

City of Atlantic Beach

2045 Comprehensive Plan



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

<u>City of Atlantic Beach Commission</u>	<u>City of Atlantic Beach Staff</u>
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Background and Summary of the City's Comprehensive Planning Process

In 1975, Florida enacted the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act which required all local governments to have comprehensive land use plans in order to manage growth and protect the natural environment. As a result of this legislation, the City of Atlantic Beach began working on its first comprehensive plan in 1976 and officially adopted it in 1981 (Ordinance 95-81-21).

In 1985, in response to a rapidly growing population and associated development pressures, Florida passed the "Growth Management Act", which substantially amended the 1975 Act. Pursuant to the 1985 Act, all local comprehensive plans must be consistent with State and Regional plans and be approved by the State. Further, all comprehensive plans must include specific elements, a Future Land Use Map (FLUM), and associated land development regulations. In 1990, the City of Atlantic Beach adopted its second comprehensive plan (Ordinance 95-90-48).

Pursuant to Section 163.3191 of the Florida Statutes, local governments are required to evaluate their comprehensive plans at least once every seven years to determine whether the plan needs to be amended to reflect changes in state requirements since the last update. Prior to 2011, the state required the preparation and adoption of an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) at least once every seven years to determine if amendments to the plan are needed due to changes in state requirements and/or local conditions. These reports were adopted by the city via resolution and then submitted to the state. The City of Atlantic Beach adopted EARs in 1997, 2003, 2008, and 2010.

The comprehensive plan has been amended several times since its original adoption, often as a response to changes in state requirements. Notable amendments occurred in 2009 with the addition of the Public Schools Facilities Element and in 2012 with the addition of policies addressing military compatibility and coordination, both in response to new state legislation at the time. In 2015, the state enacted the "Peril of Flood" statute which required the city to include a redevelopment component with principles to eliminate inappropriate and unsafe development in coastal areas. The city amended the comprehensive plan in 2019 to comply with this requirement. Most recently, in 2021, the state passed legislation that requires local governments to add a Property Rights Element to their comprehensive plan.

General Characteristics and Conditions of the City of Atlantic Beach

The City of Atlantic Beach is a small coastal community consisting of approximately four square miles of land area and a population just shy of 14,000. The City is located between two miles of Atlantic Ocean beachfront on the east and the expansive marsh and estuarine environment of the San Pablo Creek / Intracoastal Waterway on the west. The City is a near fully-developed municipality where the predominant land use is residential consisting of stable and well-established neighborhoods. The City possesses a unique character and "personality" where a high quality of life, diverse recreational activities, preservation of community character and protection of natural resources are day-to-day priorities to residents and elected officials as well.

The City contains two commercial corridors: the north side of Atlantic Boulevard (SR10) extending from the ocean westerly to the Intracoastal Waterway, and Mayport Road (SR A1A), extending from Atlantic Boulevard northerly to the municipal limits. Both corridors continue to experience a solid level of market-driven redevelopment. The appropriate redevelopment and aesthetic enhancements to the Mayport Road corridor continue to be strategic planning priorities to the City. In 2018, a community driven Mayport Road Visioning Implementation Plan (MRVIP) was completed to guide future development along the Mayport Road corridor. The MRVIP includes recommendations for new design standards and activity programming.

The City contains a wealth of natural resources and parks including the beach, preserves, and a dense tree canopy. Since adoption of the 1990 Comprehensive Plan, the City has annexed and acquired extensive marsh areas extending westerly to the Intracoastal Waterway. The future land use of these areas is designated as Conservation, and invaluable recreational resources have been established therein. Tide Views Preserve, which opened to the public in 1996, consists of eight acres of passive park and offers scenic views of the Intracoastal Waterway, 2500 feet of trail and boardwalk, a scenic overlook, canoe launch and fishing area. Dutton Island Preserve, which opened in 2003, is a 40-acre passive park containing 9,000 feet of nature trails, fishing and viewing piers, a canoe and kayak launch, pavilions and picnic areas and primitive camping areas. The 2009 acquisition of the 350-acre Buckman Pritchard Trust marsh tract, renamed the River Branch Preserve, significantly increased the City's inventory of Environmentally Sensitive Lands and passive open space. Additionally in 2018, the City purchased a 3.52 acre parcel adjacent to Sherman Creek, often referred to as Selva Preserve. Preservation and protection of these natural coastal resources, particularly the City's dense native tree canopy, are strongly held community values.

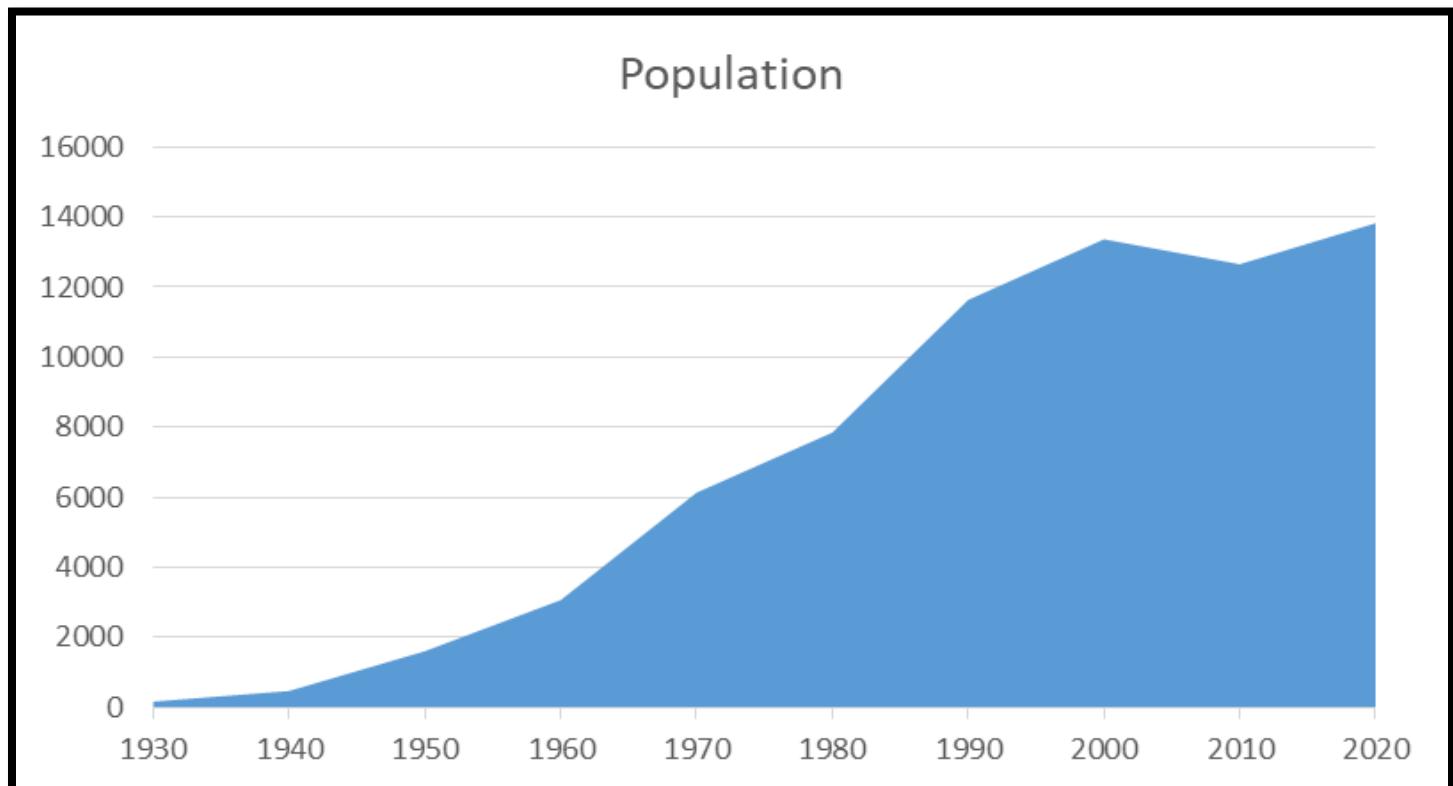
DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

POPULATION

In 1926, Atlantic Beach was incorporated and became the “Town of Atlantic Beach.” At that time, the population was about 164. Subsequently, the town became the “City of Atlantic Beach” and currently has an estimated population of 13,513. The table and chart on this page illustrate the population by decade, showing rapid growth between the 1940s and 1970s. While the rate of growth decreased after 1970, the total population has more than doubled since that time. Between 2000 and 2010, the population declined by an estimated 5%; the only decade experiencing a decline in population. As most of the developable land within the city has been developed within the last 20 years, the growth rate has declined considerably. This trend is expected to continue.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Growth/Decline</u>
<u>1930</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>1940</u>	<u>468</u>	<u>185%</u>
<u>1950</u>	<u>1,604</u>	<u>243%</u>
<u>1960</u>	<u>3,063</u>	<u>91%</u>
<u>1970</u>	<u>6,132</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>1980</u>	<u>7,847</u>	<u>28%</u>
<u>1990</u>	<u>11,636</u>	<u>48%</u>
<u>2000</u>	<u>13,368</u>	<u>15%</u>
<u>2010</u>	<u>12,655</u>	<u>-5%</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>13,513</u>	<u>7%</u>

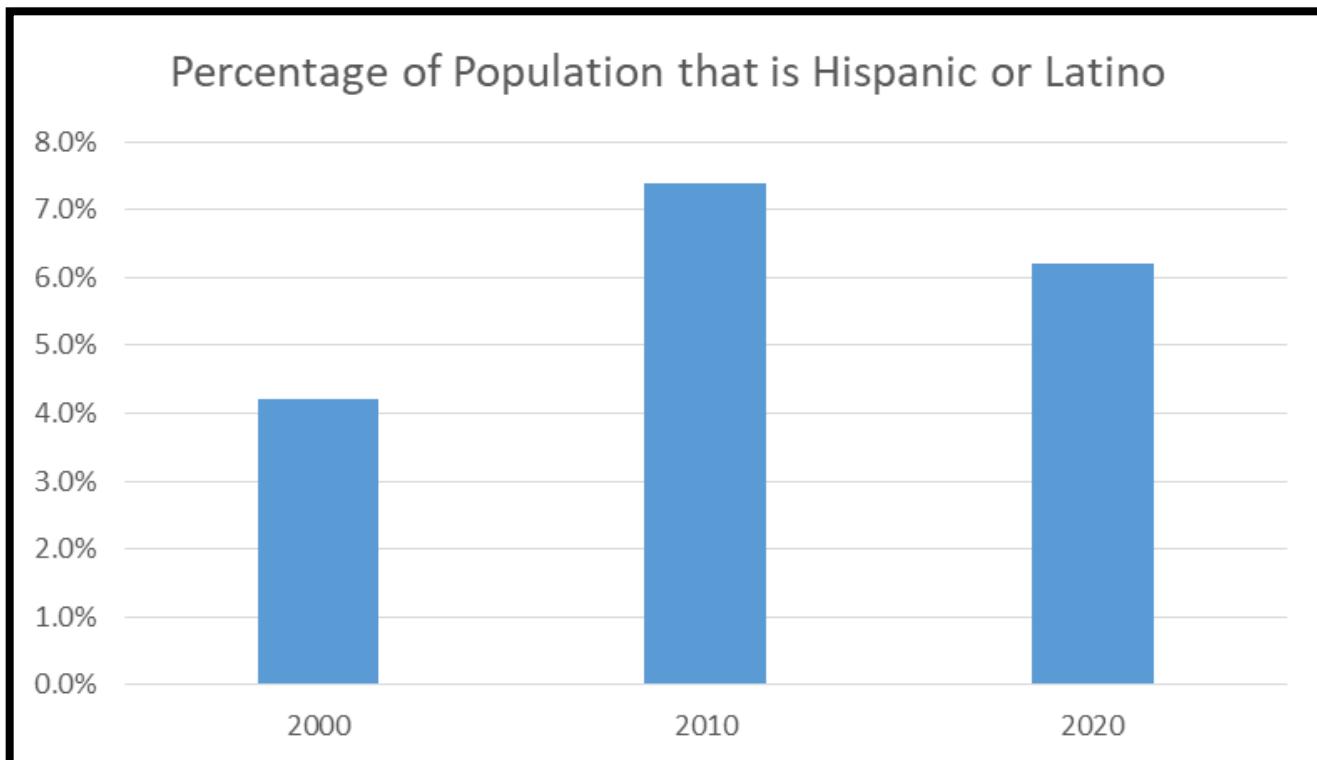
Population



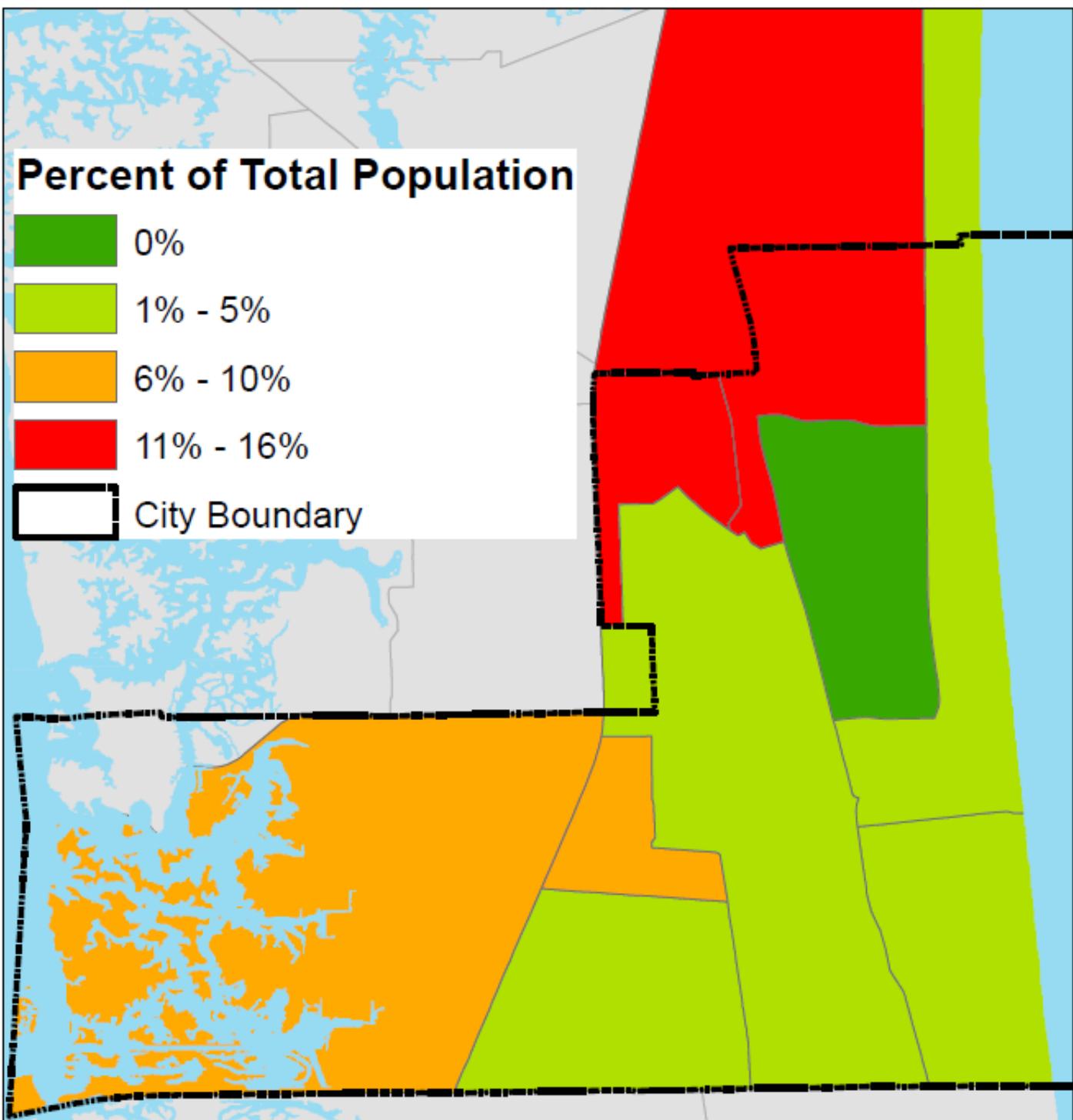
RACE

The table below illustrates the race of Atlantic Beach residents from 1980 to 2020 as reported by the U.S. Census. The table shows the majority of the population reported their race as White (81.1%), followed by Black or African American (7.3%). Historic data demonstrates an increase in population since 1980 reporting their race as White and as Two or more races and a decline in population reporting their race as Black or African American. The Hispanic or Latino percentage of the population has decreased slightly since 2010.

<u>Year</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black or African American</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</u>	<u>American Indian and Alaska Native</u>	<u>Two or more races</u>	<u>Other</u>
<u>1980</u>	<u>75.1%</u>	<u>18.7%</u>	<u>5.3%</u>		<u>0.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>0.6%</u>
<u>1990</u>	<u>80.2%</u>	<u>15.4%</u>	<u>3.2%</u>	<u>0.1%</u>	<u>0.3%</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>0.8%</u>
<u>2000</u>	<u>82.2%</u>	<u>12.7%</u>	<u>2.1%</u>	<u>0.03%</u>	<u>0.3%</u>	<u>1.6%</u>	<u>1.1%</u>
<u>2010</u>	<u>82.5%</u>	<u>10.8%</u>	<u>1.9%</u>	<u>0.1%</u>	<u>0.5%</u>	<u>2.8%</u>	<u>1.4%</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>81.1%</u>	<u>7.3%</u>	<u>2.1%</u>	<u>0.1%</u>	<u>0.4%</u>	<u>7.5%</u>	<u>1.6%</u>



Hispanic or Latino Population



Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates

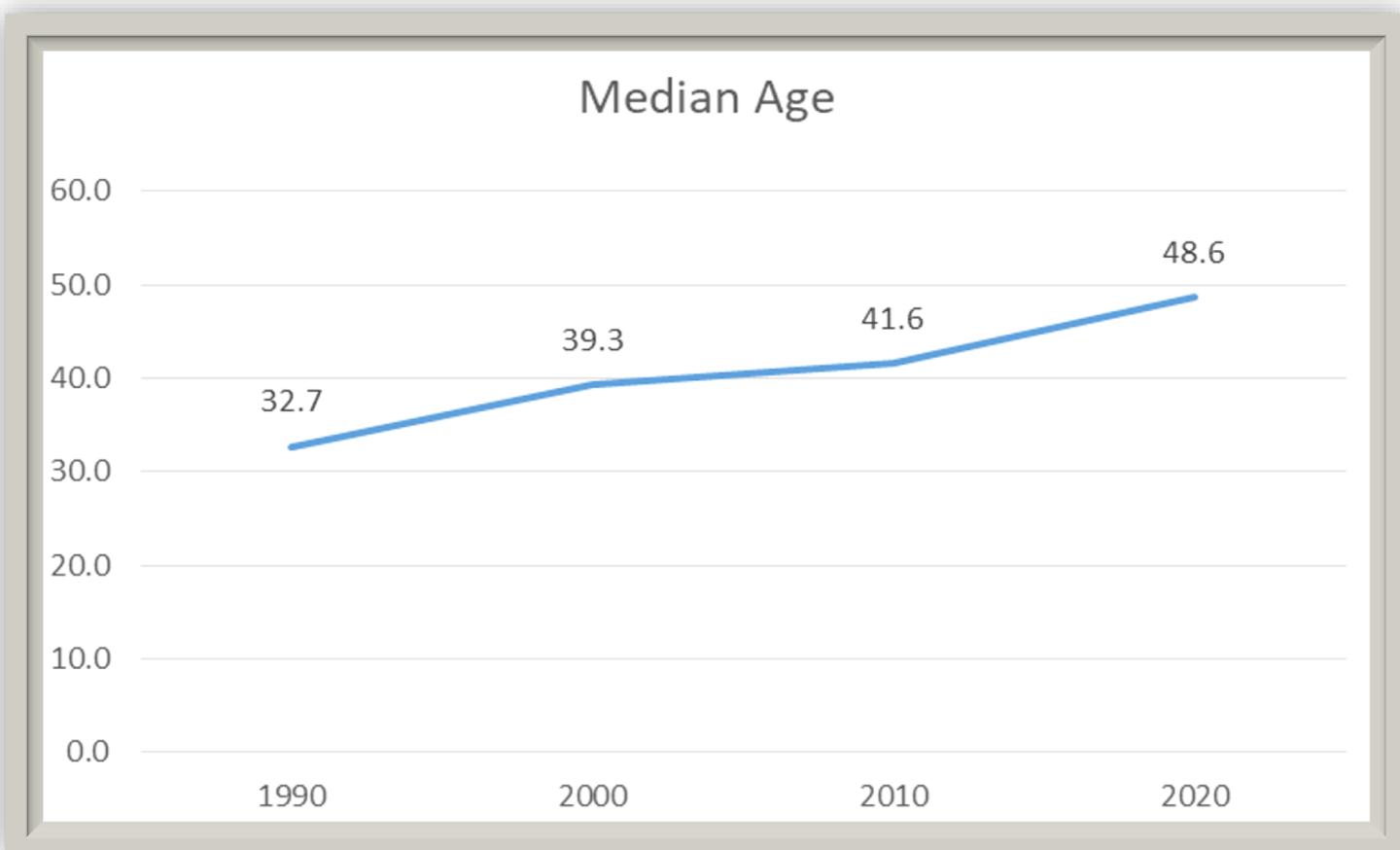


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AGE

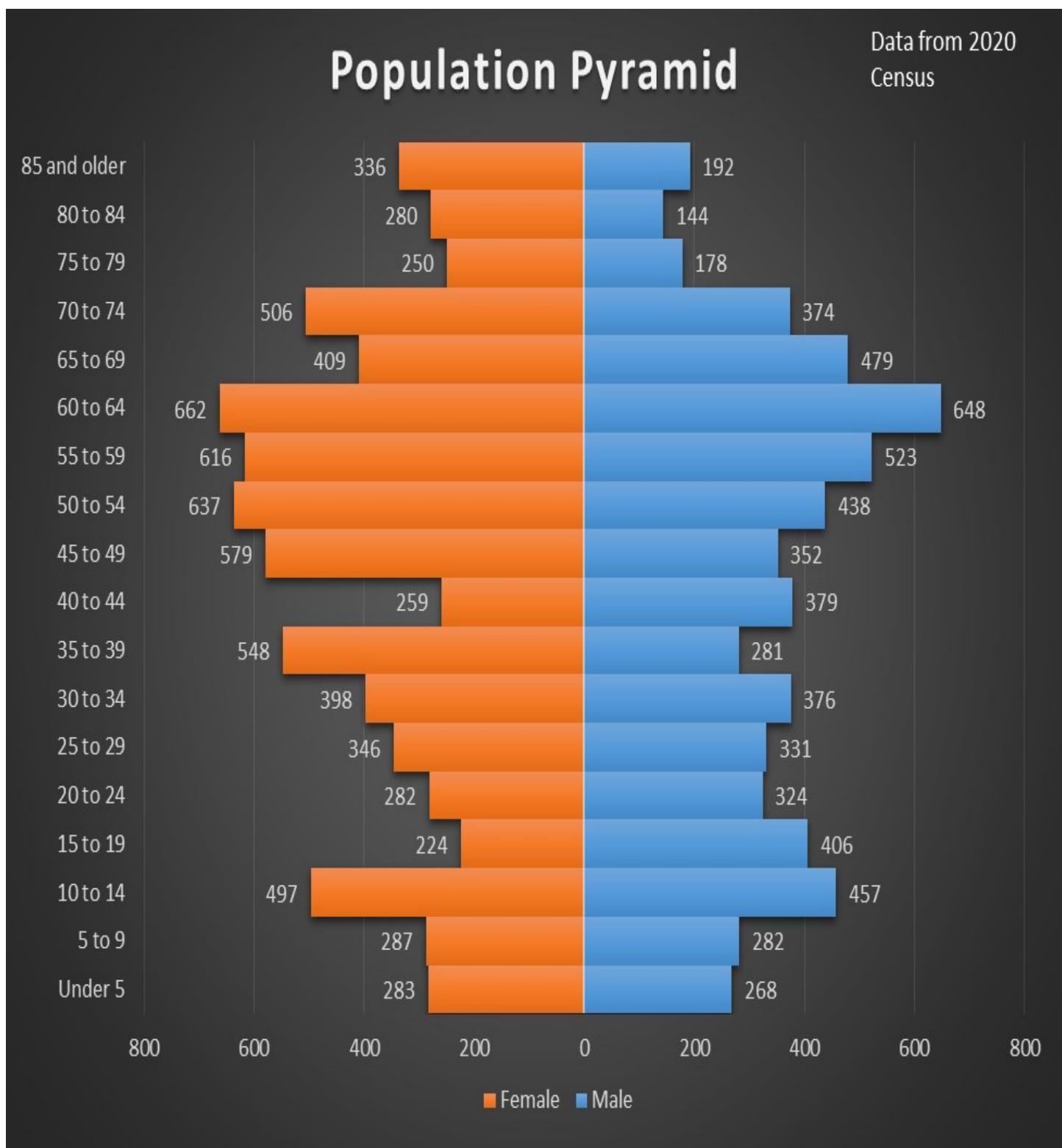
Overall, the population of Atlantic Beach has increased in age over the past three decades as shown in the reported median age and age cohorts shown below. The median age has increased from 32.7 in 1990 to 48.6 in 2020, higher than the median age of Duval County and of Florida. Similarly, the percentage of the population 65 years of age and older has increased from 9% to 23% in that time, while the percentage under 18 years of age has decreased from 33% to 18%.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 and over</u>	<u>65 and older</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Median Age</u>
<u>1990</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>67%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>48.6</u>
<u>2000</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>78%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>Duval County</u>	<u>36.3</u>
<u>2010</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>80%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>Florida</u>	<u>42.2</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>82%</u>	<u>23%</u>		

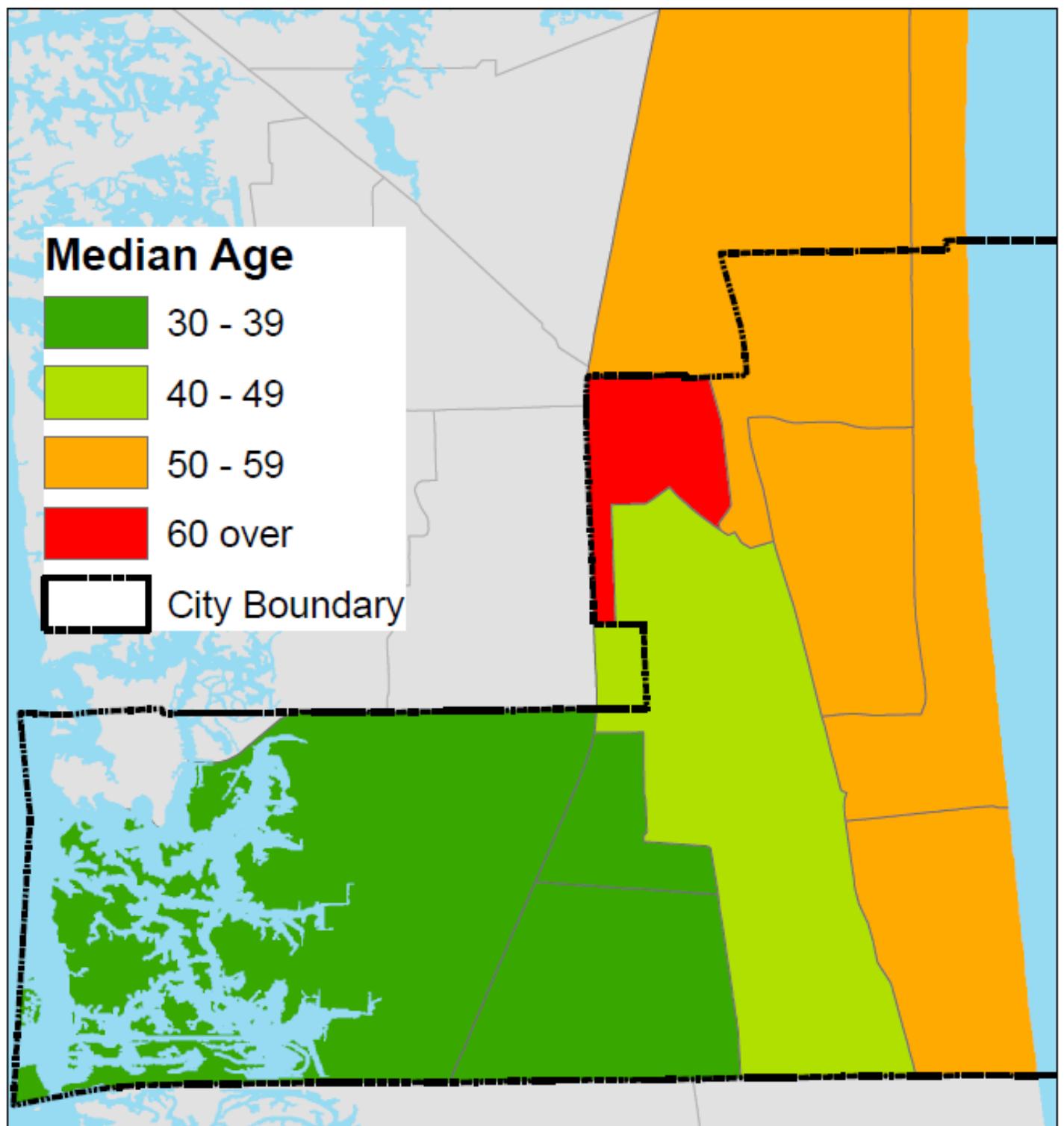


Below is a “population pyramid” for Atlantic Beach in 2020. Population pyramids are a tool used by demographers to visualize an area’s age and sex at a given time. The population pyramid below shows the number of Atlantic Beach residents by sex in different age cohorts. The pyramid shows a large portion of the population, both female and male, are between 45 and 70 years of age.

