

**Village of Loxahatchee
Incorporation Addendum to
Feasibility Study completed November 11, 2022**

Prepared by the
VoteLox Citizens Group
August, 2022

INTRODUCTION

The Village of Loxahatchee (“Loxahatchee”) is an unincorporated community that is well established and has been known as The Acreage since the 1980’s and Loxahatchee since the early 1900’s. It is located within the Indian Trail Improvement District, in central western Palm Beach County. The area is approximately 42.13 square miles of contiguous land. It is bordered by the JW Corbett Wildlife Management area and the City of Palm Beach Gardens on the North, the City of West Palm Beach and the City of Palm Beach Gardens on the North East, the Town of Loxahatchee Groves and the Village of Royal Palm Beach on the South East, the City of Wellington on the South and it surrounds the newly incorporated (2016) City of Westlake on three and one-half sides. The area to the West of Loxahatchee will remain unincorporated Palm Beach County and is primarily large tract agricultural properties which are part of the Everglades Agricultural Area (“EAA”).

The estimated 2022 population of Loxahatchee is 42,987, with an estimated 30,000 registered voters.

Loxahatchee is a designated equestrian community, zoned agricultural residential and boasts large spacious homes on properties no less than 1.15 acres and as large as 40 acres. The residents enjoy the unique characteristics and lifestyles in the community and wish to preserve these lifestyles and protect it from encroaching developments and governments including County government.

Loxahatchee has several commercial/retail hubs built or approved for development. They include the area at Seminole Pratt Whitney Road and Orange Blvd., Coconut and Northlake Blvd. and Seminole Pratt Whitney Road and Southern Blvd. There are also several opportunity locations identified by a study done with ITID and the Economic Development Opportunity grant. The area includes a Florida Power and Light solar energy farm as well as farmers markets, plant and tree nurseries, wildlife and animal rescues, sanctuaries, home businesses and services serving the local and greater Palm Beach County area. Loxahatchee has a vast majority of the necessary infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, fiber optics and parks) in place or available in the vicinity (reuse water and gas).

History of Efforts

There have been extensive meetings and community outreach regarding incorporation which began in 2021 wherein Indian Trail Improvement District created a committee of 16 community members called the Feasibility and Charter Review (FCR) Committee.

The following are the dates of the meetings held by the FCR Committee.

07/08/2021 – 6:30 PM
07/15/2021 – 6:30 PM
07/22/2021 – 6:30 PM
07/24/2021 – 9:00 AM
07/29/2021 – 6:30 PM
08/05/2021 – 6:30 PM
08/07/2021 – 10:30 AM
08/12/2021 – 6:30 PM
08/19/2021 – 6:30 PM
08/26/2021 – 6:30 PM
09/01/2021 – 6:30 PM

After September 1, 2021, the citizens group called VoteLox was created by us to move the incorporation effort forward without Indian Trail Improvement District. The following are the dates of meetings and community events with outreach by VoteLox :

10/06/2021 – VoteLox - Hamlin House - Community Meeting
10/28/2021 – VoteLox - Local Delegates Meeting
11/20/2021 – Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
12/02/2021 – VoteLox Town Hall Meeting – Old Wellington Mall
12/18/2021 - Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
01/08/2022 – VoteLox - Acreage Community Library – Community Meeting
01/15/2022 - Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
02/05/2022 – VoteLox community meeting at ITID Office
02/19/2022 - Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
03/19/2022 - Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
04/02/2022 – VoteLox - Hamlin House - Community Meeting
04/16/2022 - Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
05/19/2022 – VoteLox - Acreage Community Library – Community Meeting
05/21/2022 - Acreage Landowners Association – Rock Your Park Event - VoteLox Tent
07/02/2022 – VoteLox and Acreage Landowners - Freedom BBQ
08/09/2022 – VoteLox - ITID Office – Community Meeting

In addition to holding in-person meetings, VoteLox has also had informal zoom meetings with community members, created a website www.votelox.com and has maintained a social media presence in addition to a facebook page.

