

## **COASTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT MAJOR FINDINGS**

### **BEACH AND DUNE SYSTEMS**

1. Pinellas County contains over 35 miles of sandy beaches. Most of the sandy beaches are located on a string of barrier islands stretching from Anclote Key south along the western portion of the County down to Mullet Key. The sandy beaches are one of the County's most valuable natural assets and the foundation for the local tourist economy.
2. Few of the barrier islands are located in unincorporated Pinellas County. Mullet Key, Bunces Keys, and the southern portion of Anclote Key are the only barrier islands under the direct jurisdiction of the Board of County Commissioners.
3. Most of the barrier islands have been extensively developed. In many instances development occurred upon the primary and secondary dunes. This interference with the coastal processes between the dunes and the beach in many cases has caused the beach to erode and threaten the exposed structures.
4. Landward migration of the shoreline and the occurrence of major storms poses a threat to development on the coast. Among the engineering responses to the erosion of the beaches have been the use of beach renourishment, and the construction of groins, jetties, and seawalls. Beach renourishment has been the more recent approach to shoreline engineering. In 1985, The Beach Restoration Plan for Pinellas County was developed by Pinellas County and the State of Florida. The Restoration Plan's approach provided for a comprehensive long term management strategy for the restoration of eroding County beaches. Several of the projects included within the Beach Restoration Plan have been completed as part of the County's Capital Improvement Program and as part of the Capital Improvements Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
5. The most effective and efficient coastal protection is provided by a natural or artificial beach and dune system, which is being used by Pinellas County extensively.
6. Initial attempts at beach restoration and renourishment were done on a piecemeal basis with little or no coordination among the various coastal communities. Since that time, a coordinated approach with local, state, and federal involvement has developed. The results are countywide management plans that are consistent among themselves. These plans form the basis for the County's current beach nourishment/restoration program.
7. Pinellas County has taken the lead responsibility in managing coastal beach restoration /renourishment projects from inception through completion.
8. Currently, several beach restoration/renourishment projects are identified in the Pinellas County Beach Enhancement Five-Year Program.

## **NATURAL DISASTER PLANNING**

1. As of 1995, it has been estimated that 585,188 Pinellas County residents would have been in need of evacuation from the hurricane evacuation zone (Evacuation levels A through C). In a worst case scenario, it was estimated that 139,976 of the evacuees would need sheltering. In 1995, there were only 87,935 public shelter spaces available for the Category 3 hurricane evacuation. This represented a public shelter deficit of 52,041 spaces.
2. Pinellas County is promoting alternatives to public sheltering as a way of dealing with the public shelter space deficit. Among these alternatives is the “Host Home” program, which encourages members of churches, businesses and organizations living in non-evacuation areas to shelter members in need of evacuation.
3. In the event of a Category 3 hurricane, it has been estimated that an evacuation of Pinellas County would be completed in 14 to 16 hours. Hurricane evacuation traffic will be controlled primarily by law enforcement officers located at seventy-three traffic control points throughout the County. The countywide computerized traffic signalization system would also be used to assist the flow of hurricane evacuation traffic.
4. To comply with changes in the Florida Administrative Code, the definition of the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) of Pinellas County is now equivalent to the Evacuation Level A. The Evacuation Level A represents the portion of the County to be evacuated in the event of a Category 1 hurricane. While this new definition is more expansive than the previous definition of the Coastal High Hazard Area, the Board of County Commissioners has been restricting development within the unincorporated portion of the Evacuation Level A since 1989. The Board currently restricts increases in density and the location or expansion of hospitals, nursing homes, adult living facilities, and mobile home parks within the Evacuation Level A, or CHHA.
5. As of 1996, there were 45 repetitive loss properties and seven repetitive loss areas within the unincorporated area of Pinellas County. The repetitive loss properties were identified by the National Flood Insurance Program. While it is not necessarily known if the losses were due to coastal storms or to 100-year flood events, all of the repetitive loss areas lie within the Coastal High Hazard Area. It appears that many of the repetitive loss structures were built prior to Pinellas County’s participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

