

Town of Loxahatchee Groves, Florida
Local Planning Agency (LPA) Public Hearing Agenda Item Report
Comprehensive Plan Amendment 2020-01

PREPARED BY: Jim Fleischmann

SUBJECT: Town roadway functional classification system and Okeechobee Boulevard Corridor Overlay maps and Future Land Use and Transportation Elements Text Amendment 2020-01

1. BACKGROUND/HISTORY

History: The attached report, titled: *Town of Loxahatchee Groves Deliverable 2: FDEP Agreement Number P0361* was prepared pursuant to the scope requirements of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant #P0361 Deliverable 2 - *Update the Future Land Use and Transportation Elements of the Comprehensive Plan*. In summary, the following work activities were completed and incorporated within the Deliverable 2 report:

1. A review of the “Urban Collector” classification of Okeechobee Boulevard and, based upon the review, recommend Comprehensive Plan amendments;
2. A review of the term “Low Impact Non-Residential Development” and recommend Comprehensive Plan amendments and future Town actions to clarify the issue;
3. A summary of the Grant funded public workshop and online survey oriented to clarifying the desired development character of Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard. Specific recommendations related to the above work activities are presented in Sections II - *Transportation System Update*; III - *Low Impact Non Residential Review and Analysis*; IV *Town Visioning Process* and V *Low Impact Non-Residential Comprehensive Plan Amendments*; and
4. Preparation of Comprehensive Plan amendments based upon the results of Tasks 1-3 which are presented in the attached staff report titled: *Staff Report – Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) 2020-01: FDEO Planning Grant Amendments.*

Problem Statement: The LPA should consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as recommended in the attached staff report, including comments from the public, regarding: (1) the classification of Town roads; and (2) future land use and development along the Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard corridors.

Problem Solution: The LPA, with input from the public, should provide a recommendation to the Town Council for revising the Comprehensive Plan. An LPA Public Hearing on the proposed amendments is scheduled for _____.

2. CURRENT ACTIVITY

Staff has prepared the two attached documents for review and consideration by the LPA.

3. ATTACHMENTS

1. Town of Loxahatchee Groves Deliverable 2: FDEP Agreement #P0361.
2. Staff Report – Comprehensive Plan Amendment (CPA) 2020-01: FDEO Planning Grant Amendments.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

Work on this project is funded by Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant #P0361

5. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Consideration of public comments and recommendation of approval of proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment 2020-01 or approval of the proposed Amendment 2020-01 with revisions.

**Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
Community Planning Technical Assistance Planning Grant**

**Town of Loxahatchee Groves
Deliverable 2: FDEP Agreement Number P0361**

April 2020

Prepared by the Town of Loxahatchee Groves

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. Transportation System Update	1
A. Functional Classification System.....	1
B. Okeechobee Boulevard Data and Analysis Review.....	2
C. Road Improvements Proximate to the Town	8
D. Summary of Proposed Transportation Comprehensive Plan Amendments	9
III. Low Impact Non-Residential Review and Analysis	9
A. Loxahatchee Groves Neighborhood Plan (Neighborhood Plan).....	10
B. Strategic Vision Plan	11
C. Loxahatchee Groves Comprehensive Plan	12
D. Zoning District Intensity and Location Criteria	13
E. Summary of Planning and Zoning Directives	13
F. Town Development Approvals Since Incorporation	16
G. Non-Conforming Uses.....	20
IV. Town Visioning Process	22
A. Town Visioning Session	22
B. FDEO Grant Funded Workshop Survey	23
C. Counter Survey Supplement	24
D. FDEO Grant Funded Online Survey.....	24
V. Low Impact Non-Residential Comprehensive Plan Amendments	25
A. Basis for the Amendments	25
B. Proposed Amendments	28
C. The Next Step	31

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 - Local Road Functional Classification System	3
2 - Okeechobee Boulevard Historical Daily Traffic Counts	3
3 - Okeechobee Boulevard Historical Peak Traffic Counts	5
4 - Town Resolutions to Reduce Okeechobee Traffic Volumes	7
5 - Okeechobee Boulevard Historical Traffic Accidents	8
6 - Local Future Land Use Element Non-Residential Land Use Directives	14
7 - Okeechobee Boulevard Properties with a Town Development Approval.....	18
8 - Southern Boulevard Properties with a Town Development Approval.....	20

LIST OF MAPS

Map	Page
1 - Proposed Local Road Classification System	4
2 - Proposed Okeechobee Boulevard Overlay.....	17
3 - Okeechobee Boulevard Development Approvals	19
4 - Southern Boulevard Development Approvals	21
5 - Proposed Future Land Use Element Map FLU-1.10.1: OR 5 Overlay	29

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment

- 1 - Transportation Element Map TRN – 2.1
- 2 - Transportation Element Map TRN – 2.3
- 3 - AR, CL, CL-O and INST Zoning District Permitted Uses
- 4 - September 28, 2019 Visioning Session Notes
- 5 - February 29, 2020 Visioning Workshop Backup Materials
- 6 - Counter Survey Supplement Responses
- 7 - Online Survey Results

I. INTRODUCTION

The following report is prepared pursuant to the requirements of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant #P0361 Deliverable 2 - *Update the Future Land Use and Transportation Elements of the Comprehensive Plan*. In summary, the following work activities have been completed and incorporated within the following Deliverable 2 report:

1. A review of the "Urban Collector" classification of Okeechobee Boulevard and, based upon the review, recommend Comprehensive Plan amendments;
2. A review of the term "Low Impact Non-Residential Development" and recommend Comprehensive Plan amendments and future Town actions to clarify the issue;
3. A summary of the Grant funded public workshop and online survey oriented to clarifying the desired development character of Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard.

Specific recommendations related to the above work activities are presented in Sections II - *Transportation System Update*; III - *Low Impact Non Residential Review and Analysis*; IV *Town Visioning Process* and V *Low Impact Non-Residential Comprehensive Plan Amendments*..

II. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM UPDATE

The existing Town roadway system is illustrated on Map TRN 2.1 of the Transportation Element of the Loxahatchee Groves Comprehensive Plan (Ref: Attachment 1).

A. Functional Classification

Town roadways, per the Comprehensive Plan, are classified based on the purpose they serve, speed of travel and access to and from higher order roads. Only three Town roads are assigned a specific functional classification in the Comprehensive Plan, as follows:

1. Principal Arterial Road (Southern Boulevard): This state roadway provides service primarily through high speed and high volume traffic. Arterials provide service that is relatively continuous and for longer trip lengths.

2. Urban Collector Street (Okeechobee Boulevard): This county roadway provides both land access and traffic circulation between arterials and local roads for moderate trip length at moderate speeds. A collector street system transitions vehicular traffic from local streets onto the arterial system.

3. Urban Local Street (Folsom Road): This roadway permits direct access to abutting property and connections to higher and lower order roadways. A local street provides service to low-volume and short average trip length or minimal through traffic.

The above functional classification of Town roads is illustrated on Transportation Element Map TRN 2.3 (Ref: Attachment 2).

The Urban Collector classification of Okeechobee Boulevard was based upon the designation assigned in the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan at the time of Town incorporation. However, based upon the 2010 Federal Functional Classification and Urban Boundaries Map prepared by the Florida Department of Transportation, it is concluded that a more appropriate classification is an Urban Collector sub-category; "Minor Collector". The Florida Department of Transportation "Urban Boundary and Functional Classification Handbook" defines Minor Collector, as follows:

"Minor collectors provide traffic access and traffic circulation in lower density residential and commercial/industrial areas. They may penetrate residential neighborhoods for only a short distance and also channel traffic from local streets to/from the arterial system."

It is recommended that Map TRN 2.3 of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan be amended to re-classify Okeechobee Boulevard as a Minor Collector. The Minor Collector classification is more consistent with the character of Loxahatchee Groves, which is best defined as rural. This conclusion is justified based upon the U.S. Census definition of "Urban Area" (Ref: Federal Register Volume 76 No. 164 Part II Department of Commerce) as having a density of 1,000 or more persons per square mile, while the Loxahatchee Groves current density is 283 persons per square mile (3,424 – total population/12.1 sq. miles of land area).

