

PLANNING, PROTECTING AND IMPROVING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Southwest Florida

REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL



2008

ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It is the mission of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council to work together across neighboring communities to consistently protect and improve the unique and relatively unspoiled character of the physical, economic, and social worlds we share...for the benefit of our future generations.

Each of our meetings this year was opened with the reading of this mission, reminding Council members of the enormity and lasting effects of the tasks at hand.

In addition to detailed work dealing with the DRIs and comprehensive plan amendments, the Council focused on three things this year: legislation, water quality, and long term sustainability.

Legislatively, we've closely followed Tallahassee's workings, and had reports from several members of our local legislative delegation. This included a presentation on activities of the Taxation and Budget Reform Committee by former representative J. Dudley Goodlette.

Led by Mayor Denham of Sanibel Island, our Subcommittee for the Lower West Coast Watershed has introduced a number of resolutions to the region. These resolutions, after being passed by the Council, have been embraced by local governments and are now

seen in ordinances across the region. Addressed in these resolutions are fertilizers, wastewater, wastewater package plants, onsite systems planning/ treatment/ management and stormwater.

As a regular part of our monthly meeting agenda, we've invited guest speakers in an effort to educate and inform council members. Most notably, Lt. Gov. Jeff Kottkamp spoke to us on Florida's economy and affordable housing. Other presentations covered the topics of regional visioning and connecting Florida's regions, sustainable energy, green building and technologies, connecting with nature, and the impact of agriculture in SW Florida.

Finally, we held a council retreat at the Babcock Ranch, an area of one of the largest DRI's ever seen, focusing on long term and strategic planning.

While it has been my honor to serve the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council through 2008, it is due to the dedicated and very hard work of staff and council members that continued positive progress has been made in our region.



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Andrea Mesina, 2008 Governing Board Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

First I want to thank the 2008 Chair; Ms. Andrea Messina, a Charlotte County gubernatorial appointee, representing the school board. Ms. Messina was a fervent task manager, moving along every agenda item and watching the use of everyone's time. The Chair was also responsible for reciting the Region's mission at every meeting and requesting that the mission statement be placed at the top of every agenda so that we do not forget our commitment to the people of Southwest Florida and future generations.

Over the course of the year we have also reviewed and updated the operating rule (FAC 29I) of the Council as directed by the Council Chair. The new rule will be adopted after a state review; it is anticipated the approved rule will be presented to the Council in the early part of 2009.

It was through the wisdom and guidance of Ms. Messina that Southwest Florida undertook a monthly regional speaker that educated all of us on the importance of preserving our natural resources for ourselves and future generations; the need to sustain agriculture for its economic benefit and for resource preservation; the importance of preparing for climate change and the pending hurricane by hardening structures; the need for energy conservation and greater efficiency. It was out of Ms. Messina's leadership that Southwest Florida decided to organize and prepare a regional vision framework: ***People-Prosperity-Preservation: Working Together for a Better Tomorrow.***

I would also like to thank the dedicated and professional employees of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. As in past years, staff is continuing to meet its statutory responsibilities and obligations to the state while aggressively pursuing other grants and funding.

International, national, state, local, agency and personal economics has concerned us all. Due to the current fiscal and monetary crisis, it is likely a more severe correction will likely take place over the next several years. As such, funding and budget allocation are a constant concern and require professional attention and due diligence. While Southwest Floridians and all of America suffer through the worst economic crisis in our history, there remains hope for the future. Together, we can create the brighter future we all want for ourselves and our children.

Thank you for your support in 2008; the past year has been both rewarding and very challenging. It is an honor to serve the people of Southwest Florida and to serve as the Executive Director of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council. We have accomplished much and I have no doubt that the coming year will bring its own set of challenges and new opportunities.

The following pages of the 2008 Annual Report highlight some of the many activities and partnerships of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council.



By continuing to work cooperatively and collaboratively as a region, we will succeed in creating a more livable and sustainable community for ourselves and future generations”.

