestrian crossing not wheelchair accessible
- Curb cut too close to intersection
- No crosswalk or sidewalk
- No landscaping
- Poor lighting fixtures
- Sidewalk too close to fast traffic
- Open gutters
- Poor/no curbing
- Billboards
- Pedestrian access to businesses missing, no place on median for pedestrians
- Lack of sitting area and lack of pedestrian facilities

*Examples of photos used in the visual preference exercise.*



# PINE HILLS LAND ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLAN

## 3. VISION PLAN

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### Vision Statements

Through careful coordination with the community through a series of public involvement sessions – described on the following pages of this Chapter – a “top ten” list of vision statements was produced to serve as a basis of the plan and the future of Pine Hills.

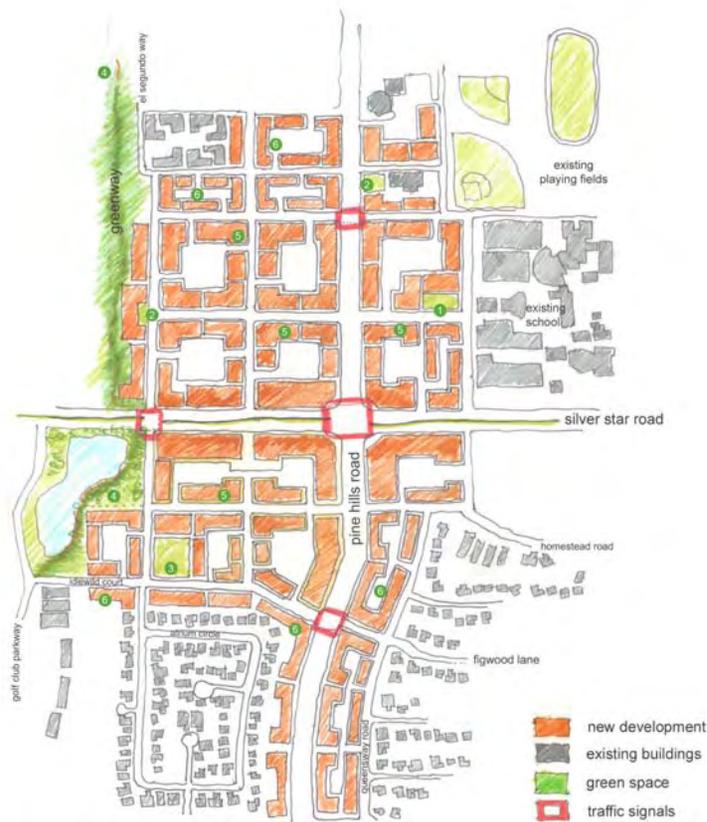
1. Maximize the quality of commercial space, particularly at major intersections and along commercial corridors.
2. Improve pedestrian and vehicular access between residential and commercial land uses through appropriate regulatory changes and urban design standards.
3. Update zoning and future land use designations to reflect the current market and community land use needs.
4. Coordinate all planning efforts (city, county, MPO, state, etc.) that affect Pine Hills, especially with regard to transportation planning.
5. Make aesthetic improvements throughout the neighborhood, including securing streetscape amenities, providing landscaping, and preserving quality green space.
6. Develop a neighborhood focal point, or downtown, for Pine Hills residents, workers, and visitors to shop, recreate, and gather for community functions.
7. Focus on business attraction and retention, and diversifying the economic base of Pine Hills.
8. Identify sites and strategies for redevelopment.
9. Support homeownership through showcasing Pine Hills’ housing stock and promoting programs for potential homeowners.
10. Ensure quality community facilities that add to the quality of life and work to attract and retain residents, including providing parks and recreation opportunities, ensuring access to good schools, public safety, and government services.

Figure 14, presented on the following page, depicts the community vision for Pine Hills. The vision is of a well-defined, cohesive and viable community. The action steps needed to help the community achieve this vision are presented in Chapter 4, Action Plan.

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Figure 14: Vision Plan

PINE HILLS Silver Star Road & Pine Hills Road



1 CIVIC SPACE

2 CIVIC SPACE

3 COMMUNITY GREEN

4 GREENWAY

5 MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

6 RESIDENTIAL | TOWNHOUSES

# PINE HILLS LAND ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLAN

## 4. ACTION PLAN

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### INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan forms the essence of the Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan. This section of the document is intended to give community leaders and policy makers the direction they need to implement the community's vision for the future of Pine Hills. The steps outlined in this section build upon one another, and when possible, assign roles and timeframes so that those on the critical path towards implementation know that they are responsible for taking action.

If Pine Hills were incorporated, it would be the second largest city in the region in terms of total population. The neighborhoods in Pine Hills are well established and defined, but there is not a focal point to organize the area. This notion is evident to the community, which indicated through workshops that Pine Hills needs a focal point. In a nutshell, **Pine Hills is a city that lacks a downtown.**

The centerpiece of the recommended plan for Pine Hills is creating a town center around the intersection of Pine Hills Road and Silver Star Road complete with the commerce and civic functions typical of downtowns. Key features of the town center include government and civic-oriented development in the northwest quadrant of the intersection, an educational oriented

center at the northeast quadrant built with and around Evans High School and a mixed-use commerce/residential district south of the intersection. These three areas will be connected through a grid street system that fosters internal travel and a sense of cohesion.



*Figure 15:  
Intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads.*

*This intersection is the centerpiece of the Action Plan and the location of future downtown for Pine Hills*

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**STEP #1: OFFICIALLY  
RECOGNIZE THE PINE  
HILLS TOWN CENTER**

The Pine Hills community should immediately request that Orange County officially recognize the Pine Hills Town Center in the County's Future Land Use Plan.

The community, with support from Orange County, should also take the steps required to establish a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). One of the requirements of designating a CRA is preparing a redevelopment plan. This plan, which will be referred to as the Pine Hills Town Center Master Plan, or Master Plan in this chapter, will build on the concepts presented in the last chapter of this report. The Master Plan will specify infrastructure and other redevelopment needs, providing information that will be tremendously helpful for the community and Orange County to use when building private and public partnerships and seeking funding from existing or new sources.

*DESIGNATE THE TOWN  
CENTER ON THE FUTURE  
LAND USE MAP*

In order to promote the redevelopment of Pine Hills and create a focal point for the community, the County should establish the area around the intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star Road as the Pine Hills Town Center on the Future Land Use Map of the Comprehensive Plan.

When designating the town center on the future land use map, the county may use existing future land use designations to achieve the desired character and density. The future land use designations created for the Holden Heights neighborhood achieve this. Specifically, the "Neighborhood Center" and "Neighborhood Residential" designations provide the correct framework for Pine Hills, and are further described below.

**ACTION ITEM SUMMARY**

**Step 1:**  
Officially recognize the Pine Hills Town Center

**Step 2:**  
Create a Community Redevelopment Association

**Step 3:**  
Prepare the Pine Hills Town Center Master Plan

**Step 4:**  
Identify and initiate funding and implementation strategies

**Step 5:**  
Monitor plan development

**Step 6:**  
Implement ongoing neighborhood enhancements

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

## Neighborhood Center

The Comprehensive Plan describes the Neighborhood Center as a neighborhood-serving mixed-use pedestrian scale environment where residents can comfortably shop for their daily needs. This is a relatively close match with the redevelopment concept for the Town Center. With this designation, the County's land use plan and development regulations will better match the redevelopment intentions for the area.

It is intended that this center provide a mix of land uses including commercial, civic, and a variety of high density residential uses. In particular, uses that shall be encouraged in this area include full-service restaurants, grocery stores, department stores, townhomes and condominiums, movie theaters, bowling alleys, and other family-friendly uses. This center is not intended for uses such as pawnbrokers, auto-related uses, manufacturing, boarding houses and SROs, fortunetellers and psychics, bottle clubs, and outdoor flea markets.

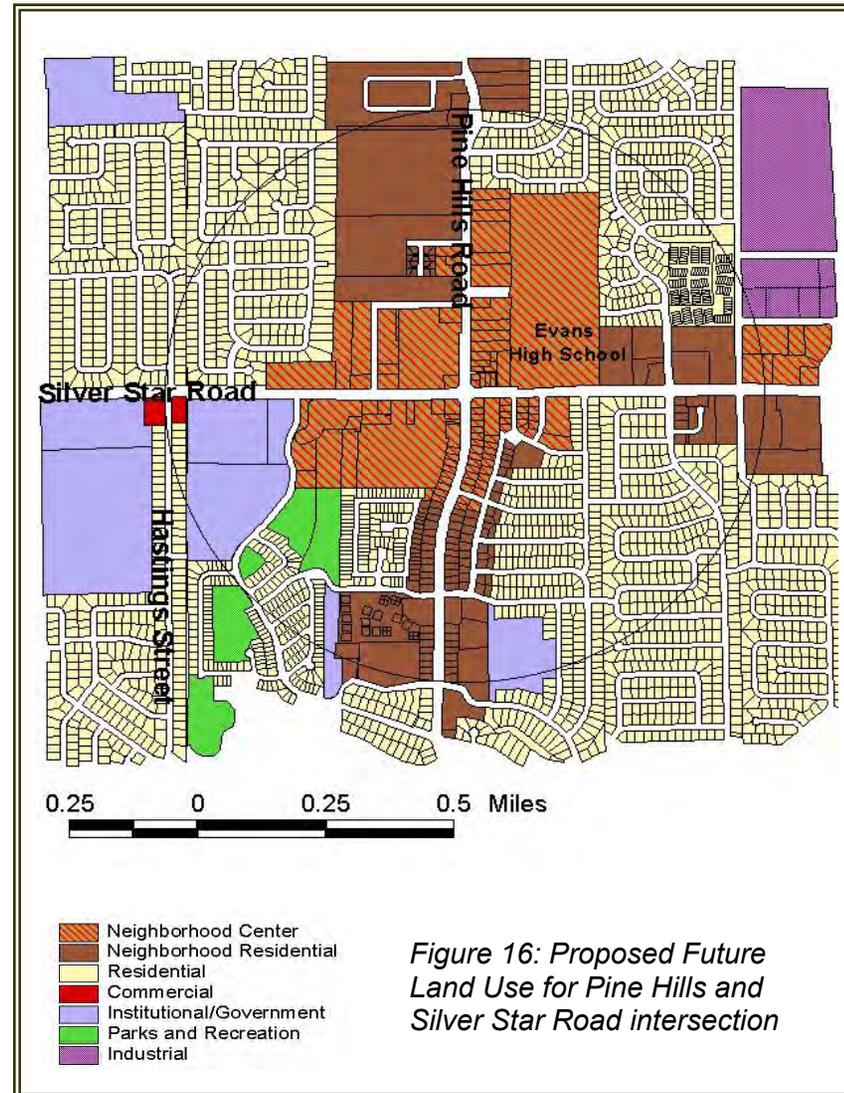


Figure 16: Proposed Future Land Use for Pine Hills and Silver Star Road intersection

