

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA
M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Jason E. Brown
County Administrator

FROM: Phil Matson, AICP
Community Development Director

DATE: November 2, 2020

SUBJECT: Discussion of Development, Visioning, and Service Delivery Issues

It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners formally consider the following information at the Board's regular meeting of November 10, 2020.

BACKGROUND

In the early 2000's, the county experienced rapid residential and commercial growth. With that growth came accompanying challenges including increased traffic, school overcrowding, reduced open space, and a fear of diminished quality of life. At the same time, the county's longstanding citrus industry faced a number of its own challenges, including disease, declining demand, and foreign competition.

The rapid consumption of developable land inside the urban service boundary coupled with an interest by developers to expand the boundary presented a previously unseen dilemma to the County's leaders. As a result, the county (through the Metropolitan Planning Organization) undertook a comprehensive visioning process that included a reevaluation of development policies. This process included professional facilitators and the establishment of a growth management committee with broad representation including both City and County elected officials.

This was not the first time that residents of Indian River County reckoned with growth issues. Over the years, many other policy initiatives carried growth management implications, including the adoption of a thirty-five foot building height limit and the imposition of impact fees to fund infrastructure needed for new development. In 1983, the county adopted its first ever Comprehensive Plan. That plan analyzed existing growth patterns and logical future extensions, forming the basis of our existing Future Land Use Plan and Urban Services Boundary.

Currently, the county is again facing some of the same issues that occurred in the early 2000's, such as high residential demand, annexation requests by rural landowners, and declining citrus production. At the September 22, 2020 Board of County Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Susan Adams raised the issue of development and service delivery and requested that staff undertake an evaluation of existing development policies, with an eye toward reaching out to all stakeholders and assessing which of the County's policies should be updated in light of changing conditions.

ANALYSIS

Planning for growth in Indian River County is a complex and multi-phase process. At a minimum, staff believes the following factors must be included in any analysis:

- A Forecast of Future Population Demand (including high, medium, and low growth scenarios);
- An Evaluation of the Availability of Land (including Vacant Land, Redevelopment, and Infill) to accommodate Demand;
- A Prediction for the future of rapidly changing “Drivers of Demand” (such as E-Commerce’s impact on Commercial Development, Autonomous Transportation, Environmental Issues, Weather Events, and Public Health);
- An Evaluation of the Strengths and Weaknesses of existing development policies in light of the above;
- An Estimation of available capacity and costs to deliver essential services (like water, road construction, and infrastructure maintenance) needed for new growth;
- Coordination with Municipalities on growth assumptions, development policies, and vacant land availability; and
- Scenario Planning and Consensus Building in preparation for adoption of Future Policies.

At the November 10, 2020 BCC meeting, staff will discuss these issues at the conceptual level and seek guidance from the Board on future action.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item; there are no recommendations at this time.