

TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members AGENDA ITEM 5R

From: Staff

Date: February 20, 2009 Council Meeting

Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review
Draft Amendments to the Village of Wellington Comprehensive Plan
DCA Reference No. 09-1ER

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 Village of Wellington has proposed text amendments to all elements of the Village Comprehensive Plan. The amendments are pursuant to an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) that was adopted by the Village on May 22, 2007 and found sufficient by the DCA on July 30, 2007. The Village has requested that a formal review of the amendments be carried out by the DCA.

Community Profile (from Village web-site)

The Village of Wellington was incorporated in 1995. It has a land area of approximately 53.5 square miles and an estimated 2008 population of 58,179.

In 1951, several tracts of land were assembled and purchased by Charles Oliver Wellington, a very successful accountant and investor from New York. Shortly following

the land purchases, the State of Florida passed legislation creating the Acme Drainage District. The initial purpose of the district, created in 1953, was to provide for drainage and flood control on the assembled acreage and make the property suitable for agriculture. This was a huge undertaking as the total size of the tract was over 16,000 acres. This drastically changed the entire landscape. Portions of the land were sold or leased to area farmers for cultivation. The area that is known as Wellington was once the world's largest strawberry patch.

Major construction did not begin until the first large tract of land, 7,400 acres was sold to the Investment Corporation of Florida (ICOF) in 1971. In 1972, a joint venture between ICOF and Alcoa Aluminum was formed to begin the construction of a new community. Shortly after construction began, hundreds of homes began selling.

A group of Wellington residents succeeded in getting a referendum of incorporation on a ballot. A vote was taken in November 1995, and the Village of Wellington was officially born on December 31, 1995. Official operations commenced on March 28, 1996.

In 1953, fewer than 100 individuals resided in the area. Today, the Village is an affluent and thriving community offering a diversity of residential types. The Village of Wellington includes equestrian facilities, horse farms, agriculture and nurseries. The primary sources of employment within the Village are construction, agriculture and retail sales.

Evaluation

The EAR indicated that the Village experienced significant growth since the preparation of the 1999 comprehensive plan, and at a rate much higher than anticipated. A significant amount of vacant land remained in 2007, and the potential for additional annexations existed. Background narrative with the EAR-related amendments indicates however, that the Village is approaching "buildout" conditions, and no extensive annexations of contiguous, undeveloped lands are anticipated. The major issues selected by the Village for evaluation during the EAR process were:

1. Development of a master plan for the State Road 7 corridor in order to coordinate land-use planning and transportation planning for the provision of job centers, and for a potential amendment of the County Constrained Roadway at a Lower Level of Service designation for that roadway.
2. Encourage redevelopment of a town center and neighborhood revitalization to reduce traffic impacts by increasing internal trip capture within neighborhoods, and to maintain appearance, value and safety.
3. Encourage and enhance equestrian venues and services within the Equestrian Preserve Area.

Some of the highlights of the EAR-related amendments are as follows:

A. Future Land Use Element

1. New Policy 1.2.14 requires that new development connect to the Village reclaimed water system where available.
2. New Policy 1.3.1.1 indicates that the prohibition on additional Community Commercial land uses shall not apply to areas located within a Village approved area-wide redevelopment plan.
3. A new section is added to Policy 1.3.2.4 (Mixed Use) to more clearly define the type of mixed use development that is permitted.
4. New Policy 1.5.5 indicates the Village may allow a density bonus for the development of congregate living facilities.
5. New Policy 1.5.6 references the ongoing Village Economic Development Initiative, that includes:
 - Sustainable Development
 - Medical Arts District
 - Village Center
 - Town Center
 - Equestrian Community
 - Housing/Redevelopment
 - Forest Hill Boulevarding
 - Flex Zoning
6. A number of changes are proposed to Objectives 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 regarding corridor planning in the State Road 7 corridor.

