To: Council Members

From: Staff

Date: September 16, 2011 Council Meeting

Subject: Local Government Comprehensive Plan Review
Draft Amendments to the City of Fellsmere Comprehensive Plan
DCA Reference No. 11-1ESR

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. The TCRPC comments are limited to adverse effects on regional resources or facilities identified in the Strategic Regional Policy Plan and extrajurisdictional impacts that would be inconsistent with the comprehensive plan of any local government within the Region. The TCRPC must provide any comments to the local government within 30 days of the receipt of the proposed amendments and must also send a copy of any comments to the State Land Planning Agency.

Background

The City of Fellsmere has proposed text amendments to the Future Land Use Element, a new Economic Element and two Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendments to the City Comprehensive Plan. The amendments are to be processed under the Expedited State Review Process.

Evaluation

A. Text Amendments

Objective A-8, the City’s Economic Development Policy, and seven policies to implement the objective are to be deleted. The City proposes to adopt a new Economic Element. All City objectives and policies addressing economic development will appear in the new Element.
B. Economic Element

The City has developed a new Economic Element to be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Element is broad in scope, proactive and emphasizes the achievement of long-term economic development. Goal A of the Economic Element focuses directly on the City providing a high level of government services that will positively affect economic development. Objectives under this goal relate to how the City shall foster an innovative business climate by constantly striving to provide a high level of service to business clients; how the City shall maintain an active network of economic partnerships with local, regional and state organizations to promote economic development; and how the City will ensure that it maintains both an adequate level of service standard on its existing public facilities, and an adequate supply of industrial and commercial land to accommodate future non residential growth.

Goal B of the Element envisions the City achieving a diversified economy through support of local and contributory industries. The City’s targeted industry list is consistent with the clusters identified in Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council’s Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Plan with added emphasis on ecotourism and agricultural opportunities. The objectives and policies developed to support the goal include actions designed to support the growth and development of targeted industries, coordinating land development with the City’s targeted industry list, and providing infrastructure improvements to facilitate economic development.

Goal C of the Element recognizes the City’s proximity to vast conservation, recreation lands and water bodies and seeks to position the City as a unique place to draw visitors from around the world to take advantage of its varied ecotourism and recreational opportunities. In support of this goal, the City has adopted policies relating to coordination with federal and state recreation related agencies to support the development of a master conservation and recreation plan for the City by April 2013, and partnering with the Indian River County historical society to accentuate the City’s historic resources to promote ecotourism.

Importantly, the first goal of the City’s Economic Element relates to the City’s desire to work in partnership with the business community, to maintain a high standard of service delivery, and provide wherever possible an expedited review and permitting process to support business development. Goal A of the Element speaks to the importance of the City developing economic partnerships with such organizations as the Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, Indian River County, and other economic development agencies to coordinate economic development programs and plans, as appropriate.

C. FLUM Amendments

1. Fellsmere Trailhead Preserve

This 85 acre property is located on the north side of CR-512, just west of I-95. The property was purchased by the City in June 2008, in partnership with Indian River County and the Florida Communities Trust. The land is set aside in perpetuity for conservation and outdoor recreation.
The property is currently vacant, containing native habitat consisting of pine flatwoods and wetland prairie. The property is to be a preservation site with some outdoor recreation facilities. The current FLUM designation is Commercial (C-1). The proposed designation is Conservation.

The existing land uses on surrounding properties include conservation uses to the north and west (the St. Sebastian River State Park), the I-95 Corridor to the east and CR-512 to the south. The FLUM designations on surrounding lands are Conservation to the north and west, Low Density Mixed Use Neighborhood and Commercial across I-95 to the east and Agricultural to the south.

The property was annexed by the City on March 5, 2009. The proposed amendment would assign an appropriate FLUM designation consistent with the conservation easement. Approximately 20 acres of the site will be developed with a welcome center, picnic area, playground, walking trails, an obstacle course and camp sites.

2. Cell Tower Parcel

This small, one-acre parcel was purchased by the City in 2008, and annexed on March 5, 2009. It was originally part of the property discussed above. The property contains a cell tower with supporting ancillary facilities. No change is proposed in the use.

The current FLUM designation is Commercial (C-1). The proposed designation is Public. The existing land uses on surrounding properties include native upland and wetland habitat to the north and west, commercial development to the east and CR-512 to the south. The FLUM designations on surrounding properties includes Commercial (to be changed to Conservation) to the north and west, Commercial to the east and Agricultural across CR-512 to the south.

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 City provided copies of the amendment materials to the County and to surrounding local governments. On June 16, 2011, Council sent a memo to Indian River County, and the Cities of Sebastian, Vero Beach and Palm Bay seeking comments regarding any potential areas of conflict with 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

The TCRPC finds the proposed amendments to be CONSISTENT with the SRPP. The use of the Fellsmere Trailhead Preserve property for conservation and outdoor recreation is consistent with Regional Goals 6.1, A sustainable countryside; 6.6, Protection of wetlands and deepwater habitats; and 6.7, Protection of upland natural communities and ecosystems. The City and its partners are encouraged to minimize the negative impacts to native upland habitat on the site that will result from the development of the planned recreational facilities. A management plan for the preserve should address the maintenance of existing wildlife populations and the prevention of the invasion of nuisance and exotic vegetation.

Recommendation

The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council should adopt the above comments and instruct staff to transmit the report to the City and the State Land Planning Agency.

Attachments
List of Exhibits

Exhibit

1  General Location Map – City of Fellsmere
2  Location Map
3  Future Land Use Map 1-1A
4  Future Land Use Map 1-1B
5  Generalized Adjacent Land Uses Map
Exhibit 1
General Location Map
City of Fellsmere