Board of County Commissioners
Work Session

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 8
Boats and Water Safety Ordinance

October 13, 2026

AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary



AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary



BACKGROUND

- 1983 - Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Chapter 8 Boats and Water Safety Ordinance
- 1985, 1987, 1995 - County Amendments to Chapter 8 related to boating safety
- 1991 to 2011 - Orange County received Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Florida Uniform Waterway Marker (FUWM) Permits for the establishment of various boating restricted areas



BACKGROUND

- 2009 - Amendment to Florida Statute Chapter 327.46
  - Pre-empted local regulations regarding boating safety
  - Requires removal of language from Chapter 8 that is preempted by Chapter 327.46, Florida Statutes
  - Required FWC adoption of local ordinances for establishing boating restricted areas on Florida waterbodies
- Orange County maintained grandfathered status of Chapter 8 Ordinance



BACKGROUND

- August 2020 - District 1 Commissioner expressed concerns of public safety and ongoing natural resources and wildlife impacts to a popular public recreation area within Lake Butler, located at Egret (Bird) Island
- September 2020 - Board directed staff to identify a Swim Area & Vessel Exclusion (SAVE) Zone adjacent to Egret Island
  - FWC required the County to adopt an ordinance for the establishment & enforcement of the SAVE Zone.



BACKGROUND

- FWC authorized the County to proceed with amending the Chapter 8 Ordinance in two phases:
  - Phase I: SAVE Zone at Egret (Bird) Island
  - Phase II: Bring the rest of the Chapter 8 Ordinance into compliance with statutes for existing and proposed boating safety zones and update language to align with State boating safety regulations



BACKGROUND

Phase I:

- SAVE Zone designation at Egret (Bird) Island
- Project completed August 25, 2023



AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary

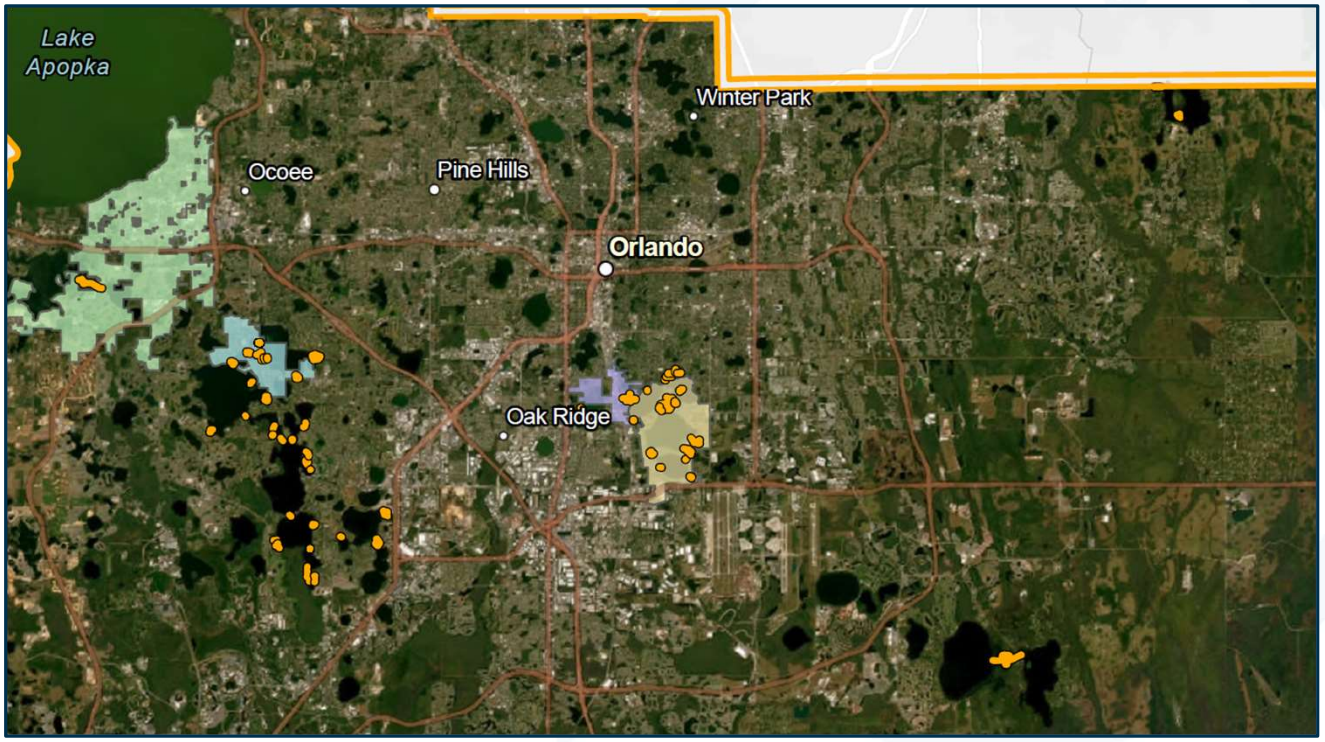


PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

- 2023 to 2026, EPD coordinated with the Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) on their recommendations of proposed boating restricted areas, and continued discussing issues with FWC, including:
  - Amending code language to reflect statutory requirements for existing FWC FUWM Permit Program
  - Reviewing 36 existing boating restricted areas and 6 non-regulatory areas on Big Sand Lake, Butler Chain of Lakes, Conway Chain of Lakes, and Lake Jessamine
  - Establishing 19 additional boating restricted areas on Big Sand Lake, Butler Chain of Lakes, Conway Chain of Lakes, Lake Jessamine, Johns Lake, Lake Pickett, Lake Mary Jane, and Lake Hart
- April 21, 2026: FWC concurrence of Chapter 8 Ordinance final draft; language and locations

PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

- Big Sand Lake
- Butler Chain of Lakes
- Conway Chain of Lakes
- Lake Hart
- Lake Mary Jane
- Lake Jessamine
- Johns Lake
- Lake Pickett



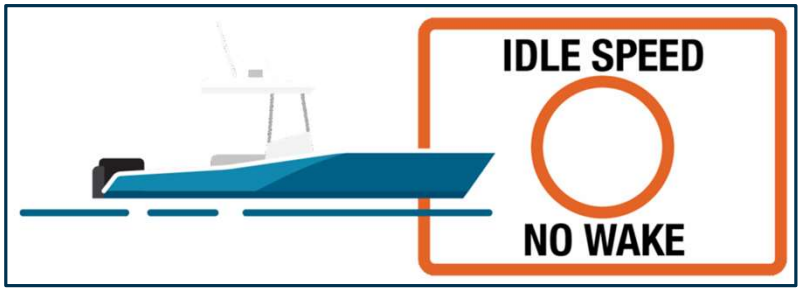
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

