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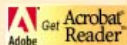
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October 13, 2005

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Planning - Evaluation & Appraisal Report

Evaluation and Appraisal Report - Introduction



Every seven years the County is required to make changes to its Comprehensive Plan to make sure that it addresses the current needs of citizens, as well as effectively and efficiently directs governmental functions. Extensive public input is required for this process. The result of this process is an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) that "evaluates" the current Comprehensive Plan and recommends changes, additions and improvements.

The report can be viewed and downloaded for printing either in its entirety [here](#) (it's a large 2.3 Mb file), or by section below;

[Introduction and Overview](#)

The Major Issues Facing the County Today

- A- Issue: [Ensuring Quality Communities](#)
- B- Issue: [Mobility](#)
- C- Issue: [Matching Development Opportunities With Natural Resource and Infrastructure Capabilities](#)
- D- Issue: [Protecting and Restoring Pinellas County's Natural and Cultural Heritage](#)
- E- Issue: [Funding the Plan](#)
- F- Issue: [Remaining Competitive in the Regional & Global Economy](#)
- G- Issue: [Intergovernmental Coordination](#)
- H- [Recommended Actions](#)
- I- [Involving Stakeholders in the Planning Process](#)
- J- [Current Status of the Elements of the Comprehensive Plan](#)
- K- [Relationship of Comprehensive Plan Objectives to the Issues](#)

▶ [What is the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan?](#)

▶ [What is the Evaluation and Appraisal Process?](#)

▶ [The Environmental Workgroup](#)

CONTACT US:

We would like to hear from you. Please address suggestions or comments to the Planning Section Manager Elizabeth Freeman at efreeman@co.pinellas.fl.us

SURVEY BOOKLET

**We are updating
the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan
so, if you are...**

PLANNING TO STAY **in Pinellas County**

WE NEED YOUR INPUT !

**because the plans and decisions we make today
will affect
the community we have tomorrow**



Please answer the following questions...

What is your zipcode? _____

**MANAGING OUR NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT**



1. What is the most important role of environmental land in Pinellas County? (check all that apply):

wildlife habitat nature experiences aesthetics
 economy and tourism water supply protection community pride
"getting away from it all" other (_____)

2. Does Pinellas County already have enough environmental land under public ownership? yes no

3. Should the County continue to buy environmental lands? yes no

4. What is the most important role of our beaches in Pinellas County? (check all that apply):

coastal habitat/wildlife recreation aesthetics storm buffer
economy and tourism other (_____)

5. As properties are redeveloped, should local governments place more emphasis on preserving and/or creating open spaces in and around neighborhoods? yes no

6. Should local governments place more emphasis on tree preservation and landscaping using native plants? yes no

7. Are existing regulations effective in protecting the natural environment during site development activities? yes no

8. What do you feel are the most important issues regarding the future of the County's environmental lands and beaches?

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water supply, sewer and solid waste



Water Supply

1. Is Pinellas County government doing enough to encourage people and businesses to use less water? yes ___ no ___

2. If no, what things would you suggest the County try as a way to encourage people to reduce their water use?

3. Are you aware of any of these water conservation programs the County offers to its customers to reduce water use?

toilet rebates? yes ___ no ___

shallow well rebates? yes ___ no ___

Indoor plumbing retrofit kits? yes ___ no ___

4. Which one(s) have you actually used?

5. Did you happen to notice if your water bill went down after implementing a water conservation measure? yes ___ no ___

6. What measure(s) did you implement?

Solid Waste and Recycling

7. Does the County need to offer its citizens more recycling programs and options
yes ___ no ___

If yes, then please give us your recycling program ideas:

PUBLIC SAFETY



1. Do you prepare for the **HURRICANE SEASON**? yes ___ no___

2. How /Where do you get your information on hurricane preparedness?

T.V. news _____

Channel 18 (gov't access tv) _____

County website _____

Newspaper insert _____

Other _____

1. Please list any issues regarding **LAW ENFORCEMENT** that are important to you:

2. Please list any issues regarding **FIRE PROTECTION** that are important to you:

3. What other public safety issues do we need to think about as we plan for the future of your neighborhood and your community?

NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES



YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

1. What do you like about your neighborhood?

2. What changes would make it a better place to live?

3. Would you be willing to live in a neighborhood that includes:
 - a) a variety of housing types like single family homes, apartments, condominiums and townhomes? yes no
 - b) businesses, grocery stores, and other community shopping opportunities within walking distance? yes no
 - c) public transit within walking distance? yes no
 - d) a common area for neighbors to gather yes no

YOUR COMMUNITY

4. What do you like about the larger community that surrounds your neighborhood?

5. What would make it better?

6. Is your community facing any housing issues? yes no

7. If yes, what are the housing issues?

The Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan

and the planning process...what is it and how can you get involved?

What is the Comprehensive Plan? A comprehensive plan represents a community's vision for its future. Under Florida's Growth Management Act, the Florida Department of Community Affairs requires that every local government adopt a comprehensive plan, and that plan must be evaluated and updated every seven years.

Why is public involvement so important? The Comprehensive Plan, through its goals, objectives and policies, provides the foundation for the local government strategies that are needed to address the community's issues, capitalize on the opportunities, and ultimately achieve the community's vision.

All local government decisions, programs and projects relating to the development of a community are required to be compatible with, and help implement, the adopted comprehensive plan. In fact, the goals, objectives and policies contained in the comprehensive plan provide the basis for many of the County's codes and ordinances that guide land use and development decisions everyday, and provide guidance to day-to-day program and project decisions.

What happens after these workshops are over? We will be compiling all of the feedback we received, as well as the information we received from meetings with surrounding cities, interested agencies, etc., and developing a list of issues and opportunities that ought to be addressed as we plan for future development and redevelopment of the County. This list will guide us in updating the Comprehensive Plan.