The balance of Town roads are not currently assigned a specific classification in the Comprehensive Plan. However, for the purpose of prioritizing Town maintenance, repairs and capital improvements projects, a local road functional classification system has been proposed by the Town's Roadway Equestrian Trails and Greenways (RETAG) Advisory Committee for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan (Ref: Table 1).

Operational and maintenance responsibilities for state and county roadways falls under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Transportation and Palm Beach County, respectively, while operation, maintenance and improvements responsibilities for Town local roads can be assigned based upon the proposed road classification system presented in Table 1. The proposed functional classification of Town local roads, based upon this system, is illustrated on Map 1.

It is recommended that the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan be amended to incorporate Table 1 within Policy 2.7.1 and Map 1 as Map TRN 2.3.1.

B. Okeechobee Boulevard Data and Analysis Update

Okeechobee Boulevard is a two-lane undivided road with a multi-use path along the south side as it traverses the Town. To assess the existing capacity of Okeechobee Boulevard to serve existing Town land use, a level of service analysis update was performed. Average daily two-way (Ref: Table 2) and peak hour peak directional (Ref: Table 3) volumes were excerpted from Palm Beach County's Historic Traffic Growth Tables.

**TABLE 1
Local Road Functional Classification System**

Road Classification	Function	Design Objective	Funding
Service Level 1	Principal public access from Town properties to Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard	Improved or unimproved, as determined by the Town	Town gas tax, road & drainage assessments, and/or a cost-sharing assessment
Service Level 2	Public access from Town properties to Okeechobee Boulevard or Southern Boulevard	Improved or unimproved, as determined by the Town	Town gas tax and road & drainage assessments, and/or a cost-sharing assessment
Service Level 3	Connector public access between two or more Service Level 1 Roads	Improved or unimproved to be determined by Town and abutting owners	Town gas tax and road & drainage assessments, cost sharing assessment
Service Level 4	Non-through public direct access to Town properties	Improvement can be requested by abutting owners and approved by Town.	Town gas tax and road & drainage assessments, cost sharing assessment
Service Level 5	Non-through private direct access to Town properties	Improvements may be made by abutting owners	Owner's responsible for improvements and maintenance at Town standards.

Source: Town of Loxahatchee Groves Roadway Equestrian Trail and Greenways Advisory Committee; 2019.

**TABLE 2
Okeechobee Boulevard Historical Daily Traffic Counts**

Year	Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Count (Vehicles)	
	Seminole Pratt to 140th ("E" Road)	140th (E" Road) to Crestwood
2009	10,747	14,254
2010	8,931	15,734
2011	8,752	13,592
2012	NA	13,962
2013	NA	14,234
2014	8,715	14,993
2015	8,971	14,757
2016	10,706	14,973
2017	9,009	14,023
2018	8,671	13,366
2019	8,662	14,321

Source: Palm Beach County Historic Traffic Growth Table – 2019

**TABLE 3
Okeechobee Boulevard Historical Peak Traffic Counts**

Peak Hour	2014 Two-Way Peak-Hour Count (Vehicles)	
	Seminole Pratt to 140th ("E" Road)	140th (E" Road) to Crestwood
A.M.	819	1,247
P.M.	779	1,275
Peak Hour	2019 Two-Way Peak-Hour Count (Vehicles)	
	Seminole Pratt to 140th ("E" Road)	140th (E" Road) to Crestwood
A.M.	917	1,221
P.M.	754	1,263

Source: Palm Beach County Historic Traffic Growth Table – 2019

Per Policy 2.1.1 of the Transportation Element, the Town's traffic Level-of-Service (LOS) Standard is based upon two-way peak hour traffic volumes. Existing level of service is determined using Table 12.B.2.C-1 1A: LOS D Link Service Volumes; Article 12 of the Palm Beach County Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). Level-of-Service volumes for a two-lane undivided road are as follows:

- Average Daily Traffic (ADT) – 15,200 vehicles per day
- Two-Way Peak Hour – 1,480 vehicles
- Peak-Hour Directional: Class I - 880 vehicles; Class II – 810 vehicles

A comparison of existing two-way peak hour traffic volumes per Table 3 with the adopted standard (1,480 vehicles per hour) leads to the conclusion that Okeechobee Boulevard is currently operating below the LOS D Standard maximum volume.

In addition, Policy 2.1.1 of the Transportation Element states that, in order to maintain Okeechobee Boulevard as a two-lane section, the Town may pursue a CRALLS (Constrained Roadway Operating At A Lower Level of Service) designation by Palm Beach County. Consistent with this Town policy, Policy 1.2-f of the Transportation Element of the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan assigns the segment of Okeechobee Boulevard between Seminole-Pratt Whitney Road and "E" Road (140th Avenue) a CRALLS facility designation for the purpose of maintaining the segment at two-lanes during the Florida Research Park buildout extension from 2014 to 2021. The associated concurrency standard is a maximum peak hour directional traffic volume of 1,439 vehicles per hour.

In order to maintain its current status as a two-lane undivided road, Loxahatchee Groves has included Objective 1.1A in the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan:

1.1A Objective:

The Town shall protect its rural character by maintaining Okeechobee Boulevard as a two-lane section.

1.1A.1 Policy: In order to maintain the two-lane section, the Town shall support implementation of the following Okeechobee Boulevard improvements:

- a) Expansion to a two-lane divided median enhanced rural parkway with properly-spaced left-turn lanes.
- b) Traffic calming features, to include but not limited to roundabouts at the Letter Road intersections with Okeechobee Boulevard.
- c) Implementation and enforcement of reduced speed limits.

The Town has made considerable efforts to implement Policy 1.1A.1, as follows:

1. Rural Parkway: Rural Parkway is a concept established in the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan as a means to protect the rural character of roadways outside of the Urban/Suburban Tier. Per County Transportation Element Policy 1.4-p, Rural Parkways shall accommodate future transportation needs to ensure that the cross-section and alignment of the roads preserves the rural residential lifestyle, sense of place and quality of life of the adjacent areas.

The application of a Rural Parkway designation to the segment of Okeechobee Boulevard, as it passes through Loxahatchee Groves, is appropriate as the Town (density of 283 persons per sq. mile) meets the Census definition of a rural area. Further, the right-of-way width, at 100 feet, can accommodate the desired two-lane median enhanced cross-section, including a sidewalk and multi-use trail, with properly-spaced left turn lanes.

Consistent with the desired cross section, the Town has been awarded priority status in the Palm Beach County Transportation Planning Agency (TPA) List of Priority Projects for FY 2021 – 2025 to construct a fenced 6-foot enhanced multi-use trail, including crossings at letter roads, along the south side of Okeechobee Boulevard, from “A” Road to Folsom Road.

Funding assistance from the federal Transportation Alternative Program is proposed. The TPA expects all currently programmed Priority Projects to advance to implementation in upcoming Five-Year Work Programs unless otherwise indicated.

The Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan should be amended to include a policy requesting Palm Beach County to designate the section of Okeechobee Boulevard within Loxahatchee Groves a Rural Parkway.

2. Traffic Calming Features: Traffic calming features are a high Town priority along Okeechobee Boulevard, as two are currently in process. Engineering Condition of Approval #7 of the Minto West Traditional Development District (TTD) (County Resolution 2014-1646) states that a traffic signal, if warranted and/or required by the County Engineer, will be constructed at the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and “D” Road. Minto West, now the municipality of Westlake, recently stated that it will abide by the Condition of Approval.

The Town has also been awarded priority status in the Palm Beach County Transportation Planning Agency (TPA) List of Priority Projects for FY 2021 – 2025 to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Okeechobee Boulevard and Folsom Road. Funding assistance from the Federal Surface Transportation Program as a Local Initiatives Project is proposed. The TPA expects all currently programmed Priority Projects to advance to implementation in upcoming Five-Year Work Programs unless otherwise indicated.

Eliminating and/or reducing cut-through traffic from areas to the north and west of Loxahatchee Groves is concluded to be a traffic calming measure as well. In this regard, the Town has enacted several resolutions, summarized in Table 4, oriented to reducing future traffic volumes on Okeechobee Boulevard from the perspective of intergovernmental coordination.

