

**Official Minutes of
MARION COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

June 9, 2025

CALL TO ORDER:

The Marion County Board of County Commissioners met in a workshop session in Commission Chambers at 2:31 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2025 at the Marion County Governmental Complex located in Ocala, Florida.

INTRODUCTION OF WORKSHOP BY CHAIRMAN KATHY BRYANT

Chairman Bryant advised that the workshop was scheduled this afternoon to discuss updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of our Country.

ROLL CALL

Upon roll call the following members were present: Chairman Kathy Bryant, District 2; Vice-Chairman Carl Zalak, III, District 4; Commissioner Craig Curry, District 1; Commissioner Matthew McClain, District 3; and Commissioner Michelle Stone, District 5. Also present were County Attorney Matthew G. Minter, County Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Tracy Straub, Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, and Deputy Growth Services Director Ken Weyrauch.

The Deputy Clerk was in receipt of a 5 page handout entitled, "Marion County Comprehensive Plan Redlines: 1 – Future Land Use Element"; an 11x17 map entitled, "Marion County UGB"; an 11x17 map entitled, "Marion County UGB Stepdown Exhibit (Option 1)"; an 11x17 map entitled, "Marion County UGB Stepdown Exhibit (Option 2)", an 11x17 map entitled, "Marion County UGB Stepdown Exhibit (Option 3)" and 26 page Agenda packet to follow along with the PowerPoint presentation.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

1. Workshop to Discuss Updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin presented the following recommendation:

Description/Background: Florida Statute Section 163.3191 requires an evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan every seven years to ensure consistency with statutory requirements and community engagement. This Evaluation Appraisal Report (EAR) identified changes to the Comprehensive Plan that need to be completed over the next year (by February 2026).

The workshop today is the eighth of ten workshops scheduled over a five (5) month period. During this series of workshops, the Board has focused on gaining consensus for proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan and has discussed broader topics that will help set the vision for guiding future growth and development in Marion County. At today's workshop, the Board will discuss the following items: Definitions, Concurrency, Level of Service (LOS) for Parks, Stepdown Approaches, Transportation redlines, Planned Service Areas (PSAs), Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs), and Environmentally Sensitive Overlay Zones (ESOZ).

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Recommended Action: Staff is seeking Board discussion and consensus on the proposed edits.

Blair Knighting, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (KHA), stated the first Item for discussion is definitions, noting a list was provided at the last workshop.

In response to Ms. Knighting, Chairman Bryant advised that the Board had no questions relating to definitions.

Ms. Knighting stated last year the topic of concurrency came up in regard to fire and police. She advised that the question of whether a level of service (LOS) for fire and police should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Knighting stated she reviewed the municipalities in the area and none of them include police or fire in their Comprehensive Plan, noting if they do have it, it is just a mention of the State and Federal requirements. She advised that she spoke with all of the Senior Planners she works with in Florida and it is not something often done so there were no case studies for an actual LOS. Ms. Knighting noted the Board already has Marion County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and Marion County Fire Rescue (MCFR) review the applications for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) so KHA's recommendation would not be to add the LOS.

Chairman Bryant commented on proposed large developments that generate comments from MCSO and MCFR stating those services will need to add staff/building to accommodate the project and questioned how the Board will address that without adding this to the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Knighting stated the Board's approval comes down to the health, safety and welfare of the public and if that is a concern, the application can be denied. She clarified that if MCSO and MCFR are stating they cannot serve the new growth, that gives the Board an opportunity to express their concern relating to safety.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Minter concurred with Ms. Knighting, noting it is a legitimate issue for the Board and the Comprehensive Plan Amendment phase would be the time for the Board to address the matter. He advised that if the Board approves a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the applicant will then have entitlements and will want the property zoned in a manner that is consistent.

Commissioner Zalak stated if an additional fire station is needed at the Comprehensive Plan Amendment phase of a proposed project, the Board can question if the applicant is interested in helping the County determine how to do that, likely through a Development Agreement.

Mr. Minter stated there are ways the government and the developer can attempt to address that and ameliorate the problem.

Chairman Bryant questioned if the Board could turn down an application based on public interest in a scenario where the land use is already in place and an applicant applies for a zoning change with the findings relating to MCSO and MCFR being the same. Mr. Minter stated that a denial equates to a site specific moratorium on that individual, which is not a good idea.

Chairman Bryant questioned if including concurrency in the Comprehensive Plan would be helpful in these types of applications. Mr. Minter advised that he would research the matter further. He commented on the combination of almost annual changes to the Statutes and case law that is coming out relating to these cases. Mr. Minter stated there is now an anomalous situation where in the State of Florida there are 6 intermediate, Appellate Courts (District Courts of Appeal) and the Florida Supreme Court, noting generally speaking if 1 District Court of Appeal makes a ruling on a case anywhere in the State it is binding on the whole State unless another District Court of Appeal comes up with a different ruling on basically the same facts. Mr. Minter advised that it has happened

and then what normally happens is one of the Courts will certify it to the Florida Supreme Court to break the tie. He commented on a growth management case where this occurred, noting the Florida Supreme Court refused to take the case, so everyone was left with 2 conflicting District Court of Appeal opinions. Mr. Minter stated ultimately the Legislature invalidated 1 of the 2 cases.

Chairman Bryant questioned if without having concurrency for Public Safety in the Comprehensive Plan and an individual comes in for a land use change, can they still be turned down based on the fact the County cannot provide the service. Mr. Minter advised that the County has more control over MCFR than MCSO, noting Sheriff William "Billy" Woods, MCSO could appear and testify that the Department has no way to support the request.

