

4 | Recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments

This section provides recommendations for amendments to the Lee Plan as work begins on the updated plan. It draws upon the Vision Framework in setting the stage for proposed revisions to each element of the plan, and outlines the different types of changes being proposed.

Summary of Priority Recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments

INTRODUCTION

The Vision Framework outlined in Chapter 2 sets the stage for EAR-Based Amendments to the Lee Plan that will define how the county will address four critical community issues: livability, strong connections, community character, and sustainability. Priority recommendations identified below are intended to reinforce the following key aspects of the Vision Framework:

- **Encourage Complete Streets and Context-Sensitive Roadway Design**—establish specific form and transportation standards—including new standards for complete streets and context-sensitive roadway design that reflects the variations in the character of development in urban, suburban, and rural areas and appropriate multi-modal travel patterns in each area.
- **Delineate and Define Urban/Suburban/Rural Areas**—establish a new Form and Character Element that addresses desired distinctions between urban, suburban, and rural areas at a county-wide scale in terms of their overall development pattern, mix of uses, mix of housing types, types of parks and public spaces, transportation network, and infrastructure needs. Support these broad policies with more detailed policy direction in the Future Land Use Element as appropriate to individual land use categories.
- **Encourage Compact Development Patterns**—promote a more compact pattern of development that supports efficient and cost-effective infrastructure and service delivery. Provide clear policy direction for infill and redevelopment areas in addition to greenfield development areas.
- **Promote Mixed-Use Centers**—support the development of special places within Lee County—places that are uniquely identifiable with a complementary mix of uses that promote livability, walkability, and a variety of housing choices.
- **Protect Character of Existing Neighborhoods**—strengthen policies related to infill and redevelopment to ensure the character of established neighborhoods in the county is preserved.
- **Land Use Transportation Coordination**—strengthen and improve coordination between land development and transportation planning
- **Protect Vital Environmental Resources**—Protect the county's natural resources.
- **Support Agricultural Uses**—strengthen policies that support and promote agricultural uses and recognize the role that commercial agriculture plays in the county's economy.

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In addition to the local community issues listed above, the EAR-based Amendments will also address major changes to Florida statutes, as listed in the table found in Appendix C. One of the most significant pieces of legislation adopted in the last seven years was House Bill 697. The legislation intends to help local governments address issues related to energy efficiency, suburban sprawl, climate change, and transportation systems in a coordinated manner. Plan updates will accomplish this goal by coordinating the Future Land Use, Transportation, Conservation and Coastal Management, and Housing Elements.

Numerous elements in the current Lee Plan are affected by the changes to F.S. Ch. 163 provided for in House Bill 697. While the bill specifically identifies changes to the Future Land Use, Transportation, Conservation, and Housing Elements, every element of the Lee Plan has been reviewed through the lens of this legislation. The resulting EAR recommendations identify opportunities for promoting sustainability initiatives— such as energy conservation, mixed-use centers, and multi-modal transportation alternatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A series of recommendations for adjustments to the organization of the Lee Plan are outlined below. Each recommendation is described in greater detail later in this section. Organizational recommendations are as follows:

- ***Incorporate New Elements***—two new elements should be added to the plan: a Character and Form Element and a Communities Element.
- ***Reorganize Existing Elements As Needed***—some existing elements are in need of significant reorganization in addition to targeted policy revisions.

- ***Provide a Clear Context for Each Element***—each element should contain an overview section that sets the context for the goals, objectives, and policies that follow, in addition to describing the relationships and linkages to other elements in the plan.
- ***Clarify Goal Structure to Focus on Outcomes***—many goals in the current plan focus on logistics and mechanics, future goals should be revised to address outcomes and achievement of county vision.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS BY ELEMENT

On the following pages is a summary description of the priority recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments to each of the Lee Plan's elements, as well as recommendations for new elements. A more detailed description of recommended changes to each Lee Plan element is included later in this section.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS BY ELEMENT

| PLAN ELEMENT | PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS |
|--------------------------|--|
| Vision Statement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update with new vision statement and vision principles outlined in this EAR. ▪ Relocate existing community descriptions to a new Communities Element. |
| Form and Character (new) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish design principles that address desired development patterns within the county at a broad level, including: mixed-use development, compact development patterns, and desired community character for urban, suburban, and rural areas at a broad level. ▪ Establish policies that support infill and redevelopment as keys to achieving a more compact and efficient development pattern. |
| Future Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restructure element to provide a more coordinated presentation of issues and recommendations around five organizing topics: growth management, land use categories, development character and form, development standards, and sustainable land use. ▪ Strengthen existing land use category policies to promote mixed-use development and foster the use of the Compact Communities Code. ▪ Clarify existing policies to provide clear expectations for new development and infill/redevelopment. ▪ Revise/update policies to reinforce distinctions between the urban, suburban, and rural land use types as described in the vision framework. ▪ Modify or add policies that affect energy conservation in keeping with the requirements of HB 697. |
| Communities (new) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relocate community descriptions currently included in the vision statement into a new Communities Element and expand as needed to address critical community issues. ▪ Relocate existing community-specific goals, objectives, and policies in the current Future Land Use Element. ▪ Include a general goal related to establishment/updating of community plans and the relationship of individual community plans to other elements of the updated plan. |

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| PLAN ELEMENT | PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update goals, objectives, and policies to reflect a clear focus on multi-modal and efficient systems that will operate in support of a more compact and sustainable development pattern for Lee County. ▪ Reorganize goals, objectives, and policies according to seven thematic topics in the context of encouraging sustainable transportation systems: multi-modal transportation, design and form, transportation standards, aviation, ports, rail, and sustainable transportation. ▪ Modify or add policies that affect energy conservation in keeping with the requirements of HB 697. |
| Community Facilities and Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update policies to focus on more efficient delivery of services, location of facilities that support compact development patterns, and conservation of resources. |
| Parks, Recreation, and Open Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update to be consistent with national standards. ▪ Emphasize critical linkages with other elements of the plan, such as land use and transportation. ▪ Coordinate the provision of new facilities with the concepts of compact development patterns, environmental preservation, economic development, and fiscal sustainability. |
| Capital Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recast this element’s emphasis to be more strongly aligned with the key goals, objectives, and policies contained elsewhere in the plan, so that the county’s investments are used to support primary policy objectives. |
| Conservation and Coastal Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reorganize goals, objectives, and policies this element under two major topics for clarity: Conservation and Coastal Management. ▪ Modify or add policies that affect energy conservation in keeping with the requirements of HB 697. ▪ Expand application of the term rare and unique county wide rather than within the planning area. |
| Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most of the material in the existing Housing Element of the Lee Plan remains applicable and should be carried forward. ▪ Modify or add policies to include broader issues related to community livability, and drawing linkage to other elements such as Land Use and Transportation. |
| Historic Preservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider broadening preservation goals, objectives, and policies to include scenic preservation. |
| Intergovernmental Coordination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modify or add policies to broaden existing efforts for coordination with colleges and the university on land use, transportation, and economic development initiatives. ▪ Reinforce policy support for regional planning efforts that emphasize coordinated development patterns, growth management, and transportation. |

| PLAN ELEMENT | PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS |
|--------------|--|
| Economic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate goals, objectives, and policies to address the wide array of issues related to economic growth and fiscal sustainability, such as land use patterns, community facilities, and facilities and services. ▪ Consider measures to encourage and/or incentivize the types of growth and land use patterns viewed by the county as most desirable for meeting the county’s overall set of goals and objectives. |

Recommendations Based on Critical Community Issues and Element Assessment Review

BACKGROUND

The evaluation of the Lee Plan has been based on a process of:

- Assessing current conditions and trends.
- Engaging stakeholders (community members, business people, professional staff, interagency partners, and appointed and elected public officials) of Lee County in a visioning process to set a clear target for the future.
- Identifying key community issues that are fundamental to all components of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Considering new policy directions or changes in course that are needed to achieve the vision.
- Setting a future planning framework that addresses current conditions and future needs.

