In the path of growth, the East Narcoossee community made a request; let’s have a discussion about growth and how we can make it work for us. In June 2009, Osceola County and AECOM Design + Planning conducted a ground-breaking planning process for the East Narcoossee community. Instead of a formal planning process resulting in an adopted plan, the process was simply to have conversations about our own community’s growth and what is happening around us. Organized by local activists, the County and the consultant team, notification included direct mailings phone calls to neighbors. The three-day workshop resembled more of a local fair, held at the Narcoossee Community Center with a series of tents set up providing information and activities.

The three days were spent listening, discussing ideas and overall vision and drawing illustrative concepts for the East Narcoossee community. Over 125 participants visited the workshop, including County Commissioner Fred Hawkins, Jr. This document is a summary of the workshop; it includes an illustrative plan that will be considered as the starting point for a Conceptual Master Plan and will inform staff in reviewing large-scale developments within and adjacent to the area.

Narcoossee is an Indian Creek word meaning “Little Bear”.

A community discussion about growth
East Narcoossee Community Visioning Event

What:
Explore alternatives for the future of the East Narcoossee Community

When:
June 12, 13, 14

Where:
Narcoossee Community Center
5354 Rambling Rd.
St. Cloud, FL 34771
This summary will not be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners as a policy document or as part of the Osceola County Comprehensive Plan 2025.

While there is a great sense of community pride in the East Narcoossee area, never before have landowners and residents had the chance to collectively put forth their vision for what the community may become in the future. This workshop facilitated that discussion and identified ways that the area can proactively plan for growth while preserving the community’s heritage and unique qualities.
This is time to enjoy and celebrate the community. It is the beginning of a larger dialogue. The goals of this three day workshop are: values, vision, goals, opportunities to accomplish the vision, how to make growth work for the area, how to continue to build communities rather than build subdivisions, how to translate general comp plan guidance into a community plan. This may sound like it supports growth but we are all going to work together and listen to each other. The overall plan will become reference of how your community envisions the future.

We want to build on common values. Respect for private property and community, respect for neighborhoods, compatibility with development, preservation of rural atmosphere even with new growth. We are asking you to think big and be visionaries this weekend. Think of a new downtown, a high tech industry and community center.

The consultants, staff, and I are here for you. We are taking time to be here to move this along. I don’t know another area in Osceola County like the Narcoossee community. I know most of you and I am glad to deal with you. This is my community as well, I live in the area.

We are going to be proactive, not reactive. This is not about the past, it is about the future. Given the growth that is happening within and outside the study area, how can we make this work? We must understand that there are some givens that we must work with.

District 5, County Commissioner Fred Hawkins, Jr.
Community Festival

Welcome  Existing Conditions  Opportunities
Community Festival

Opportunities
Visual Preference
Values

a community discussion about growth
**Workshop Goals**

Workshop goals were developed to give guidance on the outcome of the workshop, and included:

- Establishing Values, Vision & Goal Statements
- Identifying Opportunities to Accomplish this Vision
- Discussing How to Make Growth Work for the Area
- Envisioning How to Continue to Build a Community
- Translating the Comprehensive Plan into Ideas of How the Community Should Grow

It was described to participants that the workshop results will become a reference for how the community envisions the future and how this area relates to adjacent areas. The plan should build on the community’s common values while acknowledging the past, present and future. It was the beginning of a continuing conversation which will guide our community’s future growth.

Some points of consideration were also made to help guide the residents through the workshop. These included:

- Consultants and staff were present for residents
- The workshop was less about the past, and more about the future
- Focused on being proactive, not reactive
- There were some ‘givens’ that we must work within
- We must show respect for private property, present and future neighbors and the community as a whole
What We Heard

Fear of Internal & External Growth

Preservation of the Rural Character

Ability to Develop Property

Character of Development

Need for Jobs

Road Expansions

Lack of Amenities & Conveniences

Preservation of Natural Environment
Open & Maintain Water Slough from Deseret Ranch