## Neighborhood Residential

The Orange County Comprehensive Plan describes “Neighborhood Residential” as an area that provides a transition from higher density to lower density areas. This district is also intended to provide a diversity of housing types at densities higher than surrounding neighborhoods. For Pine Hills, this district is mapped in the areas surrounding the Neighborhood Center, providing a buffer to the already established single-family residences.

The key to success in this district is ensuring that the marketplace provides a diversity of housing types. The current residential trend in Pine Hills is towards detached, single-family residential homes, with some apartments. Adding condominiums, townhomes and duplexes will appeal to a broader market and help to redefine Pine Hills’ place as a neighborhood.

## STEP #2: CREATE A COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CRA)

The community and Orange County should begin the process of creating a CRA for the Pine Hills/Silver Star Road.

The first step in this process is for the PHCC and OCNS to identify the boundary for the proposed CRA. The boundary should consider existing blighted areas, areas with antiquated infrastructure, and the areas with the most potential for redevelopment.

The PHCC and OCNS must then prepare a study that demonstrates the “need” for redevelopment within the proposed CRA. The Orange County Commission must approve the “Finding of Necessity/ Slum and Blight Study” based on the study results.

The Community Redevelopment Agency will prepare the Community Redevelopment Plan (Pine Hills Town Center Master Plan). Details of what the plan will address are provided in the following section.

The County Commission must then approve the Community Redevelopment Plan, which will enable the CRA to move forward. The CRA will have powers granted that generally include authority to condemn a property for a public purpose, establish a Redevelopment Trust Fund, and authorize bond issues.

## Establish a Planning Task Force

To coordinate all planning efforts that affect Pine Hills – particularly regional planning initiatives such as transportation planning – the Pine Hills Community Council (PHCC) in association with Orange County Neighborhood Services should establish an interim planning task force.

At a minimum, the task force should include representatives from the City of Orlando Planning Division, Orange County Planning Department and Neighborhood Services, Orange County Transportation Planning Department, FDOT Region 5, Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC), Orange County Sheriff’s Office, Orange County

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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School Board and LYNX. The task force should meet at least every other month to review planning items and discuss regional coordination issues as they affect Pine Hills.

Upon establishment of the CRA, the interim task force should evolve into a more permanent, CRA-based planning task force. The CRA staff will then act as the liaison for all planning coordination.

## **STEP #3: PREPARE THE PINE HILLS TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN**

The CRA redevelopment plan, or the Pine Hills Town Center Master Plan will add important details to the design concept presented in this plan. As part of its implementation, the CRA is charged with creating the Master Plan. It is strongly recommended that the Master Plan follow the guidelines set forth in this report. At a minimum, the Master Plan should include the following information:

- Details on the overall development program, including the types of uses, building sizes and the overall demand

generated. This program will be used to properly size streets, utilities and parking.

- Guidance on the overall development pattern, including the layout of the street and path network, location and massing of buildings, location and type of parking, location of parks and open spaces, etc.
- Guidance on design details such as building architecture, street cross sections, street amenities, parking features, etc.
- Details on the streets, most importantly how the internal network intersects with Pine Hills Road and Silver Star Road. In addition, access management and traffic operations on those two roads within the study area should be included, as well as details on the phasing of the internal network to ensure connectivity.
- Details on parking, most importantly whether there is a need for structured parking and the location of common parking areas that are convenient to adjacent properties but do not disrupt the street network or development plan. Guidance on the funding of common parking is also needed, most importantly how property owners and the CRA can equitably share costs.

- Details on utilities, most importantly, stormwater conveyance systems and retention areas. The retention areas can be an integral part of the parks and open space system. Guidance is also needed for the funding of utilities.
- Details on the location and function of internal parks and connections with existing and proposed greenway systems or recreational trails. Guidance on how to fund the parks is also needed.

This information from the Master Plan will be useful in a number of ways, most importantly in helping the CRA identify its capital facility needs. With those needs understood, the CRA can request funding from ongoing programs, such as Orange County's Capital Improvement Program, or determine the most appropriate funding strategy, such as issuing bonds for common parking areas. The Master Plan will also clearly identify redevelopment expectations the can help define incentives and/or regulations and promote the redevelopment to public agencies and private interests with an interest in the area.

The following stakeholders, at a minimum, must be engaged throughout the master planning process to build consensus and momentum on the Master Plan:

- Orange County School Board and administrators from Evans High School,
- Orange County Departments, including Neighborhood Services, Planning, Zoning, Public Works, Sheriff, etc.,
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT),
- PHCC and residents, and
- Business and property owners in the CRA.

*Figure 17: Proposed Pine Hills Town Center  
Silver Star and Pine Hills Road Intersection*

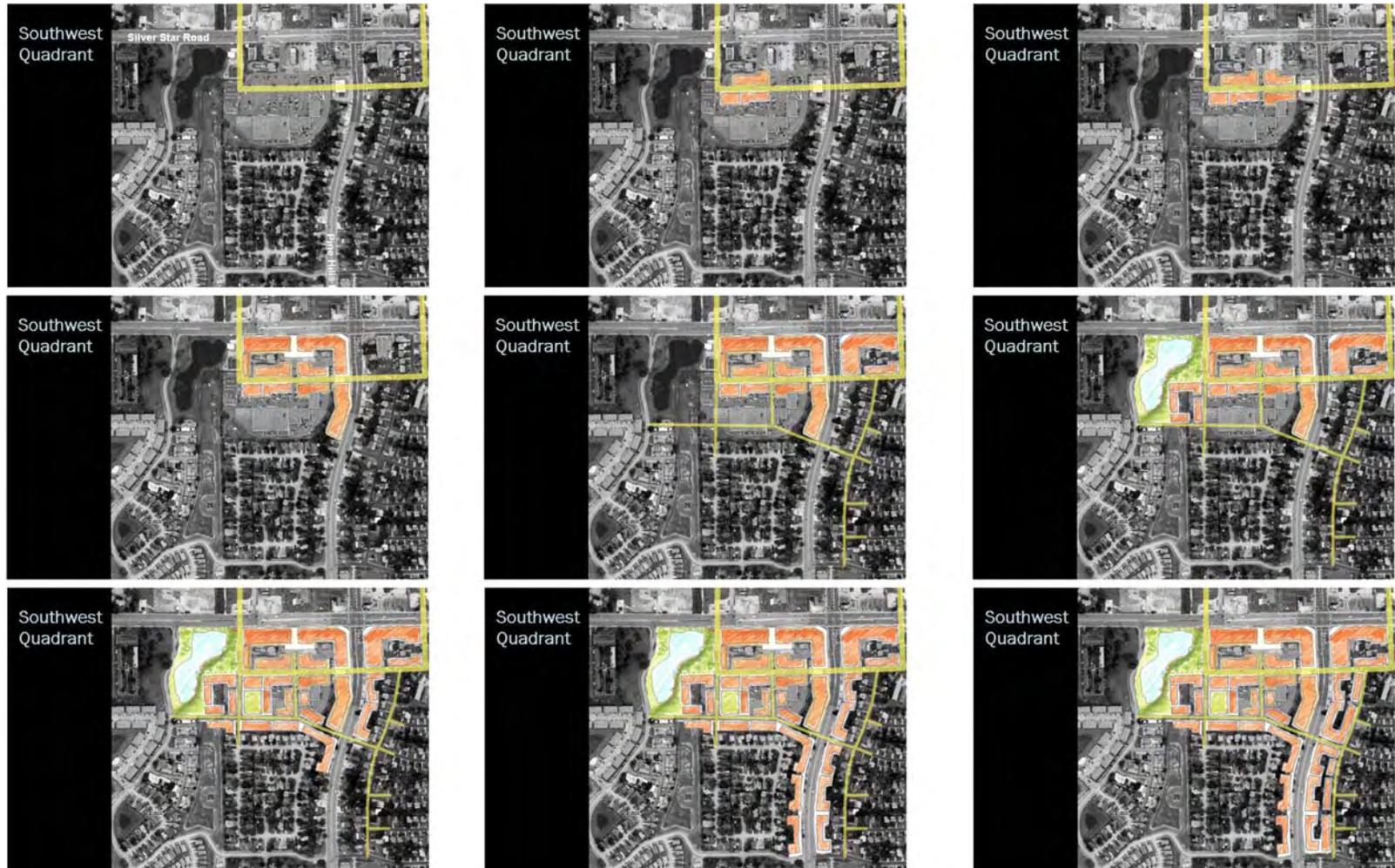


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Figure 18: Potential Phasing Strategy for the Pine Hills Town Center