The preceding chapters of this EAR clearly articulate Lee County's vision for 2030. This chapter examines how well the current goals, objectives, and policies in the Lee Plan support the implementation of county's vision and address the four critical community issues. It explores the following questions:

- Are current goals, objectives, and policies in the Lee Plan aligned with the county's vision?
- How likely are they to move Lee County toward achievement of the stated objectives?
- What needs to be changed or added?

- What tools are needed to achieve the county's new vision and land use framework?

Organizational Recommendations

Through the EAR process, it has become clear that the Lee Plan organizational structure should be updated to enable the plan to better communicate the county's vision, respond to the four critical community issues, and help make the document more user friendly.

The following recommendations will guide the Lee Plan organizational updates and provide a clear policy framework for each element. Lee Plan organizational recommendations will support and provide an structural outline for the specific element-by-element recommendations. The Lee Plan organizational recommendations are as follows:

The organizational recommendations greatly impact four elements—Vision, Form and Character, Future Land Use, and Communities. Two of these elements—Form and Character Element and Communities Element—are new to the plan and two—Vision and Future Land Use— exist but will require substantial changes.

- **Develop New Elements**—in order to implement the county's vision, the update of the Lee Plan should develop two new elements—Form and Character Element and Communities Element. The purpose of these elements is to provide additional policy direction on Lee County's development character and form while further enhancing the unique character of the county's 22 local communities. Additionally, the new elements will help determine how infill and redevelopment areas interface with established neighborhoods and how future developments support and maintain the distinct nature of the county's local communities.

The Form and Character Element would be comprised largely of new goals, policies, and objectives that address desired patterns of growth in the county at broad level, such as compact growth, mixed-use centers, traditional development patterns, and complete street design. The Communities Element would unite existing community-specific vision statements, goals, objectives, and policies currently contained in the Vision Element, the Future Land Use Element, and other elements of the current Lee Plan.

- **Reorganize Existing Elements As Needed**—two elements in the existing Lee Plan—the Future Land Use Element and the Transportation Element—need major organizational adjustments in addition to targeted policy revisions. Revisions to these elements are needed to help ensure existing and recommended policies are more closely aligned with the county’s vision.

The remaining organizational recommendations are to be applied to all of the plan’s elements. These recommendations are designed to ensure that the plan’s readability, structural outline, and clarity are easy to follow and implement. The Lee Plan organizational recommendations are as follows:

- **Provide a Clear Context for Each Element**—each element in the update of the Lee Plan should begin with an overview that describes the element’s purpose, identifies the topics that will be covered, summarizes the key issues, makes linkages to other elements in the plan, and provides a summary of the key principles and actions that are recommended in the element. This approach would help provide context regarding the intent of goals, objectives, and policies that follow.
- **Clarify Goal Structure to Focus on Outcomes**—another organizational recommendation is to update the form and context of goal statements so that they stress a desired outcome and achievement rather than a mechanical step necessary to accomplish the outcome. Many goals in the current plan focus

on logistics and mechanics rather than substantive vision of a desired outcome.

As an example, the first goal in the Lee Plan, in the first element, Future Land Use, is “To maintain and enforce a Future Land Use Map.” This goal statement focuses on logistics (maintain and enforce a map) rather than articulating an end state that is being aspired to as a result of this action. As such, it would be recommended that the land use goal be changed in this example to support Lee County’s vision by preserving its character, protecting natural and man-made resources, achieving a more energy-efficient land use pattern, and discouraging urban sprawl.

Element-by-Element Recommendations

Background

This section provides recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments to each element that will help guide the preparation of the update to the Lee Plan. The following components are addressed for each element:

- **Overview**—a brief discussion of each element and its current/recommended role in the update of the Lee Plan is provided as a foundation for the discussion of issues and recommended amendments that follows.
- **Successes/Shortcomings of Comprehensive Plan Elements**—F.S. Chapter 163.3191(2)(h) requires the EAR to contain a brief assessment of the successes and shortcomings of each element of the plan. The results of this analysis will help guide the county in the preparation of the EAR-based Amendments. Overall, there have been many successes that have resulted from the current Lee Plan’s policies. These successes range from a strong emphasis on community-based

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planning to the successful protection of the county’s natural resources and rural areas, to the establishment of a high quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure system.

Yet looking towards the future, the plan does not fully support the development patterns and opportunities necessary to achieve the county’s vision and sustain a robust quality of life. The successes and shortcomings section builds on the critical community issues assessment provided in Chapter 3 of this report. Note: since the Character and Form Element and Communities Element are new elements proposed for the Lee Plan Update, they are not included in this assessment.

- Key Issues to be Addressed**—the critical community Issues chapter of this EAR provides a detailed analysis of issues to be addressed in each of the Lee Plan’s elements in response to the four issues: livability, strong connections, community character, and sustainability. This section builds upon that discussion by briefly summarizing key issues each element will need to address based upon the four community issues and other critical county needs. This section establishes a foundation for the Recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments.
- Recommended Amendments**—this section provides recommendations for organizational and targeted EAR-Based Amendments that emerged from the New Horizon 2035 process. Recommendations in this section are intended to reflect the overarching recommendations for each element, rather than specific text amendments or new language. Recommendations for amendments to existing Lee Plan planning directives are provided in Appendix B: Recommendations for Amendments to Existing Lee Plan Elements. Recommendations for amendments based on new or revised statutory requirements may be found in Appendix C: Recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments Based on Changes to State Law.

On the following page are summaries of two tables of contents. The first, on the left is the table of contents for the Lee Plan as it exists today. The second, on the right, is the table of contents proposed for the Lee Plan update. The proposed table of contents is designed to better group elements according to corresponding issues—community and land development, transportation, public facilities services, and infrastructure, environment and parks, and plan implementation.

| Existing Table of Contents | Proposed Table of Contents |
|--|--|
| Lee Plan (2010 Codification) | Lee Plan (Updated) |
| I. Vision Statement | 1. Vision Statement |
| | 2. Character and Form (New Element) |
| II. Future Land Use | 3. Future Land Use |
| | 4. Communities (New Element) |
| III. Transportation | 5. Housing |
| IV. Community Facilities and Services | 6. Historic Preservation |
| V. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space | 7. Transportation |
| VI. Capital Improvements | 8. Community Facilities & Services |
| VII. Conservation and Coastal Management | 9. Conservation and Coastal Management |
| VIII. Housing | 10. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space |
| IX. Historic Preservation | 11. Intergovernmental Coordination |
| X. Intergovernmental Coordination | 12. Economic |
| XI. Economic | 13. Capital Improvements |

| Existing Table of Contents | Proposed Table of Contents |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| XII. Glossary | 14. Glossary |
| XIII. Procedures and Administration | 15. Procedures and Administration |

As discussed previously, the new Character and Form Element, intends to better guide the development form of future development and better articulate the county’s desired character. Additionally, the new Communities Element will better unify, define, and present the planning characteristics and objectives of Lee County’s local communities.

Vision Statement

A. OVERVIEW

The Vision Statement is the first element of the current Lee Plan and is also recommended as the initial element of the updated Lee Plan. The Vision Statement should be broad and set the stage for all that is to follow. It should be easily understood with a careful but brief presentation of the aspirations for Lee County’s future. The vision should be followed by the new vision principles, as defined in the EAR Chapter 2 Vision Framework. The vision and vision principles outlined in this EAR are concise and clear statements that reflect the community’s desires for the future.

B. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

In the current Lee Plan, the vision statement includes a description of the twenty-two planning communities in Lee County along with a discussion of the overall vision for the county. The descriptions of these varying geographies of the county are important building blocks for the plan. However, a clearer approach would be to articulate the countywide vision first, followed by discussion of

county-wide land use patterns and desired development forms, and then use those themes and principles to review the status of the individual planning communities as a separate element of the new plan. In addition, the current vision statement needs to be updated to reflect the new vision and vision principles established in this EAR.

C. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Recommended amendments are as follows:

- Replace the existing vision statement with the new vision statement and vision principles included as part of this EAR, and include aspects of the current vision as appropriate.
- Incorporate images and graphics to help communicate key elements of the vision.
- Relocate planning community descriptions to the new Communities Element.

Character and Form Element (New)

A. OVERVIEW

The Character and Form Element will be a new element in the updated Lee Plan. This element is intended to address the desired form and character of future development within the county at the broadest level. New goals, objectives, and policies will reflect the guiding principles in the Vision Framework Element—placing an emphasis on compact development patterns that support efficient and cost-effective infrastructure and service delivery; the protection and enhancement of community character and environmental resource areas; and establishing a clearer distinction between urban, suburban, and rural areas. Broad concepts and policy direction established in this element will be reinforced by more detailed policy direction throughout the plan and particularly in the Future Land Use and Transportation Elements. As an example, rural areas will be

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addressed in the Character and Form Element from the standpoint of the types and form of development patterns and uses that are desirable in these locations. While within the Future Land Use Element, more detailed policies will support these concepts as they relate to specific land use categories. In the Transportation Element the needs for context-sensitive design will be addressed. In the Conservation and Coastal Management policies regarding habitat corridors, targeted conservation areas, and natural species protection would be established.

B. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Key issues to be addressed in the new Character and Form Element as part of the EAR-Based Amendments process are as follows:

- Provide a clear definition of and distinction between the desired character and form of urban, suburban, and rural areas, addressing at a broad level issues such as compact growth and mixed-use centers. In addition, the relationship of environmental resource areas to different types of developed areas should be addressed.
- Establish policies that support infill and redevelopment as a key means of achieving a more compact and efficient pattern of growth.

C. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The primary recommended amendment is to develop and include this new element in the update of the Lee Plan, with a variety of graphics that should be included to define character and form. Specific recommendations are as follows:

- Establish new form principles for urban, suburban, and rural development types that build on the principles of form, use, and transportation outlined in the new vision framework and existing policies, where appropriate. Principles should provide broad

policy direction on the general distinctions between these areas in terms of their overall development pattern, mix of uses, mix of housing types, types of parks and public spaces, transportation network, and infrastructure needs.

- Incorporate graphic examples and design guidelines to convey what is and what is not desired in different types of development areas, and to provide policy direction for Lee County Land Development Code changes needed to codify the intended design direction for different land use types.
- Incorporate cross references or new policies that address the relationship between the Character and Form Element and other elements that have a strong influence on the form and character of the county's built environment. Elements that should have corresponding policies include Future Land Use; Transportation; Community Facilities; Conservation and Coastal Management; Parks, Recreation, and Open Space; Communities; and Housing.
- Evaluate current future land use designations based on existing conditions and future development needs to incorporate criteria and standards that address desired land use forms and character. Such amendments should assure successful implementation of the county's vision and land use framework as described in this EAR.
- Consider what land use tools are needed to 1) better delineate between urban, suburban, and rural areas (e.g., urban growth boundary and/or urban service area), 2) identify areas appropriate for urban and suburban uses, and 3) establish standards to limit expansion of development outside of these designated areas. Specific criteria for amendments to growth and/or service area boundaries should also be considered to ensure that development only occurs in appropriate areas.

- Develop a set of policies that address the need to prevent leap frog development by 1) supporting land use practices and tools that provide for the contiguous development of land, 2) expanding transportation systems and public facilities to meet those development areas located adjacent to existing infrastructure areas, and 3) prioritizing the protection and conservation of natural resources in large, adjacent, and connected land areas.
- Introduce the concept of transects into the new element as a means of clarifying transitions in character and form between urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Future Land Use Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use Element guides Lee County's future development location, type, and pattern. The element achieves this purpose through objectives and policies related to growth management, annexations, land use standards, and other county development activities. Currently, the element also includes goals, objectives, and policies designed to foster the unique character of the county's local community planning areas. The element is the most comprehensive of the Lee Plan's elements with linkages to every other topic in the plan.

Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element have provided the county with the means by which to accomplish some of the stated goals of the element. However, as discussed throughout this report, current land use goals need to be amended to better address the element's shortcoming and better meet the tenets of the county's new future vision.

Significant amendments in the structure and content of the element are recommended to help reinforce the importance of this element in helping the county to achieve its vision, establish desired urban, suburban, and rural framework, and to satisfy the sustainability requirements of HB 697.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Future Land Use Element include:

- The plan is community-based; communities are more involved in planning than most other counties and cities in Florida.
- The plan led to our current diverse neighborhoods and suburban development pattern as it was intended.
- The plan provides a good deal of market flexibility.
- Infrastructure was constructed concurrent with development and was largely paid for by development.
- The element set a foundation for a countywide park system.
- The element kept three large rural areas largely intact.
- DRGR area protected our water supply, low density, and lower services expectations.
- Protected mangrove areas; low density development, conservation.
- The barrier islands have community plans that (largely) protect their character.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Future Land Use Element include:

- The element does not address the overall land use balance in the county.

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- The element does not include a clear linkage to other plan elements.
- The element doesn't include a design component to address the desired form and character of new development or infill and redevelopment.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Key issues to be addressed in the Future Land Use Element as part of the EAR-Based Amendments are as follows:

- Modify the description of the overall land use planning context in the county based on the new vision.
- Better align goals, objectives, and policies in the element with the Vision Framework Element and other elements in the plan, in particular with regard to multi-modal transportation, mixed-use, master planning and form, and infill and redevelopment.
- Separate community-specific goals, objectives, and policies from those that are applicable county-wide to reduce the length and complexity of the Future Land Use Element and establish the new Communities Element.
- Clarify the desired character and form of new development and infill/redevelopment in urban, suburban, and rural areas of the county to ensure future development is consistent with the vision and compatible with established neighborhoods.
- Modify or add policies that affect energy conservation in keeping with the requirements new state statutory requirements including HB 697.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Two types of EAR-Based Amendments are recommended for the Future Land Use Element: 1) organizational amendments and 2) targeted amendments. Both types of amendments are intended to

help align the element more directly with the critical community issues. Each is described below.

Organizational Amendments

A key recommendation for the Future Land Use Element is to reorganize existing goals, objectives, and policies in this element for the update to the Lee Plan according to five topic areas:

- **Growth Management**—Goals 1 through 3 in the existing element, which pertain to the Future Land Use Map, an economically feasible plan, and private funding for infrastructure and their associated objectives and policies will be folded together under the subheading of Growth Management.
- **Land Use Categories**—Goals 5-9 in the existing element all relate to land use categories: residential, commercial, industrial, marine-oriented, and agricultural. Although the level of detail and range of topics varies by land use category, each generally addresses development intensity/density, development standards, and in some cases development practices. These goals, objectives, and policies will be consolidated beneath a new Land Use Categories subheading, along with new descriptions of land use categories such as mixed-use. Goals 30 and 31, which were added to establish two new land use categories, “Burnt Store Marina Village” and “Destination Resort Mixed Use Water Dependant” will also be added to this topic area.
- **Development Character and Form**— Goal 4, sustainable development design, includes objectives and policies related to the mixed-use overlay. This section will incorporate existing policies related to the design of mixed-use development and address in greater detail, the development concepts identified in the Vision Framework and addressed broadly in the new Character and Form Element. Design principles that relate more

directly to groupings of land use categories, such as neighborhoods, mixed-use centers, and employment areas will be incorporated to address issues such as development design and character, site layout, connectivity, and infill and redevelopment. The design principles will provide a clear policy foundation for future updates to the Land Development Code.