Town efforts have been successful, as the Seminole Pratt-Whitney extension to Beeline Highway and State Road 7 extension to Northlake Boulevard are shown on the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan and the extension of Okeechobee Boulevard to Southern Boulevard is not. Further, E Road is not shown on the County Thoroughfare Right-of-Way Identification Map and Okeechobee Boulevard is not scheduled for improvements in the County's 5-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

3. Reduced Speed Limits: Loxahatchee Groves, pursuant to F.S. 316.89, enacted Resolution 2016-46 (June 21, 2016) which reduced the speed limit on Okeechobee Boulevard through the Town from 45 mph to 30 mph, including the placement of speed limit signs. Although lowering the speed limit cannot be directly correlated with a reduction in accidents it appears there may be some relationship, as indicated in Table 5.

**TABLE 4
Town Resolutions to Reduce Okeechobee Traffic Volumes**

Town Resolution #	Resolution Summary
2007-02	Resolution supporting the permanent removal of the "E" road, 140 th Avenue thoroughfare from the Palm Beach County Thoroughfare Right-of-Way Identification Map.
2007-06	Resolution requesting removal of that portion of Okeechobee Blvd. located east of Folsom road to west of "E" Road from the County's 5-Year road Program.
2007-09	Resolution designating that portion of Okeechobee Boulevard from "A" Road to 162 nd Drive North as a School Speed Zone, per F.S. 316.1895
2008-08	Resolution supporting permanent removal of the "E" Road, 140 th Avenue thoroughfare from the Palm Beach County Thoroughfare Right-of-Way Identification Map
2008-15	Resolution expressing its support for Palm Beach county's proposed extension of Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road north to State Road 710, the Beeline Highway
2009-22	Resolution urging Palm Beach County Metropolitan planning Organization to maintain the extension of Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road north to State road 710, the Beeline Highway within the 2035 Long Range Plan.
2009-23	Resolution opposing the extension of Okeechobee Boulevard to State road 80 (Southern Boulevard)
2010-13	Resolution urging the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and the School board of Palm Beach county to lower the speed limit of Seminole Pratt-Whitney road to 35 mph in the vicinity of Seminole Ridge High School and to designate the same portion of the Road to be a School Safety Zone.
2011-09	Resolution supporting the extension of State Road 7 from Okeechobee Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard and urging the Metropolitan Planning Organization to keep the project in the County's 5-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Source: Town of Loxahatchee Groves Clerk's Office

The Town should incorporate language within the Comprehensive Plan to support the above resolutions on a continuing basis.

TABLE 5
Okeechobee Boulevard Historical Traffic Accidents

Description	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Hit and Run	2	4	2	1	4	1		14
Hit and Run with Injuries		1	2			2		5
Motor Vehicle Crash	12	14	24	21	19	11	5	106
Motor Vehicle Crash Department Vehicle Involved	1		2			1		4
Motor Vehicle Crash Unknown Injuries	4	8	4		7	4		27
Motor Vehicle Crash with Injuries	5	10	7	8	4	3	2	39
Homicide Vehicle Homicide			1	1	1			3
Totals	24	37	42	31	35	22	7	198

Source: Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office; Central Records Division

C. Road Improvements Proximate to the Town

The following proximate road improvements projects have recently occurred or are programmed in the near future by the Palm Beach County Transportation Planning Agency:

1. Intersection improvements at Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road and Northlake Boulevard;
2. Expansion to 4-lanes of Northlake Boulevard from Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road east to Coconut Boulevard;
3. Expansion to 4-lanes of Seminole Pratt-Whitney Boulevard from Southern Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard;
4. Expansion of Southern Boulevard to 6-lanes from Lion Country Safari Boulevard to Crestwood Boulevard;
5. Installation of a fiber-optic cable along Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road from Southern Boulevard to Orange Avenue;
6. Addition of an Arterial Traffic Management System (i.e. real time traffic monitoring and traffic control management) on Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road, from Southern Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard;
7. Addition of turn lanes at the intersection of Southern Boulevard and Crestwood Boulevard; and
8. Addition of a bus shelter on Southern Boulevard west of Crestwood Boulevard.

In addition to the above major improvements, Okeechobee Boulevard through Loxahatchee Groves and Folsom Road have been recently resurfaced.

The above major improvements projects, in general, are being made to accommodate increases in traffic projected to be generated by the following recently approved, but not developed residential communities located west of Loxahatchee Groves:

1. Westlake – 3,791 units (Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road);
2. Avenier – 4,760 units (Northlake Boulevard);
3. Arden – 2,000 units (Southern Boulevard); and
4. Indian Trails – 3,897 units (Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road).

D. Summary of Proposed Transportation Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The following is a summary of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments generated by the transportation data and analysis update:

1. Revise Map TRN 2.3 of the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan to re-classify Okeechobee Boulevard as a Minor Collector.
2. Incorporate Table 1 within Policy 2.7.1 of the Transportation Element;
3. Incorporate Map 1 as Map TRN 2.3.1 within the Transportation Element.
4. Revise Future Land Use Element Policy 1.1A.1 to coordinate with Palm Beach County to designate the section of Okeechobee Boulevard within Loxahatchee Groves a Rural Parkway; and
5. Add Policy 2.2.5 to the Transportation Element promoting the following Town policies: (1) permanent removal of the “E” road, 140th Avenue thoroughfare from the Palm Beach County Thoroughfare Right-of-Way Identification Map; (2) annual exclusion of that portion of Okeechobee Boulevard from Folsom Road to west of “A” Road from consideration of expansion to four lanes from the County’s 5-Year Road Program; (3) support for the extension of Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road north to State Road 710, the Beeline Highway; (4) opposition to the extension of Okeechobee Boulevard to State Road 80 (Southern Boulevard); and (5) support of the extension of State Road 7 from Okeechobee Boulevard to Northlake Boulevard.

III. LOW IMPACT NON-RESIDENTIAL REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The objective of this analysis is to better define the meaning of the term Low Impact Non-Residential and its application to land use on the Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard corridors. Comprehensive Plan amendments to clarify the term are proposed, as well as a discussion of the application of pertinent ULDC sections.

Loxahatchee Groves has had three principal planning documents throughout its history, one of which was prepared prior to incorporation of the Town in 2006. Each of these plans uses “Low Impact Non-Residential” as an umbrella term to describe land uses other than residential.

None of the documents specifically defined what the term means, or how it is to be applied to the two major transportation corridors; Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard. As a result, the application of the term has been used both to support and oppose specific land use proposals.

A. Loxahatchee Groves Neighborhood Plan (Neighborhood Plan,

The Neighborhood Plan, based upon a series of public workshops, was prepared with the assistance of the Palm Beach County Planning Division in 1996. At that time, County staff assisted several unincorporated neighborhoods with a unique character in developing their own plans. These plans had no specific legal standing, but assisted the County Commission in making land use decisions in the targeted neighborhoods.

The overall goal of the Neighborhood Plan was to guide the future of the Loxahatchee Groves "neighborhood", including the maintenance of low impact non-residential uses on Okeechobee Boulevard and State Road 80 (Southern Boulevard). Key recommendations include the following:

1. Consideration of low impact non-residential uses per the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan and land development regulations;
2. The existing zoning district (i.e. AR - Agricultural Residential) should remain on Okeechobee Boulevard, except as otherwise directed by land use changes consistent with the Neighborhood Plan;
3. Home-based businesses should be emphasized; and
4. The following specific development standards are proposed:
 - The depth of non-residential uses shall be limited to 660 feet along Okeechobee Boulevard.
 - The rear fifty feet shall be landscaped and fenced or walled to provide a 100% opaque barrier.
 - Access to a site shall be limited to Okeechobee Boulevard or Southern Boulevard.
 - Architectural elevations shall be submitted at the time of a land use amendment indicating a single story rural architectural style consistent with the residential style of the community.

Until adoption of the Town's ULDC in November 2010, the Palm Beach County AR zoning district, in addition to residential and agriculture, allowed property owners to apply for approval of the following uses:

- Congregate Living Type I or II;
- Bed and Breakfast;
- Landscape service;
- Medical or dental office;
- Veterinarian Clinic;
- Cemetery;

- School;
- Agriculture light manufacturing, packing plant and storage;
- Farmer's market and furrier;
- Private kennel; and
- Solid waste transfer station.