Chairman Bryant addressed the comments that MCSO now provides relating to applications, noting in a conversation with Sheriff Woods he was favorable to his office being consulted as these projects come forward. She stated Sheriff Woods may have to add Deputies relating to some applications and he needs to be able to plan for that as does the County.

Mr. Minter advised that the Courts call Comprehensive Plan Amendments a fundamental Legislative decision, noting the County/City government has to balance many different policy considerations when dealing with Comprehensive Plans and Future Land Use (FLU) Amendments. He stated part of that is determining if there is the financial ability to provide the needed services for these things. Mr. Minter noted his initial reaction is that the Board can deny the Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

Commissioner McClain advised that this should not be an issue going forward due to the 100 percent (%) Fire and EMS Impact Fee, noting if a new development is coming in, it should be paying for the service that is needed to serve the project.

Chairman Bryant stated the Impact Fee only covers the Capital if a new facility has to be built, not personnel.

Commissioner McClain advised that those individuals are paying for personnel through the assessment once they get here.

Chairman Bryant stated the assessment would cover 1.5 salaries annually based on a 400 unit development.

Commissioner Stone advised that it is likely a de minimis amount and there would be enough overlap from other stations for that type of development. She opined that it would have to be a really big development for the County to say it cannot be accommodated.

Mr. Minter stated Commissioner McClain makes a good point, noting if that scenario comes up, the County will have to get into really detailed analysis to prove that point one way or another.

Mr. Bouyounes questioned if an analysis is performed and it shows the impact and what is needed, can an applicant pay their proportionate share. Ms. Knighting advised that if she understands concurrency correctly, it cannot pay for people.

Ms. Knighting advised of a previous discussion relating to park LOS, noting Commissioner Bryant questioned why the municipalities' parks are being excluded while their populations are being included. She referred to a slide as seen on the overhead screens, which shows 2 tables. The second table removes the municipal population projections and adds back in the regional parks and greenways that the original Parks Master Plan removed. Ms. Knighting stated the second box represents Marion County's unincorporated population projections and the current park acreages. She commented on the requirement for 2 acres per 1,000 population, noting there is plenty of acreages to

meet the LOS. Ms. Knighting advised that the County has the quantity and questioned whether the Board wants to focus on quality. She stated at the last workshop there was discussion relating to the County providing regional parks and letting developments take control of smaller type neighborhood parks, noting there is a 350 square feet (sf) per unit requirement in the Comprehensive Plan for new residential development.

Ms. Knighting commented on a slide that depicts the suggested amenities LOS. She stated staff worked together to come up with regional park type uses and what may be applicable to Marion County. Ms. Knighting questioned whether the Board likes the idea of an amenity based LOS in addition to the acreage based LOS. She stated the County is exceeding the acreage based LOS.

Commissioner McClain advised that he likes the idea of an amenity based LOS for parks. In response to Commissioner McClain, Ms. Knighting stated the numbers were determined by considering the methods used in other Counties. She clarified that the data is tailored to Marion County, noting the standard is similar to other Counties for Marion County's population. Ms. Knighting advised that there are park best practices for larger County populations relating to these types of uses in regional parks. She stated she worked with Parks and Recreation Director Jim Couillard to develop a list of what they believe is needed in the community and what would be an accurate standard.

Ms. Knighting stated the group campsite shows none currently existing due to this being related to primitive camping and there are no such sites for groups.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Knighting stated primitive means there are no campsites, recreational vehicles (RVs), cabins, etc., just the Ocala National Forest and some State parks.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Knighting advised that if there is consensus, group campsite can be removed from the list, noting if this is not working when the Board reevaluates the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) in 7 years, the list can be completely removed.

Chairman Bryant requested Ms. Knighting recap the thought process on the park LOS and amenity calculations.

Commissioner Stone questioned if that includes or excludes anything in the City parks.

Ms. Knighting advised that City parks were not counted nor were their populations.

Chairman Bryant opined that the calculations should be based on the entire population and all amenities. She commented on retirement communities/gated communities with their own amenities, noting many of those individuals will never utilize the County's recreational facilities.

Commissioner Stone stated she will not be in favor of building a swimming pool in the County, noting there are springs and private entities with pools.

Chairman Bryant commented on the 7 existing volleyball courts in the County, which does not include Jervey Gantt where many individuals play.

Commissioner Stone noted there is also a swimming pool at Jervey Gantt.

Chairman Bryant opined that there is a lot of work to be done. She commented on the success relating to court sports (tennis and pickle ball).

In response to Commissioner Stone, Chairman Bryant advised that there are some baseball and softball fields that need a lot of work at multiple locations. She stated the County cannot keep up with what it already has under its purview.

Commissioner Stone advised that she is unsure about building anything else, noting there is a lot in the private sector and other municipalities that is an offering to this community.

Ms. Knighting stated it may be too soon for the amenity LOS. She advised of community

meetings following these workshops, noting there can be polling to see what amenity is missing and bring back the actual data from citizens.

In response to Ms. Knighting, Commissioner Stone commented on finding a way to utilize existing public amenities (school playgrounds, tracks, etc.) that are already built and paid for by the taxpayers. She stated there must be a way that it can be shared and opened to the community to use before investing additional funds.

Ms. Knighting advised that she is in favor of utilizing school facilities if it is available.

Commissioner Stone stated if it is not available due to a law, there needs to be a request made to the Legislators to help work through the law and allow Marion County to be a pilot program to make an adjustment while determining how to make this work.