How long will all of this take? It takes quite a while! After we get all of the feedback we will develop the list of major issues and opportunities during the summer of 2004. Throughout the rest of 2004 and early 2005 we will be busy collecting data, doing research and beginning to figure out strategies to address the issues and opportunities you help us identify. We will then compile what's called an evaluation and appraisal report (we call it the EAR) to send to the State for approval. Then we will go about actually developing amendments to the Comprehensive Plan so that we can incorporate all of the new ideas, new policies, and concepts needed to plan for the future.

If you would like to find out more about the Comprehensive Plan or the planning process, including upcoming meetings and public hearings, you can be on our mailing list, or you can call:

The Pinellas County Planning Department at (727) 464-8200, or check out our website at www.pinellascounty.org/planT



**Please put me on the Pinellas County
Comprehensive Plan Update Mailing list:**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address (optional): _____

Special Areas of Interest (optional): _____

PLEASE DROP PUT THIS IN THE SURVEY BOX OR SEND IT TO:

**PINELLAS COUNTY PLANNING DEPT
600 CLEVELAND STREET, SUITE 750
CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33755**

PLANNING TO STAY SURVEY RESULTS

In 2004, the Pinellas County Planning Department invited citizens to comment on a variety of issues as the County prepared for the process to evaluate its Comprehensive Plan. The issues that the citizens were asked to comment on included the following: Managing Our Natural Environment, Public Safety, Neighborhoods and Communities, Public Utilities and also Culture, Education and Leisure Services. There were a total of 1,087 replies to the surveys on these various issues. Citizens were surveyed in a number of different ways. Many people (230) responded to the surveys via the County website. Others were given the opportunity to take the surveys at County Connection Centers, Community Workshops and National Trail Day Events.

While citizens were invited to respond to each of the following surveys, about 60% more people responded to the Managing Our Natural Environment survey, as compared to the other three surveys. This large response reflects the concern the citizens have over the natural environment within our community. The results of that survey also reflect that the people of Pinellas County believe that the preservation of the environment is very important and should be supported by the County. The Public Safety survey received the second-highest number of respondents, reflecting the concern of the public over their safety with regards to police and fire protection.

MANAGING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The majority of Pinellas County citizens do not feel as if there is enough environmental land under public ownership in the County. The environment appears to be very high on the minds of the citizens, and a large majority of respondents answered questions in favor of further protection and acquisition of environmental lands on the part of the County. This part of the survey included 'yes or no' questions, as well as questions asking respondents to rank preferences and offer open-ended opinions.

RANKING QUESTIONS

What is the most important role of environmental land in Pinellas County?

1. Wildlife habitat
2. Nature experiences

What is the most important role of our beaches in Pinellas County?

1. Coastal habitat/wildlife
2. Recreation
3. Aesthetics

OPEN ENDED QUESTION

What are the most important issues regarding the future of the County's environmental lands and beaches?

Respondents answered that coastal and wildlife habitats are most important.

Other issues raised:

- Preservation
- Limit Density of residential development/redevelopment
- Beach protection-stop building on beaches
- Realistic allocation of funds (e.g. not to beach erosion projects)

'YES' OR 'NO' QUESTIONS

	Yes	No
Does Pinellas County already have enough environmental land under public ownership?	19%	81%
As properties are redeveloped, should local governments place more emphasis on preserving and/or creating open spaces in and around neighborhoods?	94%	6%
Should local governments place more emphasis on tree preservation and landscaping using native plants?	71%	29%
Are existing regulations effective in protection the natural environment during site development?	27%	73%

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Overall, the citizens of Pinellas County feel that the County should be doing more to educate individuals and businesses about water conservation. The respondents did not feel as if there were adequate recycling and conservation programs available, and that the County should be doing much more in this area. Suggestions were even made about a joint effort between the municipalities and the County in order to further progress in this area. This part of the survey includes questions on water supply, sewer and solid waste. Respondents were asked to answer 'yes' or 'no' questions and to give their opinions on a variety of issues.

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

What things would you suggest the County try as a way to encourage people to reduce their water use?

Responses included:

- Increase the cost of water as more is used
- Implement rebate programs and incentives
- Require the use of reclaimed water for watering lawns
- Increase public education about water conservation

What ideas do you have on recycling programs the County needs to offer its citizens?

Responses included:

- Implementing curbside recycling
- Consolidating City and County recycling programs
- Make recycling centers more convenient
- Allow more materials to be recycled

'YES' OR 'NO' QUESTIONS

		Yes	No
Is Pinellas County government doing enough to encourage people and businesses to use less water?		52%	48%
Are you aware of any of these water conservation programs the County offers to its customers to reduce water use?			
	Toilet rebates?	80%	20%
	Shallow well rebates?	45%	55%
	Indoor plumbing retrofit kits?	56%	44%
Have you used any of the following water conservation programs?			
	Toilet rebates?	88%	12%
	Shallow well rebates?	11%	89%
	Indoor plumbing retrofit kits?	2%	98%
Did you notice that your water bill went down after implementing a water conservation method?		47%	53%
Does the County need to offer its citizens more recycling programs and options?		96%	4%

PUBLIC SAFETY

Overall, the citizens in Pinellas County want to feel safe. This is evident based on the responses in this survey, with a high frequency of citizens requesting more police presence on the streets and patrolling in the neighborhoods. The citizens are very concerned about crime and drug issues in their neighborhoods, and would like to see the increased officer patrols to safeguard them. Fire protection issues were also raised in this survey, with the citizens most often citing the desire for improved maintenance of fire protection systems and increased staffing. This survey has questions asking for open-ended answers from respondents regarding public safety issues, and on 'yes' or 'no' questions.

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

How/Where do you get your information on hurricane preparedness?

Overwhelmingly, respondents said they receive their hurricane information from television news stations.

