



Legislation Text

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TO: Mayor and Commissioners
FROM: Timothy Stillings, Development Services Department
THROUGH: Neal de Jesus, Interim City Manager
DATE: May 7, 2019

ALWAYS DELRAY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE: PRESENTATION OF THE MOBILITY ELEMENT AND THE NEIGHBORHOODS, DISTRICTS, AND CORRIDORS ELEMENT

Recommended Action:

Provide comment and direction regarding the proposed Mobility Element and Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors Element of the Always Delray Comprehensive Plan.

Background:

The update to the Delray Beach Comprehensive Plan, which is branded “Always Delray,” began with the creation of a Steering Committee, appointed by the City Commission. Community workshops were held at the outset to discuss and receive public input on the plan subjects and issues impacting the city. The community and Steering Committee input, along with the input of Subject Matter Experts, consisting of City Staff, consultants, and community members, was utilized to formulate the draft elements.

Three new elements are proposed for the plan, and several elements have been renamed to better capture their role in plan, including both the Mobility Element (fka Transportation) and the Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors Element (fka Future Land Use). Each of the proposed elements were presented to the Planning & Zoning Board between July 2018 and April 2019, and received recommendations of approval to the City Commission. In advance of the transmittal hearing, the elements were presented to the City Commission, typically in pairs, to receive comments and direction. To date, 11 of the 13 elements have been presented. The presentations of the Mobility and Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors Elements are the final two elements. Previously, these two elements were scheduled to be presented as a part of the transmittal hearing in an attempt to adopt the plan before August 2019; however, the complexities and important issues addressed in the elements warranted this “preview” before transmittal consideration.

Mobility Element

The Mobility Element is replacing the current Transportation Element and establishes the City's Goals, Objectives, and Policies (GOPs) related to maintaining and improving the City's transportation system for all users and modes. The Mobility Element sets forth a framework to create a modern, well-balanced transportation system that provides mobility choices and creates great places where people want to live and invest their time and money. Mobility means people have the option to walk, bike, ride, or drive in a safe and comfortable environment.

New policies reflect the need to diversify transportation options and to create a Mobility Plan and associated fee to replace the existing transportation concurrency. A Mobility Plan with a supporting fee would establish funding for a wider range of local mobility-oriented projects or services that directly benefit the City of Delray Beach, expanding the current roadway impact fee program, which is limited to new roadway capacity. The proposed element reflects the City's

adopted complete streets policy, provides updated vehicular traffic data and transit plans, including the planned Tri-Rail Coastal Link, and sets forth policies to address future mobility.

The Mobility Element was reviewed by the Steering Committee on November 15, 2018. The Planning & Zoning Board, at a public hearing held on January 28, 2019, recommended approval to the City Commission with a 5 to 0 vote.

Neighborhoods, Districts, Corridors Element

The Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors Element, formerly the “Future Land Use Element”, establishes the City’s Goals, Objectives, and Policies regarding the City’s land uses to maintain and improve the quality of life for existing and future residents, visitors, and workers. The updated element changes the terminology from “future land use”, which implies a potential change from the existing, to “Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors” to reflect the established land use pattern of the city.

The Neighborhoods, Districts and Corridors Element provides the land use principles and standards to guide development and redevelopment to reinforce the character of existing neighborhoods, to revitalize blighted areas, and to accommodate growth in the form envisioned by the residents and stakeholders of the City. Neighborhoods are predominantly residential areas with varying levels of intensity and use that accommodate many activities of daily life. The City’s eastern neighborhoods accommodate a wider mix of uses within the neighborhoods than the western neighborhoods, which rely mainly on corridors for access to shopping and workplaces. Districts are areas that emphasize a specific use, have a unique land use pattern, or specialized plan. Corridors are both the connectors and the boundaries of neighborhoods and districts; they include thoroughfares, rail lines, and greenways. Corridors link the city internally and to the region.

The proposed Element continues the direction of the city’s plan since inception with minor “adjustments”. The updated plan is drafted in a user-friendly format and simpler language. The revised policies formalize the City’s strong history of effective planning practices, such as using Neighborhood and Redevelopment Plans created with a high degree of resident and stakeholder participation to guide changes. Certain land uses include opportunities for specific development incentives to help the city achieve defined goals, such as workforce housing, through increases in density/intensity, which are governed by the Land Development Regulations. These incentives are in the current plan for defined areas and have been made more general (by land use) to allow the city to be more responsive to community goals.

Key points about the proposed element:

1. No map amendments are proposed to the Future Land Use Map, except land use designation names. Map amendments are best made through focused projects/initiatives and not as a part of a “general” update of the plan.
2. A clear distinction between the “standard” density in land use designations and the potential density available only through specific City incentive programs, adopted overlays, etc. is made and presented in an easy to understand chart, which is specifically referenced in the GOPs. The current plan references the potential densities in narrative form as a part of the land use descriptions that are adopted by reference.

3. Changes the names of the following land use designations:
 - “Other Mixed Use” to “Historic Mixed Use”; Old School Square Historic District is the only area where this land use designation is applied and the new name better references its purpose.
 - “Open Space - Conservation” to “Conservation”; changing the name clearly distinguishes conservation land from parks and other types of open space and reinforces the intent for long term protection the land.
 - “Recreation & Open Space” to “Open Space”; open space includes both passive and active use within this designation and the “distinction” between passive/active is regulated by the LDRs.
4. Reduces the Floor Area Ratio (measure of intensity) in the Open Space land use designation from 0.5 to 0.1. Research of the current Open Space parcels indicates that no property development approaches 0.1 FAR. This change would ensure open space remains “open.”
5. Consolidates the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the Congress Mixed Use (CMU) land use designation to 3.0 for non-residential, residential, or mixed use. Currently, the CMU has two separate FARs for non-residential and mixed use (1.0) and for residential (2.0). CMU is currently implemented by the Mixed Residential, Office, and Commercial (MROC) zoning district. MROC currently allows the highest building height and density in the City, yet affords less development potential than the downtown area or the general commercial areas. Attracting development from those areas to Congress Avenue improves the potential for transit-oriented development around the existing Tri-Rail Station, locates development on a corridor that has more capacity based on 2040 roadway trip analyses, and advances the community’s vision for Congress Avenue.

The Neighborhoods, Districts, and Corridors Element was reviewed by the Steering Committee on April 10, 2019. At this meeting, the Steering Committee recommended the CMU FAR should be 2.5, which was presented to the Planning & Zoning Board. The Planning & Zoning Board, at a public hearing held on April 15, 2019, recommended approval to the City Commission of the proposed Element on a 5 to 0 vote, as presented.

City Attorney Review:

N/A

Funding Source/Financial Impact:

N/A

Timing of Request:

Once all elements have been reviewed by the City Commission, final drafts will be prepared for a Transmittal Hearing of the full Always Delay Plan.