The two maps on the following pages show the median age and the percent of the population 65 years and over by census block group. The maps indicate that the age of the population generally decreases as you move east to west.



Median Age by Census Block Group

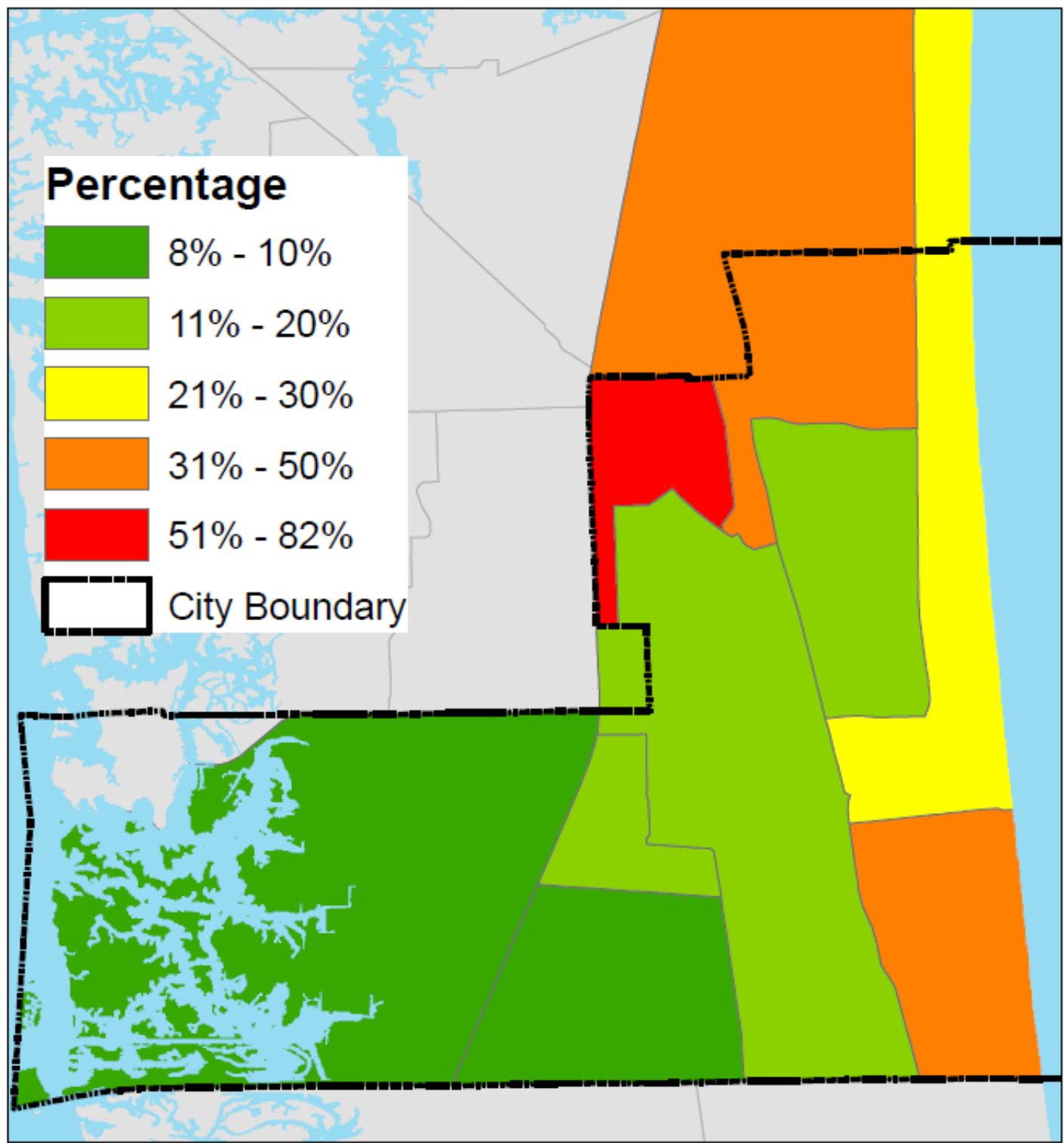


Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



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Percentage of Population 65 Years and Over



Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



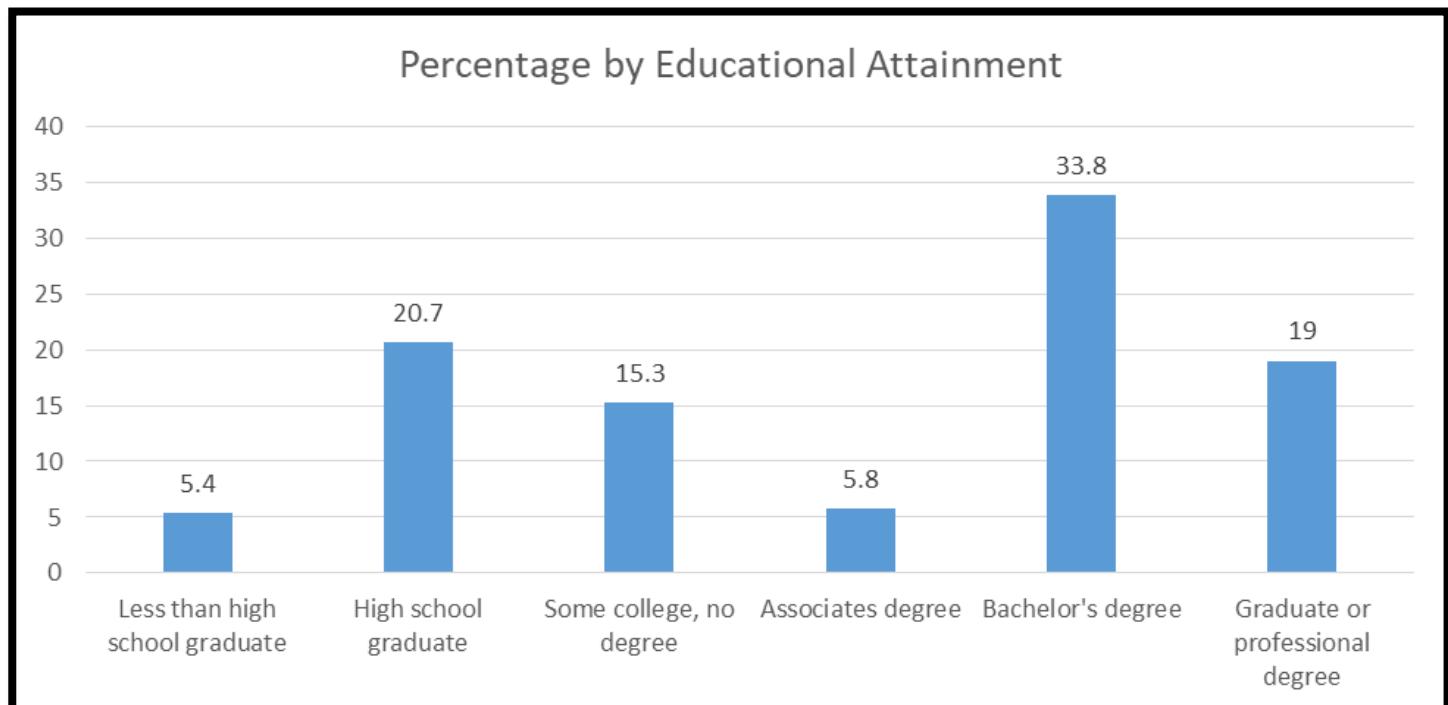
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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

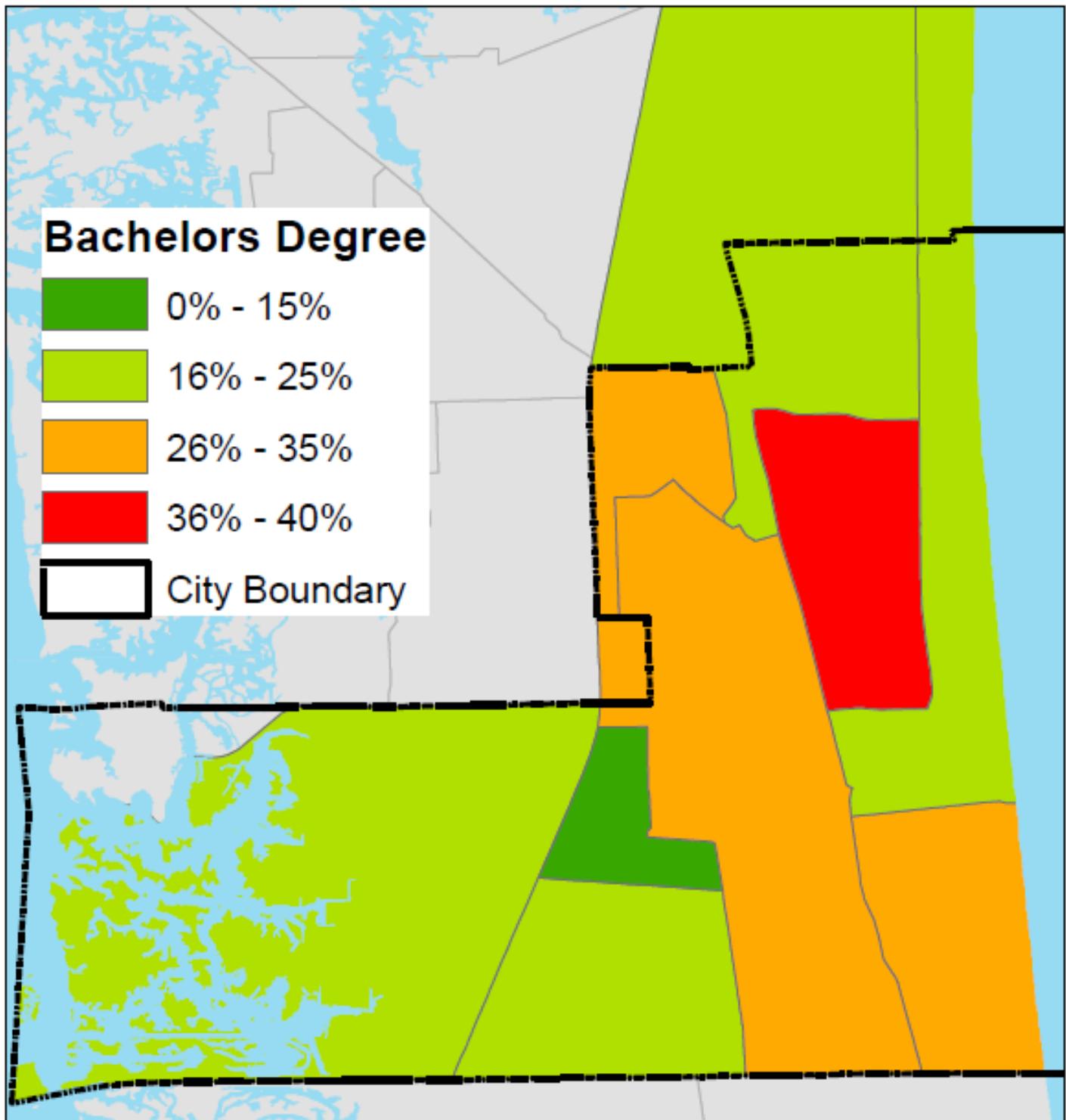
According to the 2020 ACS, 94.6% of the population aged 25 years and over has at least a high school degree (includes equivalency), which is higher than the rate reported for Duval County (90.1%) and the state (88.5%). The percentage with at least a Bachelor's degree was roughly 53%, which has remained consistent over the past five years.

<u>Place</u>	<u>% with High School Degree</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>94.6</u>
<u>Duval County</u>	<u>90.1</u>
<u>Florida</u>	<u>88.5</u>

The chart at the bottom of the page shows the percentage of the population 25 years and over broken down by educational attainment. The maps on the following pages illustrate the percentage of the population 25 and over with at least a Bachelor's degree and with a Graduate, Professional, or Doctorate degree.



Percentage of Population 25 and over with a Bachelor's Degree

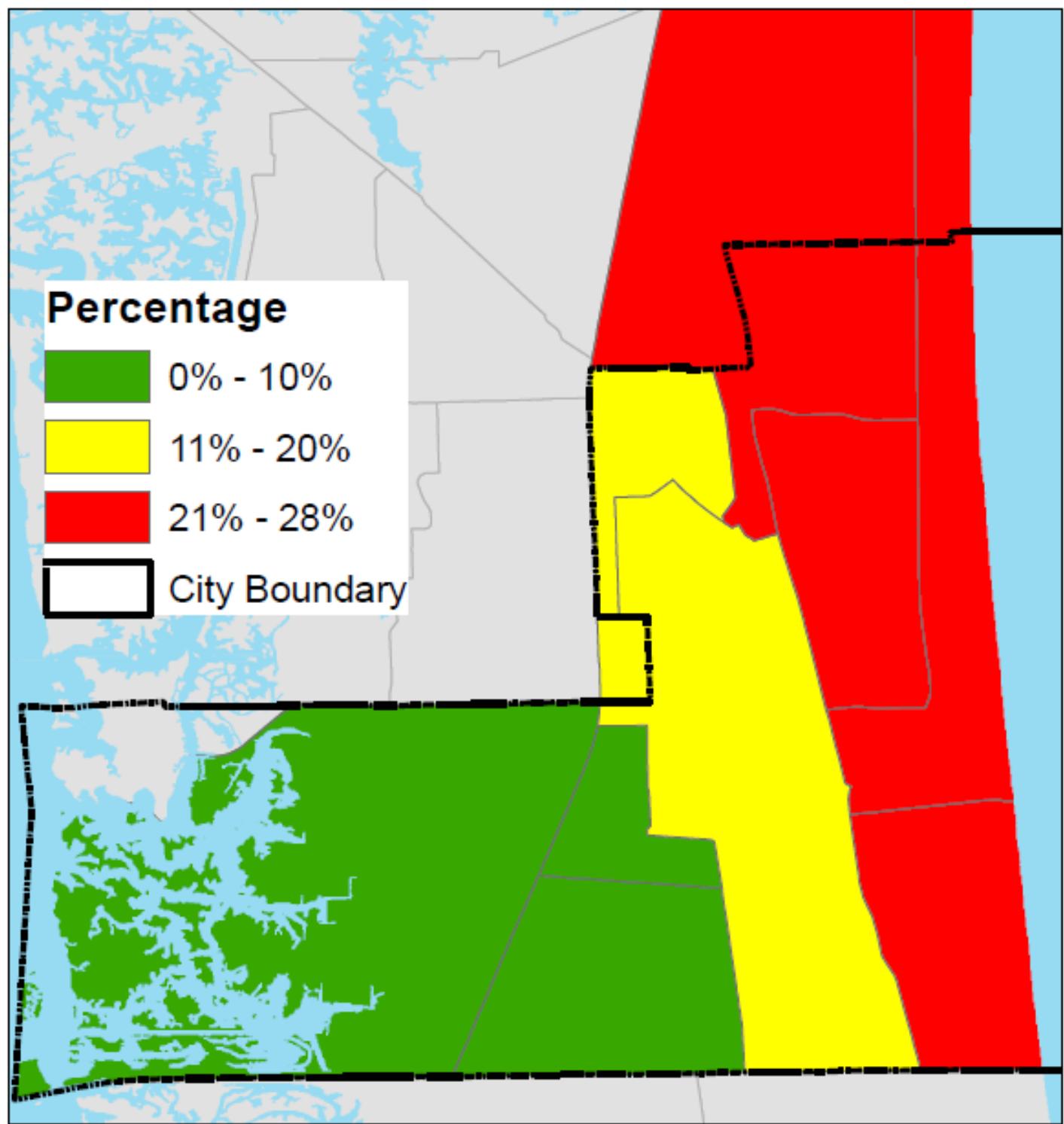


Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



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Percentage of Population 25 and over with a Graduate, Professional or Doctorate Degree



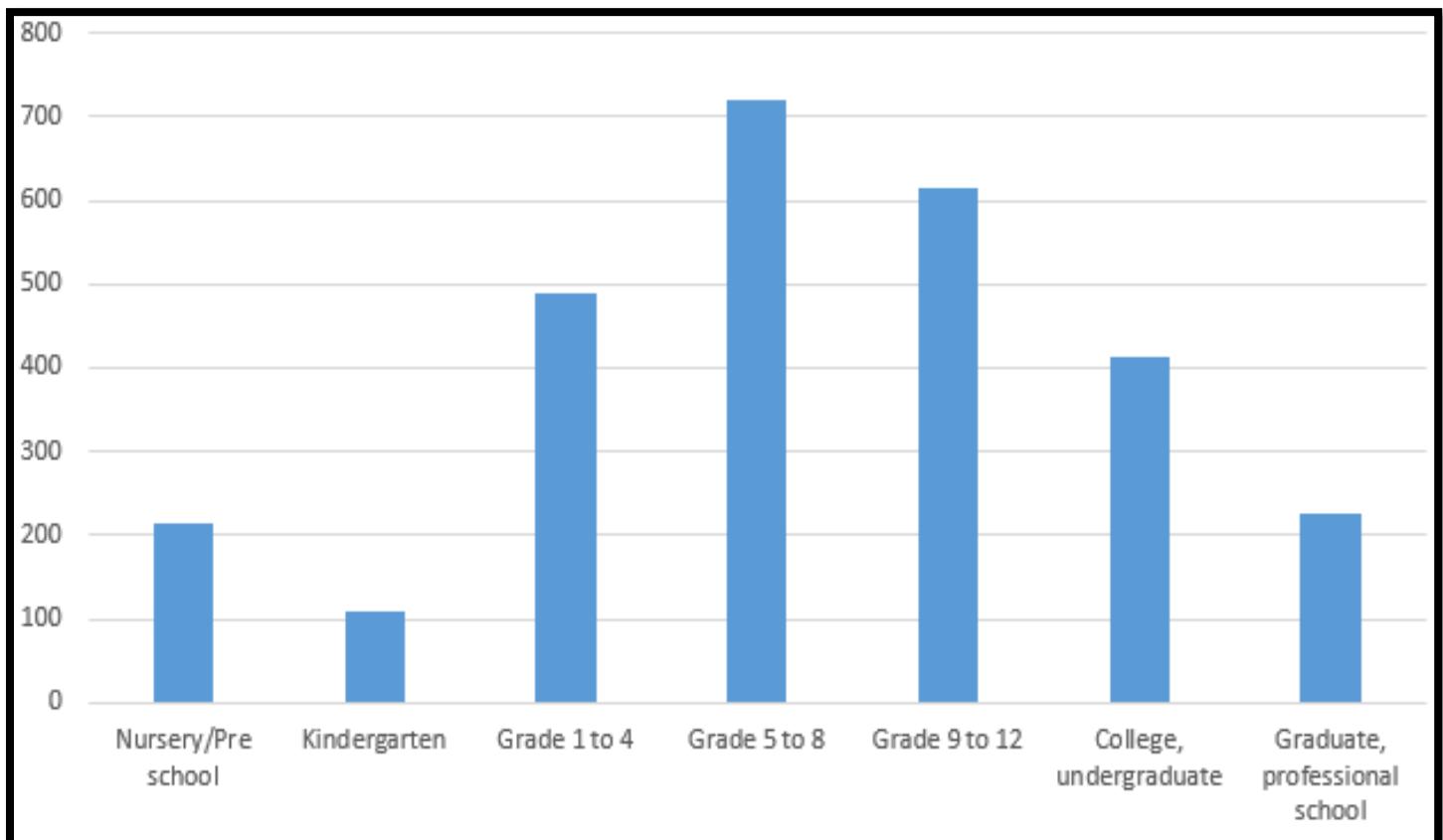
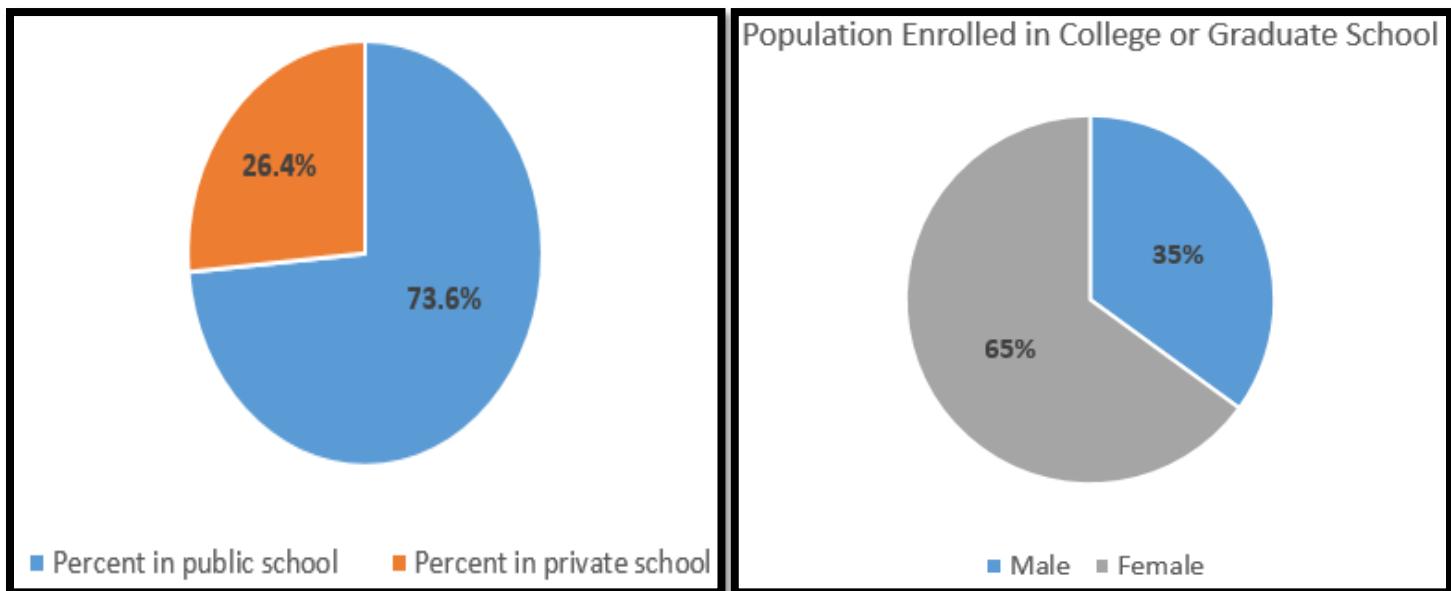
Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



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SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

According to the 2020 ACS, the population 3 years and over that are enrolled in school is 2,785. Of this population, 7.6% are enrolled in nursery school/preschool, 69.4% are enrolled in Kindergarten to 12th grade, and the remaining 23% are enrolled in college or professional school. The majority, 73.6%, are enrolled in a public school while the remaining 26.4% are enrolled in a private school. In Duval County, 79.5% are enrolled in public school. Of the 639 Atlantic Beach citizens en-rolled in college or graduate school, 65% are female and 35% male.

