



**Chapter 2  
Major Issues**

# ISSUE 1

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Ability of the Managed Growth Tier System and Future Land Uses to Accommodate Future Population and Development Activities

## ISSUE STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND

This issue deals with the ability of the County to accommodate future population growth and development activities through the Manage Growth Tier Systems (MGTS), while maintaining sustainable communities, protecting natural resources, rural areas and agricultural lands, and preventing urban sprawl.

In 1999, Palm Beach County adopted the MGTS, which created five (5) growth management tiers and is intended to guide the location, type, intensity and form of various types of development patterns consistent with the characteristics of each Tier. This system was adopted with the purpose of ensuring the development and maintenance of sustainable communities by applying smart growth practices that protect the County's natural resources; prevent urban sprawl so that land, facilities and services are used most efficiently; and, provide for the appropriate distribution and arrangement of land uses.

The Tier System established that the bulk of the population growth would occur within the Urban/Suburban Tier. Over the next 15-20 years, it is anticipated that the remaining vacant land within this tier will become depleted through development activities.

### Major changes in the County since the 1996 EAR

Several situations and growth management decisions occurred in Palm Beach County since the last EAR was adopted in 1996:

- The County adopted the MGTS as a new growth management tool after extensive stakeholder input and consensus;
- The County engaged in an optional sector planning process for the Central-Western Communities;
- Similar to other southeast Florida counties, Palm Beach will be reaching buildout of developable lands in less than two decades; finally,
- The world largest private non-profit biomedical research organization, The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) decided to open their east-coast headquarters in Palm Beach County.

The analysis of this issue will address these major situations and initiatives as they relate to the implementation of the MGTS and their impact on the future of Palm Beach County.

### A new growth management strategy

As indicated above, in 1999, Palm Beach County developed and implemented a new growth management approach known as the Managed Growth Tier System (MGTS). The basic premises for the establishment of the MGTS as the main growth management tool for Palm Beach County are described in the Introduction to the Future Land Use Element (FLUE). These basic principles together with the definition of the tier system and the overall county goals and directions delineate a vision for Palm Beach County's future.

Based on the premises of the MGTS, the FLUE is intended to guide the location, type, intensity and form of various types of development patterns that respect the characteristics of particular geographic areas or tiers. This is needed to ensure development and maintenance of sustainable communities through the application of smart growth practices to protect natural resources, prevent urban sprawl, ensure that land, facilities and services are efficiently used, and provide for the appropriate distribution and arrangement of land uses.

The MGTS was the conclusion of a long process representing the consensus of a large group of stakeholders that worked together with the County in the preparation and development of this program. The group of stakeholders was a well dispersed cross-section of all citizens and interest groups in the County.

The County's Comprehensive Plan (Plan) and the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) were amended to apply specific strategies to the several tiers. This was necessary to provide the flexibility to permit the articulation of different, and even contrasting, strategies while maintaining a comprehensive approach to planning. Five distinct areas or tiers were defined and are summarized below:

**Urban/Suburban Tier.** Expected to accommodate most growth in the County, this tier supports a variety of lifestyle choices, ranging from urban to residential estate; however, predominant development patterns are suburban in character. To meet the County's primary goal to create and maintain livable communities, balance growth throughout the County, protect natural resources and provide a variety of lifestyle choices beyond the long term planning horizon, it is imperative that land, services and facilities be used efficiently and effectively.

**Exurban Tier.** The Exurban Tier lies between the Urban and Rural Tiers and supports residential subdivisions predating the Plan. These areas have been considered rural due to a sparse development pattern, large heavily treed lots, presence of small agricultural operations including equestrian uses, and a desire for minimal services and regulation. Growth has marked a change in the character of this area from rural to more suburban and semi-rural, or exurban, as the existing and vested 1.25-acre lots developed with single-family homes. The corresponding increase in population, which is anticipated in the Plan and its population projections, has caused an escalating increase in the demand for services. Recognition of the existing development pattern, demand for services and a desire to maintain the rural character, warrants a specific set of strategies.

**Rural Tier.** The Rural Tier includes agricultural land and rural settlements that range in density from primarily 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres to 1 dwelling unit per 20 acres. These areas support large agricultural operations as well as single-family homes with small family-owned agricultural businesses, including equestrian related uses. Due to the declining availability of land and the increase in population in the Urban and Exurban Tiers, the Rural Tier is beginning to experience pressure for urban densities and nonresidential intensities normally associated with a more urban area. The strategies in the Rural Tier are established to protect and enhance rural settlements that support agricultural uses and equestrian uses.

**Agricultural-Reserve Tier.** The Agricultural Reserve area is a portion of the County that encompasses unique farmland and wetlands. Based on policy direction adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1995, it is to be preserved primarily for agricultural use, if possible. However, if not, it may be developed only at low residential densities. To preserve the area for agricultural use, several programs are offered, including unique development options targeted to achieve the goal of farmland protection and agricultural perpetuation. It is through this

combination of public action and private development that a viable program for the protection of farmlands and the perpetuation of agriculture will occur.

**Glades Tier.** The Glades Tier is generally located west of the Conservation Areas and Twenty Mile Bend, and includes the Glades Communities. This area is designated primarily for specialized agricultural operations. Communities within the Glades Tier are engaged in their own efforts with regard to planning and development. This effort is mainly in the form of economic development programming. The geographical distance and the nature of the issues faced by the Glades communities differ from the challenges faced by the coastal communities to manage growth. These factors warrant a separate initiative to further develop the Glades Tier, in conjunction with the Glades municipalities, business community and area residents.

### **Presence of The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) in the County**

Cluster industries such as TSRI have been an important component of the County's economic base for many years as evidenced by IBM, Pratt-Whitney and Motorola. These industries have induced the creation of high paying jobs, location of related industries in the County, and development of small businesses through the years. Some of these businesses have contended with forces of worldwide demand and competition by significant downsizing and relocation. However, many spin-offs and related industries have stayed in Palm Beach. The County, in cooperation with the private sector, has continued to implement strategies to attract other cluster industries to the County with the purpose of diversifying its economic base and enhancing the quality of life for current and future County residents.

As a result of this intense activity, another major event that occurred in Palm Beach County since the previous EAR was the decision by The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) of La Jolla, California to select Palm Beach County as the preferred location to locate their new biotechnology research and development operations in the East U. S. Coast. TSRI is the world's largest private, nonprofit biomedical research organization.

Early this year the State legislature approved a legislative package setting the legal basis for the location of TSRI in Palm Beach County. Palm Beach County is working with Scripps, the State, local governments, and with public and private economic development organizations to provide an expedited review package for Scripps and to make this project a successful reality for the County and the State of Florida.

The MGTS was developed to address the future of the County and have embedded tools to facilitate the incorporation of new situations and to adapt to the needs and requirements of those new opportunities or constraints. The presence of the TSRI in the County and the positive impacts expected from this event are an opportunity to enhance and enrich the vision for the future of Palm Beach County.

### **ACTIVITIES EXPLORED TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE**

Several strategies were suggested during the identification and development of the EAR Issues for Palm Beach County. They include:

- Encourage the concentration of population growth in the Urban/Suburban Tier and within the cities by promoting redevelopment, revitalization and infill development where appropriate, which allows for increased residential densities and more efficient development patterns consistent with the goals of the Managed Growth Tier System.

- Consider whether the Urban/Suburban Tier and the Urban Service Area Boundary (with increased densities and efficient land use patterns) could be modified or updated.
- Assess the Tier System including a review of the Tier boundaries, considering the separation of the Glades Tier into the Urban Glades Tier and the Everglades Tier (the EAA & conservation areas), the possible creation of a Conservation Tier, and the review and update of the Revitalization and Redevelopment Overlay, including the possible conversion of this overlay into a new Tier. Evaluate the implementation of the Tier System by County departments and agencies.
- Study the potential for increasing residential densities within the Urban/Suburban Tier and promotion of mixed-use and infill development within the Urban/Suburban Tier to continue the concentration of population growth within its boundaries.
- Assess Impacts on the provision of services. The selection of development and growth management alternatives will have an impact on the availability of land for the location of services (schools, parks, etc.); and will also have an impact on water supply, transportation and other services for the projected growth.
- Consider the impact of more intense development within the Urban Service Area Boundary that could be mitigated with the use of alternative development patterns to reduce impacts on traffic, collocate services with developments, etc.

## **ISSUE ANALYSIS**

### **Basic principles of the Managed Growth Tier System**

The Managed Growth Tier System (MGTS) acknowledges the existence of diverse land areas and communities with different lifestyle choices. The system distinguishes among these areas and communities on the basis for their potential to support growth in beneficial ways by ensuring the most cost-effective, efficient use of tax dollars in the provision of public services and by protecting environmental and quality of life features in order to achieve the County's goals.

The MGTS should not be interpreted in terms of whether it would permit, require or limit growth in any tier. Growth may occur in all tiers but with diverse densities and intensities appropriate to the characteristics of each tier. Growth occurs in the urban areas, where higher densities and intensities are needed; in the rural areas where very low density limited residential developments and small-scale agricultural/equestrian activities coexist. In areas dedicated to large-scale agricultural operations residential development is restricted to farm-related dwellings, due to the County's commitment to preserve agriculture.

The tiers may also be adjusted in response to changing conditions or to purposely promote changes that would be beneficial for the community and the region. These modifications can be accomplished with the application of specific criteria in the Plan for tier designation and re-designation that must also be fully consistent with the State's growth management rules and statutes.

### **Development trends and assessment of existing tiers**

As indicated in the issue description and background, developable land in the urban/suburban tier would be depleted in less than two decades. Like many other counties in the southeast

Florida region, our County is also reaching buildout of its developable land. In Miami-Dade and Broward counties, suburban development has sprawled to the fringes of the Everglades National Park and related ecosystems. In Palm Beach County, areas with limited development options in the rural and exurban tiers are experiencing development pressures close to the periphery of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), the A.M. Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge and the Corbett Wildlife Management Area, all of which are part of the northern Everglades ecosystem.

The County considers the EAA as prime agricultural land with regional, state and national significance. Furthermore, some analysts give the EAA global significance in the face of future food shortages in several parts of the world. The tier system calls for the protection of the EAA. Palm Beach County's tier system considers the eastern boundary of the EAA along with the A.M. Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge and the Corbett Wildlife Management Area as firm boundaries to contain western sprawl, similar to the role the eastern Everglades boundary has played in Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

The preferred strategy is then to make a more efficient use of existing developable land during the next planning horizon in the eastern coastal area of the County, east of the L-8 Canal. This strategy entails:

- Encouraging increased densities and intensities where appropriate, and promoting redevelopment, revitalization infill and mixed-use development projects.
- Master planning the Palm Beach County's Biotechnology Research Park and all related uses and complementary new residential areas located in the Mecca Farms property and in western Palm Beach Gardens.
- Implementing the provisions of the Sector Plan process in the Rural and Exurban tiers.

Regarding the presence of Scripps in the County, several immediate steps are being taken including removing the Rural Tier and designating this area as a Limited Urban Service Area in order to allow for the provision of urban levels of services required by the intensity of development activities being proposed for this initiative.

Short-term solutions provided in the EAR recommendations include the possible extension of the Urban/Suburban Tier and the Urban Service Area to incorporate Scripps and other related areas, including any decisions that Palm Beach Gardens may have made regarding their portion of the Scripps initiative and the results of the joint planning efforts between the County and the city.

Smaller portions of the Urban/Suburban Tier may need to be updated to reflect municipal boundary changes. Updates may also be needed to address changes in circumstances in other areas. They may include areas located southwest of the Urban/Suburban Tier near the Broward County line. These areas currently have a Rural Tier Designation and are specifically located South of Site 1, in lands that have been considered by the SFWMD to locate CERP projects. It appears that the District is now considering acquisition of the western portion of this area, but most of the land is no longer considered for that purpose. Adjustments in these areas need to comply with existing tier re-designation criteria in the Comprehensive Plan and with general requirements in the State's rules and statutes applicable to land use amendments. Proposed changes need to be reviewed by the SFWMD for potential impacts on CERP projects in this area.

Other areas where a tier-redesignation may be considered could include City of West Palm Beach properties located west of the Bee Line and North of Northlake Boulevard. The City purchased these properties for water management purposes needed to make a connection between the water Catchment Area and the Loxahatchee Slough. Changes are needed from rural tier designation to conservation, for consistency with the City's land use and zoning designations.

Based on the premises of the preferred managed growth strategy recommended in the analysis of this issue, the general consensus is that the MGTS continues to be valid and an important viable planning tool, even with the location of The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) in Palm Beach County (Palm Beach County Biotechnology Research Park). Developable areas east of the Glades Agricultural Production Area can absorb projected population beyond the year 2025 with current and proposed future land uses, the implementation of mix use development areas where feasible, and the creation of the Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), where increased densities and intensities will be allowed as part of infill, redevelopment and revitalization programs.

