



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The original Comprehensive Plan, with two adopted planning timeframes, was adopted in 2004, following the City's incorporation in 1999. The first timeframe is five (5) years from the date of adoption of the Plan and shall be updated annually in accordance with Section 163.3177 (3), F.S. and a long-range planning horizon which extended to 2020. From the time the Comprehensive Plan was adopted until today (2010), the City experienced significant changes in population, demographics, and the actual City boundaries. Due to these factors and major development proposals, the City, in 2010, decided to extend the original Comprehensive Plan's long-range planning horizon from 2020 to 2035. The extension of the planning horizon was not only necessary due to the significant expansion of the City's boundaries through annexation and subsequent development proposals, but also to ensure that future growth areas were planned for in a more regional and comprehensive approach. Additionally, updating the planning horizon lays the groundwork for the regularly scheduled update of the Comprehensive Plan through the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process, which is scheduled for completion in 2012.

The original Comprehensive Plan was the culmination of an 18-month community-based planning effort, which was comprised of an intensive series of public meetings and interactive workshops. The document contains eight (8) Elements, each with an ambitious set of goals, objectives, and policies intended to satisfy Florida's growth management laws and to implement our City's vision and core planning values, which are articulated in a set of "community building blocks". Although the planning horizon is being updated to 2035, it is important to note that the Vision established through the process of creating the original comprehensive plan will not be altered. Changes to the vision if any will come through the subsequent EAR process, which is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

2035 Vision for the City of Palm Coast

Palm Coast strives to be a unique and vibrant city recognized for its

- Exceptional quality of life
- Attractive job opportunities, diversified housing, and superbly designed commercial areas
- Valued natural, recreational, and cultural resources
- Exemplary public facilities and services
- Responsible growth and fiscal planning
- Responsiveness to meeting the diverse needs of the citizens
- Friendly and welcoming manner towards visitors, residents and businesses

The City's core planning values, or building blocks include

- Community Image
- Development of Parks, Recreational Facilities, Greenways, and Open Spaces
- Diversified Cultural Opportunities
- Economic and Community Development Opportunities
- Education





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- Enhanced Traffic Circulation
 - Fiscal Planning
 - Maintain and Upgrade Public Facilities
 - Preservation of Suburban Character in Existing Areas
 - Promotion of Mixed Uses in Appropriate Areas
 - Protection of Natural Resources and Environmental Ecosystems
 - Public Safety and Health

The Palm Coast Comprehensive Plan reflects this Vision by maintaining suburban residential character and providing opportunities for mixed-use development with goods, services, and employment for residents. In this manner, the Comprehensive Plan will ensure that appropriately situated commercial and office areas that help to create a full-service city enhance the existing residential character of the City. The City will provide areas for appropriate commercial and industrial uses for business and economic development opportunities. Strategies are proposed to preserve natural resources and open space; enhance public facilities, infrastructure and traffic circulation, and maintain an attractive community image. Additionally, provisions have been made for the enhancement of public safety and health, educational opportunities, and diversified cultural opportunities for citizens and visitors to maintain and improve the quality of life associated with Palm Coast.

This Executive Summary includes information about the public process in developing the Comprehensive Plan; trends and issues, and analysis thereof, identified in the *Data and Analysis*; and major policy directions of the Comprehensive Plan. The City adopted Resolution 2004-08 that provides details regarding minimum procedures to be followed to encourage public participation in the planning process. The said Resolution is consistent with Sections 163.3181 and 163.3184(15), Florida Statutes, and Rule 9J-5.004, Florida Administrative Code. The said Resolution is hereby incorporated into this Plan and shall guide the City's planning process.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Data and Analysis* provides detailed assessments and analysis of existing conditions in Palm Coast. Part 1 of the *Data and Analysis* was prepared to identify existing conditions related to land use; transportation; housing; recreation, parks and open space; infrastructure; coastal planning environmental conservation; intergovernmental coordination; and capital improvements. Next, Part 2 of the *Data and Analysis* was drafted to project future needs, within the 2035 planning period, of the population for housing, transportation, and other public services and other important trends. The resulting document serves as the principal supporting data and analysis for the Comprehensive Plan.

The community planning process took place over a period of eighteen months. Several workshops with the public were conducted to identify and prioritize issues, and to evaluate various methods that could be used to address growth and the future of the City. City staff worked with the public to develop a consensus on the Vision and to identify core planning values or "community building blocks" that underlie the Vision and are addressed as a part of the implementation of the Plan. Therefore, the Plan is comprised of Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) in each of the eight required Plan Elements. The GOPs identified the means of addressing these needs and issues.