Florida Statute Chapter 327.46 Designation of Boating Restricted Areas

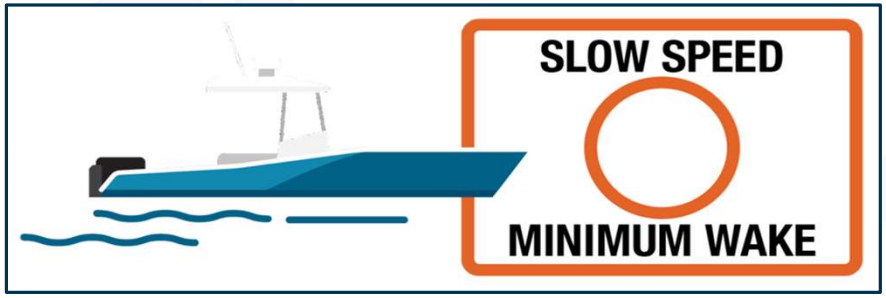
- Idle Speed, No Wake (ISNW)
  - Within 500 ft of a public boat ramp more than 300 feet in width, or within 300 ft of a public boat ramp less than 300 ft in width
  - 500 ft of public fuel pumps
  - 300 ft of a confluence of waterbodies presenting a blind corner
- Slow Speed, Minimum Wake (SSMW)
  - 300 ft of any bridge fender system
  - On a creek, stream, canal, or similar linear waterway if less than 75 ft in width from shoreline to shoreline
  - 300 ft of a confluence of waterbodies presenting a blind corner
  - Subject to unsafe levels of vessel traffic or an area where accident reports, citations, or studies demonstrate a significant risk of collision or significant threat to boating safety
  - Subject to hazardous water levels or currents

PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

- Idle Speed, No Wake (ISNW):
  - Operate at the minimum speed that allows vessel to maintain headway and steerageway
  - Produces virtually no noticeable wake
  - The vessel's wake must not be excessive nor create a hazard to other vessels



- Slow Speed, Minimum Wake (SSMW):
  - Must operate fully off plane and the bow completely settled in the water.
  - Creates a minimal or small wake/ripple
  - Vessel's wake must not be excessive nor create a hazard to other vessels



PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES



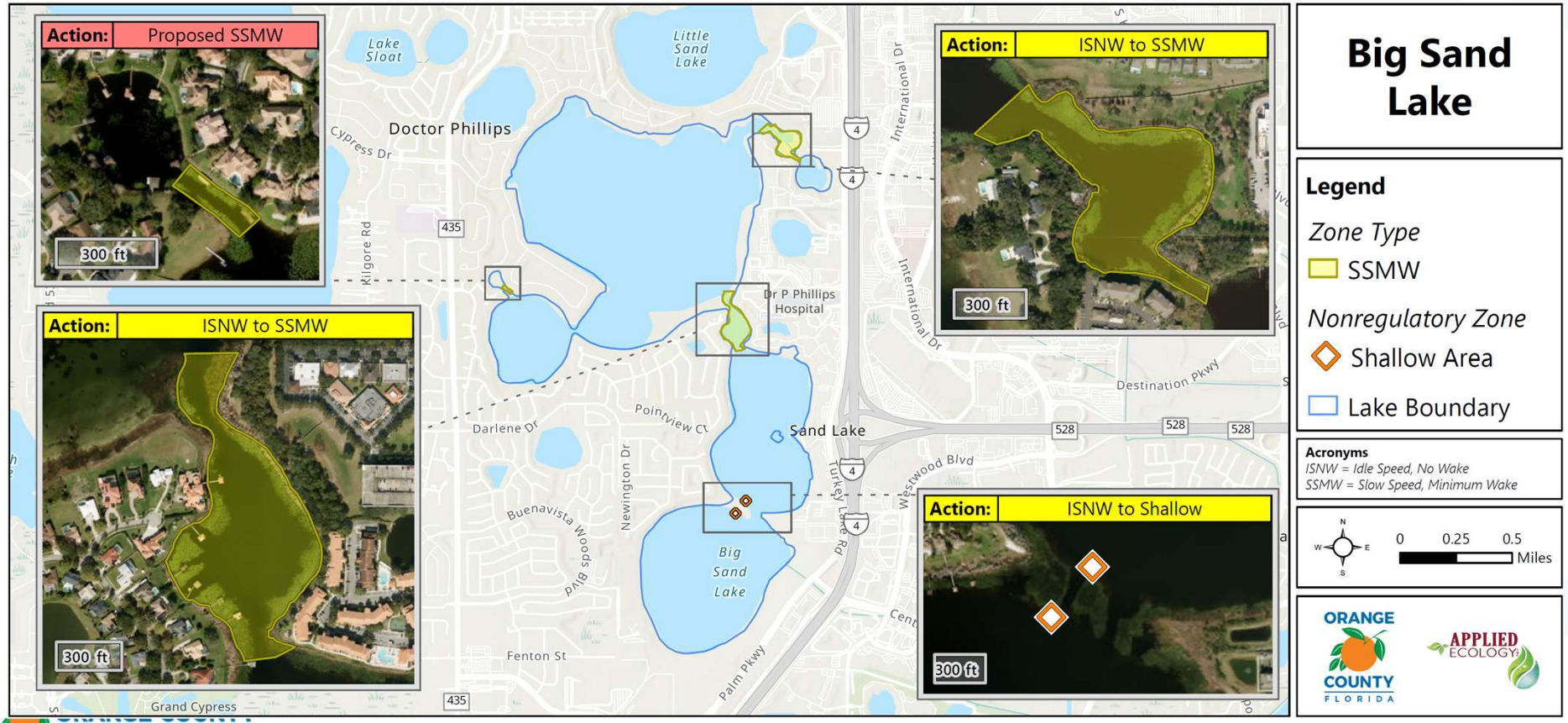
Commissioner Districts Summary Table

District	Waterbody	Number of Zones	Total Zones	Type of Zones: Idle Speed, No Wake (ISNW) Slow Speed, Minimum Wake (SSMW)
1	Big Sand Lake	3	4	SSMW
		1		Shallow
	Butler Chain of Lakes	5	26	ISNW
		20		SSMW
		1		SAVE
	Johns Lake	1	1	SSMW
3	Conway Chain of Lakes	5	21	ISNW
		14		SSMW
		1		Shallow
		1		Submerged Rock
	Lake Jessamine	2	5	ISNW
		3		Shallow
4 (changing to District 8)	Lakes Hart & Mary Jane	1	2	ISNW
		1		SSMW
5	Lake Pickett	2	2	SSMW



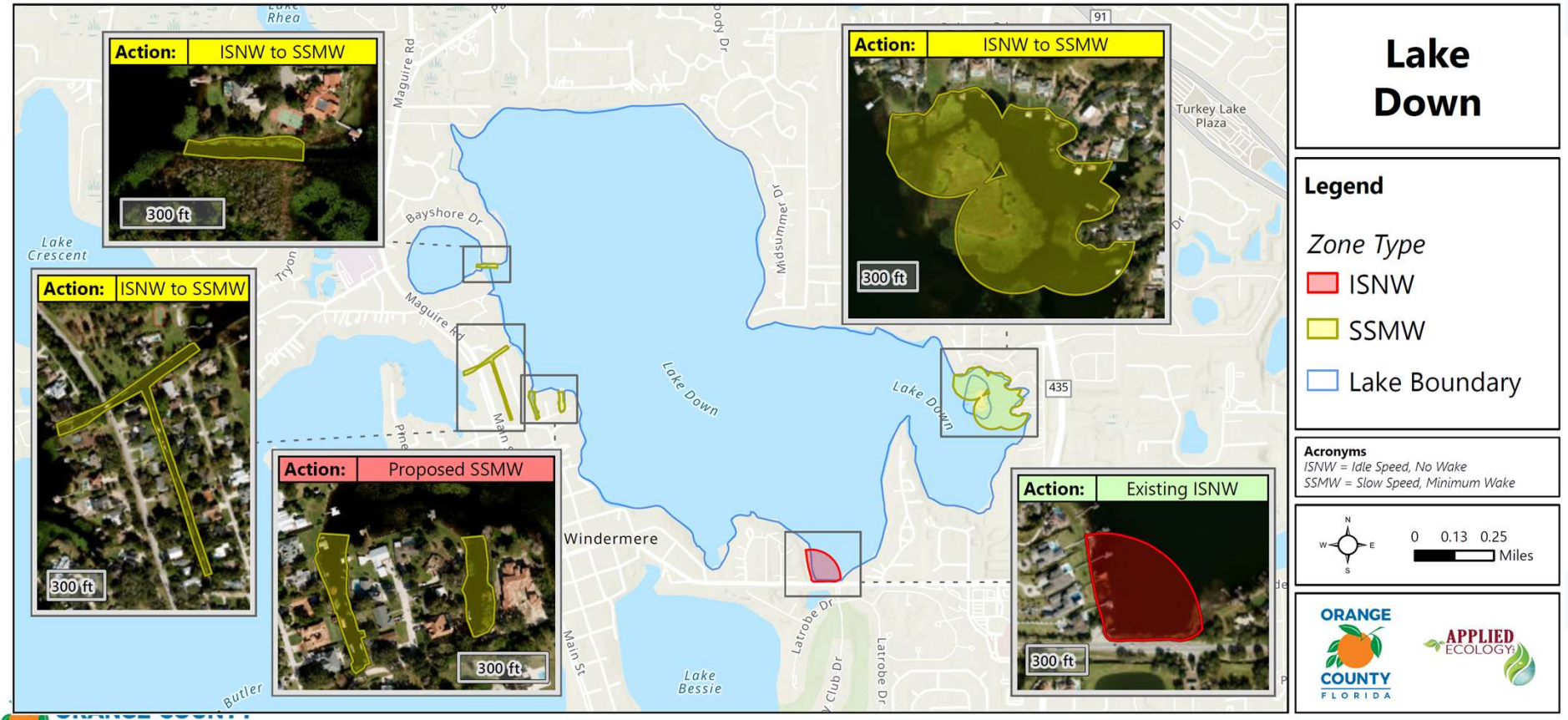
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



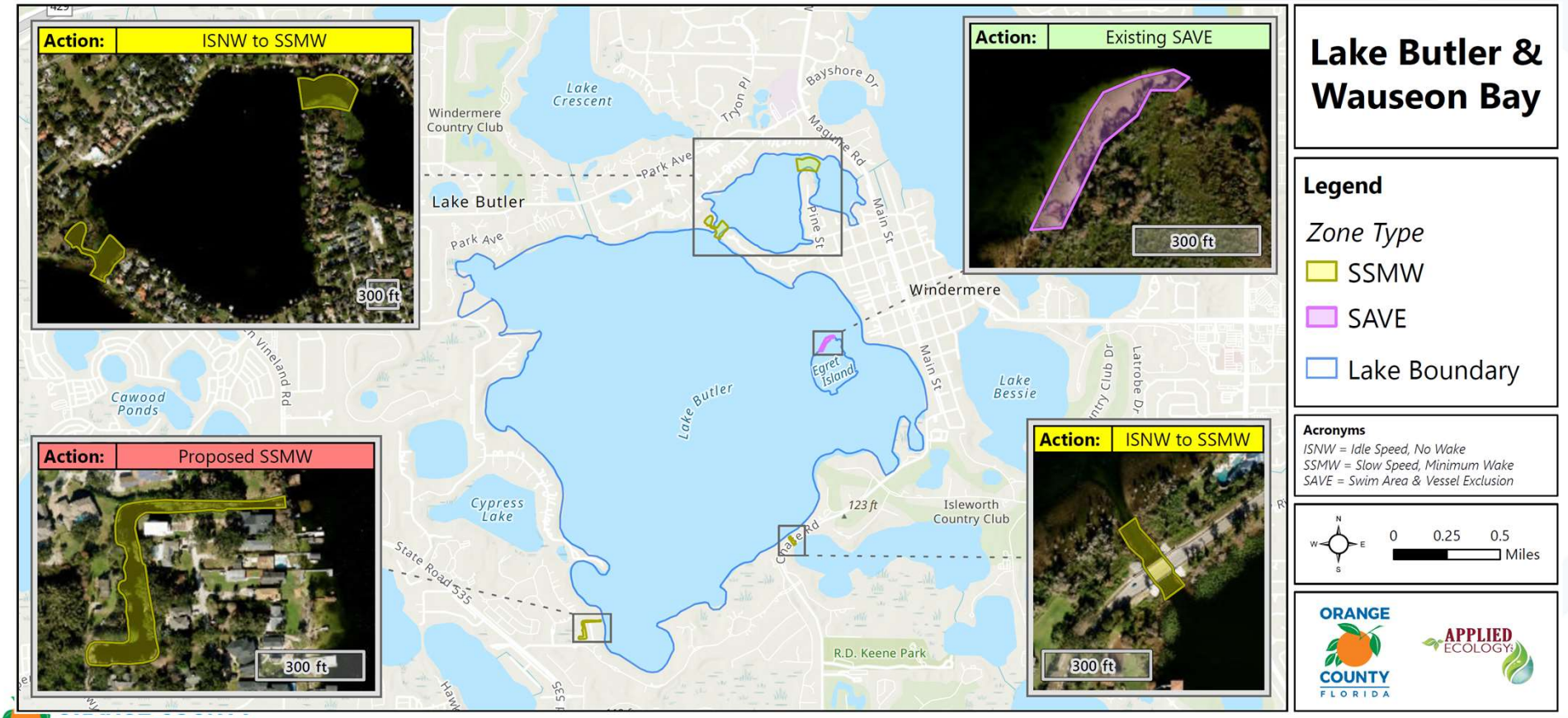
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



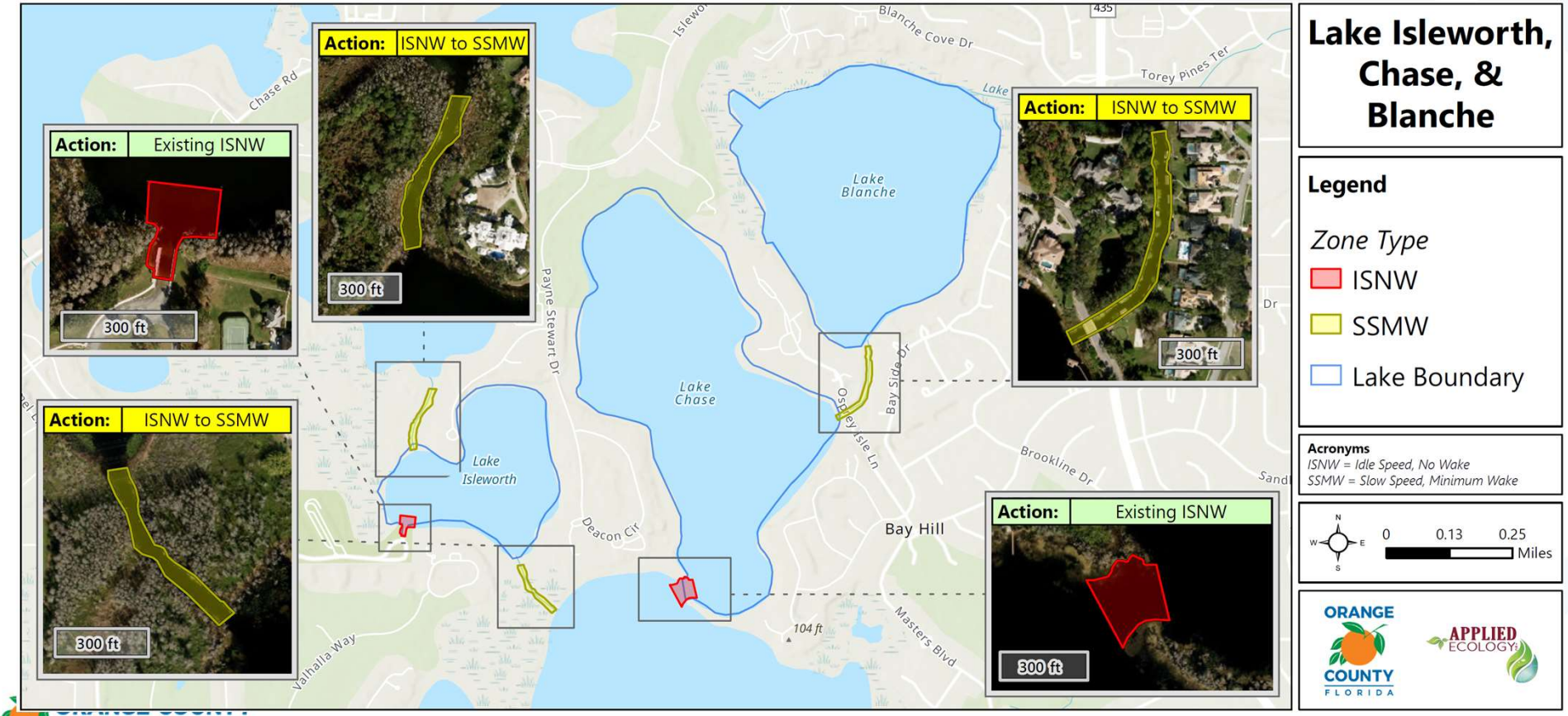
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