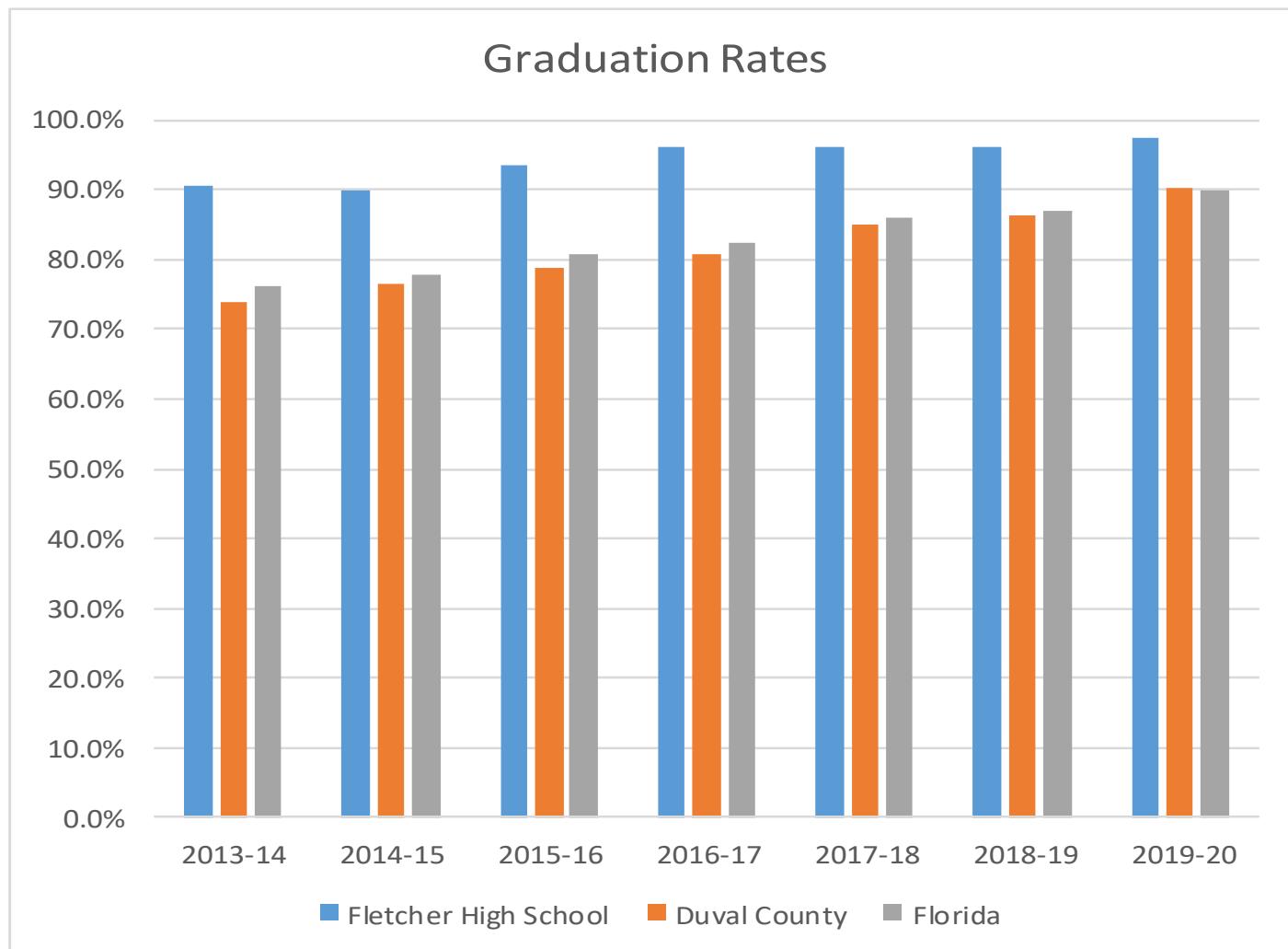


GRADUATION RATE

According to the Florida Department of Education, the 2019-2020 graduation rate for Duncan U. Fletcher High School, which Atlantic Beach is zoned for, was 97.4%. This rate was higher than that of both Duval County and the state of Florida for that year.

<u>Fletcher High</u> <u>School's Graduation</u> <u>Rate</u>	<u>Duval County</u> <u>Graduation Rate</u>	<u>FL Graduation</u> <u>Rate</u>
<u>97.4%</u>	<u>90.2%</u>	<u>90%</u>

Fletcher High School's 2019-2020 graduation rate trended upward over the past 8 school years and continues to be higher than that of Duval County and the state as shown in the chart below.



GRADUATION RATE

The 2019-2020 graduation rates by gender and race/ethnicity are shown below. The graduation rate for White (97.5), Black or African Americans (96.4), Hispanic/Latino (100), and Asian (100) graduates are all within 5 percentage points of one another. Similarly, the graduation rates for female (98.4) and male (96.4) cohorts, were also within 5 percentage points of one another. Further, at Fletcher High School each race/ethnicity reported by the FL Department of Education had a higher or equal graduation rate when compared to the state average.

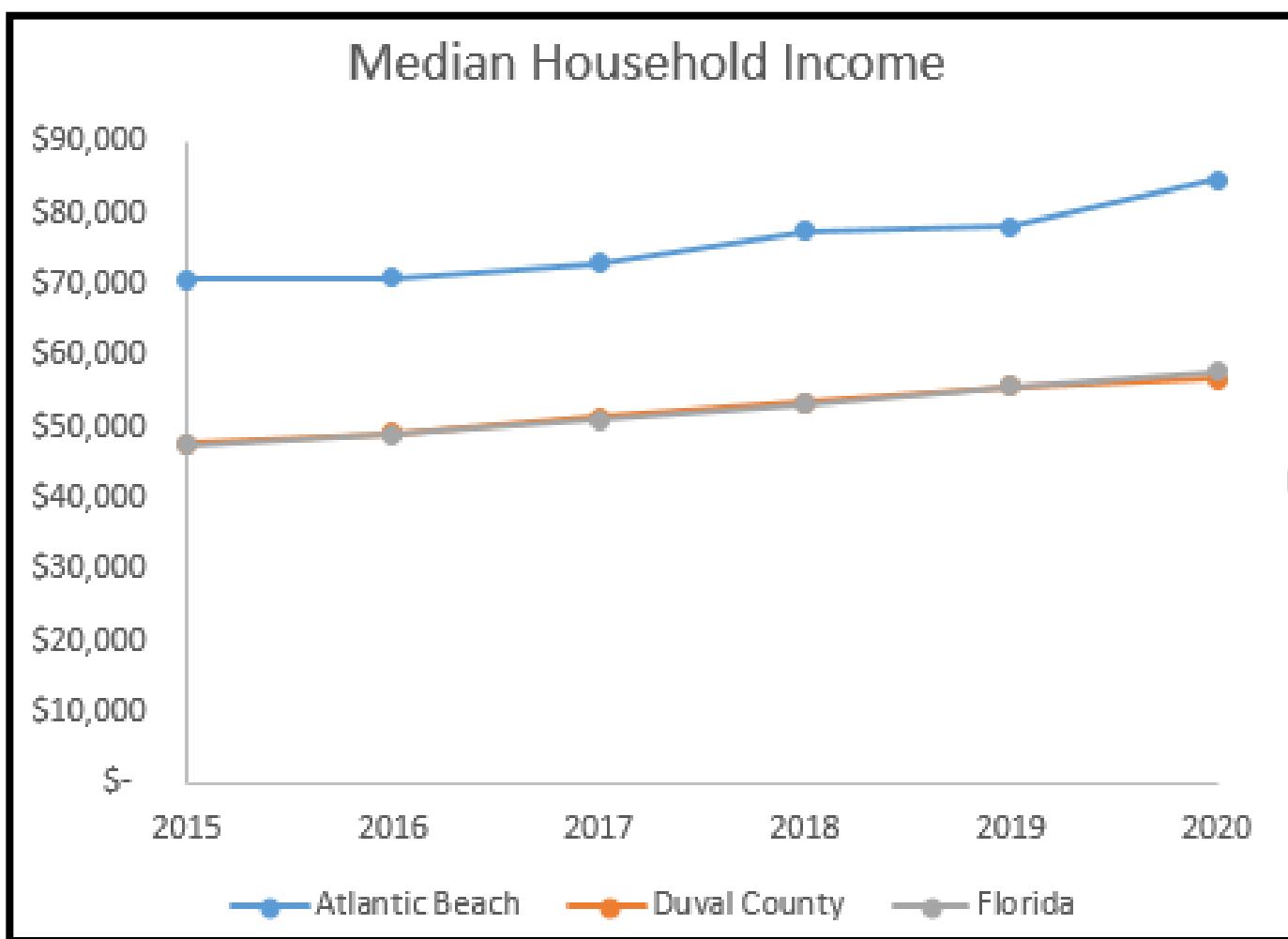
<u>Female</u>	<u>98.4%</u>
<u>Male</u>	<u>96.4%</u>

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Fletcher HS Graduation Rate</u>	<u>Florida HS Graduation Rate</u>
<u>American Indian or Alaska Native</u>	<u>(fewer than 10 students)</u>	<u>84.1%</u>
<u>Asian</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>98%</u>
<u>Black or African American</u>	<u>96.4%</u>	<u>86.6%</u>
<u>Hispanic/Latino</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>89.5%</u>
<u>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</u>	<u>(fewer than 10 students)</u>	<u>90.5%</u>
<u>White</u>	<u>97.5%</u>	<u>91.7%</u>
<u>Two or more races</u>	<u>90.5%</u>	<u>90.5%</u>

MEDIAN INCOME

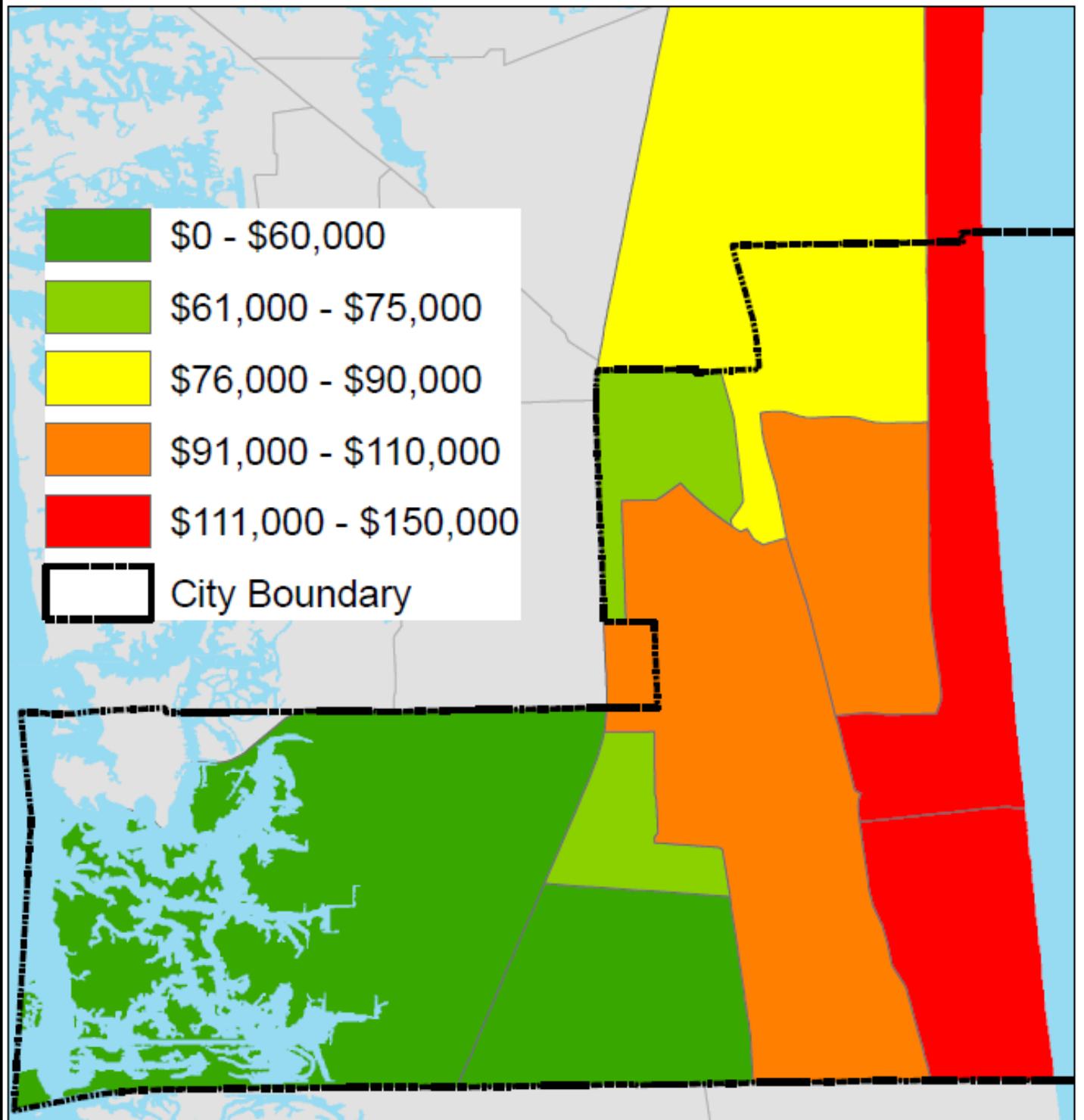
The median household income includes income of all persons 15 or older in a household. It is commonly used to provide data about the wealth of a geographic area and is considered by many statisticians to be a better indicator than the mean household income as it is not dramatically affected by unusually high or low values (USDOH). According to the 2020 ACS, the median household income in Atlantic Beach was \$84,830, which was and has been consistently higher than that of Duval County and Florida. The median household income for the city has grown at a rate similar to that of the county and state as shown below.

Atlantic Beach	Duval County	Florida
\$84,830	\$56,769	\$57,703



	<u>Households</u>	<u>Families</u>	<u>Married-couple families</u>	<u>Nonfamily households</u>
<u>Median Income</u>	\$84,830	\$102,816	\$132,717	\$57,500
<u>Mean Income</u>	\$123,038	\$153,260	-	\$74,996

Median Household Income



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

COST BURDEN

Households with an income of 80% or less than the area median income (AMI) are often considered low income, those with an income of 50% or less of the AMI are often considered very low income, and those 30% or less are often considered extremely low income. In addition, households are often considered to be “cost burdened” if housing costs equal or exceed 30% of the household income and severely cost burdened if they exceed 50% of the household income. Below are cost burden estimates for Atlantic Beach by the University of Florida Shimberg Center for Housing Studies. These estimates show the estimated number of low income, very low income, and extremely low income households and the respective housing cost burden for those households.

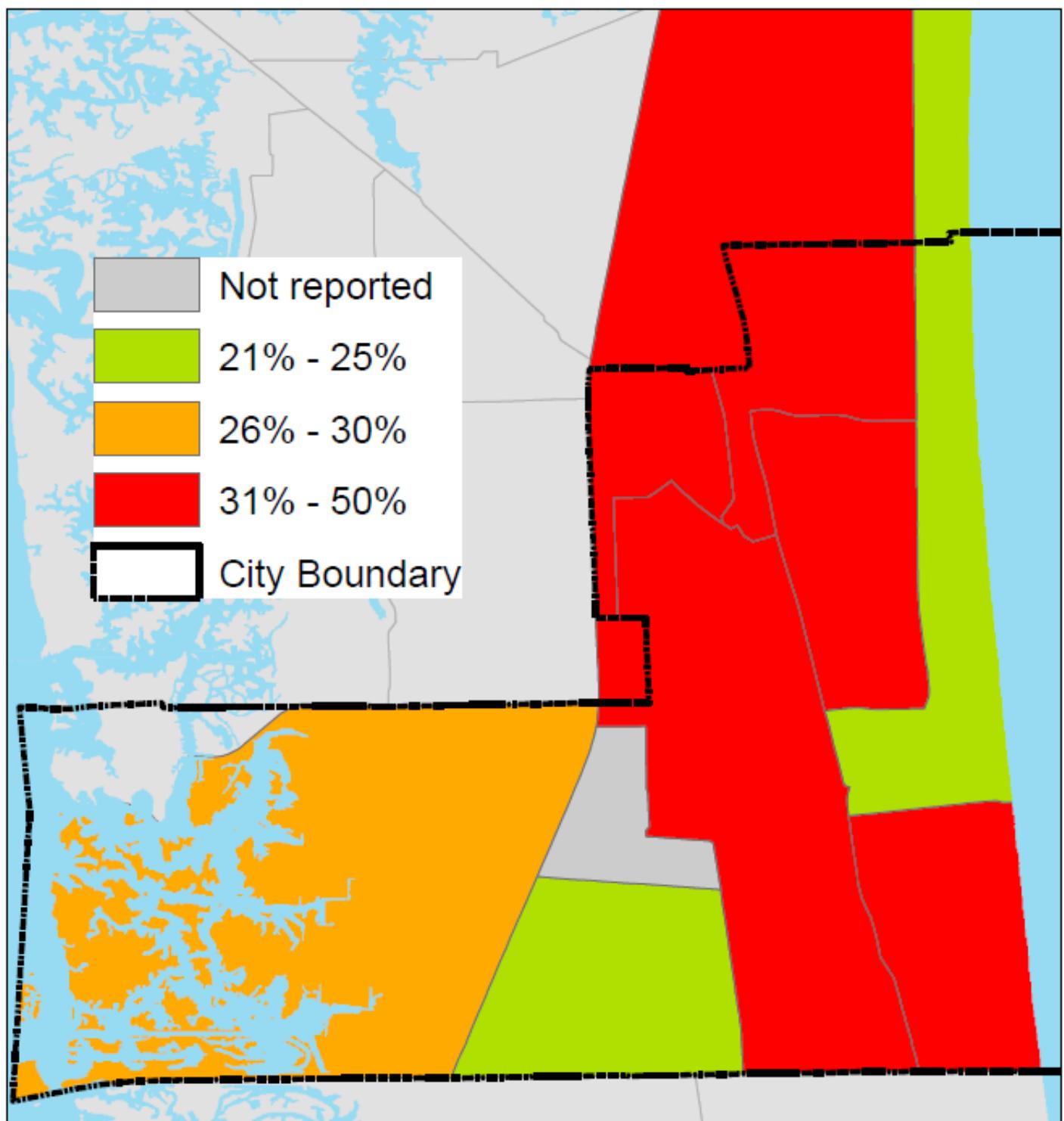
<u>% of the Area Median Income (AMI)</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>
<u>Extremely low income</u>	<u>30 or less</u>
<u>Very low income</u>	<u>30.01 to 50</u>
<u>Low income</u>	<u>50.01 to 80</u>

All Households, Cost Burden by Income, 2020 Estimate (Summary)

<u>Geography</u>	<u>Household Income</u>	<u>Housing Cost Burden</u>		
		<u>30% or less</u>	<u>30.1-50%</u>	<u>More than 50%</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>30% AMI or less</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>450</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>30.01-50% AMI</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>247</u>	<u>147</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>50.01-80% AMI</u>	<u>378</u>	<u>221</u>	<u>168</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>80.01-100% AMI</u>	<u>261</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>Greater than 100% AMI</u>	<u>3396</u>	<u>465</u>	<u>71</u>

Sources: Estimates and projections by Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, based on U.S. Department of Housing Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) dataset and population projections by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida

Median Gross Rent as Percentage of Household Income

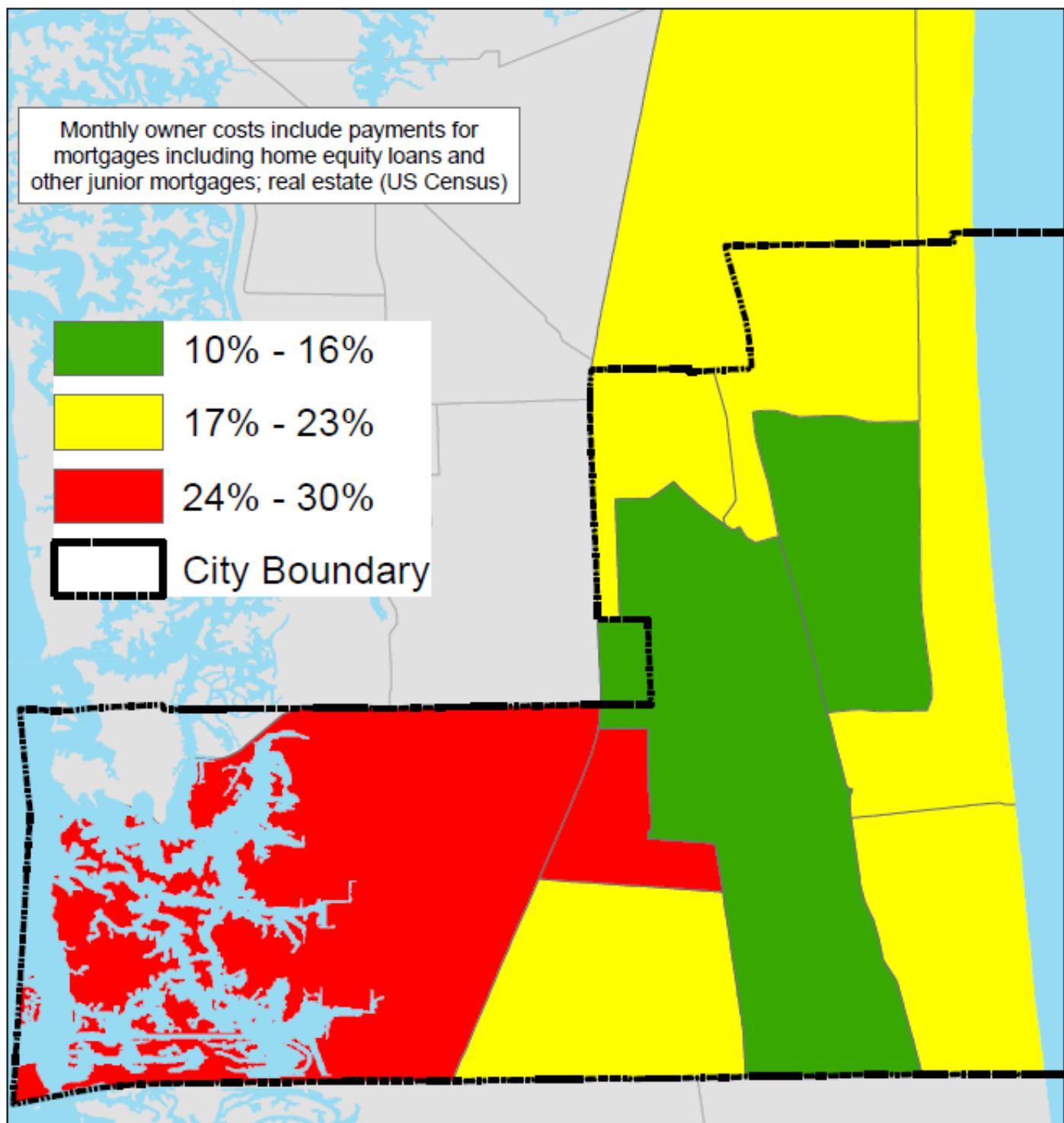


Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



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Median Monthly Owner Costs as Percentage of Household Income



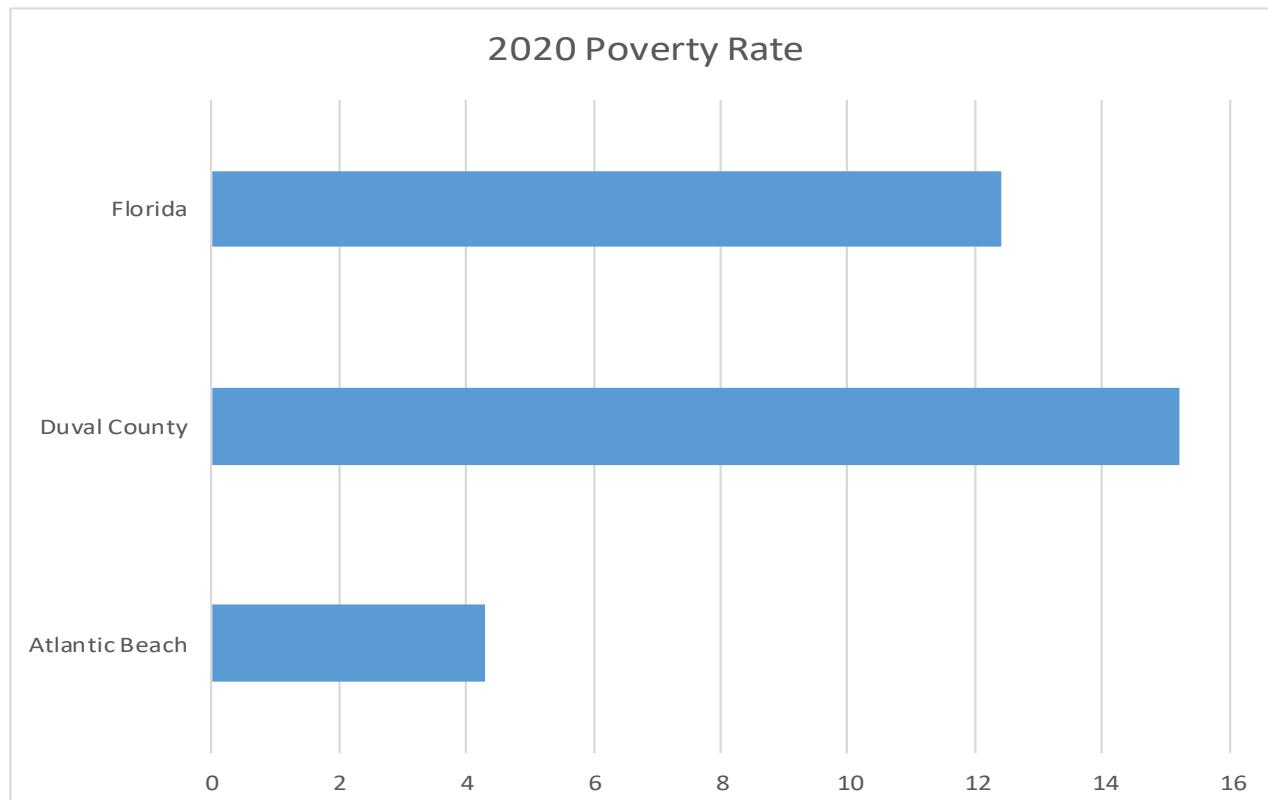
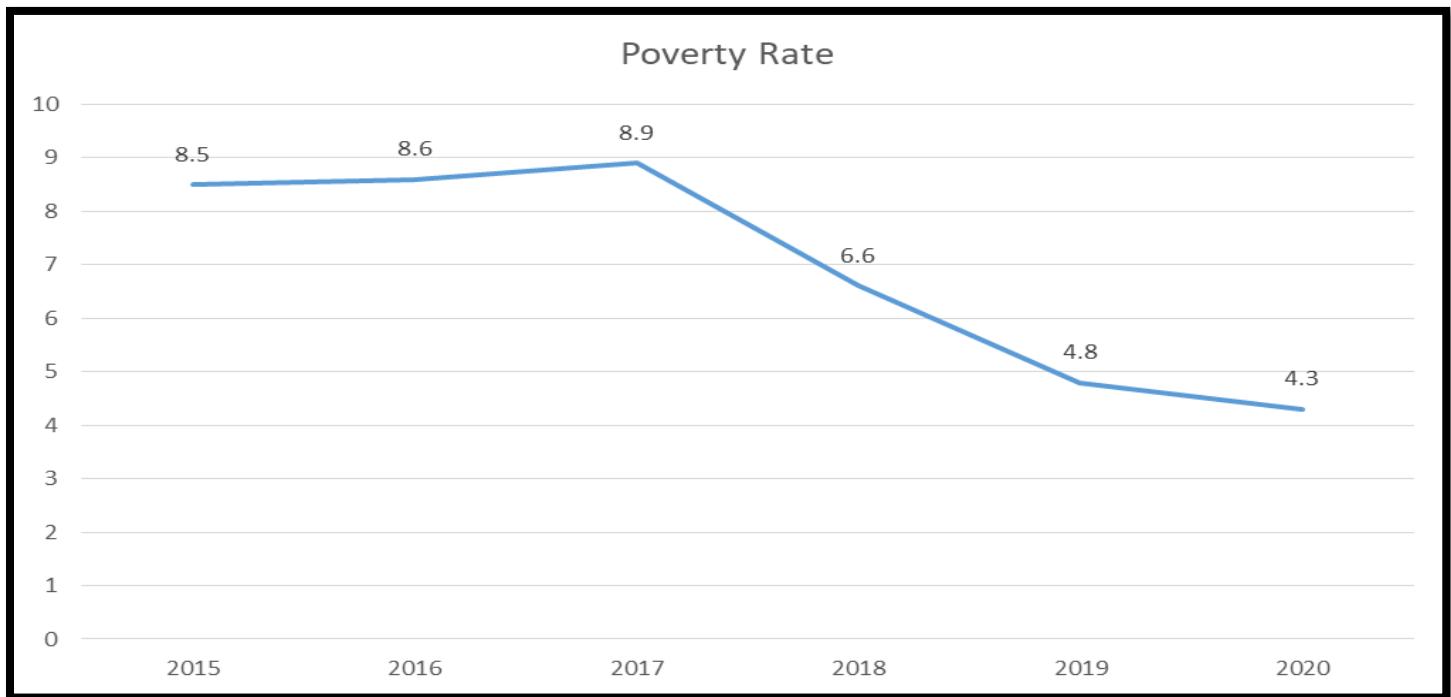
Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