6. A Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan has been developed for use by Pinellas County government. The Redevelopment Plan establishes a post-disaster redevelopment task force, sets out priorities for restoration of essential services, provides a post-disaster building permit plan, lists criteria to be used to evaluate the redevelopment of County facilities and infrastructure, establishes guidelines for the buildback of damaged or destroyed structures, and lists criteria for County acquisition of damaged land and property. The Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan is a part of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS**

1. There are a total of 164 public beach access sites in Pinellas County. Access points range in size from three foot wide pedestrian paths to 29,000 linear feet of beach access at Fort DeSoto Park.
2. Shoreline access is provided by tracts of land, or by a variety of other facilities such as bridges, causeways and piers which provide a variety of uses.
3. Some of the more popular fishing sites are the Gandy Bridge, Tierra Verde Bridge, Ft. DeSoto Causeway Bridge and the Dunedin Causeway Bridge. Some of the more popular piers include: The Pier in St. Petersburg, piers in municipal and County parks, Redington Long Pier, and the Sunshine Skyway Fishing Pier.
4. In 1996, there were approximately 10,780 wet and dry slips in Pinellas County. Additionally, there are 110 saltwater boat ramps.
5. Pinellas County provides for public access to its coastal and marine resources in an environmentally sensitive manner that includes regulations governing the siting of water-dependent land uses, including marinas, docks and boat ramps, coastal land acquisition, and public and boater education. [ 03-33]

## **EXISTING LAND USE**

1. The predominant land uses in the unincorporated coastal planning area of Pinellas County are single-family residential, environmental lands, and recreation and open space areas. The commercial and industrial uses located in the coastal planning area are rarely water-related or water-dependent. As most of the coastal planning area has been developed, no major changes in the overall existing land use patterns are anticipated.
2. Tourism and related services, and marine industries, such as commercial fishing, boat sales and repairs, and seafood dealers, are major components of the coastal zone's economic base. Since 1989, the tourist-related economic indicators have either stayed constant or increased, while marine industry-related indicators have either stayed constant or have shown slight decreases.

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[ORD. 03-33] 05/06/03

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

1. Pinellas County has completed a number of coastal and shoreline protection and beach renourishment projects. Completion of these projects helped to implement the Beach Restoration Plan for Pinellas County that was published in 1985. The beach restoration projects contained within the Element are mostly facility maintenance projects.
2. As of 1996, only one private wastewater treatment plant remains in operation in the unincorporated coastal planning area. Most of the wastewater treatment needs in the unincorporated coastal planning area are being met by regional wastewater treatment plants.
3. Potable water in the coastal planning area of unincorporated Pinellas County continues to be provided by Pinellas County Utilities, the St. Petersburg Water Supply System, the Clearwater Water Division, and the Tarpon Springs Water Department.

## **COASTAL MANAGEMENT ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **NATURAL DISASTER PLANNING**

**1. GOAL: PINELLAS COUNTY WILL PROTECT HUMAN LIFE, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT FROM THE EFFECTS OF HURRICANES AND OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS**

- 1.1. Objective: Pinellas County shall continue to implement its Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan as part of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, and shall continue to implement hazard mitigation measures to reduce the exposure of human life and public and private property to natural hazards.
- 1.1.1. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall distinguish between the immediate emergency period actions needed to protect the public health and safety and long-range restoration activities.
- 1.1.2. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall establish who will be responsible for making crucial decisions after a natural disaster regarding repair, reconstruction, relocation and hazard mitigation; this body could take the form of a recovery task force.
- 1.1.3. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall establish procedures for the restoration of essential public services and facilities following a disaster.
- 1.1.4. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall establish procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of current hazard mitigation measures at preventing damage.
- 1.1.5. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall establish procedures for utilizing information obtained from damage assessment teams in expediting post-disaster recovery.
- 1.1.6. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall contain provisions for enactment of a temporary restriction on issuing permits for reconstruction and repair not immediately needed to protect the public health, safety and welfare.
- 1.1.7. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall establish criteria for evaluating the options for repairing, replacing, modifying or relocating public and private facilities and infrastructure within coastal high-hazard areas. Any actions chosen by Pinellas County to repair, replace, modify, or relocate public facilities and infrastructure within the coastal high hazard area shall be consistent with federal and state funding standards.
- 1.1.8. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall establish that structures damaged by fire or natural forces to the extent that the cost of reconstruction or repair

exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the damage occurred shall be rebuilt to meet all applicable federal, state and local regulations.

- 1.1.9. Policy: The Redevelopment Plan shall include guidelines and criteria for determining priorities for the acquisition of storm-damaged property in the coastal high-hazard area. These guidelines shall give priority to eliminating unsafe conditions and inappropriate uses. These guidelines/criteria will also be used to prioritize potential coastal acquisitions through the State's land acquisition program. By January 31, 1998, additional criteria will be developed and included within the redevelopment plan to recognize pristine coastal properties or properties of significant or important environmental sensitivity.
- 1.1.10. Policy: Pinellas County shall continue to implement its existing hazard mitigation programs that include shoreline restoration and enhancement, building code and floodplain regulations, development management techniques such as land use, zoning, and subdivision regulations, and other applicable hazard mitigation measures. Recommendations from interagency hazard mitigation reports may be incorporated, at the discretion of the County. These mitigation programs shall be amended, as necessary, to remain consistent with federal and state requirements.
- 1.1.11. Policy: Pinellas County will use its Comprehensive Plan, its Land Development Code, and other applicable hazard mitigation measures, including appropriate recommendations from interagency hazard mitigation reports, to reduce unsafe conditions and inappropriate uses as opportunities arise, and to limit redevelopment in areas of repeated damage.
- 1.1.12. Policy: Pinellas County shall re-visit both its Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan and its Comprehensive Plan within six months of completion of the Local Mitigation Strategy in order to determine if any amendments or revisions are required in order to facilitate implementation of the final strategies.
- 1.2. Objective: Pinellas County shall cooperate with state and regional agencies, and with other local governments to maintain or reduce hurricane clearance times as a component of the evacuation times for Pinellas County.

- 1.2.1. Policy: Pursuant to the Capital Improvements Element, Pinellas County shall annually evaluate projects proposed for inclusion within the Six-Year Schedule of Improvements and shall place a high priority on improvement needs for critical links and evacuation route points, and for bridges, causeways and highway facilities designated as regional evacuation routes when scheduling capital improvement projects.
- 1.2.2. Policy: The Board shall continue to enforce its regulations requiring the development of a hurricane evacuation plan by recreational vehicle parks and transient accommodations.
- 1.2.3. Policy: The County shall coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation during preparation of the Transportation Improvement Plan for District 7 in order to encourage the State to give priority to road improvement projects on regional hurricane evacuation routes.
- 1.2.4. Policy: The County shall utilize the existing countywide computerized traffic signalization system and available law enforcement officers to expedite hurricane evacuation.
- 1.2.5. Policy: The County shall continue its public awareness campaign in cooperation with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Agency to educate the general public on proper hurricane evacuation procedures. As part of the County's public awareness campaign, the County shall also publish and make available a hurricane preparedness handbook to the general public prior to June 1 of each year.
- 1.2.6. Policy: Pinellas County shall cooperate with the State Division of Emergency Management to coordinate multi-county evacuations in a manner consistent with the Pinellas County Hurricane Evacuation Implementation Guide.
- 1.2.7. Policy: County-maintained roadways used as evacuation routes shall continue to be clearly posted.
- 1.2.8. Policy: Hurricane evacuation shall be planned and conducted in a manner consistent with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
- 1.3. Objective: Pinellas County shall restrict development within the coastal high hazard area, and shall direct population concentrations out of the coastal high-hazard area.

