

# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL



2006 ANNUAL REPORT



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a busy year for the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) members and staff as evidenced in this year's report. This 2006 Annual SWFRPC Report shares highlights of the numerous services, programs, and activities undertaken by the Council and along with the residents and visitors of Southwest Florida.

Council members and staff have been working hard on behalf of all Southwest Floridians to provide local government with value in their membership and to create a sustainable Southwest Florida that we can all be proud of.

Over the past year it has been an honor to serve as Council Chair. I have worked closely with the Executive Committee, Executive Director, and Council to provide guidance and input so that we may carry out our monthly meeting responsibilities and overall mission of the Council – *work together across neighboring communities to consistently protect and improve the unique and relatively unspoiled character of the physical, economic, and social world we share for the benefit of our future generations.*

Especially important during 2006 was the Council's first-ever facilitated Retreat and our efforts to further a better understanding of the Council's Strategic Business Plan. The business planning process of the Council represents a proactive approach to addressing the changing nature of our fiscal and political circumstance. Due, in part, to this commitment it is my belief that in 2006 the entire organization and region worked together to achieve the mission which we are committed. This collaborative effort has resulted in a year of success.

I am proud of our many accomplishments, attention to member services and legislative advocacy on behalf of all Southwest Florida. As my time on the Executive Committee and as Chairman comes to an end, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and cooperation. I also wish to express my appreciation for the contributions made by Council members and their local jurisdictions; with their continued support the Council will actively pursue its objective to be the best.

***Jonathan Thaxton***  
2006 Governing Board Chair

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The communities of Southwest Florida are bound together by our shared history, economy, and environment. While each county and municipality within the region has special features that make it unique, the tremendous pace of growth throughout Southwest Florida is erasing old borders and bringing us all together to address our common interests.

At the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, we strive to help civic leaders preserve local independence and retain the key elements that give each community here its distinct character while we also facilitate intergovernmental cooperation to incorporate a broad, regional perspective on issues which transcend political boundaries.

Just as the sands along our beaches shift with each incoming wave, our region is constantly being modified. Every new resident and visitor who arrives in Southwest Florida requires both public and private services ranging from a roof under which to sleep and places to acquire goods to roads upon which they can travel. Coordinating the provision of these services is a huge task. It's our job, and our privilege, to bring together regional partners who identify priorities, develop public policy and implement collaborative strategies to preserve valued resources and ensure a good quality of life for all the citizens of Southwest Florida.

It has been an extremely satisfying year for me as Council Executive Director. We have heard a lot about regionalism over the past year. Regions are increasingly the dominant economic, environmental and social force in our lives; regions are the building blocks of the new global economy; issues such as water quality, housing, transportation have no regard for jurisdictional boundaries and continue to be addressed on a regional basis. One can state that regionalism is now embraced in all sectors- public, private and civic. As such, the challenges we face today require regional thinkers and regional problem solvers.

Since its inception, the Council has tried to create a culture that fosters regional initiatives for the common good of the region. This past year has been a productive one as we have worked to ensure that regionalism and collaborative government help build healthy regional communities.

Southwest Florida must continue to be pro-active in the management of its assets and resources to insure a sustainable future. Over the past year, the SWFRPC, with its partners, has been developing the necessary tools and programs to manage the growth challenges Southwest Florida faces in the near future. Working on the behalf of all Southwest Florida residents, visitors, businesses and local governments some of the most recent initiatives include the following highlights:

- ❖ Strategic Planning Council Retreat
- ❖ Regional Transportation Summit and planning
- ❖ Affordable Housing study and Housing Subcommittee activity
- ❖ Economic Analysis and further implementation of FIAM and REMI
- ❖ E-planning and public management surveys and communication
- ❖ Environmental conferences and CHNEP planning
- ❖ Hurricane and disaster planning
- ❖ Local Emergency and hazardous materials planning

We want to thank regional partners and community stakeholders who have contributed to the success of the Council. My sincere gratitude to each of you for everything you do to make Southwest Florida a better place. I sincerely hope that the following report clearly describes the Council as a valuable organization to the region.

We plan to work just as hard for you in 2007 as we re-focus and re-energize the Council. The Council board and staff, with substantial input from public and private stakeholders, will complete a comprehensive strategic plan that will be implemented in October 2008 and undertake regional growth visions that will provide a critical planning context for the future. You can be assured that our commitment to regional governance through public-private partnership will continue to strengthen throughout the upcoming year.

**David Burr**  
Executive Director

# THE VALUE OF SWFRPC MEMBERSHIP

I became a member of the Charlotte County School Board back in 2000. With 12 children attending school, I wanted to take an active interest in what they were doing. When school districts were asked to participate in Regional Planning Councils in 2005, it was a chance for me personally to broaden my horizons and for the school districts to play a key role in school concurrency and regional planning. I knew it was important for school districts to have a voice in this arena.

Participation in regional planning has helped me grow and expand my influence as a local official. It has enabled me to positively impact the region and feel a real sense of accomplishment in doing so. And best of all, it has given me the opportunity to develop regional friendships and to learn from my peers.

As with most everything we do in our lives and our careers, what you get out of something is a direct result of what you put into it. That is definitely the case with SWFRPC membership. The more you are involved in SWFRPC, the more you will get out of it—personally and professionally. I have learned so much about the issues that effect our communities through the topics discussed and presentations at meetings. Those who participate have a say in the vision for the Region and what Southwest Florida will look like in the future.

How can you be involved in the SWFRPC? You can represent your community as a member or gubernatorial appointee of the Council, you can serve on an advisory working group of the Council, and you can ultimately be elected to the Executive Committee. There are numerous leadership opportunities on many of the Council Subcommittees and Working Groups. All of the SWFRPC meetings are open to the public and provide great networking opportunities for both public and private sector participants. It is also very helpful to learn what your peers are doing. They are probably experiencing many of the same issues you are dealing with, too. There's special comfort in going through this together and in solving problems with a group of concerned, educated and visionary citizens. Often there are viable solutions to take home with you.

If you or your local government needs assistance on a topic, the SWFRPC staff is always ready and willing to help. It only takes a simple phone call or email to begin contact.

Personally, I am proud to be a SWFRPC member and I am proud of the commitment of SWFRPC members to enhance the quality of life for all Southwest Florida residents and visitors.

## ***Andrea Messina***

Charlotte County School Board, Chairwoman  
SWFRPC, 2007 Vice Chairman



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## OUR MISSION:

PLAN: The Southwest Florida RPC performs long range planning, tactical planning and transportation planning for the entire region.

PROTECT: The Southwest Florida RPC's mission is to protect and improve the Region's physical, economic and social environment.

IMPROVE: The Southwest Florida RPC's goal is to continually improve the Region as growth occurs physically, economically and socially.

## THE COUNCIL

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was created by an interlocal agreement between Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties in 1973. The RPC acts as a regional information clearinghouse, conducts research to develop and maintain area wide goals, objectives, and policies, and assists in implementing a number of local, state, and federal programs. The Council serves as an advocate for the Region with State and Federal agencies, including the Legislature and Congress.

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council is a locally formed regional planning agency serving six counties: Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota. The agency is directed by a thirty-four member Council composed of local elected officials and gubernatorial appointees. Five individuals who represent State interests provide additional assistance through service as Ex-Officio members of the Council.

The Council is staffed by more than twenty professionals with expertise in planning, law, emergency management, public administration, environmental science, business administration and information technology.

### The Council Meets Monthly To:

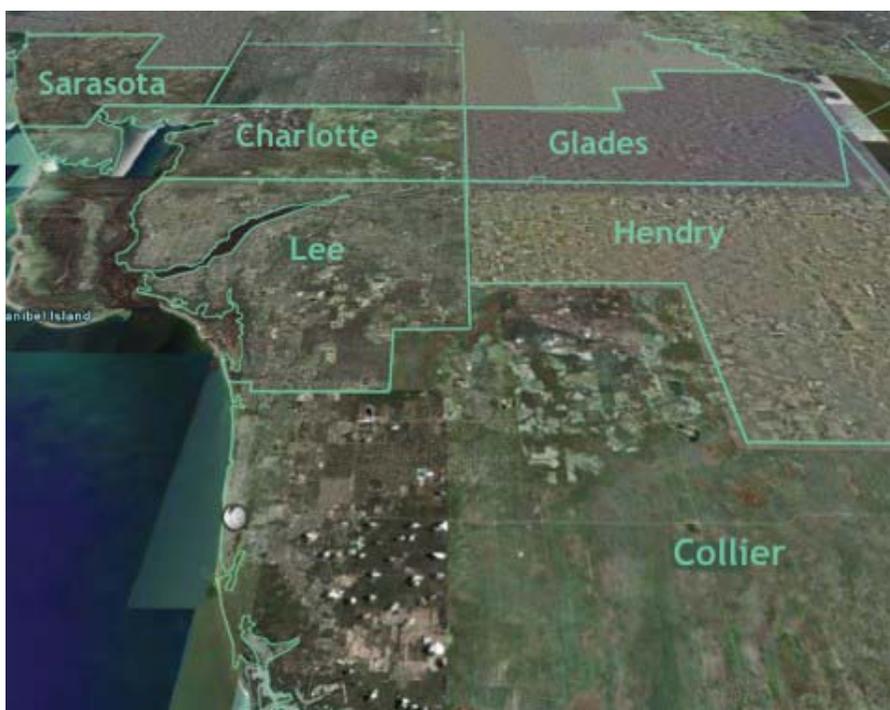
- ❖ develop agreement on a common vision for the region and assess the progress we are making toward reaching that vision,
- ❖ deliberate on proposed projects deemed developments of regional impact and on proposed changes to local comprehensive plans,
- ❖ review federal projects, programs and documents of statewide significance that may affect the region,
- ❖ collaborate on projects and programs that benefit multiple jurisdictions, and
- ❖ discuss issues that emerge as matters of regional interest, for example, infrastructure needs and proposed growth management initiatives.