B. Transportation Element

1. Policy 1.1.13 is revised to indicate the Village will encourage Palm Beach County to revise the 2025 Roadway Network Map and other appropriate documents to show South Shore Boulevard and Lake Worth Road between Pierson Road and 120th Street as two-lane, rather than four-lane cross sections.
2. New Policy 1.3.4 is to coordinate with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the urban interchange at Forest Hill Boulevard and State Road 7.
3. New Policy 1.4.2 is to coordinate with Palm Tran and the MPO regarding a park and ride facility at or near the Wellington Green Mall.
4. Revised Objective 1.6 encourages the use of mass transit along major roadways.

C. Housing Element

1. Revised Objective 1.2 deletes reference to very low, low and moderate income households and replaces it with reference to “workforce housing”. The objective is modified to indicate that market conditions make the provision of such housing within the Village difficult, and the need for such housing is met at locations outside the Village.
2. New Objective 1.8 and its supporting policies encourage a variety of housing options for existing and future senior residents of the Village.

D. Infrastructure Element

1. Revised Policy 1.2.2 indicates the Village shall take steps to ensure water quality in Basin B.
2. Revised Policy 1.3.3 indicates the Village shall strive to expand and promote the use of reclaimed water for irrigation purposes.

E. Conservation Element

1. Revised Policy 1.2.13 indicates the Village has adopted Best Management Practices to minimize the negative impacts of animal waste, stormwater discharge and land development on water quality within Basin B.
2. New Policy 1.2.17 is to continue to preserve the use of treated sewage affluent for irrigation of Village property.
3. New Policy 1.2.18 is to continue to install additional lines for further distribution of treated affluent throughout the Village for irrigation purposes.

F. Recreation and Open Space Element

1. New Policy 1.2.2 is to ensure an adequate supply of recreational land is available. A standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents of recreation land is adopted.
2. New Policy 1.3.1 is to adopt and maintain a recreational impact fee ordinance and a companion residential parks land dedication requirement program.

G. Intergovernmental Coordination Element

1. Objective 1.4 is to implement policies related to annexation and multiple jurisdiction planning for the State Road 7 Corridor as provided in the Future Land Use Element.

H. Equestrian Preservation Element

1. New Objective 1.1 identifies and lists the purposes and intent of the Village's Equestrian Preserve Area and Equestrian Overlay Zoning District.
2. New Policy 1.2.1 commits the Village to use the Future Equestrian Circulation Map to prioritize capital improvements projects that improve safety for pedestrians and equestrians.
3. New Policies 1.2.6 and 1.2.7 indicate that reports will be prepared regarding current and future equestrian trails, improvements and enhanced equestrian crossings.

I. Education Element

1. Objective 1.2 indicates the Village has established an educational advisory committee which will monitor all activities in public schools that serve Village residents.

J. Public School Facilities Element

1. Revised Objective 2.1 is to continue participating in the Countywide Issues Forum and the Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee (IPARC) to coordinate county-wide issues for schools and related facilities.

Extrajurisdictional Impacts

The Village provided notification of the proposed amendments to the IPARC. A notice was distributed by IPARC on October 24, 2008. As of the date of this report, Council is not aware of any significant extrajurisdictional impacts that will occur as a result of the amendments.

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 for Modification

Future Land Use Element

1. Under the Subject of Annexation and Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Issues, Objectives 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 all address corridor planning on the State Road 7 Corridor. Revisions made to Objectives 1.7 and 1.8 would result in a lack of clarity regarding the Village's intent. The Village is encouraged to consolidate and simplify these objectives to clearly indicate the City's intent for corridor planning and redevelopment. Consistent with the Village EAR, a policy should be added to indicate the Village will encourage/require affordable housing for the workforce in the State Road 7 Corridor.

Housing Element

2. Despite the decline in housing prices in recent months, adequate and affordable housing for the workforce remains a key growth management issue. Council has recommended that all local governments in the Region review their Housing Element policies to ensure there is adequate support for programs and

strategies to facilitate the development of housing units that are affordable to the workforce. Since each local government is different, they should utilize the appropriate set of regulations, incentives and programs that will be most effective given local conditions.