- 1.3.1. Policy: The coastal high-hazard area (CHHA) shall be the Evacuation Level A areas identified in the most recent regional hurricane evacuation study.
- 1.3.2. Policy: Pinellas County shall prohibit the location of new, or expansion of existing hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities within the coastal high-hazard area. The County shall discourage the siting of these facilities within the Evacuation Level B area.
- 1.3.3. Policy: Pinellas County shall not approve any request for residential density above 5.0 units per gross acre on the Future Land Use Element for areas within the coastal high-hazard area.[99-24]
- 1.3.4. Policy: Pinellas County shall prohibit the siting of new or the expansion of existing mobile home development within the coastal high-hazard area.
- 1.3.5. Policy: On an annual basis, the County's existing hazard mitigation programs, including those within the Land Development Code, shall be reviewed and revised if necessary to reduce the vulnerability of future development in coastal high-hazard areas. This review shall evaluate the recommendations of existing interagency hazard mitigation reports and the mitigation functions chapter of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
- 1.3.6. Policy: Consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of this Element and the availability of budgeted funds, the County shall evaluate the acquisition of storm-damaged property in the coastal high-hazard area.
- 1.3.7. Policy: By December 31, 1998, Pinellas County shall evaluate the feasibility of limiting the capacity of hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities proposed to be located within the Evacuation Level B area, as identified within the most recent regional evacuation study.
- 1.4. Objective: Pinellas County shall restrict public expenditures that subsidize development in the coastal high-hazard area.

- 1.4.1. Policy: County-funded infrastructure shall be prohibited within the coastal high-hazard area except for the following:
- The expenditure for the maintenance, repair or replacement of existing facilities; or
  - The expenditure for restoration or enhancement of natural resources or public access; or
  - The expenditure needed to address an existing deficiency identified in this plan; or
  - The expenditure for the retrofitting of stormwater management facilities for water quality enhancement of stormwater runoff; or
  - The expenditure for the development or improvement of public roads and bridges identified in the Transportation Element of this plan; or
  - The expenditure for a public facility of overriding public interest to ensure public health and safety.
- 1.4.2. Policy: When public infrastructure within the coastal high-hazard area is destroyed or receives damage that equals or exceeds 50 percent of the cost of replacing the facility at its current location, the County shall analyze the feasibility of relocating this infrastructure landward of the coastal high-hazard area. This requirement is included within the Pinellas County Post-Disaster Redevelopment Plan as adopted within the Pinellas County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.
- 1.4.3. Policy: Pinellas County shall not construct bridges or causeways to barrier islands not serviced by such infrastructure at the time of Plan adoption.
- 1.5. Objective: By December 31, 2000, the existing deficit of public shelter spaces within the County shall be reduced by five percent.
- 1.5.1. Policy: The County shall assist the Pinellas County Red Cross in coordinating with local jurisdictions and appropriate agencies in the development of a countywide plan for increasing the number of public shelter spaces in Pinellas County.
- 1.5.2. Policy: Pinellas County shall expand its coordination efforts within the limits provided by legislative authority to coordinate facility expansion plans and development review with the Pinellas County School Board so that new school facilities and facility expansion will be located and designed to provide hurricane shelters.