In conclusion, the western boundaries of the coastal tiers do not need to be expanded further west in order to accommodate projected population and development activities beyond the County's planning horizon of 2025.

**Review and update the Revitalization and Redevelopment Overlay (RRO). Assess the possible conversion of this overlay into a new tier.**

After reviewing the options and implications of converting the RRO to an urban tier, the general consensus is that the RRO does need to be converted to a new tier to provide a better support vehicle for the County efforts in infill, redevelopment and revitalization. Issue 2 recommends creating a new redevelopment goal in the plan where all redevelopment oriented objectives and policies could be relocated to be more accessible and prominent.

**Evaluate the separation of the Glades Tier into an Urban Glades Tier and an Everglades Tier**

After assessing input from stakeholders and existing policy, it was concluded that the current Glades Tier should be split. The existing urban/suburban tier in the Glades municipalities will be renamed as "Glades Communities Tier". The County will meet with Glades organizations and residents to develop ideas, strategies and directions to address the specific needs of municipalities and settlements in the Glades area, including the creation of specific incentives for the appropriate development and economic growth of the area. Continued coordination with the Office of Community Revitalization (OCR) on formulation of the Glades Communities Tier language and strategies will also occur. Pertinent Comprehensive Plan changes from the Glades Assessment Report should be incorporated in this report.

The balance of the current Glades Tier includes the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) and northern Everglades protection areas. It was believed that addressing this region as a "Glades Protection Tier" would be the most appropriate strategy. Issue 4 addresses more specific analysis and recommendations for this area.

## **Analysis of problems and opportunities**

As indicated before, due to the declining availability of land and the increase in population in the Urban and Exurban Tiers, the Rural Tier is beginning to experience pressure for increased densities and non-residential intensities normally associated with a more urban area. The bulk of this area has been addressed primarily through the sector planning process for the central western communities. As the Sector Plan is being formulated, these pressures have increased due to several factors including: the decision of the Scripps Research Institute to locate in Palm Beach County at the Mecca Farms property which has become a catalyst to increase urban development and land speculation in the western area of the county and prompted the removal of this property from the Sector Plan; other components of the plan have been challenged by attempts by land owners to obtain approvals for large-scale developments through different state processes; other areas within the Sector Plan have been the subject of a proposed annexation by a neighboring municipality; and existing residential communities are considering incorporation. Certain areas located immediately west of twenty-mile bend within the EAA have also shown some development pressure activity.

Due to the continued growth in vested rural and semi-rural subdivisions in the acreage, the area has been retrofitted with needed services such as schools, civic centers, a few shopping centers and other public amenities. Servicing these facilities required the extension of utility lines through portions of the rural service area. The County restricted the provision of urban LOS to non-residential uses and decided not to fund or subsidize any service in the rural service area. This decision was made with the purpose of controlling growth in this area. The unintended consequence of this prohibition was that other service providers extended potable service lines to the unincorporated areas, in particular, to the western communities, to serve individual non-residential projects. The lack of County participation as a service provider had created a void in effective long-term utility planning resulting in duplicative service lines, inefficient service in the RSA, overlapping utility jurisdictions and absence of written agreements defining service area boundaries. In order to address this situation, more realistic policies are proposed lifting PBC self-imposed prohibition, promoting joint utility planning and making PBC the default provider in unincorporated areas of the County not served by any other provider.

These are challenges the County needs to address as the Plan is amended to incorporate EAR recommendations and as the Sector Plan is adopted within the next few years. Many of these situations are evolving as the EAR is being prepared. A comprehensive analysis of these situations and initiatives will be performed in the near future, most probably after adoption of the EAR, when more specific information becomes available.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The general consensus is that the MGTS continues to be valid and an important viable planning tool even with the presence of The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) in Palm Beach County. Developable areas east of the L-8 Canal can absorb projected population through the year 2025 with current and proposed future land uses, including Scripps-related residential development, the implementation of mix use development areas where feasible, and the creation of the Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), where increased densities and intensities will be allowed as part of infill, redevelopment and revitalization programs.

The MGTS was developed to address the future of the County and have embedded tools to facilitate the incorporation of new situations and to adapt to the needs and requirements of new

opportunities or constraints. TSRI locating in the County is an opportunity to enhance and enrich the vision for the future of Palm Beach County.

This EAR has also served to assess how well we have done in making this vision a reality; to suggest some adjustments to strengthen the vision and redirect County actions in the process to achieve that vision, and to incorporate new challenges and opportunities.

The main recommendation is to maintain the tier boundaries with minor adjustments to address changed conditions in a few areas of the County. The overall consensus is that the tier system continues to be valid and the tier tools represented in the form of goals, objectives and policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan shall be utilized to the extent possible in order to maintain the integrity of the tier system as a growth management strategy.

The western boundaries of the coastal tiers do not need to be expanded further west in order to accommodate projected population and development activities beyond the County's planning horizon of 2025.

As the County reaches build-out of developable lands within the urban/suburban, exurban and rural tiers, the preferred strategy is then to make a more efficient use of existing developable land during the next planning horizon. This entails encouraging increased densities and intensities where appropriate, and promoting redevelopment, revitalization infill and mixed-use development projects.

In regards to the Glades Tier, it was concluded that the tier should be split. The existing urban/suburban tier in the Glades municipalities will be renamed as "Glades Communities Tier". The balance of the current Glades Tier includes the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) and northern Everglades protection areas. It was concluded that addressing this region, as a "Glades Protection Tier" would be the most appropriate strategy. Issue 4 has more specific analysis and recommendations for this area.

A management strategy is needed to effectively protect the EAA as a regional resource of food production with distribution in proximity to large population centers. CERP restoration goals necessitate the continuity of this strategy to assure the future sustainability of water resources for human consumption, natural systems and agriculture.

In regards to the Scripps initiative, short-term solutions provided in the EAR recommendations include the possible extension of the Urban/Suburban Tier and the Urban Service Area to incorporate Scripps and other related areas. This additional information includes any decisions that Palm Beach Gardens may have made regarding their portion of the Scripps initiative and the results of the joint planning efforts between the County and the city.

Existing challenges in the Central-Western Communities will be addressed as the Plan is amended to incorporate EAR recommendations and as the Sector Plan is implemented within the next few years. Many of these situations are evolving as the EAR is being prepared. A comprehensive analysis of these situations and initiatives will be performed in the near future, most likely after adoption of the EAR, when more specific information becomes available.

The Revitalization and Redevelopment Overlay (RRO) is recommended for amendment to address the County's strategy of promoting infill, redevelopment and revitalization to more efficiently use remaining developable lands in the County's unincorporated area. Additional

recommendations are presented with Issue 2. The primary RRO amendments involve the following:

- Removing the RRO from all municipalities. The County will continue supporting redevelopment initiatives in municipalities through the Comprehensive Plan by promoting the use of CRA's, TCEA's and other incentives with minor modifications to existing goals, objectives and policies.
- Include the proposed Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) and all other CCRT areas excluded from the RRO. The purpose is to make the same provisions available to the URA in the RRO and most importantly incorporate all CCRT areas into the new RRO.

## ISSUE 2

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### Effectiveness of the County's Infill Development and Redevelopment Initiatives and Comprehensive Plan Policies

#### ISSUE STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND

Infill development and redevelopment can help promote several of the goals and development objectives contained in the Comprehensive Plan and the Tier System. Infill projects can provide housing opportunities to accommodate projected growth, encourage community revitalization, and help reduce urban sprawl. While the Comprehensive Plan and ULDC include language that supports infill development and redevelopment, there is no comprehensive framework or countywide strategy in place to promote quality infill development or to establish priorities and programs that promote targeted infill development and redevelopment. Obstacles to infill and redevelopment include site and area constraints, the lack of adequate infrastructure and cost to provide, upgrade or improve existing infrastructure, the time and costs associated with processing infill projects, excessive regulatory requirements, and community opposition to infill projects.

#### ACTIVITIES EXPLORED TO ADDRESS ISSUE

The following activities were explored regarding this issue:

- Factors which will promote infill include removing regulatory obstacles, creating more flexible development standards, providing improvements to infrastructure, reducing or waiving development fees, establishing differentially tiered impact fees, providing public financial assistance and engaging community to address concerns in order to gain greater acceptance and support for infill development.
- Review Plan's policies in order to provide the basis for a coordinated effort. Infill and redevelopment are mentioned or addressed in different elements and policies in the Comprehensive Plan but are not cohesive. They include: neighborhood plans, infill study, redevelopment and revitalization overlay within the Tier system, the Countywide Community Revitalization Team (CCRT) initiatives and scattered provisions in other elements of the Plan.
- Develop specific strategies to remove and/or help address the existing obstacles to infill before urban redevelopment and reversal of blight can be achieved on a meaningful scale.
- Assess the impact on existing infrastructure and transportation systems when developing and implementing mixed-use projects in cities and older areas of the County.
- Consider increasing densities, intensities and building heights in infill redevelopment areas, along with major capital improvements to promote investment on areas targeted for infill and redevelopment.

- Many infill areas are located within municipalities. Therefore, working with municipalities through interlocal agreements and other joint activities will be needed to make this effort more effective.
- Consider strategies to allow renters to become homeowners or to stay in the area in order to avoid displacement and to maintain and improve the social fabric of existing neighborhoods. Planning for these areas should include the creation of public places as neighborhood epicenters.

## **ISSUE ANALYSIS**

Issue 2 addresses the effectiveness of existing County policies and initiatives regarding Infill development and redevelopment. This is a topic that has received significant attention recently. The Board of County Commissioners has identified redevelopment as one of their primary focus issues. As the County approaches buildout, providing for our future population growth is of significant importance. The County is at a point where we must choose between allowing continued westward expansion or look to direct future growth back east to our developed, urbanized areas. Many of these lands are either underutilized or are infill parcels.

As we address the concepts of Infill and Redevelopment it is important to note that while the two represent different functions we address them together.

For the purpose of the EAR and specifically this issue, the primary point we seek to make is that the County is actively addressing this issue. It is not our intent to perform a review for the purpose of recommending further action. The County is currently engaged in comprehensive redevelopment efforts. We have chosen this issue and performed a review to identify how our current Comprehensive Plan functions in support of redevelopment and to explain how we are currently improving it. As we review the performance of our Comprehensive Plan with regard to Goals, Objectives and Policies there are some successes which can be cited. What stands out, though, is a lack of a cohesive forum for redevelopment.

Recently the County has authorized initiatives supporting redevelopment which include the designation of an Urban Redevelopment Area, Priority Redevelopment Areas, intra-County focus on redevelopment and creation of the Office of Community Revitalization. Their initiative will provide the necessary forum for focusing on redevelopment and continual assessment of County support for redevelopment.

Gauging the actual effectiveness of redevelopment and infill activities is difficult since the last EAR suburban development has been the primary growth pattern in the County. In unincorporated Palm Beach County the redevelopment demand has been limited. However, it is in anticipation of an upcoming demand that the County is making redevelopment a primary focus.

The completion of the Infill/Redevelopment study is the driving force behind the focus on infill and redevelopment. This study is required by the Comprehensive Plan. This study has been completed and presented to the Board of County Commissioners. The study provides the framework for establishing a strategy for infill and redevelopment in Palm Beach County. The abiding theme of its recommendations is to redirect the focus of development to that of a redevelopment and infill perspective.

This has necessitated the County Planning Division meeting with key development review agencies in County government such as Engineering (Traffic and Land Development), Water Resources, Water Utilities, Zoning and the Office of Community Revitalization. Each of these departments/divisions plays a significant role in redevelopment and infill and are being requested to review their function to determine how they can assist the redevelopment and infill efforts. The Planning Division will schedule workshops with the Board of County Commissioners to discuss specific issues each entity raises, which serve to impede redevelopment and infill. Such workshops and resulting amendments to the ULDC and Comprehensive Plan will create development standards that reflect and support the County's redevelopment and infill focus.

Intergovernmental coordination will also be a factor in the County's redevelopment efforts. The proposed Urban Redevelopment Area is within the future annexation areas of a number of municipalities. The County will coordinate its redevelopment and infill efforts with those activities of the affected municipalities.

The infill/redevelopment study generally concluded that many of our policies have the ability to be effective and generally lack utilization. It is the County's belief that as redevelopment truly begins in unincorporated Palm Beach County, we will be able to test the effectiveness of policing in the plan.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Generally, it is difficult to effectively assess infill and redevelopment in the County's Comprehensive Plan. Development in the County has not substantially utilized many of the provisions for redevelopment and infill in the plan and it can only be concluded that these provisions are largely untested. However, some modifications to the Plan regarding the provisions will occur. The County's primary focus for development and infill will be in the proposed Urban Redevelopment Area. The following amendment to the plan are proposed in support of this effort:

- Reorganize the Redevelopment and Revitalization Overlay as detailed in Issue 1C.
- Reorganize all policies and objectives which pertain to redevelopment and infill under a new redevelopment and infill goal.
- Pursuant to the creation of the Urban Redevelopment Area delete policies 1.2.2-f and 1.2.3-g in the FLUE.