Ken Heatherington, Executive Director



REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCILS OVERVIEW

Regional Planning Councils Overview

“The regional planning council is recognized as Florida’s only multi-purpose regional entity that is in a position to plan for and coordinate intergovernmental solutions to growth-related problems on greater-than-local issues, provide technical assistance to local governments, and meet other needs of the communities in each region.” Chapter 186.502(4), F.S.

The Regional Planning Councils were formed by Interlocal Agreements. By 1979, 64 of 67 counties were members. This formation and membership preceded the state mandate. The Regional Planning Councils are part of a nationwide system of councils of governments. There are eleven (11) Regional Planning Councils in Florida. Across the country, there are approximately 500 Regional Planning Councils in 48 states and the District of Columbia.

Common Core Activities

While each of the 11 Regional Planning Councils are diverse in function, each conducts several common core activities which are as follows:

- Strategic Regional Policy Plans
- Comprehensive Planning
- Developments of Regional Impact
- Federal Consistency Review – Clearinghouse
- Local Government Technical Assistance
- Local Emergency Planning Committees
- Data and Information Center
- Areas of Critical State Concern
- Dispute Resolution
- Ten Year Power Plan/Transmission Line Review

Statutory Mandates

The Regional Planning Councils have multiple statutory mandates, defining primary and specific tasks and subsequently, expanded responsibilities which are detailed within the 2007-2008 Annual Report. The following are a notation of the statutory mandates.

Chapter 163, F.S.
Chapter 186, F.S.
Chapter 240, F.S.

Chapter 253, F.S.
Chapter 260, F.S.
Chapter 282, F.S.
Chapter 288, F.S.
Chapter 335, F.S.

Chapter 339, F.S.
Chapter 373, F.S.
Chapter 378, F.S.
Chapter 380, F.S.
Chapter 403, F.S.
Chapter 419, F.S.
Chapter 420, F.S.
Chapter 427, F.S.
Chapter 985, F.S.

Senate Bill 360 (2005)

Significant Regional Initiatives

The Regional Planning Councils provide assistance in regional initiatives, several of which are as follows:

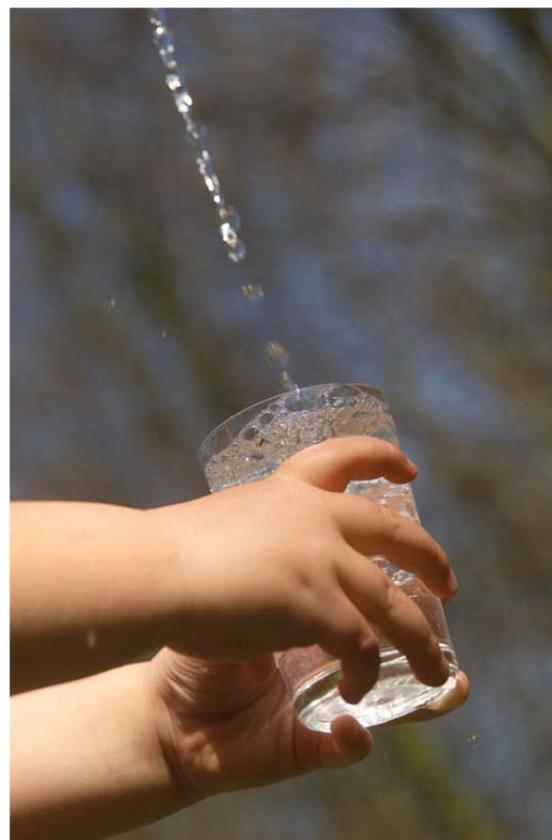
- **Economic Development**
 - Ten (10) Economic Development Districts – secured over \$500M for private/public job producing projects
 - Alternative Fuels/Air Quality
 - Small Business Revolving Loan Program - Manage and administer revolving loan funds for business creation and retention and job creation. (2 Regions)
 - Brownfield Redevelopment
 - Economic Impact Analysis
 - Tourism
 - Assistance to Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern
 - Downtown Redevelopment
- **Transportation/Transit**
 - Staff five (5) Metropolitan Planning Organizations providing urban transportation planning and prioritization
 - Designated Official Planning Staff to approximately 30 counties for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program
 - Five (5) Year and Long Range Transportation Plan Review

