

SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Planning & Development Services Business Center

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: The Board of County Commissioners

THROUGH: James L. Ley, County Administrator

FROM: Rob Lewis, Executive Director

RE: Sarasota County's Major Employment Center (MEC)
Land Use Study Implementation Discussion Item

DATE: January 8, 2008

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Discuss options with regard to implementing the recommendations of the Major Employment Center Land Use Study and direct staff to begin work on the suggested strategies.

BACKGROUND

On October 2, 2007, the Board of County Commissioners accepted the Major Employment Center (MEC) Land-Use Study, as submitted by staff and consulting team from EDAW/ERA. The Study outlined strategies for encouraging economic development within MEC areas, and touched on redevelopment approaches specific to each MEC. After reviewing these strategies, the Board directed staff to research specific implementation methods to pursue optimal redevelopment of MEC areas, and to summarize the recommendations of the MEC study so that the Board can choose which implementation options to pursue.

The purpose of today's discussion is to discuss various implementation options, their relevance to the Study's strategies, and to identify overlapping areas between commercial and MEC redevelopment work. The chart on page five lists the strategies that the Board identified during the October 2, 2007 public hearing. It identifies an implementation timeline and the availability of county resources. It also notes whether or not additional funding will be necessitated to further implement the recommendation and whether or not staff is already addressing the issue through the ongoing commercial redevelopment work. The chart on page four lists all of the implementation steps recommended by the

MEC study. Staff is prepared to discuss the October 2nd priorities and to add additional preferred strategies to the MEC study implementation work program.

MEC STUDY IN BRIEF

As part of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based Comprehensive Plan Amendments, the County adopted Future Land Use Policy 3.4.9 stating that the County would “conduct a study to determine the future demand for Major Employment Center land uses.” In September of 2006, the Board of County Commissioners engaged the firm of EDAW/ERA to conduct the MEC Study. EDAW/ERA was charged with the preparation of the Study (pursuant to FLU 3.4.9) and to ensure land use policy for managing current and future Major Employment Centers were aligned with the County’s economic development goals.

EDAW/ERA recommended that the County consider more differentiation in the character of MECs, and to look for ways to promote specific MEC areas tied to certain clusters of target businesses. Additionally, it was recommended that the County look at the creation of incentive programs to help stimulate and support economic development in our MEC areas.

With regard to MEC acreage needs, the Study indicated that historically, we have a less intensive pattern of MEC land usage and need to focus on the more efficient use of MEC lands (rather than the designation of more acreage). The exception would be in the South County area where additional acreage would be appropriate. In considering more efficient use of MEC acreage, many of the same issues previously discussed in relation to redevelopment and mixed use are applicable, most particularly, the need to address infrastructure needs and regulatory impediments.

STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT

The County’s Comprehensive Plan states that redevelopment should be a partnership between the private and public sector. It also calls for increased densities and intensities as a means to encourage the redevelopment of aging and underutilized properties. The results of the Study provide data that reinforces those assertions and can be implemented concurrent with the County’s redevelopment efforts, which have focused on commercially designated lands.

Future Land Use Goal 5 creates the Strategic Initiatives Planning Program, which provides a vehicle through which the results of the MEC Study are integrated with other County land use, transit, and infrastructure improvements. These improvements can include changes in land use that provide for population and workforce in close proximity. This proximity gives the County the ability to efficiently serve development with other infrastructure, such as central utilities and transit service.

IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

During the course of the Study, the consulting team numbered each MEC area, then grouped these areas into zones in order to perform land-use and market demand analysis. Please refer to the attached MEC Zone Map for further details (Attachment A).

As detailed in the final Study, the chart below outlines specific approaches for redevelopment and identifies which MEC areas would benefit from each approach. This chart is useful for implementation purposes, and will help direct staff priorities.