## THE REGION

Southwest Florida serves Regional District 9 and consists of six counties with a total area (land and water) of 6,663 square miles and a land area of 5,986 square miles. Four of the counties border the Gulf of Mexico and comprise a large portion of the region's urban area. Two counties are bounded by Lake Okeechobee, the second largest freshwater lake in the United States.

The population of Southwest Florida is dominated by retirees. People age 65 and older comprise 27% of the total population, and retirement incomes are the greatest single component of the region's economic base. Tourism is the next largest component of the economy – the population swells by as much as 30% each winter! Agriculture is the third largest economic component, thanks to a climate that allows for three growing seasons (winter, spring and fall) each year. Concurrent with the rise in population and its growing popularity as a tourist destination, the region's rural (non-urban) counties have emerged as a principal growth center for the State's sizeable agricultural community.

Natural resources have had a major influence on the area's economic development and growth. The most important of these resources are the region's location and climate, land and water resources, vegetation and wildlife, and inland and tidal wetlands. These resources have attracted large numbers of retirees and tourists to the region, thereby fueling the area's service, trade, and construction industries.



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY**  
 Area: 690 Square Miles  
 Population: 160,315\*  
 County Seat: Punta Gorda  
 Incorporated Communities: Punta Gorda  
 Established: 1921

**COLLIER COUNTY**  
 Area: 1,894 Square Miles  
 Population: 326,658\*  
 County Seat: East Naples  
 Incorporated Communities: Everglades City, Marco and Naples  
 Established: 1921

**GLADES COUNTY**  
 Area: 763 Square Miles  
 Population: 10,796\*  
 County Seat: Moore Haven  
 Incorporated Communities: Moore Haven  
 Established: 1921

**HENDRY COUNTY**  
 Area: 1,163 Square Miles  
 Population: 38,678\*  
 County Seat: LaBelle  
 Incorporated Communities: Clewiston and LaBelle  
 Established: 1921

**LEE COUNTY**  
 Area: 803 Square Miles  
 Population: 585,608\*  
 County Seat: Fort Myers  
 Incorporated Communities: Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel  
 Established: 1887

**SARASOTA COUNTY**  
 Area: 573 Square Miles  
 Population: 379,386\*  
 County Seat: Sarasota  
 Incorporated Communities: Longboat Key, North Port, Sarasota and Venice  
 Established: 1921

\* From Table 1 of the Florida Estimates of Population: April 1, 2006, produced by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida.

## STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

The Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) for Southwest Florida provides a long range guide for the physical, economic and social development of the region. The overall purpose of the SRPP is to steer the region toward a more healthy and sustainable future. The SRPP is not merely a plan for the Council, it is a plan for the region as a whole and all those who are active participants in shaping its future.

The Florida Legislature mandates that the SRPP for each region of the State contains the following five elements:

1. Natural Resources
2. Economic Development
3. Regional Transportation
4. Affordable Housing
5. Emergency Preparedness

Each element of the SRPP contains Strategic Issue Areas - issues that will have the most significant impact on the region and for which there are windows of opportunity for actions to create desirable change. These issues are generally multi-jurisdictional and crossprogrammatic in nature.

Each Strategic Issue Area contains a Trends and Conditions Statement which describes past and present conditions with respect to the issues and forecasts future activities. Each Strategic Issue Area also contains one or more goals. Every goal is supported by policies, which are the ways in which programs and activities are conducted to achieve identified goals, and each policy is supported by an implementation strategy. The strategies are not intended to be prescriptive nor exhaustive, rather a listing of alternative actions for enacting the policy. Finally, each goal area includes an indicator for evaluating attainment.

In addition to being used as a guide for shaping the region's future, the SRPP is used by the Council as a framework to link planning and implementation activities of various entities; to review local comprehensive plans and large scale developments; to facilitate the resolution of disputes in planning and growth management issues; and as a policy document to guide all of the Council's activities.

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council plays an important role in planning for growth management, community development, and quality-of-life issues throughout our region. We provide technical assistance to local governments, coordinate the review of Developments of Regional Impact, review local plans and plan amendments for consistency with our Strategic Regional Policy Plan and facilitate intergovernmental coordination and cooperation. As the convener of the region, the Council helps articulate multijurisdictional issues that need resolution, and we champion the unique themes of our region with state agencies and the Legislature.

To handle the growth and population of our region, Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.) requires all local governments to provide a Comprehensive Plan to address the growth issues each of those governments face. In order to keep these plans current with the needs of local populations, Rules 9J-5 and 9J-11 of the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) provide the framework for local governments to amend their Comprehensive Plans.

In order to change a Comprehensive Plan, a detailed three step process occurs from the initial request to final approval. To summarize the process, first there is an initial request from a public or private entity which is submitted to the local government who then passes the request to our staff to review. If the request is consistent with the SRPP, the Council then provides comments which are then sent to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Next, the DCA issues an Objections, Recommendations and Comments (ORC) report that identifies areas of the proposed plan or amendment. If the local government chooses to address the DCA comments, they may elect to formally adopt the amendment. Finally, the Council reviews the adopted amendment to assure that any changes made to the proposed amendment either address or does not impact the prior comments of the Council. If the amendment is consistent with the SRPP, it becomes final and if no legal challenge is submitted, it becomes part of the local government's Comprehensive Plan for the future.

During the past year, Council staff members reviewed and provided technical input on 18 proposed small-scale amendments and 21 proposed large scale amendments to local Comprehensive Plans. Council staff members also provided technical assistance to 4 communities in the region — LaBelle, More Haven, North Port and Clewiston. The Council worked with each of these local governments to address recommendations made by the DCA regarding proposed amendments to their Comprehensive Plans.



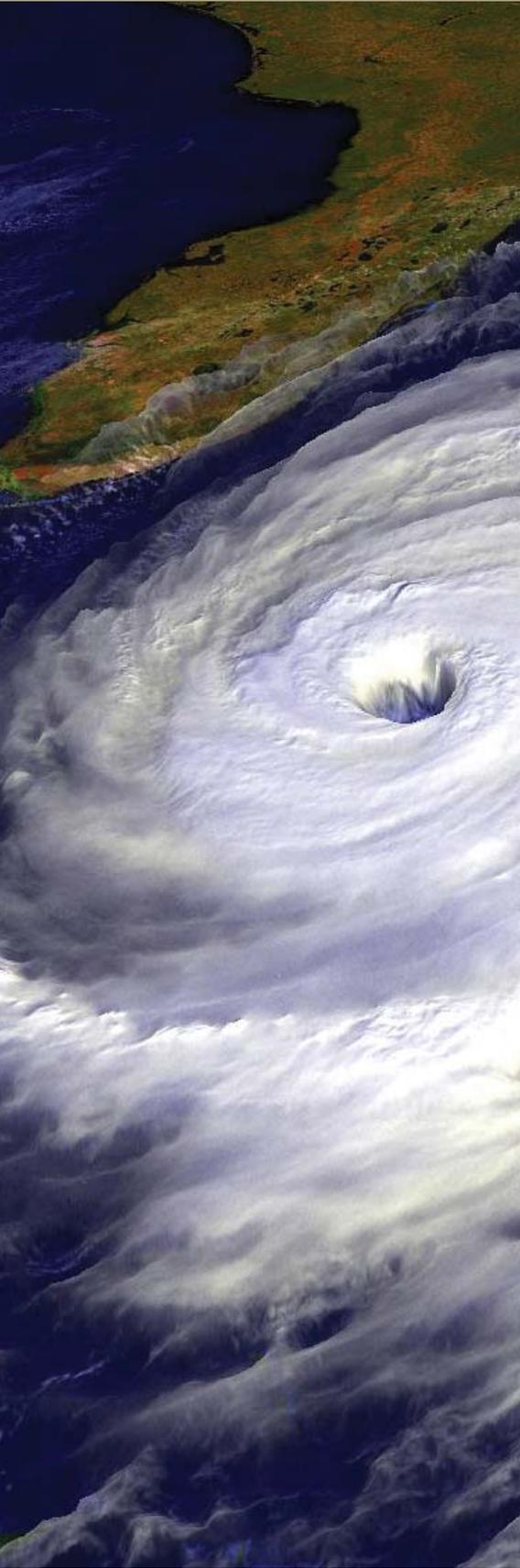
## HURRICANES

### *Hurricane Evacuation Study Update*

It has been five years and several direct landfalling hurricanes later in the region since the last Regional Hurricane Evacuation Study was updated in 2001. Due to the four major hurricanes that hit Florida in 2004 a significant amount of Federal Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant money has become available to the State of Florida's Division of Emergency Management through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

For the first time since the first hurricane evacuation study in the country was completed by the SWFRPC for Lee County in 1977, the State is funding the Florida Regional Planning Councils concurrently to update or complete for the first time regional hurricane evacuation studies. Part of this funding will be updating all the Sea Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricane (SLOSH) Models covering the State. New elevation data for these models will also be collected using Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR). The Regional Planning Council will be contracted to complete 11 X 17 inch hurricane storm tide atlases for the coastal counties and inland counties adjacent to Lake Okeechobee and to update the hurricane evacuation study based on the new storm tide maps. Staff will be working with all the counties and cities to accomplish this task within the next two years.

Getting all the regional planning councils to work on this task has been a goal of council staff, since we began hurricane evacuation planning. Staff believed if these studies were to be used for preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation planning it would have to be completed by regional planning staff since hurricanes have regional impacts not just local.