- Land use planning support for regional transportation authorities
- **Emergency Preparedness**
 - Staff Local Emergency Planning Committees to coordinate training for first responders, conduct hazardous waste and materials monitoring visits, assist Regional Domestic Security Task Forces with training exercises for homeland security, prepare coordinated regional evacuation plans for entire states or for the entire state.
- **Environment**
 - Partners with Environmental Agencies
 - Working Waterfront/Marine Resources
 - Environmental Education/Bay Area Resources Council
 - South Dade Watershed Study
 - Geographical Information System Modeling
- **Natural Resources Protection Initiatives** Provide staff expertise and support in working with initiatives such as:
 - Two (2) National Estuary Programs in Tampa Bay and Southwest Florida
 - Florida Everglades
 - Biscayne Park
 - St. Johns River
 - Indian River Lagoon
 - Lake Worth Lagoon
- **Regional Visioning Initiatives**
 - My Region
 - One Bay
 - Southeast Florida Vision 2060
 - Reality Check First Coast
 - Heartland 2060
 - Sustainable Treasure Coast
 - Sustainable Emerald Coast
 - My Region Tomorrow
 - People, Prosperity, Preservation Southwest Florida
- Economic Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation, Natural Resources of Regional Significance, and Emergency Preparedness
- Policy Guidance for undertaking all other activities
- **Local Government Comprehensive Planning**
 - Review of local comprehensive plans, amendments and evaluation and appraisal reports – recommend to the Department of Community Affairs on consistency with the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (as a whole)
 - Scoping responsibility for Sector Plans
 - Technical Assistance – Local government comprehensive plans and land development regulations and assist with evaluation and appraisal reports, capital improvement element, school concurrency, and other implementation of Senate Bill 360 (2005)
- **Developments of Regional Impact**
 - Coordinate
 - Analyze
 - Recommend

Growth Management Responsibilities

Currently, the Regional Planning Councils are charged with several growth management responsibilities:

- **Strategic Regional Policy Plans**
 - Plans for the Region – not for the Regional Planning Council



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 Council 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 Council 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.

OUR MISSION:

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council's mission is to work together across neighboring communities to consistently protect and improve the unique and relatively unspoiled character of the physical, economic and social worlds we share... for the benefit of our future generations.

THE REGION

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council 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 percent 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 percent 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: 165,781*

County Seat: Punta Gorda

Incorporated Communities: Punta Gorda

Established: 1921

COLLIER COUNTY

Area: 1,894 Square Miles

Population: 332,854*

County Seat: East Naples

Incorporated Communities: Everglades City,

Marco and Naples

Established: 1921

GLADES COUNTY

Area: 763 Square Miles

Population: 11,323*

County Seat: Moore Haven

Incorporated Communities: Moore Haven

Established: 1921

HENDRY COUNTY

Area: 1,163 Square Miles

Population: 41,216*

County Seat: LaBelle

Incorporated Communities: Clewiston and LaBelle

Established: 1921

LEE COUNTY

Area: 803 Square Miles

Population: 623,725*

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: 393,608*

County Seat: Sarasota

Incorporated Communities: Longboat Key, North Port,

Sarasota and Venice

Established: 1921

* From Bulletin 153, Projections of Florida Population by County, 2008-2035: April 1, 2008, 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 cross programmatic 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 or exhaustive, but 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 multi-jurisdictional 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 Local Comprehensive Plan, a detailed four-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 the Council staff to review.