Since the submittal last year, we have reviewed the feasibility study and correspondence between us and the State regarding the State responses of the EDR and DOR. We have also reviewed correspondence and discussions with the legislators as well as community members regarding the proposed incorporation, the feasibility study and the charter. Last year we spent a significant amount of time, energy and money in this effort. We made significant changes during the process last year, at the request of the legislators and despite this effort and money spent, we were not afforded a favorable vote by the majority of senators of the Palm Beach County local delegation to move forward in the process. We have had significant interference in the process by Minto, Seminole Improvement District and even the new City of Westlake. We believe this to be unfair to addressing the desires and concerns of the taxpayers in our community. This process was very disappointing considering our community's desire to have the opportunity to have a referendum on this issue, once and for all. We are also not personally in a financial situation to continue to expend funds on a new feasibility study particularly when it was our understanding that the feasibility study was good for two years. Therefore, we have attempted to produce an update, a review and analysis based on the current data available to us, in a short time. It is important to point out that at this point in time, the current data available is already considered dated or is just projections or proposals until budgets are adopted.

The name and addresses of the three people submitting this proposal are:

Louis Colantuoni, Jr.
7849 Coconut Blvd.
West Palm Beach, FL 33412

Robert Morgan
13784 67th Street North
West Palm Beach, FL 33412

Elizabeth Accomando
6521 Carol Street
Loxahatchee, FL 33470

ANALYSIS

We have identified the current conditions in order for residents to make informed decisions.

Strengths and weaknesses that currently exist, internally and present.

- Loxahatchee is an inland community with an elevation of 16' with the majority of necessary infrastructure in place to support the municipality
- Loxahatchee has a strong ad valorem tax base
- Community leaders are knowledgeable and experienced in providing existing services such as roads, drainage, canal maintenance and parks and recreation.

- The community worked with the County to establish the Acreage Neighborhood Plan in the early 1990's
- The community has provided input during the Palm Beach County sector planning process and comprehensive plan
- There is support for a comprehensive look at incorporation by local residents
- The community is already served by Indian Trail Improvement District and many of the responsibilities as well as resources can be turned over to the municipality while Indian Trail Improvement District will remain an independent district until 2032 at which time it is proposed a referendum on making it a dependent district or dissolving it should occur. Therefore, it would not be a difficult transition nor require a large increase in cost or employees to provide a high quality of life or levels of service to protect the existing characteristics.
- There are no major unfunded liabilities with the area's infrastructure.

Opportunities and threats – external and future factors

- Loxahatchee will need to go through the State of Florida Comprehensive planning process required of cities. The new Village's planning staff with community input will prepare the new comprehensive plan that will be an opportunity to preserve and protect the character of the area but also appropriately plan for the Village.
- There is a lack of diversity in housing choices such as affordable housing in the area.
- There is a lack of an industrial area and limited appropriate locations
- The Village of Loxahatchee will have the opportunity to established working relationships with State and Federal agencies
- The Village plans to provide many law enforcement through an inter-governmental agreement with Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department and Fire Rescue MSTU, quality control and level of service could become a key issue to meet the demand of the community
- Limited opportunities for employment growth and development in future years
- As an inland community, the agricultural and equestrian community philosophy of preserving and protecting the rural character is inconsistent with the decisions of Palm Beach County in the past 5-10 years relating to land use regulations, development and code enforcement.
- There is a need for codes that are consistent with supporting and bolstering the agricultural and equestrian nature of the community
- Roads in the area are increasingly burdened with outside development thereby increasing the need and cost of maintenance or improvements
- Development of surrounding municipalities including the recently created municipality of the City of Westlake do not contribute to the cost of providing local services through ad valorem taxes
- Electing individuals that will honor the spirit and intent of the Charter when creating the Comprehensive Plan and zoning as well as codes consistent with the character and lifestyle of the community is critical to preserving and protecting the community

Below are amendments to Tables within the Feasibility Study dated 11-11-2021:

Amended Table 1, Page 5 of Feasibility Study dated 11-11-2021

Table 1: Population Calculations for Village of Loxahatchee (26,293.2 Acres)

Year	Source	Population	Density per Acre
2000	U.S. Census	29,950	1.11
2010	U.S. Census	39,553	1.47
2020	U.S. Census	42,223	1.59
2028	Estimate	45,427	1.72