MEC Approaches (as recommended by the Study)

Program	MEC Zone (See Attached Map)														
	A		B	C						D	E	F			
	2	3	6a	4	5	6b	7	8	9	1	10	12	13	14	15
Infrastructure															
Road Impact Fee Mitigation Program		x		x					x	x					
Economic Development Transportation Fund			x		x			x	x		x	x		x	
Capital Improvement Programming					x			x				x		x	
<i>Employers Water & Wastewater Capacity Fee Mitigation Program*</i>			x									x		x	
Tax Refunds and Credits															
High Impact Performance Incentive Grant							x			x	x				
Capital Investment Tax Credit			x		x	x	x	x			x	x			x
Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program		x									x				
<i>Industrial Development Bonds*</i>			x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x
<i>Sustainable Business Incentive Program**</i>	x	x		x					x				x		
Other															
<i>Site Specific Studies*</i>		x	x				x		x	x	x	x			
Decrease Regulatory Burdens															
Increase Allowable Heights	<i>All MEC's</i>														
Decrease Required Open Space and Buffers	<i>All MEC's</i>														
Created New Preferred Zoning Categories					x			x		x	x		x	x	
Develop Form-Based Code for Mixed Use Centers				x					x	x					
Explore Increases to DRI Caps		x		x							x	x			
Sustainable Development															
Promote Broad Mixed Use Center Policies	x	x		x					x			x			
Develop Detailed Redevelopment Master Plan									x	x					
Reconfigure Boundary to Promote Land Use Compatibility					x			x	x		x			x	
Ensure Land Use Compatibility				x					x	x					
MEC Expansion												x		x	
Designate Acreage in South County															
Coordinate with Municipalities															
Source: EDAW + Economics Research Associates, July 2007															
* Denotes program that is not currently offered by the County															
** Denotes proposed program from the Sarasota EDC															

Proposed Work Program:

Based upon Board discussion at the October 2, 2007 public hearing, staff has assembled a proposed schedule for implementing selected recommendations from the MEC study. The following table outlines a broad overview of an action plan for redevelopment within MEC areas, including topics the Board directed staff to research, as well as required staff resources and potential timeframes relating to implementation.

MEC Study Implementation					
RECOMMENDATION	TIMEFRAME	OVERLAP W/ COMMERICAL DEVELOPMENT	STAFF RESOURCES REQUIRED	CHANGE IN WORK PROGRAM REQUIRED?	FUNDING REQUIRED
Impact Fees	Ongoing	Yes	Planning, Transportation, Fiscal	No	No
Incentives	Ongoing	No	Continued work with the EDC	No	None
* Industrial Development Bonds	Long Term	Yes	Fiscal, EDC	Yes	Redistribution
Regulatory Changes					
* Zoning Ordinance	12 to 18 months	Yes	Zoning Administrator	Yes. Current projects include:	No
- PID			Asst. Zoning Admin.	Siesta Key Village Redevelopment	
- PCD			Office of County Attorney	Warm Mineral Springs short term room rentals	
- ILW			Clerical	Zoning Amendment Modification Workshop	
- IR				Zoning Ordinance Update	
				Adult Entertainment News Racks	
* LDR				Gulf Gate Subdivision Signs	
* Comp Plan	12 Months	Yes	Planning	Yes	No
- Relationship to 2050 Economic Development RMA	12 to 18 Months	Yes	Transportation, Real Property, Planning Services	No	No
Infrastructure					
* Concurrency					
* Row donation incentives					
* Transit					
Redevelopment Master Plan					
* Phase I - MEC differentiation	Partial now, long range overall	Yes	Transportation, Real Property, Planning	Yes, staff resources are currently dedicated to mixed use MEC opportunities. Resources may be allocated to further MEC master planning following implementation.	No, unless full implementation is desired, in which case outside consulting services will have to be acquired.
* Phase II - Incentives/Partnerships					
Implementation Role of EDC					
* Running inventory & absorption data	Ongoing	Yes	Fiscal Staff to oversee	No	No
Infrastructure	Short Term		Fiscal and Planning	Ongoing	None

MEC SPECIFIC APPROACHES

As previously mentioned, the MEC Study outlined specific approaches the County could implement in order to achieve optimal economic development outcomes. These approaches were generalized to include:

- Infrastructure Development
- Tax Refunds and Credits
- Site Specific Studies
- Decrease Regulatory Burdens
- Sustainable Development
- MEC Expansion

From these categories, the Board discussed further implementation measures that included topics such as:

- Impact Fees
- Zoning Ordinance Changes
- Redevelopment Master Planning
- Industrial Development Bonding
- Right of Way Donations
- Application of Concurrency
- Transit Oriented Development

These items as they relate to redevelopment master planning, right of way donation, and concurrency are discussed more fully below.

REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLANNING

MEC areas one (Northgate Industrial Park) and nine (Cattlemen West of I-75) include redevelopment master plans as potential implementation strategies. Portions of area nine may be designated mixed use centers through the commercial redevelopment process. Area one is recommended to remain an exclusive industrial district by the MEC study.

Planning and Development services resources are not adequate to simultaneously complete redevelopment master plans for both areas. It is recommended that the master plan for area one commence following the completion of the plan for area nine, a delay of approximately one year.

RIGHT OF WAY DONATIONS

Programmed road projects create the potential for road impact fee credits to be provided and may increase incentive to dedicate rights of way. In the past, developers have expressed concern about loss of units or reduced floor area associated with dedication. Options would have to be weighed against other policies,

but allowing transfer of density from the dedicated property to the balance of the property may provide incentive for dedication.

APPLICATION OF CONCURRENCY

Concurrency remains an impediment to redevelopment of certain MEC properties. The discussion below outlines six options to address concurrency in MEC areas. This framework is also viable when considering concurrency options for commercial redevelopment sites.

- **Implementation Option: Trip Credits**

In order to meet concurrency requirements, the Board should consider formally adopting Trip Credits for redevelopment. Generally, Sarasota County provides a 100 percent trip credit for the trip generating potential of the prior use. By statute, the County must provide a 110 percent trip credit for concurrency purposes for redevelopment in the urban service area.

To implement this, an adopted comprehensive plan policy relating to this practice is recommended, and may be accomplished with existing resources and without adversely impacting other projects.

- **Implementation Option: Adopted Levels of Service**

Level of service is adopted by the County's comprehensive plan policy and would require an amendment to implement. Staff recommends the Board consider adopting lower levels of service by facility type and/or location. Adopted LOS is a local policy determination. Roads that are not on the State's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) may have adopted levels of service that are LOS E or better.

Coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation would be required to change adopted levels of service on State roads or the Strategic Intermodal System. Interstate 75 is the only SIS facility in Sarasota County.

- **Implementation Option: Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA)**

A TCEA establishes adopted exceptions to the concurrency requirement for development in a specified geographic area. A TCEA requires extensive analysis, comprehensive plan policies, regulations, and monitoring. Establishment of a TCEA is likely to require consulting services and may interfere with the delivery schedule of other projects.

- **Implementation Option: Transportation Concurrency Management Area (TCMA)**

A TCMA establishes an alternate means of measuring level of service for a specified portion of the roadway network. The TCMA is based on "area-wide" concurrency and focuses on the quality of the trip as opposed to the operating conditions of individual road segments. A TCMA requires analysis and is adopted through

comprehensive plan policy. It may also require an amendment to regulations and procedures. It appears that establishment of one or more TCMA could be accomplished at current staff levels but may interfere with the delivery schedule for other projects.

- **Implementation Option: Long Term Concurrency Management**

Long-term concurrency management allows a local government to establish a ten-year capital program and consider fully-funded improvements as in-place for making transportation concurrency determinations. Interim, lower levels of service may be established also.

A long-term concurrency management system requires analysis and is adopted through comprehensive plan policy and changes to the capital program. It would also require amendments to the concurrency regulations.

Establishment of a long-range concurrency management system could be accomplished at current staff levels but may interfere with the delivery schedule for other projects.

- **Implementation Option: Targeted Businesses and Industries List**

Revise targeted industry list for concurrency and road impact fee mitigation purposes. An expanded list of industries would increase the likelihood that specified developments could meet transportation concurrency and/or qualify for road impact fee mitigation.

This requires an amendment to the road impact fee mitigation regulations.

This may be accomplished with existing resources and without adversely impacting other projects.

TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit oriented development can be encouraged in MEC areas through the following mechanisms:

- **Zoning Ordinance Changes**

Increased height and decreased open space and buffer requirements provide the framework upon which a more transit friendly development form can be achieved in the MEC areas.

- **Designated Mixed Use MECs**

Designating certain MECs as mixed use versus industrial only, with the application of a form based code on those mixed use MECs provides another transit friendly platform on which to develop MEC areas.

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Attachments: **MEC Zone Map**