Commissioner Curry stated the last time the Master Plan was updated was 2016 and questioned if it contained data that would help provide any of the information the Board is requesting. Ms. Knighting advised that the Master Plan was good about delineating how staff looked at the LOS and making sure that the County does not have a deficit for the acreage based; however, it did not go into an amenity based LOS.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Parks and Recreation Director Jim Couillard stated Brick City was the first Pennies for Parks acquisition back in 1991, noting it was purchased from St. John Luthern School. He advised that there is a running track there and the field house is now Brick City Adventure Park. Mr. Couillard stated the chart should show that the County has 1 running track.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard advised that the greenway is not being included in the amenities data.

Commissioner Zalak questioned the thought process relating to group campsites. Mr. Couillard stated group camping for the Parks and Recreation Department is not primitive camping, which is where individuals walk to their campsite. He clarified that it is primitive campsites for groups such as Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA, etc., that participate in organized camping. Mr. Couillard advised that the County has zero designated areas like that within the County park system. He stated the County allows for a couple of parks to be used that way in exchange for service projects (Horseshoe Lake and Coehadjoe Park), but they are not designated that way.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the retrofit being done in Salt Springs is to accommodate those campers.

Chairman Bryant questioned what it would take to retrofit an area like Horseshoe Lake for group camping. Mr. Couillard advised that there is a big picture for Horseshoe Lake, and he has worked with Commissioner Zalak on ideas including additional cabins and relocating the day use area up near the cabins to the south end of the lake. That is the current area used for group camping, which only happens once or twice a year.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard stated he would relocate the youth campsite further into the park to be away from the general public. He advised that retrofitting the park for group camping is all about money.

Commissioner Zalak commented on adding glamping spots or group sites to the existing cabins, noting it would add to the park.

Mr. Couillard stated when Indian Lake State Forest came online, staff reviewed their recreation plan, which stated they would be adding 5 primitive campsites to the entire forest. He advised that he encouraged them not to add primitive, noting there is entire forest of primitive camping in addition to RV campsites and hardened campsites. Mr. Couillard stated he encouraged something in the middle, like glamping. He noted glamping requires a host camper to do things like change the bedding or clean the yurts.

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In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Couillard stated Horseshoe Lake is 220 acres and there is a lot of room. He advised that primitive camping in itself is just for individuals, group camping (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.) is removed from other people while still being held in a group setting. Chairman Bryant clarified that group camping is primitive, but in a group.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the possibility of camping at Gores Landing.

Mr. Couillard stated it can be done when the area in the middle is not flooded. He advised that Gores Landing is owned by the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), a division within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the County manages it like Eureka and the whole stretch from Orange Springs all the way down.

Commissioner Zalak advised that area boat ramps have the potential for additions/enhancements. He stated he would like to see more amenities inside of subdivisions.

Commissioner Stone questioned if this needs to be in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Knighting advised that it does not. She stated it provides a goal to strive for as a community and helps to direct funds. Ms. Knighting commented on the possibility of narrowing down the list and requesting feedback at the community meeting regarding what the County is missing as specific to Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Bouyounes stated there is a gap between what staff are recommending and what has been discussed in terms of population and all of the parks in the County (including City, State, etc.). He questioned why all that inventory cannot be counted, noting the Comprehensive Plan can be adjusted if things change in the future.

Chairman Bryant stated she wants a full picture of everything regardless of who is in control. She advised that she disagrees with not including the greenway.

Mr. Bouyounes questioned whether the Board agrees with including everything that is available to the public whether it is State, County or City, excluding private type facilities. It was the general consensus of the Board to agree.

Commissioner Zalak commented on using population as a measure relating to parks; however, operational dollars are the biggest factor to consider. He opined that after the capital investment, the struggle over the last decade has been the Department's operational budget. Commissioner Zalak stated the Board needs to make it clear they will support funding for the positions that will be needed over the next 10 years for the operational component. He advised that he is not sure the County has the funds. Chairman Bryant commented on the difficulty relating to using population as a driver and questioned how some figures were determined (1 pool per 110,000 residents). Mr. Couillard advised that the figures come from some industry standards that staff have researched.

Chairman Bryant commented on the number of private pools in gated communities and questioned if that population should be pulled out of the population relating to park standards. Mr. Bouyounes said it should be done for certain uses.

Commissioner Stone opined that a pool is not needed.

In response to Mr. Bouyounes, Chairman Bryant stated a water park was not included in the Comprehensive Plan the last time it was considered.

Commissioner Stone commented on developments with more than 200 homes being told they need to have pools as part of the PUD approval, noting Commissioner Zalak is adamant relating to that requirement. She advised that she is not convinced the County needs more pools at this time, noting the numerous springs.

Mr. Couillard commented on swimming at Rainbow Springs and advised that individuals

need to have a tube and know how to swim or they could drown there.

Commissioner Stone commented on the free swimming lessons offered to Marion County third graders at Florida Aquatics Swimming and Training (FAST).

Commissioner McClain stated the County has great parks and facilities; however, there are places like Belleview Sportsplex where improvements can be made and brought up to a different standard. He questioned if that would be a better use of funds rather than adding camping or building a pool.

Commissioner Zalak opined that this is about adding amenities to existing parks.

Commissioner McClain stated there are currently things at County parks that are not being maintained.

Chairman Bryant requested Ms. Knighting be allowed to bring back more information and the Board have another conversation.

