

**New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update
Local Planning Agency Position Paper
Current Status of Lee County
November 18, 2011**

The Lee Plan is the current document that describes the county's land use. It is a living document that has been evolving since its original adoption in 1984. The current land use framework of the county – 29 future land use categories – is described through an extensive series of maps and policies in the Plan. One of the key issues that will be addressed in the New Horizon 2035 Plan is providing better distinctions between different community environments in Lee County. To do this, the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (E.A.R.) identified a Land Use Framework that defines the general land use pattern for the county that recognizes existing development characteristics while supporting the new vision for a more energy efficient and compact growth pattern. This Framework will be used to update the Lee Plan by introducing policies that include new principles that guide preferred urban, suburban, and rural development forms.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the current status of Lee County in terms of existing land use categories and actual development and density patterns and to provide a framework for a revised Future Land Use Map. The goal is to create a Future Land Use Map with a clear distinction between urban, suburban, rural and environmental resource areas that correspond with the Land Use Framework established in the E.A.R.

E.A.R. Land Use Framework: Urban, Suburban, Rural and Environmental Resource

The E.A.R. provides a Land Use Framework that defines the general land use pattern for Lee County in four land use types – urban, suburban, rural and environmental resource. A summary of the land use type and principles for form, use and transportation in each area is provided below:

Urban: Urban areas have an interconnected development pattern with moderate to high density, a mixture of uses, and links to public spaces. Multi-modal connections are a priority and are provided through an integrated and highly connected transportation network, short block lengths and street widths, and prominent pedestrian connections and accesses.

Suburban: Suburban areas reflect low to moderate density development and separations of uses. Suburb development is fueled by a high desire for residential neighborhoods and privacy. Residential streets and park/green space layouts are designed to reduce cut-through traffic and establish distinct boundaries for residential communities. The automobile is the primary means of transportation in a suburban area. Public spaces are also designed to meet the needs and interests of residential users.

Rural: Rural development relies primarily on a pattern of large expanses of agricultural and conservation lands with occasional clustered residential development. Rural areas may be viewed as agricultural industrial lands as the areas function as working areas. Rural form and

use are comprised of commercial agriculture and farm lands, low density residential development (if any), separation of uses, and utilization of the natural environment for open spaces.

Environmental Resource Areas: These areas include undeveloped lands containing wetlands, natural water bodies and water courses, native uplands, coastal and estuarine ecosystems, wildlife corridors, significant species habitat, high aquifer recharge potential, and conservation. These lands are very sparsely developed and have significant natural and ecological value.

These land use types establish the Land Use Framework for New Horizon 2035. The next section describes the current land use framework of the Lee Plan.

Lee Plan Framework: Current Future Land Use Categories of Lee County

Lee County currently has 29 future land use categories. These land use categories are used to classify unincorporated Lee County into “Future Urban Areas” and “Non-Urban Areas.” In addition to the future urban areas and the non-urban areas, the Lee Plan also identifies several “other”, or customized, future land use categories. A table has been created and is attached that depicts the general allowable uses of each future land use category and the standard allowable densities. A summary of the Lee Plan’s current future land use categories is provided below:

Future Urban Areas: The Future Urban Areas of the Lee Plan include the following land use categories: Intensive Development, Central Urban, Urban Community, Suburban, Outlying Suburban, Industrial Development, Public Facilities, University Community, Commercial, and Sub-Outlying Suburban. The maximum density range for the Future Urban Areas, including bonus density is from two units an acre (2 du/acre) in the Sub-Outlying Suburban areas to 22 units an acre (22 du/acre) in the Intensive Development areas. The Commercial, Industrial Development, and Public Facilities future land use categories do not permit residential uses.

Non-Urban Areas: The Lee Plan currently includes the following future land use categories as Non-Urban Areas: Rural, Outer Islands, Rural Community Preserve, Open Lands, Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR), Conservation Lands – Wetlands, Conservation Lands – Uplands, and Coastal Rural. The maximum density range for the Non-Urban Areas is from one unit an acre (1 du/acre) in the Coastal Rural, Outer Islands, Rural, and Rural Community Preserve areas to one unit on ten acres (1 du/10 acres) in the DR/GR areas. The Conservation future land use categories do not permit residential uses.

Other Areas: The following future land use categories do not fit into to current future urban and non-urban framework of the Lee Plan: Destination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependent, Burnt Store Marina Village, Tradeport, Airport Lands, Interstate Highway Interchange Areas, Wetlands, and New Community. The maximum density range for these areas ranges from one unit on twenty acres (1 du/20 acres) in the Wetlands future land use category to 9.36 units an acre (9.36 du/acre) in the Destination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependent future land use category.

New Horizon 2035 Framework:

Application of E.A.R. Definitions to Existing Future Land Use Categories

In an attempt to distinguish between the existing future land use categories of the Lee Plan using the urban, suburban, rural and environmental resource land use type framework, staff has organized the existing future land use categories using the definitions provided by the E.A.R. This categorization was based on the densities, intensities and general description provided for each future land use category in the Future Land Use Element of the Lee Plan. Below, each of the existing future land use categories is identified in one of the four categories of the Land Use Framework provided by the E.A.R. Attached is a table that describes each of the existing future land use categories and a demonstrative map of the existing future land use categories classified as urban, suburban, rural and environmental resource using the definitions provided by the E.A.R.

Urban Areas: The following future land use categories are defined as urban areas as provided in the E.A.R.: University Community, Intensive Development, Central Urban, Industrial Development, Interstate Highway Interchange Areas, and Tradeport. These categories comprise 45,578 acres or 11.91% of Lee County and characterize urban areas because of their potential for moderate to high density and intensity development.

Suburban: The following future land use categories are defined as suburban areas as provided in the E.A.R.: Urban Community, Suburban, Outlying Suburban, Sub-Outlying Suburban, Outer Islands, and New Community. These categories comprise 106,520 acres or 27.83% of Lee County and characterize suburban areas because of their large contiguous areas of low-density residential uses.

Rural: The following future land use categories are defined as rural areas as provided in the E.A.R.: Coastal Rural, Rural, Rural Community Preserve, and Open Lands. These categories comprise 56,438 acres or 14.75% of Lee County and characterize rural areas because of their land areas dedicated to pasture and farms and large-lot residential subdivisions.

Environmental Resource: The following future land use categories are defined as Environmental Resource areas as provided in the E.A.R.: Conservation Lands Uplands and Wetlands, Wetlands, and Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR). These categories comprise 162,792 acres or 42.53% of Lee County and characterize environmental resource areas because of their significant natural and ecological value.

Other Areas: The following future land use categories are not defined in the context provided in the E.A.R.: Commercial, Public Facilities, Airport, Destination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependent, and Burnt Store Marina. These areas comprise 11,428 acres or 2.99% of Lee County. These areas will require discussion to determine how they should be addressed in the New Horizon 2035 Framework. Discussion points are provided below.

Discussion Points for Future Analysis

Reviewing the existing Lee Plan future land use categories and looking ahead as Lee County explores ways to achieve the vision expressed in the E.A.R. there are several questions that must be addressed. Over the coming months, starting with today's discussion, staff will address these questions.

- How can Lee County achieve a better delineation between urban, suburban, rural, and environmental resource areas in terms of their overall development pattern?
- Should the Public Facilities, Airport, and Commercial future land use categories continue to be identified as separate future land use categories, or should these be treated as uses allowed by zoning in more broadly defined future land use categories? How do these Lee Plan categories fit into the E.A.R. framework of urban, suburban, rural, and environmental resource areas?
- Currently, there are five Interstate Highway Interchange Areas: General Interchange, General Commercial Interchange, Industrial Commercial Interchange, Industrial Interchange, and the University Village Interchange. Can one or more of these be combined?
- Should Lee County continue to create customized future land use categories such as the Destination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependent future land use category and the Burnt Store Marina future land use category? How should the existing customized future land use categories be addressed?
- Can any of the other existing future land use categories be combined to simplify the Future Land Use Map?

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	GENERALISED ALLOWABLE USES	STANDARD MIN.	STANDARD MAX.	BONUS DENSITY	NOTES
Urban Areas					
University Community	Residential, commercial, public and quasi-public, and limited light industrial land uses - mixed use is encouraged.	1	15	0	See Policy 1.1.9. All development within the University Community must be designed to enhance and support the University. 6510 total units.
Intensive Development	Planned mixed-use centers of high-density residential, commercial, limited light industrial (see Policy 7.1.6), and office uses are encouraged.	8	14	8	See Policy 1.1.2.
Central Urban	Residential, commercial, public and quasi-public, and limited light industrial land uses - mixed use is encouraged.	4	10	5	See Policy 1.1.3. Urban core of the county.
Tradeport	Light manufacturing or assembly, warehousing, and distribution facilities; research and development activities; laboratories; ground transportation and airport-related terminals or transfer facilities; hotels/motels, meeting facilities; office uses; and <u>stand alone retail</u> .	0	0	0	See Policy 1.2.2.
University Village Interchange	Industrial Commercial interchange + university community.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.3.5
General Commercial Interchange	Retail, planned commercial districts, shopping, office, financial, and business.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.3.3.
General Interchange	Service stations, hotel, motel, restaurants, and gift shops. But because of their location, market attractions, and desire for flexibility, these interchange uses permit a broad range of land uses that include tourist commercial, general commercial and <u>light industrial/commercial</u> .	0	0	0	See Policy 1.3.2.
Industrial Commercial Interchange	Light industrial and/or commercial uses.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.3.4.
Industrial Interchange	Light industrial, research, office, visitor serving uses such as <u>restaurant and hotel</u> uses.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.3.1.
Industrial Development	Mainly for industrial activities, as well as for selective land use mixtures such as the combined uses of industrial, manufacturing, research, properly buffered recreational uses, office complex (if related to adjoining industrial uses) and <u>limerock mining and fill dirt operations</u> .	0	0	0	See Policy 1.1.7.

Suburban Areas

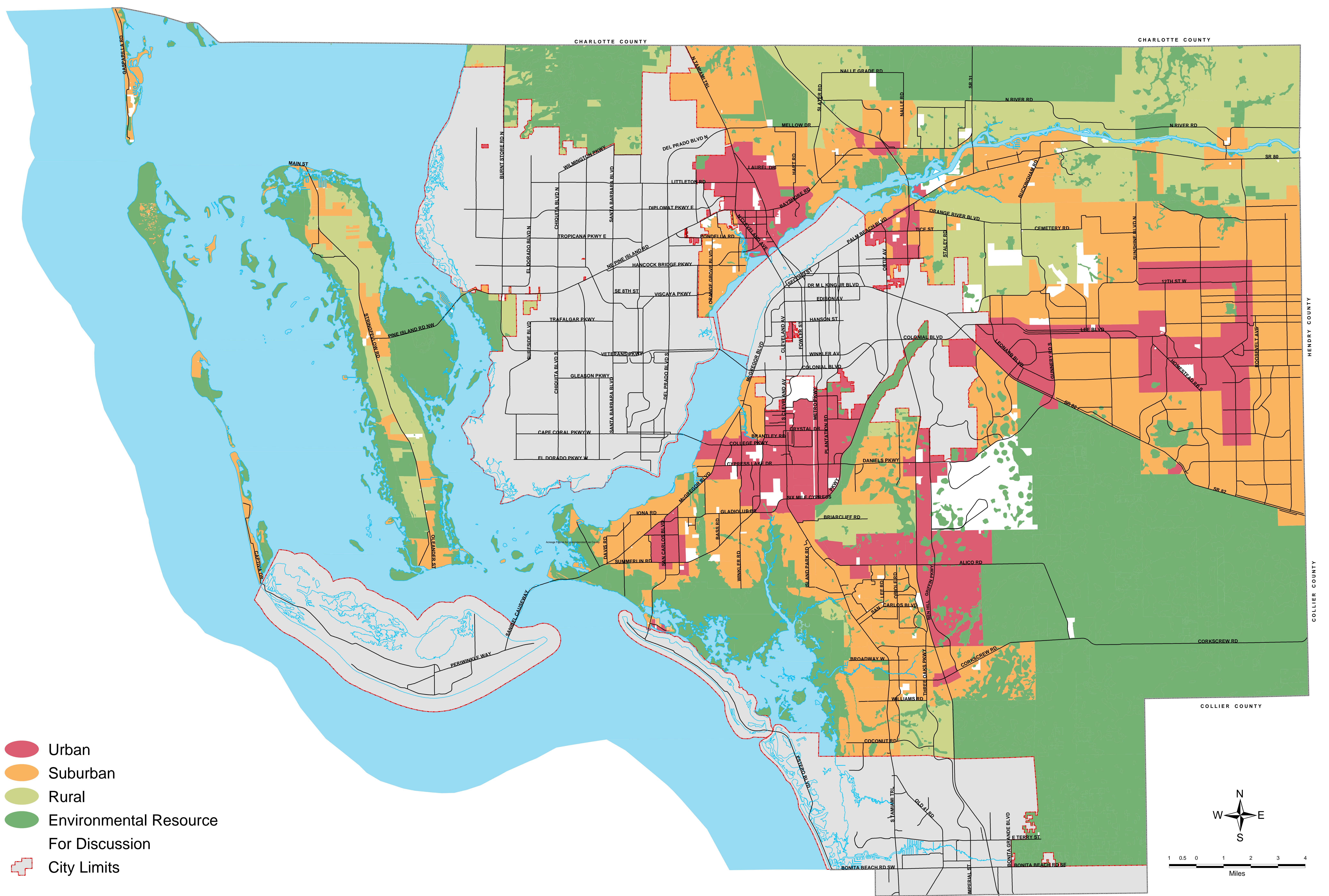
Urban Community	Residential, commercial, public and quasi-public, and limited light industry - mixed use is encouraged.	1	6	4	See Policy 1.1.4.
New Community	Full range of uses needed to to develop a complete community.	1	6	0	See Policy 1.6.1.
Suburban	Areas are or will be predominantly residential. Higher densities, commercial development greater than neighborhood centers, and industrial land uses are not permitted.	1	6	0	See Policy 1.1.5.
Outlying Suburban	Lower density residential. Commercial development greater than neighborhood centers, and industrial land uses are not permitted.	1	3	0	See Policy 1.1.6. In general, these areas are rural in nature or contain existing low-density development
Sub-Outlying Suburban	Lower density residential. Commercial development greater than neighborhood centers, and industrial land uses are not permitted.	1	2	0	See Policy 1.1.11.
Outer Islands	Low density residential.	0	1	0	See Policy 1.4.2.

Rural Areas

Coastal Rural	The Coastal Rural areas will remain rural except for portions of properties where residential lots are permitted in exchange for permanent preservation or restoration of native upland habitats or a commitment to preserve agricultural activity on existing farmland, on the remainder of the property.	0.1	1	0	See Policy 1.4.7.
Rural	The Rural areas are to remain predominantly rural--that is, low density residential, agricultural uses, and minimal non-residential land uses that are needed to serve the rural community. These areas are not to be programmed to receive urban-type capital improvements, and they can anticipate a continued level of public services below that of the urban areas.	0	1	0	See Policy 1.4.1.
Rural Community Preserve	Special design approaches are to be used to maintain the existing rural character, for example: conservation easements, flexible road design standards (including relocation of future arterials not serving the rural community), special fencing and sign standards, and retention of historic rural uses.	0	1	0	See Policy 1.4.3.

Open Lands	Open Lands are upland areas that are located north of Rural and/or sparsely developed areas in Township 43 South. These areas are extremely remote from public services and are characterized by agricultural and low-density residential uses.	0	0.2	0	See Policy 1.4.4.
Environmental Resources Areas					
Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource	Agriculture, natural resource extraction and related facilities, conservation uses, publicly-owned gun range facilities, private recreation facilities, and residential .	0	0.1	0	See Policy 1.4.5.
Wetlands	Very low density residential uses, and recreational uses that will not affect the ecological functions of wetlands.	0	0.05	0	See Policy 1.5.1.
Conservation Lands - Upland	Wildlife preserves; mitigation areas and banks; natural resource based parks; ancillary uses for environmental research and education, historic and cultural preservation, and natural resource based parks; and water conservation lands such as aquifer recharge areas, flowways, flood prone areas, and well fields.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.4.6.
Conservation Lands - Wetlands	Wildlife preserves; mitigation areas and banks; natural resource based parks; ancillary uses for environmental research and education, historic and cultural preservation, and natural resource based parks; and water conservation lands such as aquifer recharge areas, flowways, flood prone areas, and well fields.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.4.6.
Other Areas					
Denstination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependent	Residential, resort, commercial and industrial type activities that benefit from access to the water front.	6	9.36	0	See Goal 31.
Burnt Store Marina Village	Retail (55,000 square feet), wet and dry slips (1,325 slips), office (15,000 square feet), hotel (145 hotel units), and residential (160 dwelling units).	*	*	*	See Policy 1.7.12.
Commercial	Commercial	0	0	0	See Policy 1.1.10.
Airport	Hotels/motels, light industrial, service stations, ancillary retail/shopping, and office development	0	0	0	See Policy 1.2.1.
Public Facilities	Public schools, parks, airports, public transportation, and other governmental facilities.	0	0	0	See Policy 1.1.8.

LEE COUNTY URBAN - SUBURBAN - RURAL - ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE AREAS



Map Generated November 2011
Prepared By DCD/Planning Division



Future Urban Areas Include Lands Designated: Intensive Development, Central Urban, Urban Community, Interchange Areas, Destination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependent, Industrial Development, and Tradeport
Suburban Areas Include Lands Designated: University Community, Suburban, Outlying Suburban, Sub-Outlying Suburban, New Community, Burnt Store Marina Village, and Outer Islands
Rural Areas include Lands Designated: Rural, Rural Community Preserve, Coastal Rural, and Open Lands
Conservation/Wetlands Includes Lands Designated: Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource, Wetlands, Conservation Uplands, and Conservation Wetlands

For Discussion:
Airport, Commercial, and Public Facilities

New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update
Local Planning Agency Position Paper
Lee County Mixed-Use
November 18, 2011

Background

Central to the vision adopted through the 2011 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) is the development of mixed-use centers. According to the report, mixed-use centers are:

“Places that feature a complementary mix of uses, promote livability and walkability, and include a variety of residential housing opportunities. ... These places (are) focused within compact centers of activity linked by a multi-modal transportation system that provides a more varied set of travel choices.”

As places that bring people, neighborhoods, commercial centers, public facilities, parks, and multi-modal transportation systems together, mixed-use centers are essential to Lee County’s future.