## **ISSUE 3**

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Effect of Development trends and policies in the plan on the availability of housing options for very-low, low-income and moderate-income families and the County's Workforce.

### **ISSUE STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND**

Due to the proximity of build-out in the County and continued population growth and development pressures, the scarcity of undeveloped land has resulted in higher land values, which are reflected in the final cost of residential units offered in the market. Recent studies of the residential market in the County indicate that the median price of an existing single family home is close to \$250,000. According to the same study, the family income required to obtain approval of a mortgage for this amount is \$85,000/Year. The continuation of this trend will have a significant impact on low and moderate-income families that might not be able to afford new or used homes in the future.

This issue deals with strategies that encourage the development of affordable or workforce housing in Palm Beach County to provide viable housing choices for very low, low and moderate income families. Affordability is the most vexing problem on the County's housing market. Over the years, the County has gone through progressive and systematic planning changes and processes, as discussed below, to find solutions to the issue of housing affordability and availability to these target populations. The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan deals primarily with five main objectives:

- The provision of affordable housing;
- The elimination of substandard housing;
- The relocation of housing;
- The provision of special needs housing; and
- The dispersal of affordable housing.

Of particular importance is the fact that the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) provides ongoing policy implementation and monitoring of housing programs; while the Commission on Affordable Housing (CAH) has the primary responsibility for evaluating programs, recommending policies, and continuing to administer and maintain the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The functional aspects of these two departments/agencies will be discussed in greater detail later in this report.

### **ACTIVITIES EXPLORED TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE**

The following activities were explored by the County during the preparation of the EAR:

- Adopt objectives and policies in the Comprehensive Plan, and provide incentives to promote development of workforce housing for people whose incomes are 150% of the County median, and also housing units that could be afforded by moderate, low and very low-income families, young people and new couples.
- Concentration of affordable housing and starter homes may be allowed in certain areas to keep the character and social fabric of existing neighborhoods.

- The negative connotation of affordable housing needs to be reconsidered. Emphasize the placement of affordable housing with quality construction in diverse existing and new neighborhoods.
- Develop strategies to drive the market place to provide affordable housing anywhere.
- Link mass transit and multimodal transportation systems to the design of workforce and affordable housing developments.

## ISSUE ANALYSIS

### Population Growth & Housing Costs in Palm Beach County

The County's growing population has led to significant residential development activity. The housing boom has been skewed towards the upper economic end of the housing market leaving an increasing number of modest to low-income County residents with fewer affordable housing options.

- Average home price in the County (provided by the Regional Multiple Listing Service) stood at approximately \$291,400.00 in the fourth quarter of 2002.
- More than one-third (1/3) of County renters spend more than 35% of their paychecks on housing.

Most of the County's low-income households reside in older neighborhoods located near the eastern edge. As the average price of homes increase, poverty indicators appear to be increasing as well. While the overall population rose 31 percent, according to Census figures from 1990 to 2000, the County poverty rate for families jumped 37.9 percent.

Palm Beach County's relatively high cost of living affects employed residents across a wide spectrum of fields and occupations (Table 2.1). In comparison with other metro areas across Florida, for example, West Palm Beach's median income of \$60,000 is greater than the median salary earnings of 95% of all occupational fields, according to a Florida Division of Community Affairs study in 2002.

### Percent of Occupations with Annual Salary Below Median Household Income

Table 2.1

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Median Income	% Occupations with Annual Salary Below Median
Ocala	40,000	80.2%
Pensacola	43,800	84.2%
Panama City	44,100	84.4%
Dayton Beach	44,400	84.5%
Lakeland	44,800	84.6%
Miami	45,600	84.8%
Gainesville	46,800	85.2%
Tampa/St. Petersburg	47,700	86.5%
Fort Walton	48,900	87.3%
Fort Meyers/Cape Coral	49,000	88.6%
Sarasota-Bradenton	50,500	90.1%
Fort Pierce	50,600	90.0%
Melbourne-Titusville	51,200	90.4%
Orlando	52,000	90.9%
Jacksonville	54,500	92.5%

Tallahassee	54,900	92.8%
Fort Lauderdale	56,900	94.0%
West Palm Beach	60,000	95.2%
Naples	65,000	96.7%

Source: Florida Division of Community Affairs 2002 Affordable Housing Study Commission

The high cost of living also impacts the type of households that can be considered low to moderate income. It is often the case that individuals and households who have difficulty finding affordable housing are full-time workers in established fields. Table 2.2 shows the monthly beginning salary for workers in 4 major fields in comparison to the approximate monthly mortgage associated with an average priced home. It is clear that the average take-home salary for a significant number of County residents is far below what is required to own a home with a mortgage of over \$1700 a month. In some County areas, monthly rental costs would also exceed the affordability threshold for these occupations as well.

### Housing Affordability for Selected Occupations – Palm Beach County

Table 2.2

Occupation	Beginning Salary	Affordability Level (30% of monthly gross income)	Average Home Price –PBC	Monthly Housing Cost
Police Officer	39,773	\$994	\$291,400	\$1737
Teacher	31,700	\$792	\$291,400	\$1737
Firefighter	35,486	\$887	\$291,400	\$1737
Librarian	29,985	\$749	\$291,400	\$1737

Source: PBC 5th District Legislative Update. Vol.10 Issue 3 March 18, 2002; Palm Beach Daily News July 20, 2003; Florida Library Directory with Statistics 2002.

\*Cost assumes 30 year mortgage at 6.125% with \$5000 down from Mortgage 101.com

### Housing Element

The primary focus of the Housing Element is directed toward achieving the following four objectives:

- To identify existing and projected deficits in the supply of housing to meet the needs of the County's population, particularly the very low and low income families;
- To analyze housing trends and the causes, scope and nature of any housing problems;
- To develop appropriate plans, programs and policies to bring about the accomplishment of the necessary housing, whether through private-sector efforts, non-profit, public/private partnerships or the public sector; and
- To guide and coordinate all housing activities to eliminate duplications and increase efficiency of the housing delivery system.

### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is defined in terms of the income of the people living in the home. The family must be income eligible. Income eligibility is defined in terms of area median income, adjusted for family size as follows:

- Very low income describes a family at or below 50% of area median income;
- Low income describes a family at or below 80% of area median income; and

- Moderate income describes a family at or below 120% of area median income (at or below 100% of median income for federal programs).

An income eligible household is said to be living in affordable housing when it spends no more than 30% of household income on rent or mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance and utilities. The assumption is that if a very low to moderate income family is spending more than 30% of its income on housing costs, it will be cost-burdened and unable to adequately afford major household expenses like utilities, transportation, food, clothing, and healthcare.

For purposes of affordable housing delivery, the population of concern to a local government is usually the very-low and low-income segment, for two reasons:

- Until recently, the market in Palm Beach County tended to provide for units affordable to higher incomes (moderate to high) as these can usually be profitably developed. There is now concern regarding affordability of housing for moderate income populations due to recent increases in average home costs in Palm Beach County and;
- Limited government resources are first directed to population segments requiring the greatest assistance.

### **Workforce Housing (Inclusionary Zoning)**

The County is in the process of establishing a voluntary Workforce Housing Program. Workforce Housing is a method to allow residential development to receive certain development incentives in order to provide a percentage of housing units for lower-income households. This is a means to meet affordable housing needs and to disperse needed housing throughout the unincorporated County. It is intended to serve the housing needs of people employed in the jobs that the general population of the community relies upon to make the community viable. Examples of such jobs are teachers, teachers' aids, nursing assistants, medical technologists, retail workers, government employees, emergency service providers, and law enforcement.

### **Housing Need**

In accordance with the Five-Year Consolidated Plan for Palm Beach County, and based on findings of the most recent PBC Affordable Housing Study (December 2000) the Housing Element contains the following policy that identifies target unit numbers to meet the needs of very low and low-income households.

Policy 1.1-a: For the period through 2005, Palm Beach County shall utilize the strategies identified in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan for Palm Beach County to meet the need of very low and low income households identified in the Consolidated Plan: 585 rental units annually, and 1,832 ownership units annually, with special attention to special needs populations, including rural and farm worker households.

### **Housing & Community Development/Commission on Affordable Housing**

For the period October 2000 thru September 2003, Palm Beach County assisted 1,637 owner households and 1,280 renter households with various housing programs. Of the owner households assisted, 35% were special needs beneficiaries. Special Needs definition includes: elderly, disabled, HIV/AIDS families, public housing residents, farm worker, families 5+, single headed female household, and single headed male household.

### **Anticipated Problem**

Although the figures cited in this policy are correct, it should be noted that the Consolidated Plan Strategies stated that given the limitation of resource availability, the County may not be able to address all the housing needs identified within the Five Year Plan period.

### **Housing Finance Authority**

The Palm Beach County Housing Finance Authority (HFA) serves to facilitate the financing of Single Family home ownership and Multi-Family rental projects. The HFA is also an active participant in exploring other available avenues related to housing and home ownership. These efforts are achieved through the HFA's ability to issue tax-free revenue bonds.

In the past five (5) years (1998-2002) the HFA has made available through the sale of tax free revenue bonds the following:

Table 2.3

<b>Year</b>	<b>Bonds</b>	<b>Single Family</b>	<b>Multi-Family</b>	<b>Units % Low</b>
1998	\$30,515m	\$15.m	\$15,515 m	240
1999	\$53. m	\$32,500 m	\$20,500 m	564
2000	29,951m	\$16,851m	\$13,100m	230
2001	\$41,415m	\$15.m	\$26,415m	442
2002	\$27,520m	-0-	\$27,520 m	442
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$182,401 m</b>	<b>\$79,351m</b>	<b>\$103,050m</b>	<b>1,918</b>

Source: Housing Finance Authority

### **The availability of housing options for moderate and low-income families and the workforce (CAH, Sadaowski Act \$7-8 Million/year)**

The Commission on Affordable Housing (CAH) administers Palm Beach Counties Sadaowski Act monies through the HOME and SHIP programs. The CAH allocates approximately 4.5 million dollars for low-income and moderate-income first-time home-buyers annually. Financial assistance is available to potential homebuyers. However, with escalating home prices, the availability of affordable housing units is almost non-existent. New and existing single family housing units are no longer affordable to low income persons.

### **The County's incentive efforts to geographically disperse very low and low-income housing units in an effort to avoid concentrations**

In order to disperse affordable housing units throughout Palm Beach County, two incentive programs were developed: the Voluntary Density Bonus (VDB) program and the Traffic Performance Standards (TPS) Affordable Housing Exception. The VDB program permits higher density development of residential lands provided that a certain number of these units are designated as affordable units. The TPS Affordable Housing Exception provides for a reduced level of service to the Traffic Performance Standards in order to encourage the geographic dispersal and expansion of affordable housing opportunities.

The VDB program has not often been utilized very often since its inception in 1993. The program has had 556 affordable units approved and built in that time. The Traffic Performance Standards (TPS) Affordable Housing Exception was approved in 1994, and also has been used very rarely. This program has had 167 affordable units approved and 128 units built.

### **New incentives to promote affordable housing in Palm Beach County**

Workforce housing (inclusionary zoning) is a method to allow residential developments to receive certain development incentives in order to provide a percentage of housing units for

lower-income households. This is a means to meet affordable housing needs and to disperse needed housing throughout the unincorporated County.

### **Workforce Housing Taskforce**

In August of 2002, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted an amendment to Policy 1.5-c Comprehensive Plan amendment in the Housing Element, to consider establishing a workforce housing program for the County. The amended policy committed the County to establishing an advisory group to evaluate the viability of a workforce housing program and to make recommendations to the BCC regarding appropriate program parameters. In March 2003, the BCC appointed eleven (11) members to the Workforce Housing Taskforce. The Taskforce held its initial meeting in April 2003, and subsequently met a total of eleven times. The Task Force presented recommendations, including program criteria and incentives, to the BCC in December 2003, which approved these recommendations.

The Workforce Housing amendment includes as part of the proposed Workforce Housing program, the following incentives for developers:

- traffic concurrency mitigation applied to the entire project;
- an expedited permit, zoning, and land use site plan approval process including engineering platting procedures;
- a method to effectively offset impact fees and other development fees for the affordable units only, may be included;
- a density bonus of at least 10% and up to 100% percent of the permitted density, may be allowed based on location, existing very-low and low income concentrations, and land use compatibility;
- develop incentives that will be provided on a sliding scale with more incentives for very low income units to less incentives for moderate income units based on the type of residential unit, location, existing very-low and low income concentrations, and land use compatibility.

