

Board of County Commissioners
Gadsden County, Florida
Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: July 7, 2009
Date Submitted: June 24, 2009
To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board
From: Johnny Williams, County Administrator
Howard Douglas, Growth Management Director
Subject: Public Hearing - Evaluation and Appraisal Report
Adoption and Approval to Transmit Report To FDCA

Statement of Issue:

Florida Statute 163.3191 requires each local government to adopt an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) every seven (7) years to identify updates that need to be addressed in the County's adopted Comprehensive Plan. The EAR must be adopted and approved for transmittal to the Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA) for its review of sufficiency pursuant to the requirements of the Chapter 163.3191, Florida Statutes. Adoption and transmittal of the EAR to FDCA shall occur on or before August 28, 2009 or the County's Comprehensive Plan will not be in compliance with Florida Statutes.

Background:

The Department held public workshops across the County during the month of January and February 2009. A list of updates to the Comprehensive Plan were identified by the citizens of Gadsden County and presented to the Planning Commission (PC) and the Board on February 17, 2009 and March 17, 2009 respectively. A Letter of Understanding (LOU) that identified the major issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan updates was approved by the Board and transmitted to FDCA. Please see Attachment One for a copy of the LOU.

Based on the LOU, the County's consultant Kimley-Horn and Associates, developed the EAR that identified specific areas of the Comprehensive Plan that should be considered for revision. The draft EAR was presented to the PC on April 16, 2009 and May 14, 2009. The PC had comments regarding text changes and content. The PC approved the EAR at its May, 14, 2009 meeting. Please see Attachment Two for a copy

of the EAR. Attachment Two is available in book form on the Commissioner's table and the Department for review. The PC's comments are in blue.

During the months of June and July, the FDCA conducted a "cursory" review of the draft EAR. It is important to keep FDCA involved in the EAR process to ensure that when the report is submitted for approval by FDCA all of the state requirements are addressed in the report. FDCA made comments on the draft EAR. Please see Attachment Two for a copy of the EAR. Attachment Two is available in book form on the Commissioner's table and the Department for review. The FDCA's comments are in red.

Once the draft EAR is approved by the Board, the document will be sent to FDCA for final compliance review by the August 28, 2009 deadline. The next step in the EAR process is to develop the exact language that will be adopted by ordinance to revise the Comprehensive Plan. Public meetings will be held in front of the PC and the Board to address the specific issues and language that will be used to amend the Comprehensive Plan. The Board will have the final approval authority for any Comprehensive Plan changes identified.

Options:

1. Adopt the draft EAR and approve for transmittal to FDCA;
2. Deny the draft EAR and deny approval for transmittal to FDCA;
3. Board discretion.

Recommendation:

Option #1.

Attachment:

1. Letter of Understanding

Note: All Agenda Items and Attachments are available in book form on the Commissioner's table and the Department for review. The EAR is also available on the County's website (www.gadsdengov.net) for Review.)

Letter of Understanding

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Kimley-Horn
and Associates, Inc.

February 6, 2009

1725 Hermitage Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida
32308

Ms. Susan Poplin, AICP
Regional Planning Administrator
Florida Department of Community Affairs
Division of Community Planning
2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Gadsden County Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) Letter of Understanding

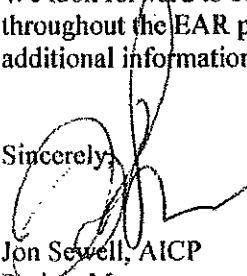
Dear Ms. Poplin:

Gadsden County is in the process of developing the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR). The County is seeking the Department of Community Affairs' approval of its proposed list of major issues, which was gathered through input from local agencies, adjacent jurisdictions, the County Commissioners, and through a series of five well-attended public meetings throughout the County.

This letter provides the complete list of major issues to be covered in the Gadsden County EAR, and seeks your agreement that this list is complete. In addition to the identified issues listed in this letter, the Comprehensive Plan will also be evaluated and updated to reflect the new amendments from the State Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 163, Part II, F.S, and Rule 9J-5, F.A.C that have been passed since the last EAR and adopted by Gadsden County in 1999. Each bulleted major issue provides a more detailed explanation of the related concerns and will be addressed in the Major Issues chapter of the EAR.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Department of Community Affairs throughout the EAR process. If you or your staff have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 553-3500.

Sincerely,


Jon Sewell, AICP
Project Manager
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Howard Douglas

TEL 850 553 3500
FAX 850 309 0055

List of Major Issues
Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan

The following is the list of major issues gathered through input from local agencies, adjacent jurisdictions, the County Commission, and the public. The list is not in priority order, but is intended to be complete. Each issue will be used to assess the associated objective(s) within the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Planning and Land Use:

- Land Use Category Consistency - *Land use categories need to be applied consistently and in keeping with the intent of the Comp Plan.*
- Development Patterns - *There have been multiple annexations by surrounding jurisdictions creating impacts to the County due to conflicting land use regulations across jurisdictional boundaries. There needs to be better inter-governmental coordination. Consideration towards revising development processes to have land use amendment approvals and decisions of where development should occur should be controlled primarily by the Commission rather than by developers. It is strongly encouraged that clustering development patterns be used to allow for more open space and natural areas. Land use classifications of large undeveloped platted subdivisions should be reevaluated.*
- Urban Sprawl - *The land use changes from agricultural uses to residential uses should be reduced or eliminated. If higher density is desired it should be located near incorporated cities or where adequate infrastructure exists.*
- Urban Service Areas - *An evaluation of urbanizing and concentrated growth/development areas should be completed to emphasize and create unique destination areas within the County. This will allow for concentrated business and industry areas. Special consideration for commercial and neighborhood commercial should be given to areas along US 90. Land use designations need to be area specific with a balance of land uses, including commercial and residential uses generated from the local communities' needs and visions.*