- **Development Standards**—Goal 11 addresses adherence to established standards. These will be combined with design-related form and character standards and become part of the Development Standards section.
- **Sustainable Land Use**—this section will make connections to other elements to address inter-relationships between transportation, community facilities and services, parks, open space, infrastructure and capital improvements, coastal management, housing, historic preservation, and fiscal issues. It will also include energy conservation topics to address the requirements of HB 697.

This reorganization is intended to reinforce the Land Use Framework defined through the EAR process and outlined in the Vision Framework chapter of this EAR. As part of this reorganization, much of the material in the current Future Land Use Element will be modified or relocated.

Goals written to meet the specific needs of a particular community in the current Future Land Use Element should be combined as part of the new Communities Element of the updated Lee Plan.

Targeted Amendments

In addition to the organizational amendments described above, the following targeted amendments to the Future Land Use Element are recommended:

- Add an introductory section that describes the overall context for land use planning in the county as background for the goals, objectives, and policies that follow.
- Draft new goals for each of the five new topic areas to address critical community issues identified in Chapter 3 of this EAR. In some cases language can be drawn from existing goal statements in the Lee Plan and modified/carried over into the updated plan.
- Strengthen existing land use category policies to promote mixed-use development. Designate appropriate areas for different types of mixed-use centers.
- Evaluate current land use categories to determine where changes may be needed to reinforce the land use recommendations contained in this EAR.
- Foster the use of the Compact Communities Code by determining how and where it should be applied.
- Directly address the urban, suburban, and rural land use framework as part of growth management policies.
- Reevaluate densities within the urban and suburban land use categories to ensure that they are supportive of the land use concepts and patterns contained in the vision outlined in Chapter 2 of this EAR. Consider increasing densities and including provisions for minimum densities in areas designated as mixed-use centers.
- Evaluate land use categories that apply in rural areas to determine if they are aligned with the goals for rural development patterns outlined in this EAR to clearly delineate and protect the character of land uses in rural areas. Consider developing new tools as part of a rural areas toolkit to protect rural area character, including density transfer programs, farmland trusts,

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standards for conservation subdivisions (rural clusters), and others as appropriate.

- Add policies that support and reinforce the retention of commercial agriculture in rural areas (i.e., ranches and farms) as an important component of the county's economic base and heritage.
- Strengthen and enhance suburban areas, both existing and newly developing, by incorporating policies that improve walkability and interconnectivity; encourage the retrofitting and design of arterial and commercial corridors to make them more vibrant and attractive places; and review land use categories and revise as needed to encourage a broader mix of uses (commercial and employment) and more diverse housing types.
- Add a sustainability goal and associated objectives and policies to address energy efficiency requirements related to HB 697.
- Add policies to address place-types, building and site characteristics, and design objectives as part of the new Development Character and Form Element.
- Add cross-references to the Transportation Element, new Character and Form Element, and other elements as needed to ensure the plan's relationship to each of the critical community issues is evident throughout.
- Add new policies to address the need for clear connections between public gathering places, open space, and parks and surrounding land uses.
- Update policies to address the importance of parks, plazas, courtyards, greens, and other public spaces as part of the mixed-use overlay.

Communities Element (new)

A. OVERVIEW

The Communities Element will be a new addition to the Lee Plan. The Lee Plan includes 22 unique and individual communities within Lee County, each with a distinct character. These individual communities are the building blocks of Lee County. Each is unique and has differing conditions and needs. This new element will pull most of its content from descriptions of the individual communities that are currently in the Vision Statement of the Lee Plan, combined with material in Goal Statements 12-32 in the current Future Land Use Plan. The uniting together of these individual communities, with an emphasis on connectivity, will be an important part of the update to the Lee Plan.

There will be multiple linkages to other plan elements. Most prominent will be connections to the Future Land Use Element to assure recognition of these individual communities, descriptions of individual areas in the Character and Form Element, and public improvement needs to be addressed through processes outlined in the Capital Facilities Element.

Goals for 11 of the individual communities are currently included in the Future Land Use Element of the Lee Plan. As this new Communities Element is being constructed for the Lee Plan, additional goal sets for the remaining communities will be added where they are already in the process of being developed in cooperation with the community. Goals for communities that do not have or are not in the process of developing goals will be incorporated in the future when initiated by the community.

| Communities for which Goal Statements Currently Exist in the Future Land Use Element or are under consideration | Communities which do not have or are not in the process of developing goals |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alva ▪ Gasparilla Island / Boca Grande ▪ Burnt Store (partially complete) ▪ Captiva ▪ San Carlos ▪ Pine Island ▪ North Fort Myers ▪ Buckingham ▪ Estero ▪ Bayshore ▪ Page Park ▪ Lehigh Acres ▪ Caloosahatchee Shores ▪ Palm Beach Boulevard ▪ North Olga ▪ Upper Captiva ▪ Southeast Lee County | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gateway / Airport ▪ Daniels Parkway ▪ Iona / McGregor ▪ South Fort Myers |
| <p>Note: While municipalities in Lee County are officially considered planning communities, planning functions are provided by individual municipalities.</p> | |

Describing each of these areas, each accompanied by goal sets, will be the purpose of the new Communities Element.

B. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Key issues to be addressed in the new Communities Element as part of the EAR-Based Amendments process are as follows:

- Provide a clear definition of and distinction between Lee County’s 22 individual communities.
- Coordinate with local communities to establish a clear vision and/or policy direction for individual communities where it is lacking in the current plan.
- Reinforce linkages to the Vision Framework and Critical Community Issues and individual communities, as applicable.
- Clarify the relationship between planning communities and community plans to reduce confusion.

C. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Establish a new Communities Element as follows:

- Relocate community descriptions currently included in the Vision Statement.
- Relocate existing community-specific goals, objectives, and policies currently included in the Future Land Use Element.
- Organize policies so as to provide a clear distinction between general policies that apply to all communities and policies that are specific to individual communities.
- Develop corresponding and shared goals and policies for those planning communities that have more than one community plan.

Transportation Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Transportation Element provides policy guidance on the county’s multi-modal transportation development and service

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delivery system. The element achieves this purpose by addressing: facility locations, safety, energy-efficiency, rights-of-way, levels of service, classifications, concurrency management, capital improvements programming, development regulations, landscaping, community and environmental impacts, intergovernmental coordination, mass transit, ports, aviation and related facilities. The element also considers coordination between the county's roadways, railways, aviation, roads, and ports.

Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element have provided the county with the means by which to accomplish some of the stated goals of the element. However, Lee County's approach to transportation is shifting. While new roadways and major road improvements are still needed in some instances, the county's priorities are turning increasingly toward improving the efficiency and sustainability of the existing transportation system. This shift in priorities emphasizes community connectivity and improved circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, with the goal of creating compact, walkable communities within the county. The term multi-modal will appear frequently in this element, referring to the need to consider all modes of transportation for people and goods: automobiles, walking, biking, public transportation, ride-sharing, aviation, and ports.

