

improvement both locally and nationally. As a member of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), and playing a key role in the development of TBEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for Tampa Bay, the County has made a significant technical, scientific and financial commitment to improving conditions in Tampa Bay. Tampa Bay will soon be subject to new water quality and watershed restoration requirements associated with Clean Water Act compliance, which should have an impact on how development activities are evaluated and regulated in the Roosevelt Watershed.

All of the property controlled by Solid Waste Operations is currently subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements, which is one reason why the location of Tampa Bay Water's brackish wells and water treatment facility are a concern. The withdrawals have the potential to affect the ground water level gradient required to maintain the integrity and function of the slurry wall around the Solid Waste properties, which is required by State regulations.

Clearly, planning for the Gateway Area must be consistent with, and help to implement, regulatory directives, but planning and redevelopment in the Gateway Area also presents the opportunity for the County to be a model for sustainable environmental planning and low impact site design (i.e., environmentally-friendly site planning techniques that conserve natural resources and hydrologic functions). In particular, this is possible with the projects under direct County control and in the development/redevelopment of County-owned properties. In turn, the County's planning and actions should be a model for other local governments and the private sector in sustainable and quality redevelopment.

The Residential Community

An additional consideration in long range planning for the Gateway Area is the evaluation of opportunities to provide new and better integration of residential land uses into the Gateway mix. That is, by providing housing closer to employment, the potential to decrease the number of trips on the overall roadway system exists. For example, the ability to coordinate local transit with the location of housing and employment so that employees can get easily from home to work and back without a car is a desirable goal. To be effective, this is likely to require the introduction of new housing options directly into the mix of business and employment related land uses. Consequently, land use changes to support mixed use development may be appropriate in certain areas. In addition, there may be sites that offer redevelopment potential by conversion to a residential use.

Existing neighborhoods must also be considered in the long range planning for the Gateway Area. The unincorporated residents of Feather Sound, for example, have already expressed concern over the build-out of the Airport properties and the potential impact on their quality of life. Ongoing communication between the County and residents is critical.

The residents of Highpoint have more immediate concerns over neighborhood revitalization, including access to active recreational opportunities. In regard to the

Highpoint Area, the County has an ongoing neighborhood revitalization effort, and is continuing to look for sites with community recreation potential. County and City of Largo staff have discussed the future of providing recreation in the community through collaboration, and the City has discussed potential annexation, although the City has not expressed any definitive plans at this time.

It is important then, that individual community needs and issues be recognized and addressed when planning for the Gateway Area if the existing residential communities are to remain viable, and if additional residential uses are going to be successfully integrated into the Area.