



A Voice for the Citizens of Florida

Founded in 1986, 1000 Friends of Florida helps ensure that the people of this state have a voice in deciding how Florida grows and develops. A statewide nonprofit membership organization, our mission includes serving as a “watchdog” over the implementation of Florida’s 1985 Growth Management Act. Our attorneys and planners take on legal challenges of statewide significance and provide guidance on how communities can plan more effectively for the future.

On other, related fronts, 1000 Friends of Florida advocates for the protection of environmentally sensitive lands, the provision of affordable housing and the revitalization of waterfront communities. We work to promote sensible patterns of development and discourage costly sprawl. Above all, we strive to give citizens the tools needed to keep Florida’s communities prosperous and livable.

Planning for Tomorrow: A Citizen’s Guide to Smarter Growth in Florida describes this state’s nationally recognized approach to smart planning for the future, and outlines how we as citizens can help.

Please note that Florida’s growth management process is constantly evolving. This report describes the process as of January 1999.

Grappling Florida

c. Jeff Parker, Florida Environments



Evidence of growth is all around us – roads being widened, subdivisions sprouting up, new shopping centers under construction. We often feel its frustrating effects as we sit stalled in traffic, see our children’s overcrowded classrooms or watch a favored piece of countryside cleared for new development.

But as our state’s population continues to grow, so too will our communities. What, then, can we do? Perhaps the best response is to better manage where and how that growth occurs. Managing growth is an arduous and complex process. But if we are to improve our quality of life, protect our rich natural environment and build sustainable, quality communities that we can be proud to call home, it is important.

This handbook was prepared by 1000 Friends of Florida to promote saner planning and smarter growth in our state. Its purpose is to help you, the citizens of Florida, become active participants in shaping the future of your communities.

For further information, check out our web site at www.1000fof.usf.edu.

with Growth: Confronts the Future

Growth in Florida

Florida remains one of the fastest growing states in the nation. With a population of 2.8 million in 1950, we ranked 20th among the states. Today we are the fourth largest, with almost 15 million residents. Each day some 650 people move here, totaling a million new residents every four years, and in 1997, 47 million tourists visited our state. Fifteen years from now we will have more people than New York, becoming the third largest state. By the year 2020, Florida's population is expected to exceed 20 million.¹

Sunny skies, pristine beaches and a balmy climate continue to draw vacationers and others to this paradise we call Florida. Aside from its natural attractions, over the last century Florida has done everything in its power to encourage and accommodate growth. Our state funded the

drainage of millions of acres of wetlands and gave land grants for railroad construction, opening up vast expanses of wilderness for development. Florida continues to lure new residents here with generous homestead exemptions, low property taxes and no personal income taxes.

Florida's rising population naturally raises the demand for public services. As an example, each year we need to build 800 miles of new roads, add 730 new classrooms and hire 740 more police officers.² Additional water and sewer systems, prisons, courts, fire and emergency rescue and other governmental services also are called for. Needless to say, all this costs money in a state that prides itself on low taxes. We only need to look as far as our congested roadways and overcrowded classrooms to see the problems of keeping up with the demands of growth.



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Grappling with Growth: Florida Confronts the Future

The Past as Prologue

Prior to World War II, most Florida residents lived in compact communities where they could walk to work, schools and shops. After the war, it seemed that everyone desired a share in the “American dream” of owning an automobile and a house on a half-acre lot in the suburbs. Government at all levels provided subsidies, some of them unintentional, encouraging suburban development. Taxpayer dollars helped finance new developments, assist citizens in purchasing suburban homes and extend new roads, water lines and sewer systems into rural areas, laying the foundation for even greater growth.

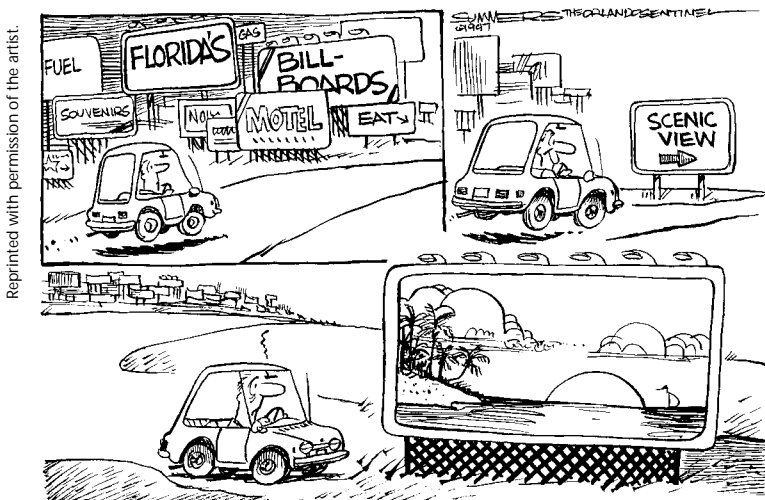
In the less-crowded Florida of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s we could better “afford” this sprawling development. It was possible to move to the suburbs and make the daily commute to and from work relatively quickly. Inexpensive land at the urban/suburban fringe allowed developers to build, and us to buy, more cheaply.