While the EAR highlighted mixed-use centers as a central component of the county’s future vision, enabling and promoting development of mixed-use centers has been a focus of Lee County’s planning and development effort for nearly three decades. Here is a summary of the county’s thirty-year effort to foster mixed-use developments:

- 1984 – The Lee Plan adopts Future Land Use Categories that allow for a mixture of residential uses along with commercial, office, and (in some categories) light industrial.
- 1991 – Lee Plan policies were adopted to promote mixed-use developments through clustering uses, reducing vehicular trips, and minimizing sprawl. The policies called for the development of mixed-use zoning classifications such as planned villages.
- 1994 –The Mixed-Use Planned Development Zoning Classification (MPD) is adopted into the Lee County Land Development Code to help, *“capture within the development a substantial percentage of the vehicular trips that are projected to be generated.”* Amendments to the MPD have been adopted to further encourage mixed-use zoning.
- 2004 – The 2004 EAR identified the need to better promote the development of mixed-use centers including the establishment of mixed-use future land use overlay areas, form-based code standards, and development incentives and disincentives.
- 2007 – Lee Plan Goal 4: Sustainable Development Design is adopted to incorporate the concepts and principles of New Urbanism, Traditional Neighborhood Design, and Transit Oriented Development. Additional amendments to the Future Land Use Map Series are adopted to include an overlay depicting targeted mixed-use development areas.
- 2010 – The Compact Communities Code is adopted into the Lee County Land Development Code to provide form-based regulations intended to create compact, walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use areas.

- 2011 – The New Horizon 2035: 2011 EAR identifies mixed-use centers as one of the primary components of the county’s updated land use framework and highlights how the Lee Plan can be amended to better foster mixed-use through the county’s future development efforts—particularly those in redeveloping commercial centers and corridors.
- 2010-2011 – Community Planning Program initiates the planning of up to six mixed-use centers within three local community planning areas (North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, and Palm Beach Boulevard) utilizing the Compact Communities Code.

Challenges to Achieving Mixed-Use

Despite the county’s efforts to support the development of mixed-use areas, the predominant development pattern in Lee County is comprised of single-use, separated residential, commercial, professional, industrial, and public space and parks areas that are each best accessed by personal vehicles. In order to determine why the county’s efforts to foster mixed-use have not achieved the intended goals, Lee County has been engaged in a series of staff charrettes, Local Planning Agency (LPA) policy workshops, and Community Sustainability Advisory Committee (Sustainability Committee) policy meetings. The goal of these discussions is to better understand why the county’s past efforts have not achieved the desired development practices and identify specific policies and practices that will enable the county to achieve its goal of developing mixed-use centers.

Suburban-based Lee Plan Policies

Through these different discussions, a common theme has come forward—the county has gotten where we are because of its land use policies and zoning standards. The LPA summed up the problem when they explained that, “we are trying to get to urban with suburban land uses and zoning.” Specifically, the county’s compatibility, density standards, buffering, open space requirements, separation of use restrictions, transportation and infrastructure level of service (LOS) standards, site location standards, and other comprehensive plan policies and LDC development requirements have been discussed as reasons the county has a predominantly suburban land use pattern. The regulations were designed to implement a more suburban form of development, where a development has a mixture of uses located adjacent to other uses but rarely has a true integrated and interconnected mix of uses.

In an effort to ensure compatibility between uses and adjacent neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public resources the county has adopted regulations that focus on density, intensity, height, building envelope, and use restrictions through the establishment of setbacks, sideyard buffers, height limits, minimum lot sizes, and lot coverage limits.

Conventional policies and standards are designed to provide for orderly growth, preventing overcrowding of land and people, alleviating congestion, and separating incompatible uses, and buffering adjacent uses. Over the last couple of decades, planners have become increasingly aware that conventional policies and standards are designed to develop suburbia and as a result have a strong influence on how we live our lives. In a study about what is the most appropriate land use tool for development of mixed-use neighborhoods John Barry explained:

The conventional zoning practices that became widely accepted in the later part of the twentieth century have drastically changed the way American cities and towns have been physically planned and developed. Conventional zoning has encouraged suburban sprawl through its promotion of low density and single use development. The consequences of this type of zoning are not limited to the physical design of the neighborhoods in which we live and work. Sprawl has also changed the way in which Americans conduct their daily lives as we increasingly rely on the automobile to commute to school and work or run errands. (Connecticut Law Journal, Form Based Codes: Measured Success Through Both Mandatory and Optional Implementation)

Lee Plan

Examples of the county's conventional land use policies and development standards included within the Lee Plan are as follows:

- Buffering/Open Space Requirements:
 - Goal—77
 - Objectives—1.3, 31.4, 77.1, 77.2, 77.3,
 - Policies—1.1.7, 1.4.7, 5.1.5, 5.1.6, 6.1.6, 7.1.8, 16.3.5, 41.1.4, 77.1.1, 77.2.1, 77.3.1, 77.3.4, 107.11.4
- Compatibility:
 - Objectives—16.3, 47.2, 66.3
 - Policies—2.2.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 9.2.1, 16.3.3, 17.4.1, 18.1.7, 33.3.2, 46.2.2, 46.4.2, 47.5.4, 85.1.1, 105.1.2
- Site location:
 - Goals—6, 39
 - Objectives- 37.1, 37.3
 - Policies—1.4.5, 6.1.2, 18.1.7

In addition to these policies, the county's existing urban and mixed-use land use designations as established in the Future Land Use Element, Future Land Use Map, and Table 1(a) Summary of Residential Densities support densities that are too low to adequately foster mixed-use developments.

Land Development Regulations

Lee County's experience with conventional land use policies and development regulations is not surprising; as a study of conventional land use practices by the American Planning Association (APA) found that such practices may hinder the building of traditional, mixed-use neighborhoods and community centers,

An evaluation of development trends and the zoning requirements of many communities identified serious problems associated with suburban communities. In many instances, conventional zoning regulations are the major contributors towards many communities ... While

there is interest in traditional urban communities, existing zoning regulations make redevelopment of urban communities more difficult by applying suburban zoning standards. Larger setbacks and excessive parking requirements make many cherished urban buildings and spaces nonconforming. (American Planning Association)

Additional planning research has shown that many communities have experienced challenges similar to those Lee County has faced when they tried to implement mixed-use goals through conventional based land use designations and zoning standards. While many local governments sought to use conventional based development policies and practices such as clustering land uses, planned development zoning classifications, and design standards tools to promote mixed-use development, such tools were designed to separate uses and guard against incompatibility. As explained in an article by the Michigan Association of Planning (now known as Michigan APA),

Planned unit developments (PUD) have been used for many years as an effective means of developing coordinated larger sites. ... However, in many instances, what is intended to be a "mixed-use" development actually ends up being "multiple-use," where there are separate and distinct areas of land uses that are not truly integrated into a mixed-use development. The other limitation of a PUD is that it is designed primarily for the development of larger sites, and with few exceptions, is not well suited for use on individual lots in an urban environment.

Clustered open space developments have had success in preserving open space and natural features. ... While open space developments are a significant improvement from (other types of) conventional zoning, the developments still tend to be separated, single-use tracts of land.

Many communities have adopted design standards ... While these design standards have been effective in improving the appearance of buildings and landscaping, the standards fail to create meaningful change in the urban form - the end result is usually aesthetically-pleasing sprawl. (Michigan APA)

Thus, despite the fact that the county desired mixed-use developments and had policies and regulations that allowed for such developments, the conventional land use and zoning practices predominantly found within Chapter 10: Development Standards and Chapter 34: Zoning of the Lee County Land Development Code have resulted in the county's suburban development pattern.

The lesson to be learned from the experiences of Lee County, planning research, and many other jurisdictions indicates that attempts to establish mixed-use centers through conventional zoning practices may not be successful because such practices are intended to develop suburban communities, not mixed-use areas.

Market Forces and Development Process

The market (aka development community, financial system, property seller, prospective property owner, and community member) is another reason for Lee County's suburban development pattern. The market contributed to suburbia by developing communities which were said to meet the overriding desire for single

family homes located in residential neighborhoods buffered from incompatible uses by landscaping, roadways, and gates. The so called, “*American Dream Home*” was fueled by the development of roadways and cheap fuel. The average American house size has more than doubled since the 1950s and now stands at 2,349 square feet while approximately seventy-five percent of Americans live in suburban communities. As the market has sought to meet the demand for single-family suburban homes and neighborhoods, there has been little to no perceived demand or need to construct more integrated mixed-use developments and centers.

Lee County’s development form has been shaped by four other significant market forces: 1) the timing of the Lee County’s growth, 2) large amounts of undeveloped suburban land uses, 3) developer specialization and 4) development financing. First, Lee County was largely developed after the suburban housing market became the dominant form of development in the mid-twentieth century. Unlike communities in the North and Southeast which originated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the county did not have many traditionally established downtown centers, connected neighborhoods, and integrated communities around which suburban neighborhoods developed. Second, when Lee County’s development boom began in the later part of the twentieth century, the county had vast amounts of undeveloped lands designated for low-density land uses. The market took advantage of these large land areas and produced vast areas of suburban developments. Third, as time progressed and the suburban movement grew, developers began to specialize in only one type of development. As a result, developers chose to specialize in one type of use (residential or commercial) and grew uncomfortable attempting mixed-use developments. Fourth, federal financing criteria made development project funding much more available for suburban communities than mixed-use developments. Thus, even developers who may have been interested in developing a mixed-use project were more likely to build a suburban development. Finally, as communities attempted to make mixed-use development easier to construct through techniques such as reduced or shared parking, the financial community grew uneasy about the viability of mixed-use centers without enough parking to satisfy the now ingrained suburban lifestyle.

Future Lee County Mixed-Use Practices

Recognizing that the county needed policies and practices that would better promote and support the development of mixed-use projects, the New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update is being reviewed in order to determine how the county’s land use policies and practices can provide:

- Greater direction about how mixed-use centers ought to be developed;
- Minimize policy and regulatory constraints to mixed-use developments;
- Higher level of certainty about the approval process; and
- Better predictability about project outcomes.

Through these updates, the county intends to develop mixed-use policies and standards that focus on the development’s form, design, and intent. The goal is to ensure that county’s future mixed-use efforts produce mixed-use development not projects with adjacent mixture of uses.

In order to achieve this goal, the EAR recommended that the county refine its mixed-use approach to better account for the specific location, size, context, and design conditions of the county’s different urban, suburban,

and rural places. The report established a basic mixed-use framework which described the form, function, and components of mixed-use development. The LPA workshop (see attached discussion summary) in October 2011 built off this discussion as it sought to provide further mixed-use policy direction.

Staff is using this information to help develop a mixed-use policy and development strategy, which will be presented to the LPA and Sustainability Committee starting in December 2011. However, while staff continues to work through the development of this strategy, it is appropriate to confirm what the county is looking to accomplish through its future mixed-use practices by examining where mixed-use center should be located, what the form and character of mixed-use centers ought to be, and how to promote mixed-use through appropriate land use categories and standards.

Mixed-use Locations Discussion

Recognizing that location is critical to the success of the county's future mixed-use strategy, a good deal of thought has gone into this first aspect of the county's mixed-use strategy. This topic involves whether the Future Land Use Map Mixed-Use Overlay should be amended to better delineate where mixed-use locations are and better direct how to blend such areas with the surrounding existing neighborhoods, service areas, and employment centers. The issue will be address through a discussion of the following concerns:

- Targeted locations that are specifically defined with specific land use categories and delineated on the Future Land Use Map.
- Flexible locations that are generally defined by an overlay on the Future Land Use Map.
- Redevelopment and infill locations that explain how to incorporate mixed-use areas within an existing development area.
- Greenfield and rural locations that explain how mixed-use areas can be used to help protect the character of rural communities.
- Mixed-use location criteria that help establish where mixed-use developments should be placed in proximity to residential, commercial, and industrial uses; transportation resources; and parks and public space areas.

Targeted Mixed-Use Locations

The argument for better defined locations is that the current overlay map is too broad and does not articulate the county's mixed-use priorities. By better delineating mixed-use areas, the map could be better able to focus its mixed-use efforts into targeted areas. According to the EAR, the county should identify specific types of mixed-use areas (regional, community, neighborhood, or rural) and develop land use policies and standards for each of these areas. During their October 2011 mixed-use discussion, the LPA further identified a number of specific locations where the county should target future mixed-use activities (i.e.: Treeline Avenue from Corkscrew Road to Colonial Boulevard; airport area, Six Mile Cypress Parkway to Metro Parkway; Palm Beach Boulevard corridor west of I-75; Winkler Road and College Parkway; and Alva Center). The LPA also stated the county should be committed to mixed-use in targeted locations by not bending to community misperceptions about mixed-use, collaborating with community groups to help address their needs and concerns through the planning process, and working with property owners to recognize the financial advantages of developing a mixed-use project.

The county has targeted a number of mixed-use center areas as part of the community planning efforts in North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Alva, Caloosahatchee Shores, and Palm Beach Boulevard. Additionally, the Estero community is working to identify potential locations as part of a current effort to update their community plan. Moreover, in four specific locations—North Fort Myers Town Center, Lehigh Acres Downtown, Lehigh Acres Community Center on Homestead Road, Lehigh Acres Neighborhood Center on Joel Boulevard, and the Palm Beach Boulevard Corridor west of I-75—the county has initiated the master planning of the community centers through implementation of the Compact Communities Code, planning of transportation improvements, and review of infrastructure needs. By targeting mixed-use locations, the county is able to focus its planning efforts, coordinate infrastructure concerns, and facilitate community planning efforts. Such publically sponsored planning efforts help attract private investments by ensuring that there is community support for the proposed effort, which makes the development review process more predictable.

Flexible Overlay Mixed-use Locations

While there is value in better targeting mixed-use locations, one of the strengths of the broad overlay map is that it is flexible and open. This flexibility allows privately initiated mixed-use efforts to come forward in locations not previously identified. Privately initiated efforts are often more likely to move beyond the planning stage because there is a known project developer and needed financial backing. This influence can be seen in the county's current planning efforts as only one of the two mixed-use projects currently under development review—Downtown Estero—is located within the mixed-use overlay.

Redevelopment/Infill Mixed-Use Locations

Redevelopment and infill mixed-use development areas are usually characterized by a high degree of existing build-out, which makes it difficult to assemble raw land on which to build. However, some districts within the county where there are many failed shopping plazas, professional buildings, and undeveloped infill sites present great opportunities in which to introduce a mixed-use development. While auto-oriented strip malls, large-lot developments, and vacant infill sites are fundamentally incompatible with mixed-use, these types of locations represent prime opportunities for conversion to mixed-use over the long term. This is because existing, underutilized suburban commercial centers and neighborhoods have large amounts of open land (parking lots, large open spaces, and stormwater areas) that may be better used as part of an overall mixed-use design. Additionally, they often are located along major roadways and can be easily linked to transit, surrounding neighborhoods, and nearby commercial areas. The key for the county will be to identify mixed-use locations that can easily transition to existing residential neighborhoods and developments so as to provide for the needs of the existing neighborhoods and businesses while protecting the existing character and viability of the community.

Greenfield/Rural Mixed-Use Locations

Development on greenfield sites in rural areas can be guided by mixed-use principles in order to minimize environmental impacts associated with new development. They may be used in Lee County's rural areas to help transfer existing rural densities into areas most suitable for development. While the county needs to be cautious when identifying greenfield locations so as to not further impact the remaining rural areas, small rural mixed-use centers (through the use of transfer of development rights), may help protect the county's

diminishing rural lands. Greenfield and rural locations that are appropriate for mixed-use include community centers where schools, post offices, parks, churches, convenience shops, personal services, and rural neighborhoods are located. The key is to develop and locate rural mixed-use areas in areas where they are most able to provide for the local needs of the community without allowing new development to encroach upon the rural agricultural areas and farming operations.

Mixed-Use Location Criteria

Regardless of whether the county targets specific mixed-use locations or promotes a variety of broadly defined areas, mixed-use developments need to be placed in appropriate locations. The county's many underutilized suburban strip centers and infill properties clearly offer the most promising locations, however carefully selected greenfield sites may help protect the county's vital rural lands. The following list expresses some of the criteria which have been identified by the EAR, LPA, and staff as to where mixed-use developments ought to be located:

- Adjacent to, centered within, or surrounded by active development areas, with a variety of diverse residential neighborhoods, employment centers, and public resources (i.e.: parks, government buildings, churches, greenways, and educational and sport facilities) nearby.
- In an area with a high level of connectivity to surrounding areas with strong accessibility via multiple transportation options:
 - Opportunities for pedestrian and bikeway access to residential, workplace, and park areas;
 - High level of accessibility to transit corridors and major roadways;
 - Be situated by intersections near major roadways;
 - Consider proximate to ports, airports, and major roadways; and
 - Promote housing near bus routes.
- Near a major transportation corridor with ample opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian access.
- Near economic development areas so that the mixed-use development can benefit from at least one strong economic anchor that provides jobs for residents, patrons for smaller shops and services, and destination for day users.
 - An economic anchor may include a large entity such as government office, health facility, college, transportation hub, or large employer or a group of organized smaller businesses such as medical offices, professional centers, or commercial retail center.
- Create synergies with surrounding residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, employment areas, government centers, transportation resources, public spaces and parks, greenways and blueways, and other community assets.

Location Recommendation

Recognizing the need to both clearly identify specific locations and allow for other development areas to be identified over time in appropriate locations, staff recommends that the current mixed-use overlay be maintained, with adjustments to help target pre-identified locations where public investment should be used to help foster the development of a mixed-use area. In order for the mixed-use overlay to achieve better success, breaking down the barriers described in this and other issue papers (i.e.: urban/suburban/rural/environmental resource area, mixed use land development standards, interchanges, transportation, and public infrastructure)

must also occur. This would include a revision to the conventional land use policies and regulations that restrict uses and promote separation where mixed-use center development meets the location criteria. These revisions would focus on the mixed use areas but must also specify which are applicable in areas outside of the overlay. Additionally, the Lee Plan should establish criteria to help identify where mixed-use centers ought to be located.

Form and Character Discussion

Mixed-use developments are designed to be vibrant, diverse neighborhoods with higher densities and a range of complementary uses such as commercial shops, restaurants, services, employment centers, governmental services and resources, and public gathering spaces and park areas. They are characterized by their integrated, accessible, and context-oriented form that provides a variety of uses, diverse housing types, employment opportunities, multiple transportation resources, and are anchored by a central public space and civic activity.