Please list any issues regarding Law Enforcement that are important to you:

Responses included:

- Increased community patrolling
- Shorter response time
- Increased drug enforcement/prevention tactics

Please list any issues regarding Fire Protection that are important to you:

Responses included:

- Staffing of fire protection departments
- Lack of maintenance of fire protection systems, including fire hydrants

What other public safety issues do we need to think about as we plan for the future of your neighborhood and your community?

Responses included:

- Improved traffic flow
- Better pedestrian crossing facilities
- Increased officer patrolling of neighborhoods
- Installation of more neighborhood streetlights

'YES' OR 'NO' QUESTION

	Yes	No
Do you prepare for the hurricane season?	78%	22%

NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

This survey reveals the desire of the public to have better access to public transportation, more parks and less congestion on the roadways. Open space seems to be very important to the respondents, and having a place to congregate with neighbors is also of importance. Housing issues do seem to be prevalent among the majority of people and their specific concerns are addressed below. This survey asked people both open ended and 'yes' or 'no' questions regarding their neighborhoods, and any issues they may have with them.

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

What do you like about your neighborhood?

Responses included:

- Location
- Convenience
- Feeling of safety
- Friendly neighbors
- Trees

What changes would make it a better place to live?

Responses included:

- Less congestion
- Improved public transportation
- More parks
- Increased code enforcement

What housing issues, if any, are facing your community?

Responses included:

- Overcrowding on beachfront property
- Lack of code enforcement
- Greedy land developers
- Dilapidated older homes needing better upkeep
- Annexation
- Too many rental units

What do you like about the larger community that surrounds your neighborhood?

Responses included:

- Location
- Access to everything

What would make the surrounding community better?

Responses included:

- Less traffic congestion
- Improved Roads
- Stricter code enforcement
- Increased police response

'YES' OR 'NO' QUESTIONS

Would you be willing to live in a neighborhood that includes:	Yes	No
a) A variety of housing types like single family home, apartments, condominiums and townhomes?	57%	43%
b) Businesses, grocery stores, and other community shopping opportunities within walking distance?	80%	20%
c) Public transit within walking distance?	83%	17%
d) A common area for neighbors to gather?	82%	18%
Is your community facing housing issues?	61%	39%

EAR MEETINGS WITH THE DEPARTMENTS

Environmental Management Department - May 26, 2004

1. Develop an *environmentally preferred purchasing policy* for the County.
 - a. Policy to purchase least toxic or non-toxic alternative products (provided they will do the intended job)
 - b. Expand recycling program
 - c. Purchase products that use less energy

2. Develop a *County reuse program* to complement recycling efforts (if one department has left-over chemicals/office supplies/meters/electronics/etc. that another department could use, both departments could benefit from reuse).

3. Develop a *green visitors map* listing and designating:
 - a. Clean Marinas
 - b. Hotels participating in programs to reduce waste and excessive energy use
 - c. Travel destinations of environmental, archaeological, or historic interest

4. *Clean Marina program*
 - a. Encourage and facilitate the participation of additional marinas in the Clean Marina (CM) program.
 - b. Work with and provide support to marinas currently participating in the CM program.
 - i. Signage and Flags
 - ii. Educational assistance
 - iii. Assistance with permitting processes, grant procurement, industry and government networking
 - c. Periodic workshops to introduce CM program to the public, new marinas and to educate staff and owners of marinas already participating.

From Environmental Lands Division (ELD):

- 1) Create a new element for Preserves and Preservation Lands by pulling goals and objectives that apply to Preserves from the Recreation and Open Space Element and the Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources Element. Many statements would need word changes to reflect the non-passive recreational and protection mission of the Preserves compared to the active recreational focus of the Parks.
 - 2) If creating a new element is not possible, perhaps adding new goals and objectives to the existing elements that focus only on Preserves would clarify the distinction between Preserves and Parks.
 - 3) If options above are not possible, careful editing to the existing elements are needed to ensure there is a distinction between Preserves and Parks. The phrase "consistent with adopted park and preserve management plans" needs to be more often in policy statements.
 - 4) Listing the names of parks and preserves would clearly identify what is a Park versus what is a Preserve.
- B. We could not find a clear definition for passive versus active recreation. This important distinction should be clearly stated.
- C. We need wording that broadens the scope of the comprehensive plan to include:
- 1) A program that includes other local, regional and state parks to develop a comprehensive system of greenways and blueways, the links between them, and the continued, cooperative management.
 - 2) This program should clearly identify the local, regional and state objectives, such as, (but not limited to):
 - a) seagrass bed protection
 - b) manatee protection
 - c) protection of listed shorebird nesting habitat (i.e. snowy plovers)
- D. Historically, we have been "assigned" properties to manage as part of our Preserve and Management Area system, only to discover at a later date, that various parcels were "reassigned" for other land uses. Generally these "reassignments" result in little environmental value and usually the ELD resources expended on the parcel were wasted. To avoid this situation in the future, some of our suggestions included:
- 1) Create a program that identifies preservation and preserve lands that are being held in perpetuity for the citizens of Pinellas County and are to be protected from future land use changes.

2) Establish a Preserve Board that would review any requested land use changes to Preserve and Preservation lands.

3) Enter into management agreements with other Pinellas County Departments that hold the title to the parcels we currently manage. Many of the parcels we manage are actually owned by different County departments. We currently have management agreements with the State of Florida and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

4) Call for some form of mitigation if a land use change occurs.

E. We suggest the following as we move forward with the Comprehensive Plan.

1) Develop a DEM task force to work together internally with each other and attend workshops with Planning.

2) Provide an opportunity for ELD to review and comment on the new proposed plan.

Include important cultural resource considerations, knowing that many of our parks and preserves contain significant archaeological sites. Those considerations should address not only preservation and conservation, but also deteriorating circumstances of erosion, disturbances, etc. We have found recently at Weedon Island exotic plant removal sometimes exposes sites, and care needs to be taken in any cleanup action plan.