Sprawl

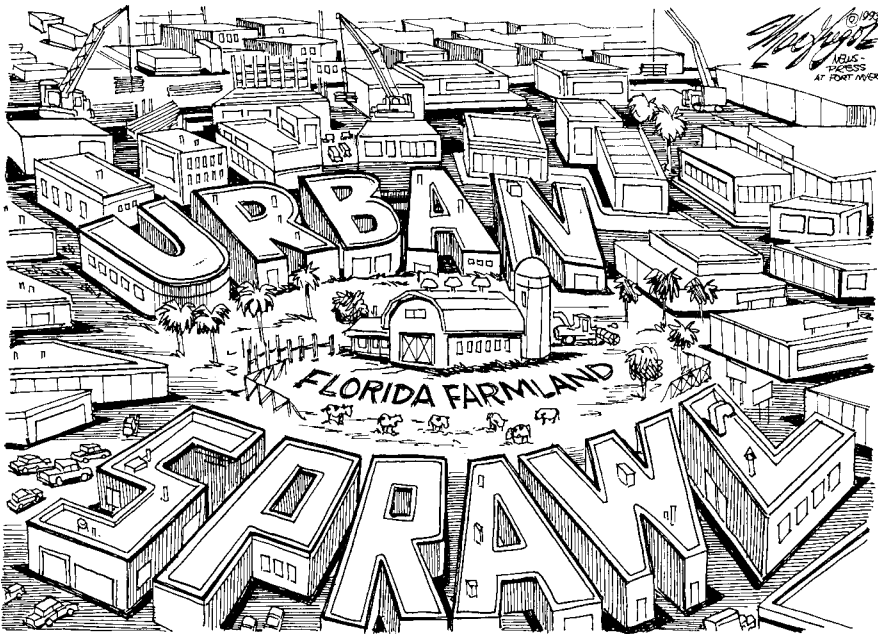
Sprawl has been defined as “low-density development beyond the edge of service and employment, which separates where people live from where they shop, work, recreate and educate thus requiring cars to move between zones.”³ In plain English, cars dominate our lives and landscape. We spend untold hours stalled on crowded roadways because we can no longer readily walk places. Most of us have to drive from our homes to shop, work, and go to school. Sprawl affects every one of us every day.

Sprawl diminishes our quality of life. Traveling from one isolated “land use” to another eats into time we could spend with family and friends, or contributing to our community. Mile after mile of pavement and strip shopping centers make it hard to tell one town from the next, and we lose our “sense of place.”

Historically, streets gave people places to play, bicycle, walk, meet and talk and served as links to other neighbor-



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hoods and downtown. But today few of us walk to the store to buy a loaf of bread, stopping to chat with neighbors. Streets now are devoted to the single purpose of moving cars, dividing neighborhoods instead of connecting them.

Our dependence on the automobile has had a big impact on personal budgets. In 1995, the American Automobile Association estimated that the total direct cost for a car driven 15,000 miles a year is \$6,185, or 41.2 cents per mile. In the average household, which has two cars, transportation costs are second only to housing.⁴

In the 1980s, the number of registered vehicles in Florida grew twice as fast as the population. Even so, almost half of Florida's population — mostly youth, the elderly and the poor — do not drive or have access to a car.⁵ To make matters worse, malls have pulled businesses away from downtown neigh-

borhoods, and sprawling development has made public transit prohibitively expensive.

Sprawl harms our natural environment. Irreplaceable green space and natural areas are disappearing; rare and endangered species face an increasing threat. Every day we clear 450 acres of forest and 410 acres of farmland in Florida.⁶ As our communities expand into the countryside, stormwater run-off from development degrades water quality, and automobile emissions harm the air we breathe.

Five Florida's cities have the dubious distinction of landing on the Sierra Club's list of the 20 most sprawl-threatened cities in the nation. Between 1990 and 1996, Fort Lauderdale's land area grew by 27 percent. Orlando's population grew by 28 percent, while its land area ballooned by 68 percent. The population of metropolitan West Palm Beach grew by around 30 percent and its land area expanded by 75

Grappling with Growth: Florida Confronts the Future

percent. And while Pensacola's population grew only slightly, its urbanized land area expanded by nearly 95 percent. Over the same six years, Daytona Beach almost doubled in size, while its population density decreased by 43 percent, a trend that could create a city of 610 square miles by the year 2020!⁷

Unfortunately, these are not the only Florida cities grappling with sprawl.

Sprawl wastes taxpayer dollars.

Sprawl hits us right in the pocketbook. As taxpayers, we pay heavily for new and expanded roads and sewer systems, for their future maintenance and for repairs to fix old problems, including those caused by impacts on the environment.

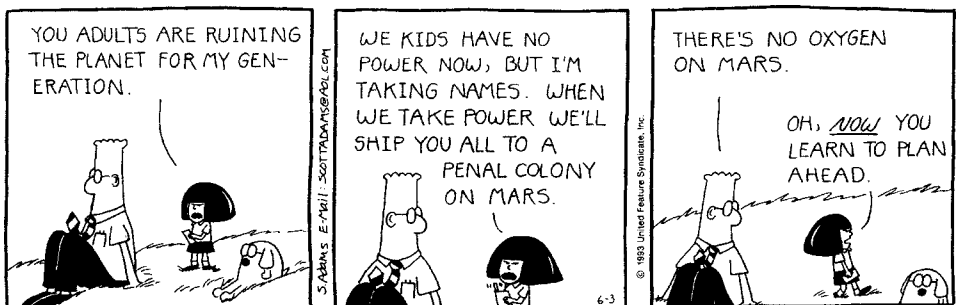
Numerous studies have shown that it costs more to provide public services and infrastructure to sprawling, low density subdivisions than to existing urbanized areas. One survey by James E. Frank, professor of urban and regional planning at Florida State University, compared the actual costs of providing sewer service to a suburban neighborhood and an inner city neighborhood near the treatment plant. The figures ranged from about \$4,500 for inner city homes to over \$11,000 for homes outside the urbanized area. Because utilities charge for water

and sewer services based on an average cost, both sets of customers pay the same per unit rates. This means that inner city users actually subsidize those in the suburbs.

Similarly, Frank found that distance greatly affects the costs associated with providing other public infrastructure and services. For example, it can cost as much as \$10,000 to provide a new suburban house with adequate roads, compared with just over \$570 for a house in town.⁸

A study by Robert Burchell and David Listokin for the Brookings Institute compared sprawl to compact growth, assuming the same number of people and the same number of jobs. They found that compact growth, with a mix of housing types at higher densities, consumed 45 percent less land, and cost 25 percent less for roads, 15 percent less for utilities, 5 percent less for housing, and 2 percent less for other public costs than sprawling development up to three units per acre.⁹

Elsewhere, Burchell calculated that directing South Florida development (in Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Miami-Dade and Broward counties) back toward the coast could save taxpayers over \$6 billion by 2020. How? In part, by using



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less land to support the area's residents. The shift would save 135,000 acres of wetlands, open space and farmland, reduce tap water demand by 3.4 billion gallons, and save an estimated \$2 billion on roads and other infrastructure, with the added benefit of improving the region's racial balance.¹⁰

Local government officials, planners and concerned citizens are not the only ones to recognize the drawbacks of sprawling development. The Bank of America commissioned a study on urban sprawl, which concluded that "unchecked sprawl has shifted from an engine of . . . growth to a force that threatens to inhibit growth and degrade our quality of life."¹¹

Planning for Tomorrow

Most of us have visited another community and thought that it would be a pleasant place to live. We might instantly recognize those qualities that attract us to it — the design of the buildings and the way streets are laid out, the lush landscaping and protected natural areas, or a sense of cultural richness and economic vitality. Chances are, some of those qualities did not happen by accident. Some communities work to reach consensus on their vision for the future and then develop a long-range plan to help them reach that vision.