Secondly, Council staff reviews the request and either recommends that the proposed amendment is consistent, consistent with conditions or not consistent with

the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP). Council then reviews the proposed amendment and either approves, denies or provides additional comments to the staff comments. The Council comments are then sent to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Thirdly, DCA reviews the requests and comments made by the Council and other reviewing agencies and issues an Objections, Recommendations and Comments (ORC) report that either requests additional informational needs that the proposed plan amendment may require for clarity or identifies issues of concern that the local government must address in order to get approval for the requested amendment. After the local government addresses the DCA comments made in the ORC report, they 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 negatively impact the prior comments of the Council. If the amendment is consistent with the SRPP and if no legal challenge is submitted, it becomes final and part of the local government's Comprehensive Plan for the future.

During the past year, Council staff members reviewed and provided technical input on 26 proposed small-scale amendments and 30 proposed large-scale amendments to local comprehensive plans. Council staff members also provide technical planning assistance to communities and private entities in the region with respect to issues that are regional in magnitude, location or character.

HURRICANES

Evacuation Study Update

In the last annual report an explanation of the evacuation study update was discussed. The behavioral survey and report of findings is now complete. The survey is the most detailed ever completed in Southwest Florida. One of the most significant findings is a large reduction of evacuees seeking public shelter. Also, the hazard analysis chapter of the report is almost complete. Since this evacuation study will address multiple hazards that can affect the region, this analysis goes into more detailed than previous studies about all the potential hazards affecting the region. LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is another component of the study that is complete. Staff sent a two terabyte (TB) external hard drive to the state to store this massive amount of data. This elevation data is also being sent to the National Hurricane Center's Storm Surge Group for completion of the SLOSH (Sea Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricane) Model. The Council staff will use this elevation data for many types of analyzes in the future.

One of the most important parts of the project is completing the small area data analysis. This involved using all of the county's property appraiser's parcel data that have residential structures and hotel motel rooms. This data is then used to determine the population levels within the counties. The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council area was the only region in the state to use property appraiser data to determine the 2006 population and project population levels to 2010 and 2015. This data was provided to the transportation consultant that will use it to determine evacuation times within the region. The entire project must be completed by October 1, 2009



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND REVIEW

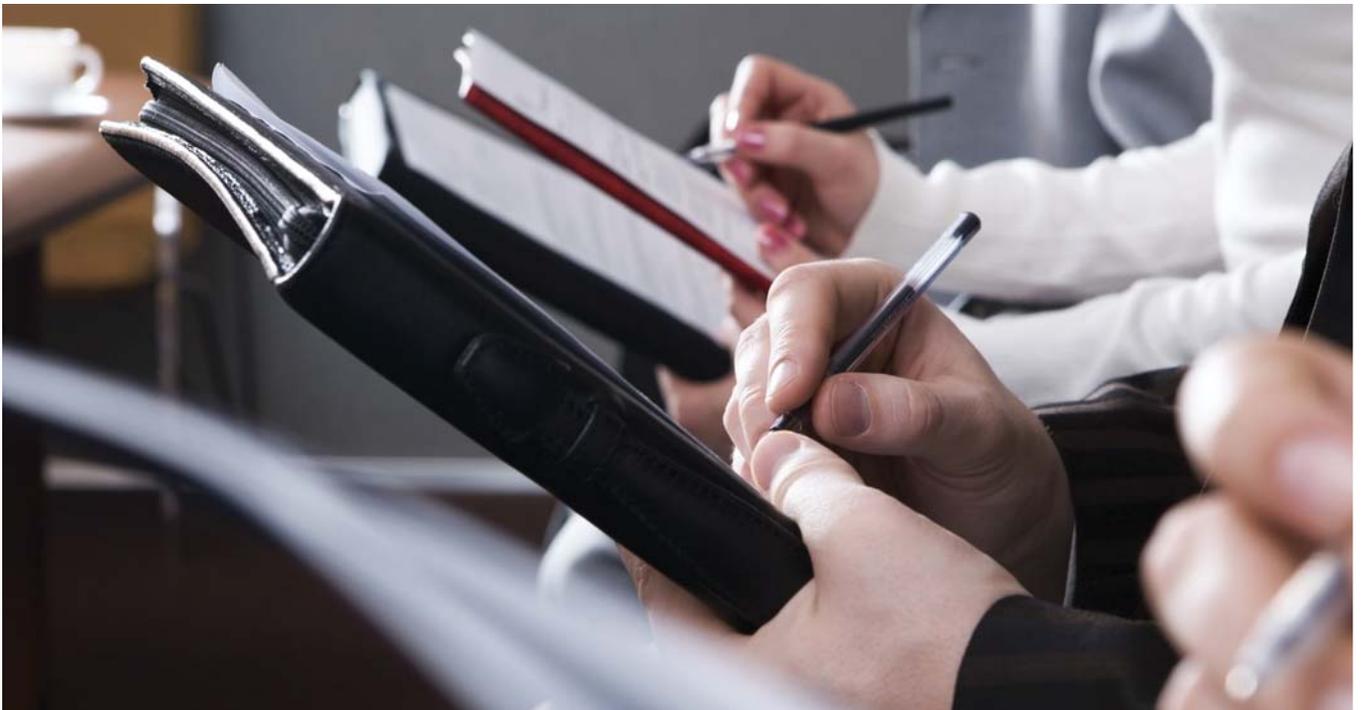
The Intergovernmental Coordination and Review (ICR) process is a federally-mandated program to make state officials aware of federal projects, programs and documents of statewide significance that may affect them. State Executive Order 83-150 designated Florida's Regional Planning Councils as "regional 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-for-profit 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 Developments of Regional Impact Development Order (when applicable), and other implications which may have multi-jurisdictional impacts.