The development of Palm Coast’s Comprehensive Plan gives the City the opportunity to make future land development and public investment reflect the community’s Vision and address its growing needs. Three land use alternative scenarios were developed and presented to the public to develop a consensus on the most prudent course for the City’s future development. Consensus was achieved on using the Multi-Center Alternative as the basis to facilitate the development of the Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM classifies the allowable land uses on properties in the City to the year 2035 to ensure compatible land uses that meet community needs and that can receive appropriate public services. The public participation process, including the drafting of the City’s 2020 Vision (to be used as the City’s 2035 Vision) and core planning values, ensures that the Comprehensive Plan addresses issues of importance to the community.

Comprehensive plans are subject to the requirements of Florida Law, set forth in Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes (F.S.), known as the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Development Regulation Act. These requirements are implemented using Rule 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C). References to these requirements are made in each of the Elements to indicate consistency.

TRENDS AND ISSUES

The City’s origins as a platted, master-planned community creates challenges for guiding development in a manner that provides mixed land uses for housing choices and convenient access to goods, services, and better paying places of employment for existing residential areas. Other important issues explore the principal components of the high quality of life that continues to attract residents, businesses, and visitors. These components include the provision of adequate housing to serve the projected future population of the City; the provision of adequate public facilities and services to adequately serve potential development; economic development to ensure sufficient public revenue and resident employment; and protection and preservation the community’s natural resources and environment.

In 2000, the City’s population as reported by the Census Bureau was 32,732. Through this decade, the City of Palm Coast experienced tremendous growth including three years as the fastest growing City in the United States. The 2009 population estimate of 73,910 represents a growth of 125% from the 2000 population. In 2009, the City comprised 78% of the total Countywide population, capturing 92% of the net population growth. Based on this capture rate, the City’s share of countywide population is projected to increase to 85% by 2035.

In addition to the population growth, the City also experienced a rapid growth in size. Through annexations, the City grew in size from approximately 50 square miles to 90 square miles. This increase in size provides the City with challenges and opportunities in shaping its future.

The initial subdivision of the land into approximately 42,000 lots allowed for very limited multi-family development. Relatively few multi-family residential units have been approved. The 2000 Census data indicate that approximately 60 percent of the persons living in the City fall within an income category (very low, low, or moderate) where there is an identified need for affordable housing opportunities. Proposed Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) and Reserve Parcels are discussed as appropriate locations to offer housing alternatives such as multi-family and transitional housing units that can address





affordability concerns and still preserve the original suburban characteristics of the City. Census data, summarized in the Housing Element, identify major issues such as the need for various housing options for persons with special needs and for affordable housing. The elderly, comprising over 30 percent of the population (65+ years of age), are among those persons with special needs. The GOPs in this Element highlight the importance of diversifying lot sizes and providing different types of housing to meet the needs of the varied population. Findings from the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies indicate that the needs for affordable housing opportunities remain similar to the conditions reported in the 2000 Census data. Approximately 60% of all households in the City fall within the extremely low, very low, low, or moderate income. Also, the elderly population (65+ years of age) will comprise approximately 30 percent of the total population.

The existing conditions and analyses thereof indicate the need to improve and increase capacities for traffic circulation, water and sewer, including line capacity to serve potential development within the planning period. If not accomplished in a timely manner, the City will neither be able to correct current deficiencies nor meet the needs of its future population. The City is addressing these concerns with a focus on fiscal planning and enhancing public infrastructure, as detailed in the several Plan Element GOPs, and other measures in the land development review process, such as updating the Land Development Code, the Concurrency Management System, and the DRI review process.

To expand revenues for public services, the City is pursuing economic development activities to ensure the tax base can support its future needs. Currently, the City has a relatively small labor force compared to its population. Concentration of employment predominantly in the service employment sector limits the tax base and potential revenue sources that are necessary to provide public services. Additionally, more than 38 percent of the workforce commutes to other cities for employment everyday. The analysis of the data indicate that higher level employment with better pay scales must be attracted to the City to balance the housing to jobs ratio.

The City will continue to evaluate annexation of compatible properties that will provide land that can be developed for expansion of the City's employment base. The City is reviewing the potential of workplace sites in the proposed DRIs. Several activity centers have been identified on the Future Land Use Map and in the Future Land Use Element. These centers are located close to residential areas, making diverse employment, goods, and services more accessible to residents. As the economy grows, projected employment can be accommodated in these centers including the proposed DRI planning areas. Actions taken by the City since the adoption of the original Comprehensive Plan such as the annexation of large tracts of land in potential growth areas, encouraging the development of large scale of mixed use projects, and the provision of infrastructure to accommodate large developments are indicative of the City's progress in implementing the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

As Palm Coast's population grows, it is important to maintain the quality of life that continues to draw new residents to Palm Coast and meets the expectations of both longtime residents and newcomers. The City's new and enhanced public facilities and services, including a proposed new City Hall, the new fire station on north Belle Terre Parkway, and the paving of dirt roads, will help meet these expectations. The community also identified cultural arts, community appearance at gateways and along major corridors, the preservation of open space, and the linkage of community areas and destinations with a greenway and





trail system, as community priorities to preserve the visual character and natural resources of the City. The GOPs recommend several means for achieving these ends.

