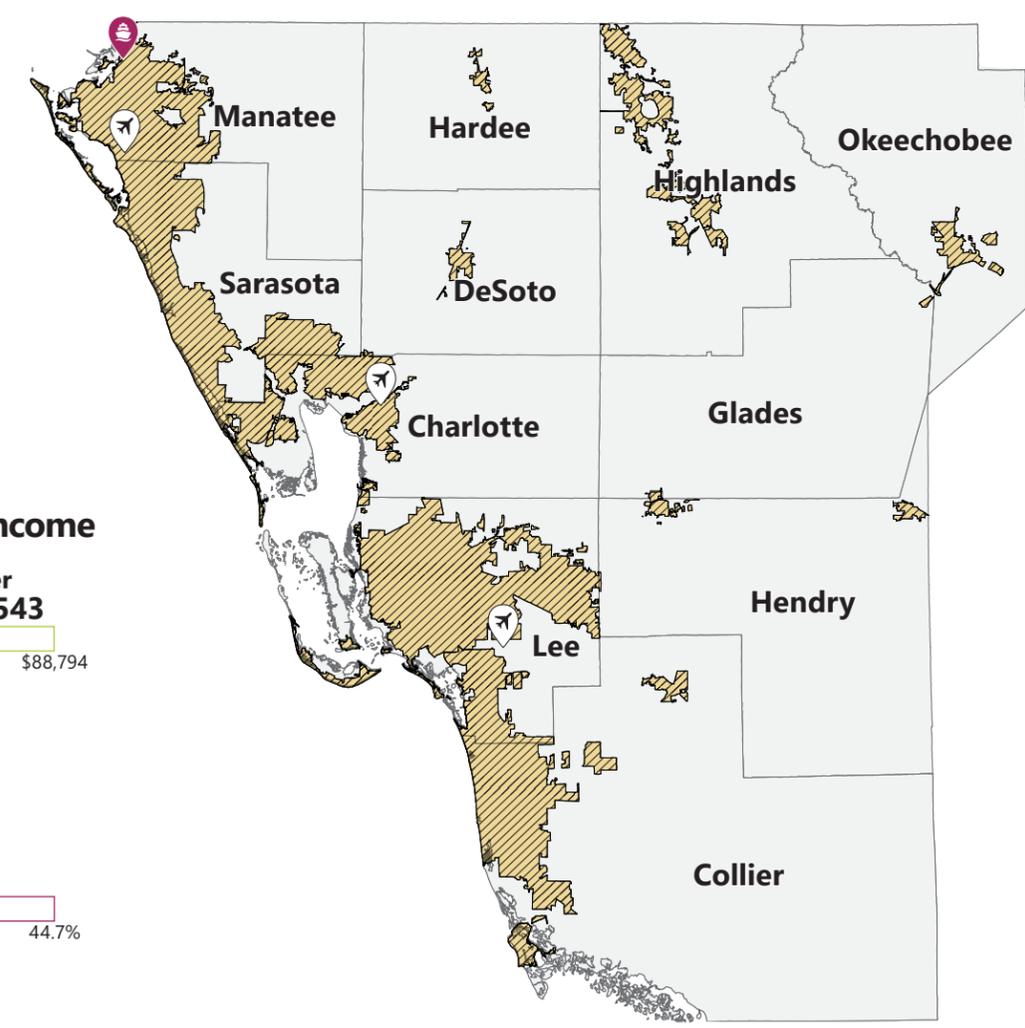
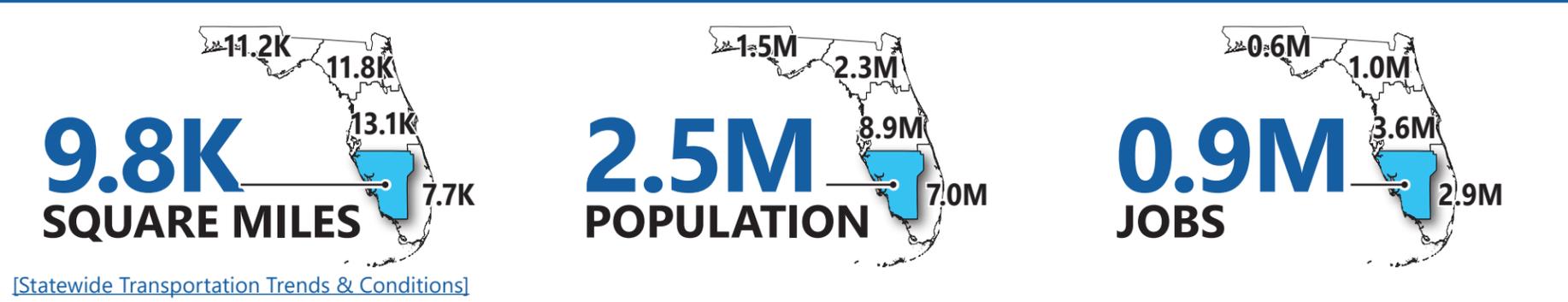




SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS & CONDITIONS

Florida's Southwest communities are comprised of two geographic areas. The first encompasses its coastal and largely urbanized counties, which host 90 percent of the region's population and key industries (retail, hospitality, and health services). The second area is inland and also referred to as "the Heartland." It makes up 10 percent of the region's population and consists of more rural counties dominated by agriculture and mining economies, although development pressures are beginning to push suburbanization inland. Over the past decades, the Southwest has experienced rapid growth in urban areas, while some rural counties' populations have declined. The area is increasingly aging, with a concentration of retirees settling inland and seasonal residents establishing second homes along the coast. Southwest communities continue to evolve, with a focus on increasing access to job opportunities and safe mobility for all users through future investments in roadways, transit, and technology.

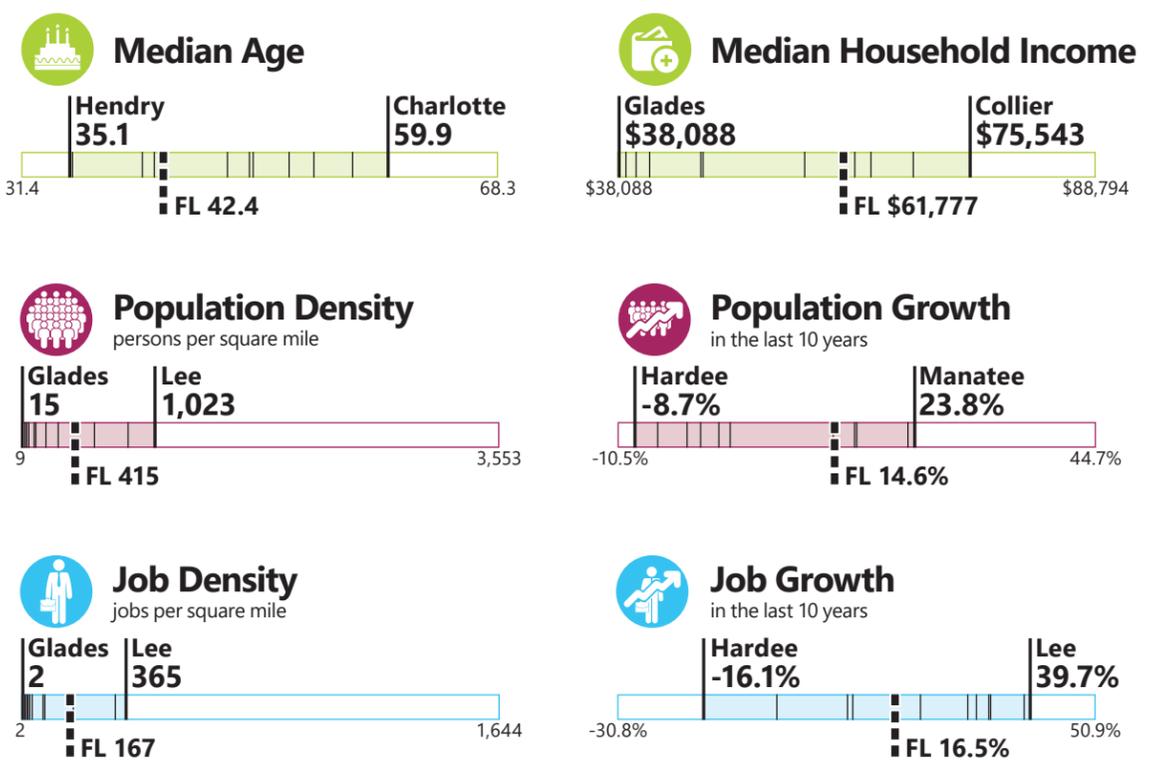


TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM HIGHLIGHTS

- 17,231** Public Road Miles
- 279** Rail Mainline Miles
- 199** Active SUN Trail Miles
- 1,925** Highway Bridges
- 4** Transit Systems
- 3** Commercial Airports
- 1** Seaport

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Reference scale bars reflect the range of values for each demographic characteristic across the state. Lines within shaded areas reflect values for Southwest communities.