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND REVIEW

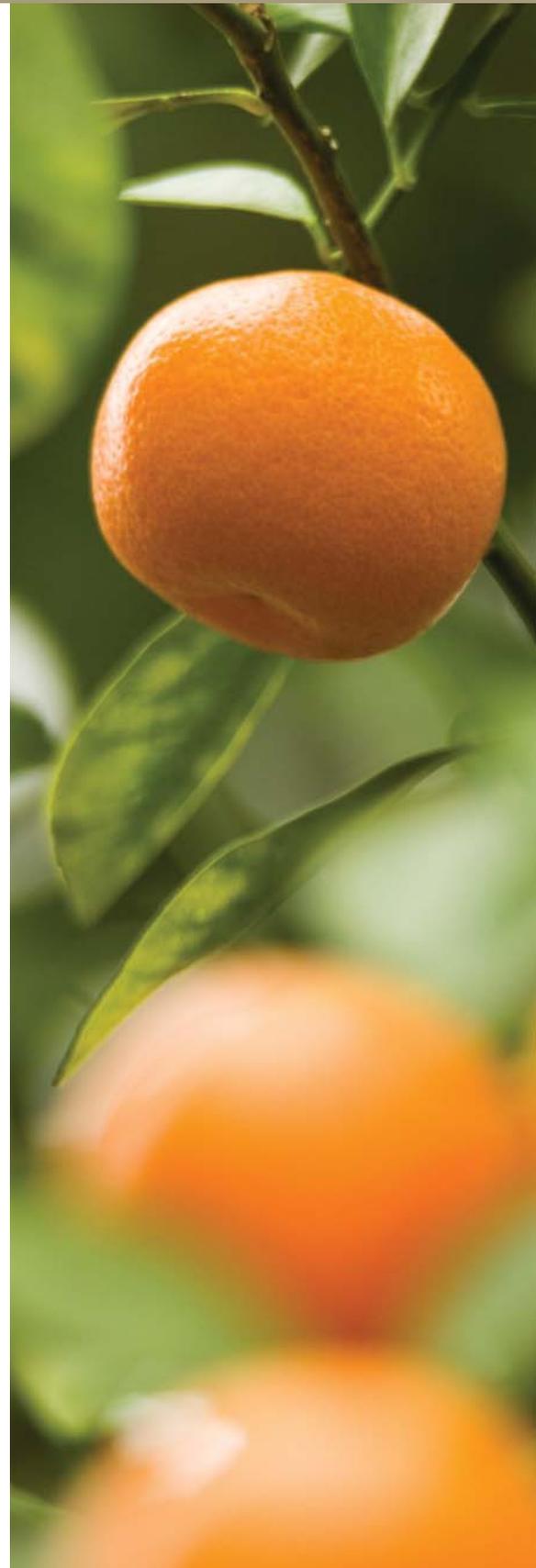
The Intergovernmental Coordination and Review (ICR) process is a federally-mandated program to make state officials aware of federal projects, programs and documents of statewide significance that may affect them. State Executive Order 83-150 designated Florida's Regional Planning Councils as "regional clearinghouses." This designation calls for the Councils to review such projects to determine their significance.

The Council routinely reviews many types of projects and proposals as a part of its ICR work. They include:

- \* Ten-Year Site Plans for power companies that serve Southwest Florida,
- \* Dredge and Fill Permit Applications filed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
- \* Federal Consistency projects from the Florida State Clearinghouse/Florida Coastal Management Program,
- \* Environmental Resource Permits issued by Water Management Districts and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection,
- \* Federal grant applications submitted on behalf of local governments and not-forprofit corporations, and
- \* Transportation Improvement Programs and Unified Planning Work Programs submitted by Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

The Council evaluates each proposal to assess the extent of its regional significance. Criteria used to identify and determine such significance include proposed impacts to wetlands and/or habitats, consistency of the proposal with its respective Development of Regional Impact Development Order (when applicable), and other implications which may have multi-jurisdictional impacts.

The Council reviewed several hundred applications and proposals in 2006. Of these, 82 were deemed regionally significant and the Council recommended actions necessary to ensure that each project would be consistent with the Strategic Regional Policy Plan for Southwest Florida.



## DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Since the inception of the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review process, 192 Applications for Development Approval (ADA Applications) have been submitted for review in the Southwest Florida Region. Prior to 1975, when the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council began reviewing ADA Applications, the Tampa Bay and South Florida Regional Planning Councils reviewed 16 DRIs. In the ensuing years, our Council has conducted the reviews of all ADA Applications filed in Southwest Florida – 176 in all.

In 2006, eight DRI ADAs were under review in 2006. The first two in the list below received conditional approval by the Council. Review of the last six projects submitted in 2006 will continue into 2007.

- ***Sarasota Interstate Commerce Park Substantial Deviation***  
 The Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners originally approved the Sarasota Interstate Park of Commerce (SI-POC) DRI on July 27, 1993 (Ordinance No. 93-049). The project is a multi-use development; approved for 220 multi-family dwelling units, 500 hotel rooms, 892,488 sq. ft. of light industrial, 246,460 sq. ft. of retail, and 311,052 sq. ft. of office in two phases. The substantial deviation application is to seek approval of Phase II, which is also to increase Phase II by 262,432 sq. ft. from 1,003,680 sq. ft. to 1,250,000 sq. ft. (100,000 sq. ft. will be office for a total of 1,166,112 sq. ft. of commercial uses) in the land use category of Regional Commercial Center Future Land Use Designation, 16,112 sq. ft. in the land use category Village Commercial Center II Future Land Use Designation and High Density Residential. Including the Phase I commercial of 633,888 sq. ft. a total of 1,800,000 sq. ft. of commercial is being proposed in the project. This proposal would eliminate the original CHI, IROP and MEC land use designations and as such required a comprehensive plan amendment. Also proposed is to increase the multi family residential by 1,530 units from 220 to 1,750, add a new use for a 3,500 seat serial performance facilities (Movie Theater), built the 500 room hotel, and extend buildout and facilities reservation periods to December 31, 2009. Conditional approved was recommended by Council at their September 21, 2006 meeting. The conditions focused on regional issues of transportation and affordable housing. The development order from the Sarasota County is pending.
- ***Pine Air Lakes Substantial Deviation***  
 The project was originally approved in 1985 for 1,280,600 square feet of total development, which included 707,000 square feet of retail regional mall, 368,600 square feet of office, 350 hotel rooms and 322 rooms of institutional. The 149-acre project is located within Collier County Regional Activity Center No.13, northwest of the Airport/Pine Ridge Road intersection and has land uses consistent with the comprehensive plan. The project as currently constructed shows primarily big box retail stores and movie theaters. The proposed change in development that created a substantial deviation is an increase in retail by 293,000 square feet from the original development order and an amendment approved in 1994. As part of the change there will be a reduction in office by 175,000 square feet for a total development level of 1,075,000 square feet, which is a reduction of 205,600 square feet from the original total development levels. Also, proposed is the ability to convert up to 50,000 square feet of office to commercial or commercial to office not to exceed the total development level. Buildout is being extended until 2010. Conditional approved was recommended by Council at their November 16, 2006 meeting. The conditions focused on regional issues of transportation and affordable housing. The rendered development order from the Collier County is pending.
- ***Isles of Athena***  
 The proposed Isles of Athena DRI consists of approximately 5,771 acres northeast of Interstate 75, between the Toledo Blade Boulevard and Kings Highway interchanges, in the City of Northport. The proposed plan includes a series of villages with mixed-use neighborhood centers, and a mixed-use town center village adjacent to I-75 with a new Interstate interchange. Preliminary plans for the project include 15,000 residential units; approximately 4,200,000 square feet of commercial/office/institutional uses complemented by civic, cultural, and recreational uses; a K-8 school; one 18 hole golf course; and a 200 bed hospital. The project schedule anticipates three phases, with ultimate buildout within 17 years in 2022. This project was submitted in December 2005 but not officially accepted for review until early 2006. In 2007, the project may continue to be reviewed.
- ***The Fountains***  
 The proposed Fountains DRI is a 2,769 acre large-scale multi-use development in Lee County. The property is adjacent to Lehigh Acres on the north, Gateway DRI on the west, and the Southwest Florida International Airport on the southwest. The Town Center will be located at State Road 82 and Daniels Parkway. At buildout in 2020, the project is proposed to have 4,215 residential units; 900,000 square feet of commercial; 1,500,000 square feet of warehouse; a 350 room resort hotel with conference facilities; and 18 holes of golf. This project was submitted in December 2005 but not officially accepted for review until early 2006. In 2007, the project may continue to be reviewed.

- SunTrust Bank**  
 The 1.25 acre SunTrust Development of Region Impact (DRI) Review project is located in unincorporated south central Lee County at entrance to Gulf Coast Town Center off Ben Hill Griffin Boulevard. Normally, a stand-alone fire station would not be reviewed as a DRI; however, because of a Lee County Comprehensive Plan requirement associated with the approval of Florida Gulf Coast University, Policy 18.2.2 requires “all property within the University Village shall undergo a DRI review”. Therefore, the DRI review for regional impacts is on a 4,500 square feet bank. This project was submitted in June 2006 and in 2007 will continue to be reviewed.

- The Loop**  
 The 195.6-acre project site east of the City of Punta Gorda is within Charlotte County and is split into five parcels, and sits on either side of North Jones Loop Road, near US41. On the southern parcel, the proposed project at buildout will include 700 multi-family residential units, 527,580 square feet of gross leaseable area (GLA) of retail, a 200 room hotel and a 9 acre parcel for the relocated trailer home park. On the northern parcel 381,300 square feet of GLA retail and 100,000 square feet of GLA office. The applicant is Wilder Companies, LTD., Inc. and will need a comprehensive land use change from Charlotte County to facilitate the optimum mixed-use strategy intended by the conceptual master plan of development. Much of the land is improved pasture and Pine Flatwoods with various percentages of exotic infestation and about 11.8 acres is potential Scrub Jay habitat per Charlotte County GIS. Also, several out parcels will have to be acquired by the applicant prior to filling the Application for Development Approval (ADA). This project was submitted in July 2006 and in 2007 will continue to be reviewed.

