

Protecting Surrounding Agricultural Land

Policy Recommendations for the Village of Indiantown

2050 Comprehensive Plan Update

May 2026

Executive Summary

The Village of Indiantown currently contains very little active agricultural land within its municipal boundaries. The majority of farming activity in the Indiantown area exists in unincorporated Martin County immediately adjacent to the Village. As the Village considers its 2050 Comprehensive Plan, two new elements — the Economic Development Element and expanded annexation policy language — create potential long-term pressure on surrounding farmland.

This paper recommends targeted policy additions to the draft 2050 Comprehensive Plan that would allow the Village to pursue responsible growth while protecting the agricultural character and viability of lands at its edges. These recommendations are grounded in the current reality that meaningful agricultural preservation in Indiantown must focus primarily on coordination with Martin County and responsible management of future annexation and infrastructure decisions.

Current Reality: Agricultural Land in Indiantown

Inside Village Boundaries

The Village of Indiantown has no dedicated Agricultural Future Land Use category. Existing low-density categories (Rural Community at 2 units/acre and Small Farm Residential at 1 unit/acre) support a rural lifestyle but do not provide strong protection for commercial-scale agriculture. There is currently very limited active row crop, citrus, or livestock production occurring inside the Village limits.

Surrounding Unincorporated Martin County

Significant agricultural activity exists immediately outside the Village boundary. These lands contribute to the regional economy, provide open space and rural character, and represent prime farmland in many cases. The Village's growth and development decisions directly impact the long-term viability of these operations through annexation pressure, infrastructure extension, traffic, and land use compatibility issues.

Problem Statement: Gaps in the Draft 2050 Plan

The draft 2050 Comprehensive Plan introduces several elements that, while beneficial for economic growth, create new risks for surrounding agricultural land:

- **New Economic Development Element:** Actively promotes growth, job creation, and commercial/industrial development without balancing language that considers impacts on adjacent farmland.
- **Proactive Annexation Language:** New dedicated section on annexation strategy lacks criteria or preferences that would discourage conversion of productive agricultural land.
- **No Agricultural Future Land Use Category:** The plan maintains the same limited low-density rural categories from 2019 without adding stronger tools to protect agriculture at the Village edge.
- **Limited Intergovernmental Coordination:** Coordination with Martin County on farmland preservation remains general and does not include specific mechanisms or commitments.

Recommended Policy Changes

The following policy additions are recommended for inclusion in the draft 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Each recommendation includes the proposed location, suggested language, and rationale.

Recommendation 1: Agricultural Land Annexation Criteria

Recommended Location

Future Land Use Element – New Objective under Goal L3 or L6 (Future Land Use Category Descriptions)

Suggested Policy Language

POLICY L3.X.X Agricultural Land Annexation Criteria

The Village of Indiantown shall discourage the annexation of lands that are actively used for commercial agricultural production or that are designated as prime farmland by the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Prior to considering annexation of such lands, the Village shall:

1. Require an Agricultural Impact Assessment that evaluates the economic, environmental, and community character impacts of removing the land from agricultural use;
2. Demonstrate that alternative non-agricultural lands are not reasonably available or suitable for the proposed municipal purpose;
3. Require a finding that annexation serves a compelling public interest that cannot be met through other means; and
4. Coordinate with Martin County to identify opportunities for agricultural conservation easements or other preservation tools on remaining farmland in the area.

Rationale

This policy establishes a clear presumption against annexing productive farmland while still allowing the Village flexibility when a compelling public need exists. It creates a structured process that protects agriculture without creating an absolute prohibition.

Recommendation 2: Agricultural Compatibility in Economic Development

Recommended Location

Economic Development Element – New Policy under the primary Goal

Suggested Policy Language

POLICY ED1.X.X Agricultural Compatibility

The Village shall ensure that economic development strategies, site selection, and infrastructure investments consider potential impacts on surrounding agricultural operations. The Village shall prioritize economic development opportunities that are compatible with continued agricultural use of adjacent lands and shall avoid economic development patterns that would create land use conflicts, increase regulatory pressure on farming operations, or contribute to the premature conversion of farmland.

Rationale

The new Economic Development Element currently lacks any balancing language related to agriculture. This policy ensures that the Village's economic development efforts do not unintentionally undermine the agricultural economy and character of the surrounding area.