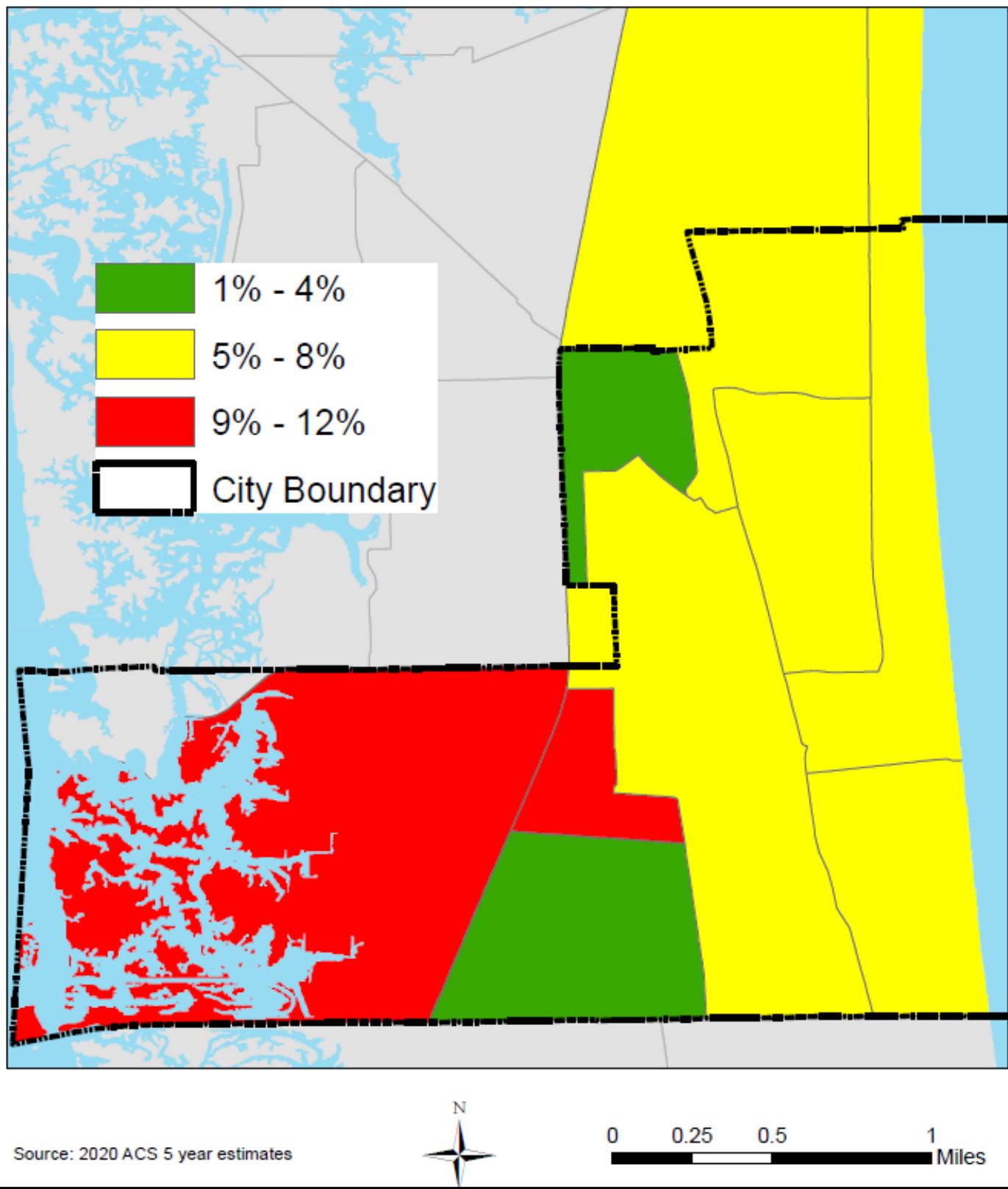
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POVERTY RATE

The poverty rate is the ratio of the number of people whose income falls below the poverty line. The 2020 reported poverty rate in Atlantic Beach was 4.3%, lower than the rate reported for the past 6 years. Similarly, Atlantic Beach reported a much lower poverty rate than Duval County and Florida.



Percent of Households with Income Below Poverty Level

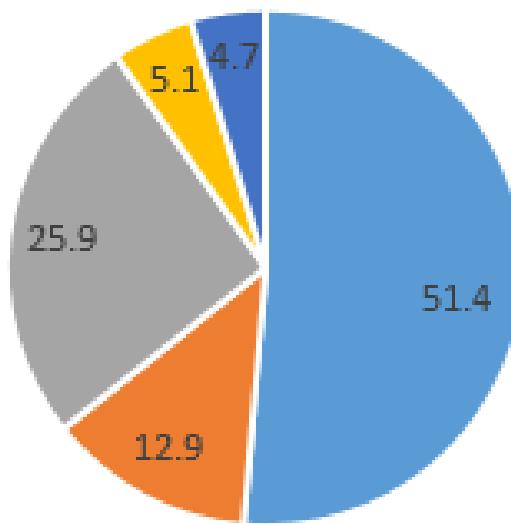


OCCUPATION/EMPLOYMENT

According to the 2020 ACS, there were 5,204 full-time year-round employed civilians 16 years and older in Atlantic Beach. Of this population, over half (51.4%) are employed in the management, business, science, and arts occupations as shown in the charts below.

Occupation	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	51.4
Service occupations	12.9
Sales and office occupations	25.9
Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	5.1
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	4.7

Occupations



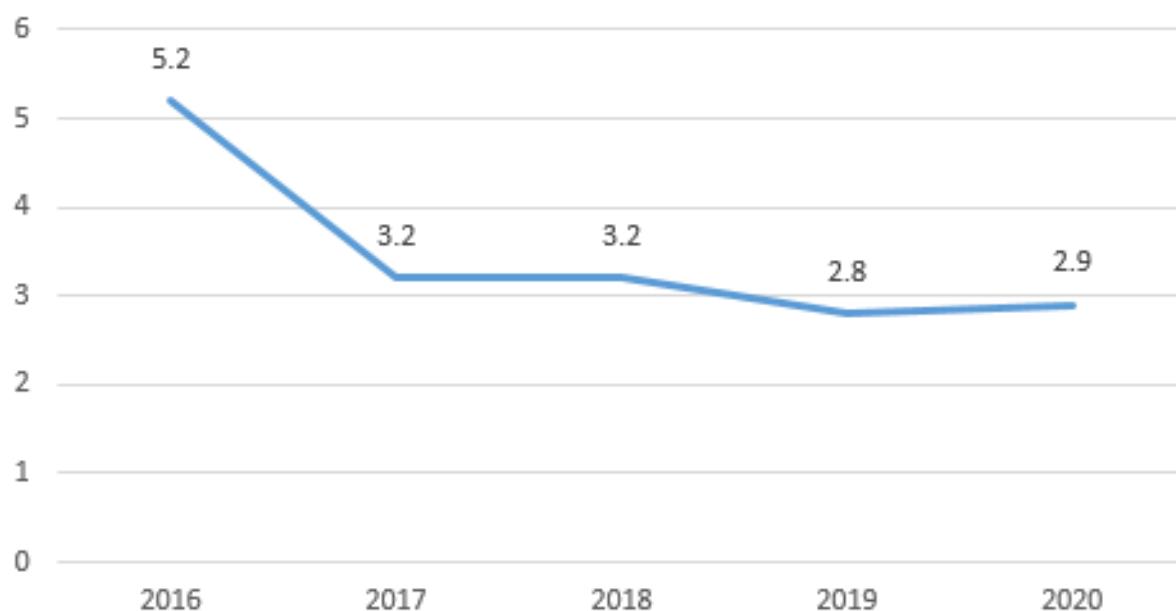
- Management, business, science, and arts occupations
- Service occupations
- Sales and office occupations
- Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance occupations
- Production, transportation, and material moving occupations

OCCUPATION/EMPLOYMENT

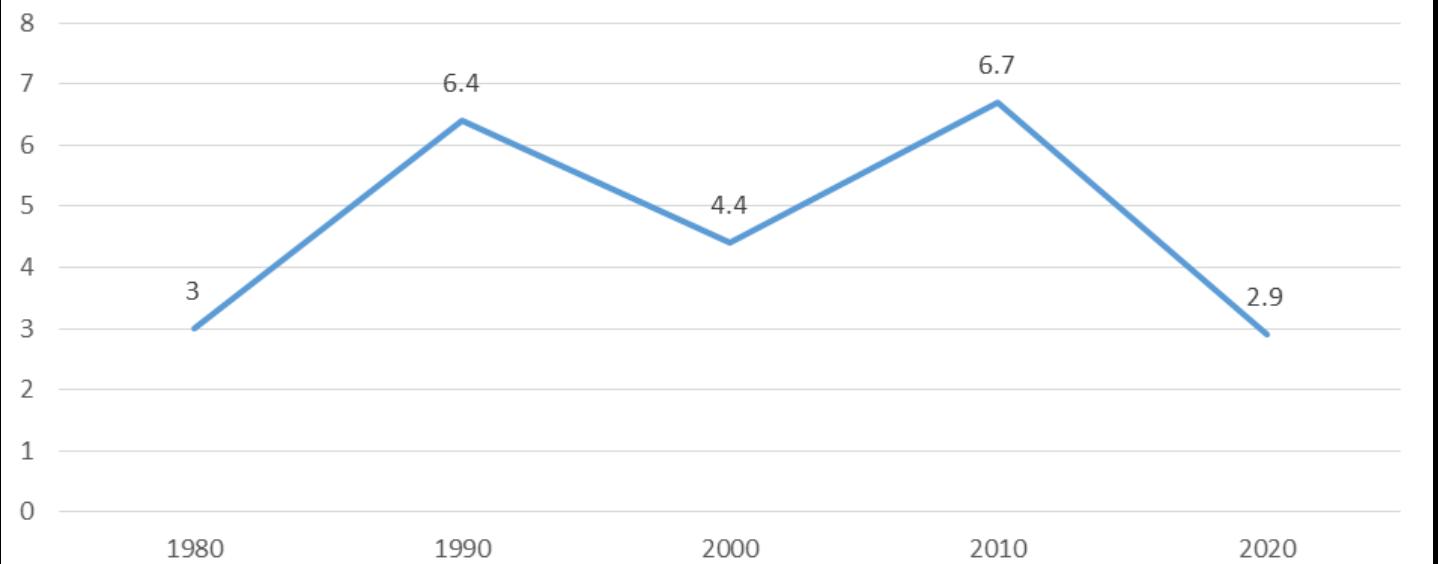
The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed people as a percentage of the civilian labor force. The unemployment rate for the population 16 years and over in Atlantic Beach was 2.9% in 2020. This rate was lower than that reported for Atlantic Beach in 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. Further, this rate was lower than that reported for Duval County and Florida in 2020, both of which were above 5%.

Atlantic Beach	Duval County	Florida
2.9%	5.3%	5.4%

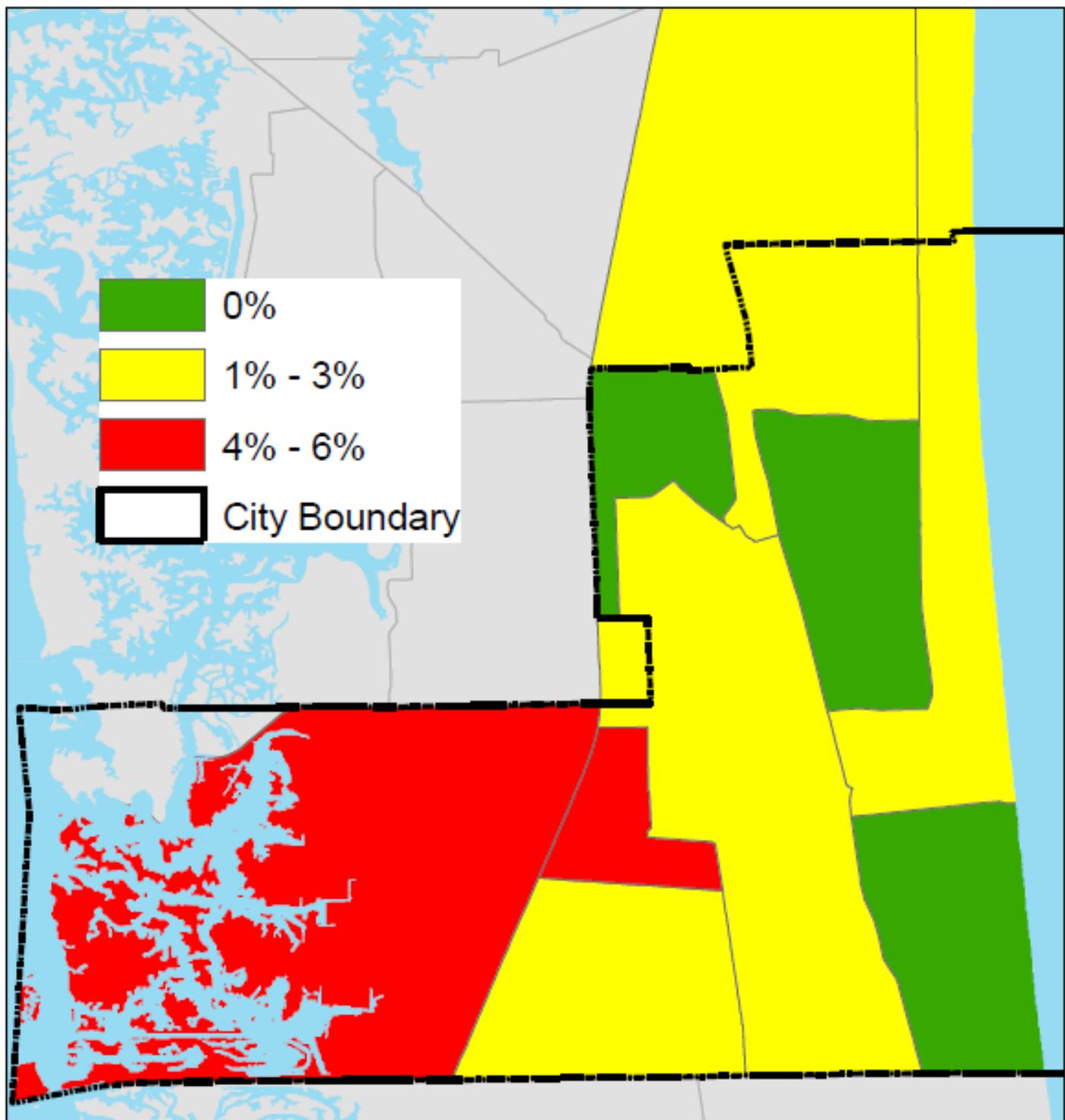
Unemployment Rate



Unemployment Rate



Unemployment Rate (unemployed/labor force)



Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates

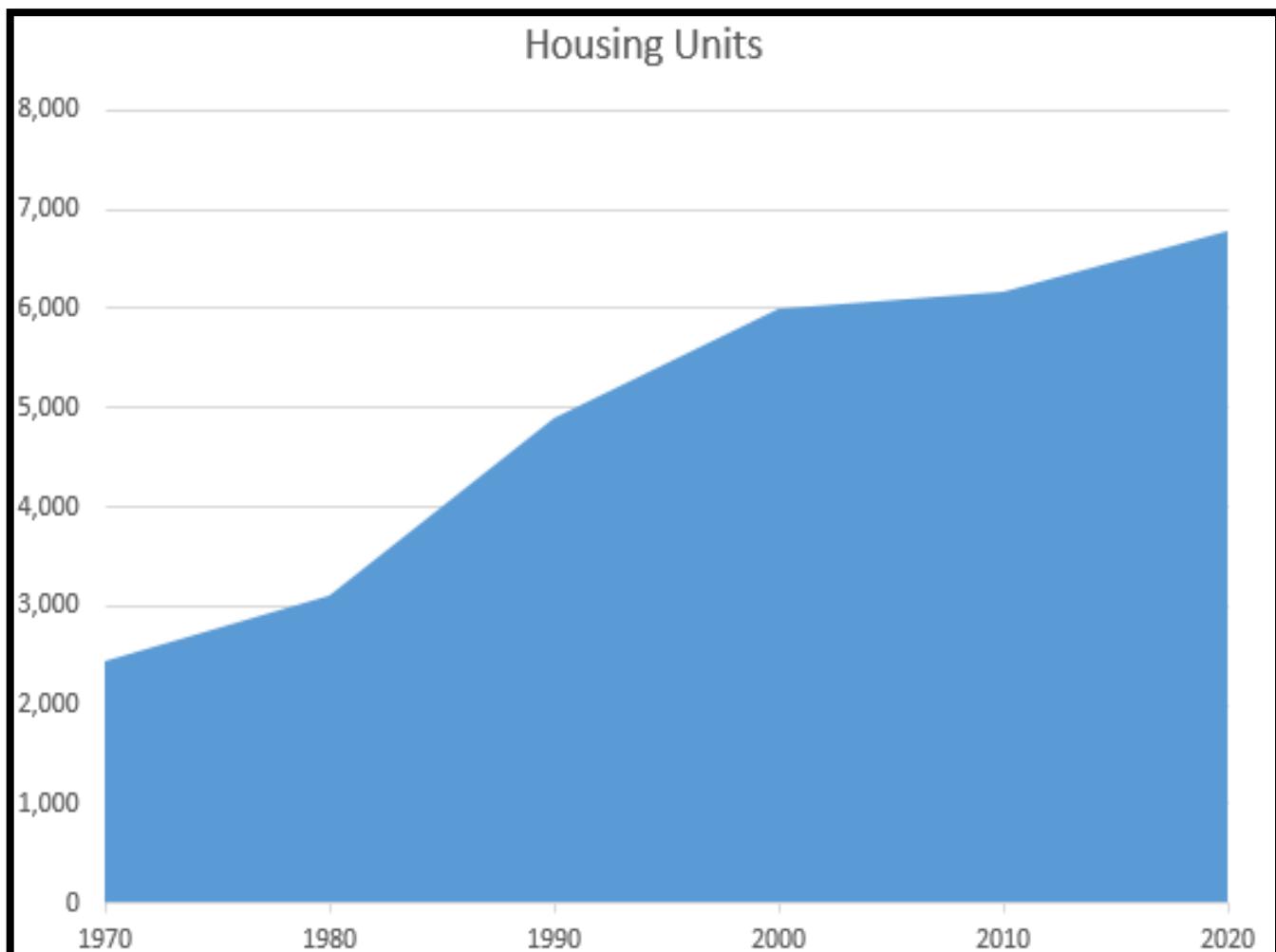


0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

HOUSING

The 2020 ACS reported an estimated 6,774 total housing units within the city of Atlantic Beach, which represents an increase in 595 units since 2010. The chart below shows an estimated 2,899 housing units, roughly 43% of the existing stock, were constructed in Atlantic Beach between 1980 and 2000. The 1980's experienced the highest increase in housing units of any decade with 1,784 additional units being constructed.

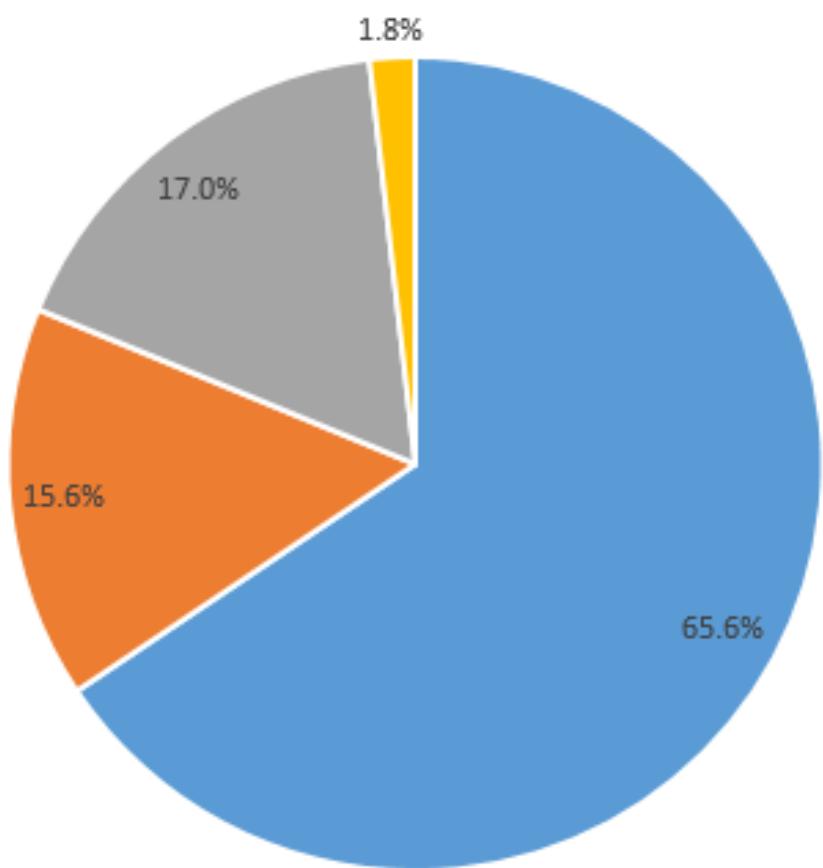
<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Housing Units</u>	<u>Increase in Housing Units</u>
<u>1970</u>	<u>2,434</u>	<u>-</u>
<u>1980</u>	<u>3,104</u>	<u>670</u>
<u>1990</u>	<u>4,888</u>	<u>1,784</u>
<u>2000</u>	<u>6,003</u>	<u>1,115</u>
<u>2010</u>	<u>6,179</u>	<u>176</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>6,774</u>	<u>595</u>



HOUSING

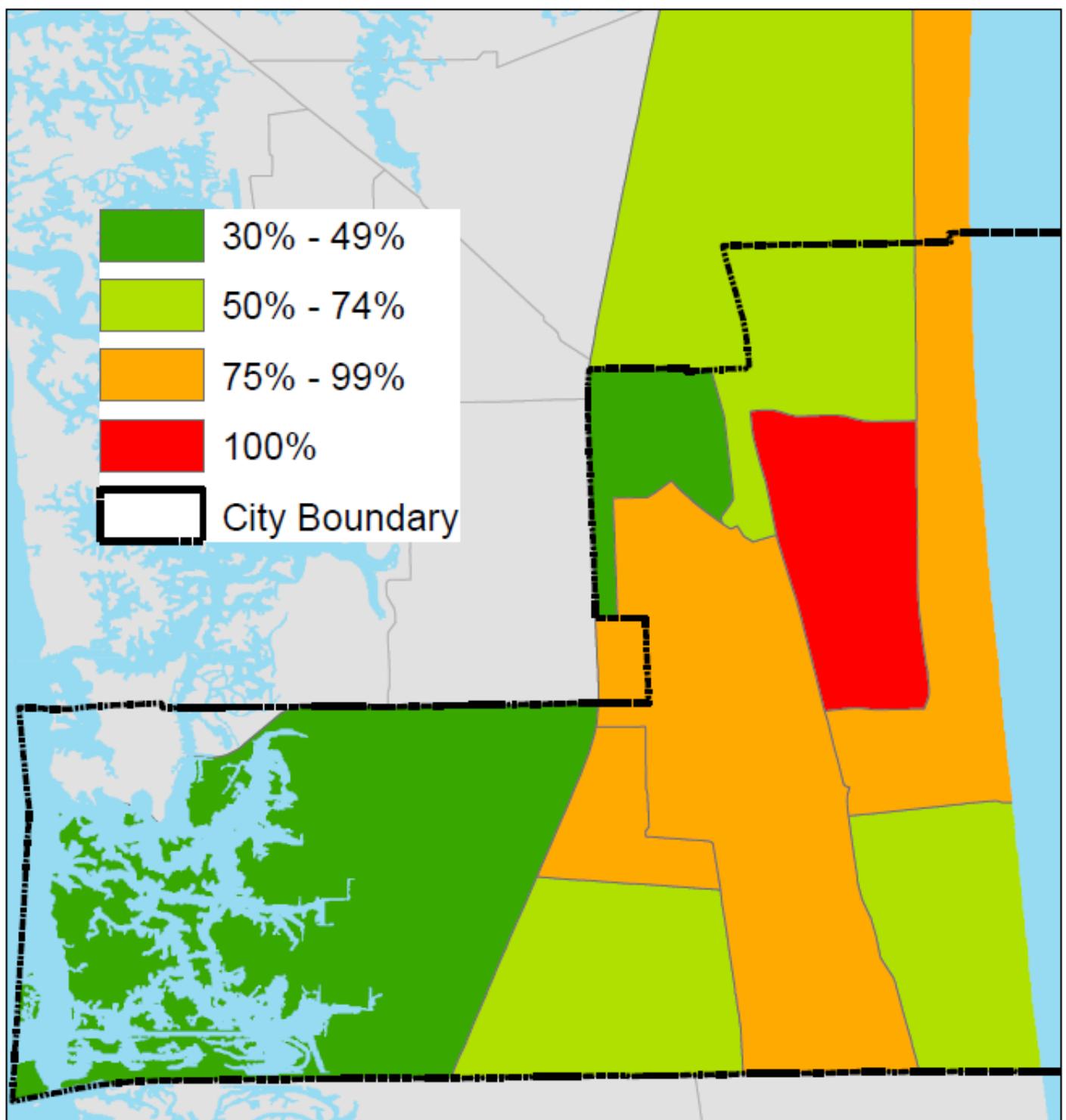
According to the 2020 ACS estimates, there were 6,110 occupied housing units within the city. Of these occupied units, the majority (65.6%) were single-family detached units. The percentage of the housing units which are single family detached has increased about 7% since 2010 while the percentage of two- and multi-family units has decreased in this time period.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Housing units</u>	<u>Single-family detached</u>	<u>Single-family attached</u>	<u>Two or more apartments</u>	<u>Mobile home or other type</u>
<u>2010</u>	<u>6,179</u>	<u>58.7%</u>	<u>19.1%</u>	<u>20.7%</u>	<u>1.5%</u>
<u>2015</u>	<u>6,533</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>14.7%</u>	<u>23.9%</u>	<u>1.4%</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>6,774</u>	<u>65.6%</u>	<u>15.6%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>1.8%</u>



- Single-family, detached
- Single-family, attached
- Two more apartments
- Mobile Home or other