- Toll-Rattlesnake**  
 The proposed project at buildout will be a mixed use community, supported by 1,889 residential units on 799 acres (large-lot single family homes, detached villas, with low and moderate density multi-family land uses a percentage of which will be affordable housing), 650,000 square feet of commercial on about 59.37 acres of which 550,000 square feet of gross leasable floor area of convenience and general commercial, along with approximately 100,000 square feet of office space on about 10 acres, an 18 hole golf course, a relocated Swamp Buggy cultural attraction use onto a larger, cohesive parcel, with no more than 10,000 permanent seats and 2,600 parking spaces on about 51.38 acres. Finally about 43.52 acres of the project will be allocated to passive recreation land use to provide a natural social atmosphere for young adults, and would be operated by the Collier County Junior Deputies League. The balance of the project will be designated for expansive conservation areas (70%). The project is to be completed in five year with buildout by 2013. This project was submitted in July 2006 and in 2007 will continue to be reviewed.

- South LaBelle Villages**  
 The 1,680-acre project site is located in the South LaBelle Community of the City’s Future Land Use Map. This DRI is the first to be proposed in the two inland counties of the region in over 25 years. The proposed project at buildout will be a mixed use community, supported by 2,500 residential units (1,700 single family and 800 multi-family units), 150,000 square feet of community neighborhood retail, 50,000 square feet of office, a public use site that could include schools or government offices, 200 bed hospital, 50,000 square feet of quasi-public uses (YMCA type use), and 18 hole golf course. The proposed buildout is to be completed in one phase by 2012. This project was submitted in November 2006 and in 2007 will continue to be reviewed.

| DRI ACTIVITY PRESENTED TO COUNCIL IN 2006                  |  |
|--|--|
| DRI  | Activity                               |
| <b>JANUARY 2006</b>  |  |
| Sarasota Interstate Park of Commerce Substantial Deviation | Preapplication Questionnaire Checklist |
| Del Prado North Commerce Park                              | NOPC                                   |
| Sandhill   | NOPC                                   |
| Sandhill   | NOPC                                   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 2006</b>                                       |  |
| Murdock Center AMDA  | NOPC                                   |
| Magnolia Landing (aka Herons Glenn)                        | NOPC                                   |
| <b>APRIL 2006</b>  |  |
| Harborview   | NOPC                                   |
| Toll-Rattlesnake   | Preapplication Questionnaire Checklist |
| <b>MAY 2006</b>  |  |
| Sandhill   | NOPC                                   |
| Summit Church  | Development Order Review               |
| <b>JUNE 2006</b>   |  |
| Coconut Point  | NOPC                                   |
| <b>AUGUST 2006</b>   |  |
| Pelican Preserve   | NOPC                                   |
| Gateway  | NOPC                                   |
| <b>SEPTEMBER 2006</b>                                      |  |
| North Point  | NOPC                                   |
| Sandhill   | NOPC                                   |
| Sarasota Interstate Park of Commerce                       | Staff Assessment                       |
| <b>OCTOBER 2006</b>  |  |
| Forum Substantial Deviation                                | Development Order Review               |
| <b>NOVEMBER 2006</b>                                       |  |
| Bella Terra (aka Habitat)                                  | NOPC                                   |
| Grey Oaks  | NOPC                                   |
| Miromar Square (aka Stoneybrook)                           | NOPC                                   |
| Coconut Point  | NOPC                                   |
| Heron Creek  | NOPC                                   |
| Pine Air Lakes Substantial Deviation                       | Staff Assessment                       |

In addition to reviewing ADA Applications, the Council reviews general DRI activity. This activity includes but is not limited to reviewing and assessing new Development Orders submitted for DRIs, Notice of Proposed Change (NOPC) requests for exiting DRIs and preapplication meeting results for potential DRIs. The table above includes the DRIs that had activity presented to the Council in 2006 by month.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This past year was defined by change, both for the Council and for the region. The biggest change for our organization has been the Council's role in economic development and our partnership with Florida Gulf Coast University and the Economic Development Councils of Southwest Florida. This successful partnership has allowed the Council to more broadly engage in economic impact modeling and local government fiscal analysis. This organizational partnership took place within an environment that was focused on improving public-private collaboration and performance. The range of partnership work is diverse but is all organized around one central theme – collaboration between the university, business and government.

The Council spearheads a number of initiatives designed to promote investment in our communities and enhance the economic conditions of the citizens who make their homes here. The following were the council's initiatives for 2006:

### *The 2nd Edition Big Water Heritage Trail*

The Big Water Heritage Trail (a scenic auto tour route/trail) provides opportunities to discover and explore the natural, cultural, historical, educational and recreational features of the Lake Okeechobee Region and connects to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. The Trail encompasses five counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee in Florida. The trail's name, the Big Water Heritage Trail, stems from the Seminole word for Okeechobee, which means "Big Water".



The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) was awarded two grants to fund the reprint of the 2nd Edition Big Water Heritage Trail brochure. Visit Florida awarded \$5,000 for the revised design and layout of the user map. The Florida Humanities Council also awarded \$25,800 which was used to print 100,000 copies of the updated brochure.

This largely successful project (originally implemented in 2003) just recently received a big boost. The 2nd Edition Big Water Heritage Trail brochure has just been updated with new points of interest and narrative text along with new photos on the original brochure. There is a total of eighty sites that have been included as part of the Big Water Heritage Trail system with 100,000 map brochures produced for distribution. Thirteen sites along the heritage trail also now have kiosks and the 2nd Edition Big Water Heritage Trail Brochures will soon be prominently displayed in the area kiosks.

### *Rural Business Support Program*

In 2004, the Council was awarded a Rural Business Opportunity Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a two-year project to promote job growth, assist small businesses in expanding and enhance the overall economic competitiveness of rural populations in Hendry County and in the unincorporated community of Immokalee in Collier County. These are small, rural areas that have been heavily reliant on agriculture for many years. The agriculture market has been threatened in recent years due to a decline in the number of agricultural sector jobs, the impact of citrus diseases, and global competition for goods. These factors, combined with the limited resources of the area, have created a need to diversify the economy with industries that complement and build upon one another. The Rural Business Support Program was designed to build upon the success of the Council's earlier Regional Strategic Initiative for Rural Development. This grant has allowed the economic development offices in Hendry County and Immokalee to hire individuals to assist with business retention and expansion efforts.



### *Economic Modeling*

In 2006, the Council announced Florida's Fiscal Impact Analysis Model (FIAM). FIAM estimates the costs and revenues associated with land use decisions. With its focus on the cost and revenue implications for local governments, fiscal impact analysis is often referred to as cost/revenue analysis. The purpose of developing a FIAM is to improve land use decision making by Florida's local governments, and to make fiscal impact analysis a routine part of land use decision making and comprehensive planning.

FIAM can be calibrated with the data reflected in a community's comprehensive plan with projections for future land from the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The calibration allows direct analysis of the fiscal impacts of comprehensive plan, as well as a comparison of how proposed land uses may affect economic feasibility of the adopted plan.



Fishkind & Associates, sponsored by the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA), developed FIAM; in response to Senate Bill 360, which was signed into law by Governor Jeb Bush in June 2005 – to amend sections within Chapter 163 Florida Statutes that requires that the Capital Improvement Element (CIE) be reviewed on an annual basis in order to maintain a financially feasible 5-year schedule of capital improvements.

SWFRPC staff completed approximately 30 hours of FIAM training, at the request of DCA. The training program provided trainees with the following: 1) A methodological background for fiscal modeling, 2) a basic working knowledge of the model, 3) the ability to construct a working model, and 4) the ability to analyze and interpret results.

### *Regional Economic Model Incorporated (REMI)*



In 2006, the SWFRPC launched its first REMI project, which you can read in detail at [www.swfrpc.org](http://www.swfrpc.org). The project, entitled 'Economic Impact study: the Consolidation of Southwest Florida Regional Medical Center and Gulf Coast Hospital, examines the economic benefits of the consolidation of these two hospitals to Lee County.





## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

As Southwest Florida continues to grow and change, we are faced with figuring out where all these new people will live, work, and shop while protecting a sustainable environment. As such, 2006 was another busy year for the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Community Housing Subcommittee and Working Group. Following a successful year with the publication of *Bridging the Gap*, the Subcommittee met to continue work on regional housing needs, including an expanded web presence and a “tool box” of strategies for local government to learn more about and to choose from, if appropriate for their community.

The 2006 Florida Legislature passed HB 1363, a housing bill on addressing some of the affordable housing challenges the State currently faces. Florida lawmakers approved a \$516 million package for affordable-housing programs. The bill, sponsored by Bradenton Republican Mike Bennett in the Senate and Naples Republican Mike Davis in the House, has numerous incentives. In addition, the Legislature identified a special tax on real-estate transactions, in effect for 14 years, that sends a steady stream of revenue into a special trust fund established for affordable-housing programs. Besides \$245 million for housing-assistance programs, another \$30 million is targeted to provide incentives for developers and nonprofit organizations to build moderately priced housing.

In addition, HB 1363 includes \$50 million for an affordable housing pilot program called the Community Workforce Housing Innovation Pilot Program (CWHIP). Florida Housing will administer CWHIP, and these funds will be awarded on a competitive basis through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to public-private entities seeking to build affordable housing for Florida’s workforce. Rule 67-58, FAC establishes the procedures by which the Corporation shall administer credit underwriting and loan servicing.