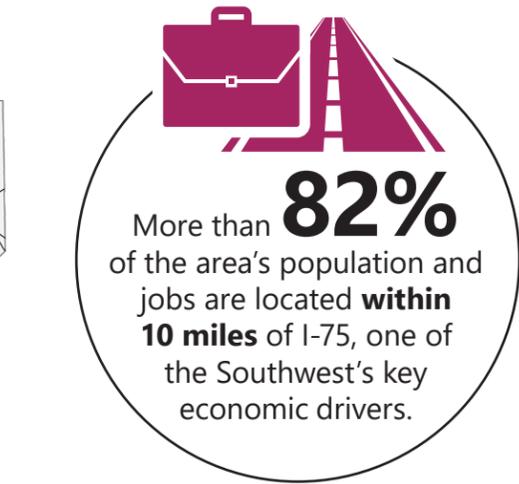
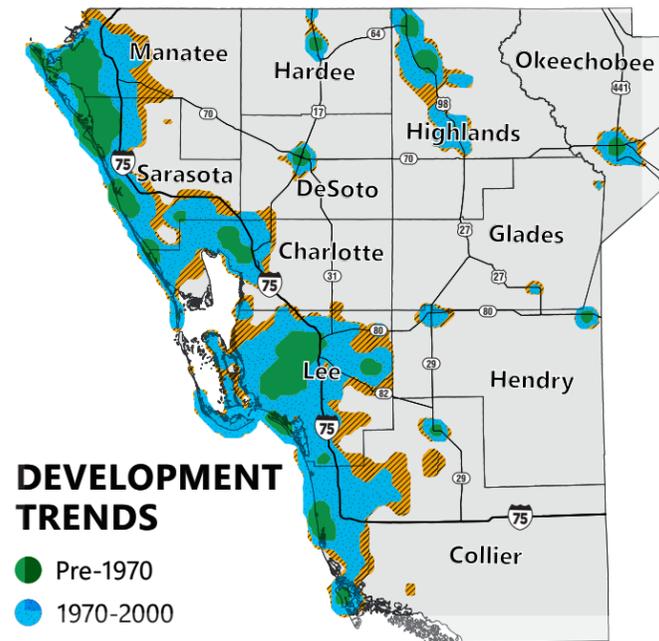
Urban Area Seaport
 Airport County Boundary

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

19% of the Southwest inland, almost 1 million acres, is undeveloped protected land

Before 1970, the Southwest communities developed predominantly with **compact development patterns in coastal urban centers and rural towns** characterized by smaller block sizes and connected street networks. In the last five decades, development has been more **suburban, with low-density** and large-scale residential development slowly moving inland.

The area's recent developments have also clustered along the I-75 and U.S. 41 corridors, leveraging the high-speed and intercity connections provided by these facilities. Growth in the coastal areas continues at unprecedented rates while remaining relatively stagnant inland, further accentuating the distinctions between the two geographic areas.



Suburban Development (Manatee County, FL)



GROWING & AGING COMMUNITIES

34% of the 2050 population will be 65 years old or older

In the next 30 years, the Southwest communities will grow, rapidly adding 1 million residents and almost half a million jobs, with an increasing prevalence of aging populations and new suburban residential developments. Transportation infrastructure investments will need to address the communities' vulnerable and aging populations, as well as providing residents multimodal access to health care and social services.