The American Institute of Architects asserts that the following form and character features are essential components of mixed-use communities:

- Parks, schools, civic buildings, and commercial establishments located within walking distance of homes;
- Residences with narrow front setbacks, front porches, and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking;
- Network of interconnected streets and paths suitable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles;
- Narrower streets with crosswalks, streetscaping, and other traffic-calming measures;
- In-scale development that fits the local context; and
- Buildings oriented to the street with parking behind.

At their October workshop, the LPA as well as the Sustainability Committee and Lee County staff echoed these ideas as they identified what mixed-use design practices should be addressed through the county's form and character policies. These ideas are the basis for the following list of form and character features:

- Human-scale active streetscapes should be established to promote walking, biking, public gatherings, and outside eating.
 - Issues regarding personal comfort should be addressed by providing ample shade, sitting and rest areas, accessible walking spaces, designated bicycle pathways, accessible public spaces, and welcoming green space areas.
- Step-down uses with the densest, most intense, and tallest buildings at the core of the development and less dense residential and public space uses at the fringe where they transition—not buffer—residential areas from surrounding commercial, professional, and other uses.
 - Height should be context-sensitive with smaller mixed-use developments at a more minimal height and community or regional centers a higher height consistent with the density and intensity of the area. Excessively tall buildings, like those along the river in downtown Ft Myers, should be avoided.
- Easily accessible commercial areas which attracts visitors as well as people who work and live in the area.
- Residential densities in the community need to be high enough to provide internal capture for retail and restaurant businesses after commuters have left.

- The highest density residential areas should be located within the commercial areas as well as immediately adjacent to the core areas.
- Moderate density residential single family lots (cottage homes, duplexes, granny flats, etc..) should be located adjacent to higher density residential.
- Lower density estate homes should be located adjacent to moderate density residential areas.
- Parks, civic, and other uses should be spread throughout the development to provide linkages from one area to another and help promote an active streetscape and community environment.
- Minimum density/intensity standards for transit-oriented mixed-use development should be 20-25 dwelling units per acre (du/a) with an additional 50,000 square feet of office and professional use. Residential density could be slightly lower (15 to 20 du/a) if additional office and professional space were incorporated at intensive densities (additional 25,000-35,000 sq. ft) to offset the loss of dwelling units.
- Connectivity within and between the development and other areas in the county should be at a high level to encourage internal capture, promote multi-modal transportation, and allow for short daily trips.
- Highly integrated transportation system designed to the human scale that features convenient transit service; short walkable blocks; grid system roadways; roundabouts; sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, and bikeways and crosswalks; traffic calming measures (narrow lanes, on-street parking, streetscaping, and speed humps); shared parking (structures, interior lot, and on-street parking); and transit hubs.
- Design needs to provide safe, walkable and bikeable conditions that protect the walker or bike rider from cars through streetscapes that include tree lined streets, on street parking, raised curbs, greenscape between sidewalks and the road, and designated bike lanes.
- The variety of types of housing units typical of TND gives people and households at all stages of life housing alternatives suited to their needs, thus providing stability to a community. The proper density of housing (typically very high) will also support the commercial and civic functions at the TND.
- An emphasis on transit in urban and mixed use areas to shift away from automobile scale of development. Revised Level of Service standards (including LOS for other modes) and traffic analysis requirements.
- Creation of a place as a destination rather than a place to drive past or through.
- Removal of barriers and/or provision of incentives.
- Mixed-use development requires local connectivity and access to all areas. Along with bicycling, walking, and vehicle access, mixed-use areas should provide additional access with choices including public transit. Buses provide transit options, but must be considered along with regional highway access.

The challenge for the county moving forward will be how to utilize such features in the development of future development projects in order to ensure that they achieve the desired mixed-use form and character. Questions regarding how to apply and where to use such features must be thought through in order that the county may determine how to establish policies related to mixed-use.

Form and Character Recommendations

These form and character principles express the mixed-use form of development which the county has been trying to establish for three decades. Throughout the New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update process, the county has led a discussion about how to ensure these principles get implemented through the development of true mixed-use places. Based on these discussions, staff has determined that the above form and character features ought to be utilized as the basis for design principles which should be applied to future mixed-use development projects.

Form and character design principles would expand upon the current Lee Plan Goal 4: Sustainable Development Design and the development standards established in the Lee County Land Development Regulations: Chapter 32 Compact Communities Code to create policies focused on the development of mixed-use places. Additionally, they would support additional new or updated mixed-use policies found throughout the Lee Plan, particularly the Visioning, Future Land Use, Transportation, and Community Facilities Elements.

Staff recommends that these mixed-use form and character design principles be developed according to the specific context of the mixed-use development—whether urban, suburban, or rural. Mixed-use development will follow these principles whether they are located in an area that has been targeted for mixed-use or whether the property chooses mixed-use. Staff also recommends that properties that follow such principles be provide mixed-use incentives such as bonus densities and/or intensities, transfer of development rights, and streamlined administrative review processes.

Particularly, staff recommends that the policies address the following considerations:

- Higher densities and intensities within the mixed-use areas so as to support the development's viability and ensure functional transit opportunities.*
- Open and accessible connectivity with surrounding development and neighborhoods must be provided through roadway, greenway, sidewalk, and park connections.*
- Neighborhoods that surround mixed-use ought to have minimum densities so as to provide a transition from the mixed-use development to surrounding residential areas.*
- Enhanced transit facilities (accessible and safe bus stops, shelters and stations, sidewalks, bike trails, etc...) will be provided to allow the center to be connected through a county-wide multi-modal transportation system.*
- Incentives for development which promote the implementation of mixed-use principles. Such incentives may include density bonuses, less intensive administrative processes, and other considerations as identified through the LPA discussions.*

Mixed-Use Character Types Discussion

Throughout the discussion about how to ensure future county land use policies and practices result in the types of mixed-use development that the county envisions for its future, one common concern was identified: how to ensure that the county's land use standards promote such developments. While all of the county's current land use categories allow for mixed-use, the standards have not resulted in the development of mixed-use projects. In

fact, as discussed in Urban-Suburban-Rural-Environmental Framework Issue Paper, the developments that resulted from current land uses rarely achieved the allowable density and intensity levels.

Addressing this concern has been identified as a critical component of achieving the county's vision for mixed-use and distinct urban-suburban-rural places. One way to accomplish this is to better define how the county expects mixed-use areas to be designed and also better express the purpose and intent of developments in these areas.

The following is a summary of three mixed-use character types that accomplish this goal in urban, suburban, and rural contexts:

- High density and intensity mixed-use developments: designed to be located in urban communities and function like a downtown area with a high level of connectivity both internally and regionally, variety of housing types, many diverse economic and governmental operations, and varied public spaces. These are the regional hubs, which unite the entire region, providing for their center for commerce, government, and culture. These types of mixed-use developments are located in close proximity to an interchange of predominant roadways with high levels of transit service. With a proportion of civic to economic to residential space at approximately 15:60:35. This type of center would be expected to feature buildings with greatest height, mass, and scale as height ranges would range under 12 stories depending on the area.*
- Moderate density and intensity mixed-use developments: designed to be located in urban or suburban communities and function like a community center with strong levels of connectivity within the community and moderate amounts to other parts of the region, variety of housing types, highly visible and viable economic anchor, and varied public spaces. These are community centers, which meet the needs of the local area and community, providing for a central community hub for jobs, commercial needs, and public resources. They are typically located at the intersections of arterials and collector roadways where they may be served by existing and planned future transit. With a proportion of civic to economic to residential space at approximately 20:50:30. This type of center would be expected to feature buildings with a moderate height, mass, and scale as height ranges would range under 7 stories depending on the area.*
- Low density and intensity mixed-use developments: designed to be located in rural or suburban communities and function like a neighborhood center with block level grid connectivity and good external connections, limited housing options, few economic resources, and central gathering places. These are the neighborhood main streets which meet the commercial and social needs of the local neighborhood. They are typically between 3 and 5 acres in size and located along the main corridor or near the center of the neighborhood. With a proportion of civic to economic to residential space at approximately 15:35:50. This type of center would be expected to feature buildings with a low height, mass, and scale so as to easily blend with the surrounding areas as height ranges would range under 4 stories depending on the area.*

Mixed-Use Character Types Recommendation

As the county seeks to better promote the development of mixed-use developments, these character types staff recommends become the basis for the establishment of three mixed-use land use categories. Staff has identified the value of utilizing these three different mixed-use character types to help define how the county expects mixed-use areas to be designed and express the purpose and intent of developments in these areas. Specifically, the establishment of mixed-use land use characters would address a number of challenges the county has had in achieving its mixed-use development goals including:

- *Identification of specific locations where mixed-use is required as part of the development project.*
- *Determination of what development policies and standards are to be applied to proposed mixed-use development projects. Mixed-use development policies and standards should address density and intensity provisions, development incentives, location criteria, civic to economic to residential space ratios, appropriate heights, infrastructure provision, and multi-modal transportation resources.*
- *Identification of how land uses are to be integrated within the development projects in order to ensure that such development result in a true mixed-use community not a multiple use development area.*
- *Establishment of an interconnected multi-modal transportation system that provides for the safety of all users and accessibility of all modes.*
- *Articulation of form and character principles that are to be applied in designated mixed-use areas. The principles should recognize the need to consider the relationships between the building and the street, the building and the block, the block and the surrounding area, and the overall development with the greater community and region.*

Staff recommends that the LPA and Sustainability Committee review the three mixed-use character types and provide direction about how the descriptions could be implemented through future policies and land development standards. Specifically, staff recommends that the committee discuss appropriate densities and intensities, land use standards, and design considerations. Such discussions will be the basis of the land use designations to be presented as part of the December 2011 Mixed-Use Land Use Designations Issue Paper.

Questions that should be considered as part this discussion, which will occur at LPA and Sustainability Committee meetings in November and December include:

- *Specify locations the are appropriate for:*
 - *High density and intensity mixed-use developments?*
 - *Moderate density and intensity mixed-use developments?*
 - *Low density and intensity mixed-use developments?*
- *Development standards that address density and intensity provisions, location criteria, civic to economic to residential space ratios, and appropriate heights:*
 - *High density and intensity mixed-use developments.*

- *Moderate density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
 - *Low density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
- *Context-based connectivity standards for:*
 - *High density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
 - *Moderate density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
 - *Low density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
- *Infrastructure provision standards for:*
 - *High density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
 - *Moderate density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
 - *Low density and intensity mixed-use developments.*
- *Types of mixed-use incentives that would effectively promote to development of mixed-use areas.*

Economic Market Assumptions White Paper

(Writer's Note: The information contained in this white paper is taken from a 2009 Association for Metropolitan Planning Organization's National Conference presentation. The presenter's were John Martin of the Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) and Daniel Rudge, now with LeeTran, but at the time volunteering as an advisor to SIR on transportation matters. The source for statements, unless otherwise noted in the paper, come from SIR's 13,000+ market research studies, John Martin's book Boomer Consumer, and Daniel Rudge's personal experience of 22 years as a planner. SIR has been in business for 45 years and their primary business is conducting market research for both public and private sector clients. All material contained in this report is presented with the permission of SIR who own proprietary rights to said information.)

Introduction

In the planning profession, the term "market research" has been primarily demographic analysis using such techniques as growth trends, demographic profiles, and even cohort-survival analysis. While this type of analysis was effective for a number of years (and even used by many market research firms until the early 2000's), it has become somewhat ineffectual for understanding markets because of several societal changes. Market researcher's point to the change in birth rates, societal tolerance changes, and an overall change in consumer values and decisions as reasons for a shift away from analysis placed on census-based reporting categories such as marital status, ethnicity, income, and age. Instead, market research has shifted its emphasis to conducting analysis based on each of the five existing generational populations to better predict attitudes, needs and wants of the consumer.

What is a Generation? And How Do I Understand Them?

In general, generations are defined by age cohorts (typically 15-20 years) that were affected by some major world or national event that had a lasting effect on their lives. They share a time and place in history. Typically, there are five or six generations alive at any one time. In Lee County these six generations are:

- The Greatest Generation (born between 1909-1928)
- The Silent Generation (born between 1929-1945)
- The Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1946-1964)
- Generation X (born between 1965-1981)
- Generation Y or Millennials (1982-2001)
- ??? meaning not enough available data yet to name them (2001- present)

While each generation has a different set of defining events, traits, and values that define who they are, they also go through four distinct life phases (sometimes referred to as seasons) that shape their individuality. The spring years are from birth to age 20 when the life focus is on play and learning, the summer years, age 21 to 40 when the life focus is on becoming somebody (work), the fall years, age 41-60, when the life focus is on the search for meaning, and the winter years, age 61 to death, when the life focus is on reconciliation and making sense of their life. This is best explained by the old Irish proverb:

Twenty years a child;
Twenty years of running wild;
Twenty years a mature man;
And then praying.

The understanding of each generation is a bit more difficult. While there are three factors that shape each generation, psychological, sociological and anthropological, it is easier to understand if generations

are thought of through a three-step process. First they share a set of defining events that begins to shape who they are. Second these defining events begin to shape their shared traits and help establish their generations value system. Finally, this leads to defining their archetype which provides insight into their behavior and how they will react in specific markets.

Market Analysis of Lee County Through a Generational Lens

For the purpose of this whitepaper, we will discuss each of the generations and how their archetype impacts Lee County land use markets for the next twenty years. Since we have reached a point in time where land use market decisions have already been made by the greatest generation (the first wave of Florida retirees) and the silent generation (the second and most recent wave of Florida retirees) we will focus on the baby boomers, Gen X and Gen Y and how they may impact land use needs in Lee County.

- Baby Boomer Generation (1946 – 1964): The list of defining events is long for baby boomers. These events include:
 - Birth of TV
 - Historical United States Prosperity
 - Cold War
 - Political-motivated Assassinations
 - Watergate
 - Rock 'n Roll
 - Growth of Suburbia
 - Women's Lib
 - Civil Rights Movement
 - Vietnam

As a result of these events, the traits and values of baby boomers have resulted in a generation that embodies certain characteristics. These include a need for personal gratification, a sense of entitlement, a strong work ethic, a high degree of optimism, a willingness to say no to the status quo, and a deep need for control. When we combine all of these traits and values we have a generation whose behavior and reaction to specific markets can be defined as driven, transformational and self-centered.

From a market perspective, it would appear that the continuation of suburban growth patterns would best serve this market. After all, this is the next wave of retirees. However, these behaviors have shown an interesting market trend that could have a long-lasting negative impact on Lee County. According to baby boomer responses in lifestyle surveys, over 88% intend to age in place. This comes from their self-centered behavior that they want to remain independent, stay close to their families, and continue to control and transform their existing community. Since a large percentage of Lee County's growth has focused on attracting retirees, and since 88% of boomers intend to age in place, it would appear that land use decisions to attract this market would result in housing and commercial developments that would serve only a very small fraction of the future market. Indeed, recent newspaper articles (see Appendix A) suggest that the current economic conditions and housing market will preclude many of the 12% of boomers Lee County might attract to reconsider their retirement plans and stay in place. As part of its market research activities for the public sector, SIR has found that if land use decisions are made based on baby boomers, then Lee County would need to focus on the needs of baby boomers who already reside in Lee County. This would include health-centric development (for example, a building in which clinics and doctor's offices are located on the first floor and senior living options on the remaining floors). The market shed for retiring boomers is considerably smaller than what was available from

retiring silent and greatest generation migrants. The needs and issues associated with providing public services of baby boomers already in Lee County will be covered in subsequent white papers particularly in transportation and human services.

- Generation X (1965 – 1981): The list of life defining events for Generation X include:
 - Watergate
 - Single parents
 - Latchkey kids
 - MTV
 - AIDs
 - Computers
 - Challenger Disaster
 - Glasnost
 - Fall of the Berlin Wall

As a result of these events, the traits and values of Generation X have resulted in a generation that embodies these characteristics. They are extremely technosavvy, they think more globally, they have a high degree of self reliance, they embrace diversity, and are very pragmatic. Thus their behavior reflects a need for independence (both from parents and society), a willingness to take risks, a deep concern for the environment, a skeptical outlook, where work-life balance is slanted towards life, and a life that is very task-driven.

From a land-use market perspective, Generation X buyers are looking for a mix of housing types with a focus on types that further their need for independence (for example no yard work) and land uses that allow them to enjoy their life (maintain or expand conservation lands). Given their extra free time (in comparison to boomers) they seek communities in which an active lifestyle can be easily achieved. However, this active life style is not golf-centric. They are more interested in bicycling, walking, and interacting with the natural environment. In fact they are very concerned about not protecting but expanding natural areas and environmentally-sensitive lands. As with Boomers, most Generation X'ers living in Lee County from now through 2035 are already here. Unless the County can attract major technology corporations to open offices here or unless there is a push to retain more Florida Gulf Coast University students, our land use strategies must take into account the people already living here. Two recent United States Census statistics bear out our changing demographics. For the first time in many years, the average age of a Lee County resident declined. We are slowly becoming younger! Second, the Census revealed that over 60% of Americans now live within 50 miles of where they were born. This is also an increase over the last census.

- Generation Y or Millenials (1982 – 2001): The list of life defining events for Generation Y include:
 - Internet Chat
 - School violence
 - Over-involved parenting
 - Multi-culturalism
 - World Trade Center attacks
 - The First Gulf War
 - Iraq
 - Technology ++
 - Afghanistan

As a result of these events, the traits and values of Generation Y have resulted in a generation that embodies these characteristics. They are viewed as having confidence plus, they have a strong civic duty, they strive for the highest personal achievement, they are more connected through social media and technology than any other generation, they are great at multi-tasking as if on steroids, and they are fearless. Thus their behavior reflects that they are tenacious, extremely optimistic, and very co-dependent (they must be connected 24/7).

From a land-use market perspective, Generation Y offers a very unique opportunity. Of all the generations, less than half of Generation Y (46%) say it would be hard to live without a car. Thus there market preference is for urban style living. This does not mean just in downtown (where housing prices tend to be more cost prohibitive), it also means activity centers where high densities and mixed-use development are the norm. Market research conducted by SIR call these locations urban villages. They are attractive for two main reasons. First, the likelihood they can stay “wired” 24/7 is perceived to be higher in these urban areas. Second, it allows them to live and work and play in one location with others that are co-dependent. The Generation Y market believes home, work, and play should all be done in one location. Just like Generation X, the anticipated market shed for Generation Y is within 50 miles of where they were born. Most are already here. Therefore future land use strategies must take into account the wants and needs of existing Generation Y Lee County residents. A recent article from the Miami Herald states: “Downtown Miami’s population has increased 9 percent in the past year, driven by an influx of young professionals, according to a study released Tuesday by the Downtown Development Association. There are about 72,000 people living in the downtown section of Miami, and about 57 percent of them are between the ages of 20 and 44, the study found. Young professionals have fueled downtown’s rental boom, renting many of the 23,000 condo units built during the city’s building boom. The DDA study, authored by Goodkin Consulting and Focus Real Estate Advisors, found that downtown’s residents have an average household income of \$43,992. That’s about 40 percent higher than average household income in the city of Miami.

