

CPA2008-25
LEE COUNTY GREENWAYS
MULTI-PURPOSE RECREATIONAL
TRAILS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

BoCC SPONSORED
AMENDMENT
TO THE

LEE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

THE LEE PLAN

DCA Transmittal Document

Lee County Board of County Commissioners
Sponsored Amendment and Staff Analysis

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November 6, 2009
LEE COUNTY

**DIVISION OF PLANNING
STAFF REPORT FOR
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT
CPA2008-25**

Text Amendment

Map Amendment

✓	This Document Contains the Following Reviews:
✓	Staff Review
✓	Local Planning Agency Review and Recommendation
✓	Board of County Commissioners Hearing for Transmittal
	Staff Response to the DCA Objections, Recommendations, and Comments (ORC) Report
	Board of County Commissioners Hearing for Adoption

STAFF REPORT PREPARATION DATE: April 13, 2009

PART I - BACKGROUND AND STAFF RECOMMENDATION

A. SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

1. APPLICANT:

LEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REPRESENTED BY LEE COUNTY DIVISION OF PLANNING
AND LEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

2. REQUEST:

Update Lee Plan Map 22, The Lee County Multi-Purpose Recreational Trails and Greenways Master Plan to include additional connector trails and blueways.

B. STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS OF FACT SUMMARY

1. RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners transmit the updated Greenways Master Plan Map.

2. BASIS AND RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF FACT:

- The amendment proposes to add two sections of Connector trails.
- The amendment proposes to designate several additional streams and creeks as blueways.
- Increased blueways will increase potential water access points for canoes and kayaks.

- The additional connector trails will potentially allow greater access to a number of conservation areas.

C. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. History

The Greenways Master Plan process began in September 2002 with a meeting between County Parks and Recreation staff and the National Parks Service. Parks and Recreation Staff have conducted many meetings with interested public groups such as bicycle and equestrian clubs, neighborhood organizations, and area businesses in order to determine the needs and desires of the public in regards to greenways and trails in Lee County. Parks and Recreation Staff have met with various governmental agencies in order to better align the proposed Greenways Master Plan with existing government trail efforts. In October 2003, the BoCC passed a resolution recognizing October as Greenways & Trails Month. The Greenways Master Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on May 16, 2007 in conjunction with Lee Plan amendment CPA2005-11.

PART II - STAFF ANALYSIS

A. STAFF DISCUSSION

The proposed Map 22 uses a new graphic style to represent the greenway corridors. This is done to convey the fact that the possible alignments of proposed greenway trails are not precisely fixed. Within a broad corridor, a greenway may take various alignments in order to take advantage of local geography or other opportunities. Although a proposed greenway corridor appears to run along a road right of way, this is only generally the case. The actual alignment of the greenway, once determined, may run along the road right of way or may be some distance from the road.

One of the changes proposed on the new map is the addition of two stretches of Connector Trails. Connector trails are internal to Lee County. Connector trails connect to the larger system or to specific locations. This is in contrast to the main Greenways system that is intended to connect to trails outside of the county. Where feasible, connector trails within urban areas should be designed as transportation alternatives to motorized use. The first connector trail is in the Greenbriar Swamp area. It continues a connector trail that extends southwest from the Lee-Hendry Canal Trail to the Sunshine Trail, a connector trail running along Sunshine Boulevard North. The proposed connector corridor will potentially allow greater access to several conservation areas that lay between Lehigh Acres and the Caloosahatchee River. The second proposed connector trail lays approximately 2.5 miles south of SR 82 and runs roughly parallel to that road. It runs west from where the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Trail greenway corridor turns north away from a Florida Power and Light right of way. The proposed connector continues northwest along the power right of way before rejoining the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Trail greenway corridor at Daniels Parkway. The additional connector closes a loop in the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Trail greenway corridor.

Several additional blueways are also depicted on the proposed map. Blueways are publicly owned waterways with scenic and recreational qualities and are accessible by the public. Blueways are

typically used for kayaking and canoeing. Many of the proposed blueways are on creeks and streams that feed directly into the Caloosahatchee River. In the Alva Area, both Bedman Creek and Spanish Creek are now designated as blueways on the proposed Map 22. Further west on the north shore of the Caloosahatchee River, Trout Creek, Owl Creek and Otter Creek are also proposed to be designated as blueways. Just east of the Edison Bridge, on the north shore of the Caloosahatchee, Powell Creek and Marsh Point Creek are also proposed to be added as blueways to Map 22. At the mouth of the Caloosahatchee, Shell Creek on the south shore and Jewfish Creek on the north shore are included in this proposal. The last proposed additional blueway is the Underhill Creek blueway which extends from Pine Island to Cape Coral north of the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River.

B. CONCLUSIONS

The additional proposed connector trails will increase potential hiking and biking access to conservation areas in the eastern portion of Lee County. The new trails will also increase connectivity in the Greenways System. Adding more blueways will increase the potential number of water access points for kayaks and canoes and improve the overall accessibility of the county's waterways.

C. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners transmit this amendment that updates Lee Plan Map 22, the Lee County Greenways System Master Plan Map.