Ms. Knighting referred to a map as seen on the overhead screens, which depicts the areas inside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) that could possibly require a stepdown approach (visual or density wise) versus (vs.) those that do not. She advised that the areas in green do not require a stepdown approach due to their proximity to a Development of Regional Impact (DRI), urban land use or municipality. Ms. Knighting stated the areas in blue are where the stepdown areas would be located, noting they are near the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA), conservation or Rural lands. She advised that the Board could choose one part of the County for a stepdown area, such as the FPA. Ms. Knighting provided an overview of the 3 options in varying degree of restrictions for the stepdown approach. Option 1 shows a portion of the UGB represented by a dashed white line with the orange line indicating a 100 foot (ft.) stepdown from the UGB. One option would be a visual stepdown that does not allow for a building in the 100 ft. stepdown and 30 feet of the 100 foot buffer would be a landscape buffer with 80% opacity required after 2 years. She clarified that parcels of record, family divisions and bona fide agricultural uses are exempt.

Commissioner Curry commented on the ability to have a barn within the 100 feet. Ms. Knighting advised that if the property is bona fide agricultural, the property can still be used that way. She commented on Option 2, which contains the 100 foot visual buffer and same 80% opacity requirement as Option 1. It also requires that within a quarter mile from the UGB, individuals will be limited to the minimum density of their land use and must feature clustering. This Option combines visual and density step downs and also allows for exemptions relating to parcels of record, family divisions and bona fide agricultural uses. Ms. Knighting stated Option 3 contains the 100 ft. setback from the UGB as well as the minimum density quarter mile; however, between the quarter mile (green) and the half mile (blue), individuals are limited to the medium density of the land use with clustering. She advised that Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) can be used in the quarter-to-half mile stepdown from the UGB to increase the densities from mid-range to the higher range.

Commissioner McClain stated Option 3 is too complicated, noting the TDR program is not functional enough to know if this will work.

Commissioner Stone advised that she was a proponent of the step downs, but after her one-on-one she is now in favor of keeping the line where it is currently.

Commissioner Curry concurred.

Commissioner Stone commented on other measures like buffers and LOS that are being addressed to help with concerns relating to growth.

Commissioner Zalak stated there should be something in the Comprehensive Plan that

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provides a better incentive relating to the TDRs.

Ms. Knighting advised that the TDR process is being worked on and is included on today's Agenda.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the possibility of a 3 to 5 acre mini horse farm hamlet community (similar to Meadow Wood Farms) within the first quarter mile. He advised that individuals could be allowed to install a well and advanced septic tank.

Senior Planner Chris Rison, Growth Services, stated the provisions the County has today are hamlets, noting there are 2 options for densities 1 unit per 5 acres and 1 unit per 3.5 acres. He advised that with the 1 unit per 3.5 acres, staff look for those individuals to have a water system due to issues relating to fire insurance. Mr. Rison stated there are hamlets on the books that are finally developing such as the Bel-Lago hamlet, which is looking to develop the third of 4. He advised that the options exist; however, they are not permitted in the FPA. Hamlets are permitted in the rest of the County outside of the Urban area.

Chairman Bryant questioned why hamlets are not allowed in the FPA. Mr. Rison stated they are not allowed in the FPA in an effort to keep the larger parcels and equine industry. He advised that when the parcels are broken down, those individuals are continuing to shop equine industry; however, they are not a horse farm production operation (tracks, training, etc.). Mr. Rison stated it becomes more like hobby farming.

Chairman Bryant advised that the hobby farms are the ones supporting a lot of those agricultural businesses in the area.

Mr. Rison stated hamlets are that option, but individuals are not taking that option.

Commissioner Zalak advised that something is not working relating to hamlets, noting individuals do want that option. He questioned if they could have hamlets in the UGB. Mr. Rison stated technically they can; however, individuals have to come before the Board for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to lower the density. He advised that from staff's perspective, that does not make a lot of sense due to being surrounded by water and sewer infrastructure and wanting to utilize a septic tank and well.

Commissioner Zalak commented on Highway 475A, noting it is a couple minutes' drive from the City and has smaller horse farms all around Belleview. Mr. Rison stated west of Belleview is low density residential (1 dwelling unit per acre (du/ac)). He advised that staff has received the first request in years relating to that area.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Rison stated an individual with 50 acres in this area could rezone the properties to Residential Estate (R-E) and make their lot as big as they want. He advised that the applicant would be informed that they need to follow the County's connection requirements and Codes, noting they would need to confer with the City of Belleview in areas where it is the technical license utility provider. Mr. Rison commented on areas of the County (northern portion of the urban area) where individuals can do that activity, noting they would be required to connect to water and sewer if they met the connection requirements.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Rison stated the connection requirement is 400 ft. per Equivalent Residential Connection (ERC) for single family development.

Commissioner Stone advised that developers have not wanted to do this due to the cost relating to infrastructure, noting they can make more by dividing up the land.

Mr. Rison stated another issue relates to much of the urban area is also inside the Primary Springs Protection Area (PSPA), which triggers the more intense septic requirements.

Commissioner Zalak advised that advanced septic is getting better.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Rison stated for the 1 unit per 3.5 acre hamlet, staff require a water system, noting it can also be capable of providing for fire flow. He

clarified that it can be a water system specifically for that one subdivision that they maintain.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the cost.

Commissioner Stone opined that there are not enough of these types of developments. She advised that individuals want to come to this community and individuals with larger properties may want to step down into smaller ones. Commissioner Stone expressed concern relating to allowing hamlets in the FPA.

Commissioner Zalak commented on acreage requirements for horse farms with tracks.

Commissioner Stone stated it is her belief that a horse farm with a track can fit on 20 acres, noting 20 to 40 acres is probably the sweet spot. She commented on 20 acre properties with a track that is shared with surrounding 10 acre properties.