A Lens on Generational Impacts on Lee County’s Land Use

Based on the above analysis several points become clear for detailed consideration. First, if Baby Boomers are indeed planning on aging in place, does the recent housing slump mean we may already have enough suburban type housing and land use in Lee County? Has too much already been permitted but not yet constructed? How do we as a County respond to Generation X’s need for a variety of housing choices while ensuring that the environment and environmentally-sensitive lands are preserved and protected? And lastly, with Generation Y’s preference for urban living, can we identify appropriate locations and transition existing land use characteristics to a more mixed-use setting.

Land Use Tools

If we are to allow market-driven development based on the markets defined here, the following land use tools should be considered by Lee County:

- Urban Growth Boundary
- Suburban Growth Boundary
- Mixed-Use Development in multiple locations
- Incentives for affordable housing especially in mixed-use centers
- Increased identification and expansion of environmentally sensitive lands
- Reduction in auto-centric land use categories
- Redefining residential land use categories

Forget that dream move to Florida: Vast majority of baby boomers will have to stay put in retirement

- **Generation of 77 million's finances shrunk by dire economy**
- **53% will have to delay retirement due to money troubles**

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

They're the generation that had never had it so good.

But now it's been revealed that as baby boomers could come back down to earth with a bump.

As the generation looks ahead to retirement they'd preferred a home that is affordable, accessible to medical care and close to family.

But an Associated Press-LifeGoesStrong.com poll finds that amid a shaky economy, few think it's likely they'll move in retirement.



Baby boomers: People considering retirement are increasingly concerned about their finances, a survey has found

Shelley Wernholm, a 47-year-old single mother of two who works for a health insurance company in Cleveland, said she wanted to retire and move to a new home by 60.

But her pension was eliminated five years ago, her personal investments tanked during the recession and her home of 21 years has lost more than half of its value.

'I was hoping I'd be moving to a beach somewhere, anywhere, preferably a warm one,' Wernholm said. 'But I'm not moving. I can't. It's hard to remain optimistic.'

The 77 million-strong generation born between 1946 and 1964 is increasingly worried about retirement and their finances amid the economic crisis of the past three years.

Just nine per cent say they are strongly convinced they'll be able to live comfortably in retirement.

Overall, about six in 10 baby boomers say their workplace retirement plans, personal investments or real estate lost value during the economic downturn. Of this group, 53 per cent say they'll have to delay retirement because their nest eggs shrank.

Financial experts say those losses, including home prices that have dropped by a third nationwide over the past four years, have left boomers anxious about moving and selling their homes.

'There's a mistrust of the real estate market that we didn't have before,' said Barbara Corcoran, a New York-based real estate consultant. 'There's a concern about whether people will get money out of their house. They envision the home as a problem, not an asset, and this unshakable belief in homes as a tool for retirement has been shaken to the core.'



Concern: People on the brink of retirement have been left anxious about moving and selling their homes

Fifty-two per cent of boomers say they are unlikely to move someplace new in retirement, unchanged from March. And four in 10 say they are very likely to stay in their current home throughout all of their retirement.

Older baby boomers are more apt to say they're already settled in for their golden years; 48 per cent say it's extremely or very likely they'll stay in the home they live in now throughout their retirement, compared with 35 percent among younger boomers. The same is true of those who've lived in their current home for 20 or more years.

Midwestern and rural baby boomers also are more inclined to stay put.

Not surprisingly, higher-earning boomers who make more than \$100,000 a year are more likely to buy a new home during retirement.

Why buy a new home? About 4 in 10 of those who say it's likely they'll buy a new home in retirement would prefer a smaller one. Other important considerations include being close to medical offices or hospitals (39 per cent); a different, and perhaps warmer, climate (30 per cent); a more affordable home (25 per cent); and being closer to family (15 per cent).

Just 8 per cent of those surveyed are looking for a larger home and only 10 percent are searching for a city with more services.

c. You will move away from where you live now to somewhere new		Total	18-29	30-46	47-65	66+
Extremely likely						
	March	8	4	9	13	2
	October	10	6	15	11	6
Very likely						
	March	14	17	15	12	11
	October	14	21	11	12	11
Somewhat likely						
	March	30	35	39	24	22
	October	30	43	35	24	17
Not too likely						
	March	25	24	22	25	30
	October	23	22	16	28	26
Not likely at all						
	March	23	19	15	25	35
	October	22	6	21	24	41
Refused						
	March	0	0	0	1	0
	October	2	2	2	2	0

John Fortune, a 60-year-old small business owner in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, outside Newark, said he'd ideally like to move in his retirement years. But he's unsure about the future and whether he'll have any money left over after putting three kids through college.

'I don't expect to fully retire,' said Fortune, who runs a business that sharpens knives, tools and other cutlery. 'It just depends on what happens to the economy. I'd like to find someplace that is warmer and doesn't have the high taxes but we'll just have to see.'

Mothers were far more likely than fathers to say that living near their children was an important consideration in planning retirement housing.

When those kids have left the nest, baby boomer parents are most likely to have turned their children's rooms into a new guest bedroom, entertainment room or home office. Three out of 4 say they would prefer visiting friends and family stay with them instead of getting a hotel room.

Q26. Overall, do you think that loss will cause you to retire later than you expected or not?
[ASK IF NOT RETIRED AND LOST MONEY ON INVESTMENTS]

		Total	18-29*	30-46*	47-65	66+*
Will retire later than expected	March	37	--	--	42	--
	October	48	--	--	53	--
Will retire the same age as originally planned	March	62	--	--	58	--
	October	52	--	--	47	--
Refused	March	1	--	--	0	--
	October	0	--	--	0	--

**Sample size too small to report.*

[Enlarge](#)

Answers: This survey question asked about finances. Here are the answers

Boomers are more deeply attuned to their retirement years than other age groups, and many say they'll keep working during retirement. A total of 73 percent of those polled said they would keep working, compared with 67 percent in March, a bigger percentage than any other generation.

Sherry Wise, a 53-year-old agricultural economist in Lorton, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, said she is worried she will have to work well into her 60s and beyond in order to continue paying her mortgage, keep up an investment property in New Mexico and look after her two daughters.

'The one thing I know is that you can't count on anything anymore. This economy has gotten so screwed up,' Wise said. 'We're just going to try to earn as much money as possible.'

The AP-LifeGoesStrong.com poll was conducted October between 5 to 12 by Knowledge Networks of Palo Alto, California. The poll involved online interviews with 1,095 people born between 1946 and 1964, as well as companion interviews with an additional 315 adults of other age groups. The margin of sampling error for baby boomers was plus or minus 3.6 percentage points.

Knowledge Networks used traditional telephone and mail sampling methods to randomly recruit respondents. People selected who had no Internet access were given it for free.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2053796/Forget-dream-Florida-Vast-majority-baby-boomers-stay-retirement.html#ixzz1eYeqwVwe>

If baby boomers stay in suburbia, analysts predict cultural shift

By [Carol Morello](#), Published: June 28

The nation's suburbs are home to a rapidly growing number of older people who are changing the image and priorities of a suburbia formed around the needs of young families with children, an analysis of census data shows.

Although the entire United States is graying, the 2010 Census showed how much faster the suburbs are growing older when compared with the cities. Thanks largely to the baby-boom generation, four in 10 suburban residents are 45 or older, up from 34 percent just a decade ago.

Senior populations

Percentage change of metro area population 65 and older, 2000 to 2010



Source: Brookings Institution
The Washington Post

Thirty-five percent of city residents are in that age group, an increase from 31 percent in the last census.

During the past decade, the ranks of people who are middle-aged and older grew 18 times as fast as the population younger than 45, according to [Brookings Institution demographer William Frey](#), who analyzed the 2010 Census data on age for his report, “The Uneven Aging and ‘Younging’ of America.” For the first time, they represent a majority of the nation’s voting-age population.

The political ramifications could be huge as older voters compete for resources with younger generations.

“When people think of suburban voters, it’s going to be different than it was years ago,” Frey said. “They used to be people worried about schools and kids. Now they’re more concerned about their own well-being.”

The nation’s baby boomers — 76 million people born between 1946 and 1964 — were the first generation to grow up in suburbia, and the suburbs is where many chose to rear their own children. Now, as the oldest boomers turn 65, demographers and local planners predict that most of them will not move to retirement areas such as Florida and Arizona. They will stay put.

“If you ask younger boomers, who are 45-ish, a lot say they expect to move and retire elsewhere,” said John Kenney, chief of aging and disability services with the Montgomery County health department. “But as people get to 65 and 70, whether because of choice or default, they end up staying. We are planning on people being here.”

Local governments are starting to grapple with the implications.

As part of its 50 Plus Action Plan, Fairfax County has converted its pedestrian traffic signals to countdowns so people can gauge whether they have enough time to cross.

The county has held forums on kitchen and bath remodeling designs that make the areas accessible for wheelchair users. It collaborated with George Mason University in a course on coping during retirement. And a police unit has been formed to focus on financial fraud committed against the elderly.

About 1.5 million people, or 27 percent of the Washington area, are part of the baby-boom generation. The largest concentrations are in Fairfax, with about 310,000 boomers; Montgomery, with 275,000; and Prince George’s County, with 225,000.

“Clearly, the age wave is coming,” said Pat Herrity (R-Springfield), a county supervisor who heads the 50-plus committee.

In Montgomery, where 11 residents turn 65 every day, the county two years ago held a summit on the needs of its elderly residents. Since then, it has developed a Web site listing all of the services available to seniors. It has helped several neighborhood groups establish “villages” in

which younger residents volunteer to help drive their elderly neighbors to appointments. And to meet seniors' growing need for income after the stock market faltered, it has staged job fairs.

"Retirement used to be the golden years," said Kenney. "No more."

According to the AARP, nine in 10 older Americans want to stay in their homes as they age, a figure the association predicts that the boomers will match. Not all communities are prepared.

"AARP research shows that most communities are behind in planning for their aging populations, but those that are adapting have come up with common-sense solutions to improve home design and make transportation easier," said Nancy LeaMond, the AARP vice president, in a written statement.

Although Florida and Arizona remain retirement magnets, 17 of the 25 states with the highest concentrations of senior citizens are cold-weather states.

In the Washington region, the proportion of residents 45 and older rose almost five percentage points over the decade, from 32 to 37 percent. One in 10 residents is 65 or older.

In Maryland and Virginia, about four in 10 residents are 45 or older, up from about 34 percent in 2000. [The District](#), in contrast, gained just a fraction of one percentage point of over-45 residents during the decade, going from barely 34 percent to less than 35 percent. It also was one of the few places in the country that saw a drop in the percentage of people who are 65 or older.

The census data mined by Frey for his report show how rapidly the nation is aging overall. The median age has increased in every state and almost every county, up from 32.6 in 1990 to 37.2 today.

Older Americans now represent 53 percent of voting-age adults.

"The political clout of older Americans will be even more magnified if the traditional higher turnout of this group continues, and as the competition for resources between the young and the old becomes more intense," Frey writes.

More on this Story

- [Baby boomers invade suburbia](#)
- [City dwellers may face extra stress](#)
- [Related coverage: Real estate](#)

Retiring Baby Boomers give Florida a cold shoulder



By Michael Connor / Reuters – Fri, Oct 7, 2011

MIAMI (Reuters) - [Florida](#) just isn't what it used to be for retirees.

Meet Patti Keagy, an [American Baby Boomer](#), who is looking at other possible retirement destinations.

"My mother says her generation and other people that she knew made a mistake. They sold everything and they moved down to Florida," said [Keagy](#), a resident of a Boston suburb.

"And then they realized, 'We're down here, we're on our own, we're by ourselves, and it's boring or lonely.' And they didn't want to be away from family," added Keagy, who is 60.

Her choices -- and the choices of others -- matter for Florida, Arizona, the Carolinas and other states that long for retired migrants -- and their steady incomes. Their spending on housing, healthcare and entertainment has created jobs and given rise to pockets of Sun Belt affluence.

The demographics -- well, they are a-changing, according to the Empire Center for [New York State Policy](#), an Albany, New York-based think tank. It pointed out that for the first time in 2009, more people left New York state for [North Carolina](#) than for Florida.

"A lot of states view that segment favorably and want to attract retirees," said Stan Smith, a specialist in population studies at the University of Florida. "There're lots of places in North Carolina, Louisiana and Georgia with golf communities. Those places are trying to attract retirees."

The stakes are high for state economies.

Florida, whose economy is reliant on newcomers of all ages, was stung early and severely by the recession. The unemployment rate in Florida peaked at 12 percent last year and now stands at 10.7 percent, compared with the national jobless rate of 9.1 percent.

The slowdown in retiree migration, as well as an overall drop in population growth, suggests Florida may take longer than other states in getting its economic footing back.

Between 2000 and 2009, New Yorkers migrating to the Sunshine State delivered \$11 billion of new net income to Florida, according to an analysis of federal tax filings by the Empire Center for New York State Policy.

During 2009, 19,909 people with average adjusted gross incomes of \$33,351 moved from Florida to New York, but the 23,654 New Yorkers migrating to Florida had average incomes of \$58,622, according to the Albany think tank's study.

BOOMER FINANCES NOT ALL SUNNY

The retirement outlook is now clouded, at best, for many of the 79 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964. With few holding traditional employer pensions, Baby Boomers are much more reliant than their parents on savings and home values that shrank by \$7.8 trillion in the Great Recession.

The oldest Boomers lost an estimated \$1 trillion in savings between the 2007 market peak and the lows of 2009, according to a Boston College study of 401(k) accounts.

The study by Alicia Munnell, director of the college's Center for Retirement Research, and researcher Jean-Pierre Aubry, said much of the losses of Boomers born in the late 1940s and early 1950s were recovered in 2010.

But younger Boomers and workers born in 1965 or later -- who missed the U.S. stock market run-ups of the 1980s and 1990s -- will need decades of very fat investment returns or will have to save much more aggressively than older Boomers.

LOWER HOME VALUES SHRINK HORIZONS

Wealth advisers typically tell Boomers to work longer, save more and reduce planned spending to offset the shrunken savings that many had hoped would carry them to Florida.

"They aren't going anywhere," former Illinois school administrator Maura West, 65, said of friends near retirement. "I think the economy has a lot to do with it. There is a tremendous amount of fear of uprooting and maybe not getting the value out of your home that you thought you would have gotten. I think that has impacted people's mobility."

West said contemporaries in the Chicago suburbs vaguely discuss possible retirement in Arizona or California. But she will remain in Illinois's Will County. She may take holidays in Europe and a side trip or two to Florida.

Florida, which was for at least six decades a champion in luring retirees, is now only a second choice for migrating New Yorkers, according to the Empire Center study.

"Florida accounted for 35 percent of New York's net migration loss in 2005, but by 2009, its share had dropped to 11 percent," the Empire Center said. "That year, for the first time on record, New York lost more residents to North Carolina than to Florida."

The tax data reflect the slowdown, with Florida's added income flows from migrating New Yorkers peaking in 2005 and declining in the years afterward. The state does not collect a personal income tax.

Next week, Florida finance officials and policy-makers are expected to report that state revenues in the next fiscal year will be substantially more than \$1 billion below forecast.

"The slowdown in Florida is the result of the national recession," UF's Smith told Reuters.
"Florida, more than other states, overbuilt. It slowed down a great deal over the last three or four years, particularly from 2008 to 2010. Those were some the worst growth years since the 1940s."

(Reporting by Michael Connor; Additional reporting by Barbara Liston.)

New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update

Local Planning Agency Position Paper

Interchange Developments

December 7, 2011

Introduction

The 2011 Lee Plan Objective 1.3 identifies Interstate Highway Interchange Areas as “specialized land use categories for land adjacent to the interchanges of Interstate 75” and list the area characteristics of interchanges along Interstate 75 (I-75). This paper summarizes the existing area characteristics as well as the future land use designations and how they relate to the urban, suburban, rural and environmental resource area framework identified in previous position papers.

Background

Lee County is bisected by I-75, a north-south limited access roadway through the United States that connects from Miami to Michigan. The length of I-75 in Lee County is approximately 34.3 miles. The freeway carries over 2.4 million vehicle miles traveled per day. I-75 is the primary means of regional travel by motor vehicle in and through Lee County. The delivery and distribution of goods to and from Lee County occur primarily from I-75.

In Lee County, I-75 was constructed in the early 1980’s. The only permitted access to I-75 is at nine grade-separated highway interchange locations. When installed, the interchanges had no considerations for other modes of travel besides motor vehicles. There is one planned additional interchange, three existing flyovers and one planned flyover. Based on traffic count data, I-75 is utilized primarily for trips within Lee County (as opposed to interstate travel) and trips to and from Collier County.

Challenges

I-75 acts as a barrier, it restricts east-west vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel. There are a total of twelve existing and two planned road crossings. The interchange areas act as a gateway or funnel of east-west travel in Lee County. The interchange and flyover locations are identified in Appendix Table 1. The roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities that pass through each interchange are identified in the Appendix Table 2. The existing and approved uses in interchange areas in unincorporated Lee County are shown in Appendix Table 3. A comparison of the five interchange and other land use categories in interchange areas is included in the Current Lee Plan Framework Position Paper and further expounded in Appendix Table 4. The only distinctions in the interchange categories appear to be a variation of commercial use restrictions and prohibition of industrial development in one category. The area of the future Del Prado Boulevard interchange is

currently designated as Open Lands and Conservation Lands and requires an Interchange Justification Report.

Lee Plan Objective 1.3 also identifies access control standards in interstate interchange areas. The Objective further specifies the allowable movements and locations of access points Corkscrew Road, Luckett Road, Bonita Beach Road, and Alico Road. These access control standards are similar to controlled access roadway designations enacted by Board of County Commissioners Resolution for Daniels Parkway among other roadways.

Opportunities

There are opportunities to streamline categories, provide better protection for existing neighborhoods, encourage economic diversity and increase multimodal options in existing interchange areas.