- 1.5.3. Policy: If the County determines, during its review of a proposed public school site for consistency with the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan and after consideration of the criteria in Section 235.26(9) of the Florida Statutes, that the site is an appropriate location for a shelter, the final determination of consistency will include a recommendation that the public school be constructed to function as a public emergency shelter.
- 1.5.4. Policy: Whenever possible, new or expanded county buildings shall be located, designed, and constructed so that they may be utilized for hurricane shelters.
- 1.5.5. Policy: Alternatives to traditional public sheltering shall be developed and promoted through public education by Pinellas County and other appropriate agencies. Alternatives to traditional public sheltering shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, host home programs, inland sheltering, retrofitting of existing structures whenever possible, utilizing refuges of last resort as appropriate, and evacuation of guests from transient accommodations to inland “sister” transient accommodations.
- 1.5.6. Policy: Pinellas County shall initiate discussion of new cooperative efforts between the County, municipalities, the Pinellas County School Board, and other appropriate agencies in an attempt to increase the number of public shelters and to reduce the shelter deficit.
- 1.5.7. Policy: Pinellas County shall utilize its public education program to attempt to decrease the number of Pinellas County residents that unnecessarily seek shelter during hurricane evacuations.
- 1.5.8. Policy: As a means of identifying solutions to the existing public shelter deficit, Pinellas County shall host an emergency shelter workshop, or summit, for affected governments and agencies by December 31, 1998.
- 1.5.9. Policy: Pinellas County shall participate with the State Division of Emergency Management in their development of a regional Hurricane Evacuation Plan, and, within a year of its completion, shall have evaluated any relevant recommendations, including those regarding shelter capacity, for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.

## **BEACH AND DUNE SYSTEMS**

2. GOAL: PINELLAS COUNTY SHALL CONSERVE, MAINTAIN, AND RESTORE COASTAL BEACH AND DUNE SYSTEMS SO AS TO RETAIN THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO STORM PROTECTION, RECREATION, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
- 2.1. Objective: Pinellas County shall continue implementation of the Pinellas County Beach Enhancement Five-Year Program, to restore altered beaches and dunes, and shall annually update the program.
- 2.1.1. Policy: Pinellas County shall continue a program for restoring and renourishing sandy beaches and dunes.
- 2.1.2. Policy: Pinellas County shall continue the role as the lead agency for coordinating and managing beach restoration/renourishment projects.
- 2.1.3. Policy: Pinellas County shall monitor erosion of the County's renourished beaches and shall develop alternative strategies for beach enhancement based on the results of the monitoring program.
- 2.2. Objective: Pinellas County shall continue to protect the stability of the dune systems and the beach itself by utilizing construction standards, development regulations and other appropriate measures that minimize the impacts of man on the beach and dune systems.
- 2.2.1. Policy: New development shall be prohibited in the frontal dune and beach area.
- 2.2.2. Policy: Vehicle and foot traffic over the frontal dune systems shall be restricted by providing vehicular parking and dune walkovers.
- 2.2.3. Policy: The County shall continue to implement County and State regulations pertaining to construction seaward of the State Coastal Construction Control Line.
- 2.2.4. Policy: Pinellas County shall designate undeveloped coastal barrier islands as Preservation, Recreation/Open Space or Preservation-Resource Management on the Future Land Use Map.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS**

### **3. GOAL: PUBLIC ACCESS TO COASTAL RESOURCES SHALL BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PUBLIC NEED.**

- 3.1. Objective: Public access to the beaches and shorelines of Pinellas County shall be increased through acquisition, development, and expansion of facilities.
- 3.1.1. Policy: By July 1, 1999, Pinellas County shall have opened Wall Springs Park on Boggy Bayou.
- 3.1.2. Policy: Pinellas County shall include the planning and development of Boca Ciega Park within the Six-Year Schedule of Improvements of the Capital Improvements Program.
- 3.1.3. Policy: The County shall continue to acquire environmentally sensitive lands, parkland and beach access sites.
- 3.1.4. Policy: Pinellas County shall not expend public monies for renourishment/restoring sand beaches where the amount of public access does not meet the minimum standards established by the State of Florida for state-financed beach renourishment/restoration projects.
- 3.1.5. Policy: New or rebuilt County bridges shall be designed to include where practical, catwalks or other facilities for fishing.
- 3.1.6. Policy: Pinellas County shall utilize the guidelines in the Pinellas County Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan to prioritize potential coastal acquisitions through the State's land acquisition program. Additional criteria will be developed and included in the Post Disaster Redevelopment Plan by January 31, 1998 to recognize pristine coastal properties or properties of significant or important environmental sensitivity.
- 3.1.7. Policy: Pinellas County shall promote the protection, preservation, or sensitive reuse, of historic resources located in coastal areas, and provide public access where appropriate and possible.