Recommendation 3: Intergovernmental Coordination on Farmland Preservation

Recommended Location

Intergovernmental Coordination Element – New or expanded policy under existing coordination objectives

Suggested Policy Language

POLICY IC-X.X.X Farmland Preservation Coordination with Martin County

The Village of Indiantown shall coordinate with Martin County on the preservation of agricultural land in areas adjacent to the Village boundary. This coordination shall include, at minimum:

- Regular communication regarding development proposals and annexation requests affecting agricultural land;
- Joint exploration of agricultural conservation easements, transfer of development rights programs, or other preservation tools;
- Sharing of data regarding prime farmland, agricultural operations, and development pressure in the Indiantown area; and
- Consideration of joint planning efforts to establish agricultural protection zones or rural buffers between urbanizing areas and active farmland.

Rationale

Because most agricultural land is outside the Village, effective preservation requires active partnership with Martin County. This policy elevates farmland preservation as a specific coordination priority rather than a general statement.

Recommendation 4: Infrastructure Extension and Agricultural Protection

Recommended Location

Infrastructure and Water Resources Element – Expand existing utility extension policies

Suggested Policy Language (Addition to existing policy)

POLICY IWR-X.X.X Extension of Central Utilities – Agricultural Protection

When evaluating requests to extend central water or wastewater service to areas outside the Village boundary or to newly annexed areas, the Village shall consider the potential impact on continued agricultural use of surrounding lands. Extension of urban infrastructure shall not be approved where it would create significant pressure for conversion of productive farmland or where it would undermine the economic viability of existing agricultural operations, unless required to address documented public health or environmental emergencies.

Rationale

Infrastructure extension is one of the most powerful tools that can accelerate farmland conversion. This policy adds an explicit agricultural protection consideration to utility extension decisions.

Recommendation 5: Agricultural Impact Considerations in Development Review

Recommended Location

Future Land Use Element – Objective L3.2 or L5.1 (Future Land Use Map Amendment Guidelines / Compatibility)

Suggested Policy Language

POLICY L5.1.15 Agricultural Compatibility and Impact Assessment

Development proposals located adjacent to or within one-half mile of active agricultural operations shall include an assessment of potential impacts on those operations, including but not limited to: compatibility of proposed uses with farming activities; potential nuisance complaints related to noise, odor, dust, or pesticide application; traffic conflicts with farm equipment; and impacts on agricultural water supply or drainage. The Village shall consider these impacts when evaluating development proposals and may require mitigation measures or buffers as conditions of approval.

Rationale

As the Village grows, new development near active farms can create conflicts that threaten the viability of agriculture. This policy introduces a formal consideration of agricultural compatibility during development review.

Summary of Recommended Policy Changes

#	Policy Recommendation	Primary Element	Primary Mechanism
1	Agricultural Land Annexation Criteria	Future Land Use	Annexation review process
2	Agricultural Compatibility in Economic Development	Economic Development	Development strategy review
3	Farmland Preservation Coordination with Martin County	Intergovernmental Coordination	Joint planning & data sharing
4	Infrastructure Extension – Agricultural Protection	Infrastructure & Water Resources	Utility extension review
5	Agricultural Impact Assessment in Development Review	Future Land Use	Development order review

Implementation Considerations

These policy recommendations are designed to be practical and implementable given Indiantown's current situation:

- **No Agricultural FLU Category Required:** Recommendations work within the existing Future Land Use category structure rather than requiring creation of a new agricultural designation.
- **Focus on Process, Not Prohibition:** Policies establish review criteria and coordination requirements rather than absolute bans on annexation or development.
- **Leverage Existing Tools:** Recommendations build on existing plan elements (annexation policy, infrastructure review, intergovernmental coordination) rather than creating entirely new programs.
- **Scalable to Future Conditions:** Policies can be strengthened or relaxed in future plan updates as the Village's relationship with surrounding agriculture evolves.

Conclusion

The Village of Indiantown has an opportunity during the 2050 Comprehensive Plan update to establish itself as a community that values both economic growth and the preservation of surrounding agricultural land. While the Village contains limited agricultural land within its current boundaries, its decisions on annexation, infrastructure, economic development, and intergovernmental coordination will significantly influence the future of farming in the Indiantown area.

The five policy recommendations in this paper provide a balanced, realistic framework that allows the Village to grow responsibly while protecting the agricultural character and economic viability of lands at its edges. These policies can be incorporated into the draft 2050 Comprehensive Plan with relatively modest additions and would demonstrate the Village's commitment to being a good neighbor to the agricultural community that surrounds it.

These recommendations are submitted for consideration during the May 16, 2026 Joint Workshop and subsequent review process for the Village of Indiantown 2050 Comprehensive Plan.