The following are the proposed Workforce Housing program criteria:

- eligible developments are to be located inside the urban suburban tier of the unincorporated County and in the Scientific Community Overlay;
- eligible developments must have a minimum number of 10 permitted units;
- the percentage of units required to be affordable shall be up to 100% of the density bonus units;
- affordable units can be both rental units and for sale units;
- affordable units are to be integrated within the project and designed to be compatible with overall development;
- rental unit and resale unit affordability controls shall be guaranteed for a period of 10 years for ownership units and 20 years for rental units;
- developments may be allowed based on location, existing very-low and low-income concentrations, and land use compatibility, in any of the following land use categories: Residential (LR1-HR18 only); Commercial (mixed use); Industrial (mixed use); Economic Development Center; Institutional and Public Facilities, Traditional Town Development (TTD); and, Multiple Land Use (MLU);
- developments are required to be located near mass transportation and/or employment centers.

## **County efforts to assist developers, local CDCs and income-qualified buyers with single family infill housing as well as multi-family housing**

HCD/CAH currently assists with single-family and multi-family housing through the following:

- Provision of HOME CHDO set-aside funds to local Community Development Corporation (CDCs) for activities including the new construction of single-family infill housing. The majority of such infill construction is located in HCD Target Areas and other areas targeted by the County for revitalization efforts.
- Provision of SHIP and HOME funds, respectively, through the Hardship “B” and Countywide 1st-time Homebuyer Programs, to eligible homebuyers for new construction of a single-family home. It should be noted that these programs do not limit new single-family construction solely to infill units.
- Construction of single-family infill homes through HCD’s Replacement Housing Program, in which existing homeowners are provided with newly-constructed homes to replace their dilapidated former homes.
- Provision of SHIP and HOME funds, through a competitive process to developers for the acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable multi-family housing.
- Provision of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the acquisition of property in support of affordable housing development.
- Provision of CDBG funds for construction of infrastructure improvements, 1) for specific project sites in support of affordable housing development; and 2) in targeted areas generally facilitating the development of affordable housing within the area.
- SHIP: Low-interest loans to developers and CHDOs for acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of affordable rental housing, or payment of impact fees associated with such.
- HOME: 1) Low-interest loans to developers and CHDOs for acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of affordable rental housing; 2) Grants to CHDOs for operating expenses; and 3) Grants or loans to CHDOs for acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, demolition/reconstruction, and site improvements/infrastructure for affordable rental or owner housing.
- CDBG Program: Grant funding to non-profit developers or CHDOs for property acquisition and infrastructure improvements in support of affordable housing development.

In addition, HCD/CAH provide developers and CDCs with non-financial assistance including:

- Providing technical assistance in project planning;
- Providing advice/information regarding the County’s land development process, and referrals to appropriate departments and contacts;
- Providing referrals to other potential sources of project financing;
- Assisting in developers’ applications to non-County funding sources by providing required certifications, verifications, and endorsements;
- Coordinates (with PREM) donation of suitable County-owned surplus properties to non-profit developers of affordable housing;
- Providing comment and input regarding proposed County policies which impact affordable housing development;
- CDC's may apply to HCD to become a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) through a Request For Proposal. As a selected CHDO by HCD, the organization would be eligible to receive operating expenses as well as funding to provide for homeownership opportunities.

HCD has coordinated Interlocal Agreements with 29 municipalities which assist the County in providing affordable housing within the redevelopment and revitalization overlay and HCD target areas. Residents within the participating municipalities can benefit from HCD's programs.

The Housing Finance Authority (HFA) facilitates financing of single-family home ownership and multi-family rental projects through the ability to issue tax-free revenue bonds.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The County's affordable housing activities must continue to focus on directing programs and activities to ensure that supply is provided to meet demand, and maintain existing housing units through policies to eliminate substandard housing and provide for relocation.

The Board of County Commissioners directed staff at the BCC Workshop on the EAR to look at all potential incentives to make it easier for developers to build affordable and workforce housing developments. The Board also urged staff to move from the adoption of policies to the implementation of specific projects.

Geographic dispersal must also be addressed in order to avoid the concentration of affordable housing in specific areas of the County, and at the same time consideration must also be given to the availability of public services and employment opportunities when locating affordable housing.

The housing needs of special-needs populations, including rural and farm worker households, go beyond the issue of affordability. The creation or preservation of adequate housing to meet specific special needs must be addressed, whether it is for foster care, group homes, farm workers or other special needs.

The establishment of the voluntary Workforce Housing program will provide an opportunity for new and redeveloped residential developments to provide a percentage of housing units for low to moderate income households, as a means to meet affordable housing needs and to disperse that needed housing in the unincorporated County. When established, the County must promote and encourage residential developers to utilize of the Workforce Housing program. County elected officials discussed the idea of making this program mandatory, given the gravity of the situation. The BCC directed staff to report back to the Board one year after implementation of the program. At that time the BCC would consider whether to make this program mandatory.

Affordable housing and workforce housing issues could not be addressed or resolved by policies in the Comprehensive Plan alone. Both private interest groups and elected officials agreed that a concerted public/private effort at the regional level, including other counties and local governments, is needed to properly address this situation.

At the EAR workshop on this issue, the BCC suggested staff to consider areas in the Glades Communities as potential targets to promote affordable and workforce housing developments. Today, many workers and public employees in Palm Beach County are traveling long distances to Martin and St Lucie Counties where they found affordable homes. Instead, many could have similar homes in the Glades cities closer to their workplaces and within the County.

## **ISSUE 4**

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Evaluate the Impacts of Development on Natural Resources, Agricultural Land and Rural Areas.

### **ISSUE STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND**

As the County reaches build-out, additional pressures are being placed on the County's natural resources within the developing areas and also on adjacent areas with sensitive lands and other resources, rural areas located in central western and northern County, and prime agricultural lands in the Agricultural Reserve (Ag Reserve) and the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).

This issue deals with the ability of the County's programs, initiatives and Plan policies to continue preserving agricultural, rural lands and environmentally sensitive areas.

### **ACTIVITIES EXPLORED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE**

The following activities were explored regarding this issue:

- Preservation of agricultural lands. The most important agricultural lands are located in the Ag Reserve, central-western County, and the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA). An evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and programs for the preservation of the Ag Reserve must be considered. A focus of this exercise must also be directed to the preservation of agricultural activities and expansion of conservation programs in the EAA.
- Preservation of rural lands. Rural lands include other important areas of the County with specific goals, objectives and policies in the Plan that reflect the desire of area residents to preserve and maintain the rural character and lifestyle of these areas. An evaluation of the effectiveness of related policies and programs must be considered during the EAR.
- Impacts of development on Everglades and other restoration initiatives. The northern Everglades, Lake Okeechobee, the Lake Worth Lagoon and the Loxahatchee River and Slough are some of the areas in need of restoration and preservation located in Palm Beach County. Several projects implementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP), the Everglades Construction Program and other restoration initiatives are located in the County. These programs have been designed with current future land use designations and demographic projections. Any changes in future land use or demographic assumptions for the County may have a negative long term impact on these initiatives and must be considered during the EAR.
- Impacts of development on Water Resources and Water Supply. Water resources in South Florida and the County are limited and must satisfy the needs of our natural ecosystems, agriculture and urban users. Current development and land use patterns may have an impact on available water resources to satisfy the competing needs of major human consumers and the environment. Linking land use and water supply planning is a first step to address this situation. Palm Beach County recently completed a Pilot Project implementing this new State requirement.

- Deterioration of surface water quality and limited availability of water for environmental restoration purposes. To assess the effectiveness of current Plan policies in preventing negative impacts of stormwater runoff to surface water bodies and whether current policies and programs for water storage are adequate to serve community needs related to natural resource protection.

## ISSUE ANALYSIS

### Preservation of Agricultural Lands

There are several areas of agricultural land in the County (**See Attachment X**). The primary large agricultural areas include those within the Everglades Agricultural Area, Agricultural Reserve and the Rural Tier. Other important areas include lands with smaller agricultural operations (e.g. horticulture, winter crops, equestrian, etc.) east of 20 mile bend in the Rural, Exurban, and Urban/Suburban Tiers. Ag is very viable and the desire is to retain and support the continuance of such production. An indication of such is inherent in the Historical Agriculture Sales for Palm Beach County (Data provided by the PBC Cooperative Extension Service):

- 2000-01            \$1,204,693,571            (acres in production 509,876)
- 1995-96            \$1,215,934,972            (acres in production 556,147)
- 1900-01            \$1,167,334,705
- 1985-86            \$ 950,677,585
- 1980-81            \$ 874,319,669

Additionally, according to current IFAS information for Palm Beach County:

- Total agriculture sales of \$1.205 billion, represent an estimated economic impact of over \$2 billion for the County;
- 502, 569 acres in agriculture production (approx. 39% of the County's land mass);
- Palm Beach County leads the Nation in the production of sugarcane and fresh sweet corn;
- Palm Beach County leads the State in the production of bell peppers, radishes, lettuce, specialty leaf crops, Chinese vegetables, rice, eggplant, herbs and cucumbers;
- Equestrian industry represents over \$320 million in economic impact to the County;
- Palm Beach County leads the State in total agricultural wages with over \$380 million per year.

### The Everglades Agricultural Area

The Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) was completed in 1962 and covers an area of 1,181 square miles (3,059 km<sup>2</sup>) containing approximately 700,000 acres. The EAA is a vast, viable and extremely productive agricultural area of Palm Beach County. It is located below the southeastern border of Lake Okeechobee and extends to Water Conservation Area 1 (WCA-1 or the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge) in western Palm Beach, Martin, Hendry and Glades counties. The majority of the EAA is located within Palm Beach County. The EAA occupies a critical area between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Protection Area.

Agriculture is the predominant land use with more than 500,000 acres of irrigated land, comprising approximately 77 percent of the EAA (Everglades Program Best Management Practices Annual Report 2003, pg. 6). Sugar cane is the primary crop (95%) grown in the EAA. More than 50 percent of the sugar produced nationally is harvested in the EAA. Other crops

include: leafy vegetables, root crops, radishes, sweet corn, rice, sod, and to a lesser extent tomatoes and peppers.

Fifteen (15) project canals and 25 control structures, which are managed by the South Florida Water Management District, serve the EAA. The Rotenberger (25,000 acres) and Holey Land Wildlife Management Areas (35,500 acres); SFWMD rock quarry (1000 acres); as well as Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) 1W, 2,3/4,5 and 6 (43,000 acres) are contained within the EAA.

There is a strong desire to retain and support agriculture in this area as well as reviewing the appropriateness of this area to support everglades restoration efforts.

### **Agricultural Reserve Tier**

The Agricultural Reserve (Ag Reserve) area encompasses approximately 21,283 acres of southern Palm Beach County and includes unique farmland and wetlands.

Based on policy direction adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in 1995, the Ag Reserve was to be preserved primarily for agricultural use if possible. However, if not, it could be developed only at low residential densities (1 unit/5 acres). In July 1998, the BCC directed development of a Master Plan for the Ag Reserve. The South Florida Water Management District, which was evaluating the area for its potential to assist in several water resource related projects, joined with the County in undertaking this effort, agreeing to fully share in the costs of developing a Master Plan.

The BCC established the goal of the Ag Reserve Master Plan as: *To preserve and enhance agricultural activity and environmental and water resources in the Agricultural Reserve, and produce a master development plan compatible with these goals.*

In Amendment Round 01-1, the Ag Reserve Master Plan was incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, effective 10/22/01. To achieve the goal of farmland protection and agricultural perpetuation, cluster development options and a 1999 Bond referendum whereby bond proceeds of approximately \$100 million were generated for acquisition of Ag Reserve Lands and \$50 million for environmentally sensitive lands including areas within the Ag Reserve were offered. It is through this combination of public action and private development that a viable program for the protection of farmlands and the perpetuation of agriculture has occurred.

Approximately 2,260 acres have been acquired with the 1999 Bond funds and the residential density has been retired. Much of the acreage has been leased to their previous owners under a reservation agreement at the time of sale. The program is continuing and, as of March 2004, has approximately \$32 million left in bond funds for land purchases.

### **East of the L-8 Canal**

There are about 49,000 acres of all types of agriculture east of 20 Mile Bend. This includes the Rural, Exurban, and Urban/Suburban Tiers. There are continuing concerns expressed by individual property owners in this area as to how they may remain in the picture with strong growth and development pressures. These property owners are typically small farmers growing specialty crops, herbs, direct marketing of vegetables to local consumers, nurseries, etc., as well as accessory uses like the green industry (landscape companies, arborists, etc). Agricultural activity within these areas includes the equestrian industry.

### **Central Western Community Sector Planning Area**

The Rural Tier includes 24,778 acres of land presently in agricultural use. The largest land holdings are located within the boundaries of the Central Western Communities (CWC) Sector planning area (**See attachment X**) that is subject to an Optional Sector Planning process per agreement with the Department of Community Affairs in accordance with State legislation, Chapter 163.3245, Florida Statutes, Optional Sector Plans. This regional comprehensive planning project, approximately 53,000 acres in central western Palm Beach County, involves the creation of a sector plan (Conceptual Plan Overlay) under the first agreement executed by a local government with the Florida Department of Community Affairs pursuant to Section 163.3245.