Unlike several other local governments in Palm Beach County, the Village of Wellington did not consider workforce housing to be a major issue to be evaluated in the EAR. It was identified as an issue, however, and the EAR indicated that the Housing Element should be amended to address the provision of workforce housing in or adjacent to Wellington. The EAR did not provide an up-to-date assessment of the availability of affordable housing for the workforce, or indicate how current shortages would be addressed or future needs would be met. In the review of the EAR, Council encouraged the Village to adopt clear policies and standards for the provision of affordable housing; and to consider policies to require the provision of affordable housing as a condition of approval for development and redevelopment.

A review of the proposed amendments to the Housing Element indicates that the Village has not proposed new objectives or policies to address affordable housing for the workforce. Narrative proposed as a revision to Objective 1.2 indicates that market conditions make the provision of low and moderate income housing within the Village difficult, and that those needs have been met in locations largely outside the Village. New Objective 1.3 indicates that the existing workforce housing in the Village will be preserved by market forces and the Village's stringent aesthetic standards. No new policy language is proposed that would indicate specifically how the current shortage of affordable housing for the workforce will be addressed or how future needs will be met.

The shortage of housing affordable to meet the needs of the workforce in Palm Beach County has been well documented. While those needs may vary somewhat from community to community, it is time for local governments to implement specific programs and strategies to meet these needs. As soon as possible, the Village should clearly indicate, in policy, what programs will be implemented, what incentives will be offered and what tools will be utilized to ensure that at least a proportion of all new housing will be affordable to the workforce, and how existing affordable housing shortages will be addressed. An entire tool box of programs and strategies (accessory dwelling units, reduction of regulatory barriers, inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, community land trusts, impact fee assistance, trust funds, etc) is available. The Village needs to select those tools that are appropriate, include them as implementing policies in the comprehensive plan, and move forward to address the workforce housing problem.

3. Objective 1.1, which currently calls for the Village to assist the private sector in providing new development that would result in a variety of housing types, sizes and costs, is to be deleted. It is to be replaced by a narrative regarding

recent permitting and construction of new units. This language does not constitute an objective. Furthermore, the deletion of the existing language is not considered consistent with the SRPP which calls for a range of housing types and affordabilities in proximity to employment and services (Regional Goal 2.2) and to ensure that all areas have a reasonable mix of housing, employment opportunities and services (Strategy 2.2.1).

4. Policy 2.2.2.1 of the SRPP indicates that local governments should carefully assess their existing housing stock and their existing needs during the preparation of the EAR. The Village has not provided such an assessment. The Village has indicated the affordable housing for the workforce has been provided in locations largely outside the Village. A current assessment should be prepared so that conclusions can be made based on up-to-date information. This assessment should include those areas outside the Village where needs are being met.
5. Objective 1.2, which currently indicates the Village will provide adequate sites for current housing for the very low, low and moderate income households has been modified. Language regarding very low, low and moderate income households has been replaced with the term workforce housing. However, workforce housing is not defined. The Village should define workforce housing. Furthermore, the Village EAR suggests that the Village anticipates workforce housing can be provided during the redevelopment of the State Road 7 Corridor, the redevelopment of the Town Center and neighborhood revitalization. However, no policies are proposed to clearly indicate this is Village policy. Such policies would be appropriate, under this objective, or elsewhere in the comprehensive plan.

Conservation Element

6. Proposed Policy 1.2.13 regarding best management practices to improve water quality should be revised to indicate it is Village policy. It currently reads as a statement of past accomplishments.

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; with the exception of the revisions to Objective 1.1 and the Housing Element that are considered to be INCONSISTENT with the SRPP. Council also recommends that the Village make additional modifications to the proposed amendments as recommended in the above comments.

