

# **MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION & LAND USE**



**AN ALTERNATIVE TO  
CONVENTIONAL  
TRANSPORTATION  
CONCURRENCY  
FOR THE URBAN CLUSTER**

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, the Alachua Countywide Visioning Plan and the Gainesville Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization's Livable Community Reinvestment Plan all emphasize future urban development within a compact urban area designated on the adopted Future Land Use Map as the "urban cluster", the preservation of open space and environmentally sensitive lands, the clustering of rural developments and the concentration of non-residential development and higher density residential development in activity centers within the Urban Cluster. The goal of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Mobility Element is to "Establish a multi-modal transportation system that provides for the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorized-vehicle users, users of rail and aviation facilities, and is sensitive to the cultural and environmental amenities of Alachua County."

Florida Statutes (§163.3180) requires that land use and transportation facilities be coordinated to ensure there is adequate transportation capacity to support the future land use adopted in the Comprehensive Plan. Policy 1.1.8 in the Transportation Element of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan requires that adequate roadway capacity needed to support new development shall be required to be available "concurrent" with the impact from development. Objective 1.1 of the Transportation Mobility Element requires that "Level of service standards, in accordance with the latest version of the Level of Service Handbook developed by the Florida Department of Transportation Systems Planning Office, shall be adopted in order to maximize the efficient use and safety of roadway facilities in order to coordinate capital improvement planning with land use decisions to meet the requirement that adequate roadway facilities be available concurrent with the impacts of development."

The State's Growth Management Act calls for implementation of the mandate know as concurrency through a combination of regulation and capital improvement programming. As applied to roadway based level of service standards, the regulatory component consists of a review of the impact of new development to determine if there is adequate roadway capacity to serve the traffic generated by the new development. Concurrency approval is granted to the new development if there is sufficient roadway capacity available at the time of approval or if new capacity is fully funded for construction within

three years of development approval (see s.163.3180 (2)(c), F.S.). Local governments are also required to adopt a financially feasible Capital Improvements Element (CIE) to provide the roadway capacity needed to maintain adopted roadway level of service standards. The State's Growth Management Act has included a longstanding requirement that a local government include a Capital Improvement Element (CIE) in the adopted Comprehensive Plan that identifies capacity enhancing transportation projects required to serve the impact of future land uses. Local governments have been required to show in the five (5) year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that needed transportation capacity can be fully funded and constructed in a five (5) year period to meet projected demand needs. The legislature has put added emphasis on the requirement for a financially feasible Comprehensive Plan, mandating that local governments update their CIE to ensure it is *financially feasible* by *December 2008 (emphasis added)* or be subject to various sanctions (see s.163.3177(2)(b)(1), F.S.), such as prohibitions on the ability to amend the future land use map.

The Concurrency Management System in Alachua County, especially in the western urban area, has been under an increasing level of stress as a number of roadways in the western urban area are operating either near or over capacity. The majority of roadways over capacity are operating below the adopted level of service due to reserved trips from already approved development. Proposed developments along portions of Archer Road and Newberry Road are currently unable to receive final development plan approval due to a lack of available roadway capacity. The County does not currently have a transportation plan to address roadway concurrency within the Urban Cluster.

The concept of concurrency was well intended, but the application of it has led to unintended and unsustainable consequences. Instead of ensuring that adequate roadway capacity is available concurrent with development, as urban areas approach build-out, new development in those areas is restricted under the regulatory component of concurrency management, creating pressure to allow more development in rural areas where capacity is available. The end result of this approach to concurrency is that denser development within urban service areas is stopped or significantly delayed due to a lack

of capacity, while a favorable climate is created for sprawling development in rural and agricultural areas.

It is becoming increasingly evident that local governments and the state cannot build their way out of congestion by adding more roadway capacity. Once local governments stops development through concurrency and begins accepting proportionate fair-share contributions to add roadway capacity; they can find themselves going down the slippery slope of continuously having to add new capacity to mitigate the impact of new development. This unsustainable pattern has proven to be an ineffective means to provide mobility. The current concurrency system fails to adequately address the land use and transportation connection and focuses solely on motor vehicle travel rather than mobility via multiple modes of travel. An alternative, such as concurrency exceptions in congested urban areas, is often not a satisfactory solution because it does not adequately address real mobility needs in areas with severely stressed infrastructure.

The Florida Legislature has recently amended the state statute regarding concurrency (§163.3180 (9) (a), Florida Statute) that enables local governments to adopt a ten (10) year Long Term Concurrency Management System (LTCMS) to address current and future roadway deficiencies (15 years may be allowed in some instances). By extending the time horizon for the Capital Improvement Program, the establishment of a Long Term Concurrency Management System provides a mechanism to allow development to continue while at the same time allowing for the needed roadway capacity to be planned, designed and constructed and sufficient funds accumulated to carry out those projects. Through a LTCMS, a local government could permit a roadway to operate below its LOS standard for a short period of time, allowing for the needed roadway capacity to be constructed.

Growth Management Staff has drafted a LTCMS to address transportation concurrency consistent with these provisions of state statute. To obtain feedback on the draft LTCMS, Staff has held a series of three (3) public workshops. In addition, the draft LTCMS has been presented to a number of community and professional groups, local government

advisory boards and the MTPO (includes MTPO Board and its various committees). The LTCMS was primarily focused on evaluating corridors for adding roadway capacity and looking longer term at the development of a transit system. The feedback received from professional groups and the majority of citizen responses supported adding roadway capacity. The community groups, local government advisory boards and the MTPO feedback leaned towards opposing adding additional roadway capacity. The transportation plan for the alternative concurrency management proposal strived to strike a balance between widening all roadways and not adding any roadway capacity. Mobility via all modes of transportation is the primary emphasis of the transportation plan.