Park and Recreation Department - May 28, 2004

Access to active recreation largely through partnerships, via MSTU paying for grants and recreational reimbursements, and partnerships with cities, school board and non-profits.

Provision of signature/special events with revenue generation potential (and also via partnerships)

Revenue generation through programmatic fees (e.g., as of July 1, boat ramp parking fees)

Adding services that are citizen value-added (e.g., concessions)

Might be partnering with the State to raise toll to get to Ft DeSoto

Charging for groups over 50 (a permit requirement and fee)

Ecotourism (Ecotourism summit coming up)

Marketing (e.g., naming rights, etc.)

More neighborhood parks

Look at Toytown per Pinellas Assembly recommendations

Trends in recreation – people want more variety; people have expectations of variety in opportunities

Attendance is up at dog parks

Per Pinellas Assembly – therapeutic recreation, with the County taking the lead.

Connectivity to/among parks via sidewalks, safe road crossings, etc.

Technology in parks (e.g., sequ technology/tours)

Blueways

Libraries

Look at level of service – should we start to include things like Airco, St. Anthony's golf course? will partnerships affect the LOS?

Development Review Services - May 27, 2004

Developers want to develop as cheaply as possible

Lots of development is marginally feasible – to come into full compliance with the code is too expensive

Need regional retention

Where possible, balance financial feasibility with quality development

Is our focus on maintaining viability of existing neighborhoods or introducing mixed use?

The public sometimes thinks our codes regarding amount of lot coverage are too restrictive

Seeing very little interest in granny flats – but code limits them to 500 s.f. which might be too limiting.

DRS uses flexibility in applying codes – treating small guy different than big guy

Issue of businesses needing to expand, need maximum use of their lot – no room for landscaping.

Increasingly seeing residential lots converting to business uses, where the neighborhood is no longer viable - but it's difficult to meet parking, access, etc., requirements. How to get people to look at combined access, etc.? (this also brings up the idea of land assembly)

Conversion of single family uses is often along road corridors. With the difficulty in meeting code requirements, is single family conversion to a business use really a good idea? Developer wants to make minimal investment.

Need better provisions for transitioning blighted commercial to other uses, like residential.

Concurrency management - transportation mitigation strategies should include provisions for things like landscaping, etc., as mitigation.

Concurrency management – flexibility; for example if can demonstrate full compliance with landscaping and drainage requirements, then you can get increased development ability.

Concurrency management - conflicting policies; sidewalks usually end up in the landscaping. Compatibility in site design and site design requirements.

Meeting with Public Works – June 3, 2004

Annexation, transfer of maintenance responsibility as it relates to roads (although this applies to drainage as well) – there are a lot of roadways that we maintain but should not.

Need to revisit what is the County versus State versus Local road network.

Impacts Fees – what's going to happen with this?

(Increasing) cost of maintenance, replacements etc. – are we going to extend existing gas tax (versus opting for new)

126th Avenue Extension in mid-County – businesses want it, but its not in any plans

Road expansion versus environment, community impacts etc. – need to balance

Coordination with Hillsborough County re: road expansion, hurricane evacuation

Funding for trails since CMAQ is going away (since we will no longer be non-attainment)

PSTA – bus rapid transit (e.g. along Ulmerton Rd. and McMullen Booth), and interest in a route to Manatee County.

Gateway Area – impact of primary activity center designation

Meeting with Utilities – June 9, 2004

Solid Waste Policy 1.2.1 (re: solid waste collection in unincorporated area shall be by private collection systems operating under a free enterprise environment) - no mechanism for ensuring this. Lealman area will be a test case for franchise system.

New focus area- recycling for commercial and industrial businesses (e.g., electronics recycling)

We have policies regarding efficiency, but some of the metals recovery process is not cost efficient.

There are times when we don't have enough trash to incinerate – might look at agreements with neighboring counties to increase trash flow.

Long term viability of facility as land around it develops – recognize and protect charter responsibility.

Joint uses of landfill properties - but solid waste disposal remains the priority; for example, the post-disaster debris management plans enables us to take over those areas being used for others uses when necessary following a disaster.

We don't support siting any hazardous waste transfer facilities in this county.

Need a long range disposal plan prior to build-out of the disposal facilities.

They plan to improve the ferrous and non-ferrous material collection program.

Meeting with Community Development – June 10, 2004

Consolidated Plan is due August 15, 2005

CD said Plan should not promote or support concentrations of low-income housing; during redevelopment we should support areas of mixed income.

Regarding conversion of mobile home parks to other uses; obviously some parks need to be redeveloped – what is the strategy for doing this?

Increase in income not keeping up with cost of housing.

Do we need higher densities?

Are we sending mixed message re: wanting redevelopment and change in certain areas, but a land use case looks at compatibility with surrounding uses - so how can you get approval to change land use – when its not consistent with what's around it. Do we need to better define redevelopment areas (where change is ok). We need to examine our land use policies (for example, we say we don't want low income next to low income – but its compatible).

Plan needs to be more concise and clear - right now, policies they rely on are sprinkled all over the place (for example, its not clear that zoning doesn't drive everything).

Keep neighborhoods stable or improve them. No neighborhood should have unpaved roads, or not have adequate fire protection. (The Board has recently made road paving a priority – will use MSTU funds for roads and sidewalks).

What about transit? Folks are using the trolley, especially the downtown and beach workers, as it has quick turnaround. Workers do appear to be locating along trolley lines.

Tear-downs are beginning to happen, even in middle income areas.

Need a strategy to get a mix of affordable housing into existing neighborhoods (and town homes do not necessarily represent affordable housing).

Poorly built houses are deteriorating faster. Data shows homes are still getting larger – will people accept a smaller home?

More emphasis on mixed income, mixed use and allowing increases in density in certain areas.

