Land Development Code  
- Section 804 -  
Ecological Corridors  
(Critical Linkages)  
Board of County Commissioners Workshop  
September 15, 2015

RECAP

• In 2000, a lawsuit over lack of environmental protection resulted in a Settlement Agreement requiring modifications to the Comprehensive Plan.

• In 2002, Pasco County initiated a study to evaluate wildlife habitat protections.

• Study supported a regional conservation strategy for habitat and natural resource protection.
In 2003 the Environmental Lands Task Force recommended protection of corridors through acquisition, regulation, and partnerships.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**GOAL CON 1: REGIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

*Protect, conserve, enhance, and manage* the natural land and water resources of Pasco County through a regional conservation strategy that protects the most significant natural resources of the County through a combination of standards for specified **critical linkages**, land acquisition, land use strategies, managing and preserving public lands, land use policies, wetlands, and water resources.
**RECAP**

- Recommendations resulted in County amendment to Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan in 2005.

- Comprehensive Plan Policy CON 1.2.2 outlines development standards and currently requires that the LDC be amended by 2010 to adopt implementation measures for corridors.

- Staff has reinitiated the LDC implementation process.

**UPDATE**

- Staff conducted 4th public workshop at the request of the LPA.
- Public notice on workshop initiated via mailing (235), email (100+) and website.
- Meeting was well attended (55+).
- Staff collected additional public comments and met with various property owners.
- Completed responses to all public comments and revised draft ordinance.
- Responses and revised ordinance distributed to the public and made available on County website.
UPDATE

Workshop focused on frequently asked questions

- Why is the County doing this?
- When does the ordinance apply?
- How will it affect future development?
- Is my property exempt?
- Can the boundaries be modified?
- Can the ordinance devalue my property?

When does the ordinance apply?

- Only when an applicant wants to rezone to greater density or intensity.
- **What is “density?”** The number of allowable dwelling units authorized per acre.
- **What is “intensity?”** How much office, industrial or commercial activity there is per parcel - measured by use, size, traffic generated, or floor-to-area ratio.
• The ordinance will not be considered in the appraisal process.
• Property will be assessed at highest and best use.

Public Comment

• Staff has responded to over 70 individual questions on the ordinance
• Significant changes to ordinance made as a result of public comment
• FAQ developed
DRAFT ORDINANCE KEY POINTS

• Assists in achieving County’s conservation strategy and compliance with the 2000 settlement agreement
• Applicability is **only** triggered by increase in density or intensity
• Contains certain exemptions
• Incentives incorporated into ordinance:
  - Density Transfer
  - Compensation in lieu of Density Transfer; or
  - Combination of transfer and compensation
  - Boundary Modifications and Reduction incorporated
  - Other Incentives: reduced setbacks, park requirements, landscaping and tree requirements, increased lot coverage and building heights

Exemptions – these types of development activities do not trigger the implementation of LDC Section 804

• Prior Development Approvals in accordance with Existing Zoning
• All Development Applications not Increasing Density or Intensity
• Prior Development Approvals prior to effective date of ordinance adoption (i.e. MPUD, site plan)
• All lawfully permitted uses and structures within a Critical Linkage existing prior to the effective date of ordinance adoption
• Existing residential units constructed at a density greater than one (1) dwelling unit per acre
• Pools, fences, walls, not considering intensity/density increases
Density Transfer

Allows density transfer from land inside the Critical Linkage [sending area] to land onsite or offsite outside of the Critical Linkage [receiving area].

Compensation in Lieu of Density Transfer

• Unutilized transferable density within a linkage may be eligible for compensation by the County.
• Compensation will be based on the average of (2) appraisals; one by County and one by property owner.
• Appeal process available for either party if not satisfied with valuation.
Linkage Boundary Modifications

Movement must maintain **width**, ecological **function** and **connectivity** to publicly-owned parcels; no negative impact to adjacent owners.

![Diagram of Linkage Boundary Modifications]

- May be reduced because some areas are highly disturbed along edge of linkage
- May be reduced because land within linkage receives score below 25 using site selection scoring in Guidelines
Support and Benefits

• Protecting, Conserving, and Managing the County Natural Resources are major goals of the County’s Strategic Plan and Business Plan.

• Recent Urban Land Institute (ULI) report recommended the continued conservation and natural resources protection efforts.

• Environmental Stewardship is a necessary element of strategic development.

• Conservation land increases adjacent property values.

Support and Benefits

• A reasonable and practical regulatory component is necessary to achieve County’s conservation strategy goals.

• The draft Parks Master Plan incorporates corridors into the Greenways, Blueways, and Trails plan.

• Preserving natural Pasco for future generations.

• Supports numerous ecosystem services such as clean air, clean water, erosion control, carbon sequestration, jobs, recreational opportunities, and flood protection.
Flood Protection

- Significant portions of the corridors are located in the 100 year floodplain.
- Protection of the floodplain is a direct benefit (ecosystem service) of preserving the ecological corridors.
- Corridors will assist in preventing future flooding by managing land use within the 100 year floodplain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Total Acres</th>
<th>Floodplain AC</th>
<th>% Floodplain</th>
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<tr>
<td>Starkey to Crossbar</td>
<td>2765.48</td>
<td>2213.31</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starkey to Connerton</td>
<td>1146.01</td>
<td>634.25</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connerton to Cypress Creek</td>
<td>174.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connerton to Crossbar</td>
<td>829.8</td>
<td>632.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starkey to South Pasco</td>
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<td>362.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cypress Creek to Cypress Bridge</td>
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<td>350.97</td>
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<td>Hillsborough to Green Swamp</td>
<td>1340.68</td>
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Next Steps

BCC Workshop September 15th?
BCC 1st Public Hearing October 20th?
BCC 2nd Public Hearing November 3rd?

Summary

• Helps to implement Settle Agreement
• Consistent with Comprehensive Plan
• Flexible implementation and incentives
• Protecting floodplains and natural resources
• Preserving a small piece of natural Pasco for future generations (1.5% of the total County land)
QUESTIONS?