

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members AGENDA ITEM 5N

From: Staff

Date: September 19, 2008 Council Meeting

Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review
Draft Amendments to the St. Lucie County Comprehensive Plan
DCA Reference No. 08PEFE-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

St. Lucie County is proposing a new element entitled Public School Facilities Element (PSFE) and revisions to the Future Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Recreation and Open Space, Capital Improvements, and Intergovernmental Coordination Elements of the County Comprehensive Plan. The County has requested that the amendments be formally reviewed by the DCA.

In 2005, the Florida Legislature amended Section 163.3180, Florida Statutes, to require the implementation of public school concurrency. Each local government is required to adopt a PSFE as part of its comprehensive plan and amend its Intergovernmental Coordination and Capital Improvements Elements to be consistent. The PSFE must address school level of service, school utilization, school proximity and compatibility with residential development, availability of public infrastructure, co-location

opportunities and financial feasibility. Rule 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code, contains the minimum requirements for the PSFE.

Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes requires that “the county and municipalities located within the geographical area of a school district shall enter into an interlocal agreement with the district school board which jointly establishes the specific ways in which the plans and processes of the district school board and the local governments are to be coordinated.” The Interlocal Agreement for Coordinated Planning and School Concurrency for St. Lucie County, which became effective on December 13, 2003, is being amended and restated.

Evaluation

Following are the highlights of the proposed amendments:

1. Future Land Use Element
 - a. Revised Policy 1.1.17.3 indicates that schools shall not be located outside the urban service area, although there are some minor exceptions. A new exemption is if the school is in a planned development where such location has been identified through a comprehensive and community-based planning effort, through a meaningful public participation process such as that utilized for the Towns, Villages and Countryside.
 - b. Revised Policy 1.1.17.4 includes an entirely new list of criteria to be considered during the evaluation of a public school site.
2. Transportation Element
 - a. Revised Objective 2.3.2 indicates the transportation system shall accommodate bicycle and pedestrian design and facility requirements.
 - b. Revised Policy 2.3.2.2 addresses bicycle and pedestrian access to public and private facilities, including schools.
 - c. Revised Policy 2.3.3.1 addresses the establishment of bicycle and pedestrian facilities around schools.
3. Housing Element
 - a. Revised Objective 5.2.4 is to establish a housing task force to identify housing needs; and Policy 5.2.4.1 indicates that the task force is to include a member of the St. Lucie County School Board.
4. Capital Improvements Element
 - a. Revised Objective 11.1.4 indicates the County will coordinate land use decisions and fiscal resources with the schedule of capital improvements.

5. Intergovernmental Coordination Element

- a. Minor revisions to Objective 10.1.3 regarding coordination with other units of local government, including the school board.

6. Public School Facilities Element

This is an entirely new Element of the County Comprehensive Plan. The stated goals are to ensure that the County will:

- Collaborate with the County School Board to plan for public school capacity to accommodate the projected enrollment demand for the five, ten, and twenty year planning periods.
- Provide adequate public school capacity to accommodate enrollment demand with a financially feasible facilities work program.
- Provide safe and secure schools sited within well-designed communities.
- Promote and optimize intergovernmental cooperation for effective future planning of public school facilities.
- Monitor and evaluate the PSFE.

The County has placed a good deal of emphasis on community and urban design in the location criteria for new schools. Objective 3.1 addresses the standards and criteria to guide the location of future schools. Schools and development are discouraged outside the urban service area (Policy 3.1.3). Objective 3.2 indicates the County will strive to see that schools are the focal points of community planning and design. Other objectives deal with siting standards for schools, development standards for schools, and coordination of support infrastructure.

Extrajurisdictional Impacts

Under the informal agreement established by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, local governments in the northern three counties of the region are to provide copies of amendment materials to other local governments that have expressed an interest in receiving such materials. In its transmittal letter to DCA dated August 15, 2008, the County indicated that amendment materials were provided to Fort Pierce, Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie Village, Indian River County, and Martin County. By memo dated August 29, 2008, Council requested comments from these local governments regarding the proposed amendments. As of the date of preparation of this report no comments have been received.

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

Comments/Recommendations

The amendments are considered to be consistent with the SRPP. Council offers the following comment for consideration by the County:

1. There is no Objective 3.3 in the Public School Facilities Element. The County should clarify whether language has been inadvertently omitted, or whether there is a numbering error.

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

**Exhibit 1
General Location Map**