Increased density means more need for recreation and schools.

With good building orientation and design, you can put buildings closer to the roads.

Emphasis on design – its important that places look nice.

Need to designate redevelopment areas, and need to utilize development agreements in redevelopment to take advantage of opportunities or provide incentives. Redevelopment needs to embrace all of the County's objectives; requires a change in the development review process.

County needs to be buying land – not surplus land. Greater coordination between departments is needed.

Summary of EAR MEETINGS with Municipalities

CITY OF CLEARWATER - March 4, 2004

Redevelopment – how do we approach it? Where? How much? At this time, staff anticipates it primarily occurring on the beach, downtown and along the U.S. Hwy 19 corridor.

Susceptibility of mobile home parks along the major road corridors to conversion to commercial uses.

Single family home communities must be encouraged to maintain their houses and yards. Must not be permitted to deteriorate.

Need better definitions [criteria] to help identify the appropriate locations for permitting increased density

Mobility – connection between the Beach and Downtown is planned (Guideway), but where else should it go? What is the appropriate alignment – the bluff? Is the Guideway to the beach for tourists or residents/workers?

Effect of future overpasses on businesses along U.S. Highway 19; decreased visibility (Gordon mentioned conversion to employment area versus commercial businesses)

Once the overpasses go in, will commercial shift to McMullen Booth? City staff is noting increased pressure from developers to put commercial and office along this corridor.

Long Term Concurrency coordination – issue of U.S. Highway 19

Look at intensifying commercial nodes first, versus developing new commercial areas. County staff raised the question of how much additional commercial is needed.

Flexibility of codes as they relate to mixed uses (to facilitate incorporation of housing and redevelopment to mixed use). Countywide rules are a hindrance to mixed use.

Affordable Housing – including housing that meets the needs of all income ranges

Approving higher densities to support affordable housing is not always a good thing

Annexation – facilitate filling in the gaps; address issues of different levels of code enforcement (and therefore different appearance among properties) between city and County; address who has responsibility for maintenance of drainage ditches.

CITY OF PINELLAS PARK - March 5, 2004

Transportation – several of the major roadways in the County traverse Pinellas Park so transportation is an issue for the City.

Intergovernmental Coordination – especially in regard to water and sewer service.

Redevelopment - their redevelopment district is not moving along as fast as they had hoped. At this time, it is expected that (re)development will follow the current future land use map, although there is the possibility of more residential now occurring in the industrial area.

Countywide redevelopment - Pinellas Park has much of the County's industrial land, especially their industrialized area in the NW quadrant of the City. It is important to support the ability of businesses to upgrade or redevelop these industrial properties to keep the area competitive for the benefit of City and County as a whole.

Coordination in concurrency/TCMA-like provisions, etc. – needs to be ongoing.

Affordable housing – Bob said (and latest housing studies indicate) that the City has an abundance of affordable housing when compared to the rest of the County, and they expect to maintain a large base of affordable housing in the community. PAO data indicates their housing base is generally well-maintained. They have some new housing selling for under \$90,000.

When possible, Pinellas County will try to relate income data to the housing data by area.

The context for livable communities should be more land use vs. transportation.

A lot of what is being designed in the City these days is already “livable” – connectivity is the issue (between businesses and residential, business and

business, etc.). The City is improving connectivity by punching through streets and including marked bike lanes on roads.

Sidewalks and bicycle trails - the City has a big commitment to sidewalks (even constructing them to accommodate bikes). They consider their sidewalk program to be an essential part of their community. They plan their sidewalks around the specific area attractors.

With the exception of Park Blvd, drainage is not a major issue, but ongoing coordination remains important.

The relationship between hurricane evacuation and increased density is a big issue. The flooding problems along Park Blvd, which is a major evacuation route, are an issue.

Pinellas Park is interested in connections to Progress Energy Trail

CITIES OF DUNEDIN, TARPON SPRINGS, OLDSMAR AND SAFETY HARBOR - March 10, 2004

Safety Harbor – does not want McMullen Booth to go to commercial; they are seeing pressure from developers for the stretch from Cedar to Union to go commercial, as well as a few properties near 590. Keep commercial land uses to the existing nodes.

Safety Harbor – implement the recommendations from the MPO McMullen Booth Study (between Drew and Enterprise). There is a lot of congestion along Phillippe Parkway and Bayshore. Bayshore has become a cut-through, resulting in a significant neighborhood intrusion. The City does not want more road improvements that just lead to more traffic.

Oldsmar – Forest Lakes Boulevard is starting to become a traffic issue. Also, they have been getting a lot of land use amendments along Tampa Road going from Industrial to Commercial. – how much more traffic can the area handle? Overall the City has a lot of industrial left to develop, and therefore the potential for a lot more traffic. Racetrack Road will be widened, which will lead to increased traffic. Coordination with Hillsborough County is required – has been difficult in the past but is getting better.

Oldsmar - the special grant from PSTA to provide routes in the area is not working out - ridership is not there.

Dunedin – Alternate 19 remains deficient, but the traffic generally remains steady (not going up or down) – except for the Curlew Road intersection backups. The CR 1 improvement might help alleviate some of the pressure from Alt 19.

The new Planning to Stay element mentions Alt 19 as a coastal beautification corridor - there is potential to link the downtowns of Tarpon Springs, Palm Harbor, Dunedin and Clearwater.

Tarpon Springs would like to move towards more form-based zoning (less concern over what the use is; more concern over how it looks). Gave example of what is happening in the Greek area - need to roll back densities in order to maintain the character of the area.

Tarpon Springs supports mixed uses but finds it hard to get folks to think beyond what the existing codes allow.

Tarpon springs wondered how Alt 19 (Tarpon Blvd to Meres Blvd) could be operating at LOS A. The City perceives Alt 19 traffic (congestion) as an issue.