Mr. Rison advised that the County has had those kinds of communities with shared amenities relating to equine; however, most of them have gone to the wayside. He stated there have been mixed reports relating to having those common facilities that everyone can utilize due to illnesses in the equine community. Mr. Rison advised that it is an option under the hamlet provision that staff look for the open space to be controlled by the homeowner's association (HOA) system; however, it can be divided out into paddocks with common facilities. He stated Bel-Lago is a version of that with an inner circle of 1 acre lots with no open space and the outer ring has a 1 acre lot plus an open space tract. Commissioner Stone stated 60% of the development has to remain open space, which is a lot for a hamlet. She commented on the ability to have a horse on the property (3 or 5 acres) they may not need all the open space that the community is required to maintain. Mr. Rison advised that this is an example of the current hamlet, which is the typical 5 acres. He stated the owner gets their buildable area space and the rest is the remainder of their lot. Mr. Rison advised that the Hunterdon Hamlet is an example, noting it is actually 2 hamlets.

Chairman Bryant stated she understands from a planning perspective the County wants to get as much density as possible within the UGB. She commented on having the ability for the Board to review requests relating to developing a property with higher density residential to allow for 1 acre lots. Chairman Bryant advised that there are individuals who do not want people on top of them but do want to live in town.

In response to Mr. Bouyounes, Chairman Bryant stated she is talking about 1 acre lot subdivision within the UGB. He advised that there are still places where they can be platted.

Mr. Rison stated properties that are medium density residential today can be done at 1 unit per acre due to that being the minimum density for the area.

Commissioner Zalak advised that the medium density classification makes it unaffordable to purchase that property for 1 acre lots, noting water and sewer connections would also be required.

Chairman Bryant stated if somebody comes in and wants to do that in the UGB, it should be encouraged.

Commissioner Zalak opined that such an applicant would have to be given a waiver for water and sewer.

Deputy Growth Services Director Ken Weyrauch advised that the Department has not turned anyone away for a similar request, noting they have not received any applications.

Commissioner Stone stated she has been told by developers that it is too expensive to develop those types of properties.

Mr. Bouyounes commented on the possibility of an individual wanting to do this outside

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the UGB and questioned whether the Board is open to that option. Chairman Bryant advised that she wants to have the conversation and see what it would look like as long as it is not located in the FPA.

Mr. Bouyounes stated in the last year to year-and-a-half he spoke to a developer that wanted to do 1 acre lots outside the UGB, noting the biggest issue was how to get water and sewer to the project. He stated the Board will have to decide if they want to allow this without water and sewer.

Chairman Bryant advised that for 1 acre parcels there has to be water and sewer.

Commissioner Zalak stated it must be over 3 acres to waive the water and sewer requirement.

Commissioner McClain commented on areas outside of the UGB where there are mini farms, noting that occurred through individuals selling off an acre here or there. He advised that it is very rare to have a developer who will come in and develop 1 to 3 acre horse farms. Commissioner McClain addressed the inability of individuals to sell off a portion of their property, noting the County does not allow it in some areas and buyers are often financially limited to a single acre.

In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Knighting stated the average lot size along the boundary of the UGB on the inside is under 5 acres.

Chairman Bryant advised that the TDR process needs to be fixed. She stated what is being done with buffers relating to residential to agriculture is likely the best fix, noting she would be concerned about challenges over some of the 100 ft. setbacks.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Minter opined that concern relating to the 100 ft. setback is legitimate.

Chairman Bryant stated it could constitute a taking in some cases due to telling an individual they cannot use their property.

Ms. Knighting advised that because of the caveats (parcels of record, family divisions, bona fide agricultural) KHA tried to think of every scenario from the public and private sides as to how this could go wrong. She clarified that it will not apply to every parcel and will essentially impact new development. Ms. Knighting expressed concern that anytime a new restriction is added, something may happen. She commented on the 100 ft. being a considerable amount, noting some lots can be 100 ft.

Mr. Bouyounes stated it is less than 60% open space. He advised that this relates to new development. Mr. Bouyounes commented on a previous application requesting to put multi-family housing in at the UGB with 3 floors, noting that is when the discussion began.

Chairman Bryant questioned if the recommended buffers would fix the issue.

Commissioner McClain stated it can be addressed through the PUD process.

Chairman Bryant stated the Board will leave the UGB line where it is today.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that there will not be a stepdown plan; however, there is a buffer plan.

Commissioner Stone stated there is a lot happening in Tallahassee right now that could override anything the Board may choose to do now.

General discussion ensued relating to the project Mr. Bouyounes referred to with the 3-story multi-family product.

Chairman Bryant passed the gavel to Commissioner Zalak who assumed the Chair.

Commissioner Bryant out at 3:50 p.m.

Amber Gartner, KHA, SE 17th Street, referred to Policy 2.1.2: LOS Standards, noting the table and text have not changed. She advised that this is the previously proposed redline, which includes an error that will be changed so it reads "Congestion Management

Process" (CMP) in the final Comprehensive Plan update. Ms. Gartner stated the previous conversation related to scenic roads, noting the current scenic road LOS is lower in the urban area than it is in the rural area. She opined that this is counterintuitive due to the desire to promote growth more in the urban area. Ms. Gartner referred to a map depicting scenic roads throughout the County, noting there are 45 currently designated in the Land Development Code (LDC). She advised of a printing error on the map resulting in the omission of County Road 475A (CR 475A), which is a scenic road from Paddock Mall south, to just south of the greenway. Ms. Gartner stated some of the scenic roads are not Marion County owned and maintained, noting a portion is in the City of Ocala. She advised that there are 22 urban, 17 rural, and 6 with portions that come in and out of the urban area.

Commissioner Bryant returned at 3:53 p.m.

Chairman Zalak returned the gavel to Commissioner Bryant who resumed the Chair.

Ms. Gartner stated KHA had proposed to change all scenic roads to LOS C, noting previously the urban were LOS B.