With adoption of the County's Managed Growth Tier System (MGTS) on August 19, 1999, Future Land Use Policy 4.1-d was established by the Board of County Commissioners to undertake sector planning in this region to address the impacts of the growth associated with the established development pattern (predominately grand-fathered subdivisions) and to plan for the future of the region. Through implementation of the MGTS, the sector plan will address the needs for, and increasing demands on, services, as this area continues to grow. It will provide opportunities to protect the rural character in the area and enhance the environment. The sector plan will address items such as parks, schools, transportation network, water resources and management, environmental resources and natural systems, and employment/economic opportunities.

The County's sector planning process entails a five stage process. Currently, Staff is engaged in Stage 4: Implementation Tools, which includes the development of policies to be included in the Comprehensive Plan as part of Amendment Round 04-2. Additionally, this entails developing implementation strategies and design guidelines to further articulate the different components of the Sector Plan Conceptual Plan Overlay. The Transmittal Hearing for this round is scheduled for July 19th, 2004 with an anticipated adoption date in November/December of 2004.

Recommendations associated with the Concept Plan Overlay include rural cluster provisions for the large agricultural land holdings in the project area, thereby preserving 50% of the land for open space purposes including agricultural uses.

Currently, particular non Sector Plan directed influences on the large properties have been introduced potentially affecting the plan outcome. Those of note include: The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) locating on the Mecca Farms parcel previously located within the Sector Planning boundaries; Callery Judge Groves pursuit of a DRI; Palm Beach Aggregates potential annexation into the Village of Wellington or staying within the County but with substantially higher densities including some nonresidential uses. These influences will be monitored and the planning modified accordingly.

### **Preservation of Rural Lands**

A goal of the County and its Managed Growth Tier System (MGTS) is to retain rural lands, preserve and maintain rural character, and provide lifestyle choices to all residents. There are currently approximately 60,415 acres in the Rural Tier in eastern County with rural residential future land uses (RR 5, RR10, RR20) and 2,872 in the Glades areas. Additionally, there are approximately 25,488 acres in the Exurban Tier in eastern County with rural residential future land uses (RR 2.5, RR10, RR20). The combination of rural residential land uses for both the Rural and Exurban Tiers equals approximately 88,775 acres.

Future Land Use Element Objective 1.4 Rural Tier states:

Palm Beach County shall plan for the impacts of growth outside of the Urban Service Area, recognizing the existence of both large undeveloped tracts as well as areas containing densities equal to or less than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres established prior to the adoption of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan located in proximity to environmentally sensitive natural areas. The County shall protect and maintain these rural residential, equestrian and agricultural areas by:

- Preserving and enhancing the rural landscape, including historic, cultural, recreational, agricultural, and open space resources;
- Providing facilities and services consistent with the character of the area;
- Preserving and enhancing natural resources; and,
- Ensuring development is compatible with the scale, mass, intensity of use, height, and character of the rural community.

Future Land Use Element Objective 1.3 Exurban Tier states:

Palm Beach County shall plan for the impacts of growth outside of the Urban Service Area in antiquated subdivisions created prior to the adoption of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan with platted densities greater than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. The County shall protect and maintain these semi-rural residential, equestrian, and agricultural communities by:

- Preserving and enhancing the rural landscape, including historic, cultural, recreational, agricultural, and open space resources;
- Allowing services and facilities consistent with the character of the area;
- Preserving and enhancing natural resources; and,
- Ensuring development is compatible with the scale, mass, intensity of use, height, and character of the exurban community.

Factors influencing pressures on rural lands to develop include: availability of land, increased price of land, and infill provisions needing to be developed to help absorb development within the Urban/Suburban tier and to help lessen the desire to increase development within the Rural and Exurban areas.

### **Impacts of Development on the Everglades System and Other Restoration Initiatives**

The County desires to protect and support Everglades restoration activities by requesting the SFWMD to provide comments on land use amendments processed by the County, which may have an impact on CERP and other Everglades restoration initiatives. The SFWMD is currently a designated commenting agency for land use amendments in the County. County agencies have been working with the SFWMD to create an additional step in the local plan amendment review process, in order to analyze land use amendments for potential impacts on the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and related projects and infrastructure, prior to actions taken by the LUAB or the BCC. A Comprehensive Plan amendment was processed to that effect in Amendment Round 04-1 that was transmitted to the DCA on April 5, 2004.

### **Impacts of Development on Water Resources and Water Supply**

There is a desire to provide and make available adequate water supply to satisfy the competing needs of major users: human consumers, agriculture and the environment. The County through various departments and the County Commission supports the concept that water resource

management and water supply should address the combined needs of the environment, urban areas and agriculture. This has been expressed in several documents, including the Comprehensive Plan and a BCC resolution in support of the Conceptual Plan for the restoration of the Everglades. Under this concept, water supply to satisfy human needs is one component of the regional water supply picture. This approach was considered when preparing the plan amendments to address the new State requirement calling to link land use and water supply planning.

Palm Beach County has been working closely with the South Florida Water Management District to satisfy conditions required to receive a 20-year water use permit. The County provided reasonable assurance that the conditions of the permit would be met throughout the duration of the 20-year permit via a water supply development plan having 5-year intervals. The County demonstrated that the volumes of water withdrawn during a 1 in 10 year drought condition would be offset by alternative water sources. Palm Beach County has proposed multiple alternative water supply projects that collectively will eliminate the impact of additional water withdrawals on the Regional System. Palm Beach County has proposed that all additional demands (after December 2000) on the Lake Worth Drainage District and the Regional System be offset by equal amounts of alternative water supplies. The offset mechanisms include reclaimed water, aquifer storage and recovery, and created wetlands systems, among others. Palm Beach County's alternative water supply program completely offsets the impact of the increased allocation on the Lake Worth Drainage District canals and the Regional System.

### **Impacts of Development on Surface Water Quality**

Existing development trends in Palm Beach County have put pressure on the surface water supply. The County has dedicated significant resources towards the acquisition and restoration of upland and wetland areas. In addition, the County's natural resources will be under increased pressure resulting from the accelerated rate of development the County is presently experiencing. The stormwater runoff from residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural developments result in impacts to the quality and quantity of available surface water supplies. The increase of the nutrient levels in stormwater runoff and the decrease of the availability of "clean" water used for environmental restoration projects endanger the viability of these projects.

Analysis of data collected from various sample points throughout the County over the past several years have indicated that there is a significant variation between the eastern, more urbanized sections of Palm Beach County, and the western, more rural and agricultural areas. Water samples are tested for the presence of nutrients, bacteria and heavy metals. The results of the data indicate that stormwater treatment systems seem to be more effective in the eastern portion of the county than in the western agricultural areas.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Preservation of Agricultural Lands**

- Consider performing an area-wide comprehensive evaluation/needs analysis of the entire EAA.
- Separate, into its own Tier, the existing Glades community areas within the Glades Tier from the Agricultural Production area of the EAA and conservation areas in recognition of its uniqueness and significance to the Ag industry. This item is further explored as part of Issue 1.

- Continue to promote/support/reinforce opportunities for smaller agriculture operations in the Urban/Suburban, Rural and Exurban Tiers. These uses include the horticulture support industry (nurseries), growers of “nitch” crops, hydroponics’ operations and growers of winter crops and equestrian activities. This includes continuing the agricultural programs offered by the Ag Cooperative Extension Service (e.g., Get Fresh Promotional Campaign, Farmer to chef, Community Supported Agriculture, Consumer Cooperatives, Agricultural Education).
- Develop language to address planning and design measures that lessen compatibility issues between agricultural and residential uses. Identify appropriate buffering for residential development to adjacent agricultural lands so as not to create a potential nuisance (noise, dust, odor, access) situation.
- Explore mechanisms to create/identify incentives to promote and maintain the agricultural use of open space preserves associated with larger commercial/residential clustered developments.
  - An incentive and benefit to a Home Owners Association (HOA) would be the income from leasing set-aside property to a smaller farm operation. This should be explored as a function of implementing any rural cluster development approvals, the Ag reserve policies, sector planning process, and opportunities on our bond acquired sites as part of managing those agricultural lands.
  - A HOA could also transfer stewardship to the County. The Soil and Water Conservation District currently manages bond acquired lands. This should be explored to determine if they could also be involved with the stewardship of HOA transferred lands.
  - A tax credit (Greenbelt exemption) could be used as an additional incentive.
- Sector Plan Area: (Rural and Exurban Tiers) Promote agriculture as a choice of open space uses within rural clustered developments thereby, retaining availability of land for such ag uses. Policies are currently being developed through the sector planning process to address this issue. They will be processed as part of Amendment Round 04-2. Policies should include consideration of appropriate buffering between the agricultural operations and residentially developed lands so as not to create a nuisance situation.

### **Preservation of Rural Lands**

- Place emphasis on strengthening existing rural design measures and developing new mechanisms that will be effective in maintaining rural character for development on rural lands. Specifically,
  - Re-evaluate the types and sizes of nonresidential uses (e.g. institutional, civic) allowed to be located within the RR land use designations without needing a land use amendment. This needs to include discussion regarding: a) the square footage allowed (FAR) for commercial, institutional, civic and church primary and/or accessory uses in the rural areas; should there be a square footage limitation?; b) type of use allowed for primary and/or accessory uses, should there be restrictions on certain uses and/or accessory types?; C) inherit with items a and b is the question of when limitations or restrictions should apply.

- Evaluate ULDC design items. Identify the rural features to be preserved and those that need to be added to the ULDC (e.g., fencing, vegetation, parking and roadway materials). Strengthen rural design language where appropriate.
- County facilities including buildings and roads need to embrace and comply with rural design standards. Identify the types of features (e.g. roads) that need a design prototype developed. Work with appropriate departments and agencies to incorporate rural design and embrace the tier system. **Link with Issue #1c (implementation of the Tier System by County Agencies).**
- Need stronger incentives in PBC infill areas in order to reduce pressure for development of the rural lands.
- Provision of services (water and sewer service) within the rural tier. **Link to Issue #1e (Assess impacts on the provision of services). Link to Issue 5: Assessment of Transportation** Policy 3.5-d recommended changes in Rd 04-2 regarding differential levels of service for rural areas.

### **Impacts of Development on the Everglades system and other Restoration Initiatives**

- Continue to request the SFWMD to provide comments on land use amendments processed by the County, which may have an impact on CERP and other Everglades restoration initiatives.

### **Impacts of Development on Water Resources and Water Supply**

- Implement the provisions linking land use and water supply in the potable water sub-element, which call for the enhancement of alternative water supply sources for the next twenty years.

### **Impacts of Development on Surface Water Quality**

- Modify the frequency and number of sampling points to adequately monitor the impacts of proposed development trends. In addition, when the State's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program is completed there will be considerable amounts of data and analysis with which the County's impaired waterways can be determined. Areas of concentration will be the western areas that are anticipated to have the development potential over the next 10 to 20 years.

## ISSUE 5

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### ISSUE STATEMENT

Assessment of Transportation Planning Programs and Comprehensive Plan Policies to Address the Impacts of Urban Growth.

### ISSUE BACKGROUND

Due in part to the County's high rate of growth and existing development patterns, the lack of viable alternative transportation modes, and the lack of programs to optimize the efficiency of the existing transportation network, the County's roadway network is being strained. Traffic projections indicate that even with a number of proposed road extensions and widening, traffic congestion in the County will increase. Additional strategies to deal with traffic congestion and increase mobility, beyond road "improvements" may need to be evaluated. These may include: the enhancement of alternative modes of travel in addition to the automobile; development of incentives to encourage land use patterns that will shorten or eliminate automobile trips; creation of programs that will seek to develop existing Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, and; the improvement of connections between developments and between roads.

### ACTIVITIES EXPLORED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The following activities were explored regarding this issue:

- Enhancement of alternative transportation modes. To deal with the increasing demands to the road network, consider implementing an interconnected multimodal transportation system.
- Encourage land use patterns that will shorten or eliminate automobile trips. The existing low-density and automobile-oriented land use patterns will need to be modified and replaced with higher density mixed-use development that will:
  - shorten existing automobile trips,
  - shift trips from the automobile to other modes and/or
  - eliminate vehicular trips altogether.

As the County reaches build-out, opportunities for mixed use and transit-oriented developments may have to be the result of redevelopment opportunities in selected corridors and nodes. Differential road Levels of Service (LOS) or traffic concurrency exception areas could be used as incentives to achieve some of these types of developments

- Interconnectivity. Revisit interconnectivity alternatives to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce daily trips. Alternatives may include interconnectivity between commercial sites, between commercial and residential developments, and between residential developments.

- Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs. The County should promote programs that optimize the efficiency of the existing transportation network through TSM measures and programs that reduce the demand for roadway network at all times or at least during peak hours through the use of TDM measures.