Safety Harbor asked how far we can realistically go with building roads. County staff indicated that really the only areas left where the County sees major road construction now are (1) the Gateway Area, (2) the Belcher corridor through Clearwater, and (3) US Highway 19. Increasingly the County is finding that any road project has neighborhood interest and impact. Tarpon Springs emphasized the need for the Meres connection to US Highway 19.

In response to questions regarding any foreseeable major changes in land use patterns – Safety Harbor does not see any major changes, but does see some tweaking of densities to allow increased population/housing downtown (to better support the downtown businesses), but appropriate height and scale will be important to maintaining the community character. Also, Safety Harbor wants to be able to pick up the unincorporated enclaves.

Tarpon Springs does not foresee any major changes in the land use pattern – intends instead to place emphasis on design, livable/walkable communities and maybe some mixed use around the docks and downtown area.

Tarpon Springs does, however, think the industrial area north of the River needs to be looked at – not viable for industrial (poor access); better for residential.

Oldsmar said they are getting requests to convert industrial to commercial.

Dunedin does not foresee any major changes in the land use pattern. Dunedin's pattern is well established. However, along Patricia Ave, after the multi-laning is complete, they can foresee increased requests for commercial.

Connectivity of greenways and trails and the need/opportunity to work with the cities on this was brought up by County staff. Safety Harbor is very interested in

connection to the Pinellas Trail (they also asked if the CSX corridor is going to be abandoned).

Dunedin mentioned the siltation and erosion problems along Curlew Creek. Safety Harbor has similar problems (erosion and water quality) along Mullet Creek, Bishop Creek, Alligator Creek and Possum Creek.

Safety Harbor asked about the future of the Water and Navigation Control Authority – they support the purpose of the Authority, particularly with increased requests for docks.

County staff asked whether there were sufficient boat launches in north county – is there additional demand that is not being met? The cities indicated that they are not hearing that access is a big issue, although they agreed there is a need.

There is interest in the Board's active recreation initiative.

Safety Harbor mentioned that they do not foresee a change in the provision of their water supply, but they also mentioned – and it was reiterated by the other cities, that affordability of water is an issue.

Safety Harbor asked how the County sees Redevelopment District Trust Fund dollars being spent in the future. The County and the City currently have some differences of opinion.

MEETING WITH CITIES OF GULFPORT AND SOUTH PASADENA - March 29, 2004

South Pasadena had interest in obtaining new traffic counts on both Gulfport Boulevard and Pasadena Boulevard for use during their EAR process. These are the two main streets in South Pasadena. They also wondered whether the County had data relating to the existing and historical tree canopy in the area. It was suggested that Environmental Management staff might know this information. (SWFWMD has the technology to analyze LANSAT images to determine vegetation type and age).

South Pasadena commented that many housing units within the city were out of compliance with county housing codes on heat and air conditioning. Some residents have replaced heating/cooling units with air conditioning only units, because they are less expensive, and are only in use for part of the year.

Affordable housing may become an issue for the City of South Pasadena as two large developments are planning to convert from regulated affordable developments to other uses. Bethany Towers and Lutheran Towers are nearing

the 30-year cutoff date that requires a certain number of units to remain at an affordable price.

The City of South Pasadena does anticipate a trend toward increased residential development. Although South Pasadena has been built-out for some time, some existing commercial properties are trying to convert to high density residential. The only other anticipated development is an improvement to the Palms of Pasadena hospital, which would actually build up in height, not out in acreage used.

Gulfport sees a current trend of increasing property values that may affect affordability in their City. The new 49th Street Redevelopment Corridor, along with the Waterfront District, has spurred revitalization. One impediment to redevelopment is the multiple grandfathered properties in the coastal high hazard area. FEMA raised the base flood elevations in much of Gulfport, which has limited some opportunities in this aging neighborhood. There was a discussion about the rights of property owners to increase or maintain the density on their property. Since many existing structures are old, a change in use would require a grandfathered building to be brought up to current code standards. Often the existing building exceeds the allowable density, and this can also be a deterrent to redevelopment.

When asked about access to water, Gulfport staff said that additional anchorage areas may be created, in the attempt to better regulate those who dock in the area overnight. South Pasadena said the residents of the City have no desire to introduce water access (boat ramps) in the area. Most residents don't want any additional traffic associated with boaters.

There was a discussion on water quality issues. It was noted that there are no NPDES sampling sites in the area of South Pasadena or Gulfport. Gulfport has a beach that has been closed in the past after heavy rains due to decreased water quality from the resulting storm-water run-off.

New neighborhood design standards are likely to be implemented in Gulfport once the new city manager settles in. Redeveloped areas will require sidewalk installation. Some South Pasadena residents don't want them in their neighborhoods, so this is likely not going to be a requirement.

The use of mass transit varies in the two cities as well. South Pasadena pays for the use of a "circulator" bus for residents that runs two days a week and is free for residents. It goes all over the city from various condominium developments to retail stores and back. Despite its low ridership, the City anticipates this service will continue because it is the only transportation available to some people.

There is a Publix shopping center on the southeast corner of South Pasadena, and a Kash'n'Karry on the northeast corner of the intersection of Gulfport

Boulevard and Pasadena Boulevard. The traffic pattern on Gulfport Blvd between these two retail centers is complicated. The stores would like to install a traffic light east of the existing intersection to relieve some of the unregulated turns in and out of both sites. This plan has been rejected by the Florida Department of Transportation because it is too close to the existing light. An alternative plan would redesign the roadway to include right-in/right-out only lanes.

The discussion returned to the topic of tree canopy studies. Pinellas County staff is interested in this idea, and will investigate other projects in the region, etc.

MEETING WITH CITIES OF TREASURE ISLAND AND ST. PETE BEACH - March 29, 2004

Both cities are creating Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs), and are struggling to retain the tourist economy and commercial base that have made them strong communities. In St. Pete Beach, two of these are planned along Corey Avenue and in the Sunset Beach area.