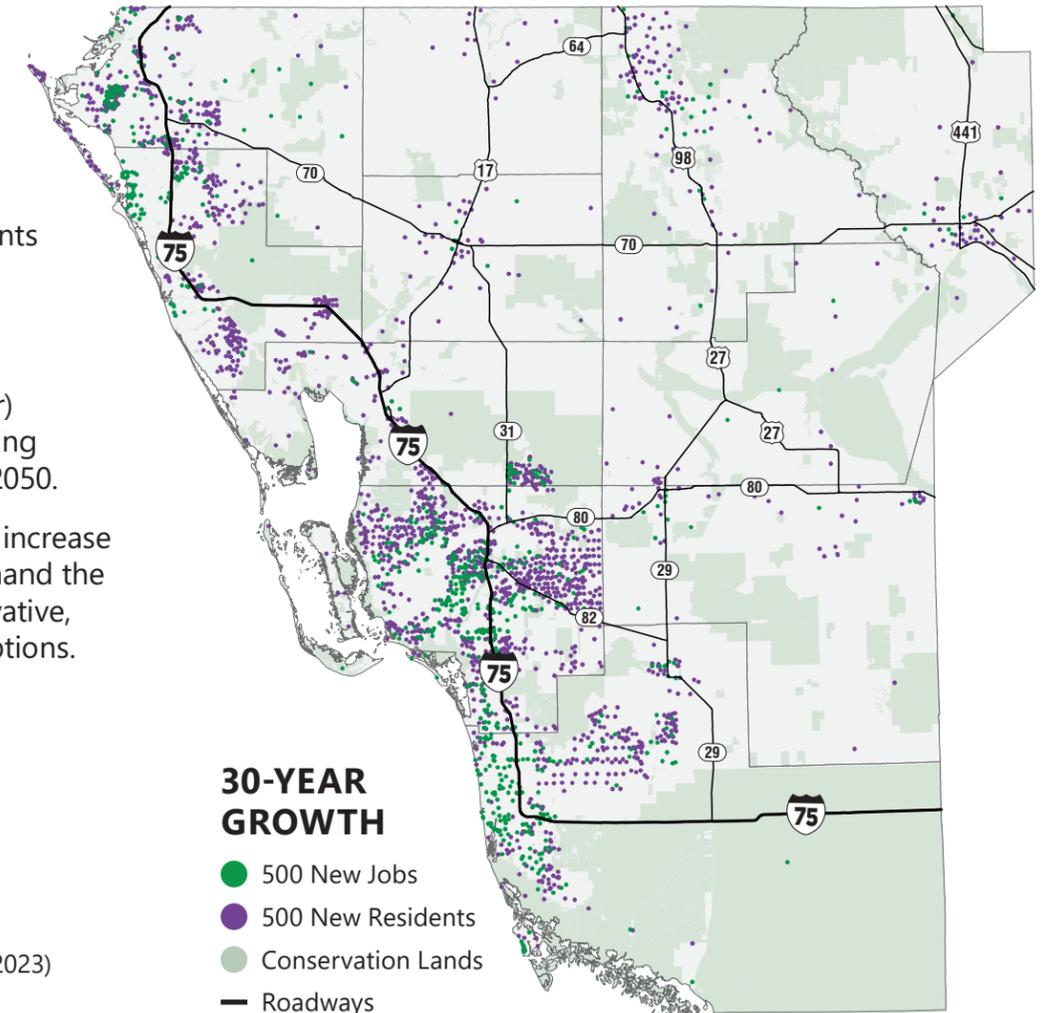
Fast-Paced Growth & Development: Much of the population and employment growth will occur along and east of I-75, converting more rural agricultural lands to suburban residential developments and industrial uses, with Lee County leading the growth.