This chapter will examine each of these strategies in an attempt to assess the means by which the transportation planning programs (and associated Comprehensive Plan policies) is addressing the problem of strain caused by urban growth. This chapter will evaluate the steps that are being taken to deal with pressures on the transportation system. Finally, conclusions will be reached in order to create a list of recommendations that are needed in order to better respond to the pressure put upon the system.

## **ISSUE ANALYSIS**

“As per Rule 9J-5.019, Florida Administrative Code, the purpose of the Transportation Element is to coordinate local transportation planning with the long range transportation plan of the Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization and to plan for a multimodal and intermodal transportation system that places an emphasis on the public transportation system.” State regulations, such as 9J-5, are intended to require government to help direct the very decentralized, very numerous (and occasionally competing) infrastructure systems under the umbrella of “transportation.”

The Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan is tied into other plans. In terms of the Transportation Element, Policy 1.13-b states that:

“The County shall continue to use the Metropolitan Planning Organization's transportation planning process as the County's main mechanism for long range transportation planning and coordination with the MPO's TIP and the FDOT District IV Adopted Work Program.”

The Planning Division has proposed population projections for 2025, which has been provided to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO is in the process of updating the 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

The MPO's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan will incorporate the population increase due to redevelopment activities. The County, on the other hand, will maintain a 2025 planning horizon in which unincorporated properties are projected to be built-out pursuant to densities and intensities in the currently adopted Future Land Use Atlas. As part of developing the 2030 Plan, the MPO has agreed to maintain and provide the County with a 2025 Cost Feasible Plan to be incorporated into the County's Comp Plan.

The upcoming MPO 2030 Plan and resulting 2025 Palm Beach County Plan will include an analysis of the impacts on the County's transportation system posed by the proposed Scripps project. Palm Beach County will be processing numerous Scripps-related Transportation amendments in the next few months in order to accommodate the impacts of Scripps.

The Transportation Element consists of sixteen objectives. Most of these objectives address transportation system expansions such, as roadway, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian system expansion. Two objectives address roadway Level of Services standards and exceptions.

Progress towards achieving greater degrees of success in implementation has been noted in the Annual Implementation Report (starting in 1998).

This chapter represents the County's assessment of transportation planning programs (and associated Comprehensive Plan policies) intended to address the impacts of urban growth. Traffic projections indicate that even with a number of proposed extensions and widenings, traffic congestion will still exist in the County.

### **Enhancement of alternative transportation modes**

According to the MPO's Plan, approximately \$2,000 million of the forecast revenue will go directly to roadway projects. Transit, including PalmTran local bus and paratransit services (along with the Tri-Rail local match) accounts for approximately \$1,270 million, or approximately 38 percent of the total. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities amount to \$29 million over the nineteen year period, plus the amount dedicated as part of roadway construction accommodations for bicycles in the outside lane and the installation of sidewalks. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) enhancements add another \$32 million. In addition, local communities are assumed to provide local maintenance of local roadways and operations of community bus services, and the accommodation of water-taxi services along the coast.

The MPO's currently adopted 2025 Cost Feasible Plan (accounting for the currently adopted land use patterns) sufficiently addresses enhancement of alternative transportation modes and consists of a comprehensive highway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian transportation system. The plan also gives consideration to intermodal access and connectivity. Some of the critical components of the MPO's Plan are described below.

#### *Transit Component*

The PalmTran reconfigured grid system serves as the basis for the transit component of the Year 2025 Cost Feasible Plan. Again, the premise of the grid system would be to provide more concentrated, higher frequency bus services on major north-south and east-west corridors within the County. Three express bus routes are also proposed. These express routes would exist on I-95 between Jupiter and West Palm Beach, on Okeechobee Boulevard between Royal Palm Beach and West Palm Beach, and on Glades Road between West Boca Raton and Boca Raton. The Cost Feasible Plan local bus service would equate to an overall increase in operation costs, as compared to current commitment, due to increased frequencies on three major routes in the County; namely US 1, Congress Avenue, and Military Trail. Remaining services would also experience a considerable increase in frequency of service as a result of the grid system being more concentrated than the system in place today. To supplement the PalmTran bus system, local community buses would be operated by local communities to facilitate local movement and to provide connection to the PalmTran area wide system. The following community bus locations are preliminarily identified: Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens, Riviera Beach, Royal Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Wellington, Greenacres, Lake Worth, Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, West Boca Raton, Boca Raton, and Belle Glade. Community water-taxi services along the intercoastal waterway are also proposed. Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) services are provided by PalmTran Connection, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA mandates equal opportunity in places of public accommodations. Currently PalmTran Connection offers pick-up and drop-off to any location within 3/4 mile of a designated bus stop. The MPO estimates the number of TD residents in Palm Beach County will escalate approximately 2 percent per year, essentially the same rate as the expected increase in the general population. Representatives from the MPO, however, noted that the costs of providing this service are increasing at a significantly higher

rate than the population increase. Tri-Rail services would be extended to Martin County. Several new stations would be implemented along the proposed extension. Exact locations of those stations would need to be identified by Tri-Rail through market research and land availability. High Speed Rail has been proposed through popular vote. High Speed Rail is proposed to extend from Tampa to Orlando to Miami, and would likely have one stop in Palm Beach County. Details of the proposed rail are being studied.

#### *Bicycle Component*

The Palm Beach MPO Long Range Bikeway Facilities Corridor Plan dated August 1996 represents the overall bicycle facilities plan for Palm Beach County. The Plan includes corridors for on-road bicycle lanes and off-road pathways. The MPO Bikeway Plan serves as the basis for the bicycle component of the 2025 Cost Feasible Plan. In addition, all roadways being constructed or reconstructed in the future shall accommodate bicycles. Bicycles are accommodated by providing 14 foot wide outer road lanes on roadways which are being constructed.

#### *Pedestrian Component*

Sidewalks will be constructed with any roadway that is either being constructed or reconstructed.

#### *Transportation Demand Management*

The Year 2025 Transportation System Plan for Palm Beach County is supportive of Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Specific TDM implementations include the accommodations of park and ride lots at all rail stations, including Tri-Rail, and along all express bus routes. Examples of other TDM measures include alternate work hours, telecommuting, and carpools/vanpools.

#### **Encourage land use patterns that will shorten or eliminate automobile trips**

In terms of transportation, the land uses in Palm Beach County are not optimal. The existing low-density and automobile-oriented land use patterns will need to be modified and replaced with higher density mixed-use development that will:

- shorten existing automobile trips,
- shift trips from the automobile to other modes and/or
- eliminate vehicular trips altogether.

As the County reaches build-out, opportunities for mixed use and transit-oriented developments may have to be the result of redevelopment opportunities in selected corridors and nodes. Differential road Levels of Service (LOS) or traffic concurrency exception areas could be used as incentives to achieve some of these types of developments.

#### *Promoting Mixed-Use Developments*

The existing Policy 1.2-p can be further evaluated to provide some level of concurrency incentives to encourage mixed-use projects (regardless of size), especially those located in and around transit centers (since these projects reduce external trips). This will help improve the efficiency of existing and future transportation nodes which may include the following:

- Intermodal Facilities (as defined in the Long Range Transportation Plan).
- Nodes defined in the CRALLS Point System.
- Tri-Rail Stations

Currently this policy only provides a concurrency exception to major projects, such as T-Rex and Boca Raton Hospital. An evaluation will need to be performed as part of the EAR amendments to determine whether the smaller projects on these nodes shall be encouraged either through a complete concurrency exception or some other partial concurrency benefit.

Another way to encourage efficient land uses is to encourage TODs by providing partial or full concurrency benefits (generally along fixed transit nodes such as Tri-Rail stations). This kind of development can be encouraged through the concept known as Transit Oriented Development (TOD). The premise for transit-oriented development is simple: if jobs and housing are concentrated around transit and daily conveniences by developing land uses patterns that support transit, then people will use their cars less and will walk and ride transit more.

Since most of the fixed transit nodes or the intermodal facilities are generally located in municipalities and the county lacks jurisdiction of implementing any land use based strategies, through the annual implementation reports process, it has been recommended to move this policy from the Transportation Element. It is recommended that the policy stay as part of the Land Use element (Policy 2.4-d), but with a more realistic date or without a timeframe. This is because there have been several discussions in the past to hire a consultant to develop TOD criteria, but due to limited opportunities in the unincorporated areas, this item was never prioritized. Recognizing that because of the Charter, the County has authority over traffic concurrency throughout the County and can encourage TODs (even in the municipalities) by providing concurrency benefits in the Transportation Element. It is recommended that the County staff follow up on any municipality's lead in developing and implementing the TOD criteria.

#### *Corridor Master Plans*

Long range planning tools, specifically the MPO model, may not be adequate to address the needs of a buildout analysis. Buildout analyses provide a framework for structuring all interim transportation plans, and provide greater assurance that anticipated growth could be accommodated within the County's Transportation System. Buildout analysis and resultant transportation system plans require comprehensive coordinated efforts among local and county governmental agencies, including comprehensive mitigation measures to be implemented within a Corridor. Mitigation measures may require various agency approval and or regulatory action. The buildout policy will address the giving away of capacity more than once. Corridor Master Plans are a necessary component of the Buildout Analyses. These will involve a comprehensive and coordinated effort among local and county governmental agencies, resulting in better, more comprehensive transportation planning. Corridor Master Plan policy, Policy 1.1-n, states that:

“In corridors where the adopted LOS may not be achieved pursuant to the 2025 Transportation System for Palm Beach County Highway Component prepared by the Palm Beach MPO, the County will institute a process to develop individual Corridor Master Plans to address each projected corridor failure. The ULDC shall provide specific guidelines for buildout analysis and specific timelines for the completion of the Corridor Master Plans.

Once a corridor Master Plan has been adopted for a corridor, no project with significant traffic on the corridor shall be approved for development by the County or a municipality unless it complies with the Corridor Master Plan.”

Currently, the Town of Jupiter is undertaking a Corridor Master Plan for Indiantown Road. A total of 28 corridors are targeted for completion by September 30, 2005.

The Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners appointed a Traffic Performance Standards (TPS) Committee which has been working towards development of the detailed criteria to be addressed by a Corridor Master Plan. The Planning Division will continue to be present at the TPS Committee meetings to provide input. The County Engineering Department, along with the Planning Division, will be taking a lead in coordinating the TPS Committee. Furthermore, the policy regarding corridor master plans needs to be modified to provide for a more realistic time frame.

*Identify urban core/Tier and provide true urban land use patterns and better services*  
refer to Issue 2

*Revisit Policy LU 3.5-d.*

Based upon a recent discussion between Engineering and Planning, Palm Beach County has initiated an amendment to Policy 3.5-d, which states:

“The County shall not approve a change to the Future Land Use Atlas which results in an increase in density or intensity of development generating additional traffic that significantly impacts any roadway segment projected to fail to operate at the adopted level of service standard “D” based upon the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan. Significant impact shall be as defined in Table 3.5 -1. “

Table 3.5-1 states that:

“A project has significant traffic: (1) when net trips will cause the currently adopted LOS for FIHS facilities to be exceeded; and/or (2) where net trips impacting roads not on the FIHS are greater than three percent (3%) of the currently adopted level of service “D” capacity on an AADT basis of the link affected up to the limits set forth in this table. The laneage shall be as shown on the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan.”

The County initiated amendment in Round 04-2 is proposed to make transportation requirements even more restrictive (decreasing significance level to less than the current 3%), thereby raising the difficulty of increasing densities and intensities.

Based upon the outcome of the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners EAR workshop in August, this policy may, again, be amended in a subsequent round or at the adoption hearing in December, in order to encourage increasing the significance level above the current 3% by density/intensity increases, this time, in the urban core/tier.

*TCEA (or other LOS exceptions) for URA with a Point System*

As allowed by State law, local governments have the authority to establish the level of service (LOS) standard for roadways within their jurisdiction, excluding the Florida Intrastate Highway System. Palm Beach County adopted a countywide LOS of “D” and instituted a program known as TCEA, or Transportation Concurrency Exception Area.

This has been used to create five TCEAs in Palm Beach County, with a sixth currently being processed.

While such exceptions allow for development in congested areas, there may be a concern over the profligate use of such exceptions as the primary method for addressing the inadequacy of transportation facilities within Palm Beach County. Furthermore, the use of TCEAs may negatively impact FIHS facilities, thereby advancing the degradation of the region's mobility. The effect of such degradation on mobility in Palm Beach County may have long-term implications on the quality of life of county residents and visitors.

Such issues were recognized in the examination of another LOS exception policy: the "Constrained Roadway At Lower Level of Service" (CRALLS) designation. Again, the concern was that an excessive use of the policy would degrade transportation facilities at the expense of the quality of life in the region. In the case of CRALLS, it was suggested that the County develop strategies to mitigate the traffic impacts of development on CRALLS and other roadway facilities. As a result, a "toolbox" of strategies was developed in TE Policy 1.2-q. In the case of Okeechobee Boulevard CRALLS, staff worked with the FDOT in developing several of the strategies as part of a point system where future projects will be graded using a points-based methodology. Since points are determined based on the type of strategy used as well as the number of trips generated by a given project, potential projects will be ranked with preference going to projects with higher point scores.