## EXISTING LAND USE

### 4. GOAL: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS IN THE COASTAL PLANNING AREA SHALL BE CONSISTENT WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT AND COMPATIBLE WITH THE COUNTY'S NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES.

4.1. Objective: The County shall give priority to water-dependent and water-related land uses in the coastal planning area, in a manner consistent with its goals for the protection of coastal and marine habitats and species. [03-33]

4.1.1. Policy: The County shall continue to enforce the performance standards for water-dependent and water-related land uses included within its Land Development Code.

4.1.2. Policy: Pinellas County shall continue to conduct its comprehensive program of data collection, monitoring, education, interagency coordination and regulation to ensure that the location and impacts of water-related and water-dependent land uses do not conflict with the need to protect marine and coastal species and habitats, including the West Indian Manatee. [03-33]

4.1.3. Policy: The County shall as a minimum use the following criteria for siting marinas: [03-33]

Adequate water depth to accommodate the proposed boat use. Sites that require no dredging or filling to provide access by canal, channel or road are preferred.

Preference shall be given to the expansion of suitable existing marinas rather than new construction.

Located in areas where there is adequate flushing of the basin to prevent stagnation and water quality deterioration.

No adverse impact on archaeological or historic sites as defined by state and local comprehensive plans.

Reasonable access to a large navigable water body.

Sufficient upland area to accommodate all needed utilities and support facilities, such as parking spaces, rest rooms, dry storage, etc.

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Capacity of the surrounding roadways to handle boating traffic to and from the marina.

Compatible land uses.

Adequate wastewater treatment capacity in accordance with state standards.

Marina development should be sensitive to the special requirements for developing in the following areas:

- a. Aquatic preserves
- b. Outstanding Florida Waters
- c. Class II waters
- d. Areas approved or conditionally approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for shellfish harvesting, and
- e. Other highly productive and/or unique habitats as determined by FDEP, by the Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, as identified in the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), or by Pinellas County, based on vegetation and/or wildlife species.

- 4.1.4. Policy: No marina shall be constructed or expanded in areas determined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, or other governmental wildlife protection agency, to be critical to the survival of the West Indian Manatee. [03-33]
- 4.1.5. Policy: No marina project shall be approved until a hurricane plan for this project has been established. [03-33]
- 4.1.6. Policy: The development of marinas shall be supported as a means of providing public water access to the extent that their development and use shall not adversely impact estuarine resources. [03-33]

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

5. GOAL: ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES SHALL BE AVAILABLE TO SERVE THE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IN THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT FOR THE COASTAL PLANNING AREA.

5.1. Objective: Pinellas County shall continue to ensure that adequate levels of service are provided by public facilities within the coastal planning area, and shall utilize the annual update of the Capital Improvements Element to schedule required infrastructure improvements in the coastal planning area.

5.1.1. Policy: The level of service standards adopted elsewhere for public facilities in the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan shall be the same standards used for public facilities within the coastal planning area.

5.1.2. Policy: The scheduling of public facility improvements within the coastal planning area shall be consistent with the Capital Improvements Element of this Plan.

5.1.3. Policy: The service areas for public facilities within the coastal planning area shall be those identified and/or established elsewhere in this Plan.

5.1.4. Policy: Pinellas County shall ensure that required infrastructure is available to serve development or redevelopment in the coastal planning area, when such development is consistent with the densities proposed by the Future Land Use Map as well as with coastal resource protection and public safety policies, by assuring that funding for such infrastructure is phased to coincide with demand.