Recommendation

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

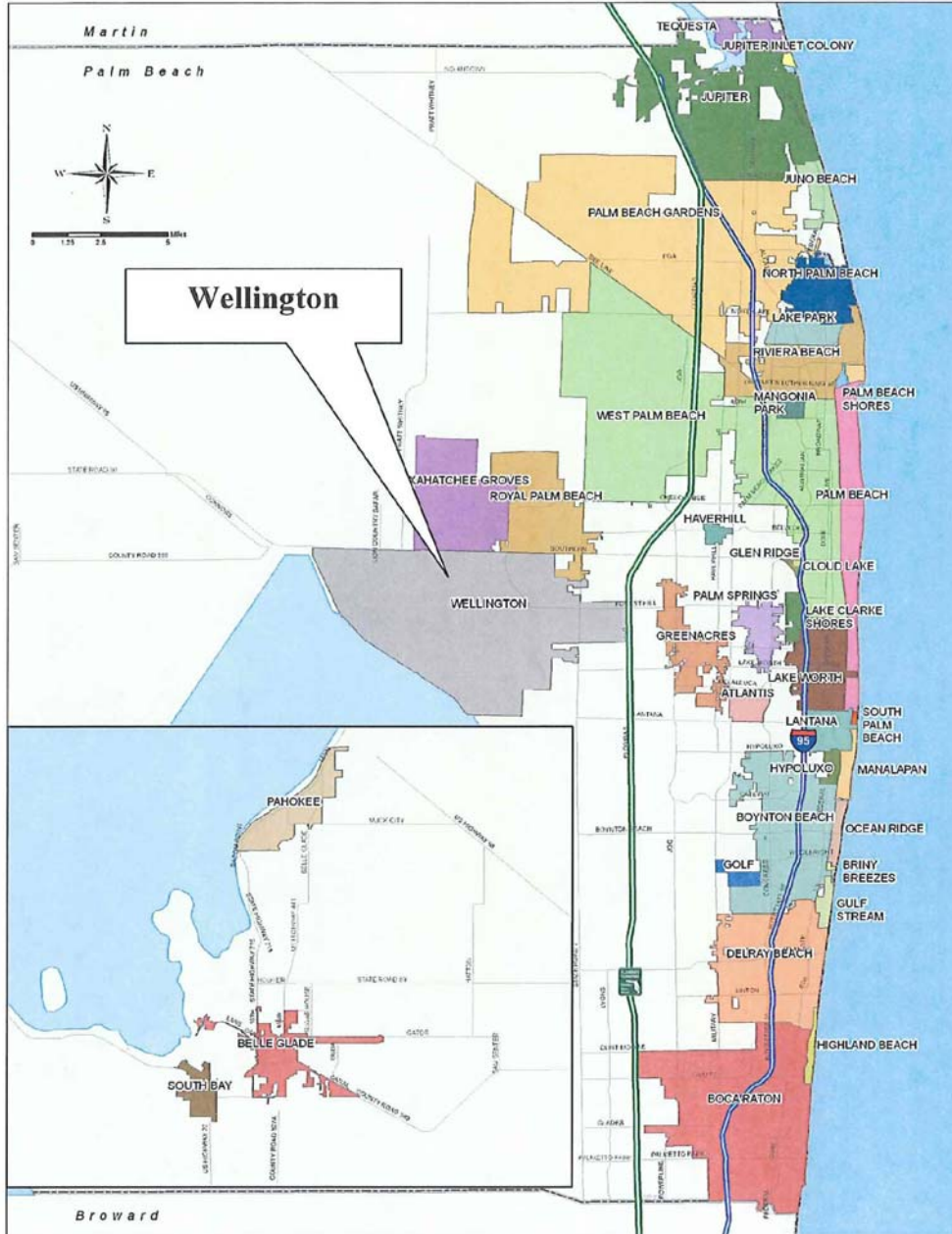
Attachments

List of Exhibits

Exhibit

