

Palm Beach County adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 1980 providing the framework for land use changes within the unincorporated area and mechanisms and standards through which changes could occur. This plan represented a rethinking and restructuring of land use planning in the County. The changes were a result of unstable conditions in the economy of the County, the needs of the Palm Beach County residents and state legislative requirements. The basic concept of the Plan was to permit development at urban densities in those areas where urban services could be provided efficiently and economically, and to prevent urban density development in areas which were not planned for extension of urban services.

Palm Beach County's 1989 Comprehensive Plan built upon the strengths of its predecessor. This plan is based on an overall goal of maintaining a high quality of life in the County. The mechanisms and means for attaining this goal have been incorporated into the Elements of this Plan. Element drafts took shape and developed into the 1989 Plan as a result of a successful citizen participation program. Citizen input and Board of County Commissioners' direction throughout the planning stages of this document have created a Plan that not only reflects the interests of the County as a whole, but maintains and protects the unique qualities and characteristics present in its sub-regions.

In 1995, the County evaluated the Plan, in accordance with the Evaluation and Appraisal Report requirements of the Florida Statutes. As a result, the Plan was substantially amended in 1996 and 1997, to incorporate the revisions necessary to update the Plan in preparation for the next planning time frame. Additional reporting requirements were statutorily mandated during the 2006 and 2007 Florida Legislative sessions. These changes help to strengthen the connection and inter-relationship between the planning and budget development processes by identifying specific funding sources for future services required to maintain established levels of services.

HB 7207, the Community Planning Act, was signed by the Governor on June 2, 2011, amending multiple sections of the Florida Statutes, Chapter 163, and providing significant change to growth management in Florida. This legislation changed the name of the 'Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act' to the 'Community Planning Act'. The legislation also revised the duties of local governments and municipalities relating to comprehensive plans; reduced state oversight of land use planning and relaxed review processes; encouraged local governments to apply for certain innovative planning tools; eliminated the state mandate for transportation, schools, and parks and recreation concurrency; and authorized the state land planning agency and other appropriate state and regional agencies to provide technical assistance to local governments.

Palm Beach County's Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to address the needs and interests of the County's residents and visitors. Areas addressed include, but are not limited to, future land use, transportation, housing, fire-rescue, health and human services and capital improvements.

The Capital Improvement Element (CIE) of the plan consolidates the levels of service established in the various other elements into a comprehensive financial framework which projects the costs of providing those services and the County's ability to finance them. The CIE also establishes criteria for prioritizing and locating capital improvements. Fiscal policies regarding revenue generation, debt financing, capital improvements and renewals and replacements are included. This element includes a five year projection of the total cost of operating the County government including capital improvements, debt payments and operations as well as the revenues necessary to finance those activities.

The CIE is updated and revised annually to reflect the outcome of the budget development process that is based on Board of County Commissioner direction and County-wide planning. This annual planning process incorporates the current year operating and capital budgets and future projections into the CIE and the Five-Year Capital Budget. The updated Plan then becomes the initial guiding document in the subsequent year's countywide, comprehensive planning process.

The Goals, Objectives and Policies presented in the Plan reflect the directives of the citizenry and the County Commissioners. The following are some of the Goals (in no particular order) and what is being done in FY 2011 to accomplish them:

**GOAL                    Accommodate the increased demand for emergency services in a comprehensive and organized fashion**

The County has undergone significant changes in the concentration of its growth, namely into the western portions of the County. Much of this area is either unincorporated or contains municipalities who rely on County Fire-Rescue and Sheriff's Office services. The FY 2012 Sheriff's budget reflects the funding required to continue to provide quality service at an acceptable level.

The Fire Rescue Department continues to provide quality service. The County's service area encompasses 1,822 square miles, serving approximately 848,000 people. In FY 2011 Fire Rescue took on BLS (Basic Life Support) transport throughout its entire service area. The County currently provides full service to 18 municipalities and dispatches for an additional 10 municipalities.

**GOAL                    Utilize a capital improvements program to coordinate the timing and to prioritize the delivery of public facilities and other capital projects**

The County has a policy of maintaining a five-year capital improvement plan to identify and fund projects required to maintain minimum acceptable levels of service. Capital project proposals are ranked as either essential, necessary, or desirable when submitted to the Budget Office during the budget development process. The projects are prioritized during meetings with the County's Management Team. Each of the major departments involved in the process; Facilities Development and Operations, Engineering, Parks and Recreation, etc.; maintain their own individual objectives and performance measures to assure the success of each project.

**GOAL                    Redirect growth to where services and facilities can be provided in the most efficient manner and encourage the revitalization/redevelopment to meet the long term needs of the County**

The Countywide goal of revitalization/redevelopment is most directly associated with the goals and objectives of the Office of Community Revitalization (OCR). The mission of the OCR is to develop revitalization strategies and to provide technical and financial assistance to residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. Working closely with other County departments, OCR will determine funding initiatives which will then be reviewed by County Administration and then presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

**GOAL**            **Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of safe, sanitary and affordable housing to meet the needs of the County's residents**

Affordable housing in Palm Beach County is a significant budget issue. Due to the economic crisis, the number of households living in cost burdened, severely cost burdened, and overcrowded conditions have substantially increased. This particularly affects County residents at the very-low and low-income levels, although all income levels are being affected. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has developed a five-year plan identifying needs and setting goals and objectives for the allocation of state/federal/county funds to support affordable housing. For FY 2012, HCD will have available \$70 million in Federal, State, and local funds to serve the County's affordable housing goal. The majority of HCD's performance measures track housing construction, mortgage assistance, and housing rehabilitations. In response to the housing slump and the foreclosure crisis, new federally-funded programs have been initiated by HCD that will assist in stabilizing neighborhoods while providing affordable housing to low to middle income owners and renters. One large County initiative is the on-going Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2, through which the new construction of 225 affordable apartments is underway, the acquisition and rehabilitation of over 100 foreclosed housing units by non-profit partners, and the provision mortgages to over 60 homebuyers.

**GOAL**            **Create a balanced and diversified economy**

The Economic Development Office will continue its focus on economic sustainability in Palm Beach County. Significant resources have been secured to support expansion and revitalization of the economy in the Western Communities. Also, efforts continue for developing the Inland Port in the Western Communities. The presence of Scripps and Max Planck is facilitating new and expanding biotech related companies, a clear indication of the positive impact of one investment in the biotechnology industry. Efforts will continue to support and promote growth in this sector.