The linkages between the Transportation Element and the Future Land Use Element are compelling, and the approaches to both need to be tightly coordinated. More compact land use patterns set the stage for attention to complete streets, with bicycle, pedestrian, and transit components. Increased connectivity in the transportation system supports mixed-use land development opportunities. As the update to the Lee Plan is prepared, attention to the land use - transportation link needs to be a major theme.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Transportation Element include:

- The element has ensured new roadways, sidewalks, bike ways, and trail systems have been built to accommodate the varied needs of a new development and increased populations.
- The element provides roadway capacity to accommodate new suburban developments.
- The element meets established roadway LOS standards and addresses the needs of transportation concurrency.
- The element provides support for airport expansion (terminal and runway) and accommodation for future service air transport demands.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Transportation Element include:

- While the county has a variety of multi-modal transportation resources (sidewalks, trails, bikeways, mass transit), the plan has not resulted in a well connected, easily accessible, or seamlessly integrated multi-modal system.
- The element contains conflicts between roadway policies and pedestrian/bicycle safety.
- Policies should be better coordinated with the Future Land Use Element and other related elements in order to better address the needs for sustainable land use development, complete streets, traditional neighborhood development patterns, and other related needs.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The Transportation Element directly relates to all four of the critical community issues identified and discussed in detail in the previous chapter and to the issue of connectivity in particular. The following issues have been identified as the core ideas that need to be addressed in the Transportation Element of the updated Lee Plan:

- Stronger policy linkages between the Transportation Element and the Future Land Use Element are needed to promote a more compact pattern of development and increased connectivity.
 - Address principles and standards for complete streets and context-sensitive design and form of roadways and multi-modal facilities. Once this policy direction has been added to the Lee Plan, specific requirements for complete streets can then be addressed through the Land Development Code and other regulatory documents.
 - Address the differing balance of travel modes within areas of the county, as well as potential conflicts between roadway policies and the movement of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.
 - Stronger policy linkages are needed between the Transportation Element and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element—emphasizing greenway and bikeway connections, the Conservation and Coastal Management Element—with regard to air quality issues, and the Capital Improvements Element—with regard to funding mechanisms and priorities for transportation improvements.
 - Energy conservation linkages to address energy related aspects of transportation as required by HB 697.
- E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS**
- Two types of EAR-Based Amendments are recommended for the Transportation Element: 1) organizational amendments and 2) targeted amendments. Each is described below.
- Organizational Amendments**
- A key recommendation for this element is to reorganize the 12 existing goals in the current Transportation Element into seven thematic topics as follows:
- **Multi-Modal Transportation**—this section will incorporate material currently found in four existing goal statements in the Lee Plan: Goal 40: Safety, Energy-Efficiency, Acquisition, Preservation, and Protection measures for a Multi-modal Transportation system; Goal 42: Intergovernmental Coordination; Goal 43: Mass Transit Service; and Goal 44: Transit Development Plan.
 - **Design and Form**—this section will incorporate Goal 39: Development Regulations and associated objectives and policies and will be expanded to incorporate context-sensitive design and transportation-related urban design policies.
 - **Transportation Standards**—this section will incorporate Goal 37: Level of Service Standards and its associated objectives and policies as well as concurrency requirements.
 - **Aviation**—this section will incorporate Goal 47: Coordinated System of Aviation Facilities and associated objectives and policies.
 - **Ports**—this section will incorporate Goal 45: Marine Navigation Management and associated objectives and policies.
 - **Rail**—this section will incorporate material from Goal 46: Coordinated System of Railways, and associated objectives and policies.
 - **Sustainable Transportation**—this section will bring together the issues of multimodal transportation, land use coordination and energy efficiency to address greenhouse gas emissions associated with the county’s transportation system. This section will also incorporate material from the following existing goal statements in the Lee Plan: Goal 38: Capital Improvements Programming; Goal 41: Community and Environmental Impacts; and Goal 46: Coordinated System of Railways, Aviation, Ports, and Roads

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Targeted Amendments

In addition to the organizational amendments described above, the following targeted amendments to the Transportation Element are recommended:

- New goals will need to be drafted for inclusion in each of the seven new sections. This new language will reflect the county's shifting emphasis towards multi-modal transportation and livability. In some cases language can be drawn from existing goal statements as modified and/or carried over into the updated Lee Plan.
- Expand the element to include a new multi-modal transportation section to address critical community issues through direct policy references to livability, connectivity, community character, and sustainability in the planning and implementation of transportation improvements.
- Establish policy linkages to the Future Land Use and Character and Form Elements of the New Horizon 2035 update of the LeePlan.
- Establish context-sensitive roadway design and complete streets provisions that integrate with urban, suburban, and rural development forms, and that provide safe, convenient facilities for all users.
- Include policies that address the ongoing evaluation of existing transportation practices for consistency with complete streets provisions.
- Include a design component to address context-sensitive design and transportation-related urban design policies. This section should be cross-referenced to the new Character and Form Element.
- Expand policies that address transportation-related development regulations specific to site design and connectivity to include appropriate standards for urban, suburban and rural areas.
- Include policies addressing pedestrian-oriented design principles and standards.
- Include policies to address alternate concurrency systems for mixed-use centers which include a specific plan for mobility for these areas which establishes transportation alternatives, necessary capital improvement, and equitable financing options.
- Expand policies that emphasize Transportation Systems Management (TSM) to improve the efficiency of the existing transportation system.
- Include policies to address parking, such as shared parking reductions in mixed-use areas, potential parking reductions in areas served by transit, and parking facilities for bicycles.
- Include policies addressing the use of transportation-related stormwater facilities (e.g., green streets or trail corridors) as a community resource integrated into the design of neighborhoods.
- Add a sustainability goal and associated objectives and policies to address greenhouse gas reduction and energy conservation linkages with transportation, including alternative fuels and vehicles as required by HB 697.
- Add/modify policies to reinforce the role of compact development in supporting a stronger relationship between land use and transportation, recognizing the tenets of complete streets as guiding principles for all transportation and land use decisions.
- Expand policies that address the need to consider the safety of wildlife in the development of new roads, particularly roads in conservation or rural areas.

Community Facilities and Services Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Community Facilities and Services Element of the Lee Plan addresses the individual components of public infrastructure necessary to sustain life and activity in Lee County. Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element have provided the county with the means by which to accomplish the stated goals of the element. However, as discussed through this report, a stronger linkage is needed between these goals and those found in other elements of the plan to help support the community's vision.

The organization of this element in the update of the Lee Plan will generally be consistent with the current Lee Plan. No major changes are recommended, except to update information and add a new section at the end of the element Sustainable Community Facilities and Services to provide a summary of the infrastructure network and comment on overall sustainability of the systems.

The goal statements for community facilities and services in the update of the Lee Plan will also be generally consistent with the current Lee Plan. Overview and summary sections will be added to provide context.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Community Facilities and Services Element include:

- Infrastructure was constructed concurrent with increased demands from new development and population increases. Additionally, the construction was largely paid for by development.

- Adoption of an ordinance that limits irrigation to two days per week.
- Water and sewer utility successfully provided services to meet the adopted level of service standards.
- There is an annual evaluation and update to the water and sewer rate study to ensure that the rate structure for these services is meeting the ongoing operating and maintenance needs of the utility and its customers.
- Level of service standards for public schools were developed as part of the newly adopted Public School Facilities Element.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Community Facilities and Services Element include:

- The existing policies are based solely on quantitative service needs and, as such, do not fully address qualitative community needs such as how to co-locate public services, design infrastructure systems, and connect services through land use and transportation considerations.
- The element needs to be updated based on current county priorities associated with the provision of water and sewer utility services, the market for those services (especially with regard to reuse water), and the current regulatory standards that affect the provision of those services.
- The element includes policies that require the completion of various studies or the coordination with other agencies, but they do not identify who (position or department) is responsible or accountable for implementing the policy. Thus, there is no mechanism to insure that these policies are implemented.