The Council reviewed approximately one hundred applications and proposals in 2008. Of these, 50 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 in 1972, 203 Applications for Development Approval (ADA) have been submitted for review in the Southwest Florida Region. Prior to 1975, when the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was established and began reviewing ADAs, the Tampa Bay and South Florida Regional Planning Councils reviewed 16 DRIs. In the ensuing years, the Council has conducted 187 reviews of ADAs filed in Southwest Florida. In 2008, 13 DRI ADAs were under review. Review of the projects submitted in 2007/08/09 will continue into 2009. Some of these projects are on hold or maybe withdrawn due to the recession and depressed real estate market.

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 North Port. 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. At the February 19, 2009 Council meeting they voted to deny the comprehensive plan amendment for the DRI. In 2009, the DRI application 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. The project is on hold due to an incomplete sufficiency response. In 2009, the project may 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 mobile 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 approximately 11.8 acres is potential Scrub Jay habitat per Charlotte County GIS. Also, all but one out parcel was acquired by the applicant prior to filling the Application for Development Approval (ADA). This project was submitted in July 2006 and currently has been seeking extensions to their sufficiency responses and in 2009 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), 550,000 square feet of commercial on 59.37 acres, 100,000 square feet of office space on about 10 acres, an 18 hole golf course, and 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 51.38 acres.

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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 years with buildout by 2013. This project was submitted in July 2006 and has comprehensive plan consistency problems and currently has been seeking extensions to their DRI sufficiency responses and thus will continue to be reviewed 2009.

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 received a DRI Development Order (DO) on July 10th 2008 from the City of LaBelle. This DO had to be rescinded in September 2008 to avoid a Department of Community Affairs (DCA) DO appeal of the adopted DO. The applicant is working on water supply issues with the water management district and the Council and in 2009 will continue to work on to get the DO consistent with the Council Assessment Report.

Florida Gulf Coast Technology and Research Park

This 489 acre Research Park is located south of the Southwest Florida International Airport, east of Treeline Avenue, and north of Alico Road in Lee County. The proposed project at buildout will include 2,897,000 square feet of industrial, 240 hotel rooms, 400,000 square feet of commercial office, and 370,000 square feet of commercial retail. This project area has been described by the Lee County Office of Economic Development as the

"economic engine of Lee County" and is ideally suited for industrial/office and commercial uses. Consistent with the Lee Plan, the development will provide the industrial/office and commercial services to support the Southwest Florida International Airport and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). The proposed buildout is to be completed in one five year phase commencing in 2008 with buildout in the year 2013. This project was submitted in March 2007 and currently has been seeking extensions to their sufficiency responses and thus will continue to be reviewed in 2009.