Based upon the Neighborhood Plan, it is concluded that applications for approval of the above AR District uses could be filed with the County until November 2010.

In comparison, the AR District in the Town's Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) currently allows property owners to apply for approval of modular or factory-built home, essential services, and wireless communication facilities as a principal use, in addition to permitted single-family dwelling and agriculture.

Town AR District permitted accessory uses include accessory dwelling, grooms quarters, and private kennel or stable. In addition property owners may apply for approval of home office, residential enterprise, retail nursery, u-pick farm, and yard sale conditioned accessory uses.

In summary, prior to November 2010, the effective Palm Beach County AR District allowed the potential for a substantial number of "low impact non-residential" (i.e AR District) uses, per direction of the Neighborhood Plan, not currently allowed by the Town's AR District along Okeechobee Boulevard.

B. Strategic Vision Plan

The Strategic Vision Plan, prepared after incorporation by Town residents in 2008 was the precursor to the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The vision for the future of the community, as stated in the Strategic Plan is as follows:

"Loxahatchee Groves will protect its natural environment and rural character in the midst of an urbanizing region. The Town will continue to be a rural residential and agricultural community that has great respect for lifestyle choices balanced with historical community needs. This is reflected in a cost effective, minimal government structure that strives to protect the environment and our quality of traditional lifestyles."

Principal goals of the Plan include:

- Preserve historical features and rural nature;
- Preserve and enhance the natural environment;
- Deflect and minimize pass through traffic;
- Provide greater outdoor recreational opportunities; and

- Allow for limited non-residential development along Southern Boulevard.

Implementing strategies of the Plan include:

- Discourage cut-through traffic;
- Protect the natural eco-systems of the community; and
- Consider non-residential uses south of Collecting Canal.

Additional guidelines for future non-residential development decisions include:

- Ensure a buffer between non-residential uses and Citrus Road East;
- Minimize traffic impacts on interior roads created by non-residential development;
- Applicants for new commercial development will be encouraged to locate in areas south of the Citrus Road East buffer;
- Encourage riding trails along the southern side of Citrus Road East; and
- Rural Vista standards will establish the Town's commercial architectural guidelines.

Unlike the Neighborhood Plan, the Strategic Vision Plan directs limited non-residential uses to areas south of Collecting Canal and new commercial uses to areas south of Citrus Road East.

C. Loxahatchee Groves Comprehensive Plan

The Town's Comprehensive Plan was initially written in 2009 but, due to legal challenges, was not approved and adopted until 2011. Both the Neighborhood Plan and Strategic Vision Plan are referenced in the Comprehensive Plan as sources.

The Future Land Use Element is the principal component of the Comprehensive Plan that addresses land use; however, the term Low-Impact Non Residential is only referenced in the Introduction, in a summary of the Neighborhood Plan, and not in the Goals, Objectives and Policies section. Specifically, the following Neighborhood Plan goals are referenced:

- Preserve the natural environment and rural atmosphere for residents;
- Provide a balance between property owners' interests and land use;
- Encourage consistency of architectural design and use of native plant buffers;
- Promote responsible code enforcement and prevent obnoxious noise;
- Promote recreational opportunities;
- Settle land use conflicts; and
- Maintain low-impact non-residential and residential land uses on Okeechobee Boulevard and State Road 80 (Southern Boulevard).

Similar to the Neighborhood Plan, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes Low Impact Non-Residential uses on both Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard, However, specific Future Land Use Element Goals, Objectives and Policies per Table 6, direct Low Impact Non-Residential land use to the Southern Boulevard corridor.

D. Zoning District Intensity and Location Criteria

The Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) includes 6 zoning districts, each of which implements a Comprehensive Plan future land use category and regulates use, intensity and, in some cases, location of uses.

The following 4 zoning districts are the most pertinent to the issue of Low Impact Non-Residential uses: AR (Agricultural Residential); CL (Commercial Low); CL-O (Commercial Low Office); and INST (Institutional and Public Facilities). Development intensities (i.e. Floor-Area-Ratio. – F.A.R.) in each district are equivalent to the companion future land use category per Policy 1.1.2 of the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Ref: Future Land Use Element Policy 1.1.2 in Table 6). Permitted uses in each district are listed in Attachment 3.

The AR District encompasses all properties abutting Okeechobee Boulevard, with the exception of two commercial parcels (i.e. “Day” property and Red Barn) located at its intersection with Folsom Road and an institutional parcel (i.e. Loxahatchee Groves Elementary School) located at “A” Road..

The CL, CL-O and INST districts have specific standards which limit their locations to parcels with frontage on designated roadways. As initially adopted, CL, CL-O and INST zoning was limited to parcels with frontage on, and access to a collector road (Okeechobee Boulevard) or an arterial road (Southern Boulevard). However, the Town Council (Ordinance 2016-11) further limited potential locations of CL and CL-O parcels to those with frontage on, and access to an arterial road (Southern Boulevard).

E. Summary of Planning and Zoning Directives

Principal historical Town Low Impact Non-Residential planning and zoning directives, based upon the above summaries, include the following:

- Preserve the rural nature and natural environment of the Town;
- Maintain low impact non-residential uses on Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard;
- Low impact non-residential development shall be directed south of collecting Canal
- Commercial development shall be directed to Southern Boulevard, south of Citrus Road East;

TABLE 6
Future Land Use Element Non-Residential Land Use Directives

Goal	Objective	Policy Statement
<p>Future Land Use Goal 1: Loxahatchee Groves will continue to protect its natural environment and character in the midst of an urbanizing region. The Town will Continue to be a rural residential and agricultural community that has a great respect for lifestyle choices balanced with historical community needs.</p>	<p>1.1: Designate future land uses with appropriate uses, densities and intensities that will protect residential and agricultural land uses and encourage limited economic development.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Land use shall be determined by a Future Land Use Map</p>
		<p>1.1.2 Regulate density and intensity of land uses as noted in Table 1-8 (NOTE: RR 5 – Non-residential uses only - F.A.R. = 0.2; CL – F.A.R. = 0.1, CL-O F.A.R. = 0.2; INST – F.A.R. = 0.1.</p>
		<p>1.1.4: Land development regulations will, at a minimum:</p> <p>h) Establish codes to allow diverse low impact home-based businesses.</p> <p>i) Establish codes to regulate uses that create large scale places of assembly.</p> <p>j) Buffer residential uses from non-residential uses using mechanisms to promote and enhance the rural natural environment.</p>
		<p>1.1.8 The Town shall continue to maintain the rural zoning regulations for areas designated Rural Residential in order to protect and preserve the rural communities of present and future residents of these areas. The regulations shall, at a minimum:</p> <p>5. Maintain specific regulations to restrict the types of non-residential and nonagricultural uses allowed and promote the rural character through design.</p>

TABLE 6 (continued)

Goal	Objective	Policy Statement
Future Land Use Goal 1 (continued)	Objective 1.1 (continued)	<p>6. Allow home occupation uses that will not degrade the rural character of the area.</p> <p>8. Include provisions that: encourage maximizing the preservation of open space and protection of native vegetation and tree canopy in front, rear, and side yards; preserve environmental systems; protect wildlife; and, retain the rural character.</p>
	1.2: Support development of rural-style commercial center along the Southern Boulevard corridor.	<p>1.2.1 Limit new commercial development to areas south of East Citrus Road border to border.</p> <p>1.2.2 Examine a special taxing district for non-residential uses south East Citrus Road border to border by December 2010.</p> <p>1.2.3 Endorse a substantial equestrian facility along the Southern Boulevard Corridor.</p> <p>1.2.4: Consider extension of Tangerine Drive from the equivalent of 161st Terrace to "E" Road.</p>
	1.3 Strive to encourage a rural community design and look.	1.3.1 The Town shall adopt an ordinance for non-residential development that reflects and updates the Rural Vista Guidelines by January 2010.
	1.12 The Town shall consider changes to the future land use plan based upon energy-efficient land use patterns and discouragement of sprawl accounting for existing and future energy electric power generation and transmission systems.	1.12.3 The Town shall encourage development of a rural-style commercial center along the Southern Boulevard Corridor to provide a center of accessible shopping, recreation, and employment opportunities for Loxahatchee Groves' residents.
		1.12.4 The Town shall continue to allow home based businesses to the extent that impacts are compatible with an agricultural/residential community.