A sense of vision is essential to developing a successful, sustainable community. A well-thought-out, long-range (or comprehensive) plan can help a community achieve that vision. Such a plan can clearly state where the commu-

A sense of vision is essential to developing a successful, sustainable community.

nity wants to go and what it needs to do to get there. Because no two communities are the same, plans must be locally produced. Active citizen participation is essential to reach a community consensus on the vision, to develop the plan to achieve it, and to make sure the plan is being followed.

Planning for Florida's Comprehensive

No one likes congested roads, polluted lakes and rivers, flooded yards, crowded schools or unsafe neighborhoods. We expect our government to provide us with adequate public services and facilities, spending our tax dollars wisely to construct needed infrastructure like roads, bike lanes, water and sewer lines, stormwater and drainage systems, schools, parks, libraries and jails. We also expect our elected officials to provide us with essential public services like police, fire and emergency rescue.

State leaders would agree, for they know that the millions of tourists visiting Florida each year for its sunshine, beaches and natural beauty also expect to find these basic facilities and services. If not, they will just take their money elsewhere, with potentially devastating results for Florida's economy.

Florida's 1985 Growth Management Act has established a workable process to guide future development in our communities. Understanding and participating in this process is one way we, as citizens, can help our communities handle growth.

Smarter Growth: Planning Process

Growth Management in Florida

Over the last 25 years, Florida's leading efforts to manage growth and protect the environment have gained national recognition. In the early 1970s, foresighted leaders understood that Florida's rapidly increasing population was damaging the environment. Coupled with declining investment in public infrastructure, the situation was leading the state to the brink of a crisis and diminishing residents' quality of life. Upon the advice of a blue ribbon panel of experts, the Florida Legislature took decisive and progressive action to adopt laws intended to protect the environment and manage growth.

Furthering these early programs, and with widespread public and media support, in 1985 the Florida Legislature

adopted its landmark Growth Management Act.¹² This far-reaching legislation established a "pyramid of planning" with state oversight and basic planning standards. At the top of the pyramid is the state comprehensive plan, with broad goals and policies dealing with subjects ranging from education to the environment. In the next tier, eleven regional planning councils are required to adopt strategic regional policy plans consistent with the state plan. Then there are the approximately 470 local government comprehensive plans, which must be consistent with the regional and state plans.

The law requires that citizens be given the ability to shape these plans "to the fullest extent possible." Active citizen participation is the foundation of Florida's planning pyramid. This is where you come in.

Pyramid of Planning



Planning for Smarter Growth: Florida's Comprehensive Planning Process

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and its Division of Community Planning oversee this planning pyramid, reviewing and approving the initial adoption and subsequent amendment of local government comprehensive plans, making sure they meet established minimum criteria. Communities are encouraged to exceed these minimums.

The Growth Management Act is included in Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes. Further interpretation is included in the Florida Administrative Code Rule 9J-5. As set forth in the Act, the local comprehensive plan should:

- Guide and control future development;
- Overcome present problems, and deal effectively with future problems which may result from the use and development of land;
- Preserve, promote, protect, and improve the public health, safety, comfort and good order; and
- Protect human, environmental, social and economic resources.

The DCA reviews, comments upon and approves every comprehensive plan and every plan amendment for areas greater than 10 acres.¹³ No comprehensive plan amendment is in effect until it

has been found in compliance with state law, and disputes are resolved in an administrative hearing, by the Governor and Cabinet or, infrequently, by the judicial system. “Affected persons” — residents or business owners who have participated in the planning process in question and have submitted, for the record, oral or written comments at either the transmittal or adoption hearing on the amendment — are able to become parties to these proceedings.

The comprehensive planning process is intended to be ongoing. Through amendments, which are allowed twice each year (with public notice and state review and approval), a plan can evolve to meet changing circumstances. Florida's Growth Management Act also requires that every seven years, local governments adopt an Evaluation and Appraisal Report on how local government is meeting the requirements set forth in its plan. This report frequently leads to amendments.

The comprehensive plan has the force of law and governs many decisions of local government that affect the development of land. Following the comprehensive plan is intended to be an effective way to manage growth based



upon projected population and public facility needs. However, it is important to remember that the state comprehensive planning process establishes only minimum criteria. Those communities that establish more stringent plans are usually better able to deal with the impacts of growth.

Components of the Local Government Comprehensive Plan

Each local comprehensive plan is required to be consistent with the appropriate strategic regional policy plan, which, in turn, must be consistent with the state comprehensive plan. Some of the chief components of local comprehensive plans in Florida are discussed below.

Future Land Use Map. Each local comprehensive plan must have a map depicting the future land uses planned for the community over a 10- or 20-year period. Each community maps what it identifies as appropriate locations and densities for future residential, office, commercial, industrial, mixed, and other types of development. Unique local features such as environmentally sensitive areas and historic resources are often shown. Besides being legally binding, this map helps residents visualize where future growth can and cannot occur.

Elements. Local comprehensive plans must contain several sections, called elements, that deal with specific aspects of the community's development: capital improvements, future land use, transportation, sanitary sewer, solid waste,

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Planning for Smarter Growth: Florida's Comprehensive Planning Process

drainage, potable water and natural groundwater aquifer recharge, natural resource conservation, recreation and open space, housing, coastal management and intergovernmental coordination. Communities with a population greater than 50,000 must include mass transit and ports and aviation in their transportation elements, while coastal communities must prepare a coastal management element. Optional elements, authorized at each local government's discretion, include historic preservation, arts and culture, economic development, public education, and community design.