Tradeport

This DRI was withdrawn on September 11, 2008. The 1,050-acre project submitted in July 2007 was located immediately southeast of the Immokalee Airport and extended both north and south of CR 846 (Immokalee Road) in the eastern portion of Immokalee. The proposed project at buildout would have included 2,871,000 square feet of industrial, 342,000 square feet of office, 125-room business hotel, 124,000 square feet of retail, and 2,750 residential units. The average residential unit cost would have been approximately \$246,000 and thus was expected to be affordable. The project was in the Immokalee urban area, the Florida Enterprise Zone, a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern and a Community Redevelopment Area. The project would have been consistent with Collier County's Growth Management Plan.

North Port Gardens

The 513-acre project is located in the City of North Port, south Sarasota County on the northeast corner of I-75 and Toledo Blade Boulevard. The proposed project at buildout will include 500 dwelling units, 2,000,000 square feet of retail, 150,000 square feet of office and 450 hotel rooms on 259 acres of uplands. Also proposed is 254 acres of wetlands conservation. The project is to be designed as a town center with a mixture of land use alternatives designed and integrated with the natural environment and feature of the project. Development is planned in two phases: 2008-2011 and 2012-2016. This project was submitted in July of 2007 and currently has been seeking extensions to their sufficiency responses and will continue to be reviewed in 2009.

DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Harborview Substantial Deviation

This DRI was originally adopted by the Charlotte County Commission in March of 1992. Several changes were made through the years until a substantial deviation ADA was filed in August 2007. The project proposal was to add 139 acres of land for a total of 653 acres. Development proposed includes 3,859 dwelling units (245 single family and 3,614 multi-family) 655,000 square feet of commercial, 50,000 square feet of office, 350 hotel rooms and a marina with 400 wet slips, 192 dry slips and 40 boat trailer parking spaces. Also proposed are 187 acres of preservation land along the Peace River and other areas of the project site. Due to the project being divided by I-75 and Harborview Road, three distinct Villages are proposed and identified as Harborview North Village, Harborview East Village and Harborview West Village. Like many neo-traditional and new urbanist type developments, the Villages will focus heavily on walkability. Construction was expected to begin in 2008 and end in 2018. This project was submitted in August of 2007 and currently has been seeking extensions to their sufficiency responses and will continue to be reviewed in 2009.

Town of Big Cypress

The Town of Big Cypress will be a mixed community, planned using the principals and guidelines of the adopted Collier County Rural Lands Stewardship Area. The Master Plan emphasizes walkability and self-sufficiency. Proposed development includes 8,968 units, 987,188 square feet of retail/service, 664,395 square feet of office, 494,080 square feet of light industrial, 500 hotel rooms and a 200 bed hospital. Also, proposed are community support facilities such as 120 acres of community facilities/civic uses, 185 acres of golf courses and 86 acres of parks. Civic uses will include, but not limited to an elementary, middle and high school. The DRI has two phases with the first commencing in 2012 and conclude in 2016 and Phase II will commence in 2017 and conclude in 2023. This project was submitted in February of 2008 and currently has been seeking extensions to their sufficiency responses and will continue to be reviewed in 2009.

Premier Airport Park

This DRI was withdrawn on February 23, 2009. On April 9, 2008, a preapplication meeting was held for the proposed Premier Airport Park Development of Regional Impact (DRI). The 225.7 +-acre master-planned mixed use business park was to be located east of Treeline Avenue, north of Alico Road, immediately west of Airport Haul Road, and immediately south of the Southwest Florida International Airport. The project was to be consistent with the Lee County Comprehensive Plan because it is in the Lee County Tradeport Future Land Use category. The project was to consist primarily of office/service industrial/warehouse buildings and office uses, and proposed ancillary retail uses to support the development. The development plan proposed 1,852,500 square feet of industrial buildings, 160,000 square feet of office, and 30,000 square feet of ancillary retail. The ADA was never submitted prior to withdrawal.

