



## Florida Department of Transportation

RICK SCOTT  
GOVERNOR

605 Suwannee Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

ANANTH PRASAD, P.E.  
SECRETARY

September 19, 2012

Ms. Lisa Walsh, AICP  
Senior Planner/GIS Analyst  
City of Ocala Growth Management Department  
201 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Second Floor  
Ocala, FL 34471

**SUBJECT:** PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** CITY OF OCALA  
**FDEO #:** 12-3ESR

Dear Ms. Hitchcock:

The Department of Transportation has completed its review of the above proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this review process, and the Department's comments are provided in the attached review memo. Additionally, we request a copy of the adopted plan amendments following their adoption.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 407-482-7880 or by e-mail at [judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us).

Sincerely,

  
Judy Pizzo, GISP  
Systems Planner, FDOT District 5

jp

enclosure

c: Jimmy D. Massey, Marion County  
Bruce Day, WRPC  
Rob Magee, FDOT  
Ana Richmond, FDEO  
Ray Eubanks, FDEO

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**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW COMMENTS**

**Local Government:** City of Ocala  
**FDEO Amendment #:** 12-3ESR (Proposed)  
**Date FDOT Received:** September 4, 2012  
**Review Comments Deadline:** October 4, 2012  
**Today's Date:** September 13, 2012

**GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Summary of Amendment:** In 2010, the City of Ocala completed its *2035 Vision Plan* for the city, and in December 2011, as a continuation of the *2035 Vision Plan*, the City completed the *West Ocala Community Plan*, its first specific planning area study. This proposed comprehensive plan amendment seeks to incorporate the *2035 Vision Plan* and *West Ocala Community Plan* into the adopted Comprehensive Plan by:

- 1) Striking and replacing the Future Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map in their entirety,
- 2) Making modifications, deletions and additions to the Transportation, Recreation/Open Space/Cultural Arts, and Capital Improvements Elements, and
- 3) Striking the Historic Preservation, Community Redevelopment, and Public Schools Facilities Elements in their entirety.

**Relevant Elements:** Future Land Use Element (FLUE)                      Capital Improvements Element (CIE)  
Future Land Use Map (FLUM)    Historic Preservation Element (HPE)  
Transportation Element (TE)    Community Redevelopment Element (CRE)  
Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Arts                      Public Schools Facilities Element (PSFE)  
Element (ROSCAE)

**Rule Reference:** Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes (F. S.)

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT**

**Amendment # CPTA12-0001:** The City of Ocala proposes to delete three (3) Elements (as identified in Summary Item 3 above) from the adopted Comprehensive Plan and make numerous changes to four (4) other Elements (as identified in Summary Item 1 above). Below is a summary of the text and map amendment changes to these 4 Elements that are pertinent and of interest to the Department.

*Future Land Use Element:*

1. In Objective 6, the City proposes to strike the 20 existing land use categories and establish six (6) new future land use categories as follows:

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FDOT Contact:	Judy Pizzo, GISP FDOT District 5	Reviewed by:	Anoch Whitfield Tindale Oliver & Associates, Inc.
Telephone:	407-482-7880		407-657-9210
Fax:	407-275-4188		407-657-9106
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us">judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us</a>		<a href="mailto:awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com">awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com</a>
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<b>Proposed LU Category</b>	<b>Proposed Density/Intensity Standards</b>	<b>Possible Bonus</b>
Policy 6.1 High Intensity/Central Core	Min – Max: 12 – 60 units/acre 0.20 – 8.0 FAR	Yes*
Policy 6.2 Medium Intensity/Special District	Min – Max: 5 – 30 units/acre 0.15 – 4.0 FAR	Yes*
Policy 6.3 Low Intensity	Min – Max: 3 – 18 units/acre 0 – 0.75 FAR	Yes*
Policy 6.4 Neighborhood	No minimum density or intensity standards Max: 5 units/acre for Single-Family 12 units/acre for Multi-family 0.25 FAR	Possible based on Code**
Policy 6.5 Employment Center	No minimum density or intensity standards Max: 24 units/acre or 2.0 FAR	Possible based on Code**
Policy 6.6 Public	No minimum density or intensity standards Max: up to 0.15 FAR	Possible based on Code**

\* For inclusion of workforce housing, green building and sustainable design standards, ROW set-asides for trails, employment-generating uses, exemplary urban design, or other benefits to the City has specified in the Land Development Code.  
 \*\* Location and application of incentives shall be set forth in the Land Development Code.

2. In Objective 7, the City intends (by 2014) to establish Corridor Overlays guidelines to promote context-sensitive (complete street) standards and ensure a transition between residential and non-residential land uses.
3. In Objective 8, the City identifies eleven (11) Medium Intensity/Special Districts (Policies 8.1 through 8.11) based on their unique function, geography, and built form. The Special Districts are intended to facilitate development with two or more uses, and their specific development character and form shall be consistent with the Community Plan within which they are located. The first five (5) are within the West Ocala Community Plan Study Area, and development within these Districts shall be required to be consistent with the West Ocala Community Plan.
4. Within the implementing policies in Objectives 12, 13 and 15, the City intends to maintain local transportation concurrency and enforce its Land Development Code provision that requires new

FDOT Contact:	Judy Pizzo, GISP FDOT District 5 407-482-7880	Reviewed by:	Anoch Whitfield Tindale Oliver & Associates, Inc. 407-657-9210
Telephone:	407-275-4188		407-657-9106
Fax:	<a href="mailto:judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us">judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us</a>		<a href="mailto:awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com">awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com</a>
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developments to pay for their proportionate share through impact fee, mobility fee or other appropriate means – “to the extent required by state law”.