The research conducted noted that such point system policies, when applied to an entire government's development approval process, created problems, did not produce the desired results, and were generally abandoned. Implementing the system in a limited situation, however, was recommended. TCEAs, like CRALLS-designated roadways, are limited (the former by area, the latter by road segments). By ranking incoming projects proposed in places with limited capacities, the "best" projects can be granted development orders.

In our recent discussions, Florida Department of Transportation has recently indicated a possibility of providing consultant services, at its own expense, to help develop a point system for the TCEA. Therefore, the County should commit to provide for one or more TCEAs or other LOS exceptions with a point system for the urban core/tier identified as part of Issue 2.

### **Interconnectivity**

Interconnectivity can be defined as the availability of access between adjacent developments. Such connections could reduce trip demands on the County's major roadways.

On August 28, 2001, Planning Division staff presented a workshop item to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) that detailed several recommendations to address traffic issues that were discussed at the North County Traffic Summit held on March 30 and 31, 2001. The lack of connectivity between uses was viewed as the most significant problem in the region by the North County Traffic Summit. One of the aforementioned Summit recommendations addressed the topic of interconnectivity.

The Summit recommendation stated that interconnectivity should be required whenever practical, with consideration given to adjoining uses, so that connections would be developed between residential uses or between residential and commercial uses, but not required between residential and industrial uses.

The Board of County Commissioners directed staff to create interconnectivity policies that would require, where feasible, vehicular and non-vehicular cross access management techniques between and within commercial developments.

Policy 4.3-k is limited to non-residential-to-non-residential connections. Residential development patterns, such as gated communities, present difficulties in that they are acute attempts at limiting access. Recognizing the access concerns of developers of these types of communities, it was determined that residential land uses would be excluded from the policy.

At present, the Planning staff will continue to address connectivity through the Corridor Master Plans and/or CRALLS Mitigation Strategies and Points System, all of which identify connectivity as a viable mitigation for congestion.

## **Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs**

### *TSM Programs*

Transportation System Management (TSM) can be defined as a variety of actions and activities designed to make the existing transportation system more efficient. To that end, the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan has a number of TSM policies that are in effect currently.

The County's Traffic Division has been successfully implementing TSM strategies (the information for this section was provided by the Traffic Division). The traffic operations in Palm Beach County are controlled from a central computer, located at the Traffic Engineering facility at 160 Australian Avenue, West Palm Beach, Florida. The computer control of the signalized intersections is maintained by Urban Traffic Control System (UTCS) – Extended Version. Currently, there are 557 signals under UTCS control along the entire east coast of the County, from Tequesta to Boca Raton. The signalized intersections communicate with the central computer via twisted-copper cable and fiber optic cable, on a second-by-second basis, indicating the status of the signal operation. Also, the UTCS graphics allow monitoring of the signal cycles in real-time and detect major signal malfunctions.

Traffic signal progression relies on: 1.) the ability of all of the traffic signal controllers on a roadway to know the exact time of day, and 2.) the traffic engineer to produce a timing plan that allows vehicles to move along the road with minimal delay. This is accomplished by communicating with the traffic signal controllers over the Traffic Division's communication system. The current communication system is being expanded and modified to use new communication technology. The old communication system uses analog technology over copper wire and fiber optic cable. The new (under construction) communication system is an Ethernet technology transmitting digital information over 100% fiber optic cables. There are approximately 1,000 traffic signals operated by Palm Beach County. Currently, 210 traffic signals are online with the new communication system. Approximately 5 traffic signals are being added per week, with the expected completion in about 3-4 years. This same interconnected system is being evaluated to determine how it can work with the Fire Rescue departments around the county to preempt signals on emergency runs.

### *TDM Programs*

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a general term for actions that encourage a decrease in the demand for existing transportation systems. The Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan has a number of TDM policies that are currently in effect.

The County, being the employer of over 5,000 people, has already made an effort in TDM policies. The County has a "flex" time policy, which allows employees who drive to work to

come in at non-peak hour times. Generally, the County also promotes transit, is in the process of implementing a Points System for specific CRALLS designations, has developed the Corridor Master Plan concept, and has been instituting TCEAs where appropriate. In addition, the County has been actively spending money on a Countywide Pathway Program on a yearly basis.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of this report focus on the second of the four activities addressed, working towards encouraging land use patterns that will shorten or eliminate automobile trips. These recommendations include:

- An evaluation to determine whether smaller mixed-use projects on transportation nodes shall be encouraged either through a complete concurrency exception or some other partial concurrency benefit.
- Supporting any municipality's lead in developing and implementing TOD criteria (see page 32), moving of TE Policy 1.13-m (in which the County considers adoption of TOD guidelines) and the changing of the implementation date for LU Policy 2.4-d (which requires the County to develop criteria to encourage TODs) to year 2010.
- Modifying the policy regarding corridor master plans to provide for a more realistic time frame.
- Amending FLUE Policy 3.5-d (which restricts projects that significantly impact any roadway segment projected to fail to operate at the adopted level of service standard based upon the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan) to encourage appropriate densities/intensities in the URA while discouraging densities/intensities in other areas.
- Committing to provide for one or more TCEAs or other LOS exceptions (with, perhaps, a point system for the URA identified as part of Issue 2).

## **ISSUE 6**

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Improve Intergovernmental Coordination Between the County and Other Local Governments and Governmental Entities

### **ISSUE STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND**

Many of the issues facing Palm Beach County today and in the foreseeable future will require a higher level of Intergovernmental Coordination. Infill, revitalization and redevelopment projects usually occur within municipalities and need a framework to better fulfill their objectives. Commuters from neighboring counties may affect transportation policies within the county and vice versa. Some agencies may need to purchase land for projects within areas controlled by municipalities and could use procedures to facilitate the use of these lands. Annexations within the county would profit with the timely cooperation between County and Municipal Governments.

### **ACTIVITIES EXPLORED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE**

The following activities were explored regarding this issue:

- Increase coordination with adjacent local governments on land use planning for future growth, including coordination on infill development and redevelopment.
- Analysis and corrections to duplication and/or deficits of service delivery.
- Coordinated approaches to common issues such as transportation planning, school concurrency and other education-related issues.
- Establishment of joint planning areas to address issues for future annexation areas between the County and adjacent municipalities.

### **ISSUE ANALYSIS**

In order to examine increased intergovernmental coordination opportunities in the County, it is first essential to examine the existing coordination channels in place. Palm Beach County participates in several intergovernmental coordination agencies/programs, including:

- The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
- The South Florida Regional Planning Council (for the REMI model)
- The Metropolitan Planning Organization
- The Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination Program
- The North County Forum
- The School Board Population Sub-Committee

In addition to the above, County staff coordinate with, and present materials to, the Palm Beach County League of Cities, and directly with municipalities and their staff, upon request. Over the past 2 years the County and the League of Cities have collaborated on three joint workshops to discuss multi-jurisdictional issues including transportation and annexation. The County and the School Board have also participated in joint workshops on school related issues.

One of the most significant tools for intergovernmental coordination that is unique to Palm Beach County is the Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination Program.

## **Overview of Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination**

Prior to the Growth Management Act of 1985, Palm Beach County had an Area Planning Board which had no implementation or regulatory authority. In 1985, the Palm Beach County Planning Congress, a voluntary group of planning professionals recommended that the Area Planning Board be abolished and that a planning organization with the authority to resolve conflicts be created. A Growth Management Task Team was formed and, in April 1986, it issued a report calling for a Countywide Planning Council. The Council was created by referendum, through an amendment to the Palm Beach County Charter. The ballot language, which was approved by the voters in November 1986, read:

“Shall there be an amendment to the Palm Beach County Charter establishing a Countywide Planning Council, which shall identify incompatibilities in land use among the municipalities and the unincorporated area, prepare a land use element for countywide application, be designated as the Local Planning Agency for the Countywide Land Use Element, providing for adoption of the Countywide Land Use Element; prevalence of countywide land use element ordinances over municipal land use element ordinance; repeal provisions”

The Countywide Planning Council, with a governing board of 17 appointed by elected officials, ran into several difficulties. These ranged from debates as to what constituted a countywide issue, to its cost of operation (FY 91/92 budget of \$1,111,000), to the additional layer of governmental review it proposed for determining consistency of local government plan amendments with the Countywide Land Use Element. In 1991, under provisions within the Charter, the Council was sunset when a majority of the municipalities adopted resolutions to that effect. The Board of County Commissioners proceeded to reinstate the Council, with the powers and functions being transferred to the Board, through another ballot measure; however, the referendum was defeated in March 1992.

Following the defeat of the Countywide referendum, the planning directors within the County set about to create a substitute organization. They were successful in this endeavor and in October 1993, after execution of two interlocal agreements among the County, 31 municipalities, the School District, the South Florida Water Management District, and 6 other Special Districts, the Multi-Jurisdictional Issues Coordination Forum and the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Coordinated Review Process were established. These programs, and hereinafter referred to as the Issues Forum and IPARC (Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee) respectively, are collectively known as the “Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination Program.”

## **History of the Intergovernmental Coordination Program**

The *Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination Program* was established by the municipal planning directors as a result of the dissolution of the Countywide Planning Council. The purpose was to establish a countywide comprehensive plan amendment coordinated review process. In October 1993, the Multi-Jurisdictional Issues Coordination Forum and the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Coordinated Review Process were established through the execution of two interlocal agreements among the County, 31 municipalities, SFWMD, the School District, Lake Worth Drainage District, South Indian Water Control District, Boca Raton Airport Authority, Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District, Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District, and the North Palm Beach County Water Control District.

## **Intergovernmental Coordination Program Composition**

The Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Coordination Program was established to provide a vehicle of communication and education between and among the various local governments and service providers. The Program consists of three components:

- The Executive Committee;
- The Issues Forum; and
- The Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee (IPARC).

### **The Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee is comprised of nine elected officials from the participating agencies of the Coordination Program Interlocal Agreement. The Executive Committee is responsible for policy direction and the administrative oversight of the Issues Forum and IPARC.

### **The Issues Forum**

The Issues Forum is comprised of management staff from the participating agencies, and is responsible for the following:

1. Identification of multi-jurisdictional issues;
2. Facilitation of the resolution of multi-jurisdictional issues by providing a vehicle for consensus building, research, and debate;
3. Formation of ad-hoc committees to address these issues through the preparation of reports; and
4. Initiation of programs and policies to address items of a multi-jurisdictional nature through:
  - Establishing a countywide position regarding multi-jurisdictional and growth management issues at the County, Regional, and State level;
  - Providing vehicle for clarification of the technical assistance in understanding Regional and State initiatives;
  - Providing an outlet for constructive critiquing of county legislative proposals having countywide significance.

### **IPARC**

The Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee is comprised of the Planning Directors and related staff of the participating agencies. Representatives review proposed comprehensive plan amendments of other jurisdictions and participate in a dispute resolution process when conflicts are identified between jurisdictions.

### **Palm Beach County's Participation in the Program**

The County supports and participates in the Palm Beach County Intergovernmental Program by:

- Serving on Program committees including the Executive Committee, Issue Forum and IPARC;
- Serving on fact-finding committees or other ad hoc committees as necessary;
- Providing technical support through staffing and other means for standing committees;
- Providing payment of annual participation fee;

- Providing proposed comprehensive plan amendment materials to the IPARC clearinghouse for distribution;
- Participating in the Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Process; and
- Participating in conflict resolution panels when appropriate.

### **Other Coordination Opportunities**

On December 31, 2003, Palm Beach County submitted the Interlocal Service Delivery Report to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Pursuant to Chapter 163, F.S., DCA will coordinate the analysis with the assistance of the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council during this year.

There are several unincorporated areas in the County that are ideal for intergovernmental coordination with surrounding municipalities towards the annexation and revitalization/redevelopment of these areas. Currently the County is participating in a special study with the Village of Palm Springs towards the redevelopment of the Lake Worth Road Corridor, from Congress Avenue west to Military Trail, and is working towards the annexation of the unincorporated portion of the Lake Worth Park of Commerce with the City of Lake Worth. The County will continue to support these efforts and other projects and as they arise and as staff time permits.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Due to the well organized existing channels of communication, there is no need for an additional agency to increase intergovernmental coordination in the County. However, in order to enhance the existing programs, the following recommendations could be considered:

- **IPARC Database:** The County provides technical support to the IPARC Clearinghouse in order to allow participating local governments to enter and post proposed plan amendments on the web. This action would result in a more efficient program.
- **IPARC Annexation Review:** Currently the County operates a voluntary annexation review program, in which municipalities voluntarily provide notice in advance of the first reading of proposed annexations. This program allows County service providers to provide comments on the annexation in advance of the hearing. The short-coming of this approach is that it is completely voluntary and there is no opportunity to resolve identified issues as with plan amendments through IPARC. An amendment to IPARC to include annexations should be considered.
- **Ad-hoc Sub-Committee on Infill and Redevelopment:** The County has experienced a dramatic increase in infill and redevelopment activities over the past several years. In order to address related issues, and to share technical expertise, the formation of an ad-hoc committee through the Issues Forum, and perhaps also IPARC, should be considered.
- **Future Annexation Area Refinement:** Recently the Issues Forum directed the League of Cities to coordinate and review the adopted municipal future annexation areas and to facilitate the revision of these areas to remove any overlap of future municipal boundaries. The County is participating in the project and providing technical support. This project will become essential if the proposed Senate Bill 2344, that permits counties and local governments to enter into interlocal agreements to facilitate annexation outside

of the current limitations of Chapter 171, F.S., is approved. The County should actively continue its participation with this project.