The five interchange land use categories are very similar. This represents an opportunity to reduce the number of land use categories. As noted above, the interchange areas also serve as gateways in Lee County. There is a great potential for promotion of uses that rely on proximity to the interstate for shipment and distribution of goods, such as proximity to the Caloosahatchee River, existing CSX railway line (operated by Seminole Gulf Railway) or the Southwest Florida International Airport.

Five interchanges have existing transit routes through the interchange, two interchanges have routes that go through the adjacent major intersection. The Transit Development Plan Needs section indicates that all interchanges will have transit routes through them. There are no designated park and ride facilities in the vicinity of the interchanges except for an unused originally constructed park and ride at the southwest corner of SR 82 and Ortiz Avenue. Another potential opportunity that may be realized beyond the horizon of the current plan is passenger rail within the I-75 right-of-way. A 30 foot corridor has been identified in the median. Passenger rail is not specifically identified in current I-75 plans, however, the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization will be conducting a Rail Feasibility Study. The study will evaluate the long term feasibility of public multi-modal transportation options. One task is called “Explore Potential Options For Passenger Service” which includes a comparison between the I-75 multi-modal envelope and the existing CSX rail corridor operated by Seminole Gulf Railway. There is an opportunity to identify future transit stations and transit oriented design (TOD) potential along the parallel facilities to Interstate 75 and perhaps in the vicinity of the interchanges. Transit stations and TOD along the parallel facilities would serve to enhance existing transit routes.

Constraints

There are a number of constraints in the existing interchange areas. The footprint of the majority of property in the interchange areas is largely built out. The remaining undeveloped property either has commercial or industrial zoning, and some of the undeveloped property is platted. Many of the above opportunities appear to be dependent on redevelopment. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) review requirements and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) prohibit access within

the limited access right-of-way. Restriction on access within interchanges (F.A.C. Rule 14-96) acts as an additional constraint to vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access. The Interchange Justification Report for a future Del Prado extension interchange also requires FHWA and FDOT review and approval.

Case Studies

Several available case studies were considered. A 2000 study by The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), focused on promotion of highway-oriented land uses and vehicular movement. A circa 2008 study by Reconnecting America identified the benefits of transit oriented development. A 2011 study by the Transportation Research Board evaluated opportunities for transit capacity and performance to create a multi-modal corridor.

The CUTR report reviewed five interchange case studies in Florida. It suggested that economic development opportunities include residential, office, commercial, industrial and tourist oriented development. The recurring recommendations were to provide access roads where possible. Otherwise limit or combine driveways within ½ mile of the interchange using FDOT access management standards and require that individual developments of similar land use provide interconnection. Coordinate and use planned developments as a tool for a higher level of review where possible.

The Reconnecting America and the Center for Transit Oriented Development report, “Why Transit Oriented Development and Why Now?” included a case study for the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor just outside of Washington D.C. in Arlington Virginia. The focus of the case study was the implementation of Transit Oriented Development. The Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor in the study is along the Washington Metrorail Orange line, is bounded by Interstate 66 and a local expressway with interchanges. The case study indicates that “assessed land values increased 81 percent in 10 years; 8 percent of county land generates 33% of county revenues – allowing Arlington to have the lowest property tax in Northern Virginia; 50 percent of residents take transit to work; 73 percent walk to stations; development has generated only modest increases in traffic; Surrounding single-family neighborhoods have been preserved.”

The Transportation Cooperative Research Program report, “Reinventing the Urban Interstate: A New Paradigm For Multimodal Corridors”, included a number of case studies in large metropolitan areas. The selected areas had a freeway and a high-capacity transit facility within ½ mile of the freeway. The study evaluated transit-oriented multi-modal corridors, park and ride facilities, and a transit optimized freeway constrained multimodal corridor. The report identified principles and techniques for market segmentation between the freeway and transit and recommended methods to achieve market segmentation. One recommendation was that freeway interchange areas should have lower density separated uses while transit station areas should have high-density, mixed-use, pedestrian –oriented land uses and urban design characteristics.

Strategies

Strategies to be considered include merging categories, broadening commercial and industrial uses, introducing design standards, introducing multi-modal standards and removing specific access regulations from the Lee Plan.

The merging of categories should consider combinations of similar interchange categories or looking at intermodal opportunities.

To broaden uses in the interchange areas, one strategy would address changing circumstances and consolidate land use category designations within ½ mile of the interchange. Commercial uses could be removed from categories with a distinction of which interchanges could have industrial uses. The introduction of design standards strategies could include requiring internal frontage/access roads for parcel circulation with connectivity to the street pattern.

Multi-modal standards could include provision of transit facilities such as sharing surface parking for a park and ride facility along existing/future transit routes, special road design standards through interchanges and strategies to address conflicting traffic movements.

A strategy to remove specific access regulations from the Lee Plan should continue to require a higher level of traffic analysis and Board consideration of every request. An additional strategy would be to evaluate existing connections and traffic control to county maintained roads connecting to an interchange for opportunities for developing access roads and combining or limiting driveways.

Re-evaluation of the land uses in the vicinity of the Del Prado Boulevard interchange would more appropriately be performed after or coincident with an Interchange Justification Report.

Recommendations

Consolidate interchange categories to two interchange land use categories, one with commercial and industrial uses (at existing interchanges with industrial or intermodal opportunities) and one with only commercial uses.

Shift specific access point location criteria to a controlled access resolution or similar mechanism requiring additional traffic analysis and BOCC review/approval. Require FDOT review/approval for any new or modified access point within ½ mile of the interchange.

Develop design standards specific to county maintained roadways and connections to the roadways within one mile of interstate interchanges.

Table 1

Interchange and flyover (existing and planned) land use category (within a ½ mile) summary

Interstate 75 interchange location	Type	Road maintaining agency	jurisdiction
Bonita Beach Road	interchange	Lee County	City of Bonita Springs
Corkscrew Road	interchange	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County
Alico Road	interchange	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County
Airport Connector	Collector distributor road/flyover	Florida DOT	Unincorporated Lee County
Daniels Parkway	interchange	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County
Colonial Boulevard	interchange	Florida DOT	City of Fort Myers
Hanson Street extension	flyover	Fort Myers	City of Fort Myers
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard	interchange	Florida DOT	City of Fort Myers
Luckett Road	interchange	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County
Tice Street	flyover	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County
Palm Beach Boulevard (SR 80)	interchange	Florida DOT	Unincorporated Lee County
Bayshore Road (SR 78)	interchange	Florida DOT	Unincorporated Lee County
Slater Road	flyover	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County
Del Prado Boulevard	None (planned interchange)	Lee County	Unincorporated Lee County

Table 2

Interchange (existing and planned) multimodal facilities

Interstate 75 interchange location	Number of motor vehicle lanes	Lee Transit Route	Bicycle facility	Pedestrian/Greenways facility
Bonita Beach Road	4 (existing) 6 (Cost Feasible plan)	150	Multiuse paths	Multiuse path, Future connector trail
Corkscrew Road	4 (existing) 6 (Needs plan)	60	None (on University loop)	Sidewalk (north side), future connector trail
Alico Road	6	60 (existing within ½ mile, Needs plan extends through)	Paved shoulders (on University loop)	Sidewalks
Daniels Parkway	6 (Needs plan interchange improvements)	50	Paved shoulder, multiuse path (north side) (on Lee Tour De Parks loop)	multiuse path (existing north side), Captiva-Hendry-Collier Trail
Colonial Boulevard	6 (Needs plan interchange improvements)	110 (Needs Plan adds local services)	multiuse paths (on Lee Tour De Parks loop)	multiuse paths, Charlotte-Lee-Hendry Trail
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard	6 (Needs plan interchange improvements)	None (existing) Premium service (Needs plan)	Bicycle lanes	Sidewalks (under construction)
Luckett Road	4 (Needs plan interchange improvements)	15 (existing within ½ mile)	None (existing) bicycle lanes (planned)	Sidewalks (planned)
Palm Beach Boulevard (SR 80)	6	100	Shared use paths (planned)	Sidewalks
Bayshore Road (SR 78)	4 (Needs plan interchange improvements)	None (existing) Charlotte Connector on I-75 (Needs plan)	Paved shoulders	Sidewalks (on needs plan) Pine Island-Hendry Trail
Del Prado Boulevard	None (Needs plan new interchange)	None (existing)	TBD	TBD

Table 3

Interchange (existing and planned) land uses (unincorporated county interchanges)

Interstate 75 interchange location	Draft Urban-Suburban-Rural-Environmental Resource Area Map	Future Land Use Category(ies)	Existing development	Approved unbuilt development
Corkscrew Road	Urban surrounded by Suburban	General Interchange/Suburban (east side), Urban Community (west side)	retail, hotel, office, residential	Commercial
Alico Road	Urban (E side, NW quadrant), Suburban (SW quadrant)	University Village Interchange (southeast quadrant), University Community (east of SE quad), Industrial Commercial Interchange (north side), Urban Community (southwest quadrant)	retail, hotel, office, industrial	Commercial & industrial
Daniels Parkway	Urban with Suburban (upper NW quadrant)	General Interchange, Public Facilities (NE quadrant), Outlying Suburban (west end)	Industrial, public facility, retail, hotel, office & residential	Commercial & industrial
Luckett Road	Urban	City Comprehensive Plan (SE quadrant), Industrial Interchange (NE quadrant), Industrial/Intensive/Suburban (NW quadrant), Intensive/Suburban (SW quadrant)	Industrial, hotel, office & residential	Commercial & industrial
Palm Beach Boulevard (SR 80)	Urban (S side) Suburban (N side)	General Commercial Interchange (south side), Urban Community (NE quadrant), suburban (NW quadrant)	retail, hotel, office, residential	Office & residential
Bayshore Road (SR 78)	Urban	General Interchange, Sub-Outlying Suburban (east), Suburban (west)	retail	retail, hotel, industrial, residential
Del Prado Boulevard	Rural	Open Lands/Conservation Lands	residential	residential

Table 4

Interchange (existing only) land use category comparison

Category	Location	Commercial	Office	Industrial	Residential
Industrial Interchange	Luckett Rd. (NE quadrant)	Restaurants, Hotels	Yes	Light	No
General Interchange	Corkscrew (E side), Daniels Pkwy, and Bayshore Rd	service stations, hotel, motel, restaurants, and gift shops	Yes	Light	No?
General Commercial Interchange	Palm Beach Blvd (south side)	Retail	Yes	No?	No
Industrial Commercial Interchange	Alico Rd (N side)	Mixed (20 percent or less of floor area)	Yes	Light, (50 percent or more of floor area)	No
University Village Interchange	Alico Rd (SE quadrant)	Mixed (20 percent or less of floor area) 10,000 total SF/ac of non-residential	Yes 10,000 total SF/ac of non-residential	Light, (50 percent or more of floor area) 10,000 total SF/ac of non-residential	No
Intensive	Luckett (E side)	Yes	Yes	Limited light	7-14 (max 22) DU/Ac
Urban Community	Alico (SW side), Corkscrew (W side), Palm Beach Blvd (NE)	Yes	Yes	Limited light	1-6 (max 10) DU/Ac
Suburban	Corkscrew (far E side), Luckett (W side), Palm Beach Blvd (W), Bayshore (W of W side)	Yes (neighborhood centers)	Yes	No	1-6 (max 10) DU/Ac?
Outlying Suburban	Daniels Pkwy (W of W side)	Yes (neighborhood centers)	Yes	No	1-3 DU/Ac
Sub-Outlying Suburban	Bayshore (E of E side)	Yes (neighborhood centers)	Yes	No	1-2 DU/Ac
Industrial	Luckett (NW quadrant)	Yes, limited	Yes	Yes	No
Public Facilities	Daniels Pkwy (NE quadrant)	No	No	No	No
University Community	Alico (E of SE quadrant)	Yes, limited to 10,000 SF/AC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Incorporated area	Bonita Beach Rd, Colonial Blvd, Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update
Local Planning Agency Position Paper
Lee County Mixed-Use
November 29, 2011

Background

Central to the vision adopted through the 2011 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) is the development of mixed-use centers. According to the report, mixed-use centers are:

“Places that feature a complementary mix of uses, promote livability and walkability, and include a variety of residential housing opportunities. ... These places (are) focused within compact centers of activity linked by a multi-modal transportation system that provides a more varied set of travel choices.”

As places that bring people, neighborhoods, commercial centers, public facilities, parks, and multi-modal transportation systems together, mixed-use centers are essential to Lee County’s future. Furthermore, the County cannot afford to continue to provide the basic infrastructure necessary to support future growth and development in the current suburban patterns.

While the EAR highlighted mixed-use centers as a central component of the county’s future vision, enabling and promoting development of mixed-use centers has been a focus of Lee County’s planning and development effort for nearly three decades. Here is a summary of the county’s thirty-year effort to foster mixed-use developments:

- 1984 – The Lee Plan adopts Future Land Use Categories that allow for a mixture of residential uses along with commercial, office, and (in some categories) light industrial.
- 1991 – Lee Plan policies were adopted to promote mixed-use developments through clustering uses, reducing vehicular trips, and minimizing sprawl. The policies called for the development of mixed-use zoning classifications such as planned villages.
- 1994 –The Mixed-Use Planned Development Zoning Classification (MPD) is adopted into the Lee County Land Development Code to help, *“capture within the development a substantial percentage of the vehicular trips that are projected to be generated.”* Amendments to the MPD have been adopted to further encourage mixed-use zoning.
- 2004 – The 2004 EAR identified the need to better promote the development of mixed-use centers including the establishment of mixed-use future land use overlay areas, form-based code standards, and development incentives and disincentives.
- 2007 – Lee Plan Goal 4: Sustainable Development Design is adopted to incorporate the concepts and principles of New Urbanism, Traditional Neighborhood Design, and Transit Oriented Development. Additional amendments to the Future Land Use Map Series are adopted to include an overlay depicting targeted mixed-use development areas.

- 2010 – The Compact Communities Code is adopted into the Lee County Land Development Code to provide form-based regulations intended to create compact, walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use areas.
- 2011 – The New Horizon 2035: 2011 EAR identifies mixed-use centers as one of the primary components of the county’s updated land use framework and highlights how the Lee Plan can be amended to better foster mixed-use through the county’s future development efforts—particularly those in redeveloping commercial centers and corridors.
- 2010-2011 – Community Planning Program initiates the planning of up to six mixed-use centers within three local community planning areas (North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, and Palm Beach Boulevard) utilizing the Compact Communities Code.

Despite the county’s efforts to support the development of mixed-use areas, the predominant development pattern in Lee County is comprised of single-use, separated residential, commercial, professional, industrial, and public space and parks areas that are each best accessed by personal vehicles. In order to determine why the county’s efforts to foster mixed-use have not achieved the intended goals, Lee County has been engaged in a series of staff charrettes, Local Planning Agency (LPA) policy workshops, and Community Sustainability Advisory Committee (Sustainability Committee) policy meetings. The goal of these discussions is to better understand why the county’s past efforts have not achieved the desired development practices and identify specific policies and practices that will enable the county to achieve its goal of developing mixed-use centers.

Challenges to Achieving Mixed-Use

So What’s the Problem?

If the County has been supporting and promoting mixed use developments in their planning efforts for 30 years, why hasn’t the County seen more progress in the creation of mixed use places? Well first, Lee County is a County and not a City. In general, county planning practices, infrastructure planning and construction practices, and land development regulations don’t work together to create “town-like” communities, and that’s what mixed use development is. In Lee County some of the practical limitations to mixed use developments include:

1. The market dynamics in Lee County have consistently favored suburban residential and suburban commercial development. For example, many residential subdivisions are developed at densities LESS THAN the maximum density permitted by the adopted future land use designation.
2. Urban infrastructure systems are not in place to serve as a foundation for urban infill and redevelopment (as opposed to cities that do have that baseline infrastructure). The benefits of urbanization are shared by the community as a whole with regard to the financial and functional ability to provide regional scale infrastructure (such as roads, water and sewer, etc), however, the higher on-site cost to create the more detailed internal infrastructure is currently borne by the developer alone.
3. The County’s Utility Manual still includes technical specifications that not only foster suburban standards for utilities, including infrastructure placement, but may even restrict urban placement options.
4. Lee Plan and the County’s Land Development Regulations do not have urban standards for parks, transportation, parking, stormwater, or utilities.

5. Recent efforts, including the Compact Communities Code, do not completely resolve site design issues, currently include cross sections that do not provide for utilities, and does not work well for smaller infill parcels and redevelopment areas.

Suburban-based Policies & Regulations – A Closer Look

The LPA summed up the problem when they explained that, “we are trying to get to urban with suburban land uses and zoning.” Specifically, the county’s compatibility, density standards, buffering, open space requirements, separation of use restrictions, transportation and infrastructure level of service (LOS) standards, site location standards, and other comprehensive plan policies and LDC development requirements have been discussed as reasons the county has a predominantly suburban land use pattern.

1. **The application of Conventional Zoning Standards in Lee County has resulted in the county’s suburban development pattern.** Despite the fact that the county desired mixed-use developments and had policies and regulations that allowed for such developments, the conventional land use and zoning practices predominantly found within Chapter 10: Development Standards and Chapter 34: Zoning of the Lee County Land Development Code have contributed to the county’s suburban development pattern.
2. **Conventional zoning standards focus on separation of uses and limitations of density/intensity.** In an effort to ensure compatibility between uses and adjacent neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public resources Lee County has adopted regulations that focus on density, intensity, height, building envelope, and use restrictions through the establishment of setbacks, sideyard buffers, height limits, minimum lot sizes, and lot coverage limits. Lee County’s regulations were designed to implement a more suburban form of development, where a development has a mixture of uses located adjacent to other uses but rarely has a true integrated and interconnected mix of uses.
3. **Many tools used by conventional suburban regulations to promote mixed-use development were actually designed to separate uses.** Many local governments use development policies and practices such as clustering land uses, planned development zoning classifications, and design standards tools to promote mixed-use development. In reality, such tools can actually result in the separation of uses. As explained in an article by the Michigan Association of Planning (also known as the Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association):

Planned unit developments (PUD) have been used for many years as an effective means of developing coordinated larger sites. ... However, in many instances, what is intended to be a “mixed-use” development actually ends up being “multiple-use,” where there are separate and distinct areas of land uses that are not truly integrated into a mixed-use development. The other limitation of a PUD is that it is designed primarily for the development of larger sites, and with few exceptions, is not well suited for use on individual lots in an urban environment.

