

# Managed Growth Tier System History

## Tier System: Related Goals, Objectives and Policies

The **Future Land Use Element** (FLUE) institutes the framework for growth management and land planning in unincorporated Palm Beach County, as authorized by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, the "Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Act."

The residents of Palm Beach County desire the creation, enhancement and maintenance of livable communities. These communities are defined as places which include:

1. A central neighborhood or community focal point, such as a civic space or commercial area and limited mix of neighborhood-based commercial uses compatible with the character of the tier which provides for the neighborhoods daily needs;
2. A compact, diverse mix of housing for a wide range of family and household types including accessory apartments behind homes and above shops to provide dispersal of affordable housing in the Urban/Suburban Tier, and large rural residential estate lots in the Exurban and Rural Tiers;
3. Higher density residential near commercial centers, transit lines, and parks - homes with a strong relationship to traffic calmed streets with porches, stoops, and lighted, safe, and comfortable sidewalks; in the Urban/Suburban Tier;
4. Neighborhood/community parks, and public space, which include landscaping, plazas, squares, greens, gardens and appealing vistas;
5. Public/private buildings placed to create human scale and pedestrian-oriented spaces and dispersed parking reflective of the character of the tier;
6. Pedestrian access appropriate for each tier, which includes safe and physically appealing sidewalks or pathways;
7. Alternative modes of transportation appropriate for each tier, including bike paths and equestrian trails; and
8. Public transit in the Urban/Suburban Tier which includes available, timely, and affordable multi-modal opportunities. The Future Land Use Element identifies goals, objectives and policies that provide the foundation for decisions that direct the location, pattern, character, interrelationship and timing of development, which ultimately affects the distribution of facilities and services to support it. The framework that establishes the form of the region is defined by the location of natural resources and resource management areas, the development pattern and the design of residential and nonresidential development and open space, the location and type of employment centers, and the transportation network. The relationship among these elements ultimately dictates the capacity of a community to accommodate growth and its ability to sustain a high quality of life for the citizens.

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## **GOAL 1 TIER SYSTEM**

To establish a Managed Growth Tier System which recognizes the diverse communities that share common characteristics within the County. This Goal establishes five (5) geographic regions (Tiers), each of which exhibits distinctive physical development patterns with different needs for services to ensure a diversity of lifestyle choices. The five (5) Tiers are: Urban/Suburban, Exurban, Rural, Agricultural Reserve, and Glades. Also establishes criteria for re-designating or amending a tier boundary. The Managed Growth Tier System provides strategies to protect viable existing neighborhoods, lifestyle choices, and communities and promote the enhancement of areas in need of assistance. In addition, these strategies are intended to direct the location and timing of future development to:

1. Ensure sufficient land, facilities and services are available to maintain a variety of housing and lifestyle choices;
2. Preserve, protect, and improve the quality of natural resources;
3. Accommodate future growth but prohibit further urban sprawl;
4. Enhance existing communities' livability, character, mobility, and identity;
5. Support infill development and redevelopment activity through coordinated service delivery and infrastructure upgrades;
6. Protect agricultural land;
7. Strengthen and diversify the County's economic base; and
8. Provide timing and phasing mechanisms to prioritize facility and service delivery to correct deficiencies in existing communities and accommodate projected growth in a timely and cost effective manner.

**Urban/Suburban Tier.** The objective is to accommodate approximately 90% of the County's population, provide for a range of lifestyle choices, and to encourage compact/ mixed-use development designed to create walkable, livable communities by:

1. Establishing minimum density requirements to promote the most efficient use of infrastructure;
2. Allowing density increases above the County's cap in certain areas;
3. Encouraging the location of schools proximate to urban residential areas;

4. Providing opportunities for limited neighborhood commercial services in residential developments;
5. Prohibiting isolated, mid-block commercial development along roadways;
6. Improving design of commercial sites to increase transit accessibility and pedestrian orientation;
7. Allowing interim agricultural uses provided they are compatible with surrounding land uses;
8. Allowing flexibility in allocation of density and intensity within planned developments;
9. Encouraging construction of Traditional Marketplace Developments (TMD);
10. Encouraging the development of Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND);
11. Update the Unified Land Development Code to graphically depict the tenets and land development regulations for TND's and TMD's;
12. Encouraging true mixed-use development;
13. Encouraging creation of Economic Development Centers for industries;
14. Supporting sustainable urban development, including restoration, infill and adaptive reuse;
15. Improving the living conditions of distressed neighborhoods through establishment of the Countywide Community Revitalization Team which will focus redevelopment efforts on those areas needing it most;
16. Facilitating development of a prototype master plan for infill revitalization of communities;
17. Promoting the County's revitalization and redevelopment efforts to the building industry, financial institutions and area residents; and,
18. Providing flexibility for innovative and creative land use patterns for large developments by establishing a Multiple Use land use designation.

