To: Council Members
From: Staff
Date: May 20, 2011 Council Meeting
Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review
Draft Amendments to the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan
DCA Reference No. 11-1

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

Palm Beach County has proposed text amendments to the Intergovernmental Coordination and Future Land Use Elements of the County Comprehensive Plan. The County has requested a formal review of the proposed amendments by the DCA.

Evaluation

A. Intergovernmental Coordination Element

New Policy 1.4-o is established to identify Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements entered into by the County. Part 1.4-o(1) of the Policy references an agreement with the Village of Palm Springs dated December 2, 2008. This Agreement provides for coordination in identifying and implementing a municipal service area.
The Agreement is consistent with the requirements of Chapter 171.203(9), Florida Statutes, regarding annexation. Chapter 171 encourages local governments to jointly determine how to provide services, establish a more flexible process and adjusting municipal boundaries and other similar matters via an agreement. The purpose of the County/Village Interlocal Agreement of 2008 is to improve efforts to plan for orderly annexation and efficient services.

The County considers this a “housekeeping” amendment. The adoption of the policy to the comprehensive plan is consistent with statutory requirements.

B. Future Land Use Element

This amendment will modify several Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) policies under Sub-Objective 1.2.2 to clarify and add flexibility to existing regulations. The Master Plan for the URA established a long-term vision for the central part of the County. The primary changes:

1) allow an exception to the two-story minimum height requirement for property assigned the Urban Infill Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation;
2) eliminate Special Districts and replace with Alternative Standards; and
3) delete regulations that will be relocated to the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC).

During the 2010 adoption process for the URA Overlay in the comprehensive plan, members of the public expressed concerns regarding the feasibility of implementing some URA Overlay provisions under current economic conditions. The Board of County Commissioners directed County staff to research the issues raised and to report back if revisions were considered necessary.

The amendments are intended to offer more flexibility and clarification of URA requirements, and to acknowledge the economic constraints that exist now and in the immediate future. Six of the policies of the URA are to be revised. Briefly, the revisions include:

1) Policy 1.2.2-b Minor housekeeping changes to the text relevant to the Urban Center FLUM designation.
2) Policy 1.2.2-c Revised to clarify what standards are used in approving projects within the Priority Redevelopment Areas of the URA.
3) Policy 1.2.2-e Revised to reflect ULDC amendments to implement the form-based code requirement for the Priority Redevelopment Areas.
4) Policy 1.2.2-f Revised to reflect the ongoing implementation of the program.
5) Policy 1.2.2-h Requires the establishment of criteria on connectivity in the ULDC.
6) Policy 1.2.2-l Revised to delay by one year the requirement to conduct a stormwater feasibility study.
Extrajurisdictional Impacts

The proposed amendments were provided by the County to the Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee (IPARC) and were circulated by the IPARC Clearinghouse Coordinator on February 14, 2011. Council is not aware of any significant extrajurisdictional impacts that would result from the adoption of 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 text amendments to the Future Land Use Element include four key revisions that relate to redevelopment in the URA Overlay:

1) the reduction of minimum building height requirements to one story for parcels less than one acre in size;
2) the elimination of references to building types (they are now identified in the ULDC);
3) the removal of Specialized Districts language; and
4) the elimination of maximum block size standards.

These revisions should help the County to meet the goals of the URA except for the elimination of maximum block size standards. Maximum block size standards ensure that redevelopment, especially for larger parcels, occurs in a pattern of walkable streets and blocks. Reasonable developable limits to block sizes result in greater options for movement to vehicles and pedestrians, allow greater flexibility in accommodating different uses and scales of buildings, and enhance the viability of transit by providing more direct connections to transit routes and stops.

The 2,500 foot maximum perimeter dimension provided in the current Comprehensive Plan language is an important and conservative safeguard for Palm Beach County. This provision ensures that future large scale redevelopment in the Priority Redevelopment Areas address pedestrian and vehicular mobility, access, and movement options. Council recommends that the County maintain the maximum block size standard in Policy 1.2.2-b.

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  Urban Redevelopment Area Regulating Plan
3  Urban Redevelopment Area Regulating Plan II
Exhibit 1
General Location Map