

Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan

This plan, adopted at the end of 1997, is a revision of the previous 1990 plan. It considers extensive changes which have occurred in the City over the past seven years. The demands for public services as a result of an increase in population of over 20,000 people in this time period was a major factor in this change. The plan has a five year time frame for implementation and should be updated again at that time. However, it contains projections and anticipates projects beyond the five year scope.

The plan was totally revised to bring it up to date with regards to inventory and analysis data, maps, tables, and policies - local, regional and statewide. Some of the significant changes and direction includes the following:

- The Future Land Use Element provides for new commercial centers which were both developer initiated and City initiated. The need for these centers was established in a land use demand analysis, the results of which are highlighted in the plan. It also provides direction for urban design improvements along two major corridors and reserves a potential future land use conversion area. It outlines recent efforts to help control the negative effects of urban sprawl including the beginning of our neighborhood planning program and mixed use and design standards for larger projects (A Future Land Use Map is included in the folders in the back of the plan).
- The Transportation Element was revised to be consistent with requirements for potential mass transit services, revised and updated maps, and to designate future right of way acquisition to establish new corridors, or the connection of existing roads to improve traffic circulation. It considers the possibility of new bridges crossing the North Fork of the St. Lucie River as well as extending Walton Road crossing Indian River Lagoon to the beaches.
- The Housing Element was updated to include current information and extensive projections related to housing need, demand and population. It includes new data as based on required state standards for statistical projections.
- The Infrastructure Element includes major changes as related to the City's sewer and water Utility Services Areas which has been legally upheld, supported by the community, and is moving forward. It recognizes the necessity of this program and value to the City's future. Assessment service area maps have been included. Updated programs on drainage improvements were also included. Level of service standards for commercial development was incorporated into the plan.
- The Conservation and Coastal Management Elements were combined into one element to help consolidate similar data. Additional and updated environmental data, analysis and natural resources maps were included in this element. New hurricane evacuation data and maps were included. The plan recognizes the value of protecting the natural resources of the City and region.

- The Recreation and Open Space Element was re-written to provide an accurate and updated inventory of both public and private sites and facilities. This element was designed to be a master plan for park site acquisition and development, but retain maximum flexibility in facility type. A unified Parks & Open Space Map is provided in the back folder of the plan. The element recognizes the recent purchase of adequate park sites for the future with the leveraging of impact fees which occurred in 1997. It also sets a new level of service standard for parks and outlines ways to bring forth future park development.
- The Intergovernmental Coordination (ICE) and The Capital Improvements Elements (CIE) were updated to reflect current conditions. A survey of coordination mechanisms was performed to evaluate and improve effectiveness. The CIE is based on the approved Capital Improvements Program (CIP) of the City which is updated yearly. It needs to be based on demand from established levels of service and included in annual plan amendments to remain accurate.
- The Economic Development Element is a new optional element which was added to the plan. It recognizes the importance of economic development for the future. It is designed as a tool to promote economic development and includes both statistical information of current conditions, and future projections. It documents some of the important areas, efforts and interests of the community with regards to economic development. The element references the City's Economic Growth Team and the need for future strategic actions.

Summary of the Comprehensive Plan

The separate elements as outlined above comprise the City's Comprehensive Plan. The plan sets direction for community development into the future and was designed to be a working document which can be used as a reference guide for decision making and as a source of detailed inventory data. It is also designed to be consistent and in compliance with the numerous growth management regulations established by the State of Florida. It helps guide the location and design of development of the City and contains provisions for how the City will meet the demands concurrent with the needs of future anticipated population growth. It also protects valuable natural resources.

This comprehensive plan documents various improvements and possibilities for the City. Some of these efforts are ongoing in current programs, while many others will require new efforts and actions to make them a reality. When viewed in its entirety, the plan provides direction for action and improvements in planning the City's future.