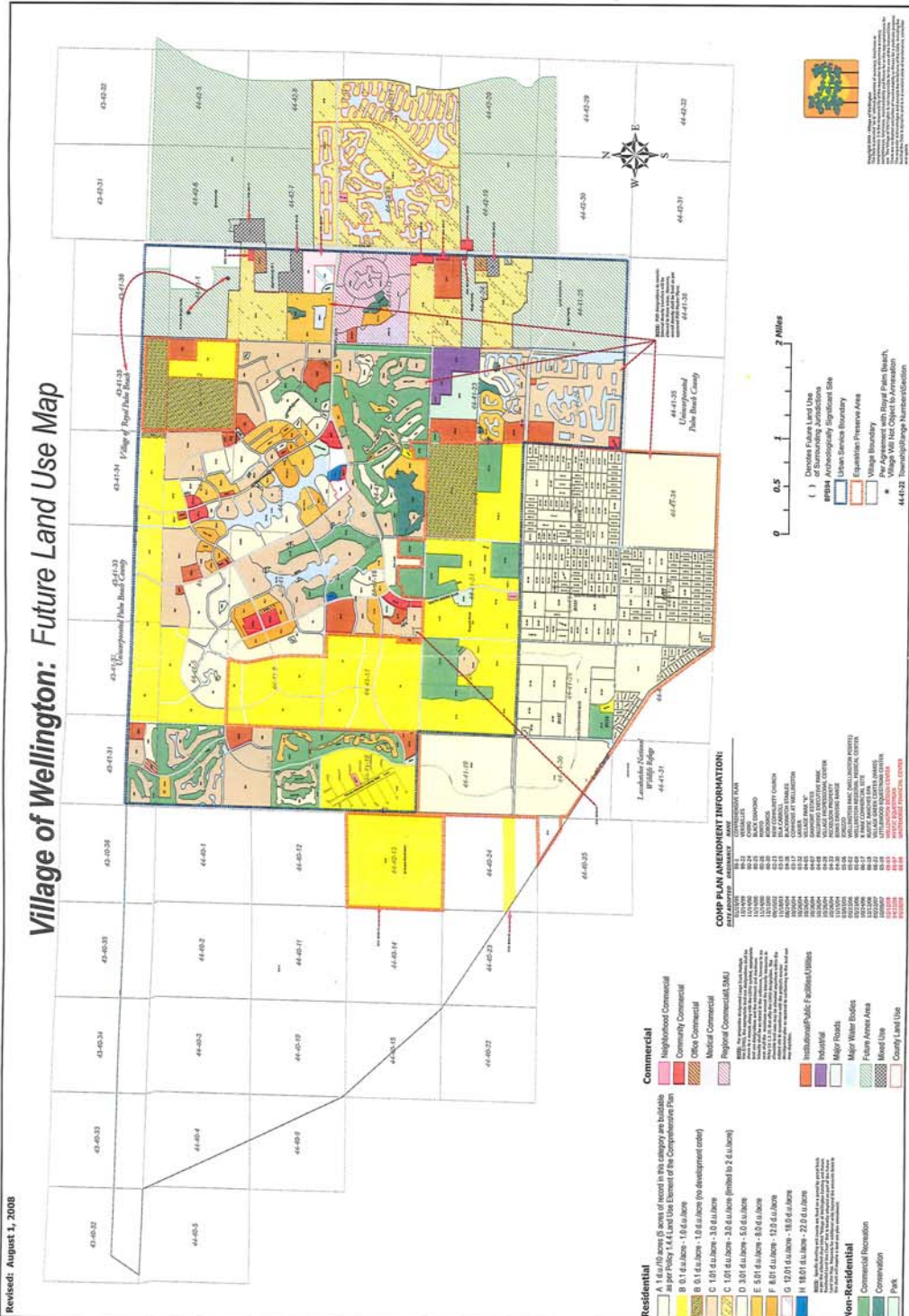
- 1 General Location Map
- 2 Future Land Use Map
- 3 Future Transportation
- 4 Equestrian Trails Master Plan

