

Board and DCAG Comments and Responses

The following is a summary of responses to Board and DCAG comments following the March 3rd Work Session and the March 25th DCAG Meeting respectively.

Comments/Questions from the March 3, 2022 Board Work Session

- There was a general question regarding the role of comprehensive plan policies and if they would lock in approaches to addressing County issues. It was clarified that policies guide decision-making with some flexibility and do not provide specific requirements. Specific details for how policies are carried out are addressed through implementing tools, such as an ordinance or land development code regulations, while meeting the intent of the Comprehensive Plan's Guiding Principles and policies. Additional opportunities for public input will be provided the time of consideration and adoption of regulations.
- It was shared that an existing strategy identifying the use of emergency shelters as a method to address homelessness does not reflect the 'Housing First' approach used by the County. The Plan strategy (HOU Strategy 1.3.1.6; see Attachment 7.c) has been revised to reflect the prioritization of permanent housing and continues to address potential approaches for transitional or emergency sheltering when permanent housing is not immediately available.
- The Board discussed the Bike Lane map (Figure 10) included in the Transportation Supplemental section, there was concern that this map indicated that bike lanes were planned for US 19, with a greater concern that bike lanes may not be appropriate on all roads. After consultation with Forward Pinellas, it was clarified that the intent of the map is not to indicate that specifically a bike lane would be located on a specific roadway as it appears on the map. The intention is to highlight key areas that should be assessed for bicycle facility treatment. Ultimately, an assessment would need to determine the appropriate treatment to meet the needs of the users. To clarify the intention of this specific map, the title has been revised to 'Bicycle Facilities'. It should be noted that this map, included as part of the supplemental information for the comprehensive plan, is not adopted and does not hold the County to any specific decisions.

The intent to expanding the bicycle network seeks to enhance the County's multimodal system. It should be noted that a bicycle network does not only meet a recreational need but addresses a mobility option for users who opt to commute or reach daily needs (e.g., doctor's office; grocery store; etc.) by bicycle, or for those who may not have a personal automobile as an option. The proposed Comprehensive Plan policies seek to address transportation options for all users. Another concern was raised regarding bike lane width requirements. The specific requirements bicycle facilities are not part of policy language in the Comprehensive

Plan but would be addressed during facility planning/engineering in accordance with Florida Department of Transportation design standards.

- There was a question regarding Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) and if there had been any changes to policies to address the protection of golf courses and open space. While it was understood that there are policies in the Plan to protect open space and to provide standards/criteria for golf course retention, it was suggested that the Plan address TDR regulations as a protection tool. Currently, Forward Pinellas is in the process of updating the Countywide Rules as it relates to TDRs. Once these new rules are adopted, it will help guide potential updates to the County's TDR program.
- The Plan reflects the need to consider investment infrastructure for a range of issues, including support for economic development and meeting mobility needs. A comment was made during the Work Session to ensure that the Plan reflects 'sound' investment in infrastructure. It should be noted that one of the Guiding Principles, 'Best Practices', calls for fiscally responsible decisions, especially related to infrastructural upgrades. In addition, TRA Policy 3.1.1 has been updated to support the coordination between transportation decision-making and 'sound' investments with economic development, land use, infrastructure, housing, resiliency, workforce, and community development goals.

**Comments/Questions from the Development Customer Advisory Group (DCAG)
Meeting on March 25, 2022.**

- The key concern raised during the DCAG meeting focused on the County's Stormwater Manual and vulnerability assessment and how they are being implemented. While no specific examples were given regarding the Plan, the DCAG wanted to clarify that policies could support a regulatory scenario that is too restrictive.

Staff clarified that the Comprehensive Plan lays out the policies of what the County is trying to achieve – in this case, to reduce adverse impacts of the built environment and to protect/enhance hydrologic and ecological functions - and identifies that a Stormwater Manual be maintained to meet that objective. This Strategy states that the Manual promote innovative techniques to do so, while meeting performance standards, stormwater quantity/quality standards, and maintain function under rising sea level conditions. While the Plan does promote flexibility in solutions, the specifics of what regulations exist in the Manual itself occurs outside of the comprehensive plan process. Similarly, the vulnerability assessment is identified as one of the tools/data sources that could be utilized in the development of regulations to protect areas subject to impact from sea level rise. In either case, the appropriate

solutions are defined through a separate review and approval process, while meeting the intent of the comprehensive plan as described above.

- There was also a concern raised that there was not a fiscal impact analysis conducted for the Comprehensive Plan update. This update was conducted in accordance with State Statute requirements (§163.3177). In past years, Florida Statutes required demonstration of a 'financially feasible' plan; however, after 2011 the Community Planning Act was revised, it no longer required this analysis. Statute still requires the need to identify a minimum five (5)-year capital improvements project schedule to maintain level of service standards, and this program is reviewed annually. As a policy document, it is difficult to identify fiscal impacts as opposed to evaluating fiscal impacts of regulations.