Figure 19: Potential Phasing Strategy for the Pine Hills Town Center – Southwest Quadrant



# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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## STEP #4: IDENTIFY AND INITIATE FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The keys to building the Pine Hills Town Center are building partnerships and finding funding. The Pine Hills Town Center Master Plan will provide much needed information to potential redevelopment and funding partners. The CRA and its partners will consider a variety of funding and implementation strategies during redevelopment. For initial consideration and guidance, the following strategies are presented:

### STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

There are several very real redevelopment partnership opportunities the CRA can pursue quickly to jump-start the Town Center. Those opportunities are:

#### Redevelop Evans High School as centerpiece of the northeast educational quadrant.

The CRA should immediately partner with the Orange County School Board and Evans High School to devise a redevelopment strategy for the northeast quadrant of the study area. Evans High School is the focal point of the study area and, as a result, the most important catalyst for redevelopment of the entire neighborhood. Specific actions to be taken at this quadrant include:

- Work with the Orange County School Board to use additional sales tax funds for a major overhaul of Evans High School;
- Explore the possibility of making Evans a magnet school for subject areas that reflect the character and interests of the Pine Hills community (e.g., technology/ cultural center);
- Explore partnerships between Evans and Valencia Community College to create a satellite campus in or around Evans
- Work with the Orange County Library to locate an expanded library in or near the school;

- Explore a partnership between Evans High and Orange County Parks and Recreation to build joint use recreational facilities; and
- Ensure connectivity between Evans other activities in the Town Center, including parks, libraries, and multi-modal transportation modes.

#### Develop a government/ civic complex as the centerpiece of the northwest civic quadrant.

The civic quadrant will include a mix of uses, but the major draw will be a civic complex for government agencies such as the State of Florida, Orange County, LYNX and the CRA. The CRA should immediately seek out opportunities with one or more of these agencies to design and build a government/ civic building(s) in the quadrant. The CRA should also contact the public and non-profit agencies already located in the area about being a development partner. Like the educational complex in and around Evans, the civic quadrant must be designed to connect with other opportunities and quadrants in the Town Center.

### **Develop a signature commercial project in the southwest quadrant.**

The CRA should become a proactive development partner with private landowners throughout the Town Center. Most of the existing buildings are in need of replacement and the CRA will likely find property owners who are willing redevelopment partners. Design and financial support are two areas where the CRA can provide much needed help. The redevelopment partners can also help the CRA implement the Master Plan. This financial support need not be direct subsidies to land owners, it can include finding tenants to ensure income, pooling money from multiple owners for economies of scale or helping owners partner to meet on-site infrastructure needs such as providing shared parking or retention. That being said, the CRA may want to consider providing financial support for a large scale signature project in the southwest quadrant, such as a mixed use retail, office and residential complex. Large-scale redevelopment is possible in the quadrant because of the large parcel sizes, and the project would help jump start redevelopment in the southern area.

### **Build partnerships in the southeast quadrant**

The southeast quadrant has a number of small parcels that were once residential but have been converted to offices over the last decade. Assembling these parcels and building consensus among the property owners will be a challenge and must be done carefully. The CRA's role in redeveloping this southeast area should be as a consensus builder, working with property owners to create partnerships and facilitate redevelopment occurring from the private sector and not through eminent domain. As such, redevelopment of this area may occur over a longer time frame, but the contacts should be made quickly to determine if there is any initial interest.

### ***FUNDING PARTNERS AND SOURCES***

A number of financing options are available to the County and the CRA to pay for needed improvements. Many of the options require special actions or approvals from Orange County or other public agencies that can take time and effort. However, there are on-going public programs, such as the Orange County Capital Improvements Program and Metro- Plan's

Transportation Improvement Program, that can and will fund improvements if the CRA makes its needs known. One of the important reasons for completing the Master Plan quickly is to identify capital needs so the CRA can quickly begin to tap into these sources. These on-going sources have a number of competing interests, so funding is not guaranteed, but it is recommended that these options be explored before others are. In addition, the CRA should take advantage of public or private partnerships, as highlighted in the strategic opportunities above. There are often mutual interests that can help augment funding.

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

As noted above, building partnerships is the most effective implementation strategy for the CRA and others responsible for redeveloping the Pine Hills Town Center. The partnerships can be with public agencies or private interests. The strategic partnerships noted in the last section illustrate how the partnerships can lead to success. Other potential partnerships include:

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- Joint use of school facilities – This would require an agreement between Orange County Public Schools and Orange County Parks and Recreation Department for public use of a school's recreation facilities, such as ball courts or tracks to the public. The CRA or another community group could initiate the discussions.
- Joint use municipal complex – As noted above, the municipal complex would be located in the northwest quadrant and it could house a number of public services, such as the CRA and satellite offices for county government, the school district, Lynx, etc. This complex would create a critical mass of employment to support private retail and service investments within the northeast quadrant or in other quadrants.

## Ongoing Funding Programs

As noted above, on-going programs can provide much needed funding support if the CRA makes its needs known and with enough detail for the administrators to easily consider for inclusion. Orange County's Capital Improvement Program and Metroplan's Transportation Improvement

Program are the two ongoing programs with whom the CRA should work.

### Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Orange County

Capital improvement projects will be extremely important to the redevelopment of Pine Hills. The redevelopment requires the construction of a new, interconnected road network, as well as upgraded street and pedestrian lighting fixtures, improved sidewalks and buffers, parks and recreational facilities including greenways and bike paths, and utilities. An example of a project currently budgeted in the CIP is the Pine Hills Trail project.

Funds available for the Orange County CIP are determined annually based on anticipated taxes and financing plans. All projects in need of funding are evaluated by Orange County and those deemed to be most needed within the next five years are included in the CIP. Lower priority projects are identified as long term funding needs.

The Master Plan should identify the specific infrastructure needs. Once the plan is completed, the CRA should immediately prioritize needed improvements and request that the highest priority projects be included in the update of county's CIP. The CRA should also look for partnerships to fund projects, including partial or advanced funding

from private landowners, other public agencies or from the other revenue sources noted below, such as tax increment financing, municipal services taxing unit and bonds.

### Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

MetroPlan administers federal and state transportation funding locally. Each year the agency adds projects it is committed to funding to the five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Most of the funding goes to roadway improvements, but at least 10 percent is set-aside for enhancement projects, such as bike trails or streetscaping or even redevelopment. An additional funding pot is used for transit improvements. The TIP also includes "boxed funds" that can be used to make small-scale improvements, such as improving intersections. These boxed funds can be used to improve Silver Star Road as needed, such as installing and coordinating traffic signals in the CRA. The enhancement funds can be used to pay for pedestrian enhancements and the transit funds can be used to build a new transit station area. The key is for the CRA to identify its transportation

needs through the Master Plan and to coordinate with MetroPlan for possible funding.

### CRA-Specific Funding

Specific funding sources can supplement funding from on-going programs. The key is to match the specific financing needs of a project or program with the right source. There is a number of sources available to the CRA. Those sources are listed below along with a description of how each works and recommendations of how each can be used for specific purposes.

#### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIFs are the most common source of redevelopment financing in Florida, and are allowed under the Florida Community Redevelopment Act. The TIF, which is determined annually, is equal to up to 95 percent of the difference between the amount of ad valorem taxes levied each year by the county on taxable real property within the CRA and the amount of ad valorem taxes that would have been produced by the current millage rates prior to establishing the CRA.

Because TIFs can generate a large amount of funding if there is significant redevelopment in the CRA, the money is often used for large initiatives. Examples of such initiatives can include high cost infrastructure not privately funded or funded through the CIP, on-going services, such as administrative funding for the CRA, joint development, such as seed money for strategic redevelopment opportunities noted above, and parcel assembly that simplifies and coordinates redevelopment. TIFs will not generate much money in the early years, so other funding sources, such as bonds and grants are needed to make initial investments.

#### Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU)

An MSTU is a specific taxing unit established and adopted through a city or county ordinance that derives a specific benefit for which a levy is imposed to defray part or all of the cost of providing that benefit. An MSTU can be a good way to fund small to medium scale improvements in the CRA that specifically benefit the property owners, such as sidewalks, streetlights and streetscaping. The major advantage of an MSTU is that the full cost of the service can be amortized over time and levied in a relatively small amount on the property taxes of only those affected for a period of years.

Orange County is ultimately responsible for administering the MSTU funds. The statutory authority for the creation of an MSTU is provided in Ch. 125.01(q) of the Florida Statutes. The Chapter authorizes counties to establish municipal service taxing or benefit units for any part or all of the unincorporated area of the county. Approval of an MSTU is subject to the consent by ordinance of the Orange County Commission.

#### Bonds

Both revenue bonds and general obligation bonds can be used to finance capital improvements. Revenue bonds are the easiest to issue because they fund projects that generate income to pay off all or part of the bond debt. Bonds are an effective way to finance central parking lots and garages in the CRA, or to build affordable housing and civic centers where the payback is the reduction in rent. Should the CRA pursue revenue bonds, they will need to complete a feasibility study for potential bondholders.

General obligation bonds typically require a property tax increase that must be

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approved by two-thirds of the voters, and are therefore more difficult to use. They most commonly fund capital improvements that do not generate revenue.