Percent of Housing Units that are Detached Single-family Units



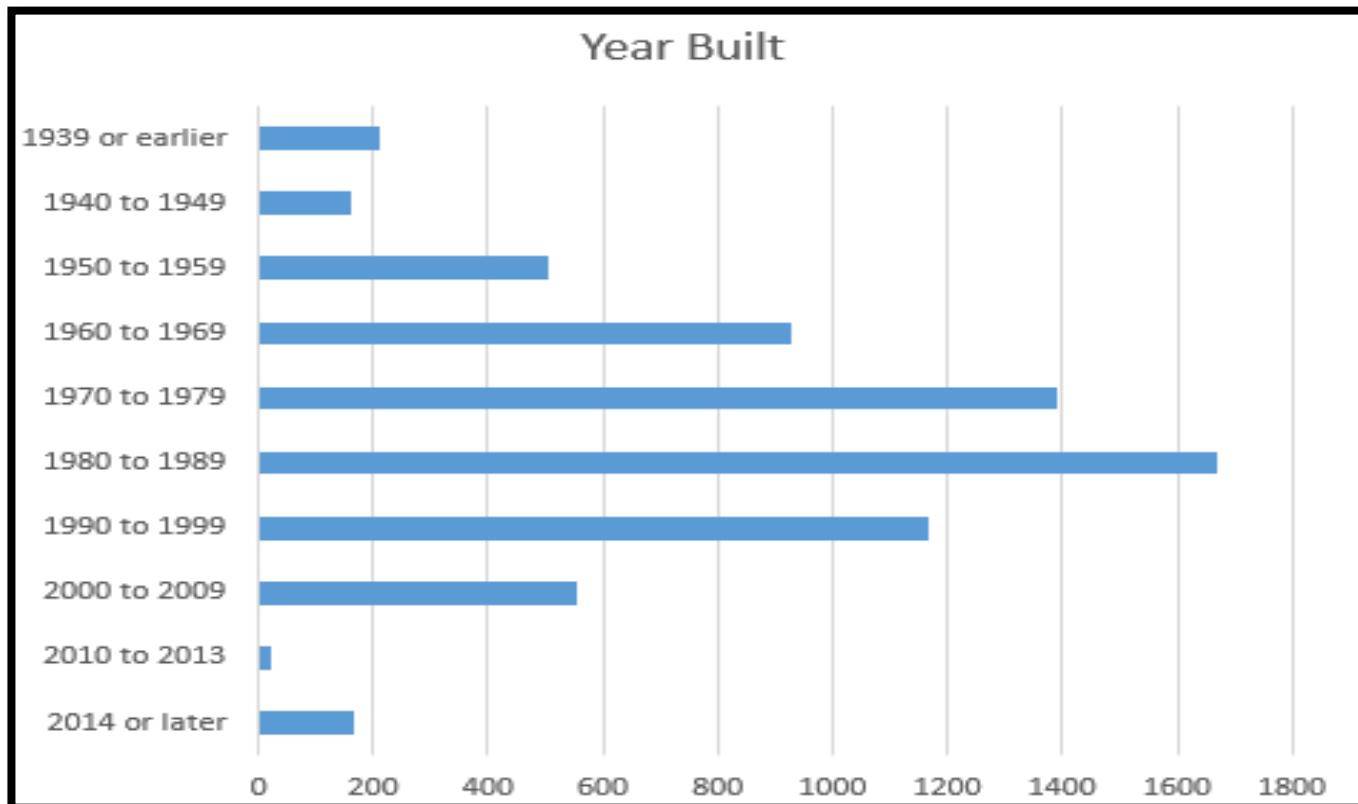
Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



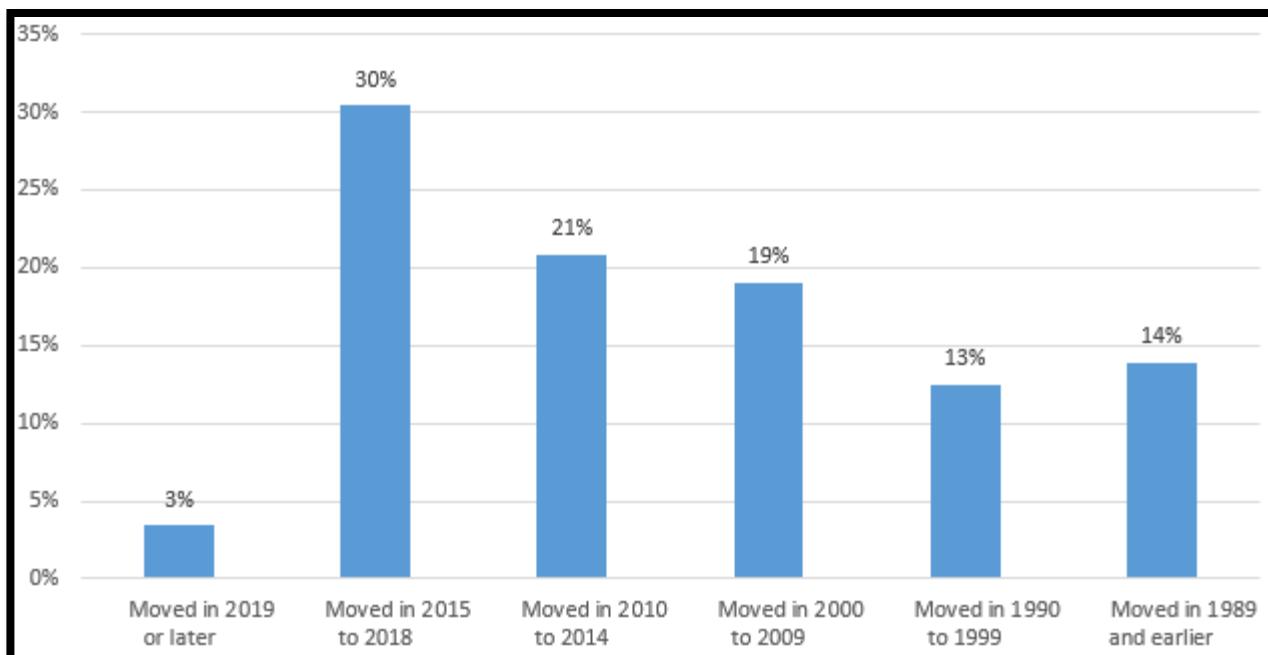
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

HOUSING

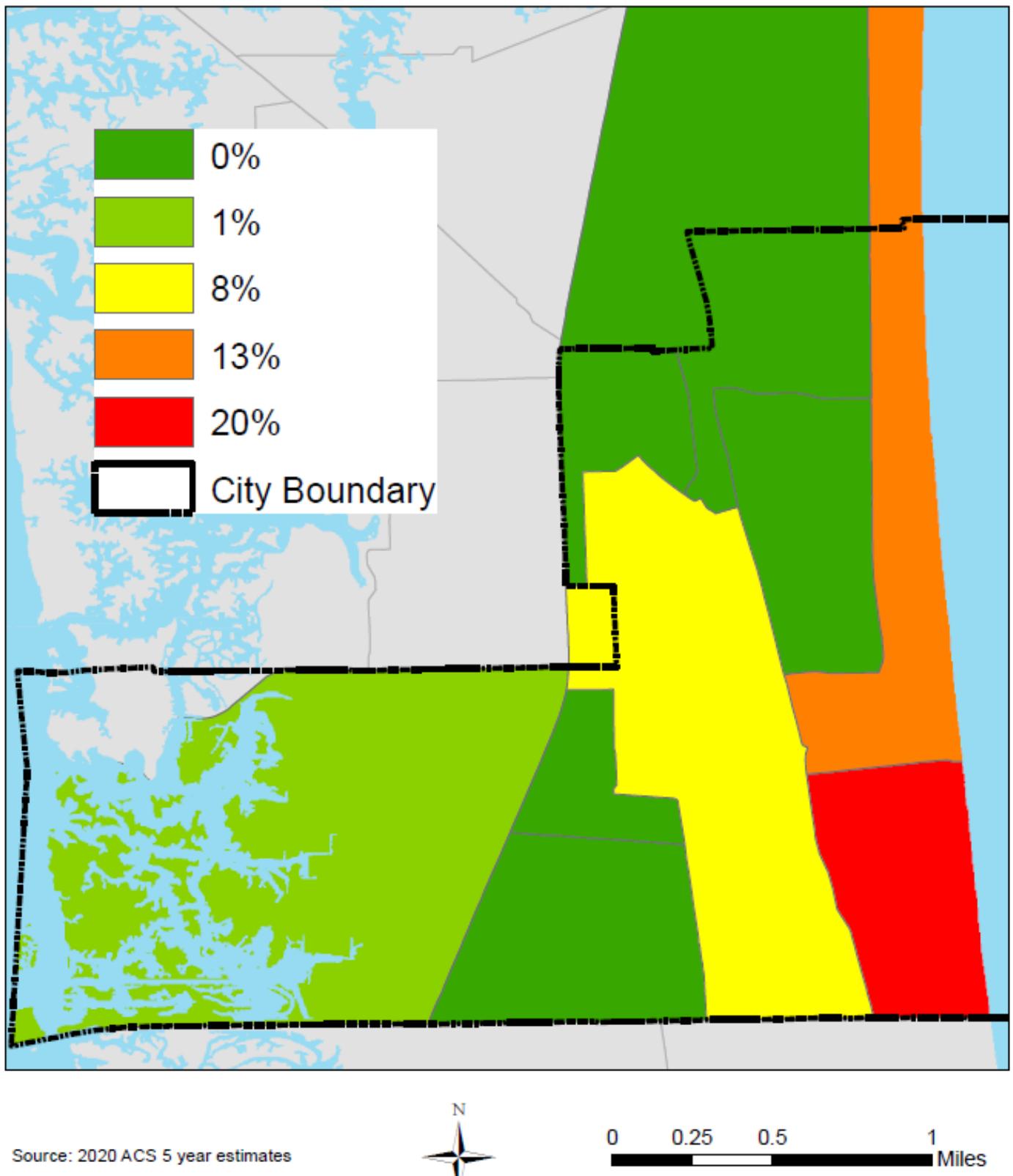
The chart below shows when the housing units in Atlantic Beach were constructed. The chart shows the vast majority of the homes (62.4%) were built between 1970 and 1999 with 1980's experiencing the highest number of housing units constructed.



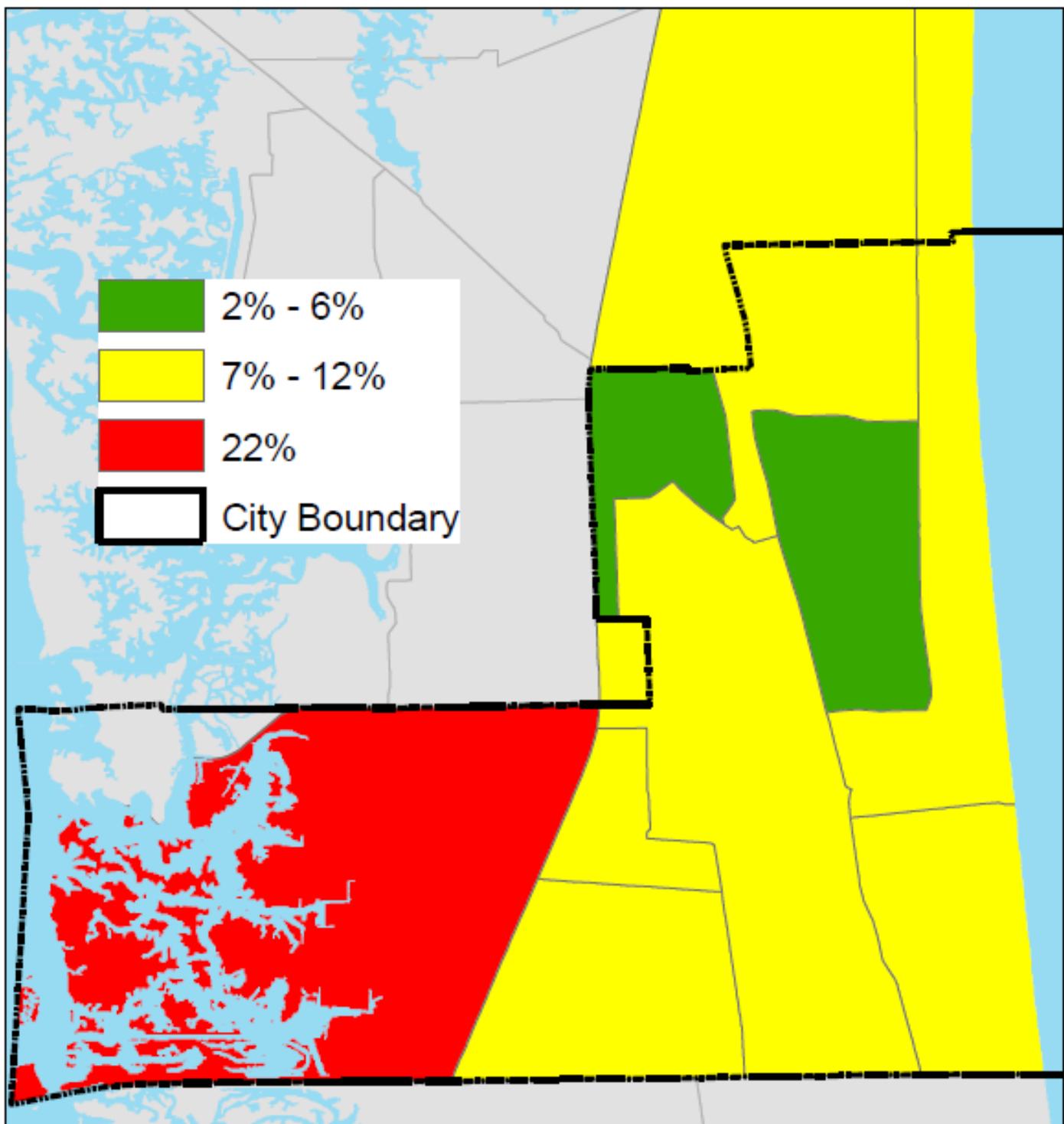
Of the 6,110 occupied housing units in the city, the 2020 ACS estimates that just over half (51%) of the householders moved to Atlantic Beach between 2010 and 2018. It is estimated that roughly 14% of householders moved to the city prior to 1990.



Percent of Housing Units Built prior to 1950



Percent of Housing Units Built since the year 2000



Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

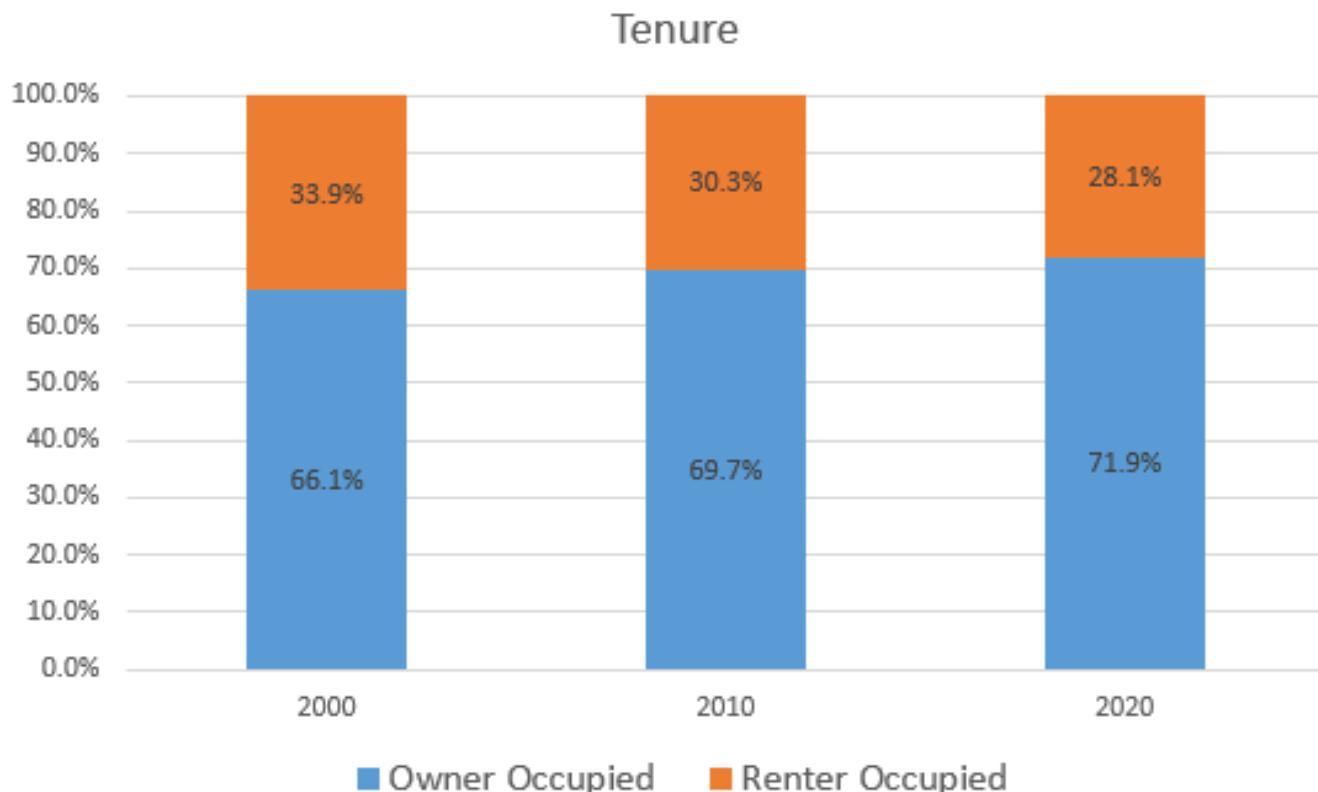
HOUSING

Of the 6,774 total housing units reported in Atlantic Beach, an estimated 6,110 (90.2%) were occupied and an estimated 664 (9.8%) were vacant in 2020. Similar to the national trend, the average household size in Atlantic Beach has decreased each decade from 3.18 in 1970 to 2.26 in 2020. When compared to the county and state, Atlantic Beach has a smaller average household size.

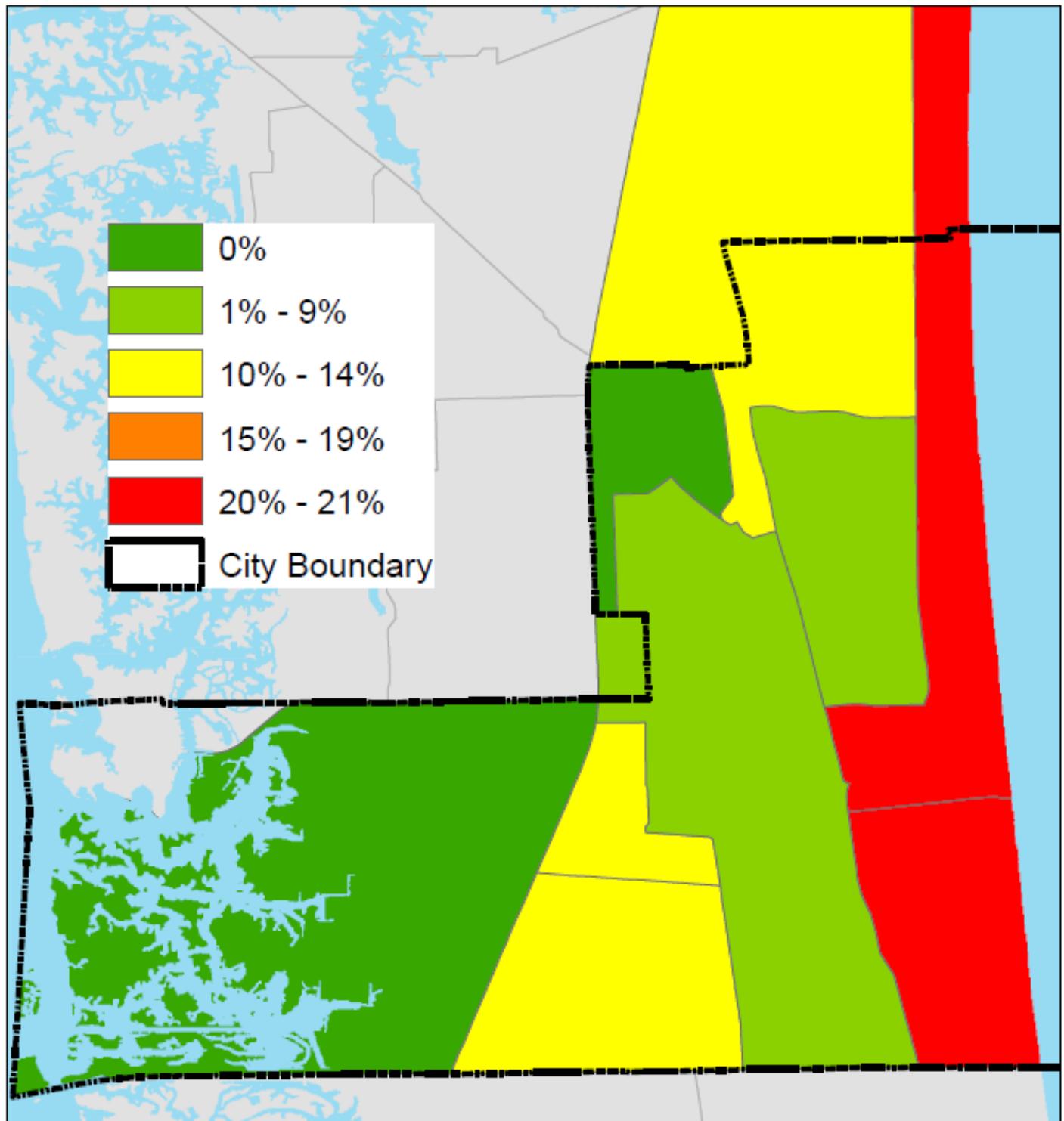
<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Housing Units</u>	<u>Vacancy Rate</u>	<u>Average Household Size</u>
<u>1970</u>	<u>2,434</u>	<u>8.3%</u>	<u>3.18</u>
<u>1980</u>	<u>3,104</u>	<u>9.9%</u>	<u>2.82</u>
<u>1990</u>	<u>4,888</u>	<u>7.1%</u>	<u>2.56</u>
<u>2000</u>	<u>6,003</u>	<u>6.3%</u>	<u>2.36</u>
<u>2010</u>	<u>6,179</u>	<u>10.5%</u>	<u>2.29</u>
<u>2020</u>	<u>6,774</u>	<u>9.8%</u>	<u>2.26</u>

<u>Place</u>	<u>Average Household Size</u>
<u>Atlantic Beach</u>	<u>2.26</u>
<u>Duval County</u>	<u>2.51</u>
<u>Florida</u>	<u>2.62</u>

Of the estimated 6,110 occupied housing units in the city, roughly 72% were owner occupied while the remaining 28% were renter occupied. The percentage of owner occupied units has increased about 6% since 2000 as shown below.



Percent of Housing Units that are Vacant

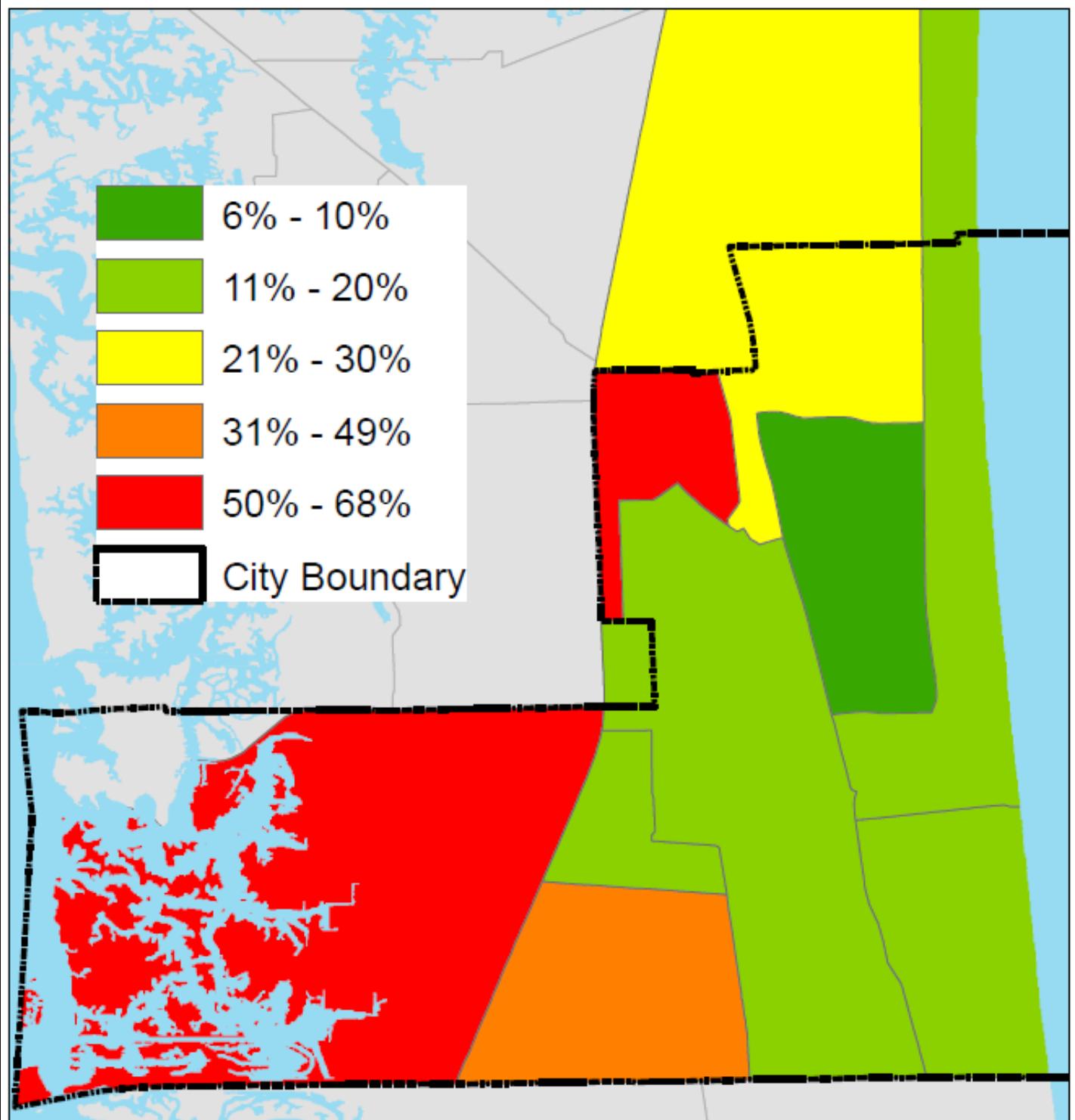


Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Renter Occupied Homes (as percentage of total occupied homes)