Clustered open space developments have had success in preserving open space and natural features. ... While open space developments are a significant improvement from (other types of) conventional zoning, the developments still tend to be separated, single-use tracts of land.

Many communities have adopted design standards ... While these design standards have been effective in improving the appearance of buildings and landscaping, the standards fail to create meaningful change in the urban form - the end result is usually aesthetically-pleasing sprawl. (Michigan APA)

4. **Conventional zoning regulations make redevelopment into urban communities more difficult by applying suburban zoning standards.** A study of conventional land use practices by the American Planning Association (APA) found that conventional zoning standards may hinder the building of traditional, mixed-use neighborhoods and community centers:

An evaluation of development trends and the zoning requirements of many communities identified serious problems associated with suburban communities. In many instances, conventional zoning regulations are the major contributors towards many communities ... While there is interest in traditional urban communities, existing zoning regulations make redevelopment of urban communities more difficult by applying suburban zoning standards. Larger setbacks and excessive parking requirements make many cherished urban buildings and spaces nonconforming. (American Planning Association)

5. **Suburban development results in an increasing reliance on the automobile for travel.** Conventional policies and standards are designed to provide for orderly growth, preventing overcrowding of land and people, alleviating congestion, separating incompatible uses, and buffering adjacent uses. Over the last couple of decades, planners have become increasingly aware that conventional policies and standards are designed to develop suburbia and as a result have a strong influence on how we live our lives. In a study about what is the most appropriate land use tool for development of mixed-use neighborhoods John Barry explained:

The conventional zoning practices that became widely accepted in the later part of the twentieth century have drastically changed the way American cities and towns have been physically planned and developed. Conventional zoning has encouraged suburban sprawl through its promotion of low density and single use development. The consequences of this type of zoning are not limited to the physical design of the neighborhoods in which we live and work. Sprawl has also changed the way in which Americans conduct their daily lives as we increasingly rely on the automobile to commute to school and work or run errands. (Connecticut Law Journal, Form Based Codes: Measured Success Through Both Mandatory and Optional Implementation)

6. **The Lee Plan includes many examples of the county’s conventional land use policies and development standards.**

- Buffering/Open Space Requirements:
 - Goal—77
 - Objectives—1.3, 31.4, 77.1, 77.2, 77.3,
 - Policies—1.1.7, 1.4.7, 5.1.5, 5.1.6, 6.1.6, 7.1.8, 16.3.5, 41.1.4, 77.1.1, 77.2.1, 77.3.1, 77.3.4, 107.11.4
- Compatibility:
 - Objectives—16.3, 47.2, 66.3
 - Policies—2.2.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.3, 9.2.1, 16.3.3, 17.4.1, 18.1.7, 33.3.2, 46.2.2, 46.4.2, 47.5.4, 85.1.1, 105.1.2
- Site location:
 - Goals—6, 39
 - Objectives- 37.1, 37.3
 - Policies—1.4.5, 6.1.2, 18.1.7
- Future Land Use Designations:

In addition to these policies, the county’s existing urban and mixed-use land use designations, as established in the Future Land Use Element, Future Land Use Map, and Table 1(a) Summary of Residential Densities, establish maximum densities and intensities within these categories. An evaluation of what densities and intensities would be necessary to better support and encourage mixed-use developments will be an important part of the solution to this issue.

LESSON LEARNED: The lesson to be learned from the experiences of Lee County, planning research, and many other jurisdictions, indicates that attempts to establish mixed-use centers through conventional zoning practices may not be successful because such practices are intended to develop suburban communities, not mixed-use areas.

Market Forces and Development Process – A Closer Look

The market (aka development community, financial system, property seller, prospective property owner, and community member) is another reason for Lee County’s suburban development pattern. The market contributed to suburbia by developing communities which were said to meet the overriding desire for single family homes located in residential neighborhoods buffered from incompatible uses by landscaping, roadways, and gates.

1. **Building the “American Dream.”** The so called, *“American Dream Home”* was fueled by the development of roadways and cheap fuel. The average American house size has more than doubled

since the 1950s and now stands at 2,349 square feet. Today, approximately seventy-five percent of Americans live in suburban communities. As the market has sought to meet the demand for single-family suburban homes and neighborhoods, there has been little to no perceived demand or need to construct more integrated mixed-use developments and centers.

2. Lee County's development form has been shaped by other significant market forces.

Timing of Lee County's growth.

First, Lee County was largely developed after the suburban housing market became the dominant form of development in the mid-twentieth century. Unlike communities in the North and Southeast which originated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the county did not have many traditionally established downtown centers, connected neighborhoods, and integrated communities around which suburban neighborhoods developed.

Large amounts of undeveloped suburban land uses.

Second, when Lee County's development boom began in the later part of the twentieth century, the county had vast amounts of undeveloped lands designated for low-density land uses. The market took advantage of these large land areas and produced vast areas of suburban developments.

Developer Specialization.

Third, as time progressed and the suburban movement grew, developers began to specialize in only one type of development. As a result, developers chose to specialize in one type of use (residential or commercial) and grew uncomfortable attempting mixed-use developments.

Development Financing.

Fourth, federal financing criteria made development project funding much more available for suburban communities than mixed-use developments. Thus, even developers who may have been interested in developing a mixed-use project were more likely to build a suburban development. Finally, as communities attempted to make mixed-use development easier to construct through techniques such as reduced or shared parking, the financial community grew uneasy about the viability of mixed-use centers without enough parking to satisfy the now ingrained suburban lifestyle.

Future Lee County Mixed-Use Practices

What is the Goal for Mixed-Use Practices?

The EAR identified a goal for the county's future mixed-use development efforts that would produce "communities" that integrate a mix of uses both vertically (provide a mixture of uses within buildings) and horizontally (connect buildings within a development through walkable site design) instead of "projects" that provide a collection of single use buildings adjacent to one another.

How Can We Create Workable Solutions?

There are 4 steps to creating specific, functional, and targeted solutions for creating mixed-use developments.

- STEP 1. **Identify Opportunities.** Given that mixed-use developments will have a limited opportunity for absorption over the 2035 planning horizon, and given that the county has limited resources to provide direct incentives to help create mixed-use communities, the County should first identify the types of mixed-use opportunities that the County wants to create and/or support.
- STEP 2. **Different Tools for Different Opportunities.** The County can provide different types of tools to support mixed-use developments that will be consistent with the goal identified in the EAR. For example, the County can have one tool that are permissive (flexible) that allows the county to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities and another tools that is more directive (regulatory) that identifies a priority location for, at most, two to four locations where the county wants to create a partnership with landowners to insure that mixed-use development happens in those locations.
- STEP 3. **Clarify the locations of Mixed-Use Places.** The creation of appropriate land use designations and policies to support, encourage and provide real incentives for mixed-use development requires a clear understanding about how and where these polices will be applied.
- STEP 4. **Get the Details Right.** Successful mixed-use developments require sufficient density, intensity, range of uses and design standards to insure that they can be financially successful while maintaining compatibility with existing Lee County communities.

- 1. **Identify Opportunities.** In order to achieve this goal, the EAR recommended that the county refine its mixed-use approach to better account for the specific location, size, context, and design conditions of the county's different urban, suburban, and rural places. The report established a basic mixed-use framework which described the form, function, and components of mixed-use development. The LPA workshop (see attached discussion summary) in October 2011 built off this discussion as it sought to provide further mixed-use policy direction.

Urban Places. There are likely two distinct opportunities for mixed-use communities in Urban Places. The first Opportunity Urban Places may apply to between two and four key priority areas, where the county establishes a partnership with landowners to insure the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services in these areas so that they may develop or redevelop into true mixed-use communities. These infrastructure improvements and the provision of urban services, while substantial benefits to the community, are necessary to transition these areas to an urban form. These areas can then serve as a catalyst for the subsequent redevelopment of adjacent areas because they are highly visible and serve as an inspiration for a new development form in the Lee County marketplace.

The Second Opportunity Urban Places may apply to a broader set of locations where it would be desirable for these areas to become mixed-use communities, but there may be less expectation for development/redevelopment over the 2035 planning horizon, or the specific location is unforeseen at this time. In those cases the county may want to create a more permissive tool that is more flexible and will support these areas in becoming a mixed-use community, but may have a different incentive structure.

Suburban Places. Like the Second Opportunity Urban Places, Suburban mixed-use communities are still an important future opportunity, however, it is less likely that these areas will develop/redevelop over the planning horizon. A flexible tool that will support future mixed-use development within these areas is likely to be the most appropriate option.

Rural Places. The purpose of mixed-use communities within the county's rural places is different. It provides an opportunity to provide more specific direction and form to rural commercial nodes that would be in keeping with the context and character of these areas.

2. **Different Tools for Different Opportunities.** The Lee Plan currently has an adopted Future Land Use Map Mixed-Use Overlay that designates specific areas on the future land use map series identifying locations desirable for mixed use that are located in close proximity to: public transit routes; education facilities; recreation opportunities; and, existing residential, shopping and employment centers. The overlay tool could be evolved to become more flexible and functional and could be further supported by the creation of a new Mixed-Use Future Land Use Designation that provided more targeted incentives for the First Opportunity and Second Opportunity Urban Places. The following paragraphs explain how these categories might be constructed:

NEW Mixed-Use Land Use Category.

Description. A prescriptive/regulatory tool that is assigned to specific properties which creates certainty with regard to entitlements, process, and incentives. This future land use category could best be implemented in conjunction with a new mixed-use zoning district that is created and administratively assigned to the properties concurrent with the plan amendment. This process would require a specific partnership with the landowners to establish density, intensity, mix of uses, form and site design standards, block structure for the properties, etc. The density/intensity bonus structure could be revised to establish TDR "tiers" that would prioritize these areas for higher density.

REVISED Mixed-Use Overlay.

Description. A permissive/flexible tool that is available within specified future land use designations (e.g., Central Urban, Urban Community, Suburban) and provides an opportunity for mixed use developments that include walkable features and meet other design and mixed use guidelines and standards and in return permit density calculations to occur on the entire parcel and establish TDR "tiers" that support this option.

3. **Clarify the Location for Mixed-Use Places.** For the First Opportunity Urban Places (the priority mixed-use communities) and for specific Rural Places, it is important to be specific in identifying the targeted locations and to focus the county's resources in support of those locations. The following list expresses some of the criteria which have been identified by the EAR, LPA, and staff as to where mixed-use developments ought to be located:
- Adjacent to, centered within, or surrounded by active development areas, with a variety of diverse residential neighborhoods, employment centers, and public resources (i.e.: parks, government buildings, churches, greenways, and educational and sport facilities) nearby.
 - In an area with a high level of connectivity to surrounding areas with strong accessibility via multiple transportation options:
 - Opportunities for pedestrian and bikeway access to residential, workplace, and park areas;
 - High level of accessibility to transit corridors and major roadways;
 - Be situated by intersections near major roadways;
 - Consider proximate to ports, airports, and major roadways; and
 - Promote housing near bus routes.
 - Near a major transportation corridor with ample opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian access.
 - Near economic development areas so that the mixed-use development can benefit from at least one strong economic anchor that provides jobs for residents, patrons for smaller shops and services, and destination for day users.
 - An economic anchor may include a large entity such as government office, health facility, college, transportation hub, or large employer or a group of organized smaller businesses such as medical offices, professional centers, or commercial retail center.
 - Create synergies with surrounding residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, employment areas, government centers, transportation resources, public spaces and parks, greenways and blueways, and other community assets.

First Opportunity Urban Place – Mixed-Use Locations

During their October 2011 mixed-use discussion, the LPA further identified a number of specific locations where the county should target future mixed-use activities (i.e.: Treeline Avenue from Corkscrew Road to Colonial Boulevard; airport area, Six Mile Cypress Parkway to Metro Parkway; Palm Beach Boulevard corridor west of I-75; Winkler Road and College Parkway; and Alva Center).

The county has targeted a number of mixed-use center areas as part of the community planning efforts in North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Alva, Caloosahatchee Shores, and Palm Beach Boulevard. Moreover, in four specific locations—North Fort Myers Town Center, Lehigh Acres Downtown, Lehigh Acres Community Center on Homestead Road, Lehigh Acres Neighborhood Center on Joel Boulevard, and the Palm Beach Boulevard Corridor west of I-75—the county has initiated the master planning of the community centers through implementation of the Compact Communities Code, planning of transportation improvements, and review of infrastructure needs. By targeting mixed-use locations, the county is able to focus its planning efforts, coordinate infrastructure concerns, and facilitate

community planning efforts. Such publically sponsored planning efforts help attract private investments by ensuring that there is community support for the proposed effort, which makes the development review process more predictable.

Rural Places: Mixed-Use Locations

Development on greenfield sites in rural areas can be guided by mixed-use principles in order to minimize environmental impacts associated with new development. They may be used in Lee County's rural areas to help transfer existing rural densities into areas most suitable for development. While the county needs to be cautious when identifying greenfield locations so as to not further impact the remaining rural areas, small rural mixed-use centers (through the use of transfer of development rights), may help protect the county's diminishing rural lands. Greenfield and rural locations that are appropriate for mixed-use include community centers where schools, post offices, parks, churches, convenience shops, personal services, and rural neighborhoods are located. The key is to develop and locate rural mixed-use areas in areas where they are most able to provide for the local needs of the community without allowing new development to encroach upon the rural agricultural areas and farming operations.

4. **Get the Details Right.** Form and character standards are important. Mixed-use developments are designed to be vibrant, diverse neighborhoods with higher densities and a range of complementary uses such as commercial shops, restaurants, services, employment centers, governmental services and resources, and public gathering spaces and park areas. They are characterized by their integrated, accessible, and context-oriented form that provides a variety of uses, diverse housing types, employment opportunities, multiple transportation resources, and are anchored by a central public space and civic activity.

The American Institute of Architects asserts that the following form and character features are essential components of mixed-use communities:

- Parks, schools, civic buildings, and commercial establishments located within walking distance of homes;
- Residences with narrow front setbacks, front porches, and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking;
- Network of interconnected streets and paths suitable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles;
- Narrower streets with crosswalks, streetscaping, and other traffic-calming measures;
- In-scale development that fits the local context; and
- Buildings oriented to the street with parking behind.

At their October workshop, the LPA as well as the Sustainability Committee and Lee County staff echoed these ideas as they identified what mixed-use design practices should be addressed through the county's form and character policies. These ideas are the basis for the following list of form and character features:

- Human-scale active streetscapes should be established to promote walking, biking, public gatherings, and outside eating.
 - Issues regarding personal comfort should be addressed by providing ample shade, sitting and rest areas, accessible walking spaces, designated bicycle pathways, accessible public spaces, and welcoming green space areas.
- Step-down uses with the densest, most intense, and tallest buildings at the core of the development and less dense residential and public space uses at the fringe where they transition—not buffer—residential areas from surrounding commercial, professional, and other uses.
 - Height should be context-sensitive with smaller mixed-use developments at a more minimal height and community or regional centers a higher height consistent with the density and intensity of the area. Excessively tall buildings, like those along the river in downtown Ft Myers, should be avoided.
- Easily accessible commercial areas which attract visitors as well as people who work and live in the area.
- Residential densities in the community need to be high enough to provide internal capture for retail and restaurant businesses after commuters have left.
 - The highest density residential areas should be located within the commercial areas as well as immediately adjacent to the core areas.
 - Moderate density residential single family lots (cottage homes, duplexes, granny flats, etc..) should be located adjacent to higher density residential.
 - Lower density estate homes should be located adjacent to moderate density residential areas.
 - Parks, civic, and other uses should be spread throughout the development to provide linkages from one area to another and help promote an active streetscape and community environment.
- Minimum density/intensity standards for transit-oriented mixed-use development should be in the range of 20-25 dwelling units per acre (du/a), a density range that is considered by Lee Plan standards to be very high, along with an additional commercial floor area of approximately 50,000 square feet of office and professional use. Residential density could be slightly lower (15 to 20 du/a) if additional commercial floor area for office and professional space were incorporated at increased intensities (additional 25,000-35,000 sq. ft) to offset the loss of dwelling units. In both cases, additional floor area should be allocated for retail uses.
- Connectivity within and between the development and other areas in the county should be at a high level to encourage internal capture, promote multi-modal transportation, and allow for short daily trips.
- Highly integrated transportation system designed to the human scale that features convenient transit service; short walkable blocks; grid system roadways; roundabouts; sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, and bikeways and crosswalks; traffic calming measures

(narrow lanes, on-street parking, streetscaping, and speed humps); shared parking (structures, interior lot, and on-street parking); and transit hubs.

- Design needs to provide safe, walkable and bikeable conditions that protect the walker or bike rider from cars through streetscapes that include tree lined streets, on street parking, raised curbs, greenscape between sidewalks and the road, and designated bike lanes.
- The variety of types of housing units typical of Traditional Neighborhood Development gives people and households at all stages of life housing alternatives suited to their needs, thus providing stability to a community. The proper density of housing (typically very high) will also support the commercial and civic functions at the TND.
- An emphasis on transit in urban and mixed use areas to shift away from automobile scale of development. Revised Level of Service standards (including LOS for other modes) and traffic analysis requirements.
- Creation of a place as a destination rather than a place to drive past or through.
- Removal of barriers and/or provision of incentives.
- Mixed-use development requires local connectivity and access to all areas. Along with bicycling, walking, and vehicle access, mixed-use areas should provide additional access with choices including public transit. Buses provide transit options, but must be considered along with regional highway access.

Conclusions for Mixed-Use Places

The opportunities for the County to transition from its current suburban development pattern to a true urban form in the proposed planning horizon of 2035 are limited. A two tiered approach appears to be the best solution. First, identify the location of two to four true urban areas where the County, along with affected property owners, targets true urbanism by providing the necessary infrastructure and services. Second, is the development of a permissive/flexible tool within specified future land use designation that provides an expanded opportunity for the development of mixed use areas.

This approach accepts the reality that large areas of the county will not transform into urban development while still allowing and encouraging mixed-use development to take place.

**New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update
Local Planning Agency Position Paper
Lehigh Acres Issue Paper
December 16, 2011**

On March 1, 2011 the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) adopted the New Horizon 2035: Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR). Many concepts and issues raised in the EAR apply to the Lehigh Acres Planning Community. This community is the sole focus of this position paper.

Background

Lehigh Acres is located in eastern Lee County and encompasses 96 square miles, about 12% of Lee County's land area. Initial development of Lehigh Acres began in the 1950s. Lehigh Acres was originally an 18,000-acre cattle ranch purchase as a tax shelter by Chicago businessman Lee Ratner. The Lehigh Development Corporation platted most of Lehigh Acres into separate single-family lots in the 1960s. As a result, Lehigh Acres is one of the largest platted communities in Florida – over 120,000 lots and a projected population of over 350,000 people.