Council staff has been working with the City of Labelle, Hendry County and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) under contract (06DB-3F-12-00-22-006) to undertake the development of a housing condition and needs study necessary to facilitate the implementation of the comprehensive planning programs and activities that will address the housing needs of the community and improve the quality of life of the people of the region.

## TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council has provided staffing support and planning services to the Local Coordinating Boards for Transportation Disadvantaged programs in Lee, Glades and Hendry Counties for seventeen years. The programs in Charlotte, Collier and Sarasota Counties have been supported by their respective Metropolitan Planning Organizations for many years.

Local Coordinating Boards (LCBs) prepare annual updates to their county's long range Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plans and they conduct annual evaluations of their county's Community Transportation Coordinators (CTCs). Quarterly meetings provide them with opportunities to carry out their planning and evaluation activities, and also serve as public forums on issues related to transit and paratransit services and needs in each service area.

Projects last year included preparing minor updates to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plans for each service area. Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plans have four components, and each one was updated in some way. The most significant changes occurred in the "Quality Assurance" and "Service Plan" components. There are numerous and sometimes duplicative policies and standards contained in those two components. During the 2006 update, they were streamlined to make monitoring and evaluating the programs easier.

CTCs also played a significant role in hurricane evacuation and recovery efforts should the need arise. They assisted the Emergency Operations Centers within their counties with evacuations of special populations and with critical trips as soon as possible after a hurricane (for example, ensuring that patients who needed dialysis treatments get to and from their medical appointments).



Comparison of Trips Taken:  
Transportation Disadvantaged Program  
2005-2006 vs. Prior Year

| County | 2005-2006 | 2004-2005 |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Glades | 5,491     | 6,077     |
| Hendry | 18,348    | 20,499    |
| Lee    | 139,850   | 199,181   |
| Total  | 163,689   | 225,757   |

The decrease in rides provided by the CTCs is largely accounted for by the decrease in funding they received.

CTCs reported fewer than 800 unmet trip requests, but it is widely believed that a person who calls for a ride and is told they cannot be accommodated because of a budget shortfall will not call again. The number of individuals who were forced to use other forms of transportation (public transit, rides from family or friends) or who simply did not make some of the trips they needed or wanted in 2006 cannot be precisely determined.

# MEETING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

The population of Southwest Florida will continue to grow bringing new residents, visitors, and employment to the region. Bringing people, goods, and freight to Southwest Florida makes transportation one of the economic engines that supports growth and makes it important for everyone in transportation and planning to keep abreast of the new initiatives and policies that impact our everyday decision-making.

Transportation is critical to supporting the region's continued growth and economic diversification. The region has strong transportation assets including Interstate 75, U.S. 41, S.R. 29, S.R. 80, the Southwest Florida International Airport, and numerous others. Southwest Florida is fortunate because these facilities and others provide the multi-modal transportation system needed to drive a thriving economy, facilitate desired growth, reduce congestion and interconnect communities.

As communities grow and change, so do the demands placed on their transportation system. Many roads designed to accommodate light or moderate traffic-flow, buckle under the weight of growth. If improvements fail to keep pace with the rate of change, the results can be congestion, delay and overall dangerous conditions for drivers and pedestrians.

### *Transportation Summit.... a huge success!*

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council along with its transportation partners hosted a Transportation Summit and luncheon on Friday, October 20, 2006 at the Sanibel Resort. The purpose of the event was to convene all four Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in a collaborative environment with members of the Florida Legislature, the Florida Department of Transportation, and our public and private sector partners to discuss solutions to the region's transportation challenges.

More than 150 transportation professionals, elected officials, residents, and business leaders attended the Regional Transportation Summit. The Summit included presentations that noted how the Florida Department of Transportation is developing strategies for meeting today's transportation challenges and facing tomorrow's modal opportunities.

It is anticipated that after the Summit, a series of meetings will be held that helps to identify key issues that need to be addressed in order to create a vision of Southwest Florida's transportation system that will support, protect, and improve the physical, social, and economic character of the Region.

### *Southwest Florida Regional Metropolitan Transportation Subcommittee*

The Southwest Florida Regional and Metropolitan Transportation Subcommittee first formed following the development of the Southwest Florida Transportation Coalition in 1999. The Coalition addressed the area's transportation needs and rallied support for a more unified effort in lobbying for state and federal funding. The Southwest Florida Regional and Metropolitan Transportation Subcommittee is comprised of one appointed elected official from the Sarasota/Manatee MPO, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, Lee County MPO, and the Collier County MPO, an official representative from each of the 6 counties, an appointee from the local office of economic development, a representative from the private sector Southwest Florida Transportation Initiative (SWFTI) and a representative of the FDOT.

The Subcommittee's efforts represent the continued commitment of a public-private partnership to work together for the purpose of increasing strategic investment to enhance the region's transportation system, economy, and quality of life.

### *New Multi-Modal Public-Private Transportation Corridors*

Transportation investment is an engine for Florida's growth. The state has become the fourth most populous state of the nation; the state's economy has expanded in areas as diverse as agriculture, real estate, tourism, and high technology. With such rampant growth, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in cooperation with the Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) has recognized that mobility for people and freight are increasingly at risk. For these reasons, FDOT and the Commission are working with statewide, regional, and local partners to initiate a Future Corridors Program. The first Statewide Partner Workshop on Florida's Future Statewide Corridors was held in Tampa on October 4-5, 2006.

The complexity of this transportation planning task will require a level of partnership that is unprecedented in Florida's history. Successful implementation will require FDOT and FTC to work with other agencies and stakeholders to form new public/private partnerships. While the New Corridors Program was officially kicked off in 2006, the 50 year focus will move forward with the initial studies in 2007.

### *Concurrency and the implementation of SB 360*

Concurrency is the growth management concept intended to ensure that the necessary public facilities are available concurrent with the impacts of development. In 2005 the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 360 an Act Relating to Infrastructure Planning and Funding. 2006 was the year for refinement and implementation.

The bill makes numerous revisions to transportation concurrency requirements and also provided a method for mitigating the impacts of development on transportation facilities by the cooperative efforts of the public and private sectors. On June 28, 2006 the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) and the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) met in Bartow with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) staff to discuss the needs and challenges of the rural counties in meeting current transportation requirements. It was agreed that a cooperative approach to assisting the rural communities and small cities would be most helpful to the two regions. During 2007 the two RPC staffs will work with DCA and FDOT to provide technical assistance to numerous county and cities through central and southwest Florida.

### *Strategic Facilitated Planning Retreat*

As requested by the Council, the purpose of the day and a half facilitated retreat exercise was to provide political executives a greater understanding of the challenges in the design, use and communication of a strategic plan for the agency. As a follow-up to the retreat, a Strategic Plan subcommittee was created and tasked with the assignment of finalizing an agency strategic business plan for fiscal year 2008.



## STRATEGIC FACILITATED PLANNING RETREAT

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council held a two day event on Thursday, October 19th and Friday October 20th, 2007. The Council Facilitated Retreat followed the regularly scheduled (but abbreviated) monthly Council meeting.

Author Chris Wye, the former director of the National Academy of Public Administration's Center for Improving Government Performance, wrote, "Management at its best and highest is leadership: setting priorities, allocating resources, tracking and achieving results, being accountable." He goes on to say that while career public servants have the primary responsibility for management, political leaders bear primary responsibility for policy and performance. Performance-based management, Mr. Wye contends, is nothing more than setting goals and tracking results.

As requested by the Council, the purpose of the day and a half facilitated retreat exercise was to help Council members better understand the challenges in the design, use and communication of a strategic plan for the agency.

John Becker, Chair of the Florida Benchmarking Consortium (FBC) served as the retreat facilitator and forwarded an example of a strategic/business planning developmental model for review prior to the retreat. The detailed strategic planning process example followed several development steps including, a description of the desired future, a mission statement that hat explains "who we are, why we exist, and what we do." Based on a series of values discussed by the Council and serving as a guide, retreat participants identified far reaching outcomes and strategic priorities.

Much of the Council's work and discussion focused around identifying major stakeholders, their current and future requirements, and the Planning Council's (SWFRPC's) current and future staffing and financial requirements. Due, in part, to the engaging discussion between Council members an external analyses of stakeholders was assigned as a future task to be undertaken by the Strategic Planning Working Group.

Strategic thinking and planning are two of the most critical elements of public management. Its purpose is to establish long-term goals, annual objectives, and detailed actions/strategies that address issues related to performance, productivity, service and community and personal well being.

Because strategic planning's focus must be on identifying the most critical factors affecting the community and agency and on seeking the most effective and efficient means to address them, it is one of the key factors in the success of the SWFRPC.

The purpose of the retreat was to assist Council members in an exercise to explore the Council's future role in growth management, explore the Council's role for future regional governance and examine the make-up and membership of the existing Council. It was suggested that the process involve working with an independent, neutral facilitator to encourage better communication and manage the retreat planning process. Several possible facilitators have been contacted for your consideration since January of 2006.

In April of 2006, staff contacted John Becker, Florida Benchmarking Consortium (FBC), Steering Committee Chair; City of Jacksonville, Quality Improvement Officer to ask if the FBC would be interested in facilitating a retreat for the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. Mr. Becker carried the suggestion to the April 21st Steering Committee meeting and inquired about FBC interest. With overwhelming acknowledgement and “not a negative vibe in the room,” FBC has offered to facilitate a retreat process for the Council. FBC has offered to undertake the entire process for \$3,500 plus additional costs for site selection and travel.