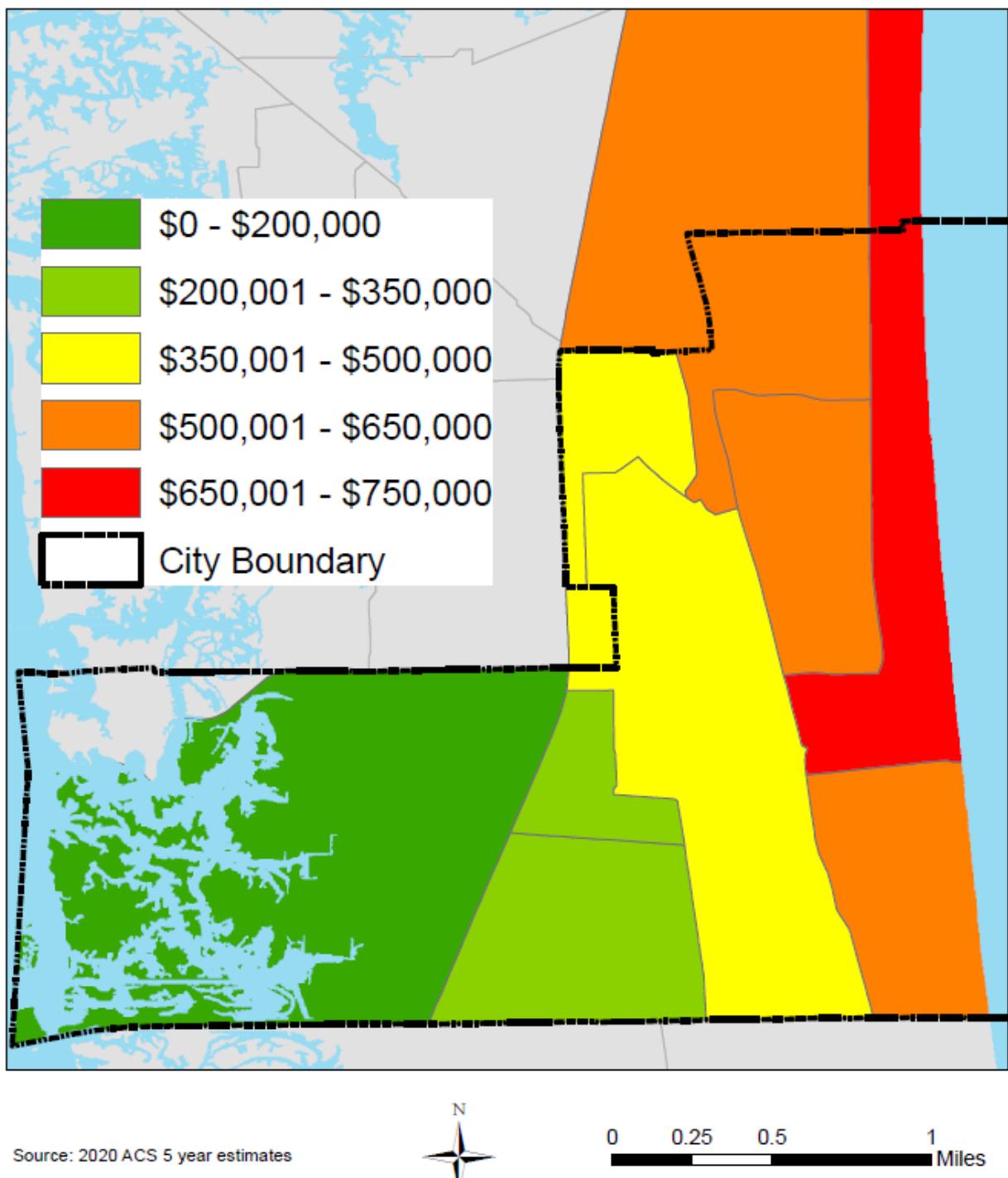
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

HOUSING

In 2020, the median home value of owner occupied homes was estimated to be \$397,200 in Atlantic Beach, much higher than that of Duval County and the state of Florida. The map below shows the median home value by census block group.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Median Home Value (owner occupied)</u>
Atlantic Beach	\$397,200
Duval County	\$195,600
Florida	\$232,000

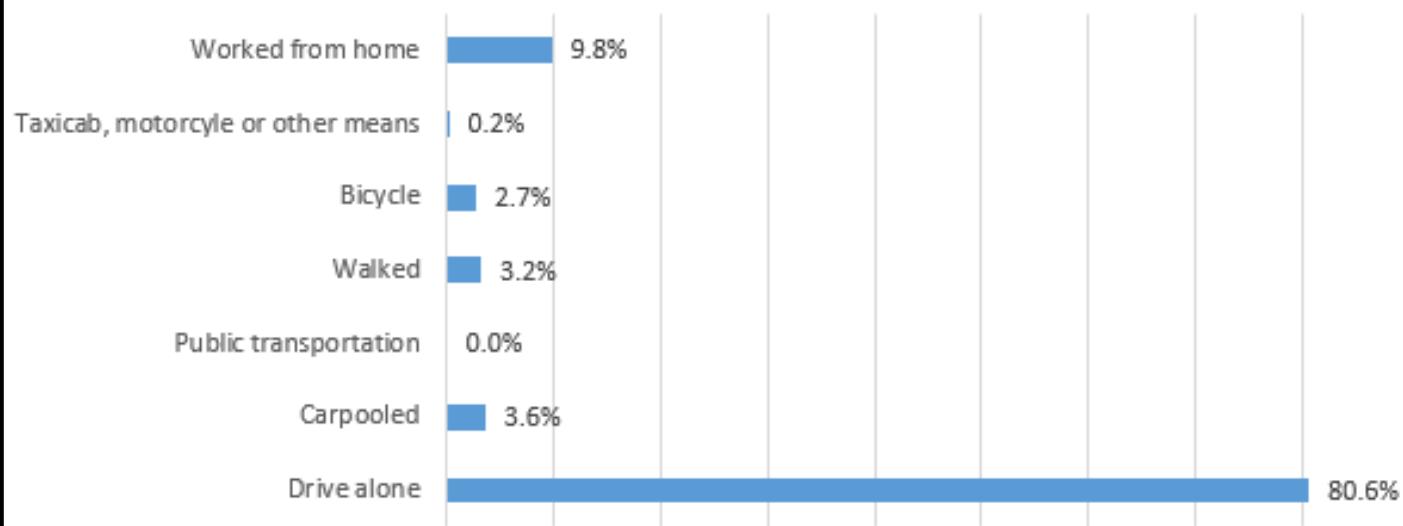
Median Home Value



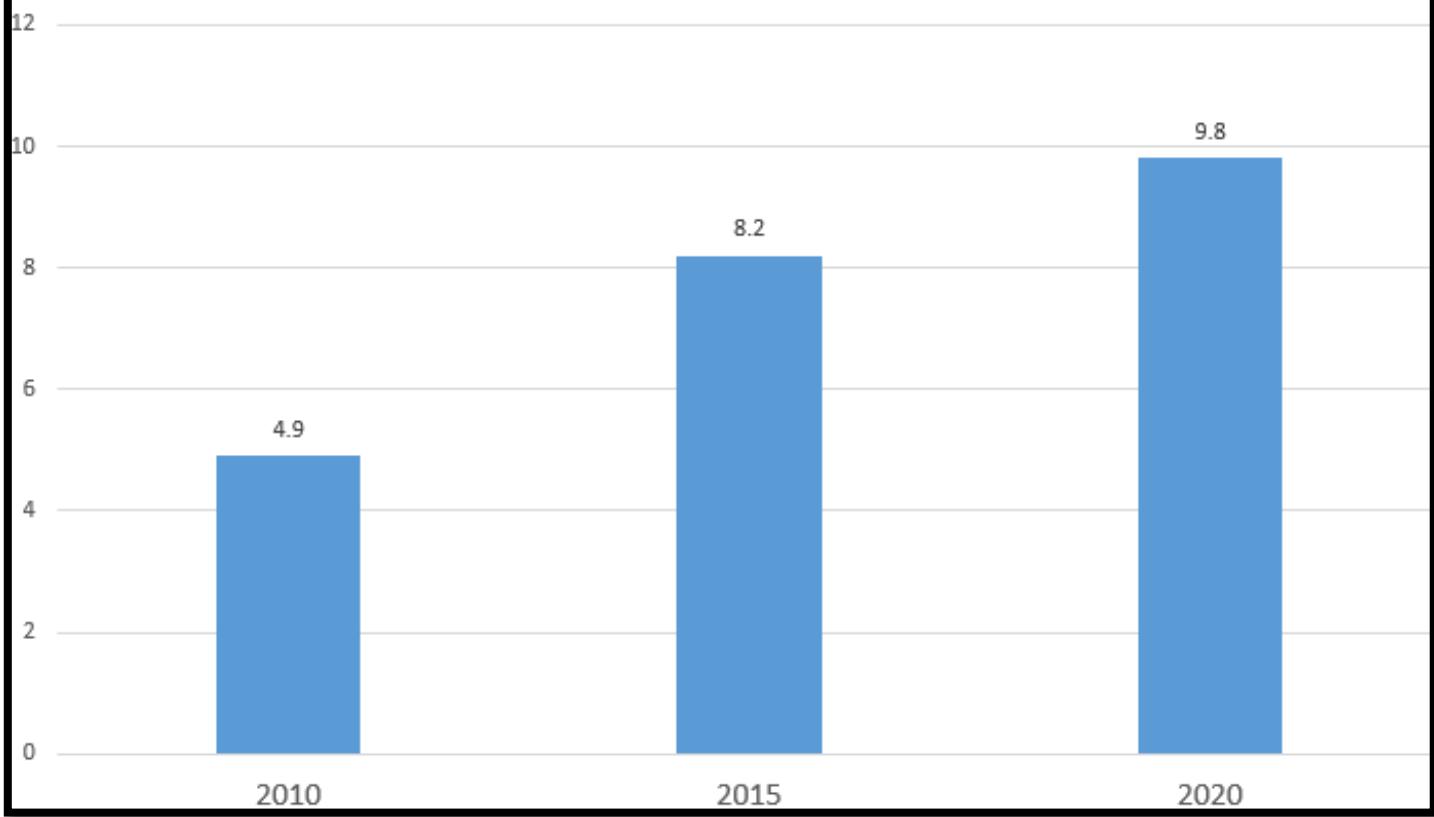
TRANSPORTATION

Of the 7,055 estimated workers 16 years and over in Atlantic Beach, 2.1% do not have a vehicle available for transportation. The remaining 97.9% have one or more vehicles available. The majority of this population (80.6%) drive alone to work in a car, truck or van, while 3.2% walk to work and 2.7% bicycle to work. Further, 9.8% worked from home, which is double the rate reported in 2010.

Means of Transportation to Work



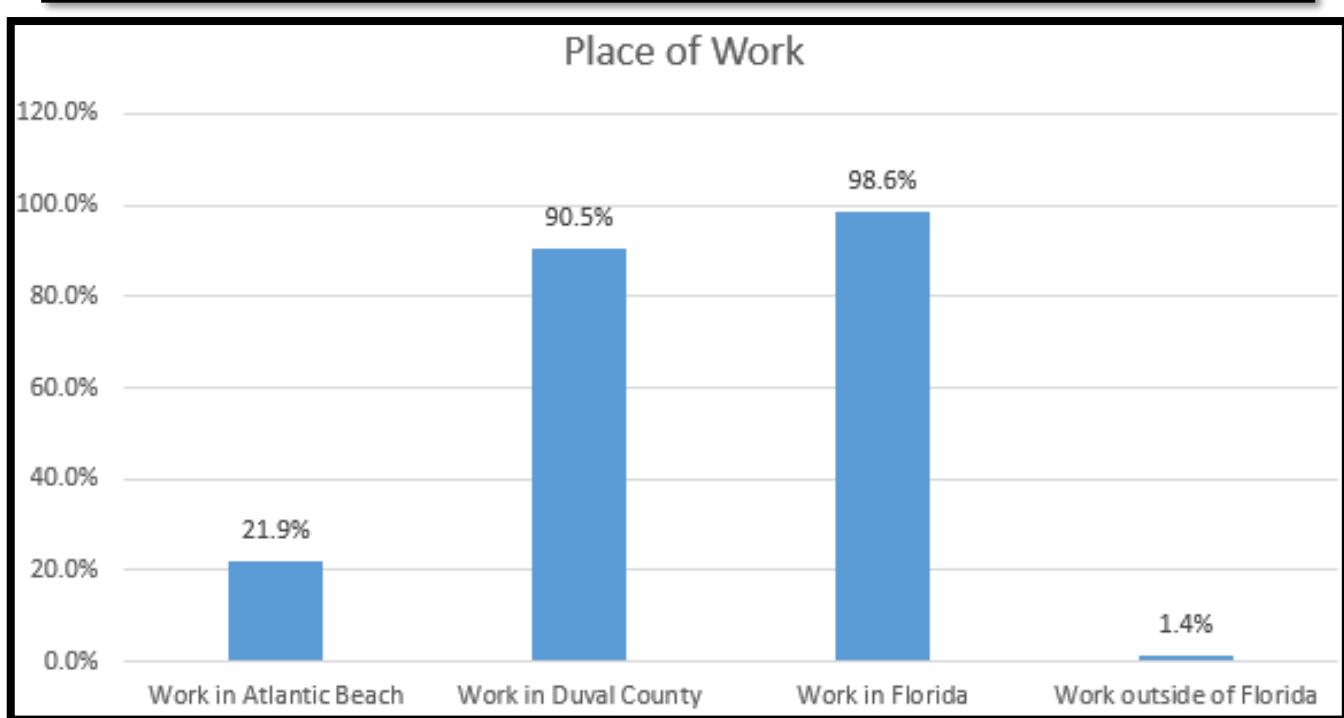
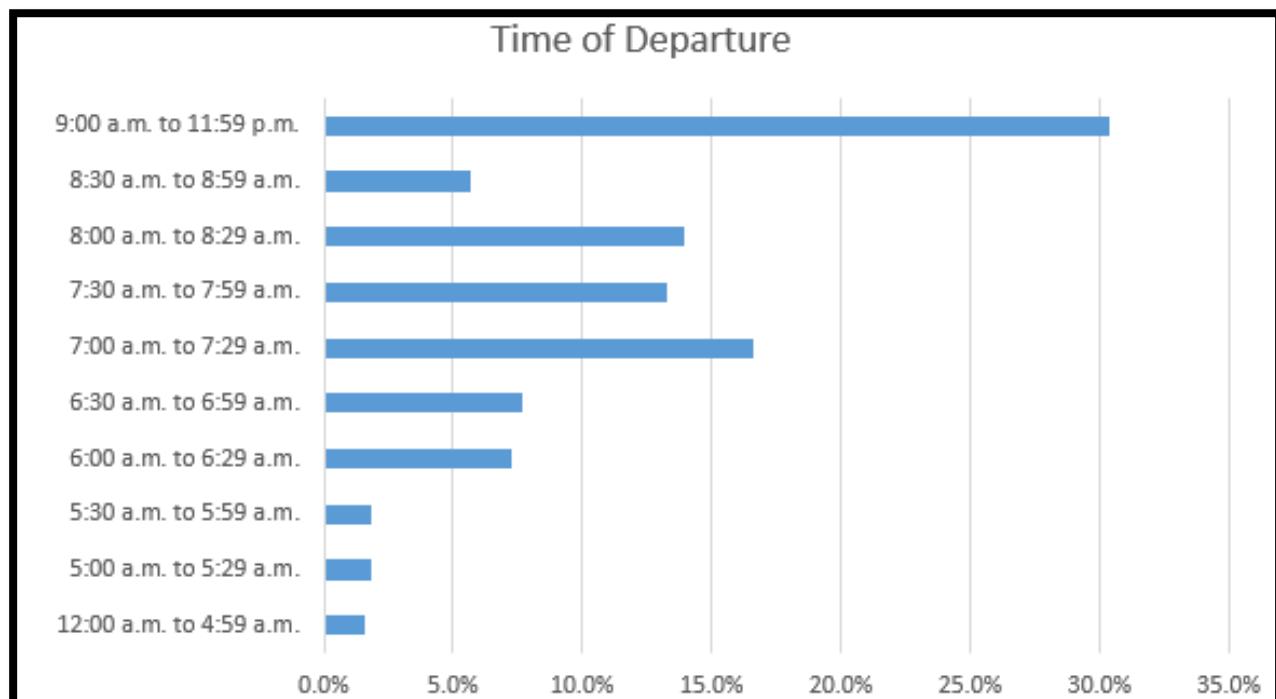
Percent Working from Home



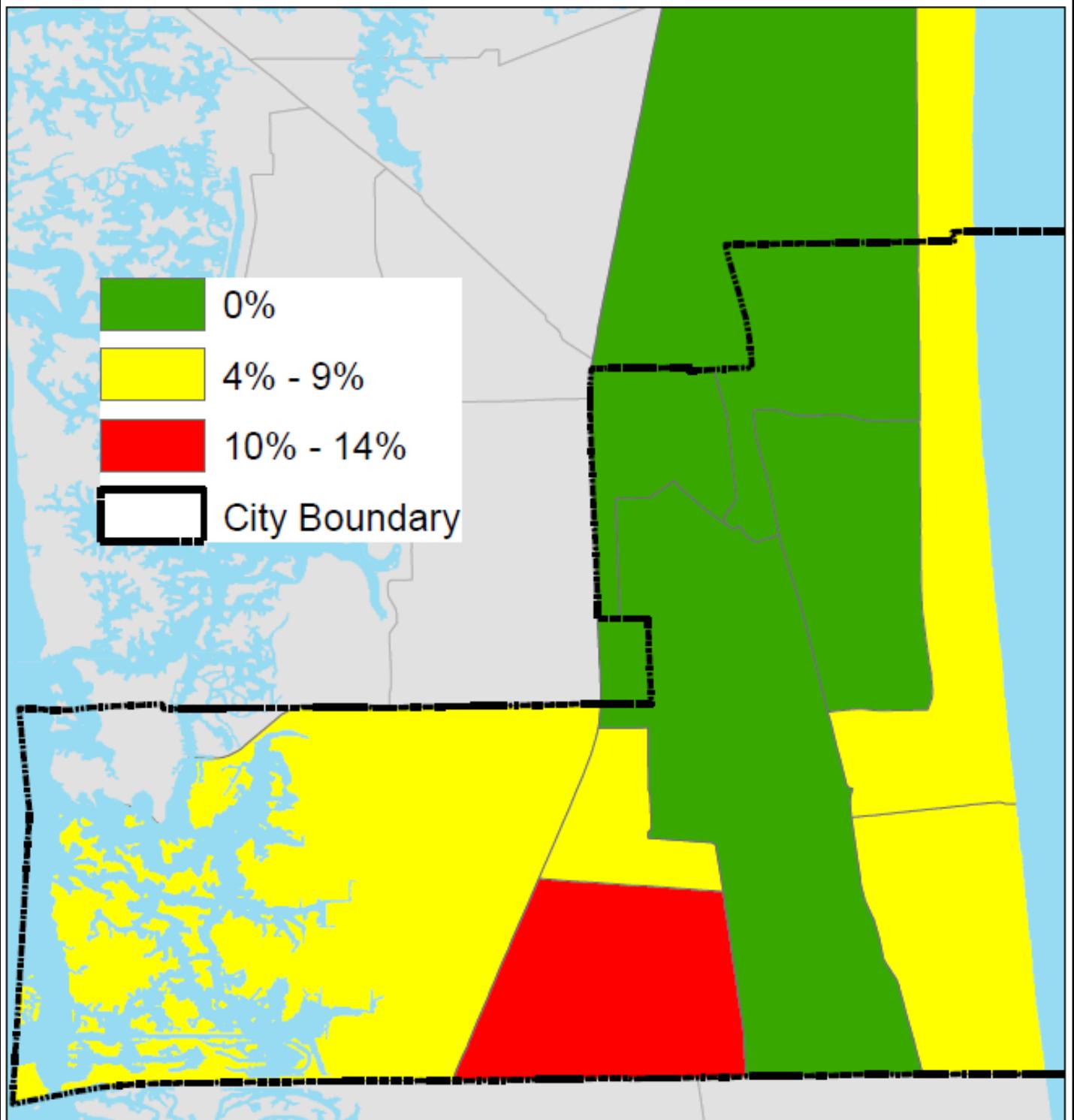
TRANSPORTATION

The 2020 ACS estimates 21.9% of workers 16 and over work in Atlantic Beach, while 91.8% of workers 16 and over work in Duval County. The average travel time to work was 25.4 minutes in 2020, similar to that for Duval County and Florida. The time of departure for work varies, however as expected, large portions of workers depart between 7:00am and 8:30am as well as between 9:00am and 11:59pm.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</u>
Atlantic Beach	25.4
Duval County	24.9
Florida	27.9

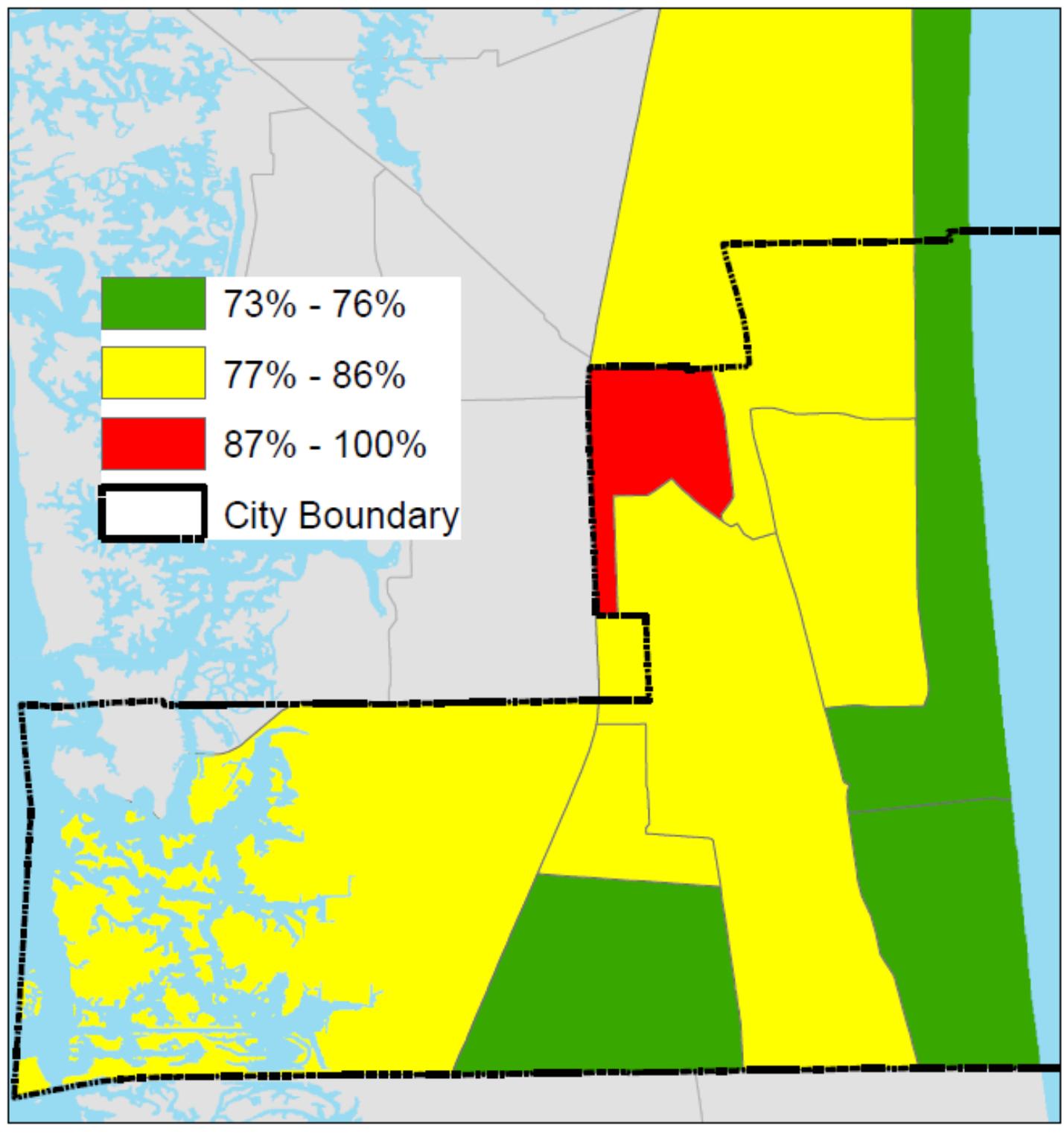


Percent of Workers over 16 that Bike or Walk to Work



Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates

Percent of Workers over 16 that Drive Alone to Work

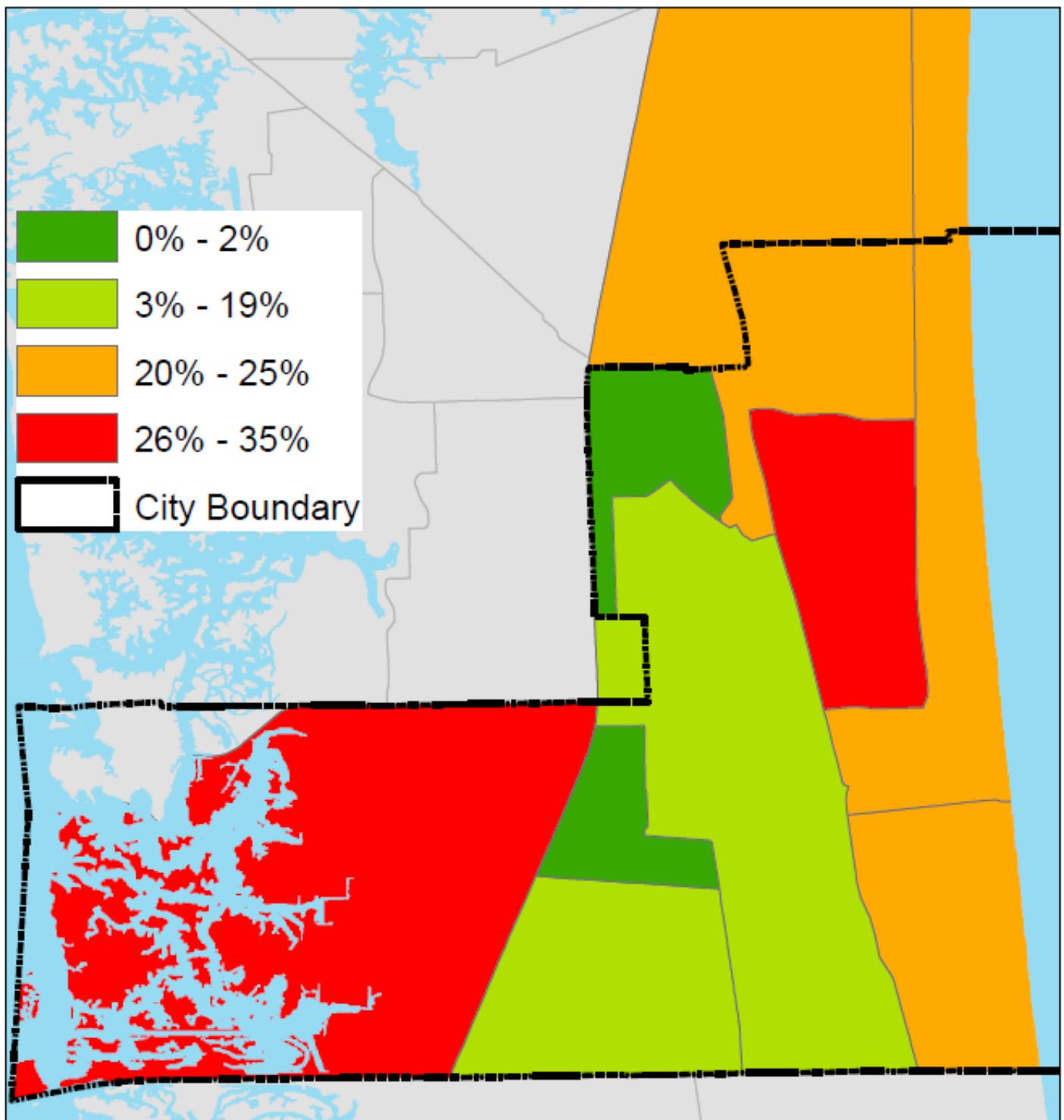


Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Work in Atlantic Beach (Percentage of Workers 16+)

