

Managed Growth Tier System History

Policy Development Process & Consensus Procedures

The purpose of the PDTF and the policy development process was to provide opportunity for the public to define the Tier boundaries, and to contribute to policy development by providing input and ideas. A consensus building approach was used as the basis to form decisions.

Laying the Foundation. A joint workshop was held between the Planning Commission and the Policy Development Task Force (PDTF) to review the directives, approach and goal of the Managed Growth Tier System (MGTS) in order to provide a common foundation for policy development. The PDTF was divided into 4 groups; each containing 11 - 17 members which focused on one or more of the tiers based on their area of expertise or interest. Each group had a chairman and vice chairman to run the meetings and keep communication open and on track during discussions.

Policy Development. Each PDTF group met for two months to identify critical issues and concerns, as well as a vision for each Tier. After these initial meetings County Planners drafted policies based on directives obtained from the LUAB and BCC, and on the issues/visions discussed at the group meetings. After completion of the initial draft, County Planners distributed the proposed policies to various agencies to obtain additional input and comments.

County Planners then distributed the draft policies back to each of the respective PDTF groups and to interested parties for review. Over a three month period, each group met to review, rank and reach consensus on the draft policies; each policy was reviewed individually. A consensus was considered to be general agreement with no opposition to the language. This ensured that, at least among the people most familiar with a topic, major concerns had been resolved and there was, at worst, no strong feelings against the proposed policy. Consistent with the LUAB's direction, policies on which a group was unable to achieve this high level of concurrence were reviewed by the Coordinating Committee in the hope that they would be able to reach this same high level of consensus.

The Coordinating Committee include the Chair and Vice Chair of each PDTF Groups and seven (7) residents, one from each Commission District. The purpose was to provide: (1) an additional forum for interested parties to express their ideas, support and concerns; (2) participation of a citizen representative from each Commission District to oversee the progress of the PDTF focus groups; 3) a regularly scheduled forum for the Chairs and Vice Chairs to keep each other informed of the work within their group, coordinate broad-based issues, and maintain accountability to forward the goal of the entire Managed Growth Tier System Program; and (4) policy input, review, and consensus building of those policies on which the focus groups did not reach consensus.

Consensus for the Managed Growth Program. A series of meetings were held with the entire PDTF for the purpose of reaching consensus on the program as a whole. All policies reviewed by the focus groups were identified as having either reached consensus or not reached consensus. Policies which did not reach consensus and were deleted were also noted. These policies were transmitted to the Planning Commission (LUAB) in the language which came closest to providing consensus, with an indication of which focus group reviewed it and how close they came to reaching consensus.

The full PDTF also reviewed and ranked the policies for the entire Tier System and were responsible for bringing all items to consensus to the degree possible. Recognizing that the larger number of members reviewing and ranking may preclude reaching the same level of support for policies as each of the focus groups, a different measure of support was used to determine consensus at the meetings where the full PDTF met to review, rank and reach consensus on the Tier System as a whole. For these meetings, consensus will be considered to have been achieved if no more than 25% of the people in the PDTF rated a policy unfavorably and none of those people rated it as being completely unacceptable.

This procedure ensured that there would be significant support among the diverse members of the PDTF for language recommended to the Planning Commission. Every policy proceeding from the Task Force as a "consensus suggestion" won overwhelming support of a focus group with no opposition and won the support of an overwhelming number of members of the entire PDTF.

A report with these results were forward to the LUAB and eventually to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). Individuals who did not agree with the final draft policies were asked to deliver their objections in writing before the draft policies were presented to the LUAB and the BCC for review and discussion.

Workshops and Public Input. Multiple workshops were held with the Planning Commission over a three month period to review the policies associated with the Managed Growth Tier System. The Planning Commission formulated a recommendation to BCC and held a workshop to review, discuss and obtain additional public input.

Staff, agency and municipal review and coordination were critical components in the development of the MGTS. The implementing department staffs and agencies provided multiple reviews of the Managed Growth Program's Goals, Objectives and Policies for consistency, applicability, and feasibility. Their comments and recommendations were included. Additionally, the County Planners presented the Managed Growth Tier System to various municipal staffs and elected representatives throughout the policy development process. Multiple meetings were held with the Intergovernmental Plan Amendment Review Committee (IPARC) and the League of Cities to provide an overview of the program and to obtain their comments and concerns.

During development of the MGTS, County Planners also met with and spoke on numerous occasions to community groups and business associations. Additionally, County Planners held Community Meetings in different regions of the County to inform the public about the Program and its associated policies, and to obtain their input and comments.