*Transportation Element:*

- A. **Goal 1** – the City proposes the following:
1. In revised Objective 2, the City plans to provide a transportation system that is consistent with the Ocala 2035 Vision Plan, proposed FLUM and FLUE, and most recent Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Per Policy 2.1, the City “shall program and fund the capital improvements projects needed to facilitate the goals and objectives of the Ocala 2035 Vision Plan”.
  2. In Objective 3 and its implementing policies, the City maintains local transportation concurrency (specifically Policy 3.6) and adopts the following level of service (LOS) standards for its roadways:

State Facilities (Except for SIS)	LOS D+10%
State Facilities (SIS)	LOS C
All City/County Facilities	LOS E

Policy 3.7 proposes that the City “shall create a mobility plan and mobility fee to replace, in whole or in part, the Concurrency Management System referenced in Policy 3.6... and the mobility plan will require all development to be responsible for mitigating segment and intersection improvements by paying a fee into a multi-modal mobility plan”.

3. In Objective 7, the City intends to “design ‘Complete Streets’ that integrate all modes of transportation (such as, but not limited to, walking, bicycling, vehicular and public transit facilities) to accommodate alternative transportation modes, aesthetics and safety for people of all ages and abilities”.
4. In Objective 8, the City promotes pedestrian and bicyclist safety and “shall initiate a [lane reduction] program to narrow or remove vehicular travel lanes from existing facilities and reallocate this space to other transportation users” – based on identified roadways with

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Telephone:	407-482-7880		407-657-9210
Fax:	407-275-4188		407-657-9106
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us">judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us</a>		<a href="mailto:awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com">awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com</a>
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projected volumes under the capacity of the adopted LOS standard. Policy 8.2 identifies three candidates for a [lane reduction] by 2022:

- a) SR 40/Silver Springs Boulevard from Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue to East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue,
- b) US 441/Pine Avenue from the base of the railroad bridge (NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) to SE 23<sup>rd</sup> Place, and
- c) Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue from SR 40 to NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

5. In Objectives 9 and 10, the City modifies existing policies to maintain adequate access routes to the airport and rail services and preserve the potential expansion of the Ocala International Airport to accommodate future quality growth. Implementing Policies 10.1 through 10.15 require consistency with Chapter 333 of the Florida Statutes, the TPO LRTP, and the City's Transportation Element.
- B. **Goal II** – The City proposes the following:
  6. Per proposed Policy 2.4, the City shall develop a Trails Master Plan by 2015 to be incorporated into the TPO Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan to “guide final alignment, trailhead design, amenities, wayfinding and signage, and other components supportive of the dedicated bicycle and pedestrian trails. Proposed Policies 2.6 through 2.8, the City “shall encourage the planning and development of interconnecting pedestrian/bike facilities between developments, shall include bicycle-sensitive traffic control devices in intersection improvement projects and new construction, and shall require new commercial developments to provide secure bicycle lock-up facilities, such as bike barns, bicycle storage lockers and bicycle racks”.
- C. **Goal IV** – This Goal relates to transportation concurrency exception areas TCEAs, proportionate share formulas, dense urban land areas, and mobility plans pursuant to the 2009 Senate Bill 360. The City proposes to delete Goal IV in its entirety.

*Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Arts Element:*

1. In general, the proposed changes in this Element are relative to, inventorying, improving and expanding on the City's existing sidewalk and trails infrastructure. Specifically, the City plans to develop a Neighborhood Walking Trails Plan with ready access to all parks in the region (Policy 4.4), conduct a detailed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance study to verify

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Telephone:	407-275-4188		407-657-9106
Fax:	<a href="mailto:judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us">judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us</a>		<a href="mailto:awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com">awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com</a>
E-mail:			
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accessibility deficiencies within City parks (Policy 4.7), and develop a Greenways and Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails Master Plan by 2015 (Policy 4.11). They plan to begin creation of the greenways system by 2016 (Policy 4.12).

*Capital Improvements Element:*

1. In Policy 1.1, the City adopts LOS standards for its roadways as listed in Transportation Element Item 2 (Objective 3) above.
2. In Objective 2 and Policy 2.1, the City intends to maintain local transportation concurrency and require sufficient public facility capacities prior to the issuance of development orders.
3. In pages 14 through 23 of the draft CIE document, the City proposes to strike its Schedule of Capital Improvements (Table 1), Summary of Costs and Revenues Table (Table 2), and Summary of Unfunded Costs Table (Table 3). No Tables are proposed to replace these deleted tables.

