

Costs of Sprawl

WHAT IS SPRAWL?

Sprawl can be defined as a development pattern characterized by low population density growing around an urbanized area.

Expansive development patterns create costs to the public that must be evaluated when setting policy—like zoning—that establish density requirements.

Some costs and effects of those options are explored to the right.

We believe Fairfield County will face increased residential development pressure. Now is the opportunity to shape smart development that meets the need of current and future residents and is aligned with community priorities. This means finding the right balance amid intersecting factors explored on this poster.

TRAFFIC

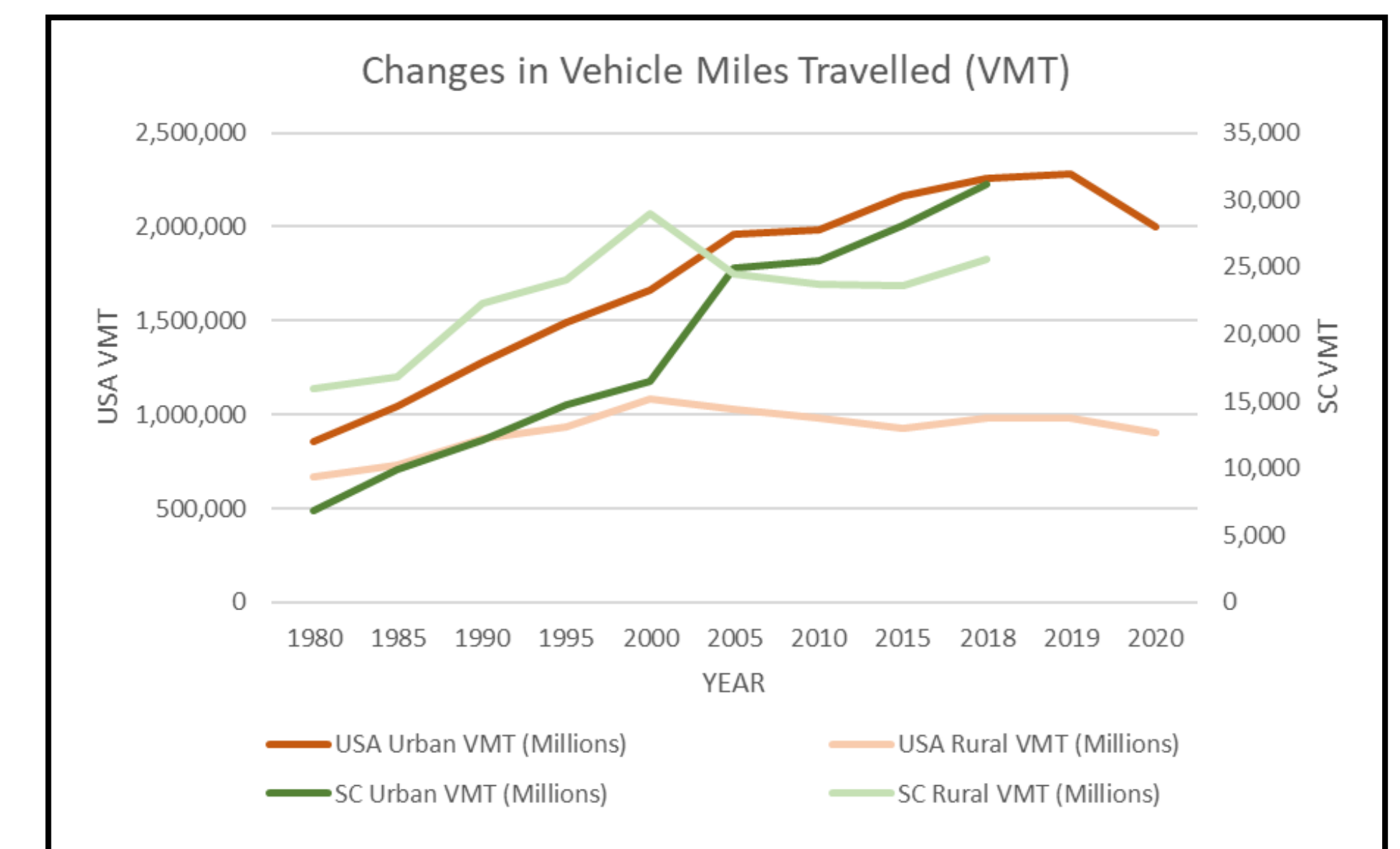
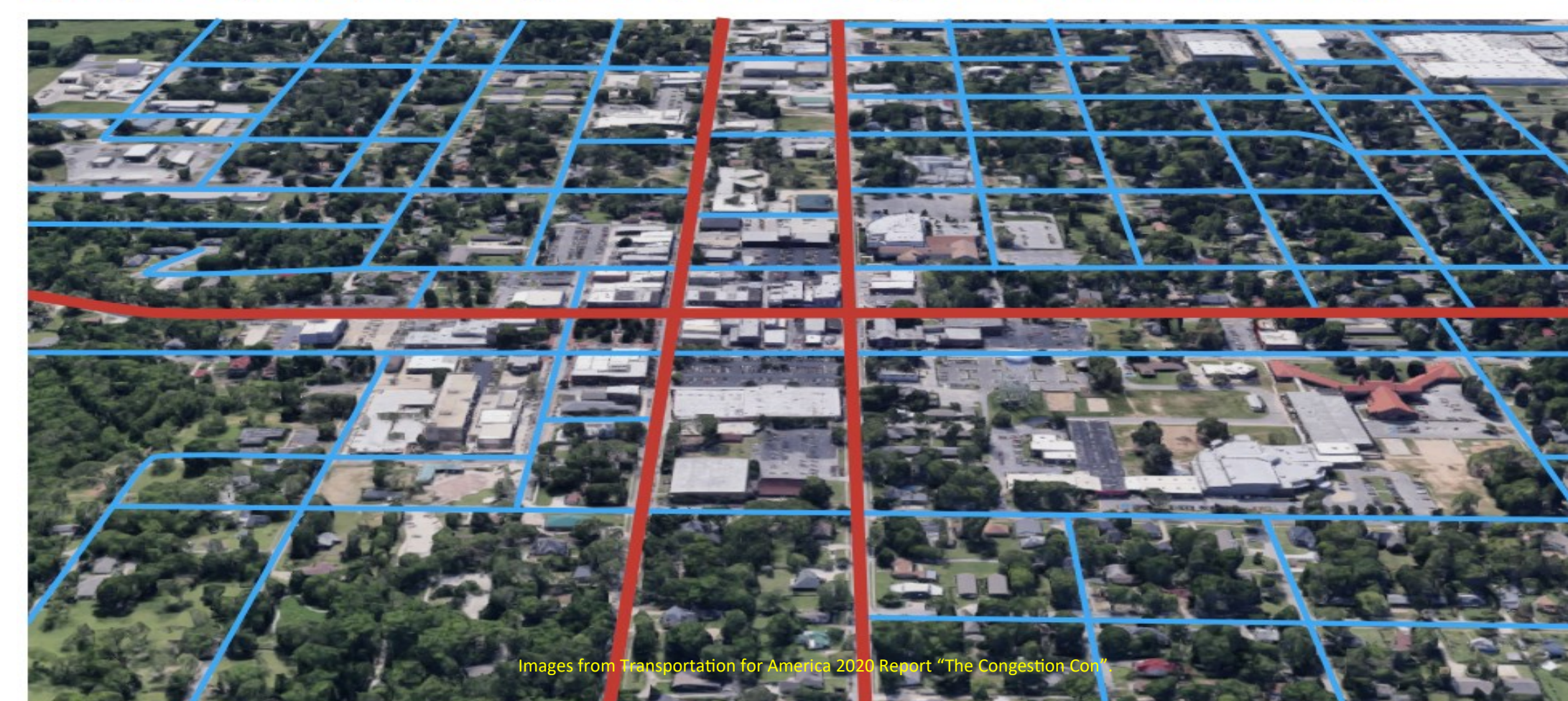
Sprawling, auto-dependent development increases the distance households must travel to reach their work, the store, school or out to dinner. Additionally, suburban sprawl is often characterized by disconnected culs-de-sac which increase travel distance and limit route options. Traffic is the result.