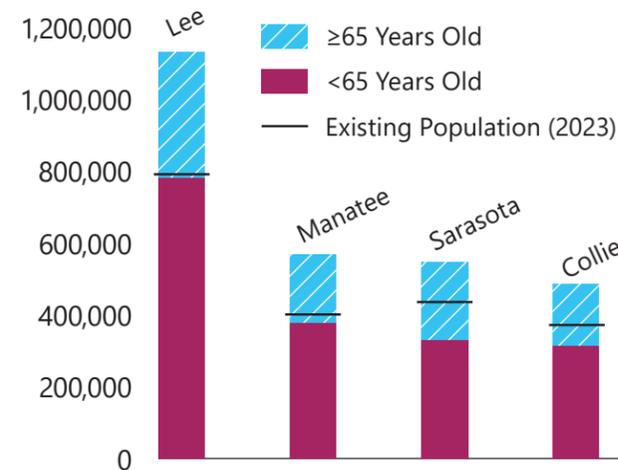
Aging Communities: Aging residents (65 years old and older) will outpace the growth of working age residents by 59 percent by 2050.



Aging-Friendly Solutions: This increase in the aging population will demand the expansion of safe, reliable, innovative, and accessible transportation options.



2050 POPULATION FORECAST



INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS & RAPID DISASTER RESPONSE

6 diverging diamond interchanges in Southwest communities



LEADING THE STATE IN PIONEERING SOLUTIONS



Florida's first **diverging diamond interchange** was constructed at University Parkway at I-75 in Sarasota/Manatee County. It efficiently moves more than 80,000 vehicles per day and was able to reduce intersection delays by 50 percent. The success of this project led to five more interchanges like it in Southwest Florida and more than 50 throughout the state.



SeaPort Manatee is the closest U.S. deepwater seaport to the Panama Canal, serving bulk, breakbulk, container, heavy-lift, project and general cargo customers. The port generates more than \$5.1 billion in annual economic impact and supports more than 37,000 jobs. More than 8 million Florida residents live within a two-hour drive to it. SeaPort Manatee offers easy access to I-75 and I-275, and it also has a shortline railroad directly connecting to the CSX railroad mainline.



HURRICANE & DISASTER RESPONSIVENESS



After Hurricane Ian washed away areas along the three-mile Sanibel Causeway in 2022, **emergency repairs were completed in just 15 days** to reconnect the barrier islands to the mainland. FDOT, along with partners at the Florida Highway Patrol, Lee County, and Florida Department of Emergency Management, made use of strategic and innovative techniques to rebuild the causeway and provide immediate access to over 6,000 residents.

The Southwest communities continue to focus on **addressing vulnerability to flooding** induced by extreme weather and rising sea levels.

- **Collier County** worked with the Army Corps of Engineers to identify coastal storm risk management solutions, including beach berm and dune nourishments, surge barriers, and floodproofing, among other measures.
- **Three cities (Everglades, La Belle, Moore Haven) and five counties (Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Highlands)** partnered to secure \$1.6 million in planning grants to develop or update comprehensive vulnerability assessments for their communities.

