

070604A

Memo



Date: September 17, 2008
To: Erik Bredfeldt, Planning and Development Director
From: Mark Garland, Environmental Coordinator
Subject: County EPD Recommendations on Green Infrastructure, Strategic Ecosystems

On July 24, the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (EPD) made recommendations to the Community Development Committee regarding "green infrastructure" and strategic ecosystems. After meeting with you and staff from Planning and Development Services and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, I believe the following represents staff opinion on these recommendations.

Tracking green infrastructure: For each new development, EPD records the acreage of wetlands and their buffers, surface waters and their buffers, significant geological features and their buffers, strategic ecosystems, listed species habitat, 100-year floodplain, significant habitat, other natural areas, community green spaces, stormwater management areas, and landscaped areas, and recommended that the city do the same. I record the acreage of wetlands on each new site plan, but the city doesn't record the other features. Recommendation: We can track some or all of the features that the county does. If we wish to track all the features, we will have to change our requirements for site plans.

GIS: EPD also recommended that the city "use GIS to provide visual representation of infrastructure." I am using GIS to review all new site plans. Recommendation: I can coordinate with the county to determine how they are providing a visual representation of infrastructure.

Green building and low-impact development (LID): EPD recommended that the city promote these practices. Recommendation: Coordinate with Building Department to determine how the city is promoting these practices now.

Wetlands: EPD recommended that the city apply county standards to wetlands in undeveloped areas or connected to creeks and lakes. Recommendation: I believe the consensus was to retain existing city standards for wetland protection in areas outside of annexed Strategic Ecosystems.

Strategic Ecosystems: EPD recommended that the city apply county standards to strategic ecosystems "that are part of greenbelt and currently undeveloped." Recommendation: Adopt two tiers of environmental regulations. For properties annexed into the City from Alachua County, acknowledge County Strategic Ecosystems designation and apply enhanced City environmental protections to be drafted by staff. For properties currently within City limits apply enhanced City environmental protections to be drafted by staff. Staff is currently reviewing the substance and distinctions between County Strategic Ecosystems and the City's Significant Ecological Overlay District and will bring back language for the Committee to review.