Ms. Gartner referred to a map showing scenic roads 2023 LOS, which also omits CR 475A. She stated a lot of roads are not counted and are scenic due to their rural nature. The County does not collect traffic data on these roads, and they are not necessarily tracked for congestion purposes. Ms. Gartner advised that the map shows the LOS letter grade for those roads that were on the 2023 CMP. She stated anything in the shaded area is the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) boundary and currently has a LOS B, noting anything in the shaded area that is a color other than green currently operates above the LOS B standard set for scenic roadways in the urban area. Ms. Gartner advised that the roads located outside of the urbanized area are rural and have a LOS C and all operate at a C or better apart from SW 66th Street at CR 475A. CR 475A has portions that operate at LOS B and LOS C today. She stated there is currently only 1 rural roadway that exceeds the LOS C standard, noting changing from LOS B to LOS C in the urban area means somethings that are deficient today would be within the LOS standard. Ms. Gartner advised that there are still 4 roadways currently operating at LOS D (yellow on the map) inside the urban area that would still exceed a LOS C standard. She stated those roadways would be changed to LOS C. Ms. Gartner referred to the scenic roads 2028 LOS map, noting the only thing that will change is a segment of SW 66th Street going from a LOS C to LOS D. She advised that there are roadways in both the urban and rural area that are currently exceeding the LOS standard; however, changing the urban LOS standard from B to C means anything in blue will now meet LOS standard. Ms. Gartner recommended staff review its Scenic Road Ordinance outside of this Comprehensive Plan process.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Gartner opined that the reason for changing the LOS from B to C is because there is a lower standard in the urban area than the rural area.

Commissioner Zalak stated it was done to keep development off those roads.

Chairman Bryant advised that roads classified as LOS B are deficient in some areas and not operating the way they should. She stated by changing it to LOS C it is implied that they are operating fine and there are no deficiencies.

Commissioner McClain questioned what can be done to resolve the issue. Ms. Gartner advised that per the County's Scenic Road Ordinance those roads cannot be widened. She stated it is acceptable to add turn lanes, intersection signalization, flooding improvements, and safety maintenance. Ms. Gartner advised that if there is development

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adjacent to those roads it can be considered with those applications or there can be parallel roads.

Commissioner Zalak stated the Ordinance can be changed to allow widening.

Ms. Gartner advised that some roads can be taken out of the scenic designation.

Mr. Bouyounes stated the scenic roads whether they are LOS B or LOS C, are still at a higher standard than any other road in the County. He advised that it makes sense to stick to 1 designation for scenic roads, noting he would not recommend going to a LOS B.

Ms. Gartner addressed the LOS on non-scenic roads. She stated the current adopted LOS in the urbanized area is LOS E and it is being proposed to go to LOS D. In the Rural areas it is currently LOS D and is being proposed to go to LOS C. Ms. Gartner advised that in the current Comprehensive Plan, scenic roads are at a lower LOS than both of those current ones. They are at LOS C and B. She stated bringing both to C means that still in the urban area, there is a higher standard for the scenic roads than all other roads because they would have a standard D.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that staff need to look at the LDC and refine the list, noting the County's Ordinance no longer applies relating to roads that have changed jurisdiction.

Chairman Bryant noted she needs more time to consider the matter.

Mr. Bouyounes stated there needs to be discussion relating to the restrictions on scenic roads prior to making any improvements.

In response to Commissioner Curry, Mr. Bouyounes stated staff is very restricted as far as what can be done relating to the designation of a scenic road. He advised that widening the road to 4 lanes requires obtaining an exemption.

Ms. Gartner stated there is also a public hearing process required in the Code of Ordinances.

Mr. Bouyounes clarified that the same process is required just to add a turn lane.

Chairman Bryant opined that CR 475A should be considered for improvements prior to Highway 475, noting the volume of traffic on CR 475A especially when Interstate 75 (I-75) is shut down or backed up.

Mr. Bouyounes commented on identifying the limits of where the scenic road starts and ends.

Commissioner Curry stated he is not in favor of anything that interferes with the tree canopy on Highway 475.

Mr. Bouyounes opined that it is unlikely staff would recommend anything that would change the area where those canopies are located.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if the scenic roads have to be turned into parkways in order to widen them. Commissioner Stone advised that the County would need to acquire property, move a road and have another road.

Chairman Bryant reiterated that the conversation is more fitting relating to CR 475A due to the things that have happened on CR 475A. She stated CR 475A is not in any kind of plan, nor has the funding been identified. She questioned what the benefit is of changing the LOS for Highway 475 from LOS B to LOS C. Ms. Gartner advised that KHA was providing input, so all the scenic roads are 1 designation and have a higher standard in the urban area to allow the growth to occur.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Gartner stated changing from LOS B to LOS C is a recognition that more development is going to happen in the urbanized area and the Board is setting LOS standards that are more achievable. She questioned if the Board accepts the change removing scenic road urban and making everything scenic road, or if

they prefer to keep is as is with 2 designations.

Commissioner Zalak advised that none of the County's roads should be below a LOS C. Commissioner McClain stated he does not like spending millions of dollars on empty roads.

Commissioner Stone stated there are peak times when roads do not meet LOS C.

Ms. Gartner stated there are different classifications, noting there are standards set for the County's arterials, collectors and Interstates. She advised that the character of an arterial road is very different than an uninterrupted flow.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Gartner stated it is always a matter of planning for the future and playing catch up. She advised that this is not only a challenge for Marion County, but anywhere development is happening. Ms. Knighting stated things are being put in place to secure funding for the improvements needed to catch up.