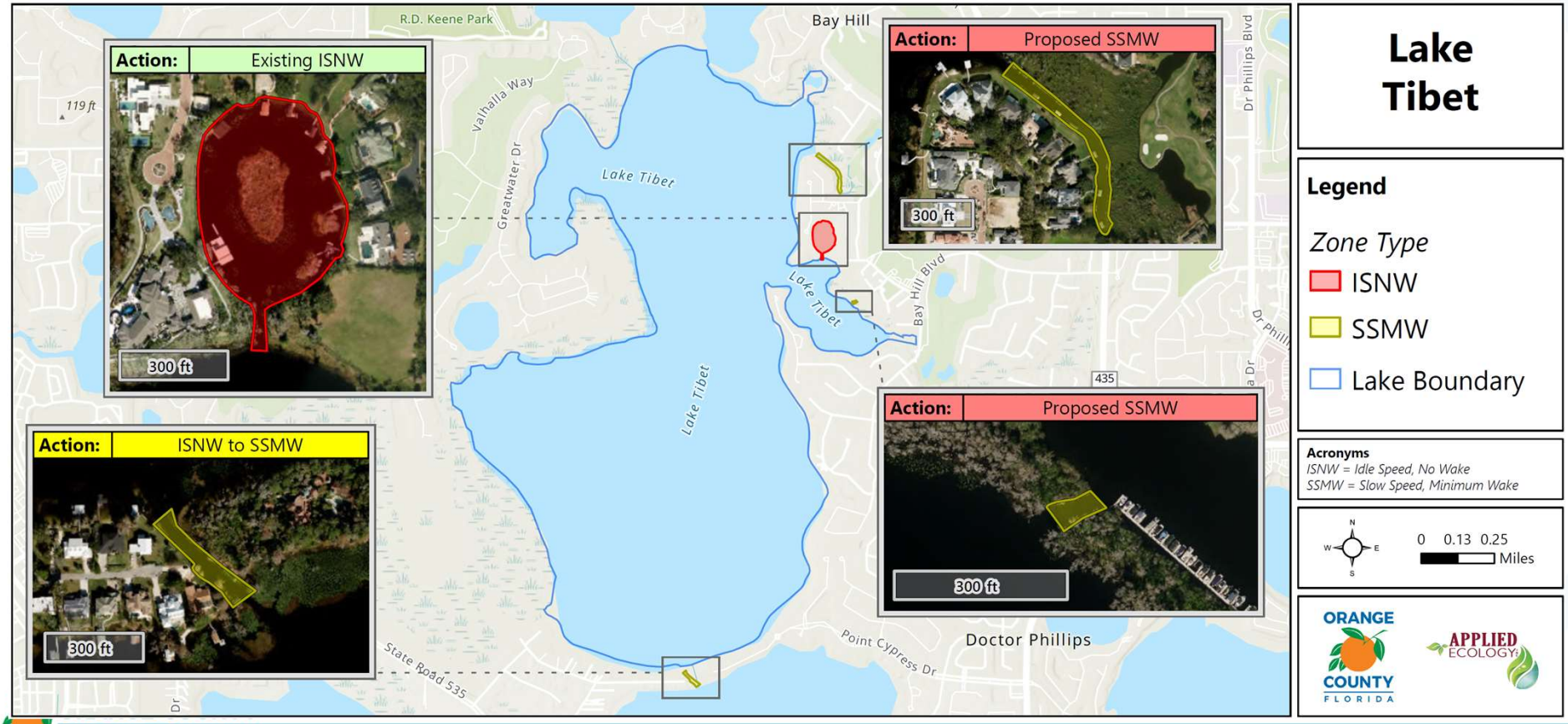
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



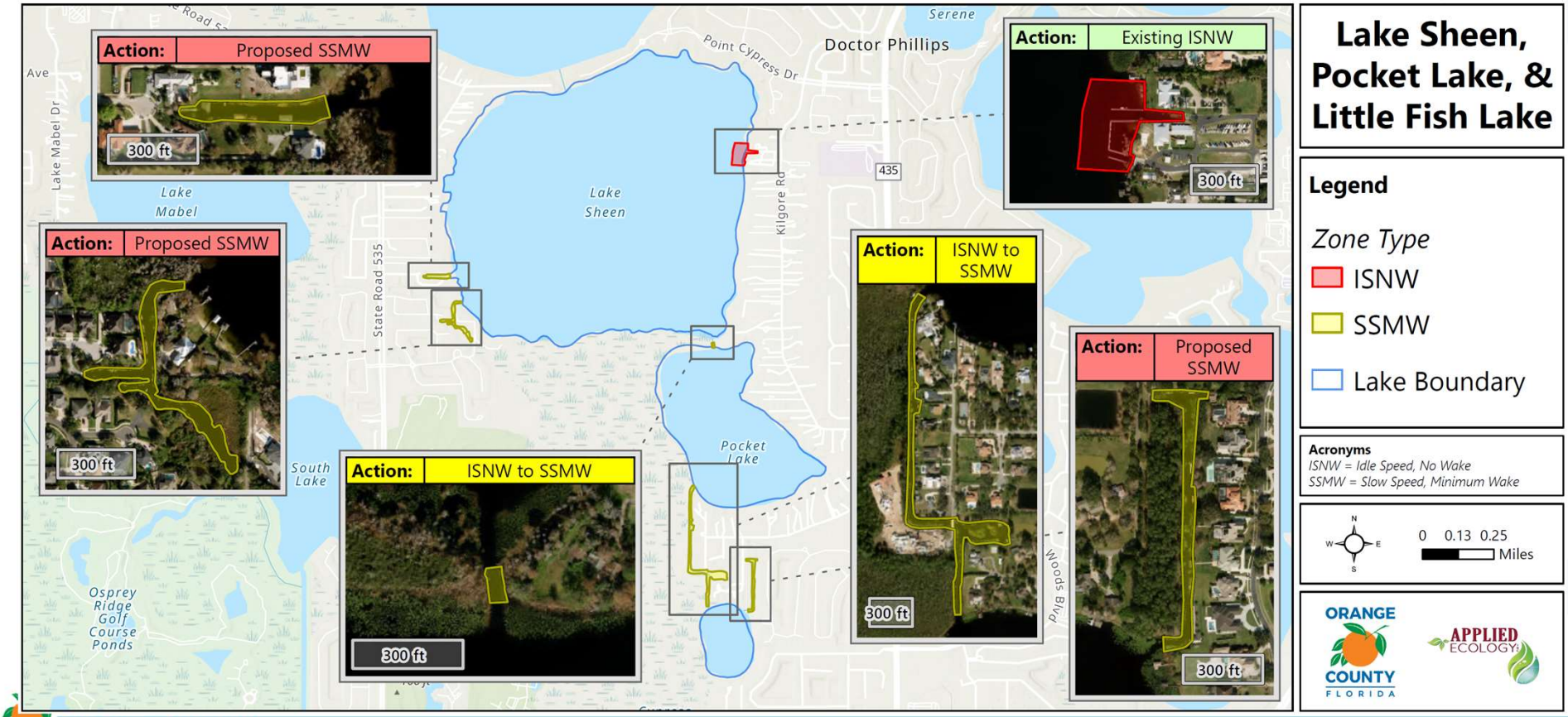
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