By building housing closer together, close to destinations, and with multiple routes, we reduce travel times and increase transportation options. Instead of driving to dinner or driving a child to school, you may choose to walk or bike. Routes are less crowded because there are multiple routes to each destination. When households choose these other transportation options, there are less cars in the streets and therefore less congestion.

Our current approach to land use and transportation in suburban areas is perfectly calibrated to produce ever-increasing congestion



But a mix of destinations throughout a connected street network manages congestion by dispersing trips, improving access, and allowing for shorter and fewer trips



Conclusion:

Sprawl increases traffic congestion while dense, mixed-use development creates relatively less.

OPEN SPACE

When urban areas expand, the open space resources at its periphery are lost. You can see in the image that the hypothetical sprawling boundaries would include farmland and forest land—land that helps define the current rural character of Fairfield County.

Low density areas can appear more green in person because they have more green lawns or trees. But viewed from a community-wide perspective, more trees and open space are preserved by building within the existing boundaries and more densely. In this way, new residents can be accommodated without losing the farmland and natural resources that the community loves.

1,600 Lots @ 0.1 Acre/unit

Building .1 Acre lots instead of 1 Acre lots conserves 90% of the land for other uses.

1,600 Lots @ 0.25 Acre/unit

Dense development allows the market to more efficiently satisfy the demand for housing leaving more land available for farming or conservation.

1,600 Lots @ 1.0 Acre/unit



Conclusion:

Density can preserve open space while sprawl requires its destruction.

FINANCE

On the right is a simplified diagram. Each green box represents a dwelling unit. The left and right sides are the same size, but the right side is 3 times as dense. By building densely the cost of infrastructure is dispersed among the households making it more sustainable to maintain in the long run. A similar effect occurs with services like fire, police, and EMS.

Taken individually, each larger lot is assessed greater valuable than a comparable house on a smaller lot. However for the County and tax purposes, small lots are more fiscally responsible because the assessed value per acre is higher. Therefore, a denser development pattern increases the total assessed valuation to pay for services.



Assessed values taken from actual properties within Clover of similar description. Additional value of ADU provided by FreddieMac. Infrastructure cost estimates are not intended to be accurate but somewhat reflective of actual costs. Roadway costs by Florida DOT. Water and Sewer costs by Rockville, MD. Numerous additional costs not included.

Cost per Foot Analysis

6" Water Main:	\$100/foot
8" Gravity Sewer:	\$50/foot
Roadway:	\$627/foot
Total Infrastructure Cost @ 200':	\$155,400
Low Density Cost per Dwelling:	\$38,850
Medium Density Cost per Dwelling:	\$12,950

Assessed Valuation

Low Density Total Assessed Value:	\$24,480
Medium Density Total Assessed Value:	\$52,080

Conclusion:

Sprawl costs each resident more for services and reduces the tax base.