Improve Intersection

Retain 5-Acre Lots

No Big Box Retail

Include Agricultural Lands on East and West Sides of Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park

Include Strong Buffer from the 417 Extension
Request Sewer & Water Connections

Improve Zuni to Handle Capacity

Pave Jones, Zuni & Franklin Roads

Do not extend Goat Farm Road

Paths

Intersection at Narcoossee & Underwood

Retain Reduced Traffic Flow on Cyrils Drive
The East Narcoossee community is located in the north-central section of Osceola County abutting the Osceola/Orange County line. The general study area boundary is Highway 15 (Narcoossee Road) to the west, Outback Road and Mixed Use District 8 to the east, Cyrils Drive to the north, and Jones Road and Mixed Use District 7 to the south. The 4,740-acre study area is mostly comprised of low density residential development. The area includes 1,348 lots with an average size of three and one-half acres.

Larger parcels are used for agriculture, including horse farms, citrus, and livestock. Although there are a number of large parcels, a great number of them are smaller than a quarter acre. Additionally, there are environmental preservation lands adjacent to the area, and large sections of undeveloped, vacant land.

Residents commonly work outside the area. Top jobs are in professional positions and sales. Most local jobs are centered in education, health and social services sectors. To commute to work, the car is the primary mode of travel.
97% of the County’s 235,000 residents live in the northwestern quadrant, leaving the rest of the County mostly rural.

In the next 15 years, the areas surrounding Lake Tohopekaliga (and East Lake Tohopekaliga) are expected to capture over 20% of the projected growth of 300,000 additional residents.

The East Narcoossee area is positioned in the path of growth.

Approximately 30% of the homes in the East Narcoossee area have been built in the last decade (see Pattern of Growth map).

Improvements are already in progress for Narcoossee Road that connect to other emerging growth areas such as Medical City, Lake Nona, and the Orlando International Airport (OIA).
Settled before its more well-known neighbors of Kissimmee and St. Cloud, the East Narcoossee community continues to experience residential growth. Even before ranching and agriculture took root, the area was planned to become a major shipping port and commerce center off of East Lake Tohopekaliga (Toho). While that plan ultimately took a different route, the community took on a unique identity that carries forward.

It is clear that the East Narcoossee community and the region is not standing still. The region has shown impressive economic and housing statistics for the last several decades, positioning it as one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the country. Even despite the economic downturn, the Orlando area is thought to have a strong economic foundation that will continue to attract new businesses and residents at a steady rate into the future. Osceola County is situated amid numerous economic centers, including Tampa, Disney, Orlando, the Orlando International Airport, Space Coast, Melbourne and Viera. Growth is simultaneously coming toward Osceola from the west (from Tampa and Disney), from the north (from Orlando and the airport), and from the east (from Brevard County). As east-central Florida develops into an emerging “super region”, Osceola is situated in the middle of that region.

The community’s oldest church, St. Luke’s Baptist Church, dates to 1888. Most people work outside the area in management and professional jobs. Jobs locally are transitioning from agricultural to education, services and medical sectors.
The citrus industry has always been a staple for the area. As far back as the turn of the century “Narcoossee oranges” were delivered throughout the world.
Development 1989 - 1998
Development 1999 - 2008

N I T Y  G R O W T H  O V E R  T I M E
which is the real narcoossee?
is there room for all of us?
In 2006, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) published a Vision and Growth Strategy for Osceola County. This report emphasizes the importance of Osceola County, the East Lake Toho and Lake Toho areas in particular, in ensuring that new growth is economically and environmentally beneficial to the region. Osceola County is positioned squarely in the region’s path of growth, and this area could capture as much as 20% of the County’s projected 2025 population of 525,000. Already, 97% of the County’s 235,000 residents live in this northwestern area, leaving the rest of the County predominantly rural. Furthermore, considering the significant regional investment in commercial projects such as Innovation Way and the vacancy rates in other established areas of the County, the ULI Report suggests: “The decision to focus East Lake Toho on residential uses is supported by the market. Nevertheless, some portion of the study area should be reserved for future business and research growth. That area should be small and located with easy access to the transportation network.”