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- The current level of service reduction obligation for water usage is not appropriate given the current per capita usage in Lee County.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Key issues to be addressed in the Community Facilities and Services Element as part of the EAR-Based Amendments process are as follows:

- Updates are needed throughout to address the issue of sustainability with regard to community facilities and services.
- An overview section is needed to set the context for the goals, objectives, and policies in the element.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Recommended amendments to the Community Facilities and Services Element are as follows:

- Establish a clearer distinction between urban, suburban, and rural development forms and a more compact pattern of growth through policies that support:
 - ✓ Standards for permitting the alternative placement of utilities in compact urban areas.
 - ✓ Consider limits on septic systems based on soil conditions and proximity to water bodies and riverine areas.
 - ✓ Limit expansion of central services to future urbanized areas.
 - ✓ Limitation on the extension of water and sewer utilities in rural areas.
 - ✓ Requirements for reuse lines within residential areas that are planned as urban areas.
- Include specific policies that address integrated water resource planning.

- Include context sensitive design and/or location standards for new above-ground infrastructure, such as utility corridors and substations, to ensure the preservation of community character.
- Incorporate relevant policy direction from the Lee County Water Supply Plan.
- Modify/add policies to address energy audits.
- Modify/add policies that begin to identify the energy savings associated with water and sewer utility improvements as a means to introduce an alternative measure of regulatory costs from state agencies.
- Consider more specific landscaping requirements including recognizing Florida Friendly landscaping as a tool to review projects in the county.
- Consider methods for creating water storage that would reinforce integrated water resource planning as a supplement to reclaimed water.
- Recognize and plan for alternative stormwater planning and treatment facilities to support the vision for creating compact urban areas, such as area-wide stormwater facilities.
- Strengthen policies to encourage the integration of stormwater facilities which mimic natural systems as part of an overall master plan and design strategy.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the Lee Plan addresses one of the most important components of community life in Lee County. The element provides policy guidance regarding the distribution, design, location, and types of park and recreational

facilities in Lee County. In addition, it addresses planning and budgeting for these facilities and their administration.

Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element provide the county with the means by which to accomplish these objectives. However, the element needs to be expanded to better address a wider array of park, recreation, and public space resources while also continuing to consider the needs for private development to construct and maintain such resources.

Although not spelled out specifically in the Lee Plan, the subject matter in this element is closely linked to the Character and Form, Land Use, Communities, Transportation, Community Facilities and Services, Capital Improvements, Intergovernmental Coordination, and Economic Elements. The revised element is an opportunity to clarify and focus on those connections.

This element in the Lee Plan currently has 12 goal statements, most of which focus on a particular type of facility—e.g., boat ramps, waterways, community parks. There are two goals related to design, and three related to planning for and financing facilities. The revised element for the Lee Plan should combine the sections dealing with design of facilities into one new section, and combine the current goals sets dealing with administration and facility financing and location into another new section. Maintaining individual sections for the different types of parks and facilities is desirable, and should be part of the organization of the revised element.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element include:

- The element provides for a variety of types of recreational facilities to serve county residents.

- The element ensures that new park resources are provided concurrent with new development and increased population demands.
- The element establishes priorities for the development of future connected park resources and trail systems.
- Provision of private park space in new developments is supported.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element include:

- Equitable geographic and social distribution of recreational opportunities is a challenge.
- Linkage to preserves not addressed in this element.
- Provision of smaller public space areas and neighborhood park resources are not considered.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Key issues to be addressed in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element as part of the EAR-Based Amendments process are as follows:

- A clearer distinction is needed in the element between goals, objectives, and policies that address park design, planning, and administration.
- The current element lacks a description of the overall context for parks, recreation, and open space in the county and the desired relationship between these facilities and other elements of the Lee Plan—e.g., future land use, transportation, and public facilities.

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- Existing goals, objectives, and policies in the element could be more closely aligned with the Vision Framework Element with regards to the location of facilities in relation to other uses.
- The current element addresses community and regional parks, but not neighborhood parks, which may be needed to serve established areas of the community and future mixed-use centers. Policies to encourage a full array of parks and recreational facilities (neighborhood, community, and regional) to serve the community should be incorporated. Construction and maintenance costs for neighborhood parks should be addressed, along with the role of the private sector.
- Expand the range of facilities that may be considered parks or open space to include community gardens. In mixed-use centers, include plazas, pocket parks, and other urban outdoor gathering spaces.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Recommended amendments to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element are as follows:

- Update recreation center standards to be consistent with national standards.
- Strengthen policy language throughout the element to be more enforceable and clearer regarding desired outcomes.
- Strengthen policies to support co-location of parks and recreation facilities with other public facilities, such as libraries and schools, to better use these facilities and promote them as multi-functional community centers.
- Add/modify policies to support creative or multi-use design for functional facilities such as stormwater basins—e.g., filter marshes, parks, and greenway connectors.

- Add/modify policies to support physical and visual linkages between park facilities and surrounding uses—especially neighborhoods—rather than fencing or walling them off.
- Provide a policy linkage between preserves, addressed in the Conservation and Coastal Management Element, and parks, recreation, and open space facilities to address opportunities and constraints related to shared access.
- Update siting criteria to encourage the location of recreational facilities and parks within ¼ mile of existing or planned transit facilities.
- Add a policy to encourage coordination between internal county departments and other agencies when planning for different, but adjacent resources, such as parks and preserve areas, to ensure access and levels of use are compatible.
- Establish design criteria for private neighborhood parks and community gathering spaces in mixed-use centers to ensure they contribute to the character of the surrounding community, incorporate traditional neighborhood design principles, provide eyes on the park, and enable pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Consider a policy related to the need to identify a means of establishing neighborhood facilities, such as community gathering spaces—both indoor and outdoor.

Capital Improvements Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Capital Improvements Element provides policy guidance regarding the provision of public facilities and services needed to meet existing and future development demands. It also addresses levels of service and financing for public facilities and services.

This element's one goal is to provide public services by arranging a system to pay for public improvements necessary to the provision of those services. As such, this element is more of a stand alone implementation mechanism, rather than an element that articulates what the community wants and needs. The focus here is to help pay for the wants and needs that are established elsewhere in the plan.

With that perspective, this component of the EAR is focused mainly on the process for:

- Annually developing a CIP.
- Evaluating the county's goals and objectives stated elsewhere in the plan.
- Establishing priorities for use of public resources.
- Establishing level of service standards to be achieved by CIP projects.
- Establishing a concurrency system to link new development with provision of the public facilities that will be needed by the new development.

Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element provide the county with the means by which to accomplish these objectives. However, shortcomings identified reflect the need for some adjustments to better coordinate the county's planning, development, and strategic management priorities.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Capital Improvements Element include:

- The process for resource allocation and selecting projects for CIP is clear and transparent.
- This element is the main place in the plan for expression of priorities for resource allocation.

- This element contains a process for using the stated priorities in making allocation decisions.
- The element should utilize the CIP to identify the county's planning and strategic management priorities.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Capital Improvements Element include:

- The process for consideration of projects brings in Comprehensive Plan considerations late in the process instead of making that a component of initial project identification.
- Financing policies discussed in the element need updating.
- Need to make better use of this element and the CIP process to educate staff and community about the foundation principles and goals that are articulated in the Comprehensive Plan.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The Capital Improvements Element relates primarily to the county's process for annually preparing and adopting a Capital Improvements Program (CIP). One of the key issues to be addressed is to clearly establish the role of the element and the resulting annual Capital Improvements Programs, as one of the primary mechanisms by which the goals, objectives, and policies of all other elements may be implemented. This correlation is particularly relevant for elements that involve the construction of public facilities, such as the Transportation Element.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

This EAR process has focused on major community issues and a vision for the future of Lee County, and has also examined in detail the existing Capital Improvements Element of the Lee Plan to identify specific amendments that are needed. Recommended amendments, for the most part, address individual policy statements

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that currently make up the existing Capital Improvements Element. Those recommended changes are listed below.