PART III - LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION

DATE OF PUBLIC LPA HEARING: April 27, 2009

A. LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY REVIEW

Planning Staff gave a brief summary of the proposed amendment. LPA members asked for clarifications concerning the proposed map. One member stated that he would like for trail heads to be depicted on the map.

One member had concerns about the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Greenway where it is located east of Daniels Parkway and south of SR 82. He stated that the land owners in that area have not been contacted about the proposed greenway. He is concerned because the area is an active agricultural use which could create conflicts with greenway uses. Staff stated that the proposed greenway is coincident with the FPL power line easement and that the County has negotiated with FPL. The LPA member stated that some of the land under the power lines was used for citrus groves and therefore this was still an issue. Staff clarified that the MPO regional pathways map erroneously depicted the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Greenway as the community priority. Staff was working with the MPO to show that the Charlotte-Lee-Collier Greenway as the main priority and that staff would have additional discussions with Parks and Recreation staff to address these concerns. The LPA member stated that the issues would be greatly reduced if the greenway was aligned along SR 82.

One member asked how the greenways impacted landowners whose land it crossed. Staff replied that the situation in the past has been worked out through a negotiation process. The Lee Plan contains policies to encourage land owners to incorporate greenways into their developments and in some cases impact fee credits have been granted in return for such improvements. The member expressed concern over the burden that a greenway might place on a land owner. Staff stated that the greenway policies allow for flexible designs that address the specific conditions of properties.

Another member asked about the impacts of the blueways on adjacent lands. Staff stated that the Blueway system is intended to contain landings periodically so that certain parcels may require landing sites with road access.

A member asked why new creeks were being added to the blueway system. Staff responded that the system is a living document, open to periodic amendment as public input and opportunities for improvement occur.

Members stated that it would have been preferable to have a more detailed map to better show the proposed amendments and to indicate river landings on the blueways.

B. LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS OF FACT SUMMARY

1. RECOMMENDATION:

The LPA recommends that the Board transmit the proposed amendment with the following changes. The map should depict the proposed changes in greater detail. The map should depict river landing sites on the blueways. The alignment of the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Greenway should be placed along SR 82 east of Daniels Parkway.

Staff believes that changing the alignment of the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Greenway to follow SR82 would be premature at this time. The PD&E study for the widening of SR82 has already been completed without consideration of a greenway. The Captiva-Hendry-Collier Greenway is part of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations Regional Pathway Map and any changes would require an amendment of that map as well. The impact of the greenway on agricultural uses south of SR82 should be determined before any changes are made to the currently adopted alignment. If a new alignment is deemed necessary, it would be addressed in a future Lee Plan amendment.

Staff has also included a second map highlighting the changes proposed by this amendment. However, staff has not included the landing sites on the blueways. According to Parks and Recreation Staff, the landings, guides and accesses are not static and therefore should not be depicted on the Greenways System Map. Planning Staff intends for future adopted Greenways maps to depict which portions of the Greenways System have been completed. As yet, that data has not been provided by Parks and Recreation Staff.

2. BASIS AND RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF FACT:

The LPA stated that the possible conflict of the Captiva-Hendry-Collier Greenway with agricultural uses could be mitigated with the more northerly alignment.

C. VOTE:

NOEL ANDRESS

AYE

CINDY BUTLER

AYE

CARIE CALL

AYE

JIM GREEN

AYE

MITCH HUTCHCRAFT

AYE

RONALD INGE

AYE

CARLA JOHNSTON

AYE

**PART IV - BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HEARING FOR TRANSMITTAL OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

DATE OF TRANSMITTAL HEARING: September 23, 2009

A. BOARD REVIEW: Staff provided a brief summary of the proposed amendment. Staff noted that the proposed greenways map will depict those portions of the greenways system that are completed once such data is available. No member of the public spoke on the amendment.

B. BOARD ACTION AND FINDINGS OF FACT SUMMARY:

1. BOARD ACTION: The Board of County Commissioners voted to transmit the proposed amendment to the Department of Community Affairs with the additional data noted by staff.

2. BASIS AND RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF FACT:
The Board of County Commissioners accepted the findings of fact as advanced by Staff and the Local Planning Agency.

C. VOTE:

BRIAN BIGELOW	<u>AYE</u>
TAMMARA HALL	<u>AYE</u>
ROBERT P. JANES	<u>ABSENT</u>
RAY JUDAH	<u>AYE</u>
FRANK MANN	<u>AYE</u>

**PART V - DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS OBJECTIONS,
RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENTS (ORC) REPORT**

DATE OF ORC REPORT: _____

A. DCA OBJECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS:

B. STAFF RESPONSE

**PART VI - BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HEARING FOR ADOPTION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

DATE OF ADOPTION HEARING: _____

A. BOARD REVIEW:

B. BOARD ACTION AND FINDINGS OF FACT SUMMARY:

1. BOARD ACTION:

2. BASIS AND RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF FACT:

C. VOTE:

BRIAN BIGELOW

TAMMARA HALL

ROBERT P. JANES

RAY JUDAH

FRANK MANN
