To: Council Members  
From: Staff  
Date: May 21, 2010 Regional Planning Council Meeting  
Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review  
Draft Amendments to the Village of Wellington Comprehensive Plan  
DCA Reference No. 10-1  

Introduction  

The Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act, Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, requires that the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) 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 the TCRPC 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 one amendment to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and text amendments to the Future Land Use, Transportation, Housing and Conservation Elements of the Village Comprehensive Plan. The Village has requested that a formal review of the amendments be carried out by the DCA.

Evaluation  

A. FLUM Amendments  

The proposed amendment is for the 150 acre McCarthy property located on the west side of Flying Cow Road (16th Avenue North) and approximately 4.5 miles south of State Road 800, at the extreme western edge of the Village (see Exhibits 2 and 3).
The current use includes a tree farm and one residential dwelling. The proposed use is for a residential/equestrian development.

The current FLUM designation is Rural Residential (RR-10), a County designation. The property was annexed in separate parcels, in 2004 and 2005. The proposed FLUM designation under the Village Plan is Residential “B” (maximum of one dwelling unit per acre). The existing land uses on surrounding property includes agricultural uses to the north, a residential subdivision to the east and the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (Water Conservation Area #1) to the south and west. FLUM designations on surrounding properties are Residential “B” and RR-10 to the north, Residential “A” to the east and Conservation (County designation) to the south and west.

The 2005 Annexation Agreement required the dedication of right-of-way to the Village along Flying Cow Road for the construction of a roundabout. The amendment is to be conditioned on a maximum of 30 dwelling units (approximate density of one unit per 5 acres), which is more consistent with existing development to the north and east. The property is also to be incorporated into the Village Equestrian Preserve. According to the Village, there should be no problems in maintaining adopted levels of service as a result of the amendment.

B. Text Amendments

The purpose of the amendments is to conform to Florida House Bill 697 of 2008 which requires incorporation of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies into the comprehensive plan. Specifically, HB 697 requires:

1. Future land use elements to discourage urban sprawl; energy-efficient land use patterns accounting for existing and future electric power generation and transmission systems; greenhouse gas reduction strategies.
2. Traffic-circulation elements to incorporate transportation strategies to address reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.
3. Conservation elements to include factors that affect energy conservation.
4. Housing elements to include energy efficiency in the design and construction of new housing and use of renewable energy resources.
5. Land use map or map series to be contained in the future land use element and depict energy conservation.

The Village has proposed new or revised goals, objectives and policies to address GHG reduction. The Village indicates that their “core” GHG reduction strategies are:

1. Reduction of the “heat island” effect. The heat island effect occurs when developed urban areas have significantly higher average temperatures than the rural areas surrounding them.
2. Discouragement of sprawl and encouragement of development and redevelopment by using energy efficient land use patterns.
3. Protection and enhancement of the tree canopy.
4. Reduction of vehicular miles traveled.

Some corrective changes are also being made to the map series for the subject elements. Some of the most significant amendments are referenced below:

1. Future Land Use Element
   a. New Policy 1.3.8 indicates the Village shall continue to accommodate and protect existing and future energy efficient electric power generation and transmission systems.

2. Transportation Element
   a. New Policy 1.1.17 is to identify and estimate costs of completing missing links needed to complete the bicycle and pedestrian circulation plan.
   b. New Policy 1.1.18 is to ensure new development contains sidewalks, pedestrian and bicycle related amenities.
   c. New Policy 1.1.19 is to ensure new development is linked to surrounding development and amenities.
   d. New Policy 1.1.20 addresses safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the vicinity of the new municipal complex and adjacent recreational facilities.
   e. New Policy 1.7.4 is to ensure development or redevelopment along major transportation corridors accommodates mass transit.
   f. New Policy 1.10.5 is to promote car pooling.

3. Housing Element
   a. New Policy 1.9.1 is to promote development and redevelopment that utilize compact building design principles, promotes pedestrian activity and support multi-modal transportation options.
   b. New Policy 1.9.3 is to encourage mixed use development and higher residential densities along major transportation corridors and nodes.
   c. New Policy 1.96 is to allow use of alternative, renewable sources of energy including use of solar panels in residential areas.
d. New Policy 1.9.7 is to provide education materials on energy saving strategies, including landscaping materials to reduce energy consumption.
e. New Policy 1.9.8 is to allow home-based businesses in residential areas.

4. Conservation Element

a. New Policy 1.7.1 includes promotion of reduction of municipal waste.
b. New Policies 1.7.2 and 1.7.3 address education and efforts to promote green initiatives and energy efficiency.
c. New Policy 1.7.4 addresses reduction of emissions by municipal employees.
d. New Policy 1.7.5 is to consolidate municipal offices at a central municipal complex to maximize efficiency and reduce travel.

Extrajurisdictional Impacts

The proposed amendments were provided to the Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee and were noticed to surrounding local governments and potentially affected agencies on January 20, 2010 and February 22, 2010. Council is not aware of any objections to the proposed 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

The proposed FLUM amendment is not in conflict with the SRPP. Policy 3.2.2.2 of the SRPP is to encourage, maintain and expand industries such as equine….. to diversify agricultural activity and encourage continued agricultural land use. While five acre lots are too small for most bona-fide agricultural uses, equestrian development of the nature proposed is important to support the equine industry in the region.

The proposed text amendments were in part based on, and are considered consistent with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council Energy Task Force publication entitled “Energy Planning in the Twenty-First Century – A Guide for Florida Communities” (December, 2009).
Consistency with Strategic Regional Policy Plan

The contract agreement with the DCA requires the TCRPC to include a determination of consistency with the SRPP as part of the written report to be submitted to the DCA. The TCRPC finds the proposed amendments to be CONSISTENT with the SRPP.

Recommendation

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning 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  Amendment Location Map
4  Zoning Map
Exhibit 2
Future Land Use Map