In 1990, the Lehigh Development Corporation requested that Lee County formally recognize that the platted lands in Lehigh Acres were vested for development rights. In 1992 a stipulation agreement was reached that vested the majority of Lehigh Acres property from meeting concurrency requirements.

Future Land Use Designation

The 1984 Lee Plan identified Lehigh Acres as an urban area and assigned the Future Land Use designation of Urban Community and Central Urban. Mostly, that is still the case today.

Over 70 percent of Lehigh is designated as Urban Community – a category described as having a distinctly urban character with predominant land uses identified as residential, commercial, public, quasi-public, and light industrial uses. Residential standard densities range from two dwelling units an acre to six dwelling units an acre, with a maximum of 10 units an acre. The current average density in Lehigh Acres for those areas designated Urban Community is less than 0.4 dwelling units an acre.

Central Urban is characterized as the “urban core” of the County. This designation covers approximately one quarter of Lehigh Acres and encases much of Lee Boulevard, Joel Boulevard and Homestead Road. Central Urban is intended for residential, commercial, public, quasi-public, and light industrial uses. The standard density range is from five dwelling units per acre to ten dwelling units per acre, and a maximum density of 15 dwelling units an acre. The average density in the Central Urban area of Lehigh Acres is less than one dwelling unit per acre.

Lehigh's Vision

The planning firm Wallace Roberts & Todd prepared the “Lehigh Acres Comprehensive Planning Study” in 2009 – taking on identified challenges including infrastructure shortcomings, such as minimally paved roads in remote sections of the community, lack of water and sewer service throughout the community, and a canal system which prevents connections between communities.

A number of new strategies were identified including consolidating development patterns by directing growth, reserving land for non-residential uses, guiding infrastructure through a “tier” system, and utilization of more urban and less suburban downtown, neighborhood and community centers.

Based on the study, and the input of the community, the following vision for Lehigh Acres was incorporated into the Lee Plan, including the overarching goal of transforming the community from a platted lands community to a sustainable community of choice.

“A ‘sustainable community of choice’ is comprised of a collection of unique and inviting neighborhoods with involved citizens, a healthy environment, housing and employment opportunities, a full range of public services, and an efficient multi-modal transportation network connecting adjacent uses and neighboring communities. Residents will be encouraged to live a healthy and active lifestyle and will be provided opportunities to connect to the natural environment and their neighbors. This is the community vision of Lehigh Acres.”

GOAL 32: LEHIGH ACRES. *To ensure that continued development and redevelopment within the Lehigh Acres Planning Community converts this largely single use, antiquated pre-platted area into a vibrant residential and commercial community consisting of: safe and secure single family and multi-family neighborhoods; vibrant commercial and employment centers; pedestrian friendly mixed-use activity centers and neighborhood nodes; with adequate green space and recreational opportunities.*

The main obstacles to making the vision come true can be summarized into three main areas: 1. The legacy of a pre-platted community; 2. Too much single-family, no diversity of housing products; and 3. Insufficient commercial uses or facilities, to serve the people living in Lehigh Acres.

Problem Identification

As part of the EAR process in April and May 2010, small-group workshops were held with residents and business owners to learn what issues and topics they wanted to address in the Lee Plan. At the Lehigh Acres workshop on May 5, 2010 many expressed specific concerns in Lehigh Acres, including the need to foster a unique community identity, more opportunities for commercial retail and employment, pedestrian friendliness, the appearance of major roads such as Lee Boulevard, inadequate public services, improved communications with county

government, divisions within the community, code enforcement issues, crime, blight, changing demographics, bad economic conditions, water/sewer utilities (or lack of services).

In 2009, sale prices of homes in Lehigh Acres were 80 percent off their peaks. Foreclosures have soared in the area, as has unemployment. The February 7, 2009 *New York Times* article “In Florida, Despair and Foreclosures” captured a portion of this at the beginning of the nation’s housing and financial crisis. It also noted President Obama visited Southwest Florida during his first 100 days in office, recognizing this was a region at the epicenter of the economic downturn.

Constraints

On October 14, 2011 the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association sponsored a program – known as *Plat-a-Palooza* addressing platted communities such as Lehigh Acres, Cape Coral and Port Charlotte. Some regulatory challenges were identified including:

1. The State’s definition of ‘antiquated subdivision’ which appears in the Community Planning Act (HB 7207), does not apply to Cape Coral or Lehigh, or most other platted lands communities statewide;
2. Amendment 8 of the Florida Constitution - adopted in 2006 - imposes a restriction upon local governments and redevelopment authorities to use the power of eminent domain for economic redevelopment purposes;
3. There are no long-term revenue sources or organizations to fund the acquisition of platted lands, at the State, local or regional level.
4. Transfers of development rights programs historically have not been successful in the past, and are difficult to administer for both governments and private developers.
5. Difficulty de-platting or purchasing lots with a large number of property owners, some from around the world, and some who have long abandoned their properties.

Solutions

Potential solutions to problems in platted lands communities such as Lehigh Acres are plentiful, but difficult. Charlotte County’s Future Land Use Element, adopted April 26, 2007 admitted there are no “ultimate” solutions but there are tried and true “remedies”.

These include: Direct purchase of platted lots; Direct acquisition of targeted lands; Direct purchase with assistance from the State of Florida; New Zoning Categories; Create an organization to handle consolidation and de-platting; Administrative de-platting; Graduated Impact Fees, Tax deed acquisition, Urban service area strategy.

Happening Today

Progress has been made proposing changes to the Land Development Code to address specific issues identified by the community, such as improved commercial signage, landscaping standards, the proliferation of model homes, addressing food vending, duplex design, and street numbering on buildings.

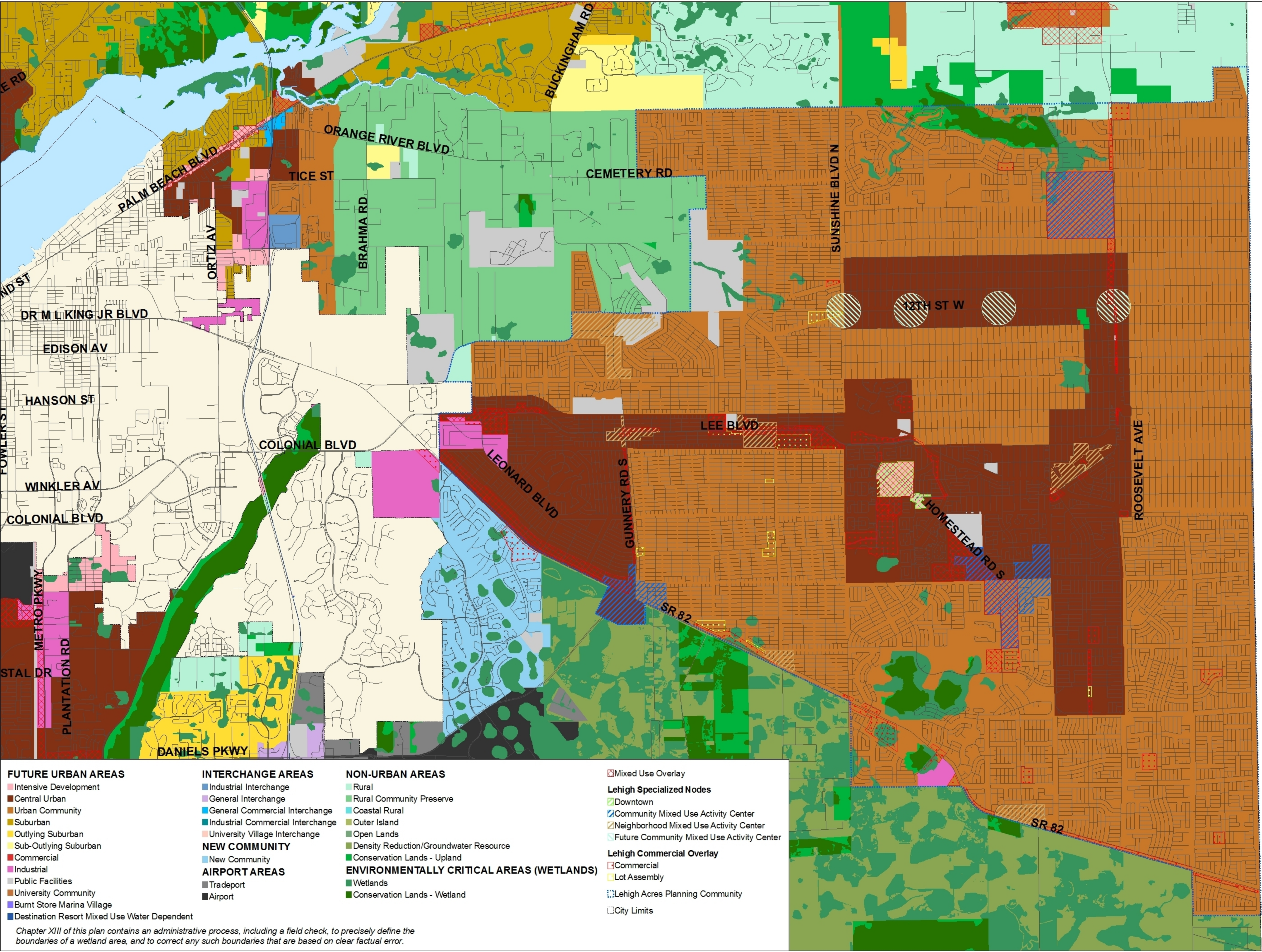
The second part of this effort will tackle proposed mixed use areas throughout the community. Solutions include using “form based” codes rather than traditional zoning. This will allow a better mix of uses, more intensity, and more efficient use of land in urban areas. It’s a similar approach in the existing Lee County Compact Communities Code – which can be used anywhere in the county. Ensite – a local planning firm – is working with Lee County Planning Division staff on this mixed use strategy in Lehigh Acres, starting with three proposed activity centers.

Discussion

The issue of what should be done to address the specific concerns of the Lehigh Acres Planning Community should be considered throughout the Lee Plan. Following this, how can the Lee Plan be modified to address community needs?

Possible answers to these questions will be the focus of the Local Planning Agency’s (LPA) and the Community Sustainability Advisory Committee meetings. Planning staff will lead a discussion about concerns relating to how to promote the County’s adopted vision and relate it to the Lehigh Acres Planning Community.

1. Are the two urban categories appropriate for virtually all of Lehigh Acres? If not, what are appropriate categories? What densities or heights of building are appropriate?
2. Are the “Three Tiers” identified on the Lehigh Acres maps appropriate? If so, how should they be better utilized?
3. What alternative transportation options should Lehigh Acres promote or focus resources on - transit, bicycles, pedestrian, or all of the above?
4. Should urban services and enhancements - such as road paving - continue in areas like Tier 3?
5. Should policies be enacted to limit residential single-family and duplex development (including septic tanks) in areas like Tier 3?
6. Which identified remedies should be tried? Which should not be pursued at this time? (purchase of platted lots; new Zoning categories; creation of an organization or method to handle consolidation and de-platting; administrative de-platting; graduated impact fees, tax deed acquisition, urban service area strategy)
7. What are the local regulatory barriers to better development in Lehigh Acres, including commercial centers and places of employment? What are the state or Federal regulatory barriers to better development in Lehigh Acres, including commercial centers and places of employment?
8. What elements could be part of Lehigh’s identity as a sustainable community of choice? Are health care, culture, arts, educational institutions, sports, or other themes appropriate?



LEHIGH ACRES
FUTURE LAND USE
MAP

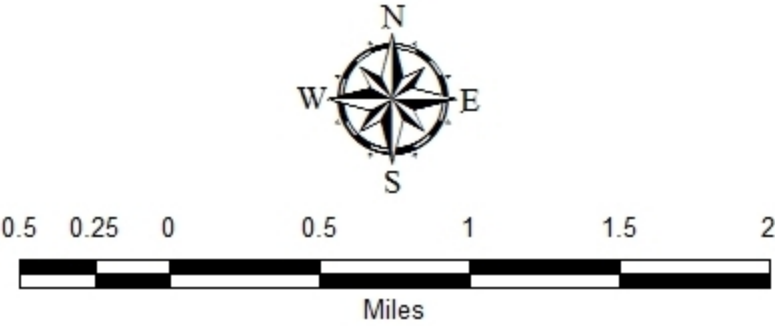
This map is a general representation of the Future Land Use Map as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners On: September 17, 1990

Revised By:

ADOPTING ORDINANCE	DATE OF ADOPTION	EFFECTIVE DATE
88-02	1/31/1989	3/1/1989
90-09	3/7/1990	3/14/1990
90-43	9/8/1990	9/17/1990
90-44	9/12/1990	9/17/1990
91-10	4/3/1991	4/10/1991
91-19	7/9/1991	7/18/1991
92-35	8/7/1992	8/18/1992
92-41	9/15/1992	9/21/1992
92-47	10/27/1992	11/8/1992
92-48	10/27/1992	11/8/1992
92-51	12/8/1992	12/21/1992
93-05	2/22/1993	2/28/1993
93-25	9/20/1993	12/4/1994
94-23	8/29/1994	11/14/1994
94-29	10/25/1994	1/9/1995
94-30	11/1/1994	7/25/1995
95-27	12/20/1995	1/20/1996
96-19	10/2/1996	11/2/1996
97-05	3/5/1997	4/2/1997
97-17	8/26/1997	9/30/1997
97-13	6/24/1997	7/25/1997
97-22	11/25/1997	12/28/1997
98-02	1/13/1998	2/13/1998
98-09	6/3/1998	7/30/1998
98-02	4/13/1999	2/4/2000
98-26	11/24/1998	12/25/1998
99-15	11/22/1999	1/18/2000
99-16	11/22/1999	1/18/2000
99-17	11/22/1999	1/18/2000
99-18	11/22/1999	1/18/2000
99-19	11/22/1999	12/23/1999
00-08	5/4/2000	6/28/2000
00-16	8/9/2000	9/8/2000
00-22	11/1/2000	12/28/2000
01-24	12/13/2001	1/13/2002
02-02, 03, 04, 05, 06	1/10/2002	2/27/2002
02-29	10/21/2002	9/9/2003
03-01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07	1/9/2003	4/1/2003
03-12	5/8/2003	6/5/2003
03-19, 03-20, 03-21	10/29/2003	12/1/2004
03-26	12/15/2003	3/12/2004
04-14	9/20/2004	12/7/2004
04-15	9/22/2004	10/22/2004
05-19, 05-21	10/12/2005	01/09/2006
05-20	10/12/2005	11/15/2006
07-07	4/24/2007	5/24/2007
07-06	4/24/2007	5/24/2007
07-09 thru 07-18	5/16/2007	8/13/2007
08-04	3/11/2008	4/11/2008
08-05	3/11/2008	4/11/2008
09-06 thru 09-17	2/25/2009	4/15/2009
10-10, 11, 12, 16	3/3/2010	8/4/2010

Please see the Lee Plan for additional information regarding special restrictions, overlays, or allowances in addition to the requirements of the land use categories.

The Planning Communities Map and Acreage Allocation Table (see Map 16 and Table 1(b) and Policies 1.1, 1 and 2.22) depicts the proposed distribution, extent, and location of generalized land uses for the year 2030. A acreage totals are provided for land in each Planning Community in unincorporated Lee County.



Map Generated: June 2010
City Limits Current as of Generation Date

Lee Plan Map 1
Page 1 of 8



New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update
Local Planning Agency Position Paper
Suburban Framework
January 23, 2012

The New Horizon 2035 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) states that suburban areas “are typically characterized by their lower intensity development patterns and a clear separation between uses.” In Lee County suburban areas are recognized as being the predominate form of development in Lehigh Acres, San Carlos Park, Estero, Fort Myers Shores, Iona McGregor, and portions of North Fort Myers and Caloosahatchee Shores.

The suburban areas of Lee County, as described in the previous issue paper “Current Status of Lee County,” include the following future land use categories: Urban Community, New Community, Suburban, Outlying Suburban, Sub-Outlying Suburban, Burnt Store Marina Village, and Outer Islands. These suburban land use categories comprise 106,520 acres, which constitutes 28 percent of Lee County. The uses found in the suburban areas of Lee County vary, and include uses such as single-family homes, multi-family homes, hotels, golf courses, big-box retail, regional shopping malls, office, and sports arenas.

These land uses and development types have made Lee County a predominantly suburban community, a pattern that will continue even as the county seeks to protect its rural communities and better define its urban development and mixed-use centers, offering more land use choices for residents, visitors, and businesses. In recognition of the continued prevalence of suburbia, the primary focus of this issue paper will be on ways to improve the form and character of Lee County’s suburban communities. Issues that will be discussed include: transportation networks and services, recreation opportunities, and suburban services and other opportunities.

Existing Lee County Suburban Design:

Lee County is largely a suburban community without a substantial urban core to build around. Historically suburban areas were built as bedroom communities that complemented an existing urban core. The EAR characterizes the Lee County form of suburban development as follows:

- Suburban Form and Use:
 - Low to moderate density;
 - More defined separation of uses; and
 - Public spaces are amenities for internal development.
- Suburban Transportation:
 - Extensive Street pattern, limited connectivity within regional street network;
 - Large block lengths and street widths; and
 - Moderate pedestrian connections and access.

Lee County suburban development, both commercial and residential, is largely based on tract development, where most development infrastructure and site improvements are provided by

the individual developer or site owner. These infrastructures and site improvements include onsite utility lines, stormwater retention and detention, parking, open space, sidewalks, and connections to public transportation infrastructure. This type of development encourages systems and facilities that serve individual developments that are often disconnected from adjoining developments. This has led to an inefficient land use pattern. These inefficiencies have produced densities and intensities that are often well below what was anticipated in the suburban future land use categories in Lee County.

Concerns Expressed During the Development of the EAR

During the EAR process planning staff held numerous meetings throughout Lee County in order to assess the concerns and needs of Lee County community members. Many of the concerns were geared towards the suburban style of development prevalent in Lee County. Below are the community's concerns applicable to suburban areas.

Connections

Many of the residents in the suburban areas of Lee County expressed concern about the lack of pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods and commercial uses. While community members expressed a want for a certain level of a separation of uses to protect their local neighborhoods, many also desire increased connections to adjacent developments and nearby shops and services. There was also concern about commercial developments that do not provide sufficient connections to surrounding residential and commercial areas, creating inefficient transportation patterns.