Both cities are concerned that beach communities to their north are allowing a nearly complete change over to high density residential where hotels and motels once stood.

As an incentive for hotel redevelopment, the City of St. Pete Beach is converting some properties from Resort Facility - Medium to Resort Facility - High. They discovered that density cannot be calculated beyond the Coastal Construction Line (CCCL) due to Countywide Rules, which changed the number of hotel rooms allowed.

Treasure Island is making use of the hotel/condo designation. This has allowed hotel use to continue in the area because it may be easier for corporations to obtain financing with multiple initial investors.

The Beach Trolley service has been used by many resort and hospitality workers to get to employment in both of these cities. Since the beach communities are highly desirable places to live, the people who work there cannot afford to live there too. This service has been invaluable to the cities by transporting both workers and tourists through the area.

The Treasure Island Causeway bridge replacement will impact hurricane evacuation, trolley service and general traffic congestion in the area.

The latest Florida Department of Transportation improvements to Gulf Boulevard will include installation of sidewalks and landscaping in areas where road

widening is not feasible. Mile marker signs are also due to be installed soon. The Treasure Island community is looking forward to having sidewalks installed.

Due to water quality concerns, Treasure Island now requires all waterfront properties to retain one inch of water onsite by installing swales or by using other measures. Although not typically required of residential properties, these measures are required for all properties with no minimum size requirement.

Treasure Island has a list that they give developers of plants that will grow well in the coastal community. They want to encourage hardy, salt-tolerant landscaping. Eventually they would like to incorporate this into the municipal code.

Both municipalities feel that there is adequate public access to the water for boats. Both have ramps on the intra-coastal side of the barrier islands. They feel there is more conflict with the installation of private docks due to loss of view and aesthetics. Some residents want limits on both docks and boatlifts. Others dislike the presence of jet skis.

The Pass-a-Grille Historic District is a voluntary preservation district in St. Pete Beach with about 100 active members. The only limit on redevelopment is a height restriction.

Both municipalities agree that there are no locations on the barrier islands that lend themselves to affordable housing opportunities. Because of this they both recognize the need to develop effective mass transit systems that connect to the areas where hospitality workers live.

The taxable values of properties on the beaches have increased rapidly in the last few years. Many property owners cannot claim homestead exemption, and cannot benefit from the Save-Our-Homes cap on increases. St. Petersburg Beach estimates that 28% of properties are not homesteaded, and 65% of condos are not homesteaded within the city.

Treasure Island said that in order to encourage interesting architectural design, some standards or incentives will need to be in place. They are considering "stepping back" some codes, and then providing allowances if the property owner installs certain desirable features, such as more landscaping and interesting designs.

Other redevelopment initiatives are underway by both municipalities. St. Petersburg Beach anticipates redeveloping Corey Avenue as a mixed-use main street, similar to Naples' 5th Avenue. This would include retail and office uses on the first floor, and residential units over them. Treasure Island has used CDBG funds to renew the look of their downtown area with landscaping and "street furniture". The clock tower was installed with municipal funding.

Beach re-nourishment is an important issue for both communities, especially in light of the efforts being made to retain the tourism base in these areas. Sea turtle nesting protection is important as well.

It was mentioned that Sarasota County's Board of County Commissioners adopted a policy to increase their tree canopy. St. Petersburg Beach has a requirement to replace any trees removed by two new trees.

MEETING WITH MADEIRA BEACH - May 25, 2004

The city of Madeira Beach has no issues with water supply or sewer service. Solid waste is hauled by the city, and uses the county resource recovery facility for both recycling and other waste disposal.

There are concerns with water quality in Boca Ciega Bay. There is little land available for stormwater retention. Original development allowed impervious surfaces on most of the land, so any redevelopment creates a better situation by requiring some retention or installation of an underground holding area. The last beach renourishment project seems to have affected the bay due to poor quality sand. Madeira Beach would like to see increased NPDES enforcement. Their Building Department has started to coordinate more with this effort. Three locations in Madeira Beach are identified in their Master Plan as areas that don't "flush" properly due to poor tidal exchange. These three areas will most likely benefit from the installation of a flow tube that will be funded by a recent grant obtained by the city. Additionally, the city has seven CDS units, which are stormwater filters that are routinely vacuumed out. They are designed to separate "floatable" debris down to the size of a cigarette.

Beach loss from erosion has not been a big issue for Madeira Beach. In fact, there has been a small beach created near John's Pass. This has introduced a problem for the city because it is in a dangerous location for people to use. The public is using this new stretch of beach, despite the high velocity of the water moving through the Pass and the amount of large boat traffic that uses the waterway.

Beach access availability meets public demand. However, parking may not always be adequate for this demand. Madeira Beach has a small number of public parking spaces at each street end access point, as well as an established park system for access across the dunes.

The Master Plan, which was derived by a consultant to the city, indicates that one waterfront area on the east side of Madeira Beach would be developed and sold for residential use. It was intended that the revenue generated would then fund the development of a town center. It was discovered that the land had to remain in public ownership, which precludes the sale to private interests.

A new 1.3-acre linear park is about to open along the Causeway. The land was purchased with funding from multiple sources, including the Florida Communities Trust Fund. The park will have a trail, bathrooms and seating areas. Other recreation and open space areas are available to the public. The city also has an interlocal agreement with the Pinellas County School Board to use the athletic fields at Madeira Beach Middle School.

The city is interested in creating some safer pedestrian walkways for residents and tourists. One result of vending bans on the beach is that visitors must cross Gulf Boulevard to buy something to eat or drink. At this time, there are few safe places to cross the road safely. Madeira Beach would like to investigate installation of crosswalks with median safety areas. Currently the traffic flow through the city on Gulf Boulevard is steady due to median turn lanes. Some traffic calming measures may be needed to increase safety for pedestrians.