- The existing AR District is to remain on properties abutting Okeechobee Boulevard;
- Emphasize home-based businesses;
- Use maximum depth, landscaping and buffer criteria for non-residential uses;
- Discourage and minimize cut-through and through traffic;
- Create and use a consistent architectural theme (i.e. Rural Vista Guidelines).
- Implement a Rural Parkway concept on Okeechobee Boulevard;
- Settle land use conflicts;
- Commercial zoning is currently permitted on properties abutting Southern boulevard, but not on Okeechobee Boulevard.

In order to specifically address the unique character of the Okeechobee Boulevard corridor where Low Impact Non-Residential use is promoted by Town planning documents while commercial zoning is not permitted by code, it is recommended that a land use overlay be created. An overlay will provide the Town with a planning tool to specifically address this area of concern. Special provisions, including the desired character, uses, development intensity, and aesthetics within the overlay can be applied in addition to the base requirements of the underlying zoning district which should remain Agricultural Residential (AR). The areal scope of the recommended Okeechobee Land Use Overlay is presented on Map 2.

The results of the Town Visioning Session, FDEO Funded Workshop and FDEO Funded Online Survey, discussed in Section IV, can be used to differentiate the application of term Low Impact Non-Residential as it applies to Southern Boulevard versus Okeechobee Boulevard in terms of character, uses, development intensity and aesthetics.

F. Town Development Approvals Since Incorporation

A review of Loxahatchee Groves files resulted in an inventory of 16 properties (i.e. one or more PCNs each) that have received at least one Town development approval following incorporation in 2006. The following categories of approval are included: Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map amendments; Site Plan approvals and amendments; Plat approvals; Variance approvals; and miscellaneous (Restrictive Covenant, Conservation Easement, and Annexation) approvals.

The data base will be used to update and maintain GIS versions of the Town's Future Land Use and Zoning Maps, as well as a data file documenting all approvals. The maps and the associated data base, created by work completed in Deliverable 1 of the FDEO Grant, will be continually updated to maintain the current status of Town development approvals.

1. Okeechobee Boulevard Approvals

The locations of Town issued development approvals along Okeechobee Boulevard are summarized in Table 7 and illustrated on Map 3. The following seven properties received Town-issued approvals: Planet Kidz day care; Big Dog Ranch animal rescue; Community of Hope religious institution Seventh Day Adventist Church religious institution; Valley Crest (Briteworks) landscape service; First Holiness Church religious institution; and "Day Property" commercial facility.



Town of Loxahatchee Groves Okeechobee Blvd Corridor Rural Overlay



0 2,000 Feet

February 2020

MAP 2
Proposed Okeechobee Boulevard Overlay

Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Boundary
- Okeechobee Blvd Rural Overlay (71)
- Roadway



TABLE 7
Okeechobee Boulevard Properties with a Town Development Approval

Map 2 No.	Project Name	Approval Type	Project Description
1	Planet Kidz	Class A Conditional Use	Day Care and Church buildings at an F.A.R. of
2	Big Dog Ranch	Conditional Use and Site Plan	Intake, Veterinary, Supervised Dog Area, Caretaker, Education Center, and Storage buildings at an F.A.R of 0.045
3	Community of Hope Church	Class A Conditional Use	Multi-purpose, Administration and Storage at an F.A.R of 0.064
4	Seventh Day Adventist Church	Site Plan	Fellowship Hall and Worship Center at an F.A.R. of 0.07
5	Valley Crest (Briteworks)	Site Plan	Landscape services use consisting of office, maintenance and storage buildings, fuel pump, a vegetative waste storage area, and vehicle parking.
6	First Holiness Church	Site Plan	
7	Day Property	Land Use, Zoning, and Site Plan	30,000 sq. ft. of retail, restaurant, and office uses at an F.A.R of 0.074.

2. Southern Boulevard Approvals

The locations of Town issued development approvals along Southern Boulevard are summarized in Table 8 illustrated on Map 4. The following nine properties received Town-issued approvals: Palm Beach State College; Loxahatchee Groves Commons; Groves Town Center; Morello Property; MM1 Property; Ayesh Property; Palms West Plaza; Valencia Village; and Southern Crossing. With the exception of Palm Beach State College (i.e. Rural Residential 5 Special Policy) and Groves town Center (i.e. Multiple Land Use), each approval is for a commercial use.

3. Potential Future Land Use Map Corrective Actions

Both the Day Property and Big Dog Ranch on Okeechobee Boulevard were approved consistent with, or assigned a Town Future Land Use category and a zoning district per the ULDC. No additional amendment actions are required. Planet Kidz, Valley Crest, and the three religious institutions were approved by the Town, prior to the 2010 adoption of the ULDC, under the jurisdiction of the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan and LDRs. Assignment of the appropriate Institutional Future Land Use category and zoning district can occur as a result of Town and/or property owner-initiated amendments. A decision as to which, or alternative manner of gaining consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs can be made by the Town Council.

All of the Southern Boulevard approvals were approved consistent with, or assigned a Town Future Land Use category and zoning district per the ULDC. No additional amendment actions are required.



February 2020

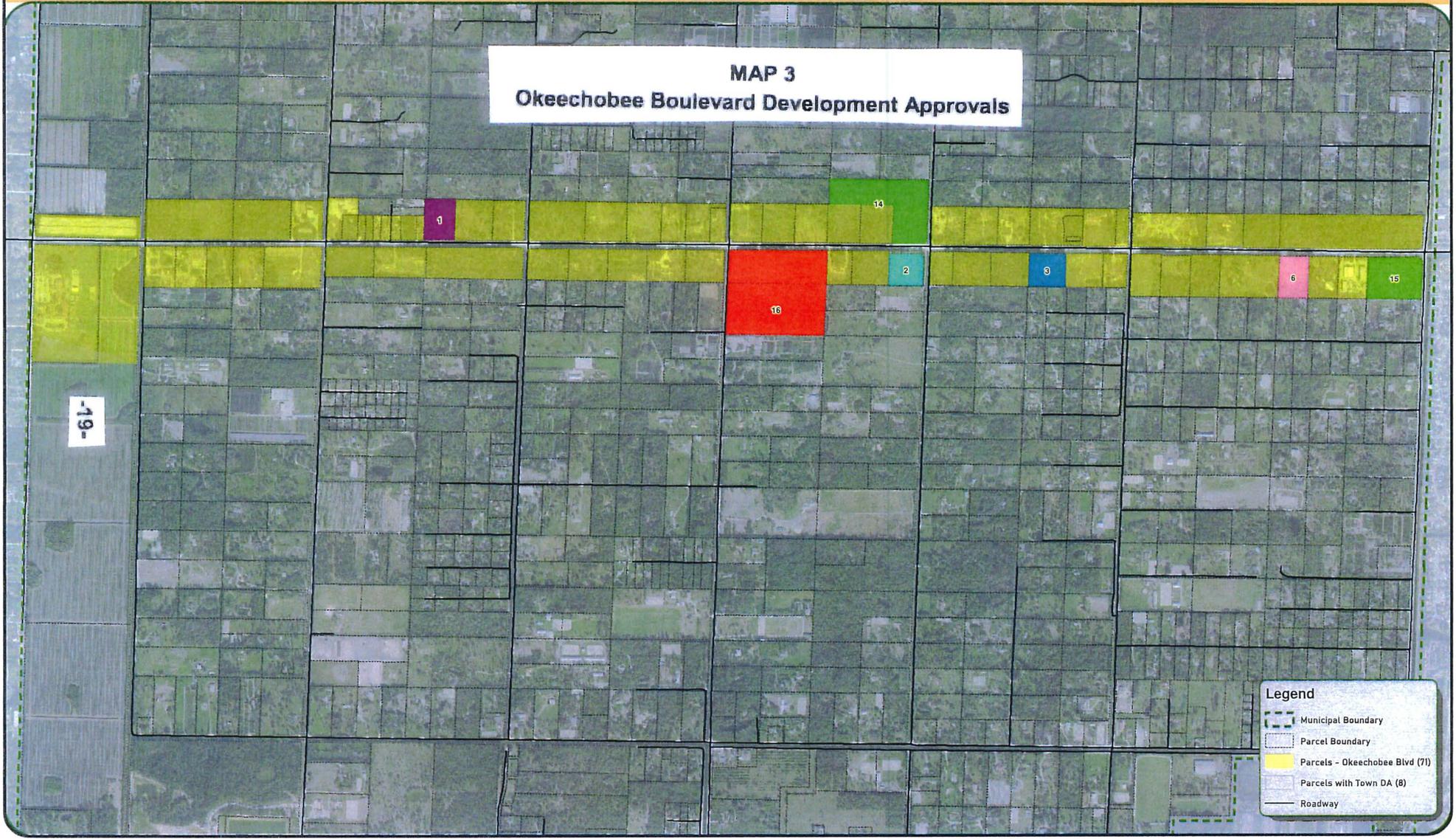
Town of Loxahatchee Groves Town Parcels Along Okeechobee Blvd With Town-Issued Development Approvals (DA's)