In 2007, the Osceola County Comprehensive Plan 2025 was adopted, mirroring many of the same visionary goals.
“Many communities have taken the position that they will remain rural without accommodating growth. That error leads to sprawl and sometimes a complete loss of community character. Failure to plan for growth effectively leads to random, sprawling patterns of development. Community character is sacrificed, and opportunities to shape a more vibrant future are forever lost.”

- Urban Land Institute

that were included in the ULI findings. Growth in the County must be deliberate and well planned in order to be both desirable and prosperous. Long-term planning is centered on smart growth principles to ensure that quality of life issues are addressed in ultimate development plans, instead of planning for short-term gains. The Comprehensive Plan provides the policy framework to accomplish this vision, to maintain the area’s high quality of life, and to promote a sustainable environment and economy into the future.

Specific to the East Narcoossee community, the Comprehensive Plan revised the allowable densities from three to five dwelling units per acre. The premise for this increase is that future development can best achieve sustainability through a finer-grain, higher density development pattern. The Comprehensive
Plan particularly addresses potential growth areas surrounding the urban core of Kissimmee and St. Cloud through its nine Mixed Use Planning Districts that comprise the Urban Expansion Area (UEA) within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) of the County. These Districts will ultimately accommodate most of the County’s future development, and while the East Narcoossee community is not contained within a Mixed Use District, it is adjacent to Districts 7 and 8, which are currently being planned through the Northeast District Conceptual Master Plan, and the proposed Center Lake Development of Regional Impact (DRI). Other nearby plans include Districts 1 and 2 of the East Lake Toho Conceptual Master Plan, and Districts 3, 4 and a portion of 5 within the South Lake Toho Conceptual Master Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan states that each Mixed Use District Conceptual Master Plan “explore a range of build-out opportunities and their relationship to the size and form of future centers, the layout and inter-connectedness of future transportation networks, and the spatial arrangement of the mix of uses with the intent of maximizing internal trip capture (Future Land Use Element, Policy 1.1.10).” The Comprehensive Plan relies on strategic growth within its Mixed Use Districts to greatly reduce or eliminate the urbanization of much of the County’s important rural areas.

Given its proximity to these three Conceptual Master Plans, concepts for the East Narcoossee community will benefit from considering components such as mobility, environmental management and employment as part of the greater planning area. Ranching and agricultural lands are also important to Osceola County’s economy and heritage, and the Comprehensive Plan’s approach to capturing the majority of growth near existing urbanized areas allows these uses to continue. The ULI report recognizes that there is a balancing act with justifying growth in certain areas in order to be most effective in preserving a greater part of the whole.
Osceola County’s new model for growth may enable the East Narcoossee community residents to achieve their goals for the future, in ways that traditional suburban growth would not. The following principles of smart growth were introduced during the workshop to begin evaluating how they may influence the East Narcoossee community.

Smart growth communities are those communities that balance social, environmental and economic sustainability to form enduring places for people to live and thrive. However, planning for smart growth in Florida is not without challenges - achieving a well-balanced demographic profile and diverse economic base is difficult with tourism, second home owners and retirees making up such a large share of the state’s economic and social foundation. It is the new communities and redevelopment areas, such as those that will take shape in Osceola County’s Mixed Use Districts, that will most effectively promote “self-reliant individuals, healthy families, competitive enterprises and strong institutions, coexisting in a safe and sustainable natural environment (ULI)”.

Principles of sustainability are intrinsic to smart growth communities, and density provides the foundation to achieve those principles. A sustainable land use pattern is difficult to attain at typical suburban densities which encourages residents to rely almost entirely on automobiles and traveling outside of their neighborhood for work, entertainment and social activities. Considering alternative land use forms from just typical suburbs can support transit and increase walkability. It can support smaller neighborhood-serving retail and employment areas. New nodes of activity can be served by transit, reinforcing the community’s ability to rely less on cars and focus their daily activities within their immediate neighborhood.
Economic Development

Statistics indicate that a large percentage of Osceola County residents commute to Orange County for employment. While this is understandable with Disney World, Universal Studios and downtown Orlando currently providing the region’s economic foundation, future growth will be instrumental in attracting new industries to diversify that economic base and allow more people to live and work within their own communities. This can have far-reaching effects on the longevity and vitality of a place.