Another area that is dangerous for pedestrians is located on the eastern side of the causeway, where Duhme Road intersects 150th Avenue. The middle school students do not use the pedestrian overpass bridge to cross the street. They cross at the light, but many high-speed drivers are not looking for pedestrians in this area.

Madeira Beach is currently built beyond the densities allowed by the Plan. This has deterred the redevelopment of some of these properties since they would have a decreased use and value for owners. Despite this the city wants to see the Plan followed.

Older motels are deteriorating because they are not economically feasible. Owners are being assessed higher taxes every year due to the increased property values. They can't charge higher rates, and are having a hard time renovating and even paying employees a competitive wage.

Madeira Beach agrees with the other coastal communities that affordable housing is not feasible on the beaches. They even thought that moderate housing is no longer available there.

The only other change to the Future Land Use Map that the city would like to implement affects a commercial property that is a nuisance to the surrounding residential and church properties in the area. The owner feels it would only be economically feasible to re-locate the business if given a higher density on the site. The city feels that the commercial property is another factor that is preventing redevelopment in this neighborhood and will try to pursue this increase in density.

PHONE CONVERSATION WITH BELLEAIR SHORE - June 8, 2004

Belleair Shore is completely single family residential; they foresee no changes in land use.

Re: infrastructure - Gulf Blvd improvements have been completed through the Town and now drainage is great. They are happy that the County has taken over the Belleair Beach sewer system and will be making improvements. They are interested in underground utilities (but do not have specific plans). Every house pretty much has a new seawall.

They have 3 beach access points - beach is for residents; property lines extend out to "wet sand." Belleair Beach provides police service, and monitors beach. Would like to get back to doing beach-cleaning, but have old equipment County gave them that doesn't work. Beach erosion is not a real issue for them.

FEMA regulations and CCCL are their only real issues, although it did not seem to be a big or insurmountable issue – perhaps due to character and value of their residential community. They are concerned about coastal flooding, but the new house are being built up.

PHONE CONVERSATION WITH CITY OF SEMINOLE - June 2004

Concern over flooding issues associated with annexed land

Public Involvement for Transportation

In April and May of 2004, the Board of County Commissioners jointly sponsored five workshops with the MPO to invite public review and comment on the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan as well as the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and on the various transportation issues they address. Public surveys were distributed at the workshops and at local libraries and on the Pinellas County and MPO websites.

The survey questions addressed a variety of issues including intelligent transportation systems (ITS) which, based on the responses, were a favored approach to addressing roadway congestion. ITS represents an approach to improving the efficiency of all modes of transportation as well as incident management through the use of advanced technology solutions. Examples of these solutions include coordinated traffic control systems, visual and audio aids for pedestrian street crossings, traffic signal pre-emption, video controlled message signs, and automated fare box systems.

Nearly 70 percent of the respondents ranked improved signal timing as a top priority for addressing traffic congestion. Computer controlled traffic signals with the capacity to change in response to traffic conditions was the popular choice when asked about priorities for various ITS strategies. Providing for the coordinated operation of signal control systems in Pinellas County is a major emphasis area of current ITS planning activity by the County and the MPO. Other results of the surveys included the following:

- The highest percentage of respondents (25 percent) indicated that improvements to sidewalks and walking paths are most important in encouraging people to walk or bike;

Nearly 75 percent of the respondents ranked access to schools and safety as the top priority for planning and funding bicycle and pedestrian projects;

Most respondents (28 percent) cited the length of time it takes to reach their destination as the foremost reason why they do not use public transportation;

Most respondents (20 percent) said more frequent bus service (especially on major roads) is the most needed PSTA bus service improvement, and

The highest percentage of respondents (22 percent) said they would use a monorail system if it could take them to work.

It should be noted that significant efforts in the survey process were made to reach out and engage special needs populations (e.g., low-income residents, minorities, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities). Over 50 organizations that serve these populations were contacted, providing a

perspective from citizens facing unique challenges in traveling to work, shopping, medical appointments, school, or social visits. Listed below were some of the recurring themes from this group.

- Participants stated that special needs populations need more flexible transportation options and door-to-door service.
- Many felt that public transportation schedules and routes can be confusing and intimidating to some potential riders. It was suggested that better outreach, communication and education is needed to teach special needs populations how to use public transit and dispel the myths about public transportation not being a safe option.
- Group participants noted that the elderly population is growing and that this segment of society is uniquely challenged because many don't drive and many won't use public transit. Special attention needs to be given to this group to get or keep them mobile.
- People want the public transportation system to have a better communication strategy that is user friendly to non-English speaking, illiterate, mentally or physically challenged and the elderly. Using pictures and graphics is important. These populations are increasing, as will their need to use public transit.
- Participants felt that more interagency coordination between the organizations that serve special needs populations needs to occur to solve transportation challenges.
- Many stated that affordability of public transportation continues to be an issue.
- A big concern among participants was pedestrian safety. People stated that there aren't enough safe crossings for pedestrians over major roadways. Many will ride the bus miles out of direction to avoid crossing busy streets like US Highway 19 and others.

In addition to the transportation survey, a second survey addressing land use and road corridor design was posted on the County website. The intent of this survey was to determine preferences toward different road corridor and site/building design strategies. Respondents were given a list of these strategies and asked to rank them in terms of priority. For road corridor design, nearly 60 percent of the respondents ranked the following as the top priorities: 1) Construction of sidewalks where necessary to fill gaps between existing sidewalk links; and 2) Construction of sidewalks and/or trails to major destination points such as parks, schools, business districts and shopping centers as the top priority. For building/site design, nearly 50 percent of the respondents ranked the

provision of landscaped common areas as public gathering space as the top priority and about the same percentage ranked the placement of bicycle racks near buildings as medium priority.

GENPLAN/EAR 2005/EAR – APPENDIX A