The most desirable form of connectivity would be pedestrian and bicycle connections that would allow for walking, biking, and other non-vehicular modes of transportation to nearby places, including commercial and recreational opportunities.

Residents also saw a need for additional connections for vehicles. This was especially the case in Lehigh Acres where canals disrupt both vehicles and pedestrians. Vehicular connection is also an issue in areas where gated residential communities limit access to adjacent road networks.

Neighborhood Recreation Opportunities

One of the most common concerns was access to parks and open space near the neighborhoods where community members live. Lee County requires 20 to 30 percent open space for most developments. Physical access to open space for recreational purposes is limited. While Lee County develops and manages regional parks, the county does not provide additional neighborhood scale parks that are available to the public.

Public Infrastructure

There was also a concern with the lack of water and sewer infrastructure in moderately dense areas such as Lehigh Acres. Lehigh Acres is within the Florida Government Utility Authority (FGUA) area, and is not served by Lee County Utilities. Much of Lehigh Acres is platted into ¼ acre lots, and water quality will be an issue if all of these lots are developed with well and septic

systems. Lee County has little to no control over the deployment of utilities infrastructure in Lehigh Acres, but may be able to adopt policies that encourage development in the areas where utilities exist or are planned by FGUA such as a lot swapping program.

Community Character

One of the most prevalent complaints about suburban developments is that they lack a unique character and sense of place. The Lee County residents also expressed concern about the lack of community identity and character. The community character issues are exacerbated by the lack of distinction between the urban, suburban, and rural areas in Lee County. While increased community character could be achieved through community architectural themes, development should also take advantage of historic and natural features as well as make a distinction between the various communities' urban, suburban, and rural qualities.

Strategies and Recommendations:

There are many different methods to address the issues and resident concerns within the suburban areas of Lee County. The EAR identifies Suburban Area Principles of Form and Use that could be used to describe the ideal suburban setting. In many of our existing suburban areas it is evident that attention was not given to these principles equally. Below are the concerns of Lee County suburban residents and a discussion of possible strategies that may be used to address these concerns.

Community Character

Lee County has sought to address concerns about the lack of community character for over a decade through its community planning program. The Lee Plan update should build upon this effort by utilizing the new Form and Character Element to establish distinct design principles that guide the future development of suburban communities. Specifically, the Lee Plan should establish policies and practices that support distinct local design styles, interconnected and well-defined community centers, and local landscape and hardscaped features. Additionally, the new Communities Element should work to ensure that each local community clearly identifies its vision for the local area and establishes a set of goal, objectives, and policies that will enable it to achieve that vision.

Protection of Existing Neighborhoods from future urban development

There are suburban areas within Lee County that have character, sufficient recreational opportunities, public infrastructure, pedestrian connections and vehicular connections. These areas should be maintained.

The suburban future land use categories standard density range is from 1 unit an acre to 6 units an acre. However, many of these areas did not develop at the maximum standard density. Given this situation, another strategy could provide a pool of the existing unallocated residential density to apply to urban areas where additional density is required, while simultaneously capping the density in these suburban areas as they were developed. If it is

determined that an existing suburban area of the Lee County should be maintained how it is and the developed density is below the maximum standard density, it could be assumed that additional density would not be developed in these areas in the future. Therefore, the difference between the maximum standard density and the actual density could be capped, “maintaining” and protecting these suburban areas as they currently exist. This would also allow Lee County to encourage increased density in the desired urban areas without changing the potential amount of development allowed by the Future Land Use Map.

Public Infrastructure Services and Transportation Systems

The suburban development model followed in Lee County typically relies on infrastructure to be provided for and constructed by private developers, without much coordination between developers. Additionally, the segregated form has resulted in a development pattern that disconnects one development from the next. This model has led to inefficiencies in the way public infrastructure services and transportation systems are provided – particularly those related to stormwater retention facilities, bicycle-pedestrian connections, vehicular connectivity, parking facilities, and parks and recreation resources. The following sections highlight these inefficiencies and discuss opportunities to address such issues through amendments to the Lee Plan and changes to the county’s land development practices.

Stormwater Retention: Every suburban development is required to have its own separate stormwater retention system. Often they are constructed in the form of large retention ponds, streams, and wells that consume large amounts of land and are often placed at the edge of the development in order to provide buffer between adjacent properties and uses. The location and size of the stormwater systems contribute to the challenges Lee County is facing as it promotes segregation of uses, discourages connectivity, and promotes inefficient and underutilized infrastructure systems. These concerns may be addressed through the following future county land development practices and policies:

- Strengthen future land use, utility, and form and character policies in the Lee Plan that promote shared stormwater retention facilities between adjacent developments;
- Strengthen future land use, parks, and form and character policies in the Lee Plan that promote the use of stormwater facilities as part of a community’s public space, park, open space, and recreational resources; and
- Strengthen future land use, utility, and conservation policies that foster the development of stormwater facilities that function as part of the county’s natural habitat system.

Bicycle - Pedestrian Connections: The gaps in the pedestrian sidewalks are another significant suburban development concern. The sidewalk gaps occur when adjacent properties have not

yet developed or two adjacent developers have not coordinated their internal bicycle pedestrian (bike-ped) systems. The reason for the gaps is that the Lee County Land Development Code relies upon each developer to build the sidewalks for their respective properties. This can make it difficult to use the bike-ped facilities. Such practices lead to the development of sidewalks to nowhere or bike ways that end without a destination point. This issue can be addressed through the following changes to the county's development policies and practices:

- Lee Plan transportation, future land use, and form and character policies that provide for bike-ped connections between adjacent neighborhoods, commercial and office areas, civic areas, and parks and recreational resources;
- Land development regulations that require bike-ped interconnectivity between adjacent developments;
- Land development regulations that require bike-ped coordination between adjacent developments;
- Retrofit existing sidewalks and bikeways;
- Seek opportunities to utilize the county's greenways and trails systems to help provide bike-ped connections where sidewalks and bikeways cannot be made; and
- Provision of sidewalks along county and state roadways.

As discussed in the Transportation Issue Paper, Lee County began to address these issues in November 2009 when the county adopted a Complete Streets Resolution, which seeks a safe and integrated transportation system for all users and modes.

Vehicular Connections: Another major concern with current suburban development practices is incomplete vehicular connections. The problem with these connections is that the county is dependent upon private developers to construct roadways between adjacent properties. The solution to vehicular connections is more challenging than bike-ped connections because once the residents are living in the community they become adverse to car connections as they don't want others driving through their neighborhoods. This is due to the perception that through traffic is hazardous and inconvenient. Additionally, it is more difficult to extend roadways than to retrofit sidewalks and bikeways. Thus, to address the unique challenges of vehicular connectivity, the following changes to the county's development policies and practices are recommended:

- Lee Plan transportation, future land use, and form and character policies that require roadways connections between adjacent neighborhoods, commercial and office areas, civic areas, and parks and recreational resources to be established during the development phase.

- Land development regulations that require vehicular interconnectivity between adjacent developments during the development phase.
- Land development regulations that require roadway coordination between adjacent developments.
- Utilization of the community planning process to help address community concerns through the planning and development phase.
- Furthermore, these practices discourage walkability and perpetuate the need to use a vehicle for all trips.

Vehicular Parking: One of the most ubiquitous features of the suburban built landscape is the ever-present and abundant parking lot. The suburban forms of development necessitate people drive to get from place. Since vehicles spend the majority of the time parked, suburban developments increase the demand for large areas of parking. Compounding this problem is the lack of pedestrian connectivity between adjoining developments, which prevents people from walking from one place to another and requires each parcel to provide for the parking needs of its patrons and employees. Additionally, parking standards require that each use provide parking to meet the needs of peak times, which occurs on very rare occasions. The result of these issues is that most suburban developments have redundant, unnecessary, and underutilized parking facilities. Changes to the county's land use policies and development that will address these issues include:

- Lee County transportation, land use, and form and character policies that encourage shared parking areas and interconnected developments.
- Cooperative parking standards and land development regulations which require adjacent properties to share parking facilities.
- Decreased parking standards in conjunction with bike-ped facilities to reduce demand for single occupancy vehicle use and promote desirable densities and intensities
- On street parking standards which would allow cars to park on street near the building entrance.
- Improved and safer pedestrian connections and access.

Neighborhood Public Spaces, Park, and Recreational Resources: The focus on the single family residence with its individual yards and play areas and large disconnected suburban subdivisions has resulted in a lack of public space, park, and recreational resources at the neighborhood level. Rather, suburban developments focus on regional sport fields and community centers to provide for the community's park and recreational needs. The lack of bike-ped connections within suburban development areas means that such areas are most easily accessed by car—even to those land areas located adjacent to the park or recreational facilities. The lack of easily accessible neighborhood parks or recreational facilities was a problem for the

community members who participated in the county's visioning efforts. In addition to community or regional park resources and recreational facilities, many would prefer local neighborhoods playgrounds, parks, and public spaces. In order to address the neighborhood needs for park and recreational facilities, the following changes to the county's park and development policies and practices are recommended:

- Lee Plan policies for parks, future land use, and form and character that support and encourage neighborhood resources.
- Lee Plan policies for parks, future land use, transportation, and form and character that require interconnectivity.
- Land development and county park practices that provide for the needs of neighborhood park and recreational resources.
- Land development, transportation, and county park practices that require bike-ped connections between parks and surrounding development areas and neighborhoods.

New Horizon 2035: Lee Plan Update
Local Planning Agency Position Paper
Urban Framework
January 23, 2012

The New Horizon 2035 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) states that urban areas “include an integrated mix of housing types and uses in a compact, pedestrian and transit-friendly pattern.” In Lee County, urban areas are, or are envisioned to be, the area immediately south of the city of Fort Myers, the core of Lehigh Acres, along U.S. 41 in North Fort Myers, portions of Iona McGregor, and around Florida Gulf Coast University and the Southwest Florida International Airport.

The urban areas of Lee County, as described in the previous issue paper “Current Status of Lee County,” include the following future land use categories: University Community, Intensive Development, Central Urban, Tradeport, Industrial Development and the five interchange future land use categories. These urban land use categories comprise 45,578 acres (or 71 square miles), which constitutes just less than 12 percent of Lee County. The uses found in the urban areas are similar to the suburban areas of Lee County and include uses such as single-family homes, multi-family homes, hotels, golf courses, big-box retail, regional shopping malls, office, research, and industrial and sports arenas.

The similarity in land uses and development types in the urban and suburban areas in Lee County have made it difficult to distinguish these areas from one another. This paper will primarily focus on ways to improve the form and character of Lee County’s urban areas to make them more distinctive. Issues that will be discussed include: appropriate urban form, allowing increased density, transportation networks and services, and urban services and other opportunities.

Existing Lee County Suburban Design:

Unincorporated Lee County is largely a suburban community. Urban areas are typically adjacent to the urban areas found in the incorporated portions of Lee County that have transitioned over time from suburban developments. The EAR characterizes the Lee County desired urban development form as follows:

- Urban Area Principles of Form and Use:
 - Provide a mix of residential, commercial and recreational uses.
 - Align public investments, incentives, and policies to encourage and protect redevelopment and revitalization opportunities that leverage existing economic assets.
 - Promote revitalization in developed neighborhoods that are aging.

- Urban Area Principles of Transportation:
 - Enhance or create an interconnected street grid system that links civic buildings, squares, parks and other neighborhood uses.
 - Prioritize a transportation network and pattern of complete streets that encourages walking and bicycling.
 - Encourage and support transit.
 - Reduce the number and length of automobile trips and vehicle miles traveled.

Urban Development Strategies and Concerns

Urban communities have a well defined development pattern which is clearly and visibly distinct from suburban and rural development patterns. Urban communities are built to accommodate a greater level of activity than suburban and rural places. They offer an array of interconnected land uses, housing options, employment and business opportunities, and park and recreational resources. In order to accommodate this higher level of activity, urban areas typically have significantly higher density levels than surrounding suburban communities, greater mixture of building types, and more intense building mass and form.

Varied modes of transportation provide people options on how to move within the urban community. Transportation alternatives (walk, bike, vehicle, and transit) are essential to the urban community as they provide a foundation for the anticipated high level of activity. Sidewalks are the predominant form of local transportation in urban areas as they link together buildings, public spaces, parking facilities, and other urban places. Roadways and bikeways form an interconnected grid pattern to link the urban community together and enable a transition from one neighborhood to another. Parking facilities are common community resources and shared by multiple properties and uses.

Throughout the evaluation of past planning practices and consideration of future planning direction, a number of concerns have been raised concerning the lack of a distinct urban development form and character within Lee County. Many of these concerns dealt with issues that are similar to the concerns raised about the county's suburban developments and mixed-use areas —lack of community connections, neighborhood recreational and park resources, underutilized public infrastructure systems, and ill defined community character. As a result, the response to how to address these concerns will mirror the strategies outlined in the, "Suburban Framework" and "Lee County Mixed-Use" issue papers. The difference is that the scale and form that urban areas should be developed more intense than that of the suburban areas and larger than in mixed-use centers.

By offering this greater intensity in the appropriate locations, Lee County will provide a great number of housing and lifestyle choices. It is not meant to take away from or replace the suburban develop pattern that is established; rather, it promotes options that will allow Lee County to meet the demands of a changing market.

The following section summarizes the concerns and highlights future urban development strategies.

Urban Development Concerns and Recommendations

Urban communities are typically well defined higher density development areas with interconnected land uses, housing options, neighborhood spaces, and transportation alternatives. However, community members were concerned that Lee County's urban areas do not follow this typical model. Specifically, people were concerned that the urban areas in Lee County:

- Are not clearly defined from the suburban areas as they blend together with similar development patterns and density standards;
- Do not have interconnected land uses, rather they are as separated as the county's suburban areas;
- Do not feature a diverse array of housing options as most homes in the county's urban areas are single family homes;
- Lack small, neighborhood based public spaces, parks, and recreational resources as the county focuses its park and recreational resources on large regional facilities and greenways;
- Are not built to density high enough to support an urban way of life, as the identified urban areas rarely achieve the maximum densities allow by the future land use category; and
- Do not support multiple modes of transportation as single occupied vehicles cars are the predominant and most easily accessible mode.

In order to address these concerns, staff has been working to identify strategies aimed at promoting the redevelopment and infill of targeted urban areas. Since most of the targeted areas are already developed areas, these are long term strategies which will be implemented incrementally over the next twenty-five or more years. The goal is to guide the redevelopment of these urban areas through policies aimed at:

Mixed-use Centers: As discussed in the "Lee County Mixed Use" issue papers the county should work to establish standards that guide the development of mixed-use centers. The standards should establish the centers' locations, density and intensity, and appropriate uses. Additionally, form and character practices should be developed that: guide the planning and placement of building layout and master planning strategies; transportation systems; infrastructure and utility services; parks and public space areas; and other community resources.

Urban Future Land Use Categories: All urban future land use categories should be evaluated and updated to address the following issues:

- Maximum density and intensity standards.
- Minimum density and intensity thresholds.

- Appropriate locations.
- Integration of land uses.
- Types of allowed land uses.

Urban Development Form and Character Principles: As highlighted in the “Lee County Mixed Use” issue papers the county should work to establish form and character principles that guide the development of mixed-use and urban development areas. Such principles are important to urban areas as they will help support the urban future land use categories by guiding the planning and development of urban communities. As discussed in the paper, such form and character should address:

- Higher densities and intensities within the urban development areas so as to support the development’s viability and ensure functional transit opportunities;
- Provide open and accessible connectivity with surrounding development and neighborhoods through roadway, greenway, sidewalk, and park connections;
- Neighborhoods that surround mixed-use ought to have minimum densities so as to provide a transition from the mixed-use development to surrounding residential areas;
- Enhanced transit facilities (accessible and safe bus stops, shelters and stations, sidewalks, bike trails, etc...) will be provided to allow the center to be connected through a county-wide multi-modal transportation system; and
- Incentives for development which promote the implementation of urban development principles. Such incentives may include density bonuses, less intensive administrative processes, and other considerations as identified through the LPA and CSAC discussions.

Neighborhood Park and Public Spaces: As discussed in the, “Suburban Framework” issue paper, neighborhood parks and public spaces are important to the livability and character of local neighborhoods. In urban communities, neighborhood parks and public spaces are even more important as they help link the various parts of the community together. In order to help promote the development of urban neighborhood parks and public spaces, the Lee Plan should be updated to include urban development principles that consider:

- Development of pocket parks, courtyards, and seating areas within urban centers, neighborhoods, and along walkway areas;
- Promotion of walkways, bikeways, and trails to connect urban business, shopping, neighborhood, and civic areas together and as opportunities to promote sustainability; and
- Use of fountains, sculptures, and other urban public art features as community markers.

Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights: As discussed in the “Rural Landscape and Environmental Area Strategies” issue paper the county should seek to use TDR and PDR programs to help provide additional bonus density within the county’s urban areas. The TDR and PDR programs would provide an additional incentive to developers seeking to build within the urban areas while also helping support the preservation of the county’s rural communities.

Multi-modal Transportation Systems: As discussed in the “Transportation” issue paper urban development areas function best when they are connected by an integrated multi-modal

transportation system. Such a system provides multiple transportation alternatives and enables people to move quickly and efficiently through an urban community. However, such a system depends upon appropriate density and intensity to ensure there are enough people to make the system function.

Additionally, as discuss in the “Suburban Framework” issue paper, future Lee Plan policies ought to address the following transportation issues:

- Completion of sidewalk systems along all roadways within the urban areas;
- Improved vehicular connections within the urban areas so that adjacent developments interconnect; and
- Revised parking standards that to include shared parking provisions, on street parking, structure parking facilities, and other urban parking practices.

Public Infrastructure: As discussed in the “Suburban Framework” issue paper, public stormwater infrastructure systems in Lee County are underutilized and contribute to the character concerns raised through the Lee Plan update process. Often the location of stormwater infrastructure systems are at the edge of properties, takes up large amounts of land, act as buffers between uses, and discourage community connectivity. In order to address these issues the following policy updates should be considered:

- Establish or expand future land use, utility, and form and character policies in the Lee Plan that promote shared stormwater retention facilities between adjacent developments;
- Establish or expand future land use, parks, and form and character policies in the Lee Plan that promote the use of stormwater facilities as part of a community’s public space, park, open space, and recreational resources; and
- Establish or expand future land use, utility, and conservation policies that foster the development of stormwater facilities that function as part of the county’s natural habitat system.