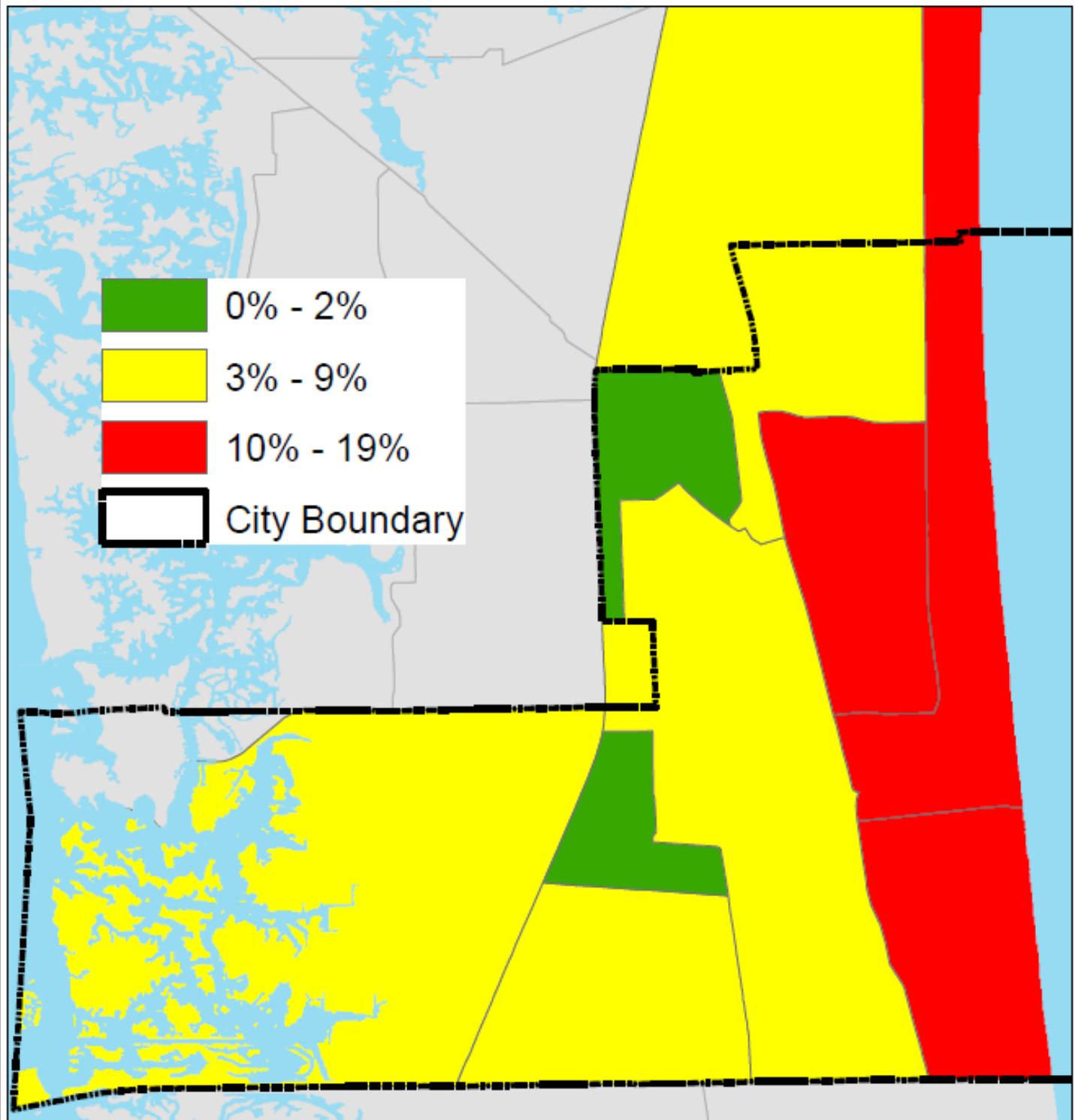


Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Percent of Workers over 16 that Work from Home



Source: 2020 ACS 5 year estimates



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Ecosystem Analysis

Topography & Flooding

Atlantic Beach is a relatively flat and low-lying coastal community that borders the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Intracoastal Waterway on the West. The highest elevations in the city, ranging from about 10 to over 30 feet above mean sea level, are located along the ocean side where sand dunes have developed over time and the lowest elevations, at or just above sea level, are generally located along the Intracoastal Waterway on the west side of the city. Additional low-lying areas of the city are located along Sherman Creek and Hopkins Creek, two of the city's primary drainage basins.

As a low-lying coastal community, Atlantic Beach is especially vulnerable to flood risks as experienced during Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Mathew, and the November 2015 Nor'easter. Unsurprisingly, flooding impacts have been most notable in the lowest areas of the city, notably along the Intracoastal Waterway, near Hopkins Creek, and along Sherman Creek. In addition, most of the city was developed prior to modern storm-water regulations for flood protection which has further contributed to these flooding issues. In recent years, the city has also experienced the development of lots on the west side of the city that have been historically untouched/ignored due to low-lying topography, wetlands, and flooding concerns. This development trend is expected to continue as remaining undeveloped lots are scarce and the demand for housing in the area continues to increase. As a result, the city has taken several initiatives to address an increasing threat of urban flooding. In 2018, the city updated the Stormwater Master Plan which led to recommended capital improvement projects that have since either been implemented or incorporated into the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). In 2019, the city completed a Coastal Vulnerability Assessment which included highly detailed modeling of projected changes in sea levels, rainfall, soil storage, wave sizes and impacts, and increases in impervious surfaces which was then utilized to create projected special flood hazard areas (flood zones) for 25, 50, and 100 year timeframes. In addition to modeling projected flood zones, sea levels, storm surges, nuisance flooding, and rainfall flooding, the report assessed potential impacts to critical infrastructure and facilities as well as private property and has been used to inform the recently approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), proposed code changes, and the completion of the city's Adaptation Plan in 2021. The Adaptation Plan identifies focus areas within the city and prioritizes critical infrastructure and facilities that are vulnerable to flooding impacts and then recommends strategies to adapt to these projected impacts.

Geology

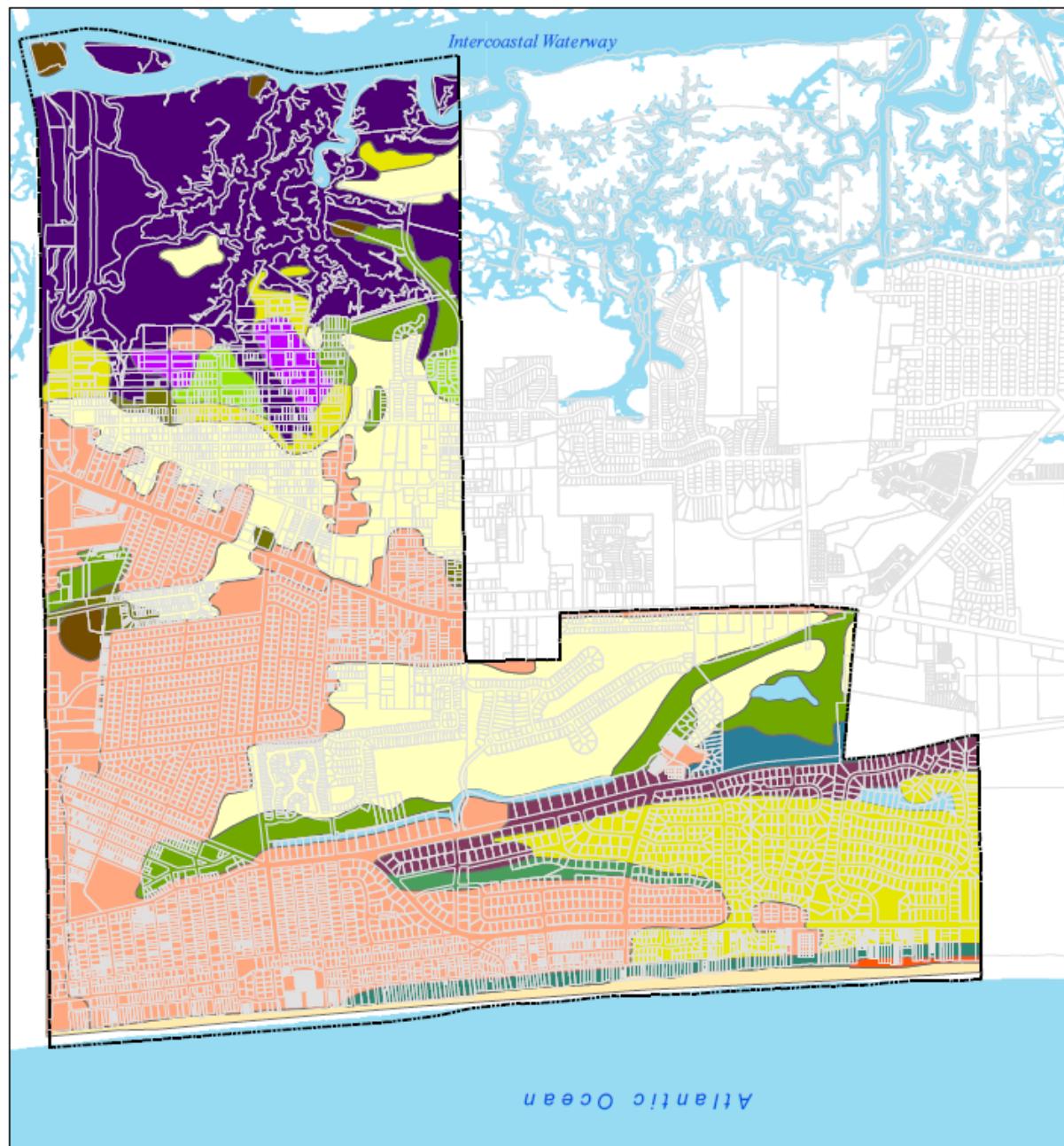
The University of Florida identifies the geologic unit for Atlantic Beach as undifferentiated Pleistocene and Holocene coastal deposits. These sediments exist along the present day coast of Duval County and the associated lagoons and coastal rivers and streams. They are composed of sands, silts and clays that sometimes contain varying percentage of organic matter. The sands may contain mica and heavy minerals. The sands are poorly to well sorted depending on the depositional environment. These include beach, marsh and lagoonal sediments which lie on older undifferentiated Quaternary sediments or Nashua Formation. Sand dunes are also present in Atlantic Beach but are not the predominant landform. The quartz sands comprising the dunes may contain shell fragments and often contain 5-10 percent heavy minerals and lies on undifferentiated Pleistocene and Holocene coastal deposits.

Soils

The majority of Atlantic Beach has been developed with either residential or commercial development except for the beach and generally undevelopable areas of salt-water marshes. As such, the majority of Atlantic Beach has been identified as Urban Land with the remainder largely identified as a type of fine sand due to the city's proximity to the coast. The drainage class for nearly all soils range from somewhat poorly to very poorly.



Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent AOI	Prime Farmland
7	Arents, nearly level	16.07	0.63%	No
10	Beaches, very frequently flooded	7.7	0.30%	No
14	Boulogne fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	279.1	11.03%	No
22	Evergreen-Wesconnett complex, depressional, 0 to 2 percent slopes	19.76	0.78%	No
24	Hurricane and Ridgewood soils, 0 to 5 percent slopes	22.76	0.90%	No
29	Kureb fine sand, 2 to 8 percent slopes	37.08	1.47%	No
32	Leon fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	512.62	20.25%	No
33	Leon fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, very frequently flooded	1.65	0.07%	No
35	Lynn Haven fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	135.99	5.37%	No
36	Mandarin fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes	82.3	3.25%	No
42	Newhan-corolla, rarely flooded, complex, gently undulating to hilly, 2 to 20 percent slopes	4.13	0.16%	No
49	Pamlico muck, depressional, 0 to 1 percent slopes	21.27	0.84%	No
58	Pottsburg fine sand, 0 to 3 percent slopes	26.22	1.04%	No
62	Rutlege mucky fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded	23.28	0.92%	No
68	Tisonia mucky peat, 0 to 1 percent slopes, very frequently flooded	423.65	16.74%	No
69	Urban land	75.05	2.97%	No
71	Urban land-Leon-Boulogne complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes	755.96	29.87%	No
99	Water	86.4	3.41%	No



Soil data from National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 2021. Parcel data from 2020 property appraiser layer.

0
0.25
0.5
1 Miles

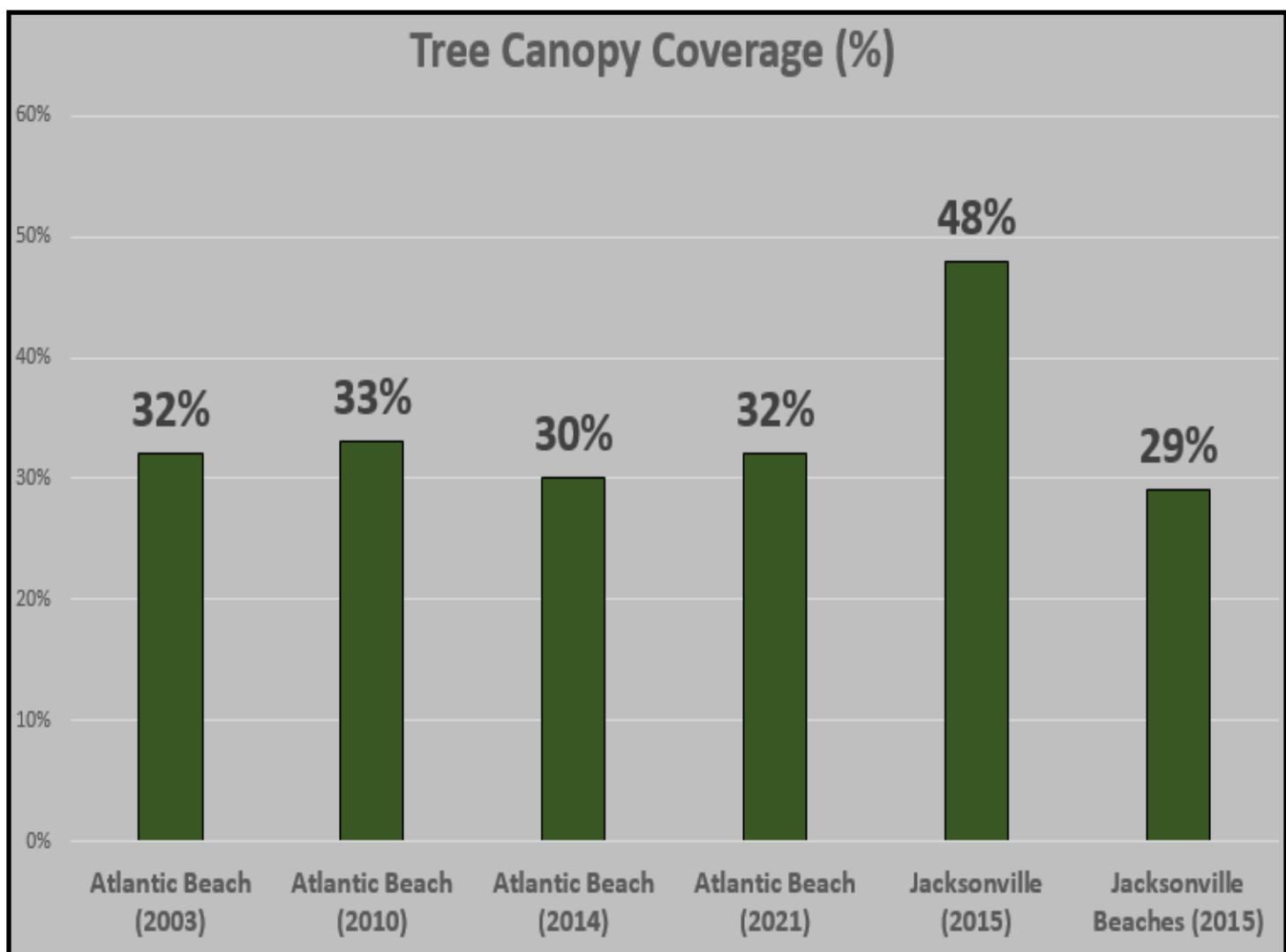


MAP A-8: Soils

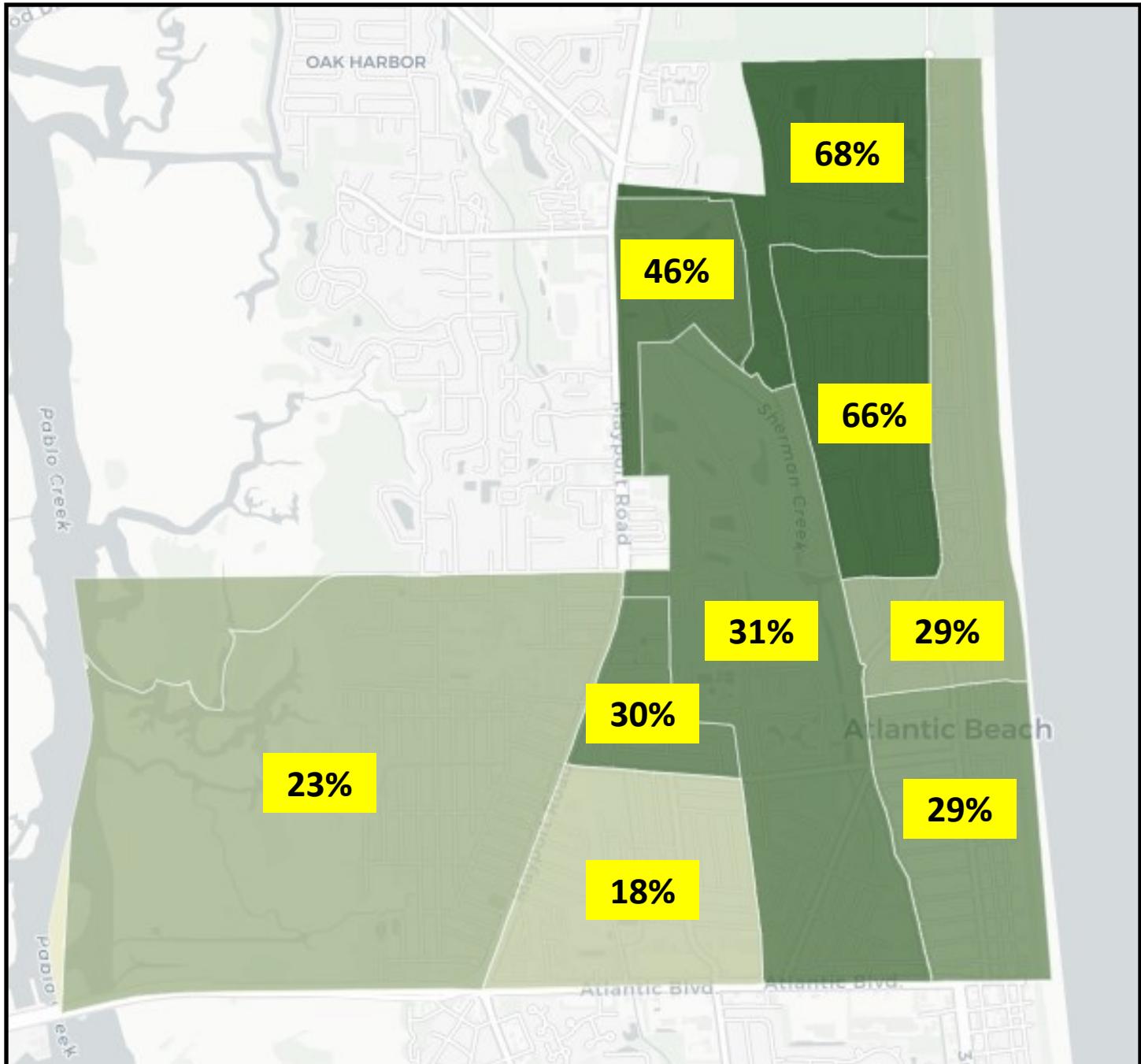
**City of Atlantic Beach
2040 Comprehensive Plan
Amendment Map Series**

Vegetation & Habitat

Tree Canopy. A designated Tree City USA since 1992, Atlantic Beach boasts a tree canopy recognized as one of its most valuable assets by City leadership and citizenry, alike. The canopy largely consists of live oak, slash pine, and cabbage palms. In 2014, the city conducted an urban tree canopy assessment which analyzed digital images of the city's tree canopy taken in both December, 2003 and January, 2014 in order to estimate changes to the canopy during that time period and to quantify long term impacts from the three hurricanes that passed through the city in 2004. The final report noted that there did not appear to be widespread disturbances in the canopy, either natural or human-caused, indicated that property owners appeared to be conscientious in conserving trees on private lands, and spoke positively of the city's measures to protect its canopy. **The assessment estimated that the city's tree canopy percentage was at 32% in 2003 and 30% in 2014.** If the land areas occupied by marshes, open water, and dunes is deducted from that assessment, this percentage increased to 39% for 2014. These figures compare favorably with the average Florida statewide tree canopy coverage in developed areas of 26.7%, and 32.1% when unplantable areas are eliminated. **A second tree canopy assessment was completed in 2023 for the years 2021 and 2010 which estimated that the city's tree canopy to be 32% in 2021 and 33% in 2010.** Further, in 2017 the City of Jacksonville conducted a tree canopy assessment which estimated the city's canopy percentage to be 48% in 2015 (excluding open water from the land area). This assessment also estimated the 2015 canopy coverage for the Jacksonville Beaches as a whole to be 29%.



Tree Canopy Coverage by Census Block Group (2021)



Vegetation & Habitat

Land Coverage. Atlantic Beach is a built-out community consisting mostly of developed land. The highest intensity of developed land is located along the city's two commercial corridors of Atlantic Boulevard and Mayport Road where suburban type shopping malls with large parking lots as well as wholesale and storage uses occupy much of this land. Additional "medium intensity" developed land is located along the coast where several multi-family developments and dense single family developments exist. The remaining residential areas are generally classified as "low intensity" developed land due to lower residential densities, larger lots, and more tree canopy. Woody wetlands are shown along Shermans Creek and the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) while the 350+ acre River Branch Preserve is shown as Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands. Lastly, many of the city's parks and open spaces make up the pockets of Evergreen Forest shown on the USGS land coverage map. Forests and woody wetlands provide a host of ecosystem services including climate regulation, water quality protection, biodiversity conservation, erosion control, air quality maintenance, and recreational, cultural, and aesthetic values.

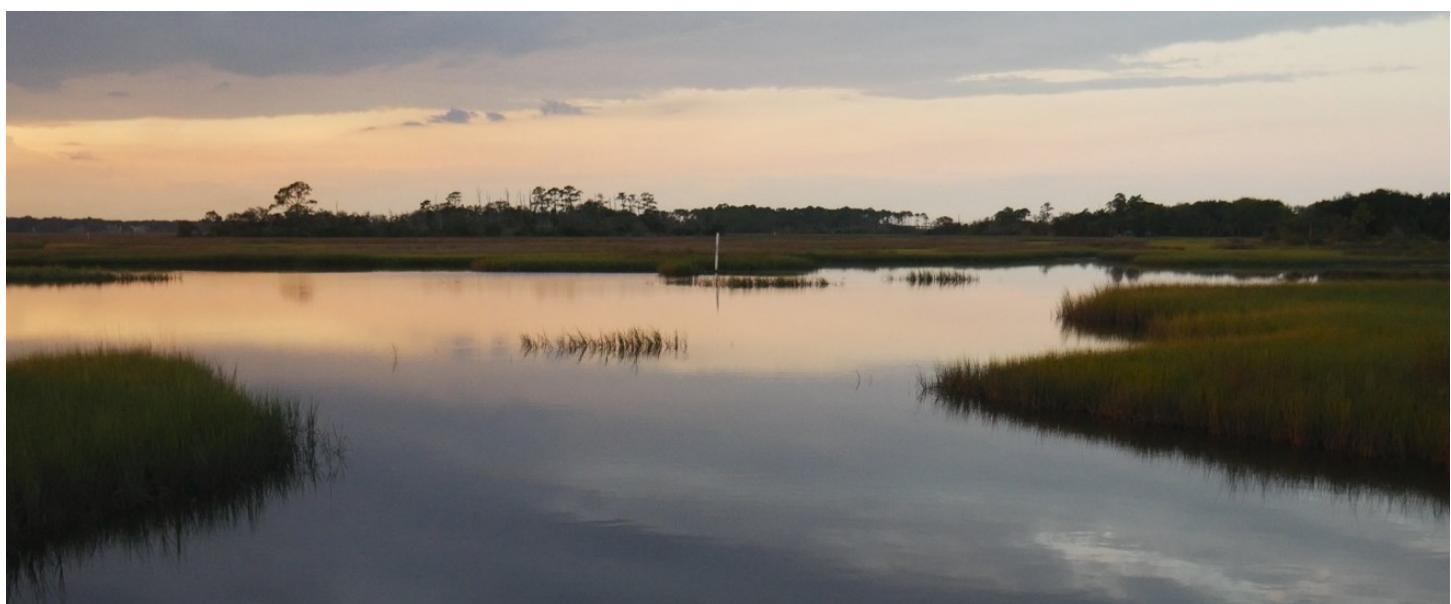
Within the 350+ acre River Branch Preserve, located between the ICW and the city's uplands, a 2018 current conditions report found four natural communities; saltwater marsh, mixed hardwood-coniferous, mixed scrub-shrub wetland, and estuarine.

Saltwater marsh is an estuarine wetland on muck, sand, or limestone substrate, inundated by saltwater daily tides. No trees are present and vegetation includes a dense herb layer with few shrubs, and common species of saltmarsh cordgrass, needle rush, saltgrass, saltwort, perennial glasswort, and seaside oxeye.