0 1,000 Feet



MAP 3
Okeechobee Boulevard Development Approvals



Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Boundary
- Parcels - Okeechobee Blvd (71)
- Parcels with Town DA (8)
- Roadway

TABLE 8
Southern Boulevard Properties with a Town Development Approval

Map 3 No.	Project Name	Approval Type	Project Description
1	Palm Beach State College	Future Land Use Element Text Amendment and Master Site Development Plan	Development governed by SREF Rule 6A-2.0010, the Florida Building and Fire Codes, South Florida Water Management District Rules, and Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District. F.A.R. not limited.
2	Loxahatchee Groves Commons	Future Land Use, Planned Unit Development and Site Plan	94,655 sq. ft. shopping center at an F.A.R of 0.10
3	Groves Town Center	Future Land Use, Planned Unit Development and Site Plan	Mixed-Use development consisting of 103,000 sq. ft. of retail and 44,000 sq. ft. of office space and a 128 bed assisted living facility. No specific F.A.R. limits
4	Morello Property	Rezoning to Commercial Low	Currently Vacant. F.A.R. limited to 0.10 by the zoning district.
5	MM1 Property	Rezoning to Commercial Low	Currently Vacant. F.A.R. limited to 0.10 by the zoning district.
6	Ayesh Property	Rezoning to Commercial Low	Currently Vacant. F.A.R. limited to 0.10 by the zoning district.
7	Palms West Plaza	Rezoning to Commercial Low	Site Plan previously approved by Palm Beach County for shopping center and Post Office uses at an F.A.R. of 0.167
8	Valencia Village commercial (Drysdale Property)	Future Land Use, Rezoning to Commercial Low and Site Plan	Approved 28,532 sq. ft. commercial center at an F.A.R. of 0.10.
9	Southern Crossing	Rezoning Multiple Use Planned Development (PBC designation)	Approved 37,408 sq. ft. professional office and bank center at an F.A.R. of 0.094

G. Non-Conforming Uses

Based upon an inventory of Use Codes assigned by the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser along the Okeechobee Boulevard corridor supplemented by a review of Business Tax Receipts (BTRs), aerial photographs and field research, there are 8 - 10 properties that may contain a use inconsistent with those permitted in the assigned Agricultural Residential (AR) zoning district. Non-conforming uses have not been identified along the Southern Boulevard corridor.

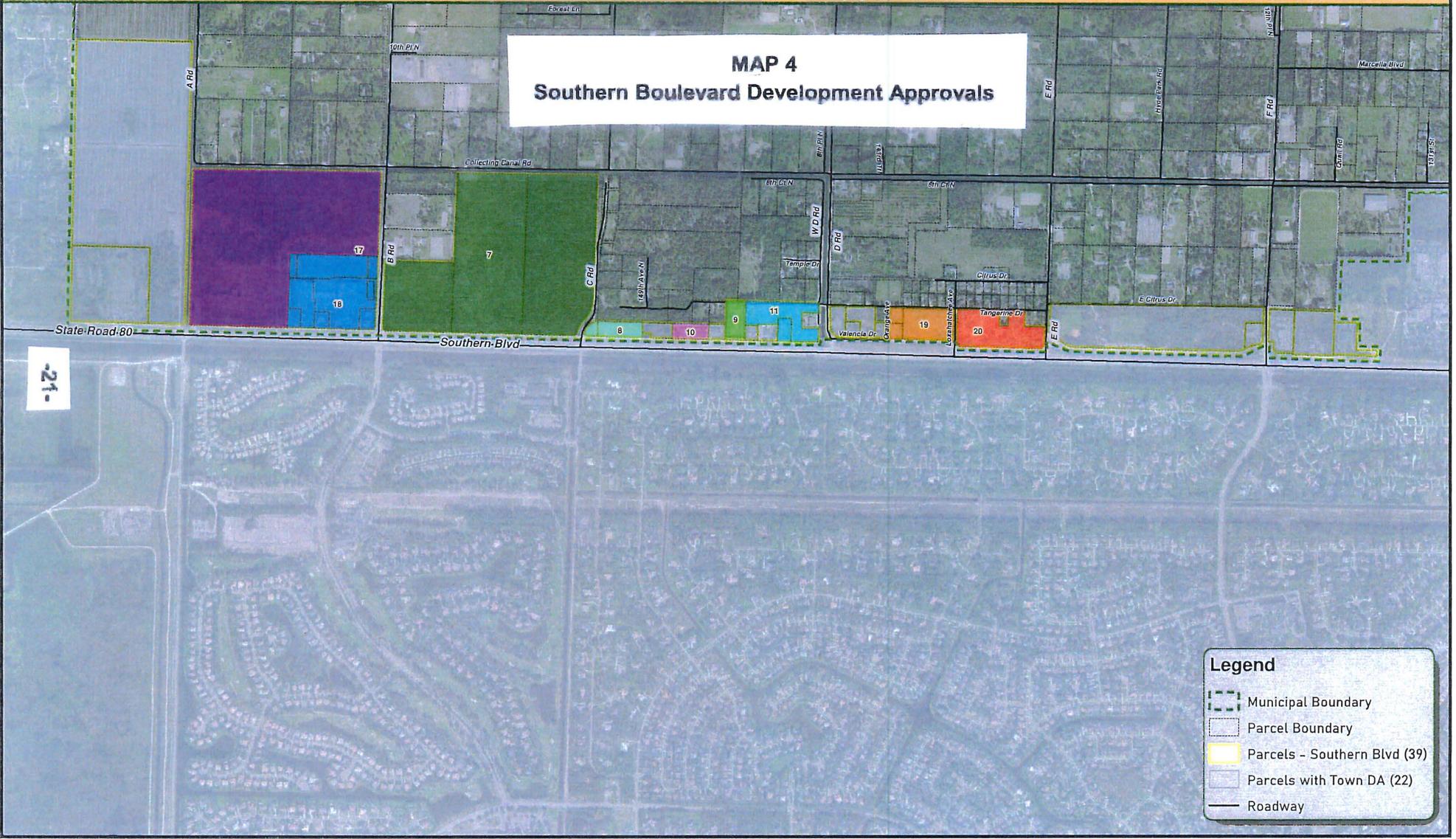


February 2020

Town of Loxahatchee Groves
 Town Parcels Along Southern Blvd
 With Town-Issued Development Approvals (DA's)



MAP 4
Southern Boulevard Development Approvals



Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Boundary
- Parcels - Southern Blvd (39)
- Parcels with Town DA (22)
- Roadway

No related Comprehensive Plan amendments are proposed at this time. However, it is recommended that additional confirmation activities be performed and the following ULDC-based vehicles be used to address each verified occurrence, as appropriate: Code enforcement; approval as a legal Non-Conforming Use, Residential Enterprise, or Historical Legacy use; and/or ULDC amendment.

IV. TOWN VISIONING PROCESS

In 2019, the Town Council determined that, before any significant changes are made to the ULDC, additional community input was necessary regarding a vision for the future, infrastructure maintenance, and development on Okeechobee Boulevard.

The project was initiated through a “strengths-weakness-opportunities-threats (SWOT) survey completed by participants at a Town Visioning Session. Additional surveys and a visioning workshop were developed using FDEO grant funds to supplement the Visioning Session and provide additional opportunities for public input.