In this light, the City of Palm Coast's Comprehensive Plan, comprised of the Goals, Objectives and Policies in each of the eight Plan Elements and the FLUM, accommodates the needs of its future population with several strategies. The FLUM Mixed Use land use designation provides for mixed-use activity and "village centers" where public services are concentrated and the demand for street capacity is prudently maximized without damaging the built environment. These centers also include nonresidential land uses to support the existing residential areas, while providing workplaces and employment to increase the City's tax base and potential sources of new tax revenues. Six other future land use designations include: Residential, Institutional, Industrial, Conservation, Greenbelt, and Development of Regional Impact. The zoning map will be updated to specify where different densities and intensities of these future land uses will be permitted. For instance, the Residential designation will be broken down into six or more individual residential zoning districts. The Industrial future land use designation will be broken down on the zoning map to light and heavy industrial zoning districts.

The fiscal planning community building block requires that expansion and development of infrastructure and other public facilities be efficiently planned and coordinated. These actions involve preparation and updating of a capital improvement plan and program plus intergovernmental coordination. Responsible public investment requires maximizing revenues and resources. For example, the FLUM concentrates development and public financial investment outside of the City's Coastal High Hazard Area, while providing open space and areas for civic, cultural and recreational uses. Such planning addresses coordination between governmental agencies to provide for public safety and health in the event of a natural disaster such as a hurricane.

MAJOR POLICY DIRECTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) of all of the eight Plan Elements are interrelated and consistent with one another and, together, comprise the Comprehensive Plan. **Chapter 1, the *Future Land Use Element***, makes recommendations for policy development in several areas. In terms of land use, the Future Land Use Element and Future Land Use Map show the designation of mixed-use activity and village centers in several locations adjacent to or within transportation corridors and nodes. The village centers range from ¼ mile radius for neighborhood scale centers to ½ mile radius for high intensity centers. They are recommended throughout the City. These centers would help to "retrofit" some of the extensive platted areas (including Reserve Parcels) of Palm Coast, into development other than single-family residences on quarter-acre lots to provide essential community services and to address land use, transportation capacity, and housing diversity. The Greenbelt and Conservation designations will preserve sensitive environmental lands. Preservation of open space and natural resources, as well as provision of parks, is addressed as important components needed to maintain the high quality of life in the City. The Greenbelt will also allow large lot residential along with agriculture and silviculture. Public and semi-public land uses are allowed in all future land use designations except for the Conservation designation. Educational land uses will be permitted in all future land use designations except Conservation and Greenbelt designations. The Development of Regional Impact (DRI) designation allows the Town Center DRI, the Grand Haven DRI, the Palm Coast Park DRI and other large scale





developments that meet the statutory threshold for DRIs. The DRI designation is broken down into residential, industrial, office, commercial, mixed use, and urban core sub designations.

Chapter 2, the *Transportation Element* sets the policy direction by establishing standards and thresholds regarding levels of service, transportation concurrency, street classification, future street improvements, access management, interconnectivity, street maintenance, and safety. The Element also includes provisions designed to ensure that an adequate transportation system of streets, sidewalks, and bicycle paths will be provided throughout the planning period to help reduce dependence on automobile transportation. Other planning tools are recommended such as a dynamic traffic model, transportation projects in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan, a Long Range Transportation Plan, and traffic and corridor studies, along with intergovernmental coordination to maximize transportation planning and minimize costs. Among the most important needs identified for the future are the provision of additional east-west connections, identification of rights-of-way needed to accomplish transportation system expansion, and the requirements for bicycle lanes and sidewalks or pedestrian paths to develop a multi-modal system that offers mobility choices.

Chapter 3, the *Housing Element* states that several strategies and programs are needed for the provision of affordable housing in Palm Coast for low-income residents and those with special needs, such as the elderly. It identifies a need for diversification of housing types and sizes that are essential to support the continuum of lifestyle needs. The quarter-acre lots typical in the original ITT planned unit development no longer satisfy the growing need for other sizes of lots and types of housing that would be attainable by all residents in the City. Among other housing issues is the necessity to revitalize and redevelop older areas and areas with obsolete platting. Programs such as creation of a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) can be used to revitalize and rehabilitate such areas.