Each element contains **goals, objectives and policies**, which become the heart of a local plan. These define the community's vision for its future and identify how it is going to grow. And since the local government is obliged to follow the plan and to act in a manner "consistent" with these provisions when making decisions that affect the development of land, they also have the force of law. The local government's land development regulations (zoning and subdivision ordinances, for example) must also be consistent with the plan. This consistency mandate is significant, for the local comprehensive plan must be followed if it is to be an effective tool to mitigate the impacts of growth.

Each element must be based upon appropriate data and analysis of past, present and future trends and conditions affecting the local government. For example, to ensure sufficient vacant land to accommodate development, the future land use element must be based upon the local government's projected growth in population over a 10- to 20-year period.

Comprehensive Planning Techniques to Reduce Public Costs of Development

The 1987 State Comprehensive Plan Committee's final recommendations noted that it would cost \$53 billion to pay for all the needed state and local infrastructure, half of it road related, for existing and proposed development.¹⁴ This failure both to plan and to pay for growth has left Florida's taxpayers with a huge and growing bill!

The Capital Improvements Element. The purpose of this primary element, required in each local comprehensive plan, is to estimate the cost of providing needed public facilities (identified in the other plan elements) to existing and future populations. It must include an assessment of the local government's ability to finance and construct improvements, along with a schedule for their funding and construction to ensure that they are in place to serve new development. In addressing the timing and location of capital improvements to support future growth and development, this element must be consistent with the future land use element. The capital improvements element must be updated annually.

Concurrency. Concurrency, related to the capital improvements element, has been called one of the keys to growth management in Florida. It allows local governments to approve new development only when plans are in place to provide for adequate facilities and services needed to serve that development. Facilities and services include roads, sanitary sewers, solid waste, drainage, potable water,

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*...and now another
pearl of wisdom
from MR. IDEAMAN*

HOW DO WE
SOLVE FLORIDA'S
LANDFILL
PROBLEM?...EASY!...



...REQUIRE EACH
OF THE STATE'S
RECORD
43 MILLION
VISITORS TO
TAKE A 5lb.
BAG OF
GARBAGE WITH
THEM WHEN
THEY LEAVE!...

JEFF
PARKER
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FLORIDA TODAY

DEPARTING
FLIGHTS

...BYE, NOW...
...BUH-BYE...
...BYE...

GATE 17



Planning for Smarter Growth: Florida's Comprehensive Planning Process

parks, recreation, and mass transit. If the infrastructure is not available, a local government cannot approve new development. Since 1996, school concurrency is an option which local governments may also include.

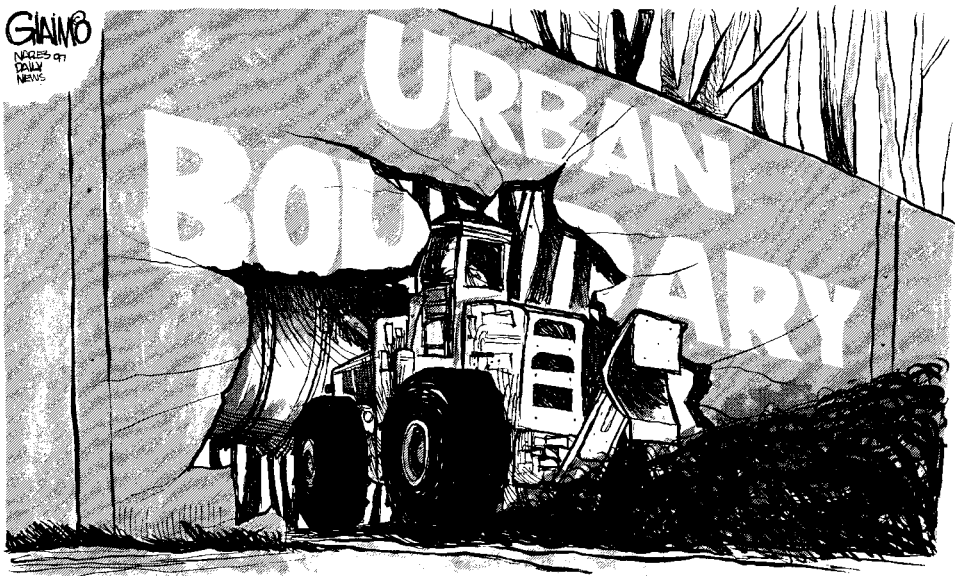
To address financial problems associated with growth, local government comprehensive plans must establish and implement a concurrency management system. Each community determines the need for public services and facilities to serve existing population and future growth, at an established, adequate "level of service," for at least 10 years. A five-year capital improvements budget is then adopted as part of the comprehensive plan, setting forth how these public services will be provided "concurrent" with the impacts of new development.

Not all facilities have to be "on line" when new development is approved. For example, parks are concurrent with

development if they are under construction one year after the certificate for the particular development is issued, while roads must be under construction within three years. In addition, the law allows the creation of transportation concurrency exception areas where they will promote infill, urban redevelopment, and downtown revitalization.

Still, the concurrency management system can fail to meet its goals, especially if the local government has provided for too much growth in its future land use element or has failed to make adequate provisions to pay for needed facilities and services. It is also important to monitor concurrency implementation for any unintended consequences.

Impact Fees. The funds for local governments to build infrastructure required by the concurrency management system come from various sources, including local property taxes, special



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assessments, state and federal revenue sharing and, in some cases, impact fees paid by the developer. An impact fee, if levied, may require the developer to pay some or all of the costs of providing public services and facilities to a new development to maintain the adopted level-of-service standards.

These fees rarely come close to paying the full cost of the impact of new development. Experts have calculated the true costs of roads, sewers, schools and other public services and infrastructure at \$18,000 (urban) to \$48,000 (rural) per house.¹⁵ Impact fees are limited by law to cover only certain, specific costs, and cannot include all the costs of providing public services and infrastructure or fixing past backlogs. In many areas of Florida, impact fees raise the cost of a house by several thousand dollars.