The Comprehensive Plan insists that new residential areas be tempered with the right mix of employment and commercial areas in order to capture a portion of the workforce internal to this community. Employment centers must be served by transit, which increases sustainability of the area and quality of life for residents. Osceola County’s commitment to creating smart growth communities will solidify the long-term economic sustainability of the East Lake Toho area.

Community Connectivity

Transit corridors are the backbone of great communities, linking neighborhoods together with regional destinations. The County’s commitment to a multimodal approach to transportation planning is evident in the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation Policy 1.3.2 states, “The County shall incorporate regulations into the Land Development Code to increase public access to transit, and facilitate bicycle and pedestrian travel, by requiring a multimodal approach to transportation planning”.

95 percent of residents take their car to work. Their average commute time is 30 minutes.
Environmental Sustainability Amenities

The East Narcoossee community is home to a wealth of important natural resources. Planning for environmental sustainability at this scale means both preserving resources that are essential to ecosystem functionality and integrating and conserving natural resources through ‘green’ design principles for the built environment. Decisions made today about transit connectivity, walkable streets, stormwater design and lot size will have a profound impact on the community’s consumption of energy, water and overall impact on its surroundings.

Social Fabric

Central Florida has many examples of great communities with well-balanced housing mixes, abundant amenities such as parks and shopping districts and civic facilities that meet the needs of residents. However, the region has seen its rapid growth lead to areas of sprawling low density neighborhoods, unappealing and often vacant commercial development and poorly functioning transportation networks. The Comprehensive Plan’s new model for growth recognizes and balances each of the community elements essential to creating appealing places to live, work and visit.

The Comprehensive Plan includes many policies that highlight the importance of community amenities and public facilities in building strong social fabric in new development.
Over the three days, the East Narcoossee community discussed these growth pressures that the area is facing, and took the opportunity to provide feedback on their Values through electronic polling. Issues and Opportunities were addressed through physically locating these options on a large aerial map of the area, working hand-in-hand with illustrators to define specific elements of these opportunities, and identifying images that demonstrate the type of character that they would like to see. The resulting vision, values and plan frameworks are illustrated on the following pages, and will eventually serve as a starting point in developing a Conceptual Master Plan for the community.

The illustrative plan framework works with the crafted vision, essentially developing a physical embodiment of the values and opportunities identified by the community. The environmental framework includes the Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park buffering and preservation of existing wildlife corridors and habitat areas. The transportation framework builds upon regional connectivity, dedicated transit, and enhanced local street connections with numerous multipurpose and equestrian trail connections throughout the community. A hierarchy of centers and neighborhoods includes a centralized Narcoossee Village Center, with two new Community Centers along Narcoossee Road at Thompkins Road and Cyrils Drive. Existing and future neighborhoods transition in density from Rural and Ranching properties, to Conservation Neighborhoods, to Traditional Mixed-Use Neighborhoods.
Vision

“A country style, cohesive community within an urbanizing area and built on rural amenities and character. A community that looks forward, providing higher wage jobs, interesting neighborhoods and amenities, while protecting its rich heritage.

Our community is based on respect for our property, neighbors, and community. In the path of growth, we will embrace change by proactively planning and celebrating our rural character.”
A country style, cohesive community within an urbanizing area and built on rural amenities and heritage. A community that looks forward, providing higher wage jobs, interesting neighborhoods and amenities, while protecting its rich heritage.

Our community is based on respect for our property, neighbors, and community. In the path of growth, we will change by proactively planning and celebrating our rural character.”
Residents’ Discussions on Growth

the challenges:
“Growth will come!”