**Exurban Tier.** The objective is to plan for the impacts of growth outside of the Urban/Suburban Tier in antiquated subdivisions created prior to the adoption of the County's Comprehensive Plan and to protect and maintain these semi-rural residential, equestrian, and agricultural communities by:

1. Limiting new lots to 2.5 acres to maintain a rural residential lifestyle for the Exurban Tier;
2. Limiting non-residential development to that which serves the needs of the immediate community;
3. Referring to the commercial location and intensity recommendations in Neighborhood Plans;

4. Establishing rural design regulations and allowing Traditional Marketplace Developments;
5. Promoting development of central community places and community focal points; and,
6. Maintaining rural zoning regulations for areas designated Rural Residential.

**Rural Tier.** The objective is to plan for the impacts of growth outside of the Urban/Suburban Tier, while recognizing the proximity to environmentally sensitive natural areas, and the existence of both large undeveloped tracts as well as areas containing densities less than 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres established prior to the adoption of the County's Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the policies established for the Exurban Tier above, policies have been established in the Rural Tier to further protect and maintain these rural residential, equestrian, and agricultural communities by:

1. Limiting the lot size to a minimum of 5 acres and 20 acres for environmentally sensitive lands;
2. Requiring future development to preserve/restore native ecosystems, protect regional water resource management areas, and incorporate greenways and open space consistent with the County's Greenway/Linked Open Space Program;
3. Prohibiting increased density and/or intensity which requires major capital facilities investments; and,
4. Establishing areas with an RR20 Future Land Use Designation as TDR sending areas.

**The Agricultural Reserve Tier.** The objective in the Agricultural Reserve Tier is preservation primarily for agricultural use while accommodating some of the growth pressure. The County promotes the continuation of agriculture in this area by:

1. Developing a Master Plan for this 20,000 acre region to prevent the potential for urban sprawl;
2. Designating the entire region as a TDR sending area;
3. Purchasing environmentally sensitive lands and farmland with \$150 million in bond funds;
4. Relaxing standards to facilitate farming while ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses;
5. Encouraging all types of agricultural uses, up to and including packing houses and food processing; and,
6. Requiring development to be clustered in order to preserve agricultural land and open space.

**Glades Tier.** The objective of the Glades Tier is to preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the Glades, protect the economically viable agricultural base, and revitalize the communities in this area by:

1. Allowing only large scale or intense agricultural uses in the majority of the region;

2. Encouraging the development of towns along Lake Okeechobee;
3. Promoting economic diversification, cultural preservation, and local revitalization/redevelopment;
4. Establishing the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative Overlay.

## **GOAL 2: LAND PLANNING**

To create and maintain livable communities, promote the quality of life, and to balance the physical, social, cultural, environmental and economic needs of the current and projected residents and visitor populations.

**Balanced Growth and Land Use Decision Making.** These two objectives are intended to ensure that growth is balanced and accommodates the population and its need for services, employment opportunities, and recreation and open space, while providing for the continuation of agriculture and the protection of the environment and natural resources consistent with the County's diverse character as reflected in the Tier System by:

1. Establishing a range of future land use designations to manage and direct future development;
2. Ensuring land use designations do not exceed the natural or manmade constraints of an area;
3. Maintaining the Future Land Use Atlas to depict the land use and associated density/intensities for all properties in unincorporated Palm Beach County;
4. Requiring all land development decisions to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Atlas;
5. Ensuring that economic development objectives are considered during the land use decision process;
6. Establishing a series of overlays to implement more focused policies that address specific issues within uniquely identified areas;
7. Ensuring that any changes to the Future Land Use Atlas are appropriate and compatible with existing and planned development in the immediate vicinity;
8. Ensuring the Land Development Code is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
9. Encourage the elimination or reduction of existing non-conforming land uses;
10. Denying future land use amendments which encourage piecemeal development;
11. Prohibiting increases in density in coastal high-hazard areas;
12. Establishing location criteria for commercial development based on intensity;

13. Prohibiting strip commercial development;
14. Conducting a Commercial Needs Assessment/Location Study;
15. Allowing Industrial uses at appropriate locations and intensities;
16. Establishing a range of agricultural categories;
17. Establishing flexible location criteria for Parks and Recreation facilities;
18. Establishing conservation designations to conserve or protect natural resources;
19. Encouraging preservation of privately owned environmentally sensitive lands by allowing them to be designated as TDR sending areas;
20. Encourage the co-location of public facilities with schools;
21. Preventing land use approvals within any roadway right-of-way;
22. Establishing special siting criteria for utilities to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses;
23. Establishing provisions for New Towns (Traditional Town Development);
24. Regulating mining and excavation activities;
25. Encouraging a variety of innovative types of development patterns that mix uses and are designed to promote walkability and a strong sense of community identity;
26. Continuing to study and incorporate incentives to promote the use of mixed-use development patterns;
27. Creating the Greenways and Linked Open Space Program;
28. Establishing a Transfer of Development Rights Program designed to protect Environmentally Sensitive Lands and the Agricultural Reserve; and,
29. Establishing the United Technologies Corporation (Pratt-Whitney) Overlay.