### *Why a facilitated strategic planning retreat?*

As we advance towards the future, our society is changing in a regional and global context. Major institutions, including government, are seeking ways to restructure in an effort to become more relevant and effective. Quite simply, a Council retreat will allow members to learn how to think through opportunities for environmental sustainability, growth and development in Southwest Florida, and put in place a strategic plan for future action.

Spending a significant amount of time together will empower the Council and members by discovering their unique value to the organization and the region. Done right, a Council retreat can be an indispensable planning and management tool. A retreat is often the perfect opportunity to:

- ✓ Identify ones mission
- ✓ Clarify an organization’s vision
- ✓ Identify barriers to success
- ✓ Assess individual and group strengths
- ✓ Discuss strategies
- ✓ Make key decisions
- ✓ Set priorities
- ✓ Establish an action plan

At the regularly scheduled Council meeting of Thursday, May 18, 2006, the Council agreed to contract with the Florida Benchmarking Consortium (FBC) to undertake a retreat for the purpose of addressing the organizational strategic planning process.

## Strategic Outcomes

### 1.Resource Development and Enhancement

- Budget Constraints
- Limited Financial Resources
- Weak Spending on R&D
- Rapid Market Growth
- Economic Boom
- Co-location of Resources
- Committed Employees
- Staff Development
- Flexible Staffing Opportunities
- Training

### 2. Creative Solutions and Innovations

- Lack of Strategic Directions and Planning
- Reactive Planning
- Factual Data Collection
- Lack of Performance Measures
- Increased Backlog of Projects
- Lack of Defined Roles and Processes
- Development
  - Data Sharing
  - New Technology
  - Change in Customer Needs and Taste
  - Distribution and Communication of Information
  - External Communication and Public Image

### 3.Create Sustainable and Livable Communities

- Demographic Shifts
- Community Development
- Diverse Backgrounds
- Economic Downturn
- Federal/State/Local Mandates
- Change in Federal/State Laws
- Increasing Government Regulation
- Annexations

### 4.Build and Maintain Partnerships

- Collaboration
- Disengaged Community
- Silent Majority Overruled by Vocal Minority
- Expand Public Support
- Strong Working Relationships with Business Partners
- Engage Planning Council
- Build Internal and External Partnerships
  - Seek Other Alliances
  - Create Problem Solving Partnerships
  - Address Internal Political Problems

## LEE COUNTY

The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an intergovernmental transportation planning agency created by an agreement among Lee County, Bonita Springs, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The MPO's major focus is to develop sound transportation in Lee County for its citizenry through partnering with the Florida Department of Transportation, Lee County Department of Transportation, Lee Tran and the jurisdictions which make up the Lee County MPO board – Lee County, City of Bonita Springs, City of Cape Coral, City of Fort Myers, Town of Fort Myers Beach and the City of Sanibel. Through their cooperative efforts, movement of people and goods via highways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian, are experiencing great strides for Lee County's transportation system.

One of the highlights of 2006 was the proposed funding of the \$60 million construction phase from Ortiz Avenue to Lee Boulevard in FDOT's Draft Tentative Work Program for FY 2007/08-2011/12. State and local transportation planners and engineers, and elected officials realized early on that an innovative and creative financing approach was the only way to secure the necessary funds for this vital project.

To that end, the Lee County MPO and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 1 office assisted the City of Fort Myers in making this project a reality via successfully tapping into Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funds worth \$10 million. FDOT District 1 was instrumental in securing growth management funds for an additional \$10 million and the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) contributed \$5 million as its share of the \$10 million local match for the TRIP funds. The City of Fort Myers contributed the remaining half.

An additional \$15 million (25% of the total construction cost) was secured through a State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) loan applied for by the Lee County MPO. The loan is interest free and is going to be repaid to the State beginning 2011/12 from the Lee County MPO's future year allocations of federal and state funds.

On May 19, 2006, the MPO adopted and published its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for FY 2006/07 through FY 2010/11. The TIP lists the highway, transit and aviation projects in Lee County from FDOT's Five Year Work Program.



# METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



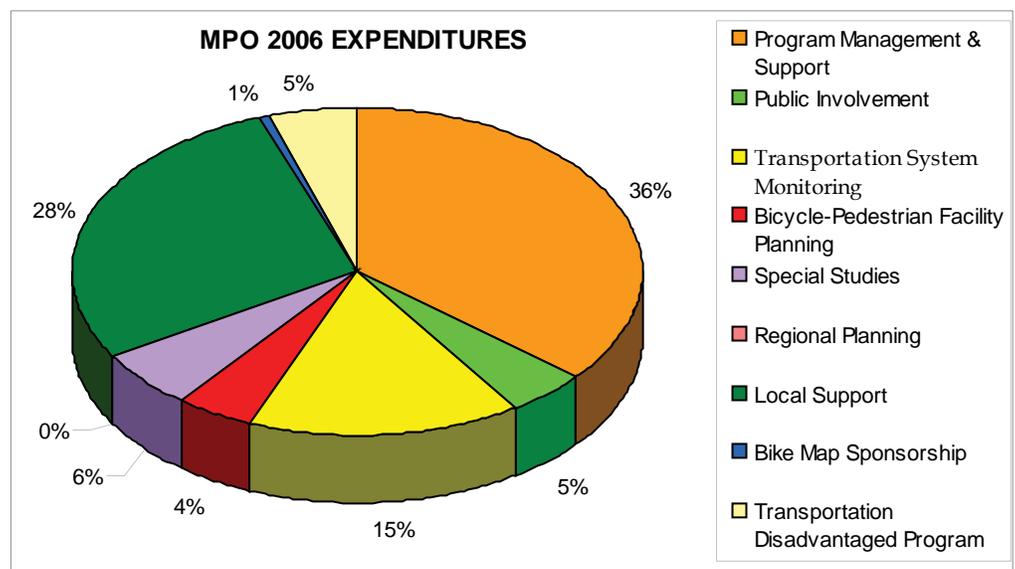
At the MPO meeting on January 20, 2006, the Lee MPO adopted the Transit Authority Consensus Building Action Plan that outlined a series of tasks needed to establish an independent transit authority in Lee County. The MPO also created a Transit Authority Oversight Committee in April 2006 to discuss and make recommendations regarding local jurisdictions being a part of a Transit Authority and funding commitments for implementing the Action Plan. The Transit Authority Oversight Committee is comprised of an elected official from each participating MPO jurisdiction, the Chairperson of the Local Coordinating Board representing the Transportation Disadvantaged and the Florida Department of Transportation as a non-voting member.

One of the MPO's goals is to support coordination efforts among the various transportation agencies in Lee County. Thus, in an effort to pursue this coordination, the Lee County MPO adopted a resolution in March 2006 in support of Lee Tran's request for a transit earmark to purchase replacement buses and the development of a new transit facility and to urge the Federal Transit Administration to support the efforts of Lee County and Lee Tran in providing transit services for its residents and visitors.

In June 2006, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a certification review of the Lee County MPO Planning Process. The 2006 Certification Report of September 18, 2006 reflected noteworthy practices of the Lee County MPO with respect to its internet website (<http://www.mpo-swfl.org>) and its regional planning participation with the Coordinated Urban Transportation Studies (CUTS) and the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) with Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), Sarasota-Manatee MPO, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO, Collier County MPO and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The MPO also produced its annual Congestion Monitoring Report. The MPO solicited reports of congested locations from the general public, law enforcement officers, Lee Tran and Lee County School District bus drivers and emergency services personnel. Input from these groups was used to identify chronically congested locations in Lee County. The report documents these locations, outlines the measures underway or programmed to mitigate the congestion and identifies mitigation projects for funding.

After considering the results of a direct-mail public opinion survey of approximately 4,000 randomly selected Lee County households, the MPO adopted transportation project priorities for 2006. The priorities include projects to be funded from District-allocated STP and state funds, the FY 2010/11 Congestion Mitigation/Transportation System Management (CM/TSM) box funds, Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds, State Intermodal Program funds, Aviation funds, and the bicycle/pedestrian box funds. These priorities will guide FDOT in developing its Draft Tentative Work Program for Fiscal Year 2007/08 through Fiscal Year 2011/12.





### Top 10 Hazardous Materials and Inventory Levels

| Chemical            | Inventory Level (lbs.) |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Sulfuric Acid       | 2,262,637              |
| Methyl Bromide      | 1,338,050              |
| Ammonia             | 413,024                |
| Chlorine            | 406,821                |
| Aldicarb            | 124,164                |
| Sulfur Dioxide      | 90,800                 |
| Nitric Acid         | 80,620                 |
| Oxamyl              | 22,890                 |
| Endosulfan          | 20,469                 |
| Paraquat Dichloride | 20,178                 |

Source: Florida State Emergency Response Commission for Hazardous Materials, 2004 Annual Report, Page 32.

## SOUTHWEST FLORIDA LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Since 1988, the Council has sought to protect the citizens of the region pursuant to the Emergency Planning & Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA). EPCRA was enacted by Congress to increase public and private efforts to reduce risks associated with the use and storage of hazardous chemicals, and to ensure that communities across the nation have plans in place to respond to chemical emergencies.

### *Awards Initiative*

In 2006, the LEPC was pleased to honor Mr. Bernie Tibble of Florida Power and Light as the Thomas Yatabe Florida Awards recipient for the Southwest Florida area. Award recipients are recognized for outstanding achievement, accomplishment or superior participation in the State's Hazardous Materials Program. Mr. Tibble is shown below receiving his award. Pictured on the right is Craig Fugate of the Florida Division of Emergency Management conferring the award on behalf of the Florida State Emergency Response Commission. Mr. Tibble has served on the Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee since July 1, 1992, and has assisted by coordinating water related hazardous materials training exercises at the Fort Myers Florida Power & Light Plant. Additionally, Mr. Tibble has assisted emergency responders of the region by hosting classroom training sessions at the FP&L training center.