• It is as much “our” growth as it is from the outside
• Can we have growth and still preserve what we love?
• Can we let current patterns continue and still have it all (low taxes, traffic, services)?
• It is not growth, it’s the pace of it

the solutions:
“Yes, we can make growth work for us!”

• If we don’t plan for it, we will lose!
• Doing nothing may not be the answer
• Not stopping growth, but having a “say” in growth
• Growth, while preserving what we love
• Growth will occur, but we can plan for it
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Preference</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Parks, Recreation &amp; Trails</th>
<th>Separators</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
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[Image 670x666 to 788x783]

[Image 538x666 to 656x783]
What is our community’s greatest asset?

- Country Living
- Large Lots
- Agriculture
- Low Crime
- Schools
- Dark Night Skies
- Sense of Community

What is our community’s biggest challenge?

- Lack of Jobs
- Highway Safety
- Housing Maintenance & Quality
- Development outside the Community
- Development within the Community
- Lack of Amenities

What are the best techniques to maintain our rural character?

- Rural Design Standards
- Dark Sky Policies
- Rural Road Design & Character
- Equestrian Trails & Amenities
- Small Town Heart
- Leave the Area Alone

How should growth occur in our community?

- Continuation of Rural Development
- Clustered Development in Key Areas
- Residential Subdivisions
- Mixed Use Neighborhoods with Amenities & Retail
- New Office & Industrial Campuses

Values

<table>
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<th>Values</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>75%</th>
<th>100%</th>
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<td>Leave the Area Alone</td>
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Community Values Polling

- Country Living
- Large Lots
- Agriculture
- Low Crime
- Schools
- Dark Skies
- Sense of Community

• Jobs Over Housing
• Natural Resources and an Environmental Balance
• Our own Self-Sustaining Community
• A Place to Retire and for our Kids to Live

How should we deal with the interface of urban and rural areas?

How do we create better development?

What is our preference for future housing?

What additional amenities would we like?

What are the greatest economic needs?
### Would you expect to retire in the Study Area?

- **Yes**
- **No**

### How do we improve compatibility with development occurring in the Study Area?

- Right-to-Farm Disclosures
- Landscaping
- Separator Zones of Walls/Berms
- Density Transitions
- Good Design

### What transportation enhancements would you like?

- Traffic Calming/Safety Improvements
- New Roads & Road Expansions
- Transit
- Sidewalks
- Equestrian Trails

### Are you a resident in the Study Area?

- **Yes**
- **No**

### Values

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<th><strong>Pedestrian &amp; Bike Trails</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Sidewalks</strong></td>
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<td>Do you have a business in the Study Area?</td>
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<td>What neighborhood amenities are most needed?</td>
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<td>Would you expect your children to live here when they grow up?</td>
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<td>Do you feel as if you are in the current path of growth?</td>
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<td>What type of trails would be best for the community?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Retail Areas
- Parks
- Trails
- Recreation Centers
- Sidewalks
- Schools
- Other
- Pedestrian
- Bicycle
- Equestrian
- Electric Vehicles
- Multi-Use
Opportunities
Settling
Amenities
Economic Development
Neighborhoods
Natural Resources
Character
Transportation
Include Beach Access
High School & Park
Public Boat Ramps/ Marina
Community Gathering Areas
Rural, Equestrian
Buffer Split Oak Forest
Keep Rural Road Cross Sections
Community Gathering Areas
Build Around Equestrian Center & Arena
Locally-Owned Businesses
Sustainable Employment Campus
Neighborhood-Oriented Commercial Center
Create Design Standards
Transition Density
Improve Downtown
Agricultural
Protect Habitat Corridors
Pave Jones, Zuni & Franklin Roads
Locally-Owned Businesses
Add Bike & ATV Trails
Neighborhood-Oriented Commercial Center
Improve Downtown
Improve Narcoossee & Jones Road Intersection
Building Density
Design Diverse Architectural Styles & Details
Retain Compatibility
Create Design Standards
Locally-Owned Businesses
Add Equestrian Trails
Retention Areas
Buffer Split Oak Forest
Protect Habitat Corridors
Cluster Neighborhoods
Native Landscapes
Conservation Areas
Agricultural
Solar Energy Production
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Locally-Owned Businesses
Add Bike & ATV Trails
Neighborhood-Oriented Commercial Center
Improve Downtown
green framework