**Review Comments:** Department review reveals the following findings:

1. Regarding the FLUE and FLUM amendments, the changes could significantly increase the overall residential and non-residential development potential throughout the entire City. No specific data and analysis was provided to address the potential transportation impacts from these amendments. However, the Department recognizes and commends the significant efforts that the City has made in creating its 2035 Vision Plan and moving forward with said Vision Plan to adopt its first Community Plan for West Ocala. The Department further recognizes that this is a long-term 25-year plan and supports the City's efforts and the strategy that it proposes to put in place to address transportation in future years.

Based on conversation with the City, this strategy essentially is to keep local transportation concurrency in the interim and put policies in place to 1) encourage and incentivize higher densities and intensities within the City's Central Core, 2) promote mixed use developments in desired areas and special districts that are supportive of the multimodal transportation alternatives that the City plans to have in place (including pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure proposed in the FLUE, TE, and ROSCAE), and 3) develop (by 2014) a Mobility Plan and Mobility

FDOT Contact:	Judy Pizzo, GISP FDOT District 5	Reviewed by:	Anoch Whitfield Tindale Oliver & Associates, Inc.
Telephone:	407-482-7880		407-657-9210
Fax:	407-275-4188		407-657-9106
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Fee to replace the interim concurrency management system. The Department concurs with the City's position that increasing densities and intensities in the central core and the Employment Center-designated lands (as they are depicted on the proposed FLUM) in the interim would be economically beneficial to the City and will not likely result in unacceptable levels of congestion along state transportation facilities in the City. The Department looks forward to working with the City as it moves forward within the next year towards developing the Mobility Plan and Mobility Fee.

2. Regarding the Transportation Element amendments, the Department encourages the City to coordinate with the Department and other appropriate agencies on any potential future lane reductions along state roadway facilities.
3. Regarding the Recreation, Open Space and Cultural Arts Element amendments, the Department supports proposed Policies 4.4, 4.7 and 4.12 relative to the Neighborhood Walking Trails Plan, ADA compliance study, and Greenways and Bicycle/Pedestrian Trails Master Plan. Once in place, increased ADA compliance and greater pedestrian/bicyclist access and connectivity can effectively help to reduce transportation demands on local and state roadways, vehicle miles travel, and Greenhouse Gas emissions and promote the mobility of people and goods within the City.
4. Regarding the Capital Improvements Element amendments, the Department has identified a concern with the deletion (without replacement) of the Capital Improvements Schedule (Table 1), Summary of Costs and Revenues (Table 2), and Summary of Unfunded Costs (Table 3).

Sections 163.3180(1)(b) and (5)(b) and 163.3177(3), F. S., requires that if a local government chooses to retain local transportation concurrency, the "local government comprehensive plan must demonstrate, for required or optional concurrency requirements, that the levels of service adopted can be reasonably met. Infrastructure needed to ensure that adopted level-of-service standards are achieved and maintained for the 5-year period of the capital improvement schedule must be identified pursuant to the requirements of s. 163.3177(3)" and that "a schedule of facilities that are necessary to meet the adopted level of service shall be reflected in the capital improvement element".

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The City proposes to keep local transportation concurrency and is thus subject to the above-referenced Statutory provisions. However, the proposed amendments do not 1) identify a "schedule of facilities that are necessary to meet the adopted level of service in the Capital Improvements Element pursuant to s. 163.3177(3), F. S." (s. 163.3180(5)(b), F. S.) and 2) does not demonstrate that the levels of service adopted can be reasonably met.

**Review Comments:**

*The Department commends the City of Ocala for its progressive efforts and commitment to promoting multimodal transportation alternatives and connectivity and integration of pedestrian/bicyclist safety and accessibility in transportation improvements, as well as the strategy that it proposes to put in place to achieve the 2035 Vision Plan. The Department has no concerns or comments relative to the deletion of the Public School Facilities, Historic Preservation, and Community Redevelopment Elements.*

*However, relative to the proposed changes to the Transportation and Capital Improvements Elements (as identified in Items 2 and 4 of the Staff Review above), The Department offers the following comments:*

1. *For the Transportation Element, please add a policy to Objective 8 or revise proposed Policy 8.3 to include coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Ocala-Marion TPO in the planning and design process for any future lane reduction on state facilities.*
2. *For the Capital Improvements Element, please provide:*
  - a. *A schedule of facilities that are necessary to maintain the adopted level of service, and*
  - b. *A Schedule of Capital Improvements () for the 5-year planning period consistent with the provisions in Section 163.3177(3), F. S., including identification of funded and unfunded projects and their level of priority for funding.*

**Recommendations:**

*The Department requests the City revise the proposed comprehensive plan amendments to include Comments 1 and 2 as stated above as well as a copy of the adopted plan amendments following their adoption.*

*The Department remains available to work with the City to resolve these comments.*

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Telephone:	407-482-7880		407-657-9210
Fax:	407-275-4188		407-657-9106
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us">judy.pizzo@dot.state.fl.us</a>		<a href="mailto:awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com">awhitfield@tindaleoliver.com</a>
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