A. Town Visioning Session

The Town visioning process was initiated by a public session held on September 28, 2019, with as many as 200 participants in attendance at various times throughout the day. The initial session, although part of the Town’s visioning process, was not funded by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FEDO) Community Planning Technical Assistance Planning Grant.

Residents worked in small groups to establish a local road classification system, identify types of appropriate commercial development for Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard, and define “big ideas” that could be transformational for the Town. The Council then held a discussion of their priorities. Notes from the Visioning Session (Ref: Attachment 4) are summarized below.

1. Road Grid: Discussion groups reviewed a local road classification map proposed by the Town’s Roadway Equestrian Trails and Greenways (RETAG) Advisory Committee (Ref: Map 1). There was a general consensus on the part of the groups that the proposed map was appropriate and complete, with most of the supplemental comments suggesting that the Town’s roadway plan anticipate that: (1) different roads may need to be maintained at different levels; (2) some roads may need to be paved that are currently unpaved, and (3) language used to describe local roads should be carefully considered, given that the technical definition of words like “collector road” have statewide significance.

2. Appropriate Commercial Development: Participant groups were asked to identify commercial uses that are appropriate and those that are inappropriate for location in Loxahatchee Groves. Further, groups were asked to differentiate their answers for a location on Okeechobee Boulevard versus a location on Southern Boulevard. Lists of appropriate and inappropriate uses for each corridor generated by workshop participants are included in Attachment 4. These lists were used as the basis to create the workshop questionnaire and online survey used in the FDEO Grant project.

4. Big Ideas: The following question was asked of workshop participants: “What else could we do to foster or protect the Town’s identity, or brand?”

Ideas for Okeechobee Boulevard were centered around the following themes:

- Emphasize the rural quality of the Town

- Promote agri-tourism and farm-to-table services
- Add equestrian amenities
- Strengthen the code
- Implement roundabouts on Okeechobee Boulevard
- Keep the Okeechobee Blvd. speed limit at 30 MPH
- Create a Town Center
- Protect tree canopy/stop clear cutting
- Implement walking/riding trails and connect multi-purpose trails
- Create overlays
- Push for commercial to be a planned in the manner of an olde time main street
- Protect/stop cut-through traffic
- Protect FAR and architectural design

Ideas for Southern Boulevard centered on prohibiting the following uses: Big box uses; gas stations; vehicle and car dealerships; adult entertainment; and large industrial complexes.

In addition, annexation of Palms West Medical Center and incorporation of a median in the Southern Boulevard expansion were mentioned.

B. FDEO Grant Funded Workshop Survey

A workshop to discuss the term “Low Impact Non-Residential” was held at Town Hall on February 29, 2020. The following items related to the workshop are included in Attachment 5:

- Notice sent to each property owner in Loxahatchee Groves.
- Workshop Agenda.
- Sign-in sheet; 28 persons attended
- PowerPoint presentation.
- Presentation notes that accompanied the PowerPoint.
- Copies of presentation boards.
- Results of the participant surveys and comment summaries; 18 surveys were completed.

Participant surveys, distributed at the Workshop, were structured to identify specific potential commercial uses that are preferred (i.e. “yes” response) and those that are not preferred (i.e. “no” response). Uses included in the survey were identified by participants at the September 28, 2019 Initial Visioning Session.

For convenience, uses were grouped into the following six categories: Food Service; Personal/Business Services; Cultural/Town Center; Specialty Commercial; Agricultural Related; and Accommodations. In addition, opportunities to state issues of concern for each category were provided,

Separate surveys were completed by attendees for Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard. Summaries of the results for each roadway are as follows:

1. Okeechobee Boulevard

Uses with a majority of “yes” responses include: Park/Public Events; Art Gallery/Town History; Saddle Shop/Boater/Leather Works; Botanical Gardens; Agri/Eco Tourism; and Farmer’s Market. Uses with 8 (44%) “yes” responses include: Coffee shop/Breakfast and Lunch; sit-down restaurant farm-to-table restaurant; specialty foods (ice cream, yogurt, bakery, butcher, etc.); multi-purpose arena; and antiques.

Issues of concern that were noted include: No uses that will increase traffic; farm-to-table uses promoting Loxahatchee Groves; keep 30 mph speed limit; maintenance and liability issues at Town-owned facilities; emergency shelter; and define Agri-tourism.

2. Southern Boulevard

Uses with a majority of “yes” responses include: Sit-down and farm-to-table restaurant; specialty foods (ice cream, yogurt, bakery, butcher); youth/recreation center; vet/pet grooming; self/RV/outdoor storage; auto repair; car wash; office space; movie/concerts/art shows; park/public events; multi-purpose arena; youth/recreation center; gun store/shooting range/driving range; go-kart track/arcade; and car wash/truck wash.

Issues of concern that were noted include: Restrict the size; use of buffers, pervious parking, and garden seating; all commercial south of Citrus Drive East; law enforcement; uses tend to increase law enforcement; some uses available in neighboring communities; no Town-owned uses; potential for increased tax revenue.

C. Counter Survey Supplement

The Counter Survey, a supplement to the Workshop Survey, was made available to Town residents and property owners who could not attend the February Workshop or complete the Online Survey below. A batch of 26 surveys (Ref: Attachment 6) was delivered by a single person. Surveys were only completed for Okeechobee Boulevard. In each case a “no” response was indicated for every use listed on the survey with the exception of 4 “yes” responses to Agri-tourism and Farmer’s Market uses.

D. FDEO Grant Funded Online Survey

A “Low Impact Non-Residential” *Survey Legend* online survey on the Town’s website was conducted from March 2 through March 17, 2020 to supplement the Workshop surveys.

Survey results are contained in Attachment 6. Approximately 400 residents/property owners on the Town’s local contact list were notified and directed to the online survey. There were approximately 80 responses.

The list of potential uses was identical to the list used in the Workshop survey. However, a different response format was used. Rather than the “yes”/“no” format used in the Workshop survey the following numerical system was used:

- 1 = “No, this use/business should not be on the corridor”;
- 2 = “Not great, but I could live with it”;
- 3 = “Maybe, if . . . ” (refer to “Other Uses and Comments” column);
- 4 = “It’s a pretty good idea”; or
- 5 = “Yes, this is a great business for the corridor”.

Similar to the Workshop survey, opportunities to state issues of concern for each category were provided. Separate surveys were completed by attendees for Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard. Online Survey respondents were more likely to support commercial uses, as indicated in the following summaries:

1. Okeechobee Boulevard

Uses with a majority of “5/6” responses include: Coffee Shop/Breakfast and Lunch; sit-down restaurant; farm-to-table restaurant; specialty foods; park/public events; multi-purpose arena; saddle shop/bootery/leather works; botanical gardens; agri/eco tourism; and farmer’s market;

Issues of concern that were noted include: Cannot support non-profits; no concerts/public events; local small businesses only; Town-oriented family evening/weekend events; honor the environment; retail/high traffic uses on Southern; uses to go on “Day” property; RV storage, but no live-in; limit traffic on Okeechobee Blvd.; no “specialty” or “shooting related” businesses; any family-friendly business consistent with Town character; auto repair, car/truck wash but with substantial buffer, agriculture equipment sales; hardware; Bedner’s-style farm market; agriculture/residential (zoning) to remain; no self-storage; high-end RV park; campground; assisted living facility.

2. Southern Boulevard

Uses with a majority of “5/6” responses include: Sit-down restaurant; farm-to-table restaurant; specialty foods; youth/recreation center; vet/pet grooming; self/RV/outdoor storage; auto repair shop; car/truck wash; office space; movies/concerts/art shows; multi-purpose arena; youth recreation center; gun store/shooting range/driving range; saddle shop/bootery/leather works; botanical gardens; agri/eco tourism; farmer’s market; senior living facility; hotel/bed and breakfast.

Issues of concern that were noted include: larger businesses, big chains O.K.; convenience food options; cut F.A.R. on all businesses; require wide buffers and light control outdoor activity stops at 10:30 p.m.; Town should not be a “drop-off” for teens and young adults; already have water park and go-kart facilities in the vicinity; feed and hardware stores; uses that increase crime not wanted.