Amended Table 2, Page 10 of Feasibility Study dated 11-11-2021

Table 2: Village of Loxahatchee Community Profile

	Village of Loxahatchee
Population Summary	
2010 Total Population (Census)	39,553
2020 Total Population (Census)	42,223
2023 Total Population (estimate)	43,084
2028 Total Population (estimate)	45,427
Household Summary	
2021 Families	12,814
2021 Average Family Size	3.41
2026 Families	14,023
2026 Average Family Size	3.42
2021-2026 Annual Rate	1.44%
Housing Unit Summary	
2021 Housing Units	15,724
Owner Occupied Housing Units	87.7%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,523
Median Household Income	
2021	\$92,144
2026	\$102,338
Median Home Value	
2021	\$350,484
2026	\$370,605
Per Capita Income	
2021	\$34,258
2026	\$39,157
Median Age	
2021	40.9
2026	41.0

Amendment to Table 4 of Feasibility Study dated 11-11-2021, Page 20

Table 3: Proposed Timeline for Budget Purposes¹

Date	FY 2023-2024 Budget Calendar
On or about November 7, 2023	Referendum
On or about December 31, 2023	Village of Loxahatchee Incorporation becomes final
On or about March 12, 2024	Election of Village Council
On or about December 31, 2023	Preliminary Tax Roll from Palm Beach County Property Tax Appraiser
On or about June 30, 2024	Projected Millage Rate for FY24 is submitted to Palm Beach County Property Tax Appraiser
On or about August 1, 2024	Proposed budget delivered to legislative body
On or about August 1, 2024	DR-420 submitted to Palm Beach County Property Tax Appraiser
September, 2024	First Public hearing to adopt millage rate and budget
September, 2024	Final Public hearing to adopt millage rate and budget
October 1, 2024	FY 2024-2025 Budget goes into effect
November 2024	Village of Loxahatchee begins to receive ad valorem tax revenue

¹ This timetable assumes that the Local Government Affairs Subcommittee reviews and the Senate approves the feasibility study and proposed charter in 2022.

Amendment to Feasibility Study dated 11-11-2021 – Page 25

The Village of Loxahatchee taxable value (non-school district and based on the 2022/23 preliminary taxable value provided by the County) is \$3,026,696,541.² Based on this valuation, the Village of Loxahatchee property tax revenue for fiscal year 2022-2023 per one mill levied is:

Taxable value	\$ 3,026,696,541
x the discount factor ³	0.95
Revised Taxable Rate	\$2,875,361,714
Millage	1
Estimated Property Tax per mill	\$ 2,875,362

Using the 2022 taxable value minus the 95% discount factor the following table shows the minimum projected revenue the Village of Loxahatchee could collect at different millage rates starting in FY 2024-2025.

Table 4: Estimated Property Tax Revenue Per Mill

Millage Rate	Estimated Revenue
1	\$2,875,362
2	\$5,750,724
3	\$8,626,086
4	\$11,501,448
5	\$14,376,810
6	\$17,252,172
7	\$20,127,534
8	\$23,002,896
9	\$25,878,258
10	\$28,753,620

² Please note that taxable value for the Village of Loxahatchee does not include property that can be assessed for taxing purposes, including taxable value of personal property for operating purposes, taxable value of centrally assessed property for operating purposes, and new construction. Moreover, the value is based on 2022 preliminary taxable values.

³ Historically, local governments in Florida have used a 95% discount factor to capture potential property tax appraisal appeals, discounts, delinquencies, and non-payments.

To provide more conservative estimates despite the Palm Beach County trend, a 4% annual growth rate is used for this study review (which includes the value of new construction).

Table 5: 5-Year Estimate of Property Tax Revenues

	Taxable Value (95% @ 4% Growth Rate)	Estimated Property Tax Revenues Per Mill	Property Tax Revenues - 3 Mills
FY 2022-2023 (Base Year)	\$2,875,361,714	\$2,875,362	\$8,626,086
FY 2023-2024	\$2,990,376,183	\$2,990,376	\$8,971,129
FY 2024-2025 (First Year)	\$3,109,991,230	\$3,109,991	\$9,329,974
FY 2025-2026	\$3,234,390,879	\$3,234,391	\$9,703,173
FY 2026-2027	\$3,363,766,514	\$3,363,767	\$10,091,300
FY 2027-2028	\$3,498,317,175	\$3,498,317	\$10,494,952
FY 2028-2029	\$3,638,249,862	\$3,638,250	\$10,914,750