



STATE OF FLORIDA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

"Dedicated to making Florida a better place to call home"

CHARLIE CRIST
Governor

THOMAS G. PELHAM
Secretary

March 2, 2010

Ms. Kelly Moosbrugger
City Planner
City of Hawthorne
6700 Southeast 221st Street
Hawthorne, Florida 32640

Dear Ms. Moosbrugger:

The Department of Community Affairs has reviewed your letter dated February 16, 2010, which outlines the major issues that will be the focus of the City's Evaluation and Appraisal Report. I am confident that your report will build upon the City's public involvement process. The Department agrees with the summary of the issues as set forth in the attached list of nine (9) major community issues. This letter serves as confirmation of our understanding. As we discussed, there is an expectation that the applicable requirements under Chapter 163.3191(2)(a) through (p), Florida Statutes, will be fully assessed in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. As a result of the assessment, there may need to be proposed changes to the comprehensive plan to better implement the intended planning objectives.

We appreciate the cooperation and effort of you and your staff in working with us to successfully complete this Evaluation and Appraisal Report. If you and your staff should have any questions or require further assistance, please contact Ana Richmond, Principal Planner, at (850) 922-1794 or via email at anastasia.richmond@dca.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

Mike McDaniel, Chief
Office of Comprehensive Planning

MM/ar

Enclosures: City of Hawthorne Major Issues for Evaluation and Appraisal Report

cc: Mr. Scott Koons, Executive Director, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

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February 16, 2010

Mike McDaniel
Chief of Comprehensive Planning
Department of Community Affairs
2555 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2100

FEB 17 2010

Re: City of Hawthorne Evaluation and Appraisal Report Major Issues

Dear Mr. McDaniel.

The City of Hawthorne held a public workshop on February 9th, 2010 to identify the Major Issues that would be addressed by the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. Members of the community, the City Commission, and staff joined the Planning and Zoning Board for the meeting. Also in attendance was a representative from Alachua County and from the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council. Information from visioning sessions conducted in 2006 was discussed and incorporated into the list.

The Board voted 5-0 on the attached list of Major Issues. The City is seeking confirmation from the Department of Community Affairs that these are the issues on which the report should focus and requesting that the Department provide the City with a Letter of Understanding agreeing to the proposed issues and advising the City of any necessary revisions.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (352) 482-2432 or kmoosbrugger@cityofhawthorne.net.

Sincerely,

Kelly Moosbrugger
Planner

CITY OF HAWTHORNE

Major Issues for Evaluation and Appraisal Report

Issue #1:

Promote and develop transportation alternatives and improve the flow of traffic.

The planned increase in CSX railroad traffic through the City will negatively affect mobility from the East to West sides of town. A pedestrian/bicycle bridge and another vehicle overpass near the south end of the City over the railroad and U.S. Highway 301 would provide a partial solution.

Hawthorne is not currently on the 10-Year RTS Transportation Plan, but could possibly collaborate in the future for an express bus or van service during peak business hours. This would also be a good alternative to road widening if a transportation concurrency issue arises in the future. Expansion and promotion of the Park and Ride program for commuters traveling to Gainesville and Ocala will reduce congestion and reduce vehicle emissions. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be improved, including access to the Gainesville-Hawthorne bicycle trail and extension of sidewalks throughout the City.

Issue #2:

Implement the Historic Preservation ordinance and identify historic standards.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for preservation standards for historic housing in Hawthorne, but does not address other types of historic structures. The City has designated the Planning and Zoning Board as the Historic Preservation Board, but has not identified an official historic district or historic properties. The downtown business district is generally considered the historic part of the City and contains numerous structures built before 1925.

Issue #3:

Analyze the Future Land Use Map and Land Development Regulations to identify changes needed to accommodate industry and business.

Population in Hawthorne is predicted to double within the next five to ten years, based on approved developments and growth projections. The City has a large urban reserve area in which it can annex property into the City limit. An evaluation of the amount of undeveloped land and the future land use of this property will determine if there are any changes that should be made. Potential annexation areas should be identified and analyzed for development potential.

Issue #4:

Encourage mixed uses and increase the density in the downtown area.

The downtown area of Hawthorne has several vacant buildings and vacant lots. Currently, the zoning allows mixed use structures, but they are not encouraged over other types of uses. Density in the area is limited to 1.0 Floor Area Ratio, which may restrict the density desired. Form-based code or Smart code is a potential mechanism the City could employ.

Issue #5:

Address the prevalence of blighted and dilapidated housing.

Hawthorne does not have a lack of affordable housing, but much of the housing stock is in disrepair. Also, the Pleasant Gardens community, a public housing development financed and

managed by Alachua County, is in terrible condition. Minimum housing standards may be expanded to address the condition of housing. The City can also form partnerships with the County and other nonprofit groups like SHIP to renovate homes.

Issue #6:

Identify potential water conservation mechanisms, alternative water sources, and stormwater management solutions.

The City currently has restrictions on irrigation but could also add landscaping requirements or incentives or use Florida-friendly plants and landscaping techniques. Alternative water sources include reclaimed water and surface water. Hawthorne currently does not have the infrastructure necessary for reclaimed water. Surface water possibilities in the area should be evaluated, including Lake Lochloosa.

A stormwater study or engineering survey is needed for Hawthorne to determine its drainage needs and establish a stormwater management plan. Encouraging Low Impact Development through the Comprehensive Plan and design standards will then allow the City to improve drainage and water quality in problem areas.

Issue #7:

Establish policies for reducing greenhouse gases through transportation alternatives and urban design.

Pedestrian mobility in Hawthorne is neither popular nor convenient. Many local streets lack sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Major impediments are the speed of traffic and the width of Highways 301 and 20. At such high speeds, especially on 301, most pedestrians do not attempt to cross. Unfortunately, popular destinations like Hitchcock's, CVS, and several eateries are across both highways from the largest residential area in the City. Encouraging alternative modes of transportation such as carpooling, walking, and biking, and discovering ways to make them safer and more convenient, will reduce the ecological footprint of the City.

Issue #8:

Identify policies and objectives for economic development, including attracting industries and vocational programs to Hawthorne.

Hawthorne has a lack of industrial land that is served by sewer and water, making it difficult to attract business and industry to the City. Creating an Industrial Park and increasing the capacity of the City's sewer and water plants would help the City market itself to manufacturing companies or other industries that will create jobs in the community. Hawthorne residents are also concerned about the lack of healthcare facilities in town. Citizens have cited a need for an immediate care center or small hospital to serve the greater Hawthorne area.

Issue #9:

Analyze the recreation levels of service and increase accessibility to recreation areas.

The thresholds for recreation services and some of the services themselves are out of date and do not reflect the needs and desires of the Hawthorne community. With help from the City's Recreation Advisory Board, the activities and services for which the City establishes a level of service standard can be analyzed and updated. Also of concern is the lack of pedestrian access to the City's recreation park. Better access for bicyclists and pedestrians is needed, along with investigation of the possibility to make a connection to the Gainesville-Hawthorne bicycle trail.