Urban Service Area. On the future land use map, and usually in the future land use element, an Urban Service Area (USA) identifies the boundaries where public infrastructure that supports urbanized development is to be provided over a specified number of years. USAs are intended to encourage new development in a community to occur near existing development and to use existing facilities. If properly developed, USAs slow the premature conversion of rural land for development and limit the premature provision of new public services in more rural areas. Unfortunately, some Florida communities have adopted USAs that are ineffective or inefficient because they cover too great a geographic area. This promotes sprawling rather than compact development.

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Planning for Smarter Growth: Florida's Comprehensive Planning Process



Rule 9J-5.006(5) Urban Sprawl Provisions. This DCA rule is a powerful tool to use against land use decisions that promote urban sprawl. It includes a requirement that the local government comprehensive plan contain provisions for “discouraging the proliferation of urban sprawl” and even identifies criteria to identify what constitutes sprawl.

Other Considerations

1000 Friends of Florida has reservations about The Bert J. Harris, Jr., Private Property Rights Protection Act which became law in 1996.¹⁶ It was intended, in part, to limit government involvement in the regulation of private property. The Act is applied to rules, regulations and ordinances passed after May 11, 1995, that “inordinately burden, restrict, or limit private property rights.” In some cases it has made local governments more cautious when making changes to their local comprehensive plan or to land

development regulations.

1000 Friends of Florida has intervened in numerous significant lawsuits to ensure a fair balance between property rights and land use planning. One of our major achievements has been to steadfastly uphold the right of citizens to participate fully in planning for future growth and development in their communities.

A community can have an outstanding local comprehensive plan, but it can only be effective if it is properly implemented. It is up to us, as citizens of Florida, to make sure our local governments follow their plans.

For more information on legal options, see Citizen Enforcement of the Growth Management Act, available online at www.1000fof.usf.edu.

Other State Programs that Promote Smarter Planning

A number of nationally recognized state programs complement and supplement Florida’s Growth Management Act. They promote the

acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, establishment of a statewide network of greenways, provision of affordable housing, preservation of historic resources, and development of sustainable communities.

Acquisition of Environmentally Sensitive Lands. Since 1990 more than a million acres of land has been preserved through Preservation 2000 (P2000). This project generates funds through state government bonds backed by a fee applied to the sale of property. P2000 has provided funds to such programs as Save Our Rivers, Conservation and Recreation Lands, and the Florida Communities Trust, which matches local government funds with money from P2000 to buy land at the local level.

In November 1998 an overwhelming 72 percent of Florida voters approved an amendment to the state's constitution to continue such acquisitions. 1000 Friends of Florida endorsed P2000 and supports its successor as an important complement to Florida's growth management process.

Establishment of a Statewide Network of Greenways. 1000 Friends of Florida was instrumental in establishing the Florida Greenways program with the goal of creating a network of protected natural areas to provide important wildlife and recreation corridors throughout the state. As a result of state and local identification of potential greenways, combined with Florida's major funding for the acquisition of environmental lands, Florida's emerald necklace of green continues to grow. In 1996 this program was transferred from 1000 Friends to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Provision of Affordable Housing. Florida's strong dependence on service, agricultural, retail, and government jobs leaves many families unable to afford decent, safe housing. Through the William E. Sadowski Act, Florida has the nation's largest source of dedicated revenue for affordable housing. Since 1992 the Act has helped over 58,500 families with affordable home ownership and rental housing, and has been used as match for an additional \$266 million in federal monies. Sadowski Act funds have also been used for emergency response to such disasters as Hurricane Opal, and to provide technical assistance. The Act has generated thousands of jobs in the construction industry. 1000 Friends of Florida initiated the Sadowski Act Coalition to oversee the establishment of this important program and has played a key role in refining it.

Preservation of Historic Resources. The Florida Department of State has made funds available to protect significant archaeological sites, survey historic resources, restore historic buildings, develop local historic preservation plans, develop educational programs, promote tourism to historic areas and undertake other projects that explain and promote the preservation of Florida's rich heritage. Since 1982 the Department's Division of Historical Resources has distributed over \$140 million in federal and state grants, leading to the rehabilitation of nearly 1,200 buildings, the survey of over 80,000 historic resources and numerous other preservation efforts.

Development of Sustainable Communities. A little more than a

Planning for Smarter Growth: Florida's Comprehensive Planning Process

decade ago the concept of sustainable development was introduced to a world audience. A common definition of sustainability, developed by the Bruntland Commission, is *"...that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* To help move Florida closer to sustainability, the 1996 Florida Legislature enacted the Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project, authorizing the Department of Community Affairs to designate pilot communities to serve as models for sustainability in Florida.

These communities are developing innovative public and private financial and regulatory incentives to restore key ecosystems, achieve a cleaner and healthier environment, limit urban sprawl, protect wildlife and natural areas, advance the efficient use of land and create quality communities and jobs. For their participation they receive substantially reduced oversight of local comprehensive plan amendments and developments of regional impact and are given increased priority in other state programs and projects.

Boca Raton, Hillsborough County and Tampa jointly, Orlando, Ocala, and Martin County are now participating in this project, although many other communities around the state are actively working to increase their level of sustainability. More information is available through the Sustainable Communities Network at <http://sustainable.state.fl.us>.

Our Role as Citizens

The local planning process is dynamic. It is subject to change and improvement over time.

Recognizing that the residents of a community are ultimately responsible for developing, adopting and monitoring the enforcement of their local plan, the Florida Legislature made citizen participation a vital component of the process. Advertised public hearings allow citizens to become active in creating and revising every local plan.

Florida law gives citizens broad standing to challenge the adoption of plan amendments. Substantially affected persons can contest, in an administrative hearing, the validity of land development regulations as being inconsistent with the plan. Finally, as the plans are applied, adversely affected persons can challenge, in circuit court, those development orders that fail to comply with the plan.

The Growth Management Act has empowered the citizens of Florida by providing tools to manage growth in our communities. Although by now most communities have adopted plans, diligent public participation still is needed if they are to succeed. We must read and understand what is in our local comprehensive plan and then closely monitor the decisions our local government makes to see that they are consistent with the plan.