Chapter 4, *Public Recreation and Open Space Element* Goals, Objectives and Policies call for active and passive parks, recreation and open space opportunities for all residents and visitors to maintain a healthy populace in a balanced community that addresses physical and social needs. The provision of arts, cultural, and educational opportunities are addressed as part of the public recreation system to satisfy the creative and intellectual needs of all ages. The interconnectivity theme, addressed in Chapter 2, is continued in Chapter 4 as the GOPs address the linkage of residential, institutional, and nonresidential land uses and venues with greenways and trails throughout the City and with other similar facilities adjacent to City boundaries. Proposed short-, mid-, and long-range recreation improvements have been incorporated into the City's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

Relative to public services, **Chapter 5, the *Infrastructure Element*** establishes level of service standards for potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, and stormwater management for Palm Coast to ensure these vital public services can meet future needs. The Infrastructure Element calls for intergovernmental and interagency coordination to meet future service needs of the population, which will require significant infrastructure investments. As a basis for these recommendations, this Element considers the requirements for concurrency to provide adequate public facilities timed to be in place on or before the date of occupancy as well as the need to consider the carrying capacity of these systems. Among the most important recommendations of the Element are acquisition of the water and sewer utility, protection of





groundwater aquifers and wellfields, water conservation, and management of growth to prevent urban sprawl.

Chapter 6, the *Conservation and Coastal Management Element* is the combination of two Plan Elements required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. Although the City does not have frontage along the Atlantic Ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway, Outstanding Florida Waters, and the City's canal system are connected to the ocean. The protection of natural resources and environmental ecosystems is an underlying core planning value throughout the Plan. This Element addresses the value most clearly through its GOPs, divided into two categories: natural resources and natural disaster management. Intergovernmental coordination is recommended to appropriately protect natural and public resources such as groundwater. The Element calls for regulations to preserve unique upland communities and prevent soil erosion. Public safety is addressed through the GOPs to cover natural and manmade hazards provide for evacuation routes and shelters; and plan appropriately for development within the Coastal High Hazard Area.

Chapter 7, *Intergovernmental Coordination Element*, one of the most important Elements, promotes cooperation, coordination, and planning between governmental agencies and related entities to maximize public investment. The Element identifies existing and potential partnerships that can be used to provide a coordinated system of planning for not only the City but also the County and adjacent jurisdictions. Joint efforts must be encouraged to obtain grants and funding for large capital improvements, especially those public projects that may be located within a joint planning area. Cooperation opens up communication lines and expands the possibilities for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of all residents, businesses, and visitors.

Chapter 8, *Capital Improvements Element (CIE)* can be thought of as the adhesive that binds the GOPs of the Elements together to achieve the Vision throughout and beyond the planning period. The Capital Improvements Element identifies capital projects proposed in the Plan Elements, primarily Future Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Public Recreation and Open Space, and Infrastructure. Sources of revenue to fund the proposed capital projects are addressed in the Capital Improvements Element. The Element identifies additional revenues to fund projects to reduce reliance on ad valorem taxes as the primary source of funds. As required by Florida Statute, the Capital Improvement Program is updated on an annual basis. Projects funded by impact fees are identified and revenues for permitted capital projects are identified in the CIE. In addition, projects that are funded by developers or others are shown in the CIE.

The last Element of the Plan is **Chapter 9, *Public School Facilities Element (PSFE)***. This element provides for the coordination of planning of school facilities and impacts of development between the Flagler School District and the City of Palm Coast. A Level of Service (LOS) standard is adopted as part of the element. The element requires the annual submittal of data on growth and development from the City to the School District for use in student projections and planning of school facilities. The element is updated annually to incorporate the School District's 5-Year Work Plan as part of the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP).





PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Upon Plan adoption or amendments to the Plan, City Staff prepare and update an implementation schedule showing the Goals, Objectives, and Policies (GOPs), implementation timeframe, agency or department responsible for implementation, and method of funding or funding resource. This matrix will be used to evaluate and monitor Plan implementation. In accordance with 9J-5.005 (7), F.A.C., City Staff and the Local Planning Agency (LPA), also known as the Planning and Land Development Regulation Board, will monitor and review the status of the implementation of the Goals, Objectives and Policies annually to ensure that they are being accomplished as scheduled. Except for the Capital Improvements Program and Capital Improvements Element, which are updated annually, a more complete evaluation will be done when the City is scheduled to prepare, adopt and transmit its Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) to DEO.