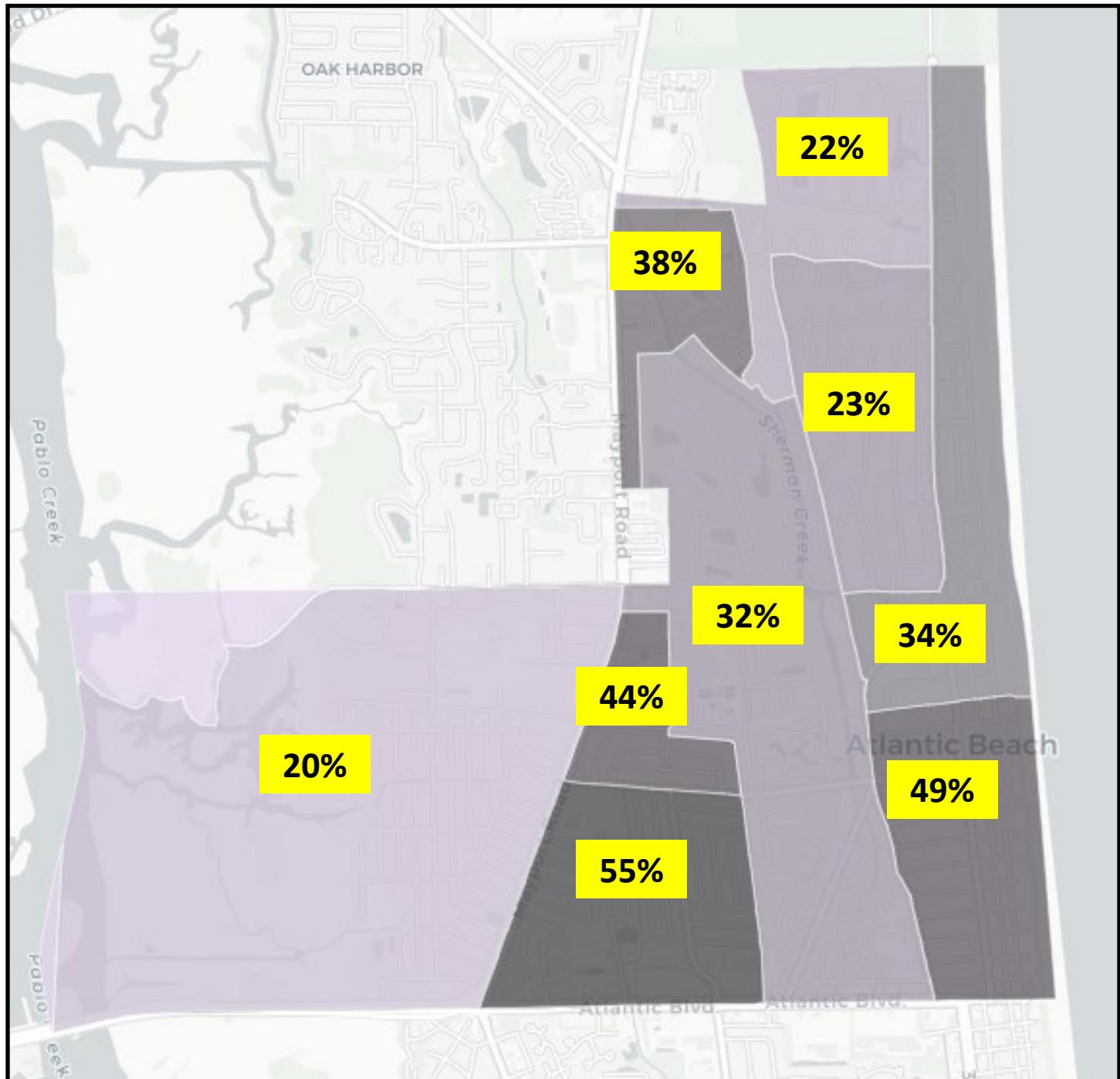
Mixed hardwood-coniferous ecosystems have a canopy dominated by sand live oak, live oak, water oak, slash pine, loblolly pine, red cedar, red bay, sabal palm, and southern magnolia. The understory consists of species such as wax myrtle, yaupon holly, gallberry, saw palmetto, wiregrass, and brackenfern.

Mixed scrub-shrub wetlands are dominated by vegetation less than 20 feet in height. Soil is often saturated and mucky, occasionally shallowly inundated. Vegetation consists of dense stands of shrubs, with trees often absent or sparse. Common species include sphagnum moss, titi, black titi, fetterbush, large gallberry, laurel greenbrier, pond pine, and slash pine.

Estuarine habitats include deepwater tidal habitats and adjacent tidal wetlands that are usually semi-enclosed by land but have open, partly obstructed, or sporadic access to the ocean, with ocean derived water at least occasionally diluted by freshwater runoff from the land.



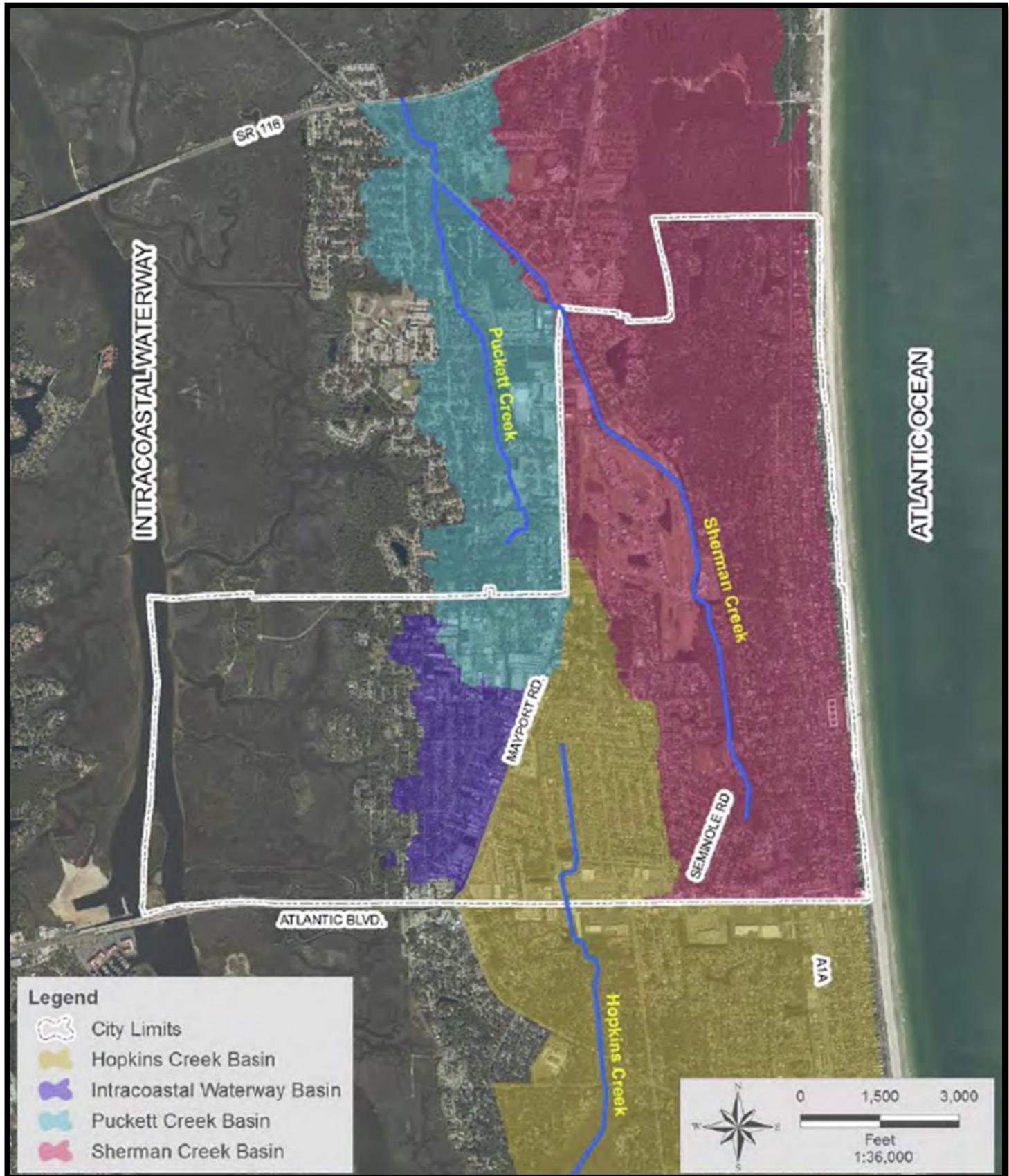
Impervious Surface Coverage by Census Block Group (2021)



Hydrology & Aquatic Ecosystems

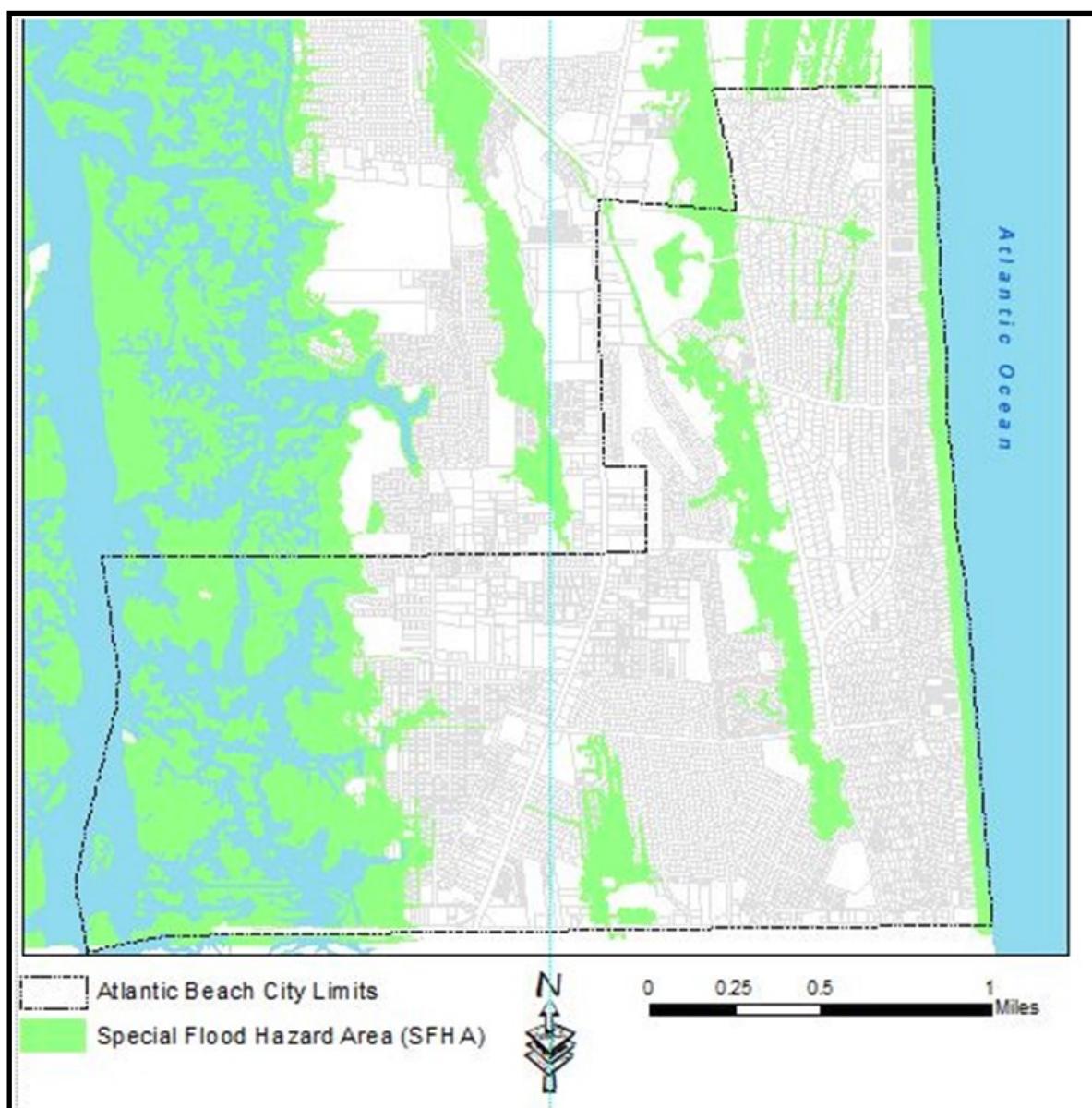
Atlantic Beach is located within the Lower St. Johns Watershed, which covers the portion of the St. Johns River and its tributaries from Lake George to the mouth of the river at the Atlantic Ocean. The Lower St. Johns River is an elongated estuary that extends about 101 miles from its union with the Ocklawaha River to the Atlantic Ocean, and is joined near its mouth by the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). The hydrology of the Lower St. Johns River is highly varied and influenced mainly by the interaction of tide, wind, freshwater flows, and the confines of the river banks and bottom. The Lower St. Johns contains both freshwater and saltwater wetlands. Salt marshes are common along the ICW in the northern end of the watershed and provide important nursery areas of saltwater commercial fisheries. In Atlantic Beach, tidal salt marsh creeks drain west in the ICW, which then drains to the north in the St. Johns River which ultimately drains into the Atlantic Ocean.

Drainage Basins. Stormwater in Atlantic Beach flows to four primary drainage basins; Sherman Creek, Hopkins Creek, Puckett Creek, and the Intracoastal Waterway. Sherman Creek begins within Howell Park and flows north to the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) and is where the majority of water in the city drains. Hopkins Creek drains the Royal Palms and Donner subdivisions in the central part of the city and runs south through Neptune Beach into the ICW. Hopkins Creek and Shermans Creek watersheds both originate within the city however only a small portion of the northern end of the Hopkins Creek watershed, approximately 340 acres, is located within the city. The Shermans Creek watershed within the city limits is partially ditched and primarily wooded. It originates within Howell Park and flows north through a drainage ditch flowing across the Atlantic Beach Country Club through heavily developed areas until its confluence with Puckett Creek at SR A1A. Areas west of Mayport Road flow into the Intracoastal Waterway or into Puckett Creek. The Puckett Creek headwaters are located near Dutton Island Road on the city's northern boundary and flows through the residential and commercially developed areas until its confluence with the Shermans Creek canal at SR A1A where it then flows through salt marsh to Shermans Creek. The City primarily drains through stormwater pipe collection systems that route water to larger ditch/creek systems. The City's stormwater discharges to the Intracoastal Waterway via direct discharge from ditches, by way of Hopkins Creek or Sherman-Puckett Creek. A majority of the City drains through Hopkins Creek or Sherman-Puckett Creek, which flows through a combination of ditches and large culver crossings owned and maintained by other entities before discharging to the Intracoastal Waterway.



Hydrology & Aquatic Ecosystems

Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). Atlantic Beach has approximately 1,085 acres of SFHA area within the city limits, mostly “AE” zones. Generally, the SFHA is shown along the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) on the west side of the city, in the Aquatic Gardens area near the Hopkins Creek ditch and pond, along Sherman Creek and canal, and on the beach. These areas correspond to reported flooding issues as well as projected flooding issues and priority areas as identified in the city’s stormwater master plan, coastal vulnerability assessment, and adaptation plan. The city has a number of regulations and policies related to flood protection. This includes a minimum finished floor elevation of 8.5 feet NAVD and at least 2.5 feet above the base flood elevation. This requirement is meant to ensure that habitable living area is elevated above potential flood waters. Also, the city requires on-site water retention for all development within the city, including single family, which is extremely rare in the state. New development is required to retain water equal to a 25-year and 24-hour rainfall (9.3 inches) over the site. Development within a special flood hazard area (SFHA) is also required to retain water onsite to mitigate for any filling in order to ensure a no net loss of floodplain storage. In addition, the city has managed to acquire land within the SFHA for preservation and flood protection purposes.



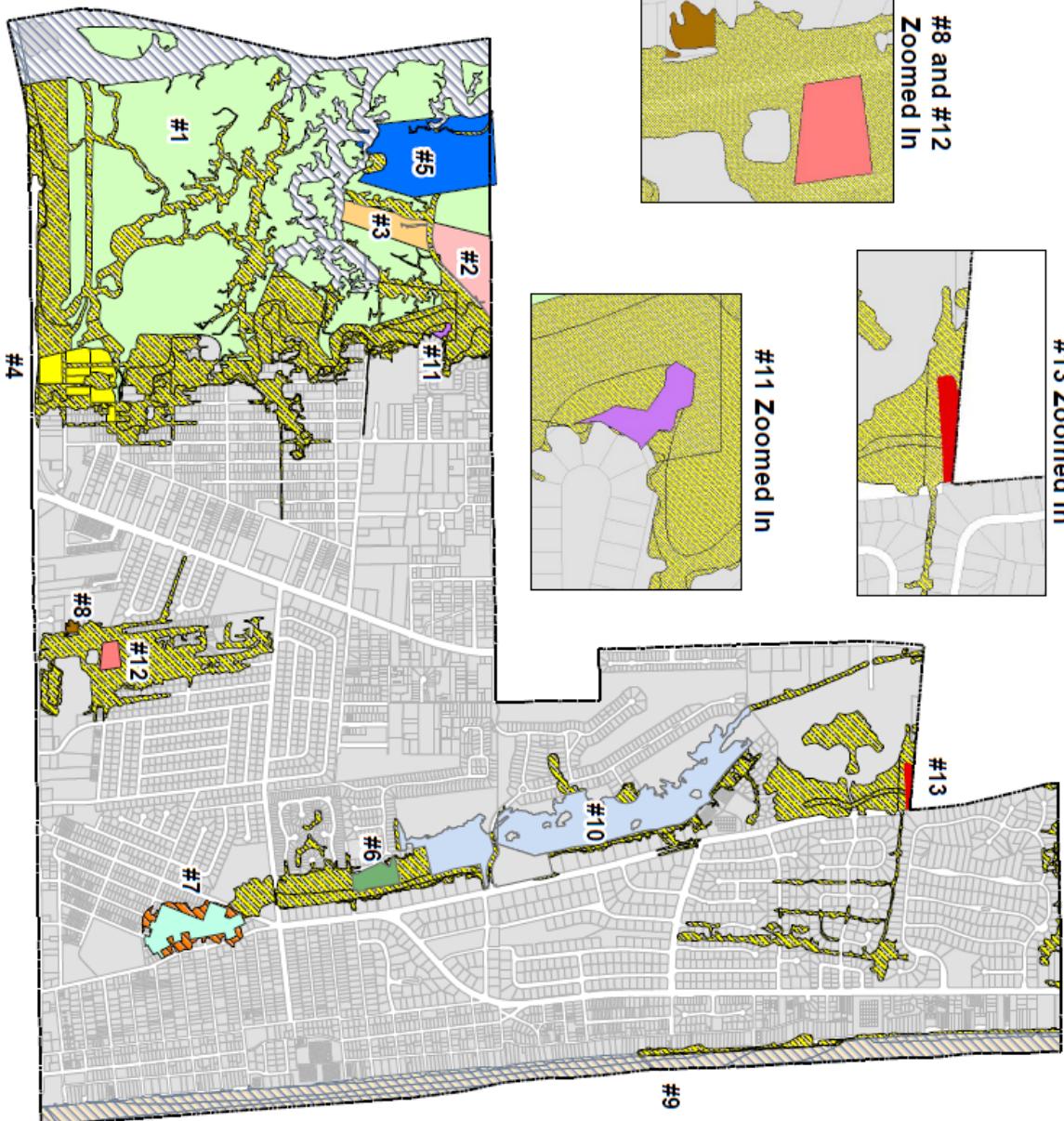
Open Space Preservation Impact Adjustment Map for Activity 420



Atlantic Beach City Boundary

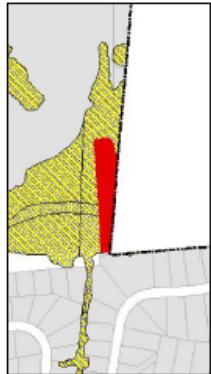
SFHA (total 2118.18 acres)

- A
- AE
- VE

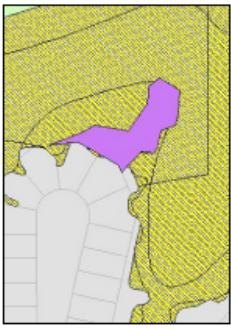


Total Open Space: 677.95 acres

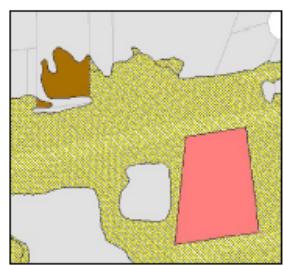
#13 Zoomed In



#11 Zoomed In



#8 and #12
Zoomed In



Natural Functions Open Space (NFOS) Map



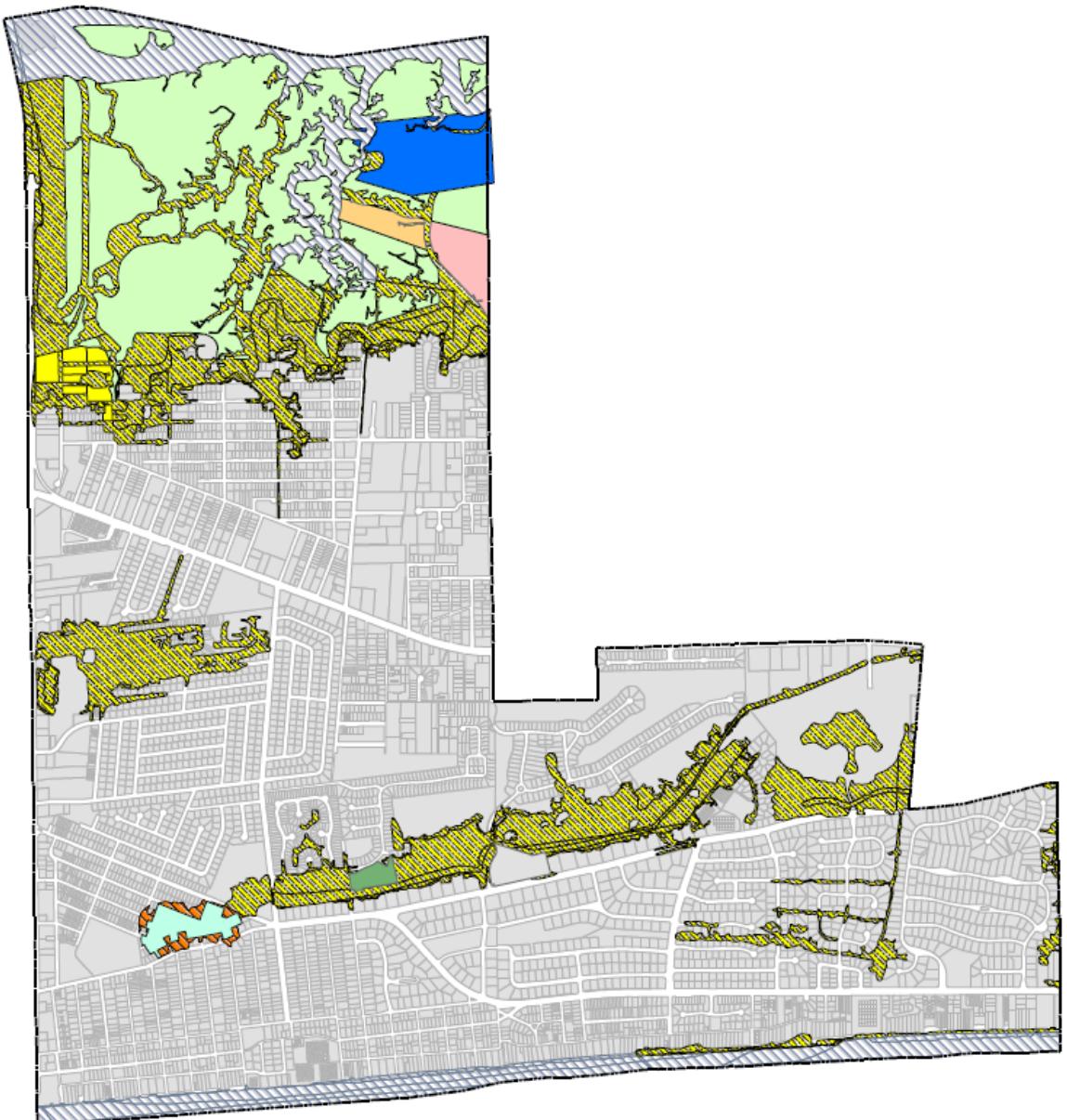
□ Atlantic Beach City Boundary
SFHA (total 2118.18 acres)

■ A
■ AE
■ VE

NFOS1 Credit:

#1	River Branch Preserve (259.09 acres)
#2	River Branch Addition 1 (11.84 acres)
#3	River Branch Addition 2 (7.73 acres)
#4	Tide Views Preserve (9.31 acres)
#5	Dutton Island Preserve (31.27 acres)
#6	Selva Preserve (31.52 acres)
#7	Howell Park (7.04 acres)

Total NFOS1: 329.8 acres



Hydrology & Aquatic Ecosystems

Wetlands. A majority of the wetlands in Atlantic Beach are located along the western coast where the salt-marsh and uplands meet. As undevelopable land in the city becomes scarce, many wetlands areas are seeing increased interest from developers. Wetlands provide flood protection, water quality improvements, erosion control, and habitat for aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. Recognizing the importance of preserving this environmentally sensitive land, the city has purchased over 350 acres of environmentally sensitive land along the Intracoastal Waterway comprising of three preserves collectively referred to as the “Marsh Preserves”. The Marsh Preserves offer the public enjoyment of the saltwater marsh, pine flatwood forests, live oak, magnolia, and water oak forests, and resource-based recreational facilities. The creation of the preserves has protected a large land area of undeveloped wilderness within the urban landscape along the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) including saltwater marshes, which are the most productive ecosystems on earth. The City’s Comprehensive Plan, the Marsh Master Plan, respective Management Plans, and a recorded easement all serve to ensure that these preserves will remain passive and natural in function. In addition to saltwater marshes, there are “mixed scrub-shrub” and “mixed forested” wetlands along the ICW and “mixed wetland hardwoods” along Shermans Creek toward the center of the city.

Beaches. The City of Atlantic Beach contains about two miles of public beaches along the Atlantic Ocean that residents and visitors enjoy year round. There are 21 public beach access points along the beach with most located at a street terminus while a few are narrow easements over private property. The majority of the beach is adjacent to single-family homes, with the exception of several multi-family developments and the One Ocean Resort and Spa. Sand dunes lie between ocean front development and the beach and provide the city’s first line of protection against storm surge. A primary concern of Atlantic Beach, and other Florida coastal communities, is beach erosion caused by wave action. As a response to major erosion experienced in Northeast Florida between the 1950s and 1970s, the Duval County Shore Protection Project was implemented in 1978 and since then, six principal renourishments have occurred (1985-87, 1991, 1995, 2005, 2011 and 2016-17) in addition to periodic placement of maintenance-dredged sand. The beach renourishment occurs about every five to six years to maintain beaches at their original design as part of the project. The renourishment is funded in partnership with the City of Jacksonville, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Duval County. The goal of engineered shore projects is to reduce risk and promote coastal resilience. Shore projects help to reduce the damages – economic, environmental, infrastructure, human health and safety – of tropical storms and hurricanes. Along with providing economic stability and opportunities, beach nourishment projects also have inherent benefits in restoring critical habitat. It provides more sand for endangered sea turtles, which normally nest on the same beach where they hatch, to find sufficient areas for nesting. Several species of shorebirds also nest along the beach. And, of course, the beach is essential to the area’s economic driver, tourism. The 2016-17 Project Description: The Duval County shore protection project nourished eroded beaches and rebuilt dunes devastated by Hurricane Matthew’s passing in October 2016. The City of Jacksonville funded the additional dune work that included building dunes in Jacksonville, Neptune and a portion of Atlantic Beach. More than a million cubic yards of sand – equivalent to more than 2.7 billion pounds – was dredged, piped and tilled across about ten miles of county shoreline. Roughly 860,000 cubic yards went to building the beach and another 200,000 cubic yards went to rebuilding dunes. Construction started in mid-September 2016 to widen the beach berm between 20 to 60 feet, and raise the elevation of the beach by about 3 to 5 feet. In addition to beach renourishment, the coastal dunes are protected by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (FDEP) Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) Program which regulates structures and activities which can cause beach erosion, destabilize dunes, damage upland properties, or interfere with public access as well as regulations to protect sea turtles and dune plants.