TREASURE COAST REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Council Members  
AGENDA ITEM 5G

From: Staff

Date: October 15, 2010 Council Meeting

Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review
Draft Amendments to the Martin County Comprehensive Plan
DCA Reference No. 10-2

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

Martin County has proposed two amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the County Comprehensive Plan. The County has requested the DCA to carry out a formal review of the amendments.

Evaluation

The proposed FLUM amendments are for property referenced by the County as the Atlantic Ridge State Preserve. Information about the amendments is shown in Table 1. The property consists of two separate and non-contiguous parcels (see Exhibits). The larger Atlantic Ridge Parcel, 4,869.7 acres in size, is located south of Cove Road. The smaller Medalist Property is 877 acres in size, and is located north of Bridge Road and west of U.S. 1.
Table 1  
Proposed Amendments to the Future Land Use Map  
Martin County Comprehensive Plan  
DCA Reference No. 10-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amendment Number/Name</th>
<th>Approx. Acreage</th>
<th>Current FLUM Designation</th>
<th>Proposed FLUM Designation</th>
<th>Approximate Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Atlantic Ridge Parcel</td>
<td>4,869.7</td>
<td>LDR (376.3 acres) EDR (1003.9 acres)</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>South of Cove Road, between I-95 and U.S. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RDR (2626.0 acres) AR (863.5 acres)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Medalist Property</td>
<td>877.0</td>
<td>LDR (268.0 acres) RDR (609.0 acres)</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>North of Bridge Road and west of U.S. 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,746.7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key to FLUM Designations

- **LDR** Low Density – 5 dwelling units per acre
- **EDR** Estate Density Residential – 1 or 2 dwelling units per acre
- **RDR** Rural Density – 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres
- **AR** Ag Ranchette – 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres
- **IR** Institutional Recreation - lands are designed for activity-based and resource-based recreational uses and typically contain recreational facilities and substantial access improvements
- **IC** Institutional Conservation - publicly owned areas designed for conservation uses

A. Atlantic Ridge Parcel

This property consists primarily of native upland and wetland habitat. However, there is an existing house and maintenance shed on the northwest portion of the property. Parts of the property have been impacted by drainage ditches, trails and maintenance roads. The proposed use is for a native preserve and passive recreational area. Public access to this property will be provided from Cove Road.

The property has multiple FLUM designations of Low Density, Estate Density, Rural Density and Agricultural Ranchette. The proposed FLUM designation is Institutional Recreational. The existing land uses and FLUM designations on surrounding lands are:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Use</th>
<th>FLUM Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North</strong></td>
<td>Tres Belle and Summerfield residential development; vacant land</td>
<td>Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Estate Density(1), Estate Density(2), Rural Density Residential, Mobile Home, Rural Density Residential, Low Density Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East</strong></td>
<td>Undeveloped; Lost Lake development</td>
<td>Rural Density Residential, Low Density Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South</strong></td>
<td>Vacant; abandoned agricultural land</td>
<td>AgRanchette; Agricultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West</strong></td>
<td>Halpatiokee Regional Park; agricultural</td>
<td>Rural Density Residential, Estate Density(1), Institutional Conservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Medalist Property

This property consists of native upland and wetland habitat. Portions of the property have been impacted by previous drainage activities. The Medalist parcel is under the management of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). No public access is allowed on the Medalist Parcel due to deed restrictions.

The current FLUM designations are Rural Density Residential and Low Density Residential. The proposed FLUM designation is Institutional Conservation. The existing land uses and FLUM designations on surrounding properties are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Use</th>
<th>FLUM Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North</strong></td>
<td>Medalist Golf Club; residential development</td>
<td>Rural Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East</strong></td>
<td>several residential developments</td>
<td>Mobile Home, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South</strong></td>
<td>Hobe Sound Golf Club; residential development</td>
<td>Rural Density Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West</strong></td>
<td>undeveloped</td>
<td>Rural Density Residential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These properties were purchased in 1998 by the State of Florida and the SFWMD with bonds from the P2000/CARL program. Each owner maintains an undivided 50% interest in the property. In 2000, the Atlantic Ridge Parcel was leased to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Division of Recreation and Parks as an agent to manage the property. Under this lease: 1) the property is to be used only for development, conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources; and 2) for resource-based public outdoor recreation compatible with the conservation and protection of the resources.

In March 2010, the DEP requested that the County change the FLUM designation on the Atlantic Ridge Parcel to Institutional Recreational. The parcel is now known as the Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park. The DEP proposes to develop an access road, parking lot, restroom facility, picnic pavilion, pole barn and equestrian trials. The DEP has provided a
Park Management Plan with the request for the FLUM amendment. Access to the proposed trailhead on the Atlantic Ridge Parcel will be from Cove Road.

The Atlantic Ridge Parcel is a component of the Florida Greenways and Trails System. It was purchased to protect and conserve natural resources and represents one of the largest areas of natural land remaining in the coastal area, and contains many unique and rare habitats. It will help protect water quality in the St. Lucie and Loxahatchee River basins.

Section 4.4.M.1.i of the Martin County Future Land Use Element includes policies regarding Institutional FLUM designations. Publicly owned lands must be assigned the appropriate Institutional FLUM designation. The area of the subject properties has been targeted for conservation for many years, according to the County. The Institutional Recreational designation on the Atlantic Ridge Parcel will allow construction of public park facilities on the property. The proposed amendments further several County policies pertaining to diverse recreational opportunities, public access to waterways and protection of natural resources. Public water and sewer services are available to serve the Atlantic Ridge Parcel.

**Extrajurisdictional Impacts**

Under the informal agreement facilitated by the TCRPC, 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. The County provided copies of the amendment materials to all adjacent and nearby local governments. Council sent a memorandum to these local governments on September 13, 2010 seeking comments on any conflicts with the proposed amendments. The proposed amendments should not have any detrimental extrajurisdictional impacts.

**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. In fact, the amendments should help to protect significant resources such as the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers.

**Analysis of Consistency with Strategic Regional Policy Plan**

The proposed amendments are considered to be consistent with the SRPP; specifically with:

- **Strategy 1.1.1**  Preserve and manage complete natural systems as a network of connected natural preserves.
- **Strategy 2.1.1**  Acquire and otherwise preserve and protect significant natural systems and the components of these systems.
- **Policy 2.1.1.2**  Acquire and manage significant natural systems on a cooperative and collaborative effort of all public land acquisition entities.
- **Strategy 6.1.1**  Preserve and manage natural systems as a network of connected natural preserves and promote the establishment of greenway systems in the Region.
Policy 6.1.1.3  Support the establishment of greenway systems to provide opportunities for recreational trails connecting public conservation lands and to provide public access where needed.

Policy 6.1.1.4  Support partnerships between state agencies, local governments, and private corporations to facilitate the development of greenways.

Strategy 6.6.1  Maintain functions and values provided by wetlands and deepwater habitats.

Strategy 6.7.1  Preserve and manage upland natural communities in order to maintain viable populations of all native plant and animal species, and representative stands of each habitat type.

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  Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park – Vicinity Map
3  Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park – Reference Map
4  Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Location Map
5  Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Aerial Map
6  Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Future Land Use Map
7  Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Proposed Future Land Use Map
Exhibit 3
Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park – Reference Map
Exhibit 4
Atlantic Ridge State Preserve – Location Map

LOCATION MAP
CPA 10-23, Atlantic Ridge State Preserve