MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members
From: Staff
Date: March 21, 2008 Council Meeting
Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review
Draft Amendments to the Town of Loxahatchee Groves Comprehensive Plan
DCA Reference No. 08-1

Introduction

The Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, requires that Council review local government comprehensive plan amendments prior to their adoption. Under the provisions of this law, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) prepares an Objections, Recommendations, and Comments (ORC) Report on a proposed amendment only if requested to do so by the local government, the regional planning council, an affected person, or if an ORC Report is otherwise deemed necessary by the DCA. If an ORC Report is to be prepared, then Council must provide DCA with its findings of consistency or inconsistency with the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP), and provide any comments and recommendations for modification on the proposed amendments within 30 days of its receipt.

Background

The Town of Loxahatchee Groves, which is the newest municipality in the Treasure Coast Region, was incorporated in October of 2006 and the first Town Council was seated in March of 2007. The Town is located in east central Palm Beach County, immediately west of the Village of Royal Palm Beach and north of the Village of Wellington (see Exhibit 1). The Town’s population is estimated at approximately 4,000.

The Town has proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the Comprehensive Plan, and has requested a formal review of the amendments. The Town is operating under the FLUM designations as assigned under the County Comprehensive Plan until the Town can prepare and adopt its own comprehensive plan.
Evaluation

The proposed amendments are to 1,543 separate parcels of land totaling approximately 5,750 acres (see Exhibit 2). This represents approximately 73 percent of the Town land area. The subject lands are bordered by the territory of unincorporated Palm Beach County to the north and west, the Village of Royal Palm Beach to the east, and the Village of Wellington to the south. The subject properties are used for residential or agricultural purposes, or are vacant. No changes in existing land use are currently proposed.

The present FLUM designation on the properties is Rural Residential 10 (RR-10), maximum one dwelling unit per ten acres. The proposed FLUM designation is Rural Residential 5 (RR-5), maximum one dwelling unit per five acres. The existing land use on surrounding lands includes a conservation area to the north, Southern Boulevard with the Village of Wellington beyond to the south, large lot residential and conservation uses to the east, and large lot residential development to the west. The FLUM designations on surrounding lands include Conservation to the north; residential in the Village of Wellington to the south; RR-5, Conservation and Institutional to the east, and RR-5, RR-2.5 and Conservation to the west.

The Town considers these to be corrective amendments to more accurately reflect the existing land use pattern/density. In 2001, Palm Beach County adopted a similar amendment (RR-10 to RR-5) for 1,800 acres to the immediate east of the subject property that also became part of the incorporated Town of Loxahatchee Groves. The proposed amendments are consistent with a recommendation that appears in the 1995 Loxahatchee Groves Neighborhood Plan. The amendment materials indicate that only 168 of the 1,543 affected parcels will have the capacity to increase density as a result of this amendment. The majority (70 percent) of these parcels will be able to accommodate only one additional unit. The amendments are considered to be consistent with the County Management Growth Tier System. The Town indicates that facilities and services are available to serve the amendment sites at the adopted levels of service.

Extrajurisdictional Impacts

The Town is currently not a member of the Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination Program; therefore the proposed amendments were not processed by the Plan Amendment Review Committee. However, the Town indicated that the Villages of Royal Palm Beach and Wellington, as well as the County, were copied with the amendment package. The Town has thus far received no objections to the proposed amendment.

Effects on Significant Regional Resources or Facilities

Analysis of the proposed amendments indicates that they would not have adverse effects on significant regional resources or facilities.
Analysis of Consistency with Strategic Regional Policy Plan

The proposed amendments are not in conflict with the goals and policies of the Regional Plan.

Consistency with Strategic Regional Policy Plan

The contract agreement between the DCA and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council requires Council to include a determination of consistency with the SRPP as part of the written report to be submitted to the DCA. Council finds the proposed amendments to be CONSISTENT with the SRPP.

Recommendation

Council should adopt the above comments and instruct staff to transmit the report to the Department of Community Affairs.

Attachments
List of Exhibits

Exhibit

1  General Location Map
2  Loxahatchee Groves Future Land Use Designations
3  RR-5 Amendment Impacts
4  2006 Aerial
Exhibit 1
General Location Map
Town of Loxahatchee Groves
EXHIBIT 2

Map - Loxahatchee Groves Future Land Use Designations

Amendment No.: 07-01 (Rural FLUA Revisions - Loxahatchee Groves)

Amendment: From Rural Residential, 1 unit per 10 acres (RR-10) to Rural Residential, 1 unit per 5 acres (RR-5).

Location: The portion of the Town that is currently RR-10.

Size: Approximately 5,750 acres

Property No.: Various, available on request
Exhibit 3
RR-5 Amendment Impacts