

# 5 *The Availability of Community and Public Services*

The following portion of the Future Land Use Element is an analysis of the availability of public facilities and services necessary to serve existing land uses and future development within the unincorporated County. An important point to consider in a discussion of the availability of community and public services is that land development patterns for the unincorporated County are well established, and the County has been providing urban services and infrastructure to the unincorporated areas for several decades. The Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan has been instrumental in the development of public facilities as the Plan has been used to identify any existing service deficiencies, facilities in need of replacement, and future infrastructure needs. It should be noted that the responsibilities of the Board of County Commissioners for providing urban services and facilities often includes municipal areas; however, this discussion will focus on the unincorporated area. For a more comprehensive analysis of the Board's responsibilities, please refer to the individual infrastructure elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

With practically no exceptions, urban services are available to all areas of Pinellas County. Urban (re)development and infill development are anticipated to continue in all sectors of the County. Regarding the development of vacant land and the availability of services, the vacant land in Pinellas County is distributed throughout the County in areas where there are already services provided or where facilities can be easily accessed.

The coordination of development with the provision of public services and facilities is complicated by the large number of local governments in Pinellas County. This requires that a local government coordinate with the provider of a public service (whether it be a municipality, Pinellas County, a special district, or the State of Florida) to ensure that permitted development will have adequate public services and facilities.

## **Availability of Facilities/Services to Serve Existing Land Uses**

As Pinellas County is a distinctly urban county, it offers a full range of urban services. For example, Pinellas County provides surface water management, sanitary sewer, and water supply services to unincorporated residents and, in several cases, to municipal residents as well. Some County programs and responsibilities, however, are countywide in scope; these include solid waste disposal, parks and open space, natural resource management, and transportation. In some cases, municipalities provide certain services to some unincorporated areas. Interlocal agreements between the Board of County Commissioners and the municipalities determine responsibilities for providing public services such as wastewater collection, treatment and disposal; solid waste disposal; and the supply of potable water.

Listed below is a brief description of those services. For a more detailed discussion of the facilities serving existing land uses, please consult the appropriate elements of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan.

## ***Surface Water Management***

Pinellas County has undertaken and completed major surface water management improvements, and will continue to undertake additional projects and to maintain existing drainage facilities. The County coordinates with other local governments to identify surface water management needs through the development and implementation of watershed management plans. For a detailed discussion of the provision of surface water management services, please consult the Surface Water Management Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## ***Recreation and Open Space***

Presently, the BCC owns and/or operates six regional parks totaling 3,591 acres, 15 environmental lands totaling 15,435 acres, five neighborhood parks totaling 59 acres, two multi-use trails totaling 350 acres, six beach access parks totaling 22 acres, three boat ramp parks totaling 17 acres, and one marina of 3 acres. Overall, the BCC operates a total of 4,322 acres of developed park land, which is an increase of nearly 329 acres since 1989. The BCC also operates the Pinewood Cultural Park (192 acres) and two equestrian trails totaling 88 acres. For a more detailed discussion, please consult the Recreation, Open Space and Culture Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## ***Wastewater Management***

Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) operates two regional wastewater treatment/reclamation plants with a combined capacity of 42.00 million gallons per day (mgd). Both plants have been expanded to meet anticipated demand. The South Cross Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant operates today with a treatment capacity of 33 mgd and the William E. Dunn Plant operates at a capacity of 9.00 mgd. Since completion of these upgrades, the McKay Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has been taken out of operation, and wastewater flows were diverted to the South Cross Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant. The PCU recently purchased the Town of Belleair Wastewater Plant and is redirecting the Town's effluent to the South Cross Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant. PCU provides sanitary sewer collection and treatment services to 230,847 unincorporated residents. Local municipalities provide sanitary sewer collection and/or treatment services to approximately 64,299 unincorporated County. A small number of unincorporated residents receive wastewater services from private package plants. Less than one percent of unincorporated County residents are served by septic tanks, and those areas that are on septic tanks continue to decrease over time. The County disposes of its wastewater by water reclamation. Over 23,300 customers are served by the County's current reclaimed system. For a more detailed discussion, please consult the Potable Water Supply, Wastewater and Reuse Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

## ***Solid Waste Disposal***

In most of the unincorporated area of Pinellas County, residents are responsible for arranging for solid waste collection. However, the Lealman community located in Planning Sector 14 coordinated with Pinellas County to establish a franchise agreement for collection of solid

waste for their community. Pinellas County operates a three boiler refuse-to-energy facility that has a capacity of 3,150 tons per day. Additionally, Pinellas County operates the Bridgeway Acres Sanitary Landfill. Thirty-one percent of the solid waste stream within Pinellas County was recycled in 2005. For a more detailed discussion, please consult the Solid Waste and Resource Recovery Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### ***Transportation***

A detailed discussion of the County's transportation system is found in the Transportation Element of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan. A discussion of the relationship between land use and transportation is found elsewhere in this element and in the Transportation Element.

### ***Water Supply***

The Pinellas County Utilities System (PCUS) provides water supply treatment and both wholesale and retail distribution services to most residents of the unincorporated County. Some residents of the unincorporated County receive potable water from the City of St. Petersburg or the City of Dunedin. A small number of unincorporated residents receive potable water from private wells. The PCUS receives its water supply from Tampa Bay Water, a regional water utility.

To reduce demand on the County's water supply, successful conservation efforts have been undertaken by Pinellas County and its citizens and businesses. Additionally, the County continues to cooperate in regional efforts to ensure an adequate future supply. For a more detailed discussion of water supply facilities and services, please consult the Potable Water Supply, Wastewater, and Reuse Element of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan.