


# Memo

To: Paul O'Connor, Planning Director

From: David Loveland, Public Works Operations Manager, Planning 

Date: May 10, 2011

Subject: **CPA 2010-08 (RSW Comprehensive Plan Amendment)**

The Department of Transportation has reviewed the above-referenced comprehensive plan amendment request, submitted on behalf of the Lee County Port Authority. The request is to amend Policy 1.2.7 and Policy 47.3.4 of the Future Land Use and Transportation Elements and to amend Table 5(a) SWFIA Development Schedule to allow additional development within future non-aviation areas of the Southwest Florida International Airport. The applicant's traffic analysis indicates that the non-aviation land uses would total 248,750 square feet of retail and service, 5,000 square feet of gas station/convenience store, 187 hotel rooms, 147,500 square feet of light manufacturing/assembly, 329,200 square feet of warehouse/distribution, and 162,500 square feet of office at buildout.

The applicant did not submit a short-range analysis, noting there are no immediate development plans at this time. Instead the applicant submitted an analysis based on the above development parameters plugged into the Lee MPO 2030 Financially Feasible Plan FSUTMS model set. Their conclusion was that a large section of Daniels Parkway and some sections of I-75 and Treeline Avenue are projected to fail (i.e., volume-to-capacity ratio exceeds 1.0) in 2030 even without the additional development from this plan amendment request. The segments projected to fail are:

*Daniels Parkway, Palomino Lane to SR 82 (at 6 lanes)*  
*I-75, Terminal Access Road to Colonial Boulevard (at 6 lanes)*  
*Treeline Avenue, Terminal Access Road to Daniels Parkway (at 6 lanes)*

### Applicant's Analysis

In the initial amendment request submittal, the applicant stated the following in relation to addressing the transportation impacts:

“All non-aviation development will be subject to Lee County guidelines to meet concurrency requirements. This traffic study will provide guidelines for the congested roadway segments. However, when the proposed developments will need to be implemented, site specific traffic studies will be required for concurrency compliance to identify relevant impact fees at that time. The Lee County Port Authority will work closely with Lee County Transportation Planning,

FDOT and other stakeholders to ensure that sufficient capacity is made available along the arterial roadway segments in the study area.”

In addition, the applicant provided the following supplemental statements as part of a sufficiency response:

- “1. As a multimodal facility, Southwest Florida International Airport serves the traveling public’s needs by offering air travel alternatives for more efficient, longer distance travel. As a vital part of the national aviation system this local transportation resource provides a critical global economic link for tourism, business and personal travel requirements. In addition, the Airport is a key component of Florida’s Strategic Intermodal System wherein the state recognizes the value of providing and maintaining quality access and mobility to support the region and State’s competitive connection with the global economy. A 2010 Florida Statewide Aviation Economic Impact Study by the Florida Department of Transportation determined the total contribution from airport operations to the region’s economy through direct and indirect sources is \$3.8 billion annually.
2. While the Port Authority must observe FAA restrictions on investment in capital projects outside the Airport boundary, the Port Authority has been supportive and contributed toward permitting and mitigation associated with the completed extension of Treeline Avenue and the planned development of a new I-75 direct airport connector interchange. These improvements relieve congestion on Daniels Parkway and the Daniels Parkway and Alico Road Interchanges.
3. The planned future eastern extension of Alico Road, and eventual connection of the Alico Extension to SR 82 will provide an alternate route from Lehigh Acres to I-75 and all points south and west, and therefore relieve current and projected congestion on Daniels Parkway.
4. Public transit provides alternative means of transportation to help reduce private vehicle trips to the Airport. Lee Tran Route 50 connects travelers and employees from as far west as the Tanger Outlet Center on McGregor Boulevard to the Airport. Future expansion of LeeTran operations with services to Southwest Florida International Airport, the Red Sox Spring Training Facility, Florida Gulf Coast University and the surrounding business parks will further improve connectivity and relieve congestion on the regional roadway network.”