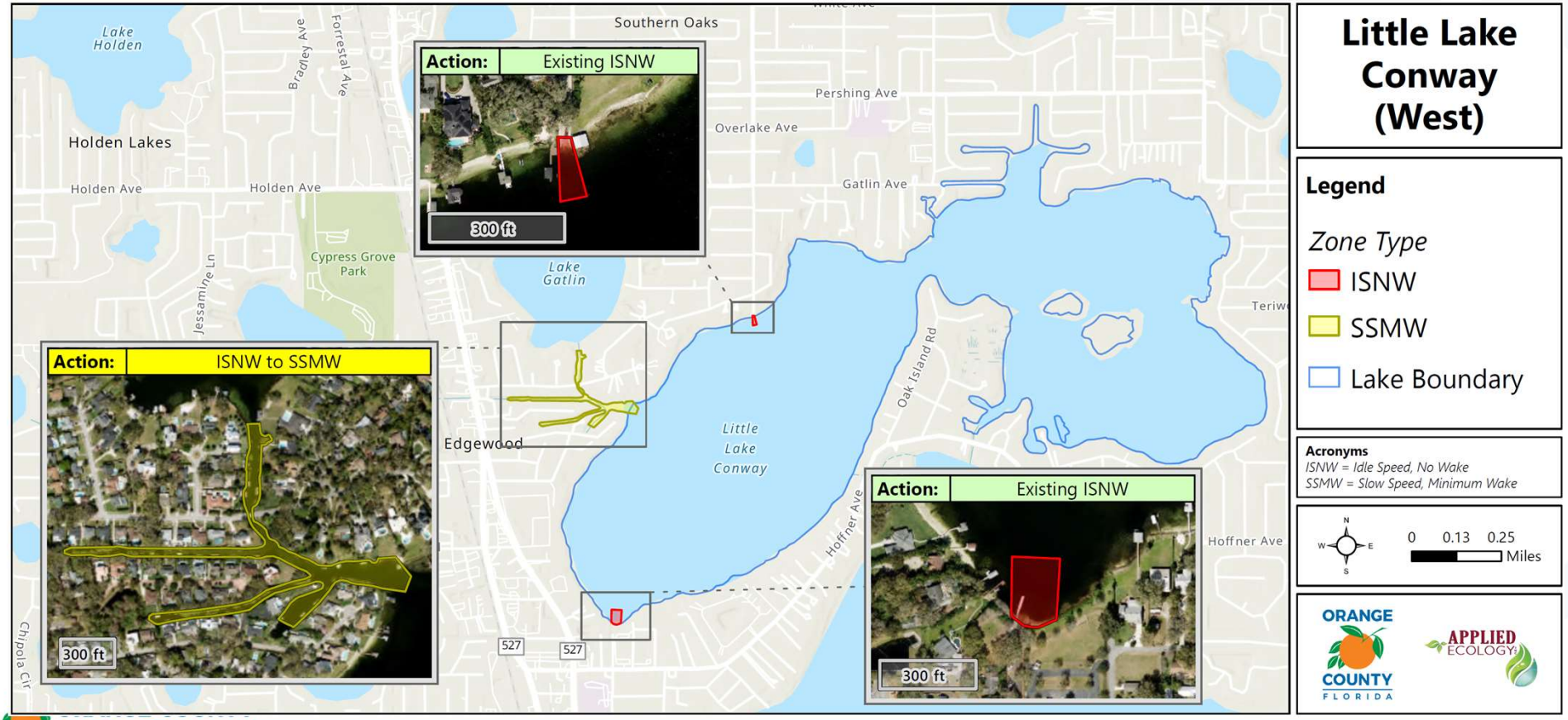
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 3



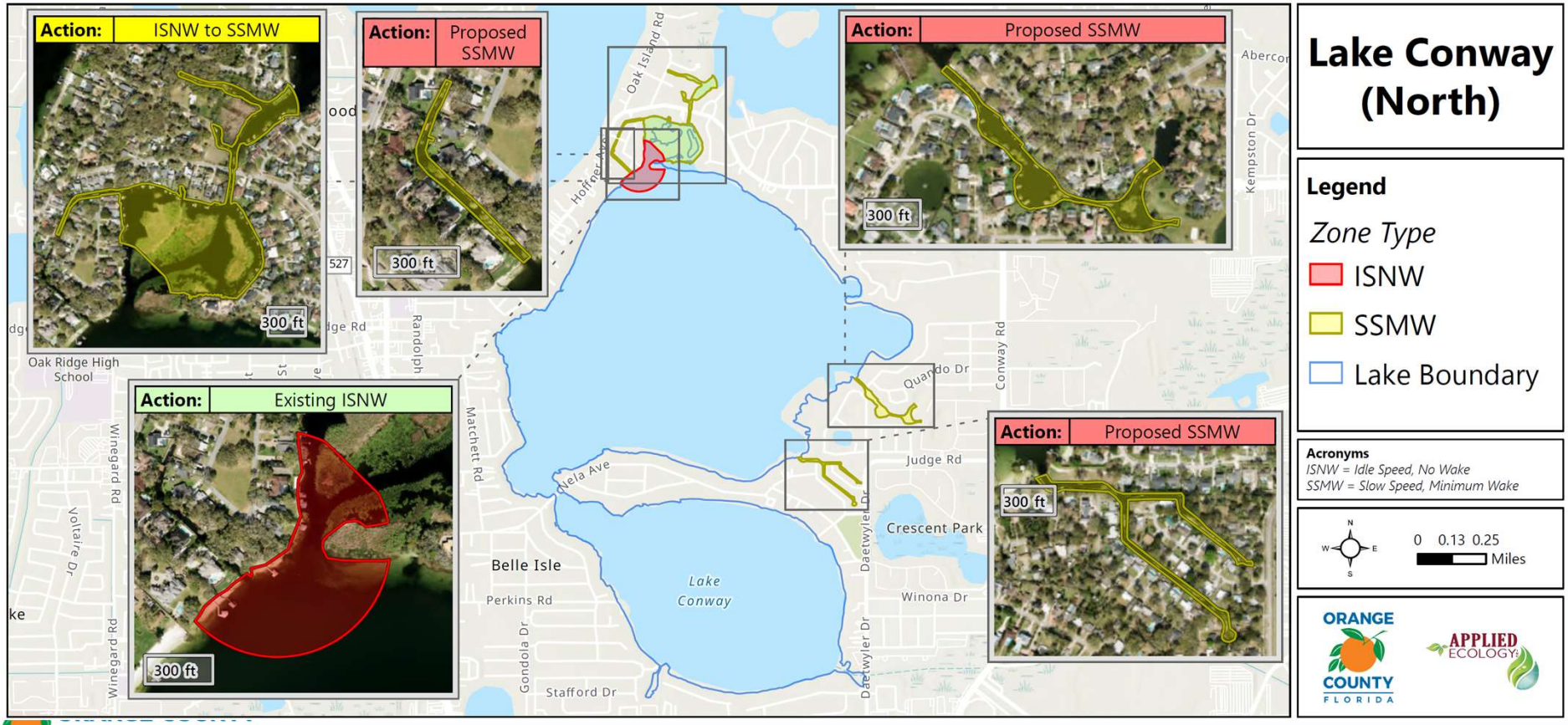
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 3



PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 3



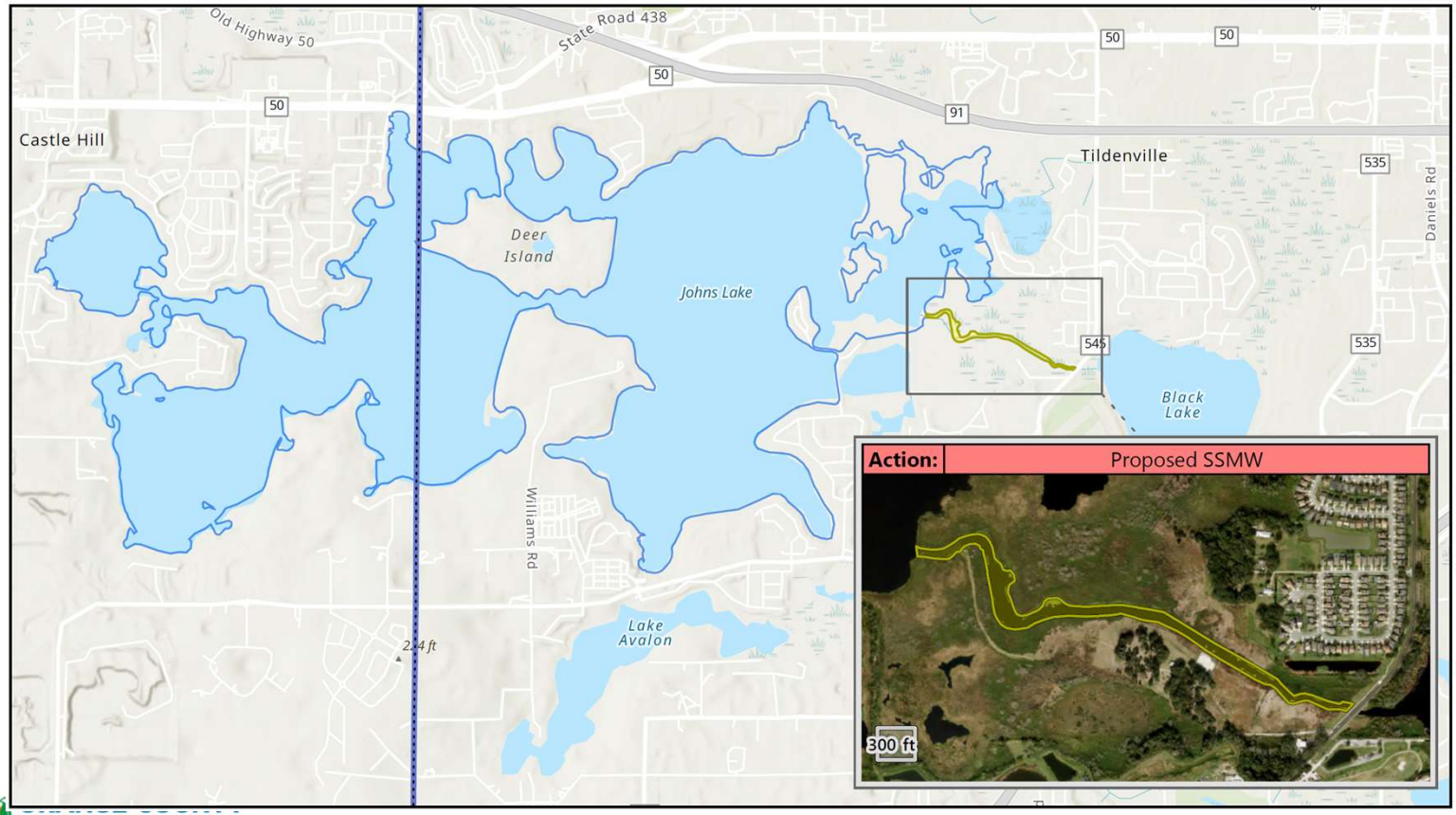
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 3



PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 1



Johns Lake

Legend

Zone Type

- SSMW
- Lake Boundary
- County Boundary

Acronyms

SSMW = Slow Speed, Minimum Wake

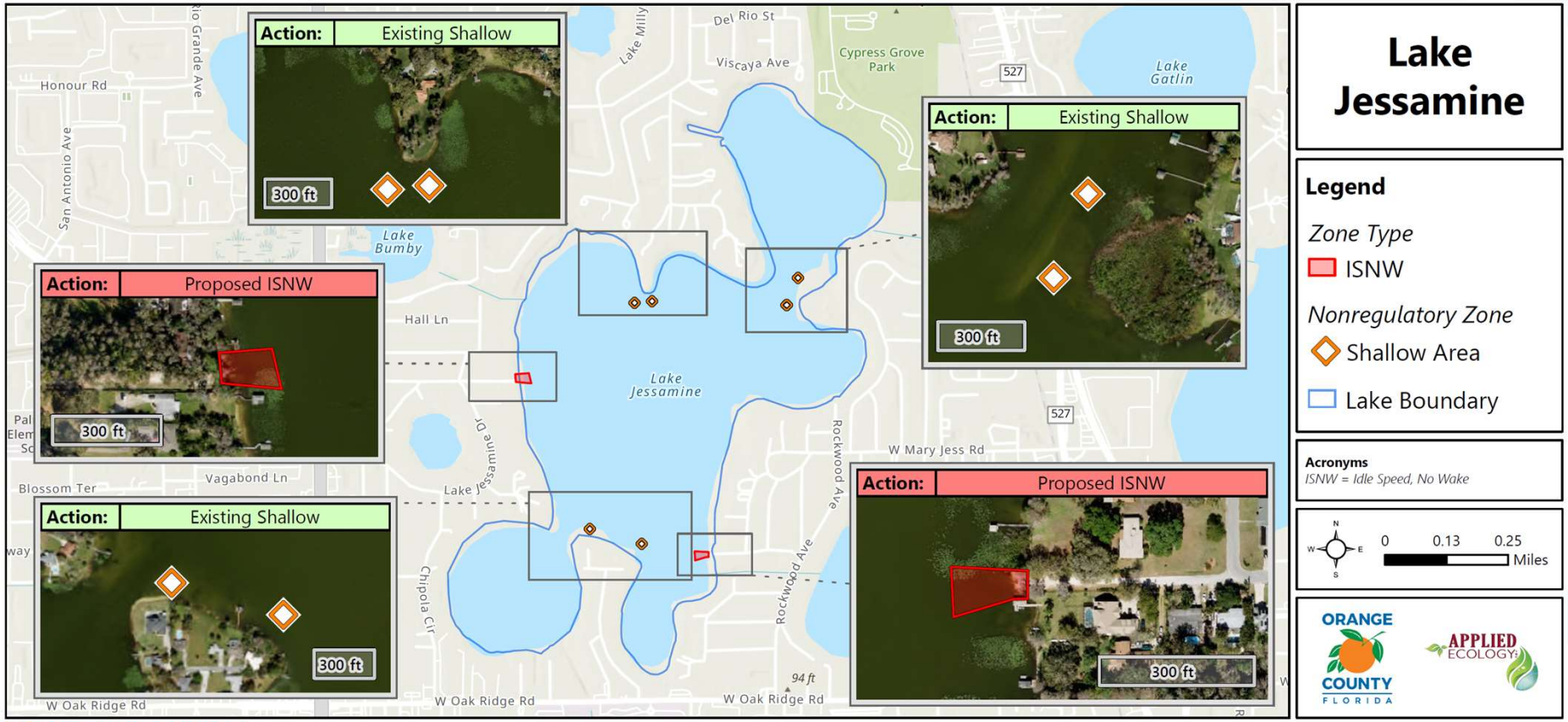
N W E S 0 0.25 0.5 Miles

ORANGE COUNTY FLORIDA

APPLIED ECOLOGY

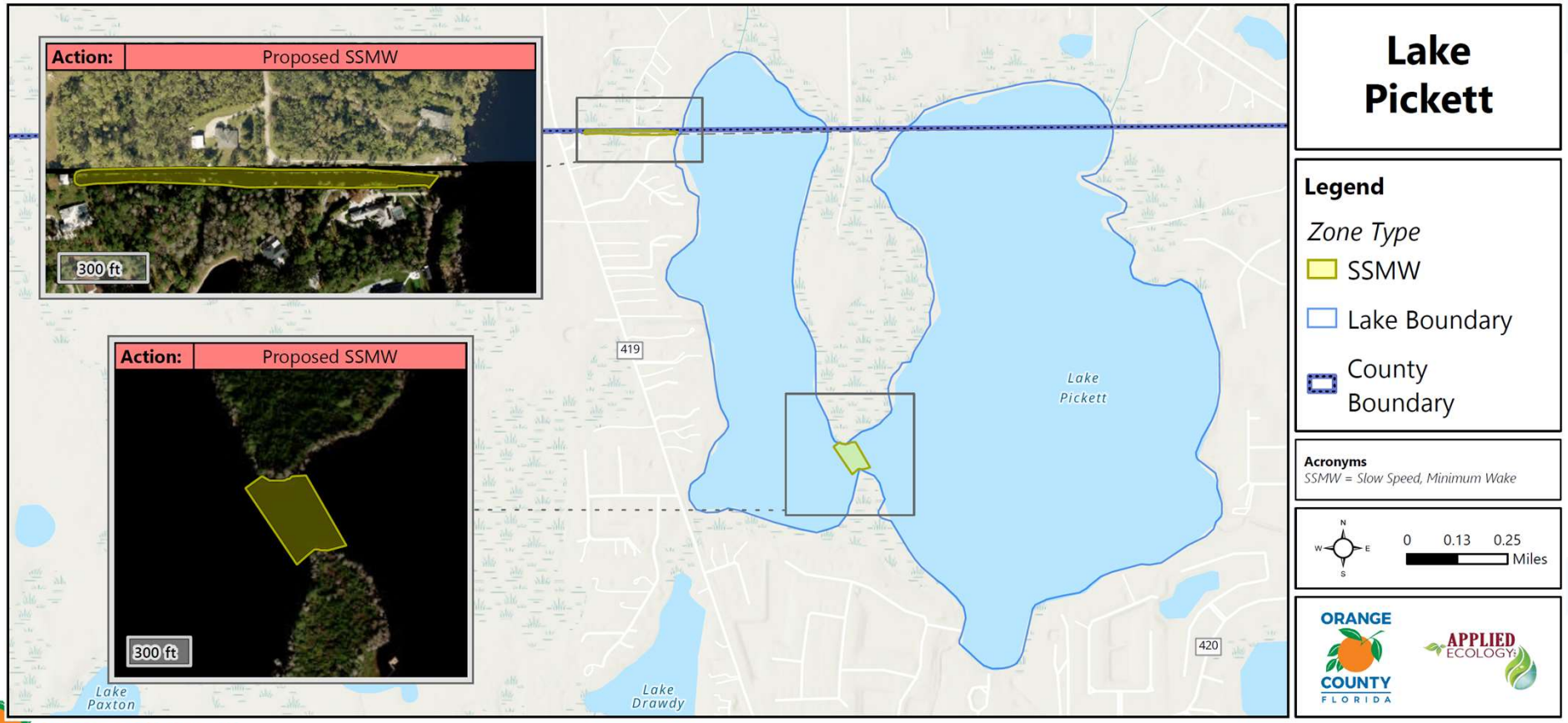
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 3



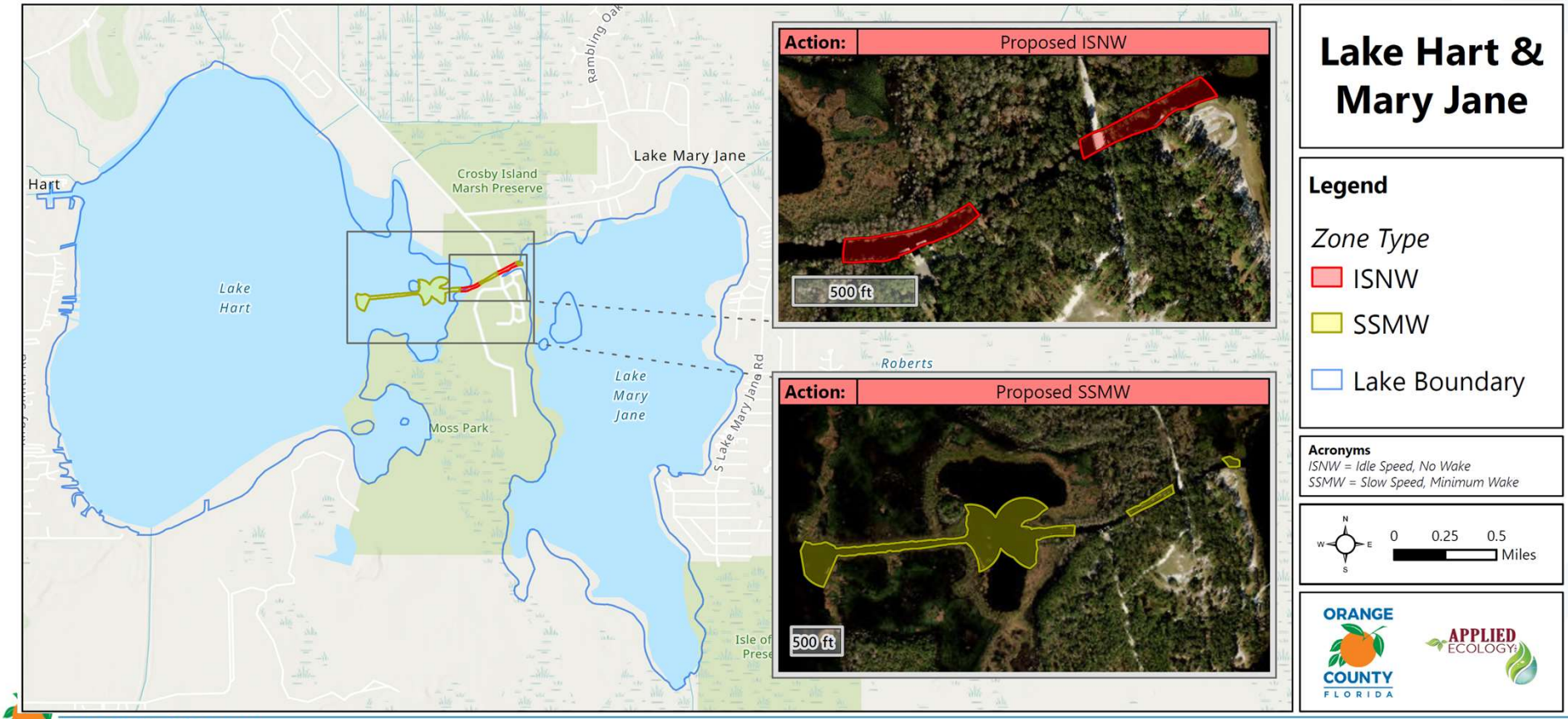
PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 5