Economic Development:

- Employment Opportunities - *Local industries are closing leaving hundreds unemployed. New jobs and workforce development with vocational training is needed.*
- Schools - *The school system is underfunded which in turn is affecting the County's ability to grow and attract new businesses and citizens.*
- Taxes - *County taxes need to be reevaluated to account for changes in land uses as well as to include solid waste collection and roadway cleanup.*

Affordable Housing:

- Senior Housing - *Many seniors within the County are unable to afford necessary repairs to their homes to keep them consistent with County codes. Programs need to be established that address these needs.*
- Family Homestead Provision - *Upon the expiration of the County's Family Homestead Provision at the end of 2008, families owning large plots of land are unable to divide their property into smaller parcels to distribute to immediate family members. Provisions need to be made to address this change in property management.*

**List of Major Issues
Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan**

Transportation:

- Transportation Needs - An evaluation of the current Level of Service (LOS) standards for roadways is needed along with a schedule for roadway improvements through consideration of a Long Range Transportation Concurrency System. Potential funding sources, such as the possible instatement of impact fees, need to be identified and updates to the proportionate fair-share ordinances need to be addressed.
- Alternative Modes of Transportation- Public transportation options within the County need to be provided, especially for seniors and citizens dependent of public transportation to fulfill daily tasks and obligations.

Infrastructure Expansion/Improvement:

- Water Supply and Water Quality- Regional impacts on water quality in Gadsden County from water transfers needs to be monitored. A higher priority needs to be placed on water usage and re-use within the Plan. A loading study is needed to assess other hydrological aspects and water availability.
- Stormwater and Drainage- Regional and local stormwater master planning needs to be completed to coordinate drainage issues County-wide rather than parcel by parcel. The use of the new Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) drainage requirements is now required.
- Sewer, Septic Tanks and Waste Water- Sewer and wastewater infrastructure should be addressed within the County. A long-range plan for a centralized or retrofit sewer system is needed. Density standards and monitoring (committees) need to be established regarding the capacity or impact placed on the infrastructures and water quality. Central sewer should be provided or high performance septic systems where central sewer is not available.
- Impact Fees - The adoption of impact fees should be considered as a funding option for infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure funded through impact fees could be put in place before development occurs and could help manage growth while attracting economic development to certain locations.

Environmental Protection and Conservation:

- Overlay District – A protection plan or overlay district needs to be established for the Lake Talquin area.
- Environmental Protection – Nonconforming land uses, such as industrial uses are affecting watersheds, local aquifers, creeks, and ravines. Impacts to the natural environment should be considered before approving development, and conservation areas should be expanded. Proper site location should be a strong factor in siting such uses.

Coordination with Municipalities:

- Interlocal Agreements – Interlocal agreements should be created between the County and municipalities for the provisions of:
 - Infrastructure,
 - Hurricane evacuation,
 - Adjacent land use changes,
 - Concurrency, and
 - Domestic animal control.



STATE OF FLORIDA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

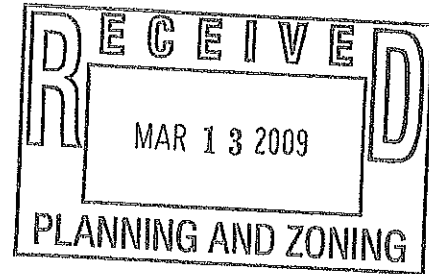
"Dedicated to making Florida a better place to call home"

CHARLIE CRIST
Governor

THOMAS G. PELHAM
Secretary

March 11, 2009

The Honorable Eugene Lamb, Jr.
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners
1-B East Jefferson Street
Post Office Box 1799
Quincy, FL 32353-1799



Dear Chairman Lamb:

The Department of Community Affairs has reviewed your request dated February 6, 2009 which outlines the major issues that will be the focus of Gadsden County's Evaluation and Appraisal Report. The Department agrees with the summary of the issues as set forth in the attached list of seven (7) major community issues, which include: Community Planning Land Use, Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure Expansion/Improvement, Environmental Protection and Conservation, Coordination with Municipalities. There is an expectation that the applicable requirements under Chapter 163.3191(2)(a) through (p), Florida Statutes, will be fully assessed in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. This letter serves as confirmation of our understanding. As a result of the assessment, there may need to be proposed changes to the comprehensive plan to better implement the intended planning objectives.

We appreciate the cooperation and effort of you and your staff in working with us to successfully complete this Evaluation and Appraisal Report. If you and your staff should have any questions or require further assistance, please contact Nia Clark, Planner, at (850) 921-3760 or via email at nia.clark@dca.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

Mike McDaniel, Chief
Office of Community Planning

MM/nc

cc: Mr. Bud Parmer, Interim County Administrator, Gadsden County
Mr. Charles D. Blume, Executive Director, Apalachee Regional Planning Council
Ms. Amy E. O'Dell, Planner, Gadsden County Department of Growth Management
Mr. Jon Sewell, AICP, Consultant to the County, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.