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Enhancing Our Linking Growth and

Planning is often viewed as merely guiding the physical development of our community – helping us decide where to locate a certain road, which land uses are appropriate where, or where to extend a sewer line. However, the ultimate goal of planning is to promote a better quality of life for all of us, and for that a strong, sustainable local economy is essential.

The quality of life in a community affects its ability to attract sustainable economic development. Good schools, safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, a protected natural environment, ample recreational and cultural opportunities and a distinctive built environment become vital economic development tools. Now that industry and retail no longer mean smokestacks and strip malls, smart communities are identifying what makes them unique and then working to attract economic development opportunities that will contribute to and enhance local character and economic diversity.

Planning is a tool to promote long-term, sustainable economic development to meet today's needs without compromising those of tomorrow. In creating a viable economy for both present and future generations, we must protect the natural environment if we are to enhance our quality of life.

Quality of Life: Management Economic Development



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Florida's Economy

Good News and Bad News. In recent years, Florida's economy has outperformed the nation's, due largely to the state's rapid population growth.¹⁷ There are drawbacks, however. As a recent guide on moving to Florida noted, "If you are a petroleum engineer, a marine architect, a diamond worker or nuclear technician, you're going to have a tough time finding a job in Florida for the next ten years. But if you are a secretary, a cashier, a retail salesperson, a groundskeeper or a gardener, you won't have any trouble."¹⁸ This is, perhaps, the fundamental dilemma facing Florida's economy, for while service jobs are closely linked to Florida's high rate of tourism and population growth, they are often low paying and require lower level skills.¹⁹

Florida's economic base has evolved

in this century from predominantly agriculture and forestry to greater reliance on service, government, retail trade, manufacturing and construction activities.

Government employment accounted for almost 943,000 jobs in 1997, and of Florida's more than 6.4 million private sector jobs, over 2.2 million were service jobs, and another 1.3 million were in retail trade.²⁰ Service jobs are related to hotels, amusement and recreation services, museums and art galleries. Retail jobs include eating and drinking establishments, food stores, and building material sales.

While agriculture has declined in overall proportion to the state's economy, Florida remains in the top ten in agricultural sales. In the early 1990s, Florida still led the nation in production of citrus, sugarcane and a variety of vegetables and row crops.²¹

Enhancing Our Quality of Life: Linking Growth Management and Economic Development

Tourism has for decades been Florida's number one industry, with 47 million visitors in 1997, and over \$40 billion in related sales.²² This in large part accounts for the high number of service jobs. While tourism still relies heavily on sunshine and beaches, in recent years more visitors are seeking out other natural, historical, and cultural resources in Florida. Known as "ecotourism" and "heritage tourism," these newly recognized facets of the industry offer great economic potential.²³

Jobs and Housing. Florida's strong dependence on service, agricultural, retail, and government jobs leaves many families unable to afford decent, safe housing. Although Florida is considered a national leader in state funding for affordable housing, currently an estimated 700,000 housing units are still needed for low- and very low-income households. Economic development activities that bring higher paying jobs to this state are essential. It is also critical to improve this state's education system, both to attract higher paying jobs to the state and to train young people in needed skills.

Most communities in Florida fall short in providing affordable housing, and what is provided is often in sprawling patterns that waste taxpayers dollars. Housing requires infrastructure and myriad services, and residential development does not always pay for itself, especially in sprawling communities. On average, for every \$1 of tax revenue raised from housing, counties spend \$1.34 per residence to provide services.²⁴

On the other hand, agriculture actually subsidizes other uses, generating

more in taxes than it demands in services. One study showed that, on average, counties spend only 30 cents of each farm, forest, and open space tax dollar received to provide public services. Next in line are industrial and commercial uses, which usually pay more in taxes than they cost in public services and infrastructure.²⁵ It pays, therefore, for a community to have a healthy mix of uses to offset the costs of servicing the residential areas.

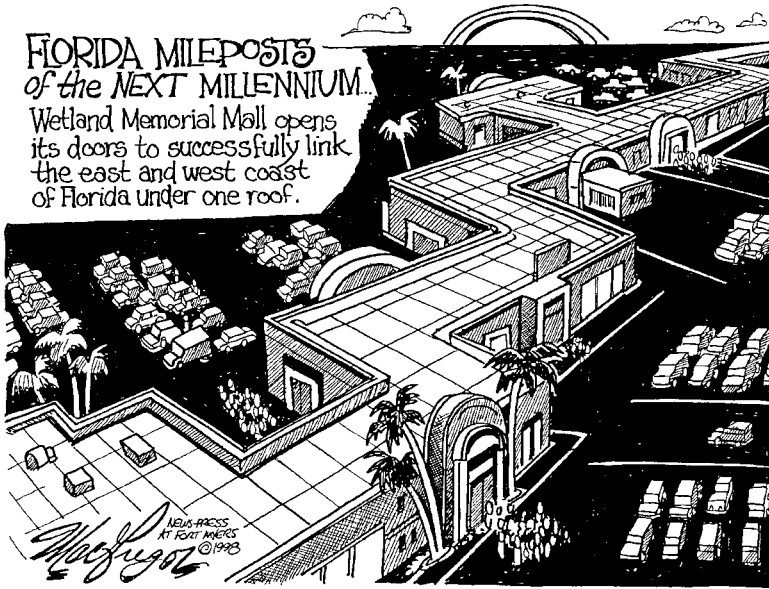
Growth Management and Economic Development

The relationship between long-range community planning and economic development is clear. As a part of the landmark 1985 Growth Management Act, the state comprehensive plan contained policies on the economy, agriculture, tourism, and employment. Consideration of economic factors permeates the required elements of the local comprehensive plan, and local governments may adopt an optional economic element.

Elements that relate directly to economic development include future land use, infrastructure, capital improvements, transportation and housing. The future land use element, of course, sets forth the type, location and amount of land designated for residential, commercial, industrial, utilities, conservation, and other uses. This basic element dictates how and where the community will grow. It lays the groundwork for different types of growth and economic development while ensuring compatibility

FLORIDA MILEPOSTS of the NEXT MILLENNIUM...