### *Hazardous Materials Program - Facility Compliance*

In 2006, there were more than 1,300 chemical records housed at the offices of the Council, congruent with the mandates of EPCRA which are administered by the LEPC, an organization staffed by the Council. Facilities with either hazardous or extremely hazardous chemical inventories at a threshold planning quantity are required to submit formal reports to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Florida Department of Community Affairs, and the LEPC annually. In 2005, the Florida Department of Community Affairs reported the 10 top chemicals in the region in the order provided.

### *Hazardous Materials Training*

Hazardous material training is an important component of the mission of the LEPC. In 2006, a total of 158 individuals (see below) benefited from the training conducted by the LEPC. Training programs included the following:

- » Chemistry for Hazardous Materials Response, July 17-22, 2006
- » Clandestine Drug Lab Awareness, September 15, 2006
- » Hazardous Materials Awareness Level 1, September 27, 2006
- » Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response, September 29, 2006
- » Two Hazardous Materials Technician Level Refresher Courses in 2006

#### **Program Training by Occupation**

| Profession      | Awareness  | Operations | Technician | Total      |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Fire            | 40         | 21         | 15         | 76         |
| Law Enforcement | 19         |            |            | 19         |
| EMS             | 15         | 2          |            | 17         |
| Other           | 41         | 5          |            | 46         |
|                 |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>115</b> | <b>28</b>  | <b>15</b>  | <b>158</b> |

Below is a picture of the Southwest Florida Regional Chemical Exercise coordinated by Collier County Emergency Management Agency. The local emergency planning Committee was a major player in the chemical component of the exercise which was conducted at the Cleveland Clinic Hospital in Collier County. Other components of the exercise involved a plane crash and a flu epidemic.



### *Community Safety Outreach Initiatives*

Two Community Safety Fairs were conducted in Collier and Sarasota Counties. Also, a Shelter-In – Place Workshop was conducted in Immokalee at the Friendship house for the benefit of the Community. The workshops served as a get acquainted and informational forum for citizens and visitors of the region. Shown below are pictures LEPC coordinated events in Collier and Sarasota Counties.

Sarasota County Community Safety



Collier County Community Safety Workshop





## CHARLOTTE HARBOR

The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) is a partnership of citizens, elected officials, resource managers and commercial and recreational resource users who are working to protect the greater Charlotte Harbor estuarine system by improving the water quality and ecological integrity of the 4,400 square mile watershed. The partnership is hosted by the Council and works as an advocate for the estuarine system by building consensus that is based upon sound science.

Activities of the CHNEP are coordinated through the Management Conference, a body which is comprised of four committees (Citizens Advisory, Technical Advisory, Management and Policy) and the staff. Major accomplishments of the CHNEP in 2006 follow.

### *Management Conference*

The Management Conference is cited as the most important function of the CHNEP. It is composed of Policy, Management, Technical, and Citizen Committees. In support of the Management Conference function, the CHNEP prepares and implements a task-based budget with specific deliverables. The City of Bonita Springs was added to the Policy Committee this year. In 2005, the City of Winter Haven joined. In addition, the CHNEP successfully passed the EPA-conducted implementation review. Passing this triennial review is a requirement to continue receiving federal funding.

### *CCMP Update*

The CHNEP adopted a procedure to update its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) every five years. A complete draft of the CCMP was completed by the end of 2006. The new CCMP features a graphic vision series. The draft quantifiable objectives and priority actions were the result of a survey among management conference participants and interested public followed by dozens of subcommittee meetings to craft strategies. The draft plan addresses hydrologic alterations, water quality degradation, fish and wildlife habitat loss, and stewardship gaps. A new way to look at the CCMP quickly was developed and entitled "CCMP-at-a-Glance." The document helped to identify gaps, duplications, and improve the structure of the draft CCMP. Adoption of the plan is expected in 2007.

### *Outreach*

The CHNEP newsletter, "Harbor Happenings", and its web site provides information on a wide variety of topics including latest research findings, restoration accomplishments, changes in legislation, events, and information about CHNEP's partners including the water management districts.

The CHNEP has hosted, or otherwise provided funding to support, a variety of workshops and events. Highlights include:

- ◆ WFCU aired and produced the final two interstitials on seagrasses and mangroves.
- ◆ The Charlotte County boaters guide was updated with information on environmental concerns.
- ◆ Two day workshops were held on the topics of "The Sustainable Communities" and "Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place."
- ◆ A public conference was held for Cape Coral Canals.
- ◆ CHNEP sponsored the Charlotte Harbor Regional Nature Festival with more than 50 exhibitors, guided walks and rides, talks, children's zone.
- ◆ Celebrated National Estuaries Days with Peace River Center for Writers' Fifth Annual Literary Cruise, with DeSoto County with "Paddle the Peace" and with Keeping the Peace: Translating Management Plans into Action.

# NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM



## Research

The wide variety of research fills gaps in knowledge related to hydrologic alterations, water quality degradation, and habitat loss. Research projects are chosen from a Research Needs Inventory adopted in 2004. Highlights from last year include approval for a resource-based approach for setting numeric water quality targets for Lemon Bay, Charlotte Harbor and Estero Bay using seagrass light requirements; an update to the SFWMD and SWFWMD 1999 seagrass maps with Oyster bar locations; contracts executed for the Historic Basins Map and for the Historic Benthic Habitat Map; and the CHNEP continued with GES and finalized the upload of all Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network data to the State's central water quality database (STORET).

## Restoration

The CHNEP participated in a variety of restoration projects in 2006 including, playing a "major role" in the acquisition of over 73,000 acres of the Babcock Ranch property by the State of Florida and Lee County. Among other things, the Charlotte Harbor NEP accomplished the following:

- \* contributed the first \$5,000 to establish the Babcock Preservation Partnership and provided primary staff support to this group; prepared a map series that was used in presentations to convince the Governor and Cabinet of the merit of the acquisition; solicited and acquired funds (over \$3.25 million) and in-kind support; testified before the local legislative delegation to advocate the acquisition; and staff organized the collection of over 17,000 signatures supporting the purchase of Babcock Ranch.
- \* published "The Lower Charlotte Harbor Reconnaissance Report," the first step to completing a Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan.
- \* provided the initial shape file and database to the Southwest Florida Feasibility Study (funded in WRDA 2000) for alternatives development.
- \* Prepared GIS Maps of wildlife undercrossing locations for SR 72 east of Interstate 75 in Sarasota County.



## Advocacy and Review

From time to time, CHNEP advocates positions to protect the watershed and estuaries. Toward this end, in 2006 the CHNEP:

- Reviewed City of Venice Comprehensive Plan, including providing seven sets of useful information.
- Requested support from USACE for Cumulative EIS of all development in Peace and Myakka River Basins. Requested support from FDEP for the designation of Horse Creek as an Outstanding Florida Water. Presentation to the Manatee County BOCC on CHNEP positions regarding an Area-wide EIA for the Peace and Myakka Basins.
- Analysis and Presentation of Caloosahatchee Structure Modification, Flows, and Changing Release Schedules, leading to a letter evaluating the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for modifying Lake Okeechobee water release schedules.

## Grants

The CHNEP funds 3 grant programs: Research and Restoration Partners Program (RRPP), Public Outreach Grants (POG), and Micro-grants. Highlights of projects funded in 2006 include:

- » Friends of the Myakka River developed an outstanding map of the wild and scenic trails in the park and surrounding conservation lands.
- » DeSoto County Parks & Recreation and Deluxe Trees and Shrubs designed and installed a 110x110 ft maze garden of native plants using nearly 600 plants. The site is on the grounds of the popular Brewer Sports Park.
- » funded education to fifth graders at J. Colin English Elementary School in Lee County on watersheds.
- » Sponsored Polk County Extension's "Water-Lifeblood of Planet Earth: A Water School for Polk County Decision Makers" for 55 community leaders in Polk County that included a series of five 2 1/2 hour workshops and 2 field trips.
- » As part of the Monofilament Recovery & Recycling project, Charlotte County placed 80 bins to collect monofilament throughout the county with signage explaining the need to recover and recycle this material.
- » Support for the Burrowing Owl Festival on February 18, 2006 in Cape Coral of which over 2,000 people attended.
- » Maintained and hosted the website for Myakka River Management Coordinating Council.
- » funded education to 5,500 fourth grade students in Polk County on the water cycle, through the use of signage describing each stage of the water cycle and related props.