## **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

The federal government distributes CDBG funds to local governments who apply for the grants and approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds are distributed according to a formula that includes housing age, population, poverty and overcrowding. The list of eligible activities is broad, but all expenditures must meet at least one of three objectives: 1) benefit low and moderate-income persons, 2) prevent or eliminate slum or blight or 3) address an urgent need such as a federally declared disaster. One of the eligible activities is neighborhood revitalization.

Communities with HUD-approved Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies have enhanced flexibility in using their funds for economic development and less of an administrative burden. Other HUD programs may also prove useful, such as the Home Investment Partnership (HOME), Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) and Emergency

Shelter Grants (ESG). There is also a federal Low Income Tax Credit Program.

## **Program Oriented Funding**

Program oriented funding sources are also available to the CRA. Unlike the on-going or CRA specific sources that can be used for a variety of needs, these funds or grants are for a specific purpose.

### **Housing**

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers grants to organizations and groups from various programs including Community Development Work Study, Community Development Technical Assistance, Housing Counseling Training, and Rural Housing and Economic Development.

For communities, studies have shown that higher levels of home ownership improve the stability of neighborhoods, resulting in higher levels of civic activities and tax revenues and lower crime rates. Public and private interests including the Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Services, HUD and various Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) affiliates of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (NRC).

These groups have created innovative funding programs and intensive financial counseling curricula to support homeownership objectives. In addition, secondary market institutions such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have provided liquidity to mortgage lenders to facilitate expanded home ownership.

While there are several programs which assist with families in purchasing homes, there are also programs to assist borrowers with post-purchase counseling to help families work out budgets that will help them meet their mortgage obligations and other housing expenses.

### **Parks and Recreation**

Potential funding sources include the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) both administered by the FDEP Bureau of Design and Recreation Services Division of Recreation and Parks. The FRDAP provides grants for public outdoor recreation. Funds from FRDAP may be used to acquire or develop land for public outdoor recreation or to construct or

renovate recreational trails. Municipal or county governments or other legally constituted entities with the legal responsibility to provide public outdoor recreation may apply for FRDAP funds.

The LWCF Program is a competitive program that provides grants for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreation use. LWCF Funds can be used for the development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities such as beaches, picnic areas, trails, ball fields, tennis and basketball courts and playgrounds along with associated support facilities such as lighting, parking, restrooms and landscaping or acquisition of land for outdoor recreation purposes.

### Library

Numerous programs offer funds and non-financial resources for libraries. Both the Library Coop Grants and Public Library Construction program are resources available from the Florida State Department. There are also cultural and educational resources that can augment existing public library resources such as the National Endowment for the Humanities Grants and the Florida State Department's Cultural Support and Development Program.

### Brownfields

Redevelopment at key sites in the study area may be hindered by possible contamination. The term "brownfield site" refers to real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. In Pine Hills, the most common potential brownfield site is vacant gas stations, also known as "petroleum brownfields." The most common reuse of a vacant gas station is a new gas station, as the lot sizes are often too small for other types of development, as well as environmental conditions, and costs and liabilities for reuse. Redevelopment of these properties typically requires some form of government assistance to encourage developer interest. Several sources offer grants for brownfield cleanup. These include:

- EPA – The EPA has several grants or funds that municipalities can apply for including the Brownfields Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund and Cleanup Grants.
- HUD – The Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) is a key competitive grant program that HUD administers to stimulate and promote economic and community development. BEDI is designed to assist cities with the redevelopment of abandoned, idled and

underused industrial and commercial facilities where expansion and redevelopment is burdened by real or potential environmental contamination.

- Other funding sources include HUD's Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) program, FDOT's Livable Communities program, the Department of Commerce's (DOC) Economic Development Administration and the Department of the Interior's (DOI) National Park Service.

Creative solutions to gas station redevelopment have, in other communities, included constructing new "green" homes that incorporate environmentally sustainable design and building practices; providing a location for clean, light manufacturing uses that contain a commercial element; and building a park or community center that also serves as a community focal point.

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## Orange County Neighborhood Services

The Orange County Neighborhood Services offers grant programs, and Pine Hills is eligible for the following:

### ReNEW

The ReNEW program supports and assists citizens and organizations in improving the physical and social qualities of neighborhoods by providing grants to neighborhood organizations and non-profit corporations to fund projects that improve the Orange County community. The PHCC applied for a Neighborhood Planning Grant for the development and implementation of this small area or neighborhood strategic plan (e.g. land use and zoning, formulation neighborhood organizations, crime prevention/safety, landscaping, etc.). The program provides residents, property owners and business owners the opportunity to collectively work toward creating a plan that identifies and prioritizes issues ranging from crime and public safety issues to needed infrastructure improvements.

## The Safe Neighborhood Program

The Safe Neighborhood program is a tool for revitalizing Orange County's older and transitioning communities and assists residents and community stakeholders in reclaiming communities before crime and deterioration create blighted conditions. The PHSNP created an action plan to address priority issues affecting the greater Pine Hills area such as safety, community organization, community development and beautification. A few of the successful projects completed through PHSNP include installation of LYNX bus shelters, introduction of mini-grants available to community groups, landscaping and beautification, bicycle helmet distribution and distribution of information to community citizens.

## Community Equity

A number of community service programs strive to involve residents in building pride and ownership in the community. In addition, many commercial businesses offer programs to help build community equity. Some examples are described below:

- Habitat for Humanity. Determine if a Habitat Home can be built in the Pine Hills area, or if

they can participate in the remediation of substandard housing.

- Work with local businesses such as Home Depot or Lowes to provide workshops on home maintenance and/or obtain volunteers to come speak at a community meeting.
- HUD offers grants to organizations and groups from various programs including Community Development Work Study, Community Development Technical Assistance, Housing Counseling Training, and Rural Housing and Economic Development.
- Youth Crime Watch of America offers young people an active role in reducing crime in their schools and neighborhoods. They own and run their Watch program, with support from adults. Youth Crime Watch challenges youth to reduce drugs, violence, and crime, and it helps youth and adults recognize that youth can and must be a part of civic problem-solving, community partnership development, and crime prevention ([www.ywca.org](http://www.ywca.org)).

**Summary of Funding Opportunities**

**Public/Private Partnerships**

**Ongoing Programs**

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)  
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

**CRA-Specific**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)  
Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU)  
Bonds – General Obligation and Revenue  
Community Development Block Grant (CBDG)

**Program Oriented**

Housing  
Parks and Recreation  
Library  
Brownfields

**Orange County Neighborhood Services**

Safe Neighborhood Program  
ReNEW

**Community Equity**

***INCENTIVES***

Incentives are used to guide redevelopment properly and to entice partnerships. Incentives Orange County and the CRA can use include:

**Density Bonuses**

A density bonus allows developers to build at a higher density than otherwise allowed in exchange for meeting criteria specified by the County or CRA. These criteria can include providing certain amenities or building space for certain uses. Communities can encourage mixed-use development by granting a density bonus for commercial projects that include residential space.

Density bonuses may be used to encourage pedestrian amenities. Builders in designated pedestrian-oriented areas are thereby allowed higher density in exchange for including such features as public plazas, fountains, pedestrian arcades or public restrooms. For developers, a density bonus can make a project more profitable. It will be effective in areas where builders are constrained by the existing density limits.

**Parcel Assembly**

Lot sizes in older commercial and residential areas are frequently smaller than required by new projects, either commercial or residential. CRAs can aid new development by assembling parcels into larger lots and then selling these parcels to developers. Parcel assembly also gives the CRA the leverage to define and develop a project to ensure it meets the Master Plan goals. If the CRA or County cannot assemble parcels themselves, they can provide incentives for developers to do so.

**Common Infrastructure**

Providing common infrastructure benefits the CRA and developers in several ways. First, it leads to greater overall efficiency, both in terms of the amount of land required for facilities such as parking, and construction costs. Less land allows greater development densities and returns on investment. Lower construction costs also increases returns. Second, on-site infrastructure requirements can be reduced or eliminated, thereby reducing development costs for individual

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developers. Third, common infrastructure can be funded in a number of ways, giving the CRA options with regard to providing incentives or disincentives. Fourth, common infrastructure can help the CRA influence development patterns because the location and layout of streets, parking areas and retention sites significantly influences overall development patterns.

Common infrastructure includes:

- Internal street network – To function as a downtown, the Town Center must allow easy travel within and between quadrants, preferably easy travel for pedestrians. People on the street will make the place more active, inviting and safe. To ensure convenient travel, the internal path network must be well defined and connected. These connections are only possible if the CRA makes a commitment to develop the internal network as soon as possible. Making convenient connections across Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads will also be a priority and the CRA will need to work with both Orange County and FDOT to identify improvements.
- Parking – Common parking allows property owners the ability to meet their parking

needs off-site, thereby reducing or eliminating on-site parking. Common parking is particularly efficient if adjacent uses have differing peak hours of parking demand. Furthermore, common parking can be funded in several ways, including contributions from property owners in lieu of providing on-site parking or parking fees. Revenue bonds could be used to fund the initial construction.

- Stormwater retention – Addressing stormwater retention collectively rather than on a site-by-site basis not only increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the stormwater system, it also provides opportunities for interesting parks and plazas. Like parking, it also reduces the financial burdens for individual developers and can be paid for in a number of innovative ways.
- Parks – Open space is required for any development, but too often that space is not well defined or not open for public use. Most open space can be used for development; therefore, increasing development densities and returns. Common parks and plazas can provide a purposeful and efficient use of open space.

Defining common infrastructure needs and locations through the Master Plan is a critical first

step. Needs are based on the development program and locations are determined based on the overall design concept.