- Consider earlier introduction of comprehensive plan priorities into process of developing potential projects as part of the Capital Improvements Plan.
- Recast the list of priorities to reflect the goals, objectives, and policies from other elements of the plan, as previously suggested. An example of this practice would be to highlight that investment in existing development areas to support infill and redevelopment is a higher priority than investment to extend facilities and services to undeveloped areas for new development.
- Update technical information in financing policies and add a new section regarding exploration of additional funding mechanisms.

Conservation and Coastal Management Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Conservation and Coastal Management Element combines two statutorily required elements in one element and provides policy guidance on protecting the public from the effects of natural and technological hazards. A primary focus of the element is to protect the county's natural resources for future generations and to manage development in coastal areas so as to minimize damage due to natural events. As such, the element directly supports many of the sustainability issues identified as part of the New Horizon 2035 process.

Included as part of this element are policies that address the following concerns: emergency preparedness, hazardous materials, protection of life and property in coastal high hazard areas, coastal resource protection, wetland and upland resource protection,

estuarine water quality, watershed management, hazard mitigation, evacuation planning and shelter space, post-disaster redevelopment, intergovernmental coordination, planning for coastal areas, water resources, air quality, fisheries management, commercial fishing, marine and navigation management, water access, artificial reefs, and shoreline management.

Overall, the comprehensive array of goals, objectives, and policies contained in this element provide the county with the means to accomplish these objectives. Primary shortcomings identified associated with the element relate to the element's organizational structure, large number of goal statements which can be confusing to the reader, lack of linkages to other plan elements, and need for stronger policies to support environmentally critical areas.

Policy linkages to the issues of livability, strong connections, and community character are less clear and can be improved in a reorganized and revised element for the Lee Plan. Recommended amendments are intended to reinforce the role the county's natural resources play in the health of its communities, economy, and environment and to ensure their protection.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Conservation and Coastal Management Element include:

- The element supports beach nourishment and maintenance projects.
- The element addresses the county's need for tropical storm readiness.
- The element provides for the needs of the Calusa Blueway.
- The element supports Conservation 2020, even though there is little or no discussion in this element in terms of policies for these

acquisitions and projects. The element needs to be better coordinated with recreation and open space element.

- The element provided for the passage of the Water Conservation Ordinance (05-10) and the Fertilizer Ordinance (08-08).
- The element provides for the implementation of the Matanzas Harbor Management Plan.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Conservation and Coastal Management Element include:

- The element's organizational structure, which include redundancies, reactive versus proactive and ineffective language, tense, and voice.
- The element's limited ability to protect rare and unique uplands, and other environmentally critical areas.
- A lack of coordination with element that address land use, transportation, parks and open space, communities, form and design, and other related elements.
- Backlog of county-initiated rezonings on county lands.
- Inability to expeditiously address derelict vessels in waterways.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Key issues to be addressed in the Conservation and Coastal Management Element as part of the EAR-Based Amendments process are as follows:

- Strengthen language throughout to be more clear and enforceable.
- Ensure that stronger provisions in the Lee County Land Development Code chapters 14 and 26 are mirrored by the element.

- Review and revise Coastal High Hazard Area provisions.
- Address requirements of HB 697.
- Reorganize the element to reduce redundancies, address connections between private preservation areas, and remove unnecessary language now provided in the county's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) public lands.
- Extend protection to and clarify definition of "rare and unique" as it applies to environmental areas.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Two types of EAR-Based Amendments are recommended for the Conservation and Coastal Management Element: 1) organizational amendments and 2) targeted amendments. Each is described below.

Organizational Amendments

A key recommendation for the Conservation and Coastal Management Element is to divide goals, objectives, and policies into two sections: one for Conservation, and one for Coastal Management.

Targeted Amendments

In addition to the organizational amendments described above, the following targeted amendments to the Conservation and Coastal Management Element are recommended:

- Update obsolete references and timelines as needed.
- Add a separate overview for Conservation and Coastal Management to set the stage for the reorganized goals, objectives, and policies that follow.

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- Review and update policies as needed to ensure the element is consistent with regulations in Lee County Land Development Code chapters 14 and 26.
- Include policies to address access to conservation lands while protecting environmentally sensitive areas from adverse impacts.
- Integrate land use considerations in the element to provide for connections between private preservation areas and public lands.
- Review and revise Coastal High Hazard Area policies as needed.
- Combine several goals through expansion and merger.
- Revisit the “green infrastructure and natural functions program” of Policy 107.1.1: 4.g
- Add a sustainability goal and associated objectives and policies to address energy efficiency requirements related to HB 697.
- Include policies to support GHG reductions through maintenance and expansion of conservation lands.
- Encourage the restoration of county-owned and managed conservation and mitigation lands to their most suitable sustainable, productive, and beneficial condition, where feasible.
- Expand the applicability of the “rare and unique” standard countywide beyond the coastal planning area.
- Provide for the enhanced protection of native species and habitats in the development process.
- Prioritize the conservation of natural resources based on the need for conservation lands and natural resources to be located in large areas contiguous and connected to other natural resources to promote healthy natural systems.

- Protect coastal and wetland natural systems in order to minimize the impacts of natural events, sea level rise, and coastal development.
- Evaluate appropriate land development measures (i.e., building setbacks) needed to protect coastal areas, rivers, wetlands, and other waterfronts from the impacts of development.
- Consider Firewise Communities programs to help protect private property and dwellings from the impacts of wildfires.

Housing Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Housing Element provides policy guidance regarding the provision of safe and sanitary housing at affordable costs for present and future residents in the county. The element addresses issues of housing availability, rural and farmworker housing, substandard housing, affordability, special needs, and neighborhoods. Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element provide the county with the means to accomplish these objectives and these topics are all still current. Therefore, many of the goals, objectives, and policies of the Lee Plan can be carried over into the updated plan. In addition, there is interest and need in broadening the scope of the Housing Element to focus more on sustainability issues, neighborhood conservation, and a greater variety of housing and lifestyle choices for all age groups. Additional shortcomings identified relate to the need for a stronger linkage between the Housing Element and the Future Land Use, Transportation, and proposed Form and Character elements.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Housing Element include:

- Lee County has been successful achieving a market rate look with affordable projects which results in greater acceptance by the surrounding neighborhood.
- Affordable projects are integrated into the general community and not isolated or concentrated in a particular section of the county.
- This element encourages housing for a variety of populations.
- Good non-profits result in quality development and the successful management of affordable projects.
- Public funding of affordable housing encourages locations in proximity to services.
- The compatibility of affordable projects with surrounding development is addressed and is generally successful.
- Affordable rental developments for the general and special needs populations have been completed through the availability of funding and incentives—SW Florida Addiction Services (prevention/rehab model) and Renaissance Manor.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Housing Element include:

- The housing element could be amended to better foster interconnectivity and improved neighborhood linkages.
- Even if distance to services or employment is not great; neighborhoods are often still not walkable due to lack of sidewalks, bicycle connections, and walls.
- Green development and connections between neighborhoods and the rest of the community are not addressed.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The following key issues have been identified as the core ideas that need to be addressed in the Housing Element.