Finally, in response to discussions with staff about multi-modal accommodations, the applicant noted that the existing Airport Layout Plan already identifies an area of airport property along Treeline Avenue as the potential location for a multi-modal facility, and was willing to consider possible relocation of that area up along Daniels Parkway as part of future updates of the Airport Layout Plan. The applicant offered the following additional Lee Plan text change to address the issue:

**POLICY 47.2.1:** The Port Authority will coordinate efforts with aviation and other transportation interests at Southwest Florida International Airport to establish multi-modal

transfer facilities. As such, during prior master planning efforts, the Port Authority has identified on its Airport Layout Plan (Map 3F) a passenger multi-modal facility within its ultimate planning horizon. As part of the normal Airport Master Plan approval process, the Airport Layout Plan has been approved by the FAA, FDOT, and the Board of County Commissioners and is consistent with other transportation-related objectives. This ALP (Map 3F) and the RSW Proposed Development Schedule (Table 5a) was previously adopted into the Comprehensive Plan through CPA 2003-02. Future RSW Master Plan Update efforts will continue to re-evaluate suitable locations for a multi-modal transfer facility on airport property.

#### DOT Staff Conclusions

While the projected roadway failures in 2030 both with and without the CPA would normally be a cause for concern and could lead to a recommendation of non-transmittal absent a financial commitment to make the necessary improvements, DOT staff recognizes that the Port Authority is not like a regular developer and that the Southwest Florida International Airport is in fact a key part of the area's transportation infrastructure. By its very existence it helps take some trips off the roadways in terms of arriving visitors and goods. We also recognize that the development of the non-aviation areas is intended to generate revenue for the continued successful operation of the Airport into the future, and that under Policy 47.4.5 of the Lee Plan, "development of non-aviation related uses on airport property will be required to meet concurrency standards set forth in the Lee County Land Development Code." Furthermore, we are familiar with the FAA rules that make it difficult for the Port Authority to commit to off-site road improvements and we acknowledge the Port Authority's previous actions to construct a key section of Treeline Avenue. We agree that the new Airport Connector project providing a direct connection to I-75, which is scheduled for construction by FDOT in FY 11/12, will provide relief in the short term to Daniels Parkway and its interchange with I-75, and we agree that the planned Alico Road Extension, which was not part of the 2030 Financially Feasible Plan network but is part of the new MPO 2035 Financially Feasible Plan, will provide significant future relief to Daniels Parkway.

It is important to recognize that the development on and around the airport property is a key element of the County's "Research Diamond" concept, promoting airport-related and alternative energy research and development types of development in the area, while at the same time focusing on a "green" approach to infrastructure. Therefore, accommodating alternative modes of transportation is a key consideration, and will help address the projected future roadway level of service conditions. Lee County DOT staff supports the suggestion of the Lee County Planning staff to limit the footprint of the non-aviation development north of the old terminal, which Planning staff is proposing to protect wetlands but which should also have the effect of clustering the planned development, thereby making it more walkable and more transit-oriented. It is worth noting that the MPO's new 2035 Plan calls for a possible park-and-ride facility in the area, which should be a consideration as more specific development plans for the site are established. We also appreciate the Port Authority's willingness to reconsider the most appropriate location within their property for a multi-modal facility as part of future updates of the Airport Layout Plan, but their proposed change to Policy 47.2.1 could be streamlined. Planning staff has suggested a simplification of the proposal, which DOT staff supports, which would read:

**POLICY 47.2.1:** The Port Authority will coordinate efforts with aviation and other transportation interests at Southwest Florida International Airport to establish multi-modal transfer facilities. ~~As such, during prior master planning efforts, the Port Authority has identified on its Airport Layout Plan (Map 3F) a passenger multi-modal facility within its ultimate planning horizon. As part of the normal Airport Master Plan update and approval process, the Airport Layout Plan has been was approved by the FAA, FDOT, and the Board of County Commissioners and is consistent with other transportation-related objectives. This ALP (Map 3F) and the RSW Proposed Development Schedule (Table 5a) was previously adopted into the Comprehensive Plan through CPA 2003-02. Future RSW Southwest Florida International Airport Master Plan Update efforts will continue to re-evaluate suitable appropriate locations for a multi-modal transfer facilityies on airport property.~~

Based on the above reasons, DOT staff feels it is appropriate to allow the Port Authority to increase the amount of non-aviation development allowed within the boundaries of the Southwest Florida International Airport as requested through the CPA. Therefore, LCDOT staff recommends transmitting this amendment, with the addition of revised Policy 47.2.1 as identified immediately above.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

cc: Donna Marie Collins, Chief Assistant County Attorney  
Brandon Dunn, Senior Planner, LCDCD  
Josh Philpott, Lee County Port Authority  
Laura DeJohn, Johnson Engineering