

INTRODUCTION

In 1985 the State Legislature passed Florida's Growth Management Act. Officially referred to as the "Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act of 1985," this bill requires all local governments in the State to maintain comprehensive planning programs based upon an adopted local government comprehensive plan. As part of this process, the local government must monitor changing conditions and must use this information to guide periodic amendments to the local comprehensive plan.

The periodic amendment process, which occurs once every seven years, as described in Section 163.3191, F.S., is a two-phase process. It begins with the preparation of an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) by the local government, and ends with the adoption of the EAR-based amendments. The EAR evaluates the performance of the various elements of the local government comprehensive plan since the previous EAR-based amendment process. It assesses the successes and shortcomings of the various goals, objectives, policies and programs included within the local comprehensive plan and provide recommendations for necessary changes. Additionally, the EAR provides an opportunity to identify major issues in a community and evaluate how effective the local comprehensive plan has been in addressing these issues.

The recommendations contained in the EAR are intended to become the basis of proposed amendments to the local government comprehensive plan. These EAR-based amendments, once adopted by the local governing board and found in compliance with Chapter 163, F.S., then become part of the goals, objectives and policies of the local plan until the next EAR cycle.

Since the adoption of the EAR-based Amendments in 1998, a new trend in planning has occurred, called "Smart Growth." In 2003, the Volusia County Council adopted Smart Growth as one of its priorities. In response, in 2003-2004, the Volusia County Association for Responsible Development (VCARD) convened a steering committee with representation from a broad range of governmental, citizen and environmental groups to sponsor a series of Smart Growth Summits to explore the ideas behind smart growth. Participants at these summits concluded that the concepts of Smart Growth did indeed hold promise for Volusia County, and strongly supported their further exploration. They recommended that a group be formally appointed to develop specific recommendations for implementation of Smart Growth in Volusia County.

A Volusia Smart Growth Implementation Committee was formed in response to that recommendation and met from August 2004 to July 2005. It was jointly sponsored by Volusia County, Volusia cities, the Volusia County School Board and private interests, with members formally appointed by a broad range of Volusia governments, citizen, business, and environmental organizations. A report was recently produced including 15 "keystone" recommendations and 49 additional recommendations that outline how the principles of Smart Growth could be implemented in Volusia County. (See Appendix C.) Many of the goals, objectives and policies contained in the Volusia County Comprehensive Plan already promote Smart Growth and are reinforced by the recommendations of the report.



2006 EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT

This second EAR reviews the performance of Volusia County's Comprehensive Plan from May 1999, the effective date of the last EAR-based amendments, through December 2004. The EAR will be adopted by September 1, 2006. The 2006 EAR is organized into a single-bound report containing three (3) major chapters. These chapters are:

- Chapter 1 – Community-wide Assessment
- Chapter 2 – Evaluation of Major Issues
- Chapter 3 – Special Topics

Chapter 1 contains seven (7) sections that provide required background information, population projections and the availability of vacant land for the new planning time frame of 2005 to 2025, and assess the condition of the various Elements and Sub-elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 2 evaluates the six (6) major issues, as agreed upon between Volusia County and the Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA). Chapter 3 examines four (4) required special topics, as agreed upon between the County and the DCA.