V. LOW IMPACT NON-RESIDENTIAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

A. Basis for the Amendments

The following Town documents and events, summarized in this report, are used as the basis for: (1) clarification of the term Low Impact Non-Residential; and 2) recommended Comprehensive Plan amendments related to the term.

1. Town Planning Documents

The following Town documents were initially reviewed in order to extract an historical perspective of the term Low Impact Non-Residential: Loxahatchee Groves Neighborhood Plan (pre-incorporation); Strategic Vision Plan (post incorporation but prior to adoption of the Comprehensive Plan); and the Loxahatchee Groves Comprehensive Plan. Maintenance of the Town's rural character is stressed in each of the planning documents.

In addition, permitted uses, floor-area-ratio (F.A.R.) and location criteria of Town zoning districts were reviewed. The following planning and zoning policy directives can be used as an initial basis to define the term Low Impact Non-Residential use:

- Maintain low impact non-residential uses on Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard;
- Commercial development shall be directed to Southern Boulevard, south of Citrus Road East;
- Town non-residential zoning districts include the following: Commercial Low (CL); Commercial Low Office (CL-0) and Institutional and Public Facilities (INST). Current F.A.R.s of each district are as follows: CL – 0.10; CL-O – 0.20; and INST – 0.10.
- The existing AR District is to remain on properties abutting Okeechobee Boulevard;
- Emphasize home-based businesses;
- Use maximum depth, landscaping and buffer criteria for non-residential uses; and
- Discourage and minimize cut-through and through traffic.

2. Initial Town Visioning Session

Resident groups at the Initial Town Visioning Session on September 28, 2019 generated lists of favorable and unfavorable commercial uses, both in general and specifically for the Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard corridors. The lists were used as the basis to create the surveys used in the FDEO Grant Funded Workshop and Online Survey.

In addition, participants identified issues related to Low Impact Non-Residential use. Policy issues related to Okeechobee Boulevard were centered around the following themes:

- Promote agri-tourism and farm-to-table services;
- Create a Town Center;
- Create overlays;
- Protect/stop cut-through traffic; and
- Protect FAR and architectural design.

Policy issues related to Southern Boulevard centered on prohibiting the following uses: big box uses; gas stations; vehicle and car dealerships; adult entertainment; and large industrial complexes.

3. FDEO Grant Funded Workshop

A workshop to discuss the term Low Impact Non-Residential was held at Town Hall on February 29, 2020. Surveys, completed by attendees at the Workshop, were structured to identify preferred commercial uses along Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard. Preferred uses are summarized in Sections IV.B.1 and 2, above.

Policy issues of concern related to Low Impact Non-Residential uses on Okeechobee Boulevard that were noted by Workshop attendees include:

- Prohibit uses that will increase traffic;
- Permit farm-to-table uses promoting Loxahatchee Groves;
- Maintain the 30 mph speed limit on Okeechobee Boulevard; and
- Define Agri-tourism uses.

Noted policy issues of concern related Low Impact Non-Residential uses on Southern Boulevard include:

- Restrict the size of uses;
- Use buffers to protect adjacent residential areas;
- Allow pervious parking;
- Commercial uses should be located south of Citrus Drive East;
- Commercial uses tend to generate increased law enforcement activity; and
- Commercial has the potential to increase tax revenue.

4. FDEO Grant Funded Counter Survey Supplement

The Counter Survey Supplement offered property owners and residents that did not attend the Grant Funded Workshop an opportunity to respond to the survey. In total, 26 responses were submitted. Surveys were completed only for Okeechobee Boulevard. All surveys, with the exception of four, opposed all commercial development along Okeechobee Boulevard. The four, however, supported Agri-tourism and Farmer's Market uses and opposed all other uses.

5. FDEO Grant Funded Online Survey

Similar to the Grand Funded Workshop, surveys completed by Online Survey participants were structured to identify preferred commercial uses along Okeechobee Boulevard and Southern Boulevard. Preferred uses are summarized in Sections IV.C.1 and 2, above.

Policy issues of concern related to Low Impact Non-Residential uses on Okeechobee Boulevard that were noted by Survey participants include:

- Local small businesses only;
- Town-oriented family evening/weekend events ;
- Honor the environment;
- Commercial uses to go on "Day" property;

- Limit traffic on Okeechobee Blvd.;
- Allow family-friendly business consistent with Town character;
- Agriculture/residential (zoning) to remain.

Noted policy issues of concern related Low Impact Non-Residential uses on Southern Boulevard include:

- Larger businesses and big chains O.K.;
- Allow convenience food options;
- Cut F.A.R. on all businesses;
- Require wide buffers;
- Outdoor lighting activity stops at 10:30 p.m.;
- Town should not be a “drop-off” for teens and young adults; and
- Uses that increase crime are not wanted.

B. Proposed Amendments

1. Okeechobee Boulevard

The following are proposed Future Land Use Element Comprehensive Plan amendments based upon Town’s historical planning documents and the four visioning exercises:

(a) Incorporate Map 5 as Map #FLU-1.10.1 of the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan to define the extent of the Okeechobee Rural 5 Overlay (OR 5 Overlay).

(b) Add Objective 1.16 to read as follows:

Insure compatible, Low impact uses on properties with frontage on Okeechobee Boulevard by establishing and implementing the OR 5 Overlay as a means to control the allocation, location, scale and timing of development along the corridor.

(c) Add Policy 16.1 to read as follows:

The minimum parcel size of a development within the OR Overlay shall be 5 acres and comply with the land development regulations of the Town’s Agricultural Residential (AR) zoning district, unless specifically countermanded by the provisions of this Comprehensive Plan.

(d) Add Policy 1.16.2 to read as follows:

Low impact development within the OR 5 Overlay may occur only in accordance with designated uses within the following six categories:

- Residential and non-residential principal and accessory uses within the Town’s Agricultural Residential (AR) zoning district.
- Conditional Uses previously allowed in the AR zoning district prior to incorporation of the Town: bed and breakfast; landscape service; medical or dental office; farmer’s market; or furrier.

- Cottage Business Conditional Uses (Home Office or Residential Enterprise). Permitted businesses shall be defined by the Town Council and incorporated within the ULDC. Numbers of employees and/or customers for individual businesses shall be determined by the Town Council through the Category A Special Exception approval process.
- Low Impact Non-Residential Uses, including: saddle shop/leather works; Agri/Eco tourism, to be defined by the Town Council; coffee shop/breakfast and lunch; farm-to-table restaurant; specialty foods (ice cream, yogurt, bakery, butcher, etc.); and antiques.
- Historical Legacy Uses, as approved by the Town Council.
- Community Serving Uses: Town Center; multi-purpose arena; botanical gardens; and park/public events.

(e) Add Policy 1.16.3 to read as follows:

The Maximum Floor-Area-Ratio of a development within the OR Overlay, with the exception of residential and agriculture uses, shall not exceed 0.10.

(f) Add Policy 1.16.4 to read as follows:

The Town shall require a consistent architectural theme within the OR 5 Overlay.

(g) Add Policy 1.16.5 to read as follows:

The owners of non-conforming uses within the OR 5 Overlay shall meet with Town staff to establish a program to identify and rectify such non-conformities. The program shall be subject to a Category B Special Exception review and approval process.

2. Southern Boulevard

The following are proposed Future Land Use Element Comprehensive Plan amendments generated by the review of the Town's historical planning documents and the four visioning exercises summarized herein:

- (a) Amend Table 1-8 of the Future Land Use Element to: (1) increase the Intensity (Maximum Floor-Area-Ratio) of the Commercial Low Uses Land Use Category from 0.10 to 0.15; and (2) add a reference to Policy 1.2.6 which provides an F.A.R. exception for self-storage facilities..
- (b) Add Policy 1.2.5 to the Future Land Use Element to prohibit the following uses: additional big box; gas station; vehicle/car dealerships; and large industrial complexes.
- (c) Add Policy 1.2.6 to the Future Land Use Element to read as follows:
The maximum Floor-Area-Ratio of a self-storage facility may be increased above 0.15 provided that parking, loading, landscape, building height, setback and buffer requirements are satisfied,

C. The Next Step

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report, as well as the results of the surveys summarized above will be presented at a Town Council workshop where specific direction regarding Comprehensive Plan amendments and related programs will be discussed.