New Community Amenities

Expansion of Split Oak Forest Preserve

Sustainable Industries within Buffer

Trail & Greenway Linkages to the Northeast District, Deseret Ranch, & the Econ Swamp

Neighborhood Park

Equestrian Center & Trail Gateway

Rural Preservation Zone to Mimic Traditional Agrarian & Ranching Environment

Equestrian Loop Trail

New Equestrian Trail System

Connections to Deseret Ranch

Natural Buffer to Adjacent Development

Connection to Chisholm Park

Improved Existing Chisholm Park Amenities

Fell's Cove

Hinden Lake

Ajay Lake

Coon Lake

East Lake Toho

Lake Center

CONNECTION TO CHISHOLM PARK

IMPROVED EXISTING CHISHOLM PARK AMENITIES

EQUESTRIAN CENTER & TRAIL GATEWAY

RURAL PRESERVATION ZONE TO MIMIC TRADITIONAL AGRARIAN & RANCHING ENVIRONMENT

NEW EQUESTRIAN TRAIL SYSTEM

CONNECTIONS TO DESERET RANCH

NATURAL BUFFER TO ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT

TRAIL & GREENWAY LINKAGES TO THE NORTHEAST DISTRICT, DESERET RANCH, & THE ECON SWAMP

SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIES WITHIN BUFFER

EXPANSION OF SPLIT OAK FOREST PRESERVE

NEW COMMUNITY AMENITIES
Create a Conservation Buffer of 300’ to Preserve Rural Landscape

Locate Trailheads at Primary Trails

Preserve Drainage Areas, Wetlands, Existing Vegetation, & Wildlife Habitat

Include Soft Surface Equestrian Trails

Include Multi-Purpose Hiking & Bicycling Trails

greenway, rural buffer & trail

the community speaks 43
Preserve Existing Vegetation

Include Sustainable Energy Employers as a Community Separators

Use Low Impact Development Best Practices, such as Natural Stormwater Systems

Utilize New Technologies such as Production of Biofuels & Solar Fields
centers framework
Create a New Equestrian Center with a Covered Arena, Stables, Tack Shop & Event Parking

Connect to the New Equestrian Loop Trail

Utilize Signage, Architectural Elements & Plantings to Create a Gateway

Incorporate the New Narcoossee Village Center

Allow for Farmers’ Market Areas
Plan for Retail & Commercial Uses Along the Narcoossee Road Corridor

Incorporate Recreational Amenities such as Multi-Purpose Trails, Gardens & Water Activities

Build New Senior Living Facility Adjacent to Mixed Use Commercial Node Along Narcoossee Road

Connect Senior Facility with Commercial Nodes via Pedestrian-Friendly Boulevards

Include Larger-Scale Mixed Use Buildings at Nodes Along Narcoossee Road

senior living facility
Create a New Transit Stop with Regional Transit Connections

Incorporate a Mix of Uses such as Retail Shops, Post Office, and Neighborhood Services

Design Streets to be Pedestrian & Equestrian-Friendly

Incorporate a Public Green as a Central Gathering Space
neighborhoods framework
Preserve Existing Vegetation as Community Separators

Connect to New Multipurpose & Equestrian Trails

Utilize Low Impact Development and LEED-NC Technologies & Strategies
Retain Large Lot Single-Family Homes

Create New Mixed Use Neighborhoods

Transition to Low Density Single-Family Homes

Preserve Equestrian Pastures & Use a Buffer Between Estates and New Neighborhoods

Cluster Large Lot Equestrian Estates

Locate Multipurpose & Equestrian Trails within an Open Space Separator

rural heart compatibility
Combined Framework
the community speaks 53
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<th>Zahid Ahmad</th>
<th>Barbara Eagan</th>
<th>Sonya Howard</th>
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Osceola County

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Stephen Wood

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