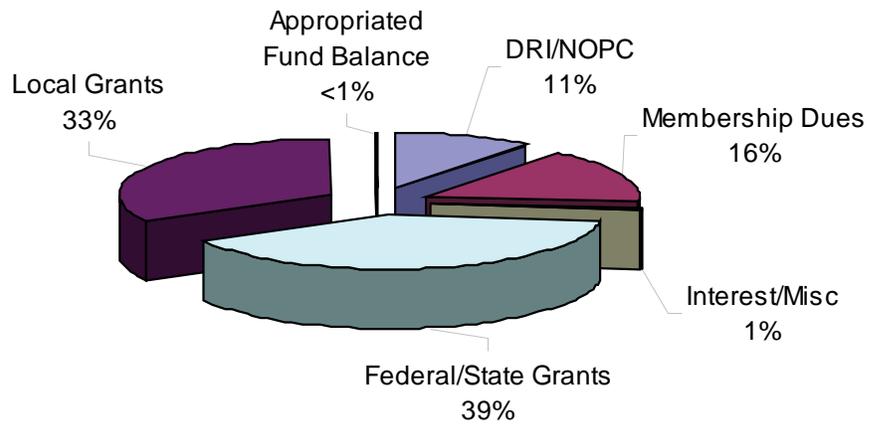
# FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

In its annual Independent Auditor's Report to the Council, Stroemer Tuscan & Company P.A. opined that the basic financial statements of the Council presented "fairly, in all respects, the financial position of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council as of September 30, 2006 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

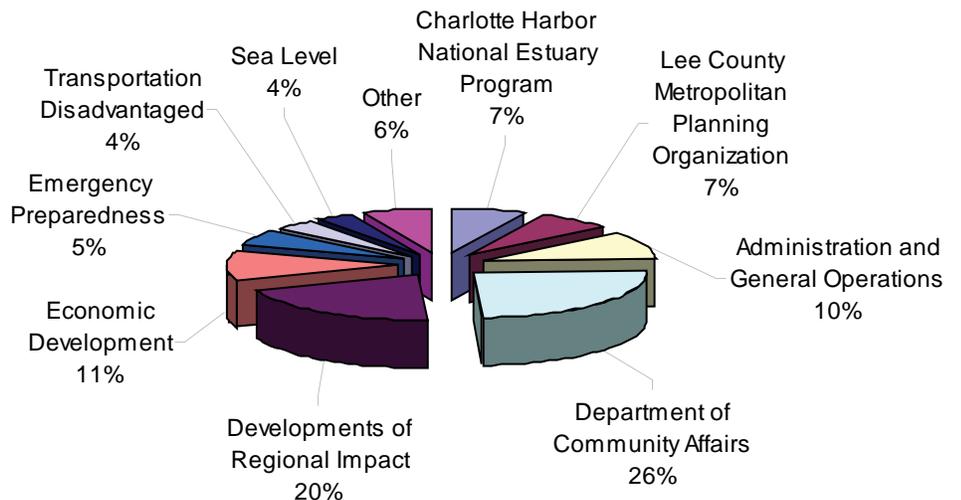
The Council's fund balance stood at \$392,965 on September 30th, a decrease of \$11,081 from the prior year-end balance. The Council purchased and moved into a new building in 2004 and made renovations to the building in 2005/2006. The decrease in the fund balance is due to expenses incurred for the renovations.

Operational expenses increased 5.79% and revenue increased by 6.44%.

**2006 Council Revenue**

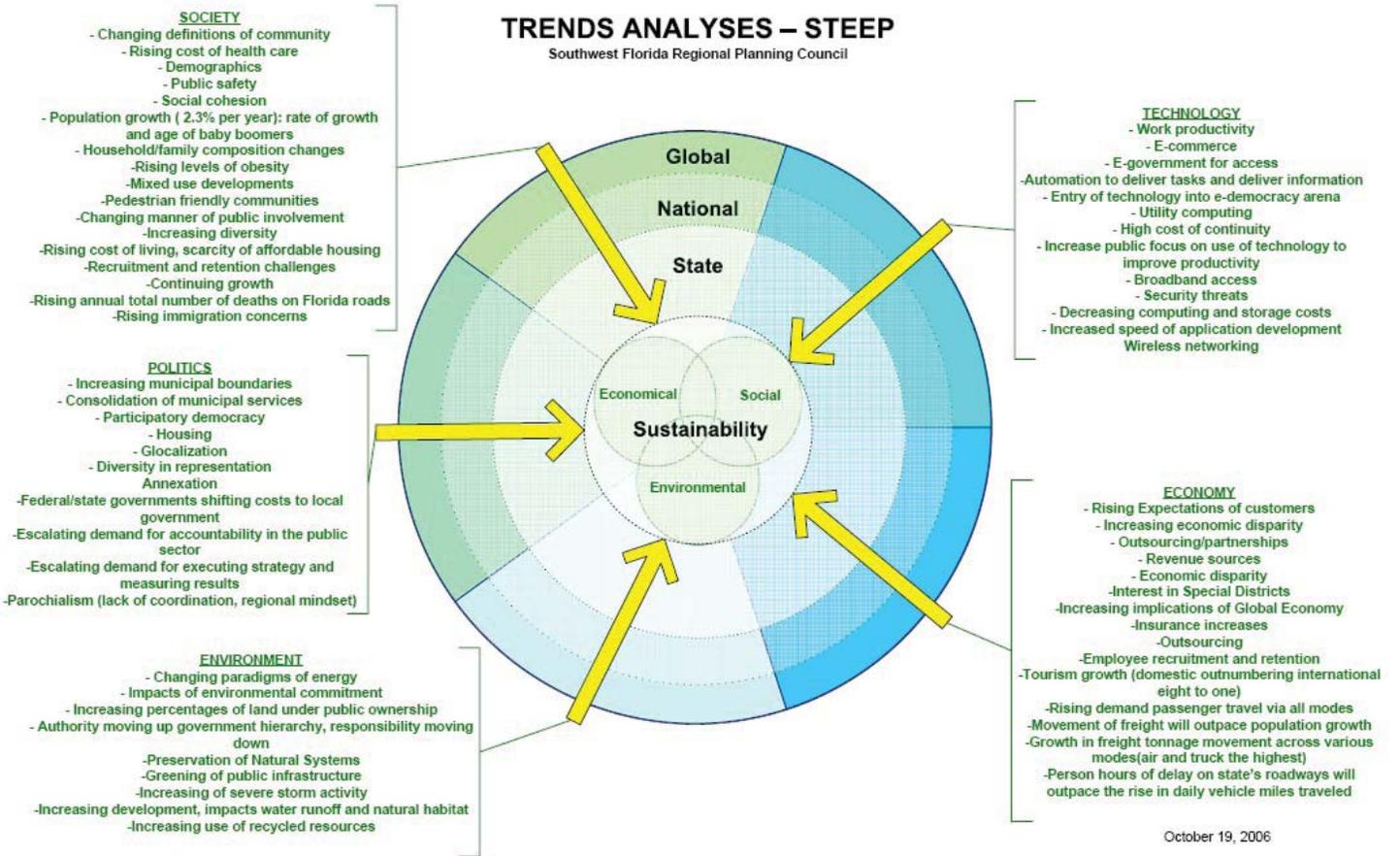


**2006 Council Expenses**



## TRENDS ANALYSES – STEEP

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council



# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL STAFF

DAVID Y. BURR, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KEN HEATHERINGTON, AICP, PLANNING DIRECTOR  
LIZ DONLEY, ESQ., LEGAL COUNSEL

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

MOJI ABIMBOLA, FISCAL/ECONOMIC ANALYST  
DAVID CRAWFORD, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER  
JOHN GIBBONS, PRINCIPAL PLANNER  
JENNIFER PELLECHIO, NETWORK ADMIN/  
SENIOR PLANNER  
DANIEL TRESMOTT, PRINCIPAL PLANNER  
JASON UTLEY, REGIONAL PLANNER/  
ASSISTANT DRI COORDINATOR

## LIBRARY/INFORMATION SERVICES

REBEKAH HARP, PUBLIC INFORMATION  
SPECIALIST

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

NANCY DOYLE, ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER,  
OPERATIONS  
NICHOLE GWINNETT, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT,  
IC&R COORDINATOR  
MEGHAN MARION, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
ANGELA TOMLINSON, AP/ PURCHASING COORDINATOR  
JANICE YELL, ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER, FINANCE

## CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

LISA BEEVER, PH.D., DIRECTOR  
CATHERINE CORBETT, SENIOR SCIENTIST  
LIZ DONLEY, ESQ., GRANTS AND CONTRACTS MANAGER  
MARAN HILGENDORF, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

## GRAPHIC INFORMATION SERVICES

RICK CARPENTER, GIS/  
GRAPHICS SPECIALIST  
TIMOTHY WALKER, GIS/  
GRAPHICS MANAGER

## LEE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

JOHN VOGES, MPO DIRECTOR  
RON GOGOI, AICP, DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
BRIAN RAIMONDO, SENIOR PLANNER  
DEBBIE KOOL, PLANNING TECHNICIAN

# SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN..... COMMISSIONER JON THAXTON  
VICE CHAIRMAN..... DR. EDWARD ELKOWITZ  
SECRETARY..... COMMISSIONER JIM COLETTA  
TREASURER.....Ms. ANDREA MESSINA

## CHARLOTTE COUNTY

COMMISSIONER TOM MOORE  
COMMISSIONER DICK LOFTUS  
COUNCIL MEMBER MARILYN  
SMITH-MOONEY  
MR. FRANK C. WEIKEL  
MS. ANDREA MESSINA  
MS. PATRICIA CARROLL

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COMMISSIONER W.C. "Bo" PELHAM  
MAYOR MALI CHAMNESS  
COMMISSIONER DAVID LYONS  
MR. MELVIN KARAU

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COMMISSIONER TOM HENNING  
COUNCILMAN BILL WILLKOMM  
COUNCILMAN CHARLES KIESTER  
MS. LAURA HOLQUIST

## LEE COUNTY

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COMMISSIONER RAY JUDAH  
COUNCILMAN THOMAS HAIR  
VICE MAYOR MICK DENHAM  
MAYOR JAMES HUMPHREY  
MAYOR JAY AREND  
MS. MARGARET EMBLIDGE  
MR. JAMES GREEN

## GLADES COUNTY

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COMMISSIONER PAUL BECK  
DR. EDWARD ELKOWITZ

## SARASOTA COUNTY

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COMMISSIONER PAUL MERCIER  
COUNCILMAN JAMES BLUCHER  
MAYOR FRED HAMMETT  
MR. GEORGE H. MAZZARANTANI  
MR. RORY DUBIN

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

RHONDA HAAG, SFWMD  
MS. JANET WATERMEIER, WATERMEIER CONSULTING & PROPERTY SERVICES  
MR. JON IGLEHART, FDEP  
MS. JOANNE MCCLELLAN, SWFWMD  
MR. JOHNNY LIMBAUGH, FDOT