Wetland Memorial Mall opens
its doors to successfully link
the east and west coast
of Florida under one roof.



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and linkages among land use types, promoting economic efficiency and protecting natural resources.

Eighteen local governments in Florida have adopted the optional economic element in their comprehensive plans. Essential to this element is a clear understanding of the community's economic base types of employment available, the percentage of the local tax base generated from various sectors of the economy, and how employment and wages compare with those in similar communities and state and national averages.

Employment and population projections provide the foundation for the economic element. This information helps the community determine its needs and identify opportunities, limitations, and obstacles to economic development, which can then be translated into goals, objectives, and policies for this element.²⁶ For example, decisions might be taken to encourage downtown revitalization, promote industrial park development or ecotourism and heritage tourism, or

support any number of planning tools to strengthen and diversify the local economy and improve the quality of life. Also key to the economic element are an analysis of the local labor market, including worker supply and demand, and the availability of educational and training services.

Toward a Sustainable Future

The concept of sustainability has special urgency in Florida. Rapid growth has caused this state to face massive and often irreversible degradation of its natural environment, an alarming rate of sprawl, major social problems, and a boom-and-bust economy. The dilemma is how to protect this rich natural environment to serve the needs of generations to come. Sustainable development must be a significant part of the equation if Florida and Floridians are to have a viable future.



Shaping Future

Today's decisions are shaping the communities of tomorrow: where to develop, what pattern of development to pursue, which roads and bike paths to build, and what environmental resources to protect. For better or worse, these decisions shape our communities, natural environment and quality of life.

Across the nation a grassroots movement of citizens is calling for smarter growth. According to the Urban Land Institute, “smart growth explicitly recognizes the link between quality of life and development patterns and practices.”²⁷ The ULI goes on to note that smart growth can enhance the sense of community, protect investment in existing neighborhoods, provide certainty in the development process, protect environmental quality and conserve open space, reward developers with profitable products, financing and flexibility, decrease congestion by providing alternative modes of transportation, and make efficient use of public money.

Behind smart growth is thoughtful planning, long-range, creative thinking, and careful attention to community design. If we are to reshape our communities to better meet our needs and hopes for the future, we as citizens must become active participants.

the of Florida

Infrastructure and Growth

It has been clearly shown that building new roads, expanding the capacity of water mains and sewer systems, constructing bridges and schools and other public expansion of infrastructure can stimulate new development.

Two types of costs are associated with providing public services: the up-front, or capital, costs of building and installing public facilities, and those associated with their operation, maintenance, repair, administration and debt service. Like any business, government tries to save money while providing the highest quality service to its customers, the taxpayers. Growth management can be a powerful tool — one that is greatly underutilized to reduce the costs of providing public services and facilities. Effective management of the location, pattern and timing of growth can help government control these costs.

Changing the way we develop can prevent the waste of untold millions of taxpayer dollars, prevent unsightly sprawl, protect our rural resources and maintain community character. By

encouraging the location of new development close to existing central water and sewer facilities and near where people already work, we can reduce the demand to build costly public facilities in the countryside. Increasing existing residential densities and encouraging developers to design subdivisions to include a mixture of residential, retail and office uses maximizes use of existing facilities.

The Urban Land Institute has identified a number of strategies to promote smart growth, including:

- Conservation of open/green space, including farmland preservation;
- Incentives to encourage investment and reinvestment in central cities, older suburbs and existing communities;
- Location of major new regional attractions in central cities;
- Creation of higher-density development nodes around transportation;
- Use of new urbanist ideas to build communities with charm and character at higher densities;
- Mixed-use development;
- Dispersed affordable housing; and
- Infill development.

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Location and Patterns of Growth and Development

The location of new development is critical. When it is adjacent to existing development and compact in design, it can protect open space and natural resources and save considerable taxpayers' dollars.

A new bridge to a barrier island or a road that opens up vacant land or improves travel time may encourage premature development or development in an inappropriate location. Premature development of rural land (sometimes referred to as "leapfrog" development because it "leapfrogs" into the countryside) can hurt the local farming economy. There are environmental impacts, too, when new subdivisions spring up on vacant land that previously provided aquifer recharge, wildlife habitat, open space and water resource protection.

Patterns of growth, too, can be used to reduce the public cost of providing services and infrastructure. Below are a number of design techniques for smart growth.

Compact Development. Building houses on smaller lots and keeping remaining land in open space can reduce the capital costs of subdivision development significantly. This type of development also costs local government less to serve with police, fire and emergency services, and even school buses have fewer stops.

Mixed Uses. Allowing a mixture of uses within a neighborhood or development so people can walk, bike or take public transportation to shops, schools and work, also has many benefits. It

lessens the impact on roads and can result in more vital and livable communities.

Open Space. The environmental and recreational values of open space benefit the entire community. Local governments are discovering that development amenities like buffers and greenways can actually generate revenue by increasing the value of adjacent homes. A greenway in Boulder, Colorado, for example, increased nearby property values by \$5.4 million, contributing an additional \$.5 million in local tax revenue.²⁸

Improved Road Design. The pattern of roads within a development can make a difference. For example, a subdivision with only one entrance funnels all the traffic to one road. Every trip into or out of the subdivision puts another car on the road, increasing congestion, eventually requiring more improvements. A design with access to more than one roadway spreads traffic over a broader area, thus reducing the impacts at any one location and increasing connectivity.

Infill. Instead of sprawling into the countryside, communities can encourage "filling in" vacant or underutilized lands in existing urban or suburban areas. Infill development takes advantage of existing roads and other infrastructure, and the increase in population density may help support more neighborhood businesses and public transportation.

Traditional Neighborhood Development. Sometimes called "neotraditional development" or "new urbanism," this "new" strategy combines many of the principles of smart growth. Like typical pre-World War II towns,

TNDs contain a commercial center with shops and offices within walking distance of a moderate-density residential area. When compared to urban sprawl, a TND project can consume 45 percent less land, cost 127 percent less to serve, and generate property taxes that exceed costs of service.²⁹ In one study, citizens drove 65 percent less, impervious surfaces were cut in half and overall infrastructure cost was cut by 45 percent.³⁰ With a good mix of commercial and office use, TNDs can reduce daily reliance on the automobile, helping to lessen congestion and the costs of new roads and maintenance.