Mr. Bouyounes opined that staff and the consultant (KHA) have provided the Board with a very reasonable recommendation on the LOS that is somewhere in the middle. He advised that the County will not stop individuals from developing in appropriate places like the UGB. Mr. Bouyounes commented on having an aggressive improvement plan, noting the Sales Tax will be a huge help in funding those things. He stated the County can accommodate good traffic flow and still allow growth in the community. He stated the recommendations are very reasonable and practical.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Mr. Bouyounes advised that either way it does not set the Board up to say no to a project in that area if that is their decision.

Chairman Bryant questioned who must participate in the funding relating to a new project that requires additional capacity when there is a LOS C. Mr. Bouyounes stated regardless of LOS the Board establishes, when a development comes in they perform a traffic study. If it is determined that the project is impacting that highway based on the standard LOS adopted by the Board, staff will have to identify the fix and how it would be accomplished. He advised this would occur prior to approval.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Mr. Bouyounes stated there are very few failing roads in the County.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the background traffic that is impacting roads in the County.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that whether there is a LOS B or LOS C, the roads are impacted the same way.

Commissioner Zalak stated he is unsure if the LOS relating to roads matters as much as the LOS at intersections.

Mr. Bouyounes advised that the recommendations being provided are setting up the County for the future when there are large developments, the Board will be able to work out something whether it is proportionate share or any other way.

Commissioner Zalak stated that there are no fixes, expansions, tweaks or improvement plans that individuals can participate in for intersections. He clarified that there has to be an improvement plan in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for proportionate share to take effect.

Commissioner McClain commented on the recent increase in Impact Fees. He opined that too much time is spent relating to capacity and widening roads, noting the County should build new roads and corridors to get individuals off the roads long term.

Commissioner Zalak commented on the length of time it will take to fill up new roads, noting once they are built new developments will be created that fill the roads up.

In response to Ms. Gartner, Mr. Bouyounes advised that the scenic roads discussion will

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be a bring back item at a future meeting.

Commissioner Curry requested an update relating to improvements for the section of CR 475A where flooding occurs.

Mr. Bouyounes stated staff are working on the drainage problem on that segment of 475A in addition to the roundabout at 475A and Williams Road.

County Engineer Steven Cohoon, Office of the County Engineer (OCE), advised that staff are working with adjacent property owners relating to the roundabout plans. In regard to widening, the Department is at 90% planned delivery for that ultimate consideration. Just the two lane portion and the elevation are what staff have that they are ready to roll with, but the plans will be such that this can roll into a four lane as well in the future. He stated now in the TIP he believes fiscal year (FY) 26 is when staff have slated for the two lane elevating road portion.

Chairman Bryant questioned what the Department has planned for that area this year, noting she was recently there and saw dry pastures. She stated she is unsure why staff are not talking to that property owner about possibly making that a retention pond.

Mr. Cohoon advised that there are negotiations and discussions with property owners, not only at SW 66th Street but with some of the stakeholders that are adjacent to CR 475A.

Chairman Bryant questioned if there is anything that needs to be put in place for the County's contingency plan for next year in the event the area is hit by a storm. Mr. Cohoon advised that there are internal discussions relating to pre-staging things, noting if there is a need this year for some temporary pumping, staff will be ready.

Ms. Gartner provided an overview of the red line changes relating to sub-area studies and corridor specific service volumes.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Gartner stated the FDOT Quality/LOS (Q/LOS) Handbook data is established through a calculation to determine equivalent volume on a roadway that equates to a LOS standard.

Commissioner Curry out at 4:21 p.m.

Ms. Gartner advised that it is based on the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), which is actually the industry standard to determining LOS operation for a particular roadway type. She stated this information creates generalized service volume tables and it is based on a roadway type and then a roadway location (urbanized, rural, transitioning). Staff can compare the daily actually observed volumes, peak hour two way volumes, and peak hour directional volumes against these service volumes that have been established for different LOS standards. Ms. Gartner advised that it is generally used statewide because it converts a more complicated process. She stated for arterial roads and collector roads that are signalized, the way that the HCM actually measures LOS is based on travel speed, noting it is not necessary to go out and collect travel speed every year to compare against those standards. Ms. Gartner advised that FDOT has done some calculations based on assumptions of what is the speed limit, how many driveways there are, how many turn lanes, how dense the signals are, and come up with an equivalent volume. That is a standard methodology that is used mostly across the state, but it could be done for a particular corridor. She stated currently there are none that she is aware of in the County with a corridor specific service volume. Ms. Gartner advised that when traffic studies are conducted the cars are being counted. The volume is projected and compared against a service volume. She stated the service volume portion does not change; it is the actual volume that is collected and projected compared to that base service volume. That is what the traffic study is doing. Ms. Gartner advised that the traffic study

hypothesizes about how many cars this community will add and looks at the real numbers on the corridor relating to the volume piece. She reiterated that the service volume does not change. Ms. Knighting stated how many cars are allowed on that road is the standard and the standard volume does not change.

Mr. Bouyounes stated it is probably good due to the ability to squeeze more traffic/volume when performing the detailed study.

Commissioner Zalak stated a study was completed relating to State Road (SR) 200 and more when Commissioner Curry was the Chairman, noting it was stated there is not one that exists. Ms. Gartner advised that KHA still uses the FDOT generalized service volumes. She stated the way that KHA looked at future volumes is they performed a projection based on all the developments and did it as a sub-area as opposed to one specific road. Ms. Gartner clarified that KHA was still looking at projecting out actual volumes on the road compared to a service volume; however, that service volume was still based on the FDOT generalized, that KHA uses for all other studies and for the County's CMP.