## **Multimodal Transportation District (MTD)**

In 1999, the Florida legislature amended Chapter 163, Florida Statutes (Growth Management Act), authorizing local governments to establish multimodal transportation districts. The purpose of this legislation was to provide a planning tool that Florida communities could use to reinforce community design elements that support walking, bicycling and transit use. It also enables communities to advance transportation concurrency through development of a high quality multimodal environment, rather than the typical approach that involves road widening for automobile capacity.

An amendment to the Orange County Comprehensive Plan is initially needed to begin the process of developing a MTD. Implementation is carried out through the zoning overlay district proposed for the study area.

The main advantage to a MTD in Pine Hills is that development/redevelopment will be able to occur on Pine Hills and Silver Star where concurrency may be an issue. In a MTD, developers, to meet concurrency, can be required to make offsite improvements such as contributing to the new interconnected roadway network, providing bikeways, enhancing transit stops, etc.

<p><b><u>Summary of Incentives</u></b></p> <p><b>Density Bonus</b></p> <p><b>Parcel Assembly</b></p> <p><b>Common Infrastructure Master Plan – Internal Streets, Parking, Stormwater and Parks</b></p> <p><b>Multimodal Transportation District</b></p>
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### ***GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS***

Both guidelines and regulations help set and enforce expectations for the CRA. Proven techniques such as zoning overlay districts can be augmented with other strategies, such as design guidelines and multimodal transportation districts, to provide the right guidance for development.

#### **Design Guidelines**

In order to cultivate a unique character for Pine Hills, development should reflect traditional downtown design. This includes buildings built up to the lot line, small footprints or breaking down of larger building masses into smaller “units,” frequently-spaced window and door openings (no blank boxes fronting the street), two- to three-story development, mixed-use, and parking taking a secondary location.

Good design requires paying attention to details to make sure the entire CRA integrates properly. Design guidelines are an extremely effective way to provide detailed design expectations without being overly regulatory. The key design features to address are contained in Chapter 3, Design Concepts.

#### **Overlay Districts**

Overlay districts are used to apply unique zoning requirements to an area or corridor to ensure development occurs as expected within the area. An overlay district for the CRA will be a likely outcome of the Master Plan.

In addition to the possible CRA overlay, corridor management overlay districts are recommended along Silver Star Road, Pine Hills Road and SR 50 to promote orderly and attractive development in the area. The overlay districts should be mapped over the entire length of Silver Star Road and SR 50 in Pine Hills, between Hiawasse Road and the City of Orlando border, and along the entire length of Pine Hills Road. The overlay district would specify design guidelines for building layout and design, signs, landscaping, circulation and access, parking, allowable land uses, etc. All standards should be consistent with the guidelines and objectives contained in this action plan.

The overlay district should incorporate recommended design guidelines, set

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forth the level and intensity of mixed uses, and require street/sidewalk connections to adjacent uses. It should also contain the following corridor management elements:

## **Restrict drive-in and auto-related uses**

Pedestrian safety is a critical issue in Pine Hills and zoning for appropriate land uses that cater to pedestrians is an important solution. Additional drive-in commercial and auto-related uses (e.g., gas stations, car washes, auto repair shops, and car dealers) should be discouraged in the study area. These uses require multiple curb cuts, decreasing pedestrian safety and break the continuity of the street wall or building setback lines. Auto-oriented uses also contain negative visual elements – such as parking in front, canopies, bright lights and large, internally lit signs – which are incongruous with and undermine the neighborhood’s desired development style and negatively affect the visual character. For existing auto-related uses, regulations limiting lighting and canopies should be added. Curb cuts for these uses should be modified, and definable driveways required. These measures will help to protect pedestrians in Pine Hills.

## **Limit corner lot access**

Accidents at intersections typically occur three times more frequently than between intersections. For lots located at major intersections, driveways and connections should be set back from the intersection to reduce the number of conflicts and provide more time and space for vehicles to turn or merge safely. Access to corner lots should be from the adjacent local road (e.g., Pine Hills Road), and not from the major arterials (e.g., Silver Star Road). Access to corner parcels should be far enough from the intersection so that vehicles using the driveway do not interfere with the function of the intersection. Driveways should be prohibited within the boundaries of an intersection turn or merge lane.

## **Connect parking lots and consolidate driveways**

Connections between adjacent properties permit vehicles to circulate between uses without having to turn on and off the roadway unnecessarily. These conditions improve highway safety, convenience to shoppers, and access for emergency and delivery vehicles. Shared driveways are encouraged, where feasible. Access to all outparcels should be provided through the access and circulation system of the principle retail center and not via separate

driveways to the roadway. Development sites under the same ownership or those consolidated for development should be treated as a single site and should provide a coordinated access management and circulation plan.

## **STEP #5: MONITOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

### **How does a community measure its success towards implementing a strategic plan?**

Neighborhood Indicators are a series of measures the community will use to evaluate its progress in the implementation of each strategic action item. These indicators are based on where the community is today, and will assist the county and the community to measure the progress of each strategic action item in five-year increments.

The guiding principles developed to guide the development of this strategic action items should serve as the basis for the community’s neighborhood indicators. Listed below is each guiding



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- recognize the Pine Hills Town Center?
  - Has the Town Center been established?
  - Has an Ethnic Museum and Cultural Center been established?
- 7. Focus on business attraction and retention, and diversifying the economic base of Pine Hills.
  - Has a CRA been created?
  - How active is the CRA in promoting local businesses?
  - Has a marketing strategy been created and implemented?
  - What is the theme for Pine Hills?
- 8. Identify sites and strategies for redevelopment.
  - Have Brownfield sites been identified?
  - Has a redevelopment plan been adopted?
- 9. Support homeownership through showcasing Pine Hills' housing stock and promoting programs and education for potential homeowners.
  - What is the home ownership rate?
  - Has the number of owner-occupied homes increased?
  - Has the diversity of housing types been increased? Are new homes, other than detached single family, being built?
- 10. Ensure quality community facilities that add to the quality of life and work to attract and retain residents, including providing parks and recreation opportunities, ensuring access to good schools, public safety, and government services.
  - Has new parkland been identified and purchased?
  - Have strategic partnerships been formed with the school and library?
  - Has the Town Center been recognized and established?

**STEP #6: IMPLEMENT  
ONGOING NEIGHBORHOOD  
ENHANCEMENTS**

*ESTABLISH AN ETHNIC  
MUSEUM AND CULTURAL  
CENTER*

Pine Hills is a center of diversity and multiculturalism for Orange County and the central Florida region. Because of the various ethnicities and cultures, Pine Hills residents would benefit from an ethnic museum and cultural center. The ethnic museum would be an opportunity to offer educational and interpretive exhibits and programs that focus on the heritage of various immigrant groups. The ethnic museum could house surplus exhibits from the art museum and display the works of local artists. Proximity to tourist attractions has the potential to attract out-of-town visitors to the museum, especially those visiting family in the area and not staying on the main strip. Most importantly, and coupled with other improvements, this museum could serve as a

catalyst project that launches a new identify for Pine Hills.

The cultural center could be set up as a public-private partnership, a not-for-profit agency, or a private business. It could also be set up as a line department associated with another institution, such as a college or university or other local museum or cultural center. The center could serve as a location for new residents to meet others with the same background or other backgrounds and offer classes to new residents, such as English as a Second Language (ESL), starting a small business, and other classes about living in the United States.

The following considerations should be explored in pursuit of this initiative:

**Funding sources/matching funds**

Costs to consider include preparing a feasibility study/site assessment, start-up capital costs, marketing, and operations. Potential funding sources may include the following organizations:

- Local and national endowments including the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts Heritage

- US Department of Interior, National Parks Service
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Municipal funds
- Private donations
- Merchandise sales/ specialty items (e.g., community fundraisers showcasing local art or cuisine; develop and sell an international cookbook)

**Facility size and location**

- How much space can we afford?
- What services shall be offered?
- What is the demand for use of this type of facility?
- What are the community needs that this facility could address?

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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## Organizational/ management structure

- Not-for-profit corporation
- Public-private partnership
- Line department

## Market area/ target market

- Who is our target market?
- How large is our market area?
- May include just the local community and schools or may be designed to attract tourists and visitors from nearby communities
- What and where are the competing facilities?

## *DEVELOP A CREATIVE MARKETING STRATEGY*

The business districts of Pine Hills should work together to devise a creative and coordinated marketing strategy. Such a strategy should include developing brochures, instituting a

signage program, promoting the neighborhood web site, and other promotions portraying a positive vision of Pine Hills as a place to shop and invest. Pine Hills may want to develop an association with a local college or university marketing department to assist with a strategy as a student or class project. At a minimum, the strategy should incorporate the following objectives: 1) Educate the public about services and opportunities in Pine Hills; and 2) Overcome existing perceptions about Pine Hills and emphasize the community assets.

## *PROMOTE A THEME FOR PINE HILLS*

A recognizable theme or brand should be devised for Pine Hills. The identity should be authentic and, while reflecting the history of the community, should recognize the future and celebrate the neighborhood diversity and culture. A steering committee should form to develop and implement this concept. The committee may include representatives from local community organizations, businesses, and residents. The committee should consider sponsoring a contest or community event to solicit creative ideas from residents, schools, or community groups. The contest should be highly publicized in the

community, and multiple highly visible locations should be established for people to submit their ideas.

## *CREATE NEIGHBORHOOD GATEWAYS*

Locations for gateway signage into the Pine Hills area should be identified and purchased by the County or the CRA. These signs should indicate to passers-bys that they are entering a place of significance, and serve as a source of community pride and identify.