During the development and presentations of the LTCMS, the Newberry Village project was approved and the Florida Department of Community Affairs proposed legislation that would dramatically change concurrency. The Newberry Village project took advantage of a provision in the Comprehensive Plan based on Florida Statutes that allowed for development that focused on promoting public transportation, known as a Transportation Concurrency Exceptions for Projects that Promote Public Transportation (TCEPPT). The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan recognizes several alternative concurrency options identified in Florida Statute for individual projects or small districts such as TCEPPT, Mutli-Modal Transportation Districts (MMTD), Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas (TCEA) and Transportation Concurrency Management Areas (TCMA).

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) proposed legislation in the last legislative session that would have provided for an alternative approach to concurrency. The legislation stated that “The current system is complex, lacks uniformity among jurisdictions, is too focused on roadways to the detriment of desired land use patterns and transportation alternatives, and frequently prevents the attainment of important growth management goals”. The draft legislation proposed the creation of a mobility fee based on vehicle miles of travel that would potentially replace both proportionate share and transportation impact fees. The mobility fee would be designed to provide for mobility needs by all modes and ensure that development provides mitigation for its impacts on

the transportation system, while requiring that land use plans promote compact, mixed-use, and energy efficient development. The mobility fee legislation did not pass; however, it highlighted the opportunity to approach concurrency utilizing an alternative approach.

Growth Management and Public Works Staff have met with the Florida Department of Community Affairs to discuss the development of such an alternative approach to transportation concurrency. The alternative approach would focus on the creation of a mobility fee based on vehicle miles of travel (VMT) and linking land use in the Urban Cluster and transportation through existing Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) policies and proposed Transit Oriented Development (TOD) policies. The transportation mobility fee would assist in the funding of a transportation plan that emphasizes mobility by all modes and would replace both proportionate share and transportation impact fees.

The transportation plan for the western portion of the Urban Cluster would focus on the development of an interconnected roadway network, along with dedicated transit lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks and paths. The transportation plan for East Gainesville would focus on the development of a system of dedicated transit lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks and paths. The land use vision is to emphasize Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) and to encourage Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND) to be constructed between the transit centers in the Urban Cluster. The Transit Oriented Developments would be planned to provide for a mixture of high density residential uses and higher intensity retail and employment uses served by rapid transit service. Rapid Transit service on dedicated transit lanes would serve daily commutes by connecting Transit Oriented Developments with the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, Downtown, the Gainesville Regional Airport and Fairgrounds, Shands, North Central Florida Regional Medical Center and other regional employment and retail centers. The future rapid transit network could eventually be expanded to connect with municipalities outside of the Urban Cluster. A network of bicycle lanes, sidewalks and multi-use paths would connect adjacent residential development and Traditional Neighborhood Development to the

Transit Oriented Developments. Roadway capacity projects would focus primarily on the development of an interconnected network that provides alternatives to the state roadway system, including the provision of additional lanes over Interstate 75 and connects development to planned Transit Oriented Developments and Activity Centers. With an emphasis on mobility as the means of linking land use and transportation, new TOD's and TND's can be planned to discourage sprawl and encourage efficient use of the Urban Cluster by directing new development to areas where mobility can be provided. By focusing on the provision of services and goods in close proximity to residences and providing transit service for commute trips, there is the potential for a significant reduction in VMT and reduced congestion. After presentation of this approach, the Department of Community Affairs Staff, including DCA Secretary Thomas G. Pelham, were very supportive of the proposal and encouraged the County to work with them on the development of this alternative concurrency management system, which they deemed is consistent with current Growth Management Statutes.

The mobility fee would be based on the existing transportation impact fee. The primary difference is that the mobility fee would be based on an infrastructure plan that includes transportation capacity, dedicated transit lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks and paths. Since there is adequate roadway capacity in eastern Alachua County, the mobility fee for East Gainesville would be based on a network of dedicated transit lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks and paths. The current transportation impact fee is based on generalized transportation facilities required to maintain roadway level of service (LOS). The mobility fee would be based on actual infrastructure projects for all modes.

The County is still required to demonstrate that the alternative concurrency management system is financially feasible. The mobility fee would be one means of funding the infrastructure and demonstrating financial feasibility. The alternative concurrency system approach would benefit from the expenditure of gas taxes and bonding for upgrading major roadways and providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The infrastructure plan for all modes would potentially serve as the basis for seeking additional funds such as bonding, infrastructure assessments and infrastructure sales tax.

In addition, Staff would pursue state and federal funds for the proposed capacity projects on state roadways and funds from the federal government for development of a rapid transit network serving the urban areas in Gainesville and unincorporated Alachua County.

Growth Management Staff has met with representatives of potential developments that are interested in pursuing Transit Oriented Developments consistent with this alternative concurrency approach. The Department of Community Affairs has stated that applications for such Transit Oriented Development could be submitted in conjunction with a Comprehensive Plan amendment that establishes the policy framework for the alternative concurrency approach to transportation in the Urban Cluster.

The proposed alternative concurrency management system would require a Comprehensive Plan amendment. State statute requires the County to have a financially feasible Comprehensive Plan by December of this year. The Department of Community Affairs recognizes that some additional time may be needed to process the Comprehensive Plan amendment and has expressed a willingness to work with the County on the financial feasible deadline. Growth Management and Public Works Staff are both prepared to move forward with a Comprehensive Plan amendment upon direction from the Board of County Commissioners.