# ISSUE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## **ISSUE 1 - Conclusion and Recommendations**

The general consensus is that the MGTS continues to be valid and an important viable planning tool even with the presence of The Scripps Research Institute (TSRI) in Palm Beach County. Developable areas east of the L-8 Canal can absorb projected population through the year 2025 with current and proposed future land uses, including Scripps-related residential development, the implementation of mix use development areas where feasible, and the creation of the Urban Redevelopment Area (URA), where increased densities and intensities will be allowed as part of infill, redevelopment and revitalization programs.

The MGTS was developed to address the future of the County and have embedded tools to facilitate the incorporation of new situations and to adapt to the needs and requirements of new opportunities or constraints. TSRI locating in the County is an opportunity to enhance and enrich the vision for the future of Palm Beach County.

This EAR has also served to assess how well we have done in making this vision a reality, to suggest some adjustments to strengthen the vision and redirect County actions in the process to achieve that vision, and to incorporate new challenges and opportunities.

The main recommendation is to maintain the tier boundary with minor adjustments to address changed conditions in a few areas of the County. The overall consensus is that the tier system continues to be valid and the tier tools represented in the form of goals, objectives and policies throughout the Comprehensive Plan shall be utilized to the extent possible in order to maintain the integrity of the tier system as a growth management strategy.

The western boundaries of the coastal tiers do not need to be expanded further west in order to accommodate projected population and development activities beyond the County's planning horizon of 2025.

As the County reaches build-out of developable lands within the urban/suburban, exurban and rural tiers, the preferred strategy is then to make a more efficient use of existing developable land during the next planning horizon. This entails encouraging increased densities and intensities where appropriate, and promoting redevelopment, revitalization infill and mixed-use development projects.

Regarding the Glades Tier it was concluded that the tier should be split. The existing urban/suburban tier in the Glades municipalities will be renamed as "Glades Communities Tier." The balance of the current Glades Tier includes the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) and northern Everglades protection areas. It was concluded that addressing this region, as a "Glades Protection Tier" would be the most appropriate strategy. Issue 4 has more specific analysis and recommendations for this area.

A management strategy is needed to effectively protect the EAA as a regional resource of food production with distribution in proximity to large population centers. CERP restoration goals necessitate the continuity of this strategy to assure the future sustainability of water resources for human consumption, natural systems and agriculture.

Regarding the Scripps initiative, short-term solutions provided in the EAR recommendations include the possible extension of the Urban/Suburban Tier and the Urban Service Area to incorporate Scripps and other related areas. This could be addressed once the expedited review process has been completed for the research park, when the County would have better information to make a proper determination regarding the extension of this tier. At that time, the County would have better information to make a proper determination regarding the possible extension of this tier. This additional information includes any decisions that Palm Beach Gardens may have made regarding their portion of the Scripps initiative and the results of the joint planning efforts between the County and the city.

Existing challenges in the Central-Western Communities will be addressed as the Plan is amended to incorporate EAR recommendations and as the Sector Plan is implemented within the next few years. Many of these situations are evolving as the EAR is being prepared. A comprehensive analysis of these situations and initiatives will be performed in the near future, most likely after adoption of the EAR, when more specific information becomes available.

The Revitalization and Redevelopment Overlay (RRO) is recommended for amendment to address the County's strategy of promoting infill, redevelopment and revitalization to more efficiently use remaining developable lands in the County's unincorporated area. Additional recommendations are presented with Issue 2. The primary RRO amendments involve:

- Removing the RRO from all municipalities. The County will continue supporting redevelopment initiatives in municipalities through the Comprehensive Plan by promoting the use of CRA's, TCEA's and other incentives with minor modifications to existing goals, objectives and policies.
- Adding the proposed Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) and all CCRT areas to the RRO. The purpose is to make the provisions of the URA applicable to the entire RRO.

## **ISSUE 2 - Conclusions and Recommendations**

Generally, it is difficult to effectively assess infill and redevelopment in our Comprehensive Plan. Development in Palm Beach County has not substantially utilized many of the provisions for redevelopment in our plan and we can only conclude that it is untested. As we move forward we do intend to make some modifications to the Plan. The County's primary focus will be in the proposed Urban Redevelopment Area. It is in support of this designation where we will seek the most significant changes.

- Reorganize Redevelopment and Revitalization Overlay as detailed in Issue 1C.
- Reorganize to the greatest extent possible all policies and objectives which pertain to redevelopment under a new "redevelopment" goal.
- Pursuant to the creation of the Urban Redevelopment Area delete policies 1.2.2-f and 1.2.3-g in the FLUE.

### **ISSUE 3 - Conclusion and Recommendations**

The County's affordable housing activities must continue to focus on directing programs and activities to ensure that supply is provided to meet demand, and maintain existing housing units through policies to eliminate substandard housing and provide for relocation.

The Board of County Commissioners directed staff at the BCC Workshop on the EAR to look at all potential incentives to make it easier for developers to build affordable and workforce housing developments. The Board also urged staff to move from the adoption of policies to the implementation of specific projects.

Geographic dispersal must also be addressed in order to avoid the concentration of affordable housing in specific areas of the County, and at the same time, consideration must also be given to the availability of public services and employment opportunities when locating affordable housing.

The housing needs of special needs populations, including rural and farm worker households, goes beyond the issue of affordability. The creation or preservation of adequate housing to meet specific special needs must be addressed, whether it is for foster care, group homes, farm workers or other special needs.

The establishment of the voluntary Workforce Housing program will provide an opportunity for new and redeveloped residential developments to provide a percentage of housing units for low to moderate income households, as a means to meet affordable housing needs and to disperse that needed housing in the unincorporated County. When established, the County must promote and encourage residential developers to utilize the Workforce Housing program. County elected officials discussed the idea of making this program mandatory, given the gravity of the situation. The BCC directed staff to report back to the Board one year after implementation of the program. At that time, the BCC may consider whether to make this program mandatory.

Affordable housing and workforce housing issues could not be addressed or resolved by policies in the comprehensive Plan alone. Both private interest groups and elected officials agreed that a concerted public/private effort at the regional level, including other counties and local governments, is needed to properly address this situation.

At the EAR workshop on this issue, the BCC suggested staff to consider areas in the Glades Communities as targets to build affordable and workforce housing developments. The rationale is that many workers and public employees are traveling long distances to Martin and St Lucie Counties where to find homes they can afford, while they could have obtained the same homes in the Glades cities, which are closer to their workplaces within the County.

### **ISSUE 4 - Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **Preservation of Agricultural Lands**

- Consider performing an area-wide comprehensive evaluation/needs analysis of the entire EAA.

- Separate, into its own Tier, the existing Glades community areas within the Glades Tier from the Agricultural Production area of the EAA and conservation areas in recognition of its uniqueness and significance to the Ag industry. This item is further explored as part of Issue 1.
- Continue to promote/support/reinforce opportunities for smaller agriculture operations in the Urban/Suburban, Rural and Exurban Tiers. These uses include the horticulture support industry (nurseries), growers of “nitch” crops, hydroponics’ operations and growers of winter crops and equestrian activities. This includes continuing the agricultural programs offered by the Ag Cooperative Extension Service (e.g., Get Fresh Promotional Campaign, Farmer to chef, Community Supported Agriculture, Consumer Cooperatives, Agricultural Education).
- Develop language to address planning and design measures that lessen compatibility issues between agricultural and residential uses. Identify appropriate buffering for residential development to adjacent agricultural lands so as not to create a potential nuisance (noise, dust, odor, access) situation.
- Explore mechanisms to create/identify incentives to promote and maintain the agricultural use of open space preserves associated with larger commercial/residential clustered developments.
  - An incentive and benefit to a Home Owners Association (HOA) would be the income from leasing set-aside property to a smaller farm operation. This should be explored as a function of implementing any rural cluster development approvals, the Ag reserve policies, sector planning process, and opportunities on our bond acquired sites as part of managing those ag lands.
  - A HOA could also transfer stewardship to the County. The Soil and Water Conservation District currently manages bond acquired lands. This should be explored to determine if they could also be involved with the stewardship of HOA transferred lands.
  - A tax credit (Greenbelt exemption) could be used as an additional incentive.
- Sector Plan Area: (Rural and Exurban Tiers) Promote agriculture as a choice of open space uses within rural clustered developments thereby, retaining availability of land for such agricultural uses. Policies are currently being developed through the sector planning process to address this issue. They will be processed as part of Amendment Round 04-2. Policies should include consideration of appropriate buffering between the agricultural operations and residentially developed lands so as not to create a nuisance situation.

### **Preservation of Rural Lands**

- Place emphasis on strengthening existing rural design measures and developing new mechanisms that will be effective in maintaining the rural character for development on rural lands. Specifically,
  - Re-evaluate the types and sizes of nonresidential uses (e.g. institutional, civic) allowed to locate within the RR land use designations without needing a land use amendment. This needs to include discussion regarding: a) the square footage allowed (FAR) for commercial, institutional, civic and church primary and/or

accessory uses in the rural areas; should there be a square footage limitation?; b) type of use allowed for primary and/or accessory uses, should there be restrictions on certain uses and/or accessory types?; C) Inherit with items a and b is the question of when limitations or restrictions should apply.

- Evaluate ULDC design items. Identify the rural features to be preserved and those that need to be added to the ULDC (e.g., fencing, vegetation, parking and roadway materials). Strengthen rural design language where appropriate.
- County facilities including buildings and roads need to embrace and comply with rural design standards. Identify the types of features (e.g. roads) that need a design prototype developed. Work with appropriate departments and agencies to incorporate rural design and embrace the tier system. **Link with Issue #1c (implementation of the Tier System by County Agencies).**
- Need stronger incentives in PBC infill areas in order to reduce pressure for development of the rural lands.
- Provision of services (water and sewer service) within the rural tier. **Link to Issue #1e (Assess impacts on the provision of services). Link to Issue 5: Assessment of Transportation** Policy 3.5-d recommended changes in Rd 04-2 regarding differential levels of service for rural areas.

### **Impacts of Development on the Everglades system and other Restoration Initiatives**

- Continue to request the SFWMD to provide comments on land use amendments processed by the County, which may have an impact on CERP and other Everglades restoration initiatives.

### **Impacts of Development on Water Resources and Water Supply**

- Implement the provisions linking land use and water supply in the potable water sub-element, which call for the enhancement of alternative water supply sources for the next twenty years.

### **Impacts of Development on Surface Water Quality**

- Modify the frequency and number of sampling points to adequately monitor the impacts of proposed development trends. In addition, when the State's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program is completed there will be considerable amounts of data and analysis with which the County's impaired waterways can be determined. Areas of concentration will be the western areas that are anticipated to have the development potential over the next 10 to 20 years.

## **ISSUE 5 - Conclusion and Recommendations**

The recommendations of this report focus on the second of the four activities addressed. Working towards encouraging land use patterns that will shorten or eliminate automobile trips. These recommendations include:

- An evaluation to determine whether smaller mixed-use projects on transportation nodes shall be encouraged either through a complete concurrency exception or some other partial concurrency benefit.

- Supporting any municipality's lead in developing and implementing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) criteria (see page 32), moving of TE Policy 1.13-m (in which the County considers adoption of TOD guidelines) and changing of the implementation date for LU Policy 2.4-d (which requires the County to develop criteria to encourage TODs) to year 2010.
- Modifying the policy regarding corridor master plans to provide for a more realistic time frame.
- Amending FLUE Policy 3.5-d (which restricts projects that significantly impact any roadway segment projected to fail to operate at the adopted level of service standard based upon the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan) to encourage appropriate densities/intensities in the Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) while discouraging densities/intensities in other areas.
- Committing to provide for one or more Transportation Concurrency Exemption Area (TCEA)s or other LOS exceptions (with, perhaps, a point system for the URA identified as part of Issue 2).

## **ISSUE 6 - Conclusion and Recommendations**

Due to the well-organized existing channels of communication, there is no need for an additional agency to increase intergovernmental coordination in the County. However, in order to enhance the existing programs, the following recommendations could be considered:

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