# PINE HILLS LAND ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIC PLAN

## 5. DESIGN CONCEPT FOR PINE HILLS

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### INTRODUCTION

As presented in the Action Plan, a major action item will be the creation of a detailed master plan. The goal of this plan should be to create a new focal point for the community through establishing a Town Center at the Pine Hills/Silver Star Road intersection.

Upon establishment of a CRA, a master redevelopment plan will be developed and adopted. **The guidelines contained in this section shall serve as a basis for the CRA master redevelopment plan, and shall employ a Town Center design concept to establish the focal point.**

The Town Center design concept contains a mix of low density residential, office, and small-scale neighborhood commercial uses connected by a new network of walkable streets. This network is comprised of a new loop road connecting the four major quadrants around the Pine Hills/ Silver Star intersection as well as a secondary internal street network connecting the new major development nodes. This new network not only provides enhanced connectivity

between surrounding neighborhoods and new commercial services, but it will also relieve pressure on the primary road network of Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads.

This new grid-street pattern creates a framework for traditional-style redevelopment and a pedestrian-oriented environment.

### *EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER*

Pine Hills can be characterized as primarily residential, surrounded by disconnected and obsolete commercial uses along Pine Hills and Silver Star roads. Access into these commercial areas is, in many cases, limited to individual driveways off these major roadways, which carry both regional and local traffic. Additionally, the surrounding neighborhoods are disconnected from these uses, and have a limited street network connecting them to the major roadways.

During an initial community workshop, stakeholders expressed a concern that future roadway widening would encroach upon

existing commercial spaces, continuing a trend towards blighted conditions. Other concerns expressed at this event included:

- Lack of focal point/ downtown area;
- Incompatible land uses;
- No diversity of housing types;
- Underutilized commercial and retail space; and
- Deteriorated aesthetic quality.

The Town Center Master Plan concept presents an underlying strategy to address these issues and concerns in the future. This concept also articulates a vision of Pine Hills that residents and decision makers can work towards over the next three to five years.

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## *FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER*

### **Basic Principles**

The centerpiece of the strategic plan for Pine Hills is creating a town center around the intersection of Pine Hills Road and Silver Star Road complete with the commerce and civic functions that all downtowns have. Key features of the town center include government/ civic-oriented development at the northwest corner of the intersection, an educational-oriented center at the northeast corner built around Evans High School, and a mixed-use commerce/ residential district south of the intersection. These three areas will be connected through a grid street system that fosters internal travel.

The master plan should include the following elements:

#### **Loop Road**

Two east-west main streets are created on opposite sides of the intersection and

connect to an enhanced north south network, creating a loop road around the primary intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star Road, relieving pressure on this intersection and creating a secondary network for local travel, as depicted in Figure 20, below. .



*Figure 20: Conceptual alignment of a loop road around the intersection of Pine Hills and Silver Star*

#### **Commercial Focal Point**

The north side of the intersection is intended for more commercial/civic uses. Lots fronting Silver Star road would be the ideal location for larger scale retail uses.

#### **Civic Focal Point**

An “education core” in the east and a “government core” in the west define the northern main street. A formal green space should be created across from the school, enclosed by a public library and cultural/ ethnic museum. This space creates a place for congregation and activity during and after school by students and citizens. The street terminates in the west at the “government core” which should consist of a city hall, courthouse, and police station.

#### **Mixed-Use Center**

The southern plan concentrates commercial/ mixed-uses along the corridor and the main street on the

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

interior. This side of the intersection is smaller in scale and may provide for residential uses. A greenway on the western edge should be developed to connect the two elements. Additionally, mixed-use features should be created on the site through redevelopment. Potential uses include townhouse development, senior housing, and mixed-use buildings (e.g., residential apartments or condominiums above retail stores or professional offices).

## Main Street

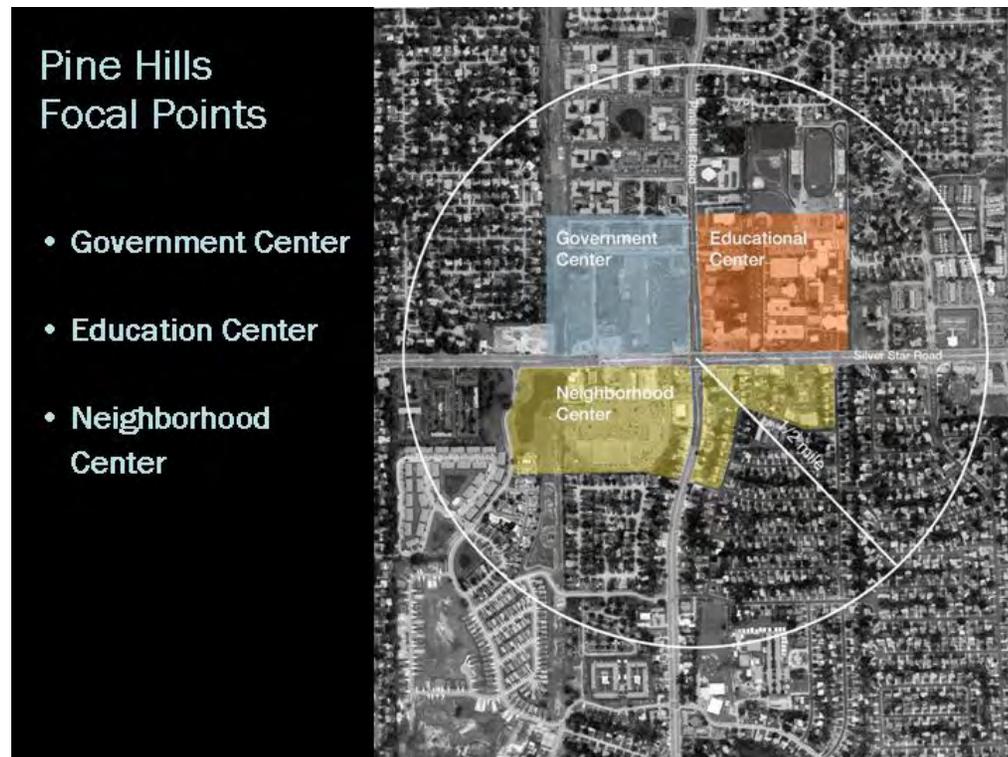
Larger commercial uses may be accommodated in the Town Center's main street shopping district. This district may include a small-scale retail area for residents, small shops, and other typical pedestrian-oriented downtown uses.

## Community Assets

Places for community gathering such as a community center, a cultural or performing arts center, or museum, should be provided, as well as space for additional neighborhood

or county facilities such as schools, county satellite offices, sheriff precinct, etc.

Figure 21: Conceptual plan for a mixed-use town center at Pine Hills and Silver Star Road





### Town Center Elements

The recommendations for development of the Pine Hills Town Center Master Plan, to be undertaken by a newly established Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) incorporates traditional neighborhood design (TND) components as described below.

#### Mix and Integration of Uses

It is important to distinguish multi-use development from mixed-use development. Where multi-use development allows for a variety of distinct and separate development types, integrated mixed-use development allows people to live within walking distance of work, shopping and other activities. This type of development also establishes a “park once” environment where people are able to walk between activities rather than drive. Additionally, mixed-use helps to create vibrant neighborhoods with a variety of activities throughout the day and week. Different uses can be incorporated into a single building or small single use zones can be combined to create mixed-use neighborhoods. In mixed-use districts, it is

important to promote the development of multi-purpose buildings whose uses can be adapted over time. This same flexibility should also be reflected in the network of streets and blocks. Land uses such as office, commercial and medium/high density residential are well suited for neighborhood centers such as what is recommended for the study area.

#### Buildings and Frontages

Building frontages are the interface between the public street and the building interior. Treatment of building fronts should reflect the use of the interior space. Retail frontage is intended to draw the public into the interior, while residential frontage protects the privacy of the interior, yet allows the residents to observe and engage with neighbors and passer-bys.

The ground level should always be given the most careful consideration. Ground floor heights, façade articulation, setbacks and entry design have a critical impact on the overall street environment. The typical progression from street to building includes vehicular traffic, on-street parking,

landscaping elements and street trees, sidewalks, and building entry. The dimensions and relationships between elements vary depending upon building types and uses, vehicle traffic and pedestrian traffic.

#### Orientation and Massing

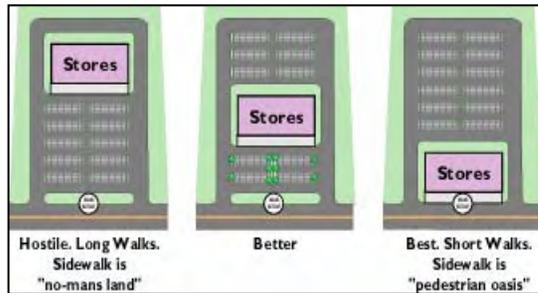
The current development pattern in Pine Hills is towards the automobile. By simply reconfiguring a site, building placement can reduce walking distances for customers and make streets more useful for pedestrians, transit customers and cyclists. Buildings should be sited to complement the existing built environment while recognizing the characteristics of the specific project site.

Building massing describes the physical form of a building or group of buildings. In order to maintain a comfortable feeling of scale, massing must be carefully considered in building design. Massing should be compatible with surrounding buildings

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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to create a streetscape that maintains a consistent scale while allowing unique articulation between buildings. A single, uniform building mass should be avoided.