### **GOAL 3 SERVICE AREAS AND PROVISION OF SERVICES**

To define graduated service areas for directing services to the County's diverse neighborhoods and communities in a timely and cost-effective manner, reflective of the quality of life and lifestyle associated with each respective Tier. Service Areas. The objective of establishing graduated service areas is to distinguish the levels and types of services needed within a Tier, consistent with sustaining the characteristics of the Tier. This is accomplished by:

1. Establishing the Urban, Limited Urban, and Rural Service Areas;
2. Periodically reviewing minimum levels of service, and the capacity of the various facilities/ services within a Tier to assess the ability to accommodate projected population growth;
3. Establishing the Urban Service Area (USA) where urban levels of service are expected and required for development, yet allowing a minimum level of development to proceed if services are not yet available;
4. Establishing a Limited Urban Services Area (LUSA) to allow for a mix of urban and rural levels of service;
5. Establishing a Rural Service Area (RSA) to service the needs of rural development and uses without encouraging the conversion of rural areas to more intense uses;
6. Establishing provisions to: require the availability of services concurrent with the impacts of development; ensure that development orders will be based on the County's ability to maintain minimum levels of service; allow flexibility to ensure concurrency requirements can be satisfied by phasing projects, allowing developer contribution; and monitoring existing and projected levels of service; and,
7. Providing timely and appropriate levels of service to further the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **GOAL 4 COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DESIGN**

To develop and implement strategies that will enhance the quality of life within its neighborhoods and communities by ensuring that these areas are well-planned, visually pleasing, safe, devoid of substandard housing and blight, and coordinated with County historic preservation efforts. Neighborhoods and communities shall also be accessible to all of the residents of Palm Beach County through an emphasis on the provision of a variety of housing opportunities through the continuous development of affordable housing.

Community/Neighborhood Planning. This objective provides a means to create, enhance, and maintain more livable communities which provide a strong sense of place and identity for the various regions within the County by:

1. Including area residents, businesses and community/neighborhood leaders in the planning process;
2. Addressing and incorporating the "Principles of a Livable Community;"
3. Ensuring a balanced mix of land uses;
4. Requiring Community and Neighborhood Plan recommendations be considered prior to the extension of utilities or services, approval of a land use amendment, or issuance of a development order; and,

5. Establishing the Sector Planning process, and designating a 55,000 acre area, known as the Central Western Communities, as a Sector Planning Area.

**Joint Planning Areas.** This objective facilitates a coordinated planning approach with other local governments to ensure the proper allocation and placement of future land uses and provide for the diverse needs of the County by:

1. Pursuing interlocal agreements with municipalities that have established future land use designations for adjacent unincorporated areas; and,
2. Promoting development, redevelopment, and revitalization of the coastal communities.

**Community Design.** This objective improves the function and visual appearance of the County by:

1. Evaluating public facilities' plans for all buildings to ensure that their design is consistent with the character of the neighborhood;
2. Developing of positive community identification and appearance by implementing unique architectural and site design themes for different areas of the County in conjunction with development of any Community or Neighborhood Plans;
3. Developing visually pleasing roadways by strengthening the regulations for all signs and billboards;
4. Identifying scenic highways, roadways, and corridors, including commercial corridors, in both urban and rural areas of the County;
5. Pursuing public/private partnerships for the design and funding of community enhancement projects;
6. Requiring the Unified Land Development Code to ensure parking and traffic flow is safe and convenient within and adjacent to developments;
7. Encouraging inter-connectivity between adjacent commercial/office sites;
8. Encouraging innovative site designs which are visually attractive and help reduce the potential for crime;
9. Updating the Unified Land Development Code to promote sustainable design; and,
10. Updating the Unified Land Development Code to create rural design standards and development regulations for non-residential development in the Exurban and Rural Tiers.

**Historic Preservation.** This objective is to protect historic resources (sites, buildings, structures, objects and districts) associated with archeological, historical, engineering, and cultural development by considering historic preservation opportunities and implications in its future land use decision-making process in accordance with the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## **GOAL 5 NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION**

To provide for the continual protection, preservation, and enhancement of the County's various high quality environmental areas for the benefit of its current and future residents and visitors.

**Protection of Natural Resources and Systems.** The objective of this section is the monitoring and enforcement of environmental and development ordinances pursuant to the Conservation Element by:

1. Ensuring protection and stewardship of natural resources and systems;
2. Evaluating the impact of development on natural resources and systems;
3. Creating regulations and incentives to establish buffers on private property adjacent to conservation lands;
4. Establishing a Native Ecosystem Overlay to protect high quality native ecosystems;
5. Establishing the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park Greenline Overlay to protect Park resources;
6. Establishing the Jonathan Dickinson State Park Greenline Overlay to protect Park resources; and,
7. Establishing the Turnpike Aquifer Protection Overlay to protect groundwater recharge areas.