ADDRESSING ROADWAY SAFETY

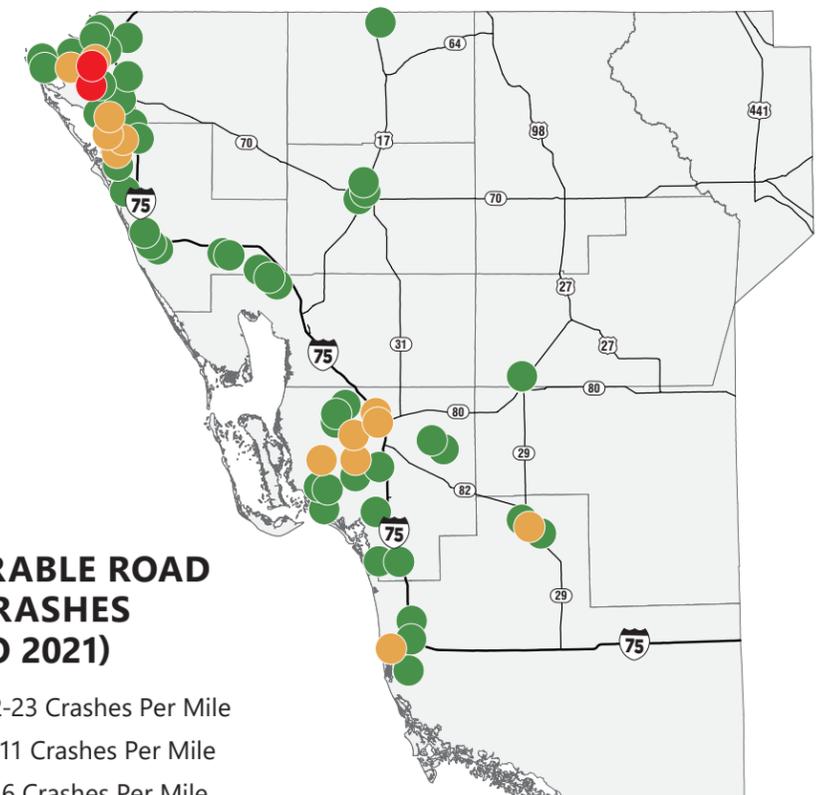
17%

5-year increase in pedestrian & bicycle fatal & serious injury crashes

The Southwest communities aging demographic and high tourist activity have continued to heighten the challenges on their roadways. FDOT identified key roadway segments and areas that have the most fatal and serious injury crashes for those walking and bicycling. Together with regional partners, the department will prioritize improvements along these corridors to address safety challenges for the region's most vulnerable roadway users (VRU).

As part of the **VRU Safety Assessment**, FDOT identified some initial strategies along roadway segments with Tier 1 crash frequency:

- Add more **safe and accessible pedestrian crossings**.
- **Manage vehicular speeds** through roadway design.
- Launch pedestrian **safety education and awareness programs**.
- Utilize technology to **improve multimodal safety** (e.g., use of smart signals, automated pedestrian detection, etc.).



VULNERABLE ROAD USER CRASHES (2017 TO 2021)

- Tier 1: 12-23 Crashes Per Mile
- Tier 2: 7-11 Crashes Per Mile
- Tier 3: 3-6 Crashes Per Mile

THE COAST CONTINUES TO BE THE ATTRACTION

4% projected increase in tourism activity by 2035

To meet the transportation needs of the growing number of visitors and residents, the area will be investing heavily on:

- More transit connections**, such as between Southwest Florida International Airport and Downtown Fort Myers, as well as Bus Rapid Transit to connect to the beaches.
- Improvements to multimodal access and safety**, such as the reFRESH Estero Boulevard project which caters to the influx of tourists to Fort Myers Beach.
- Continuous rebuilding of the economic engine of the area**, including FDOT's \$285 million investment in repairing and upgrading the Sanibel Causeway impacted by Hurricane Ian.



INVESTING IN THE HEARTLAND

550,000 new residents
200,000 new homes
by 2060

Made up of inland, non-metropolitan counties, the Heartland will see significant changes from the targeted transportation investments, including:

- Connecting rural, underserved homes and businesses** through a \$23 million statewide grant for Southwest Florida to install high-speed fiber optic internet. Hardee County will receive the largest grant of \$7 million, and Arcadia in DeSoto County receiving \$4.9 million.
- Constructing a new, four-lane, \$85 million State Road 29** around downtown Immokalee as part of the **Moving Florida Forward Initiative**. This roadway will ease congestion, improve regional connectivity, and bring economic development.

CONNECTING BARRIER ISLANDS & INLAND COMMUNITIES

Stronger connections between the barrier islands and the inland communities will address travel demand and congestion while linking residents to jobs. These connections are critical to the Southwest communities' economic competitiveness. These multimodal strategies include:

- Multimodal mobility and safety** improvements (such as new bridges, counterflow options on existing bridges, and improved wayfinding) were recommended in FDOT's transportation management plan for the Sarasota/Manatee Barrier Islands.
- Transit solutions** will need to be part of the toolbox to address high travel demand from tourists and service industry workers traveling within, to, and from the barrier islands.



DECREASED AGRICULTURAL LAND

Agricultural land is diminishing in Southwest Florida, notably in Lee, Collier, and Charlotte Counties, due to economic trends, an influx of residents, diseases affecting crops, and the relaxation of housing density standards. The agricultural areas have been converted to housing eastward into the Heartland, as exemplified by residential developments near Gladiolus Drive and Corkscrew Road in Lee County. While the agriculture industry's footprint has reduced, it remains significant, requiring adaptation in practice and connectivity for transport.



The Southwest communities constitute 14% of Florida's total land area yet **contribute**

26%
of the state's agricultural product value.