**Oriented building entrances along the street reduce walking distances and helps create a continuous street wall over time.**

## Spatial Enclosure

Spatial enclosure refers to the degree that the edge of the street is defined. Commercial streets typically lack enclosure when parking lots dominate the streetscape. It is recommended that the Master Plan establish minimum setbacks in commercial areas and visually fill-in spaces between

sidewalks and buildings. Ideally, maximum setbacks should be established so that the building height to street width ratio is not less than 3:1, thereby creating a feeling of spatial enclosure which dignifies the street as public space, calms traffic, and creates a pedestrian amenity.



**Enclosure creates a human-scaled pedestrian environment by clearly defining the edge of the street.**

## Building Articulation

Highly articulated storefronts and homes add interest and variety to the pedestrian experience. Detailed building facades generally provide unique visual sequences that focus pedestrian attention on the setting rather than the walk itself. The use of

interest-creating features on ground floor facades should be required. A minimum of 75 percent of a new or reconstructed first-floor wall should contain interest-creating features.

Figures 22 and 23 on the following page illustrates the impact that combining the various design elements – mix and integration of uses, buildings and frontages, orientation and massing, spatial enclosure and building articulation – can have on a streetscape and a pedestrian experience. Figure 22 is of an existing segment along Pine Hills Road near Silver Star. Figure 23 is an example of how that segment could look in the future, after redevelopment occurs when these design principles applied.

□□□□□ 5. DESIGN CONCEPT FOR PINE HILLS

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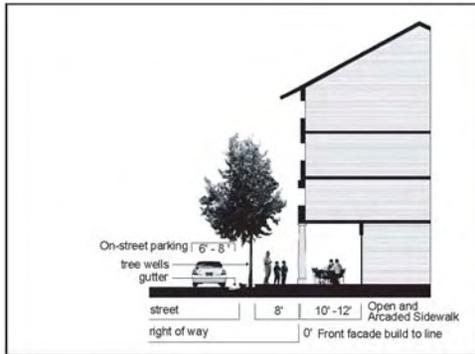


*Figure 22: Existing*

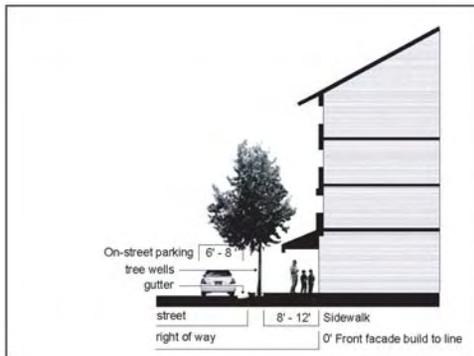


*Figure 23: Future  
(Conceptual)*

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan



**Arcade Front**



**Shop Front**

## Arcade Front

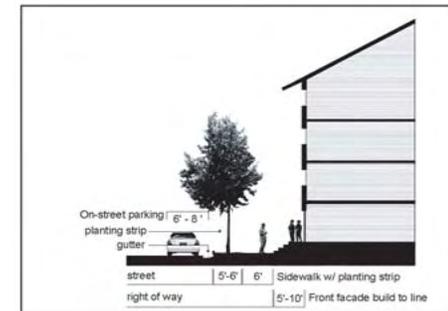
An arcade is a series of arches or piers often used to support an overhead covering to create a partially enclosed, protected walkway. Arcade fronts draw the building to the edge of the right-of-way, integrating the sidewalk with the built space. The shared arcade space provides shade and weather protection. Ground floor retail functions can expand into the arcade space. The covered space is also an ideal setting for outdoor café and restaurant setting.

## Shop Front

A shop front is intended to promote retail activity. Building façade should be at or near the edge of the right-of-way. Minimum ground floor heights ensure a civic presence at street level. A ground floor façade often has large openings to draw attention inward. Awnings and signage may cantilever over the right-of-way.

## Stoop Front

A stoop front provides a comfortable interface between the public streetscape and residential units. Elevating the entrance above sidewalk grade helps minimize building set back. The “stoop” should be oriented towards the street to encourage interaction between residents, neighbors, and passersby.



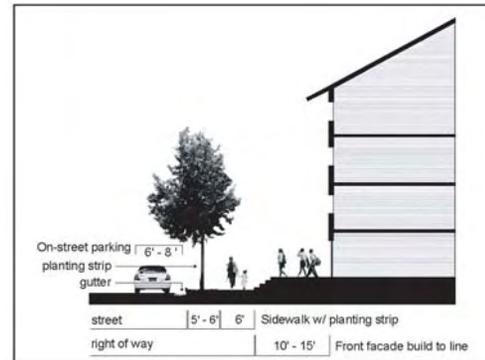
**Stoop Front**



## 5. DESIGN CONCEPT FOR PINE HILLS

### Dooryard

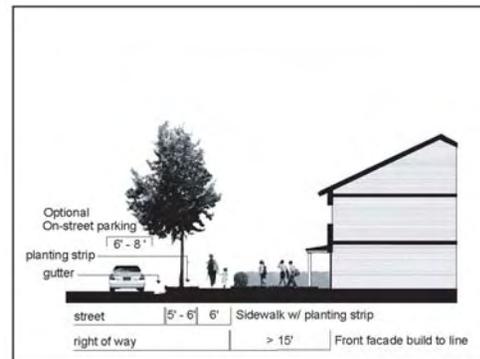
A dooryard front includes a paved or landscaped surface between the right-of-way and front facade line and provides gradual transition from sidewalk to building. The large transitional space and elevated entrance allow the building to negotiate significant elevation changes. The open surface can be enclosed as a porch or retained as outdoor space.



Dooryard

### Common Yard

A common yard front uses a substantial building setback. The front yard created may be fenced or unfenced and should be visually continuous in landscaping with adjacent yards. With the deep setback as a buffer, common yards are suitable for higher speed thoroughfares.



Common Yard

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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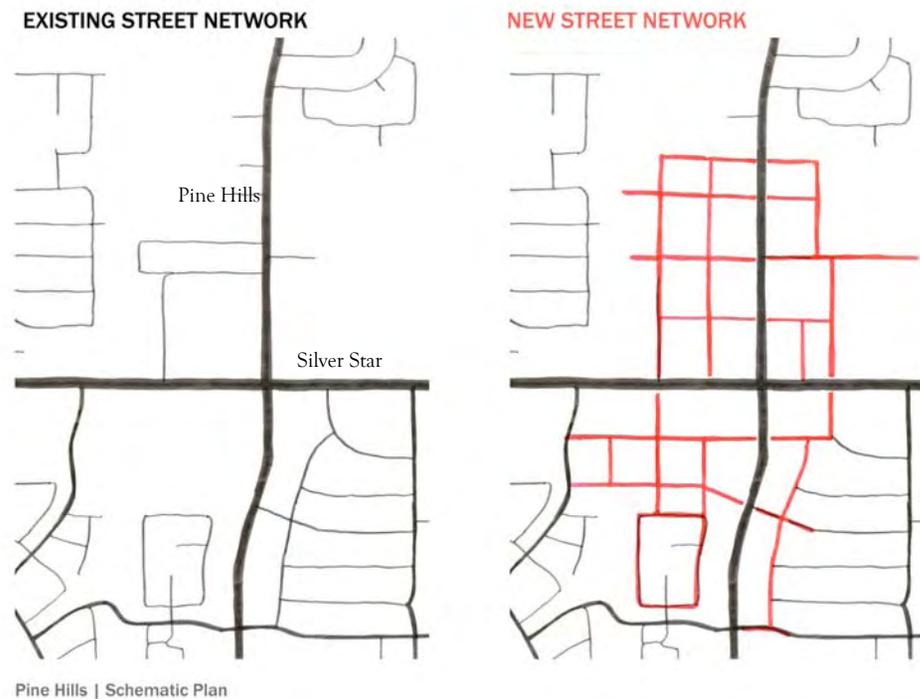
## STREETS

Streets and corridors provide the framework for the center. Effective street design is critical to the success of a mixed-use activity center. Streets must provide an efficient and interconnected network for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Street function and appearance must be balanced with the built environment and create a pleasant and safe experience for all travelers and residents that have homes and/or businesses facing the street.

To ensure a lively street setting, street networks must avoid concentrating travel on a few large roads. A more diverse roadway fabric provides multiple routes of access and evenly distributes activity to create a more energized urban environment. The dispersal of vehicle loads allows streets to be narrower and treated at a human scale.

A new, interconnected street network – as illustrated in Figure 24 – is the premise behind the recommended “loop road” concept for the Pine Hills/Silver Star Road intersection.

Figure 24: Comparison of the existing and proposed new street network. Black lines indicate existing roadways. Red lines indicate potential new roads. The red lines build upon the “loop road” concept.





## 5. DESIGN CONCEPT FOR PINE HILLS

### Streetscape

Streetscape elements provide a softened appearance and enhance the quality and appeal for pedestrians. On-street parking and street trees help define a comfortable pedestrian realm buffered from vehicular traffic. Narrow road widths naturally reduce travel speeds and give greater spatial enclosure to the street environment. Enclosure allows the streetscape to be experienced as an “urban room,” a space that attracts pedestrians and jumpstarts activity.

### Pedestrian Crossings

Pedestrian crossings are a critical element of the pedestrian network. Safe and convenient crosswalks make a sidewalk system usable and appealing, encouraging pedestrian activity. Crosswalks should be clearly marked and located carefully in relation to vehicular traffic.

To ensure safety and usability, crossing distances should not exceed 50-feet. Bulb-outs and median refuge islands should be used to reduce crossing distances for

pedestrians. Marked crosswalks (especially paved or painted) indicate the appropriate route across traffic for pedestrians, assist the visually impaired, and serve as a reminder to motorists. Crosswalks should be aligned with the path of the sidewalk to ensure accessibility. Intersections and crossing areas with heavy traffic or wide crossing distances require crossing signals to aid pedestrians and motorists.