PROPOSED ORDINANCE UPDATES

District 4 (changing to District 8)



AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary



ENGAGEMENT

Internal Collaboration

- Orange County Attorney's Office
- Orange County Risk Management
- Orange County Sheriff's Office
- Orange County Parks and Recreation Division
- Environmental Protection Commission
- Lake Advisory Boards

External Collaboration

- Governmental agencies
- FWC, Division of Law Enforcement & Boating and Waterways Section
- Audubon of Florida
- Residents within respective lake taxing districts
- Interested parties

ENGAGEMENT

- Frequent stakeholder updates and notification of upcoming BCC Meetings
- Dedicated Chapter 8 and Engage Orange webpages
- September 26, 2022 and February 21, 2023: Stakeholder Meetings
  - Request for increased law enforcement presence and additional navigation marker signage
  - Agreement of aligning Chapter 8 Ordinance to support statutes
  - Opposition of another SAVE Zone
- March 29, 2023: Environmental Protection Commission Public Hearing
  - Approved a motion of support for ordinance revisions
- June 18, 2026: General Stakeholder Meeting
  - Vessel wakes within a certain distance from shoreline and established speed limits
  - Concerns of personal watercraft operation at night
  - Clarification of specific language preempted by statute

ENGAGEMENT

- July 21, 2026: City of Belle Isle Council Meeting
  - Idle speed zones converted to slow speed zones, concern for shoreline erosion
  - Lack of designation of an idle speed, no wake zone at the Venetian Canal boat ramp
  - Lack of an idle speed, no wake zone within the Daetwyler Cove
- July 29, 2026: Environmental Protection Commission Work Session
  - Requested the total number of pilings and signs and the estimated cost of project
  - Inquired about the applicability of the boating restricted area at private boat ramps
  - Asked about the statutes regarding shoreline erosion
  - Asked why the blind curve criteria is listed in both the ISNW and SSMW

ENGAGEMENT

- Lakes@ocfl.net
- http://orangecountyfl.net/Environment/StakeholderCommentForm.aspx
- https://www.orangecountyfl.net/Environment/BoatingCode.aspx

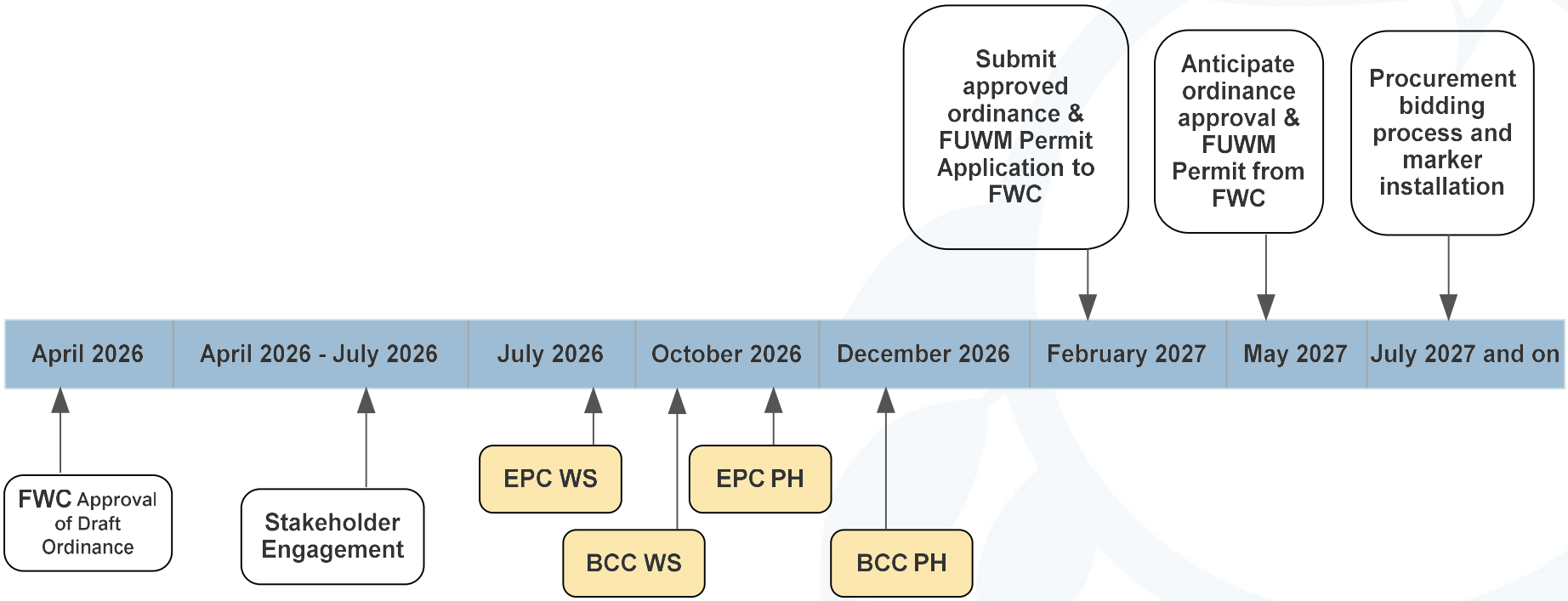


AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary



TIMELINE


Submit approved ordinance & FUWM Permit Application to FWC
Anticipate ordinance approval & FUWM Permit from FWC
Procurement bidding process and marker installation
April 2026
April 2026 - July 2026
July 2026
October 2026
December 2026
February 2027
May 2027
July 2027 and on
FWC Approval of Draft Ordinance
Stakeholder Engagement
EPC WS
BCC WS
EPC PH
BCC PH

AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary



NEXT STEPS

- EPC Public Hearing
  - Recommendation for Adoption, October 28, 2026
- BCC Public Hearing
  - Request for Adoption, December 1, 2026
- Apply for FUWM Permit
- FWC to issue FUWM Permit
- Marker installation



AGENDA

- Background
- Proposed Ordinance Updates
- Engagement
- Timeline
- Next Steps
- Summary



SUMMARY

- Chapter 8 was adopted in 1983 and has undergone multiple updates that have since been preempted by updated State regulations
- Updates required to maintain compliance with Chapter 327.46, Florida Statutes and to allow for County's FUWM Permit to be updated to reflect current and additional markers
- 55 boating restricted areas in Chapter 8 Ordinance and 6 non-regulatory areas on 8 lake systems across Orange County
  - Existing Zones: 11
  - Redesignated Zones: 25
  - New Zones: 19
  - Non-Regulatory: 6