The International City/County Management Association³¹ has identified the following characteristics of traditional neighborhood developments:

- Return to pedestrian or “village” scale;
- Decreased reliance on the automobile;
- Smaller streets in grid patterns;
- Shallow front yards with porches;
- Greater efficiency of public infrastructure;
- Reduced energy consumption;
- Multiple-use development in compact neighborhoods; and
- A vital town center.



Shaping the Future of Florida

Florida has a growing number of TNDs, including Seaside and Rosemary Beach in the Panhandle, Celebration near Orlando, and Fernandina Beach's Amelia Park. Besides these newer TNDs, some older communities, including Gainesville's Haile Plantation and areas in Miami Lakes and Davie, are retrofitting existing suburban developments following TND principles.

Traditional neighborhood development faces challenges. Because the concept is relatively new, many existing local zoning and building codes need to be revised to allow this type of development. In some instances, developers have a difficult time obtaining financing from less progressive financial institutions. As national demographics continue to shift to smaller, older households, many without children, TNDs promise to become increasingly common. Tired of long commutes and traffic jams, people are embracing TND communities.

Coordinating Decisions

Land use, transportation and environmental decisions are interconnected. Together, they weave the fabric of our communities. One decision leads to another: Permitting a new residential subdivision uses land and impacts environmental resources. The subdivision requires public services and infrastructure, including access roads, and stimulates demands for new commercial outlets. Widening an existing road or developing a new connection between two existing highways may lessen congestion for a time. But when the added road

capacity stimulates premature development along these roads, this in turn uses more land, impacts more environmental resources and ultimately requires even more services and roads. The process repeats itself. Our quality of life is largely dependent on how wisely these decisions are linked.

The long-term impacts of our land use and transportation decisions are critical to our quality of life. No longer can we afford to make transportation and land use decisions without consciously considering these impacts. Linking transportation and land use decisions can be done through the Metropolitan Planning Organization process.

Individual MPOs are groups of representatives of local governments and other transportation providers who plan transportation facilities and services within their metropolitan areas. The MPOs identify and prioritize transportation improvements and expenditures for their area and create a local transportation improvement program, or TIP. These decisions carry weight in that federal or state funds generally cannot be applied to a transportation program or project unless it is included in one of these TIPs.

Changing Our Habits

Changing development patterns is no easy task. Current banking and finance systems discourage innovative development patterns. Too often, local zoning and development codes, even if unintentionally, promote sprawl. Many of us who grew up in

suburbs may have reservations about living in more compact communities where homes, shops and offices intermingle. Used to driving everywhere, we may be resistant to using other means of transportation. And with today's communities already designed for cars, there is no doubt that the transition will be difficult.

The list of reasons not to change is long. But the arguments to begin to bring about change are compelling — our quality of life, our environment, our pocketbooks.

Meaningful change will only come about if we, as citizens, begin advocating it. There are many steps to take, and they all start with you.

- Educate yourself on Florida's planning process. (We hope that this handbook and the recommended sources are useful.)
- Read and become familiar with your local comprehensive plan.
- Become more involved in your local planning process to ensure that the local comprehensive plan, transportation plan, zoning and development codes and other documents allow and encourage more innovative development.

- Attend public meetings and hearings to monitor planning and development decisions.
- Speak out and let your voice be heard.
- Consider forming an organization to serve as a local watchdog over planning and growth.
- Locate local professionals willing to provide advice and guidance.
- Evaluate your community's Urban Service Area. If it promotes sprawl, work with others to shrink it. If your community does not have a USA, work to create one.
- Understand Florida's Private Property Rights law and how it can affect your community development pattern.
- Promote the development of more affordable housing in your community.
- Work to ensure that your community has a healthy mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses that will provide a strong economic base.
- Identify and gain consensus on environmentally sensitive lands, greenways and open space that should be preserved, using federal, state and local programs.
- Find ways to begin moving the design of your community toward more compact development with an



economically beneficial mix of houses, offices and shops.

- Make sure that transportation needs are addressed from a regional perspective.
- Promote alternative modes of transportation.
- Pay more attention to linkages among roads, mass transit, bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways.

To be successful, we must pay more than lip service to changing our concepts of community design, recognizing that this goes against 50 years of “how things have been done.” Change will likely be incremental, but we can help make it happen and make certain it is headed in the right direction. We, as citizens, must play an active role.

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For More Information

For further information on Florida's growth management process, urban sprawl, smart growth, and other topics of interest, you may find the following sources of information helpful.

Florida Sites:

1000 Friends of Florida
www.1000fof.usf.edu
(includes links to other state nonprofit organizations including Florida Audubon and Florida Wildlife Federation)

Florida Department of Community Affairs
Division of Community Planning
www.state.fl.us/comaff/DCP

Florida Design Initiative
Built Environment Center
fcn.state.fl.us/fdi/bec/bec-home.htm

Florida Internet Center for Understanding
Sustainability (FICUS)
www.ficus.usf.edu

Florida Sustainable Communities Center
<http://sustainable.state.fl.us>

Florida's growth management legislation
(Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes and
Florida Administrative Code Rule 9J-5)
can be found at [www.state.fl.us/comaff/
DCP/Legislation/legislat.htm](http://www.state.fl.us/comaff/DCP/Legislation/legislat.htm).

National Sites:

American Farmland Trust
www.farmland.org

American Planning Association
www.planning.org

Congress for the New Urbanism
www.cnu.org

Joint Center for Sustainable Communities
www.naco.org/program/special/center
www.usmayors.org/uscm/sustainable

Sierra Club
www.sierraclub.org

Smart Growth Network
(International City/County Management
Association)
www.smartgrowth.org

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12. Section 163.3161, Florida Statutes. For an overview of this law, see Richard Grosso, "Florida's Growth Management Act: How Far We Have Come, and How Far We Have to Go," *Nova Law Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter 1996).
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