Exhibit 1 General Location Map Village of Wellington



Village of Wellington: Future Land Use Map

Revised: August 1, 2008



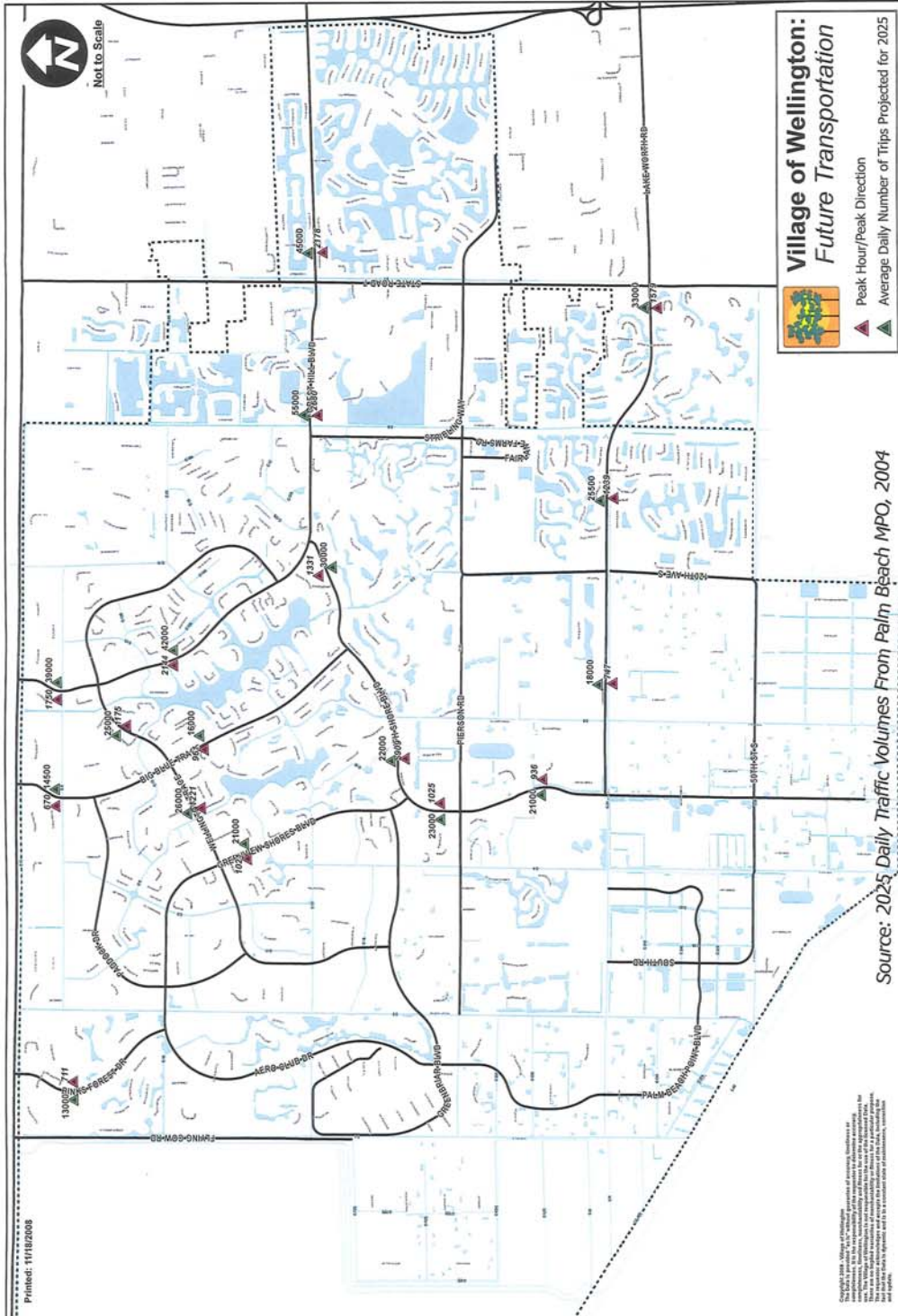


Exhibit 4