When possible, pedestrian enhancements should be added to Silver Star Road. However, Silver Star is a high speed, highly traveled regional roadway; therefore, pedestrian design should be focused on make Silver Star safe for pedestrians, while recognizing that Silver Star is not intended as a pedestrian street. The loop road, and Pine Hills Road, are more suitable for pedestrians and should be treated as pedestrian streets.

*These photos depict examples of neighboring Central Florida neighborhoods with strongly articulated streetscapes containing pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, and lighting.*



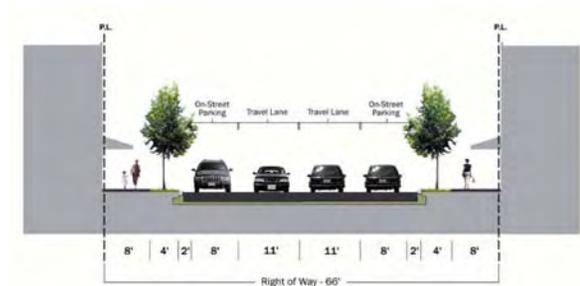
# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

## Street Types

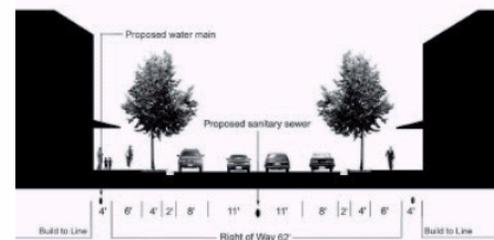
### Main Street

It is recommended that the Main Streets have a maximum 66-foot right-of-way accommodating two-lane traffic (11-foot lane width), on-street parking (8-foot parking stall width), and curb and gutter drainage (2-foot width). The pedestrian zone shall include a 4-foot wide area for street trees and plantings and 8-foot minimum paved sidewalk. It is further recommended that all utilities be placed underground within a public utility easement.

Street trees shall be planted in tree wells located within the 4-foot reserved area for trees and plantings. The street tree centerline shall maintain a 10-foot separation from all utility lines. Pedestrian lighting shall also be provided within the 4-foot reserved buffer area. All buildings fronting Main Streets are required to have arcade front or shop fronts.



**Main Street Prototype**



**Local Street Prototype**

In Pine Hills, Main Streets, along with Local Streets, will be located in each focal point and comprise the new, interconnected street network.

### Local Streets

Local Streets should have a 62-foot right-of-way accommodating two-lane traffic (11-foot lane width), on-street parking (8-foot parking stall width), and curb and gutter drainage (2-foot width). The pedestrian zone shall include a 4-foot wide planting strip for street trees and plantings and 10-foot minimum paved sidewalk. It is further recommended that all utilities be placed underground within a public utility easement.

Street trees shall be located in 4-foot planting strips and a 10-foot separation shall be maintained between the street tree centerline and all utility lines. Planting strips are to be composed of low grass or groundcover plants. Pedestrian lighting shall be provided within the 4-foot planting strip area.



## 5. DESIGN CONCEPT FOR PINE HILLS

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### Open Space

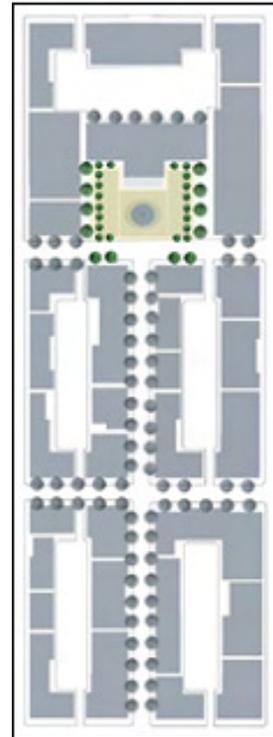
Carefully planned open space is necessary for the richness of town centers and neighborhoods, and the vitality of the public realm. Open space is a broad classification for public spaces ranging from community recreational areas to civic squares. Formal civic spaces should be located in the center area, serving the area of highest intensity, while recreational facilities, greenways, and neighborhood parks should be strategically placed to serve the mixed-use communities surrounding the core.

Many qualities contribute to the appeal of open spaces. Often, environmental and natural features are integrated into open space planning. In urban settings, water retention systems can be formalized as landscape elements that punctuate design. Attractive civic spaces in the center, such as canals, ponds, and fountains promote gathering, interaction, and comfort. Moveable seating, tables, and elements that are multi-functional (planters that are at seat height) allow people to congregate and personally define spaces. Shade trees,

greens, and cooling fountains help create a comfortable setting.

### Plaza

A plaza is the most formal public space and is generally less than half the size of a block located at the intersection of important thoroughfares. It is devoted to civic uses and commercial activity and is surrounded by buildings on all sides. Its landscape is composed primarily of durable pavement and formally planted trees. Significant architectural features such as fountains, statues, and other vertical elements help mark the civic prominence of the plaza. Such features are most successful when



planned in accordance with a strong visual axis, allowing the plaza to be read from a distance.

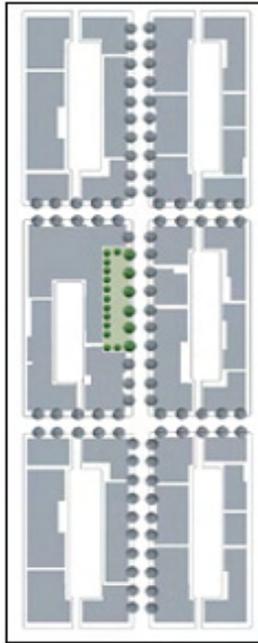
It is recommended that a plaza be located in the government core, anchored by the municipal complex.

### Pocket Park

A pocket park is a small park that often occupies a “left over” space between buildings. Pocket parks are block fragments (typically no longer than 100' of frontage) that provide vegetation, shade, and open space within densely built areas. Due to their small scale, pocket parks predominantly serve immediately adjacent buildings and thoroughfares. These small, informal breaks in the dense fabric provide a healthy counter to more prominent civic spaces such as urban parks and plazas. Pocket parks may establish Farmer's Markets as a potential use to promote economic development activity in the area.

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

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**Pocket Park**

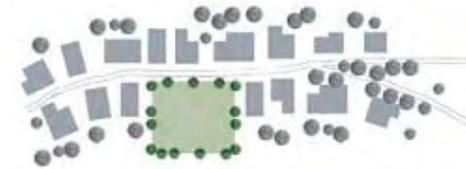
## **Neighborhood Park**

A neighborhood park is an open public space serving a residential area. The space may be used for civic gatherings and recreation. Neighborhood parks provide a

safe open area free from moving traffic for children and neighborhood residents. Neighborhood parks may be bound by residences or small-scale institutional or civic buildings to form a common green. Such parks are intended to serve the local area, unlike recreational parks, which serve a larger residential population.

## **Recreational Park**

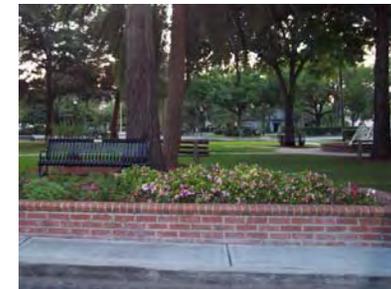
A recreational park is an open public space reserved for civic gatherings and recreation. Often, recreational parks are designed around existing natural features. Its landscape consists primarily of grassy areas, paved or unpaved walks, and shade trees. Formal playing fields may be established to serve community needs. A mix of residential, commercial, and civic buildings should surround the park. Recreational parks may also serve nearby institutions, such as the high school or a technical school. Parking needs and other necessary facilities must also be considered; opportunities for shared parking should be explored. Recreational parks may range from three to 10 acres in size.



**Neighborhood Park**



**Recreational Park**



**Local Park**

## Signage

Signs play a significant role in forming the character of streets. Signs can either contribute to or detract from the visual quality of the public right-of-way. Signage should be managed to avoid visual blight and safety concerns, while providing a fair economic environment. Attractive, coordinated, and well-designed signs have a positive impact on both businesses and the community. Appropriate signs provide a defined identification of individual businesses, stimulate business performance, create a pleasing environment that will attract people, and enhance the neighborhood image. Pine Hills should enhance the regulation of signs by ensuring that signs:

- Do not contain too much information;
- Are the minimum size appropriate to the use and volume of the facility;
- Are lit from an outside source;

- Contain a minimal number of colors; and
- Do not include billboards.

## Traffic Signs

Traffic signs are part of the total streetscape and should be designed accordingly, while still fulfilling mandated size regulations and other requirements. The following guidelines for public sign control are recommended:

- Street and highway signs must be clean, simple, easy to read, and appropriately located;
- To minimize information overload at intersections, which are decision points for the driver, limit signs to those whose message is critical at the street corner (e.g., directional signs and street name signs); and
- To keep the number of poles along streets to a minimum, mount signs on light fixture poles wherever possible.

A comprehensive signage program, focusing on design, placement and size, should be adopted for Silver Star Road as part of a corridor overlay district. The goal of this program should be to reduce the visual clutter caused by excess signage along the corridor, as well as promote the safety and orderly development along the corridor.

# Pine Hills Land Analysis and Strategic Plan

Figure 25: Vision Plan for Pine Hills



1 CIVIC SPACE



2 CIVIC SPACE



3 COMMUNITY GREEN



4 GREENWAY



5 MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT



6 RESIDENTIAL | TOWNHOUSES