- Develop an objective that addresses a broader range of housing issues, such as the overall mix, location, and types of housing that are desired in different locations of the county in coordination and support of similar objective and policies found in other plan elements –i.e., Future Land Use, Form and Character, and Transportation..
- The element should contain clearer linkages to other relevant elements in the plan, such as the Future Land Use, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Elements.
- Support for sustainable development could be strengthened through support for a broader mix of housing types and energy efficient construction techniques.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Recommended amendments to the Housing Element are as follows:

- Add new goals, objectives, and/or policies to address sustainable building practices, energy conservation, and housing diversity. Encourage a range of green building techniques, including the integration of recycling facilities and/or community gardens.
- Provide policies to encourage the construction of housing that allows for residents to age-in-place. Encourage compliance with universal design characteristics and visibility standards, such as level thresholds, wider doorways, and grab bars.
- Strengthen policies to reinforce the need for a variety of housing options throughout the county, including a diversity of home sizes, prices, and types. Accessory dwelling units, live-work

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units, and other alternatives to the single-family, detached home should be encouraged.

- Add/modify policies to support alternative neighborhood types and opportunities such as mixed-income and mixed-use developments.
- Establish a clear policy linkage between this element and the Future Land Use, Transportation, and Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Elements.
- Update siting criteria for affordable housing projects to address desired proximity of housing to parks, services, and employment and multi-modal connections between uses. Encourage redevelopment and rehabilitation in established areas that meet siting criteria.
- Establish design principles for infill and redevelopment and affordable housing projects to protect the character and viability of established neighborhoods.
- Update existing policies to encourage continued partnerships and coordination with other agencies.
- Update policies to support neighborhood watch, homeowners associations, and other cooperative efforts as a way to promote neighborhood pride and stability.
- Update/add policies to encourage the retention of existing affordable housing in the county through support for the rehabilitation of existing homes, infill and redevelopment, and through limitations on the conversion on mobile home parks.
- Explore funding and other incentives that would enable the county to foster new affordable housing opportunities.

Historic Preservation Element

A. OVERVIEW

This Historic Preservation Element provides policy guidance on the identification and evaluation of Lee County’s historic resources, including: recognition and registration, local preservation techniques, education and public participation, and coordination. The element is closely tied to state statutes that allow for and prescribe historic preservation practices. Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element provide the county with the means by which to accomplish these objectives. Therefore, most existing material in the element remains relevant and can be carried over into the updated plan and updated to address outdated references.

A question to be addressed in the plan revision process is whether or not to broaden the scope of the Historic Preservation Element to incorporate considerations related to scenic preservation. This is an important topic in Lee County, and revision of this element for the new plan can be an opportunity to incorporate scenic preservation objectives.

Existing goals can all be carried over into the updated plan along with references to other elements—most notably the linkages to the Land Use, Communities, and Economic Elements. A summary at the end should tie sustainability and livability objectives to historic preservation efforts.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Historic Preservation Element include:

- Individual and district designations for both architectural and archaeological resources have been successfully completed.

- The number of individual properties and districts listed on the National Register continues to increase.
- Historic preservation grant program has worked well as an incentive to preserve resources.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Historic Preservation Element include:

- The element's focus on the preservation of architectural and archaeological squanders opportunities to preserve scenic areas.
- Buildings and districts constructed in the 1960's may be eligible for evaluation and designation, but have not been identified.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The following key issues have been identified as the core ideas that need to be addressed in the Historic Preservation Element.

- Consider expanding the element to address both historic and scenic preservation.
- Improve connectivity of historical resources and districts through identification and education.
- Need to foster the adaptive re-use of historic structures as an alternative to demolition.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Other recommendations for rewriting this element include:

- Update obsolete references and timing where needed.
- Revisit Land Development Code chapter 22 to assure that provisions in those regulations are mirrored by the element. Strengthen language to be more regulatory where appropriate.

- Reorganize the element to reduce redundancies and streamline policies.
- Eliminate existing policy references to loans.
- Combine existing goals through expansion and merger to reduce redundancy.
- Add policy to support additional outreach aimed at improving the visibility of preservation efforts in the community.
- Establish a sustainability objective to address the role of preservation in reducing the consumption of land and construction materials and protecting community character.

Intergovernmental Coordination Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element establishes policies to guide cooperation between Lee County and its intergovernmental partners (Cities of Ft Myers, Cape Coral, Sanibel, and Bonita Springs as well as the Town of Ft Myers Beach,) on issues such as public services, level of service standards, roadway improvements, natural resource protection, and growth management.

Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element provide the county with the means to accomplish these objectives. These goals, objectives, and policies remain relevant and have become increasingly important. The Intergovernmental Coordination Element should retain those goals, and enhance the objectives and policies to further address issues related to land use patterns, annexation, provision of infrastructure, connectivity, and fiscal sustainability.

4 | Recommendations for EAR-Based Amendments

An even higher level of coordination may be required to ensure the county is successful in achieving its vision of a more ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable pattern of development in the future.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element include:

- The element supports the development of county-wide blueway and greenway system which includes participation from multiple jurisdictions.
- The element encourages a multi-modal transportation system which is fostered through the intergovernmental direction of the Lee County MPO.

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element include:

- The element could provide better direction about how to address the concerns related to municipal annexations.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Core ideas that need to be addressed in the Intergovernmental Coordination Element relate primarily to the need to reinforce and enhance current policies in a few key areas.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Recommendations for updates to this element include:

- Consider adding more detailed polices related to intergovernmental coordination related to plan amendments, annexation, and development proposals.

- Consider adding more detailed policies that address the coordination between the county and its cities with regard to future land uses and future urban areas

Economic Element

A. OVERVIEW

The Economic Element establishes policies to promote a diversified and stable economy. The element accomplishes this purpose through the conservation and enhancement of the county's natural and cultural resources; expansion and enhancement of the tourism industry; recruitment of new industries; expansion and development of the county's educational facilities; and the retention and expansion of the county's existing economic base.

Overall, the goals, objectives, and policies in this element provide the county with the means to accomplish these objectives. However, as noted with several other elements, one of the element's biggest shortcomings is the lack of clear policy linkages between the element and other elements in the plan that support the systems and infrastructure needed to attract and retain a diverse employment base and population. As the updated plan is being prepared, fiscal and economic issues related to land use, transportation, parks and recreation, community facilities, intergovernmental coordination, and capital improvements should be identified and discussed.

B. SUCCESSES

Successes of the Economic Element include:

- Emphasis on implementation of employment centers
- Addresses broad range of economic considerations

C. SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Economic Element include:

- Limited policy linkages between the Economic Element and other elements in the plan.
- Some policies in the element lack the flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing economic opportunities.
- The element could better support a variety of different economic generators by establishing policies aimed at new or innovative industries.

D. KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

There is currently one goal in the Economic Element of the Lee Plan, calling for a diversified and stable economy. The array of goals in this element should be broadened to reflect the need for economic resiliency, intergovernmental coordination, opportunities for clean energy industries and other primary employment sectors, links to resource conservation, relationship to compact land forms and mixed use development patterns, and fiscal sustainability.

E. RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

Other recommendations for rewriting this element include:

- Expand existing goal to include economic resiliency and diversity.
- Update/add policies to emphasize the connection between the economy and attractors, such as opportunities for higher learning and the array of natural resources the county has to offer.
- Update/add policies with regard to the need to balance the needs of residents, employers, visitors as part of the overall economic picture.
- Update/add policies to address desired linkages between employment areas, trade, rail, water, and tourism.

- Reinforce policies to reinforce the importance of maintaining opportunities for commercial agriculture as a key element of the county's economy.
- Evaluate land use, transportation, public facility, and development incentive practices for the development of target economic centers including those at the Research Diamond, and along Alico Road.