Commissioner Zalak questioned if this is still being done in a way that is going to capture the volume that is there plus the new volume and the background volume. He advised that it does not seem like the data is capturing that and the County continues to put these roadways into failure beyond their capacity.

Ms. Gartner stated each time a development application comes in the County's LDC dictates what is required in a traffic study. She advised that depending on the size of the development, an applicant will have to study further out or closer. If it's a smaller development only the roadways right adjacent have to be studied, but if it is a much larger development because the impact is greater, the applicant has to study 5 miles away.

Commissioner Curry returned at 4:25 p.m.

Ms. Gartner stated it is the same process of taking data (counting cars on the road today) and adding background growth from two sources. She advised one source is all the historic data of what has been happening over the course of the past 5 to 10 years and applying the annual growth rate. The other is staff's list of other developments that have been approved in this area that the County needs to add on top. Ms. Gartner stated there are longer ranged studies to the County's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which is based on the FDOT maintained model and updated every 5 or more years. She stated it is based on input that staff provides saying the County's population's going to grow to 500,000 and questions where the growth will occur. That information is put into the model in addition to all the other communities in District 5, FDOT runs that to see what the projections are and that gives a forecast as to the volumes on the roads. Ms. Gartner advised that this does not provide a complete picture due to not including every single road in the County; however, it has the major roads and gives a picture as to how those volumes will grow. She stated the addition was because the County might do corridor specific service volumes, might evaluate LOS based on corridor specific studies or might do sub-area studies that it wants to use in the future when looking at the County's LOS on its roads.

In response to Commissioner Zalak, Ms. Gartner advised that she has done specific studies in the past and used the data to show that a road designated as a LOS F is really a LOS D.

Ms. Gartner referred to the red line relating Policy 2.1.5: Bicycle and Pedestrian LOS, noting based on a previous discussion language was added to include shared-use paths after bicycle facilities.

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In response to Commissioner Stone, Ms. Gartner stated a sidewalk is not considered a shared-use path; however, a shared-use path does provide for pedestrian use.

Ms. Gartner addressed Policy 4.1.4: Planning Strategies, which is the policy that was added related to prioritization of improvements once the traffic volume reaches 80% of the adopted service volume.

Chairman Bryant stated she is comfortable with the new red line language.

In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Gartner referred to Policy 4.1.3: Transportation Network Analysis and Measurement. She stated the County currently takes traffic counts annually, updates the CMP through the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and the Policies and Procedures manual stated it will be done every 2 years. Ms. Gartner commented on a discussion relating to possibly doing it annually so language was added indicating updates to the CMP will occur at least on a biennial basis.

Chairman Bryant questioned if there is adequate staff to do it annually. Mr. Cohoon advised that there is adequate staff; however, they do not count every single road, nor would it be feasible. He stated the Department has staff and the equipment to put out counters, but it has not reached the point where there has been serious discussion relating to a consultant. Mr. Cohoon advised that areas of concern are checked more frequently than others.

ACA Tracy Straub stated when staff began the West Marion Study, it looked at the LOS transition and found that the reason why mathematically the County was not running anything that showed 80% was due to the 5 year planning and long-range planning effectively picking up all of the 80%, so there was nothing being overlooked.

Ms. Gartner commented on Policy 6.1.4: Funding for Transportation Disadvantaged, noting there was language added due to concerns about possibly not having Marion County Senior Services. She advised of a lone change replacing shall with may relating to Policy 6.1.7: Funding Mechanisms. Ms. Gartner addressed Policy 2.3.5: Alternative Mitigation, which changes the word shall to may, and includes language relating to including transit as this relates to transit mitigation. She commented on Policy 7.1.7: Airports and Airport Hazards, noting this is a new Policy that was added. Ms. Gartner advised of previous conversation relating to the term vicinity. She stated Florida Statute (F.S.) 333 includes the work vicinity, so it was left and staff added, "Pursuant to Florida Statute 333."

Chairman Bryant expressed concern with individuals believing the County is going out to develop these Planned Service Areas (PSAs), noting the Board just needs to provide the necessary tools and advise of the areas where it is believed the PSAs will work.

Commissioner Stone concurred. She stated she does not want communities to think the County would be helping them to incorporate and become their own small communities. Commissioner Stone advised that in the past some communities have wanted to incorporate, which is not the obligation of the County.

Chairman Bryant stated communities that want to do so are able to go through the process; however, in the past it always comes out that it would cost way too much.

Ms. Knighting advised that KHA is scoped with holding 2 in-person community meetings and 1 virtual meeting after these workshops, noting the thought process is to hold the 2 in-person meetings in Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores (SSS) to get feedback from those communities. Ms. Knighting commented on these locations being appropriate for PSAs. She stated KHA will come back before the Board with any recommended changes after the community input is received and have more targeted conversations.

Commissioner Curry expressed concern relating to turnout, noting he is unsure how to

get the community engaged.

Ms. Knighting stated the Marion Oaks community meeting was well attended with upwards of 100 to 110 community members present. She noted KHA is considering sending targeted letters to individuals in those communities to specifically invite them to that meeting.

Chairman Bryant advised that the discussion on TDRs will be brought back before the Board at another workshop.

Ms. Knighting commented stated KHA worked with County staff and identified that ESOZ is needed due to the impact on water quality. It was decided not to red line anything in the ESOZ section of the Comprehensive Plan.

It was the general consensus of the board to agree to leave the language as it is currently. In response to Chairman Bryant, Ms. Knighting advised that the next workshop will be held June 23, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. She stated there will be discussion relating to TDRs and a recap at that workshop.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting thereupon adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Kathy Bryant, Chairman

Attest:

Gregory C. Harrell, Clerk

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