Villages of Lakewood Ranch South

The 4,935 gross acre project site is located in northern Sarasota County on the Manatee Sarasota County line adjacent to existing and planned development, the existing urban service boundary and I-75. The DRI will likely be designated eligible under the Sarasota 2050 Resources Management Area System Comprehensive Plan Amendment as a village. The proposed development is to construct 6,100 residential units (1,276 units to be affordable housing), 300,000 square feet of commercial and 75 hotel rooms. The proposed buildout is to be completed over a 20-year period. The project is adjacent to one of the largest employment centers in the region which provides a unique opportunity for higher density workforce housing proximate to employment. The project site has an ongoing 20-year mining operation generally moving from west to east which will create large lakes as unique focal points for the community. The master plan proposes a system of village and neighborhood centers to complement residential and recreational uses. A multi-tiered greenway and trail system not only deals with onsite pedestrian needs but also links to adjacent communities and the larger regional greenway system. The far eastern portions of the project contemplate low density residential and conservation that may be added

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to the larger greenway corridor system, which extends east of the parcel. This project was submitted in November of 2008 and will continue to be reviewed in 2009.

Alico Interchange Park of Commerce Substantial Deviation

This existing DRI is located within unincorporated Lee County at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of I-75 and Alico Road. The original Alico Interchange Park DRI was approved by Lee County on November 10, 1986. The original proposal was a 345-acre mixed-use project consisting of 1,498 residential dwelling units, 400 hotel rooms and 1,696,000 square feet of commercial space. There have since been four amendments to the development order. Currently, the existing DRI is entitled to construct 1,446,000 square feet of combined total office/retail square footage (which includes up to 750,000 square feet planned for corporate headquarters/office use); provided the retail square footage does not exceed a maximum of 1,120,000 square feet; 400 hotel rooms; and 800 residential dwelling units and a maximum building height of 95 feet. The substantial deviation application request is to increase the permitted square footage of office space from 750,000 square feet to 1,200,000 square feet in the northwest quadrant of the project. The proposed buildout is to be completed by 2011. This project was submitted in December of 2008 and will continue to be reviewed in 2009

In addition to reviewing ADAs, 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 new DRIs. Table 1 includes the DRIs that had activity presented to the Council in 2008 by month.

TABLE 1:
DRI ACTIVITY PRESENTED TO COUNCIL IN 2007/08

DRI	Activity
JANUARY 2008	
1. Metro Park	NOPC
2. Sandhill	NOPC
3. Merchants Crossing	NOPC
4. Toll-Rattlesnake	Request for Extension
5. Babcock Ranch Community Master DRI	Development Order Review
FEBRUARY 2008	
1. Tradeport	Request for Extension
2. Palmer Ranch Increment III	NOPC
MARCH 2008	
1. SunTrust Bank	Development Order Review
APRIL 2008	
1. Toll-Rattlesnake	Request for Extension
2. Harborview Substantial Deviation	Request for Extension
3. The Loop	Staff Assessment
MAY 2008	
1. North Port Gardens	Request for Extension
2. South LaBelle Village	Staff Assessment
3. Premier Airport Park	Preapplication Questionnaire Checklist
JUNE 2008	
1. Florida Gulf Coast Technology and Research Park	Request for Extension
2. North Port Gardens	Request for Extension
3. Toll-Rattlesnake	Request for Extension
4. Shell Point	NOPC
5. Lakewood Ranch Corporate Park	NOPC
6. Stoneybrook	NOPC
7. Big Cypress	Request for Extension
AUGUST 2008	
1. Gulf Coast Town Center	NOPC
2. South LaBelle Village	Development Order Review
3. Alico Interchange Park Substantial Deviation	Questionnaire Checklist
SEPTEMBER 2008	
1. Belle Terra	NOPC
2. Sandhill	NOPC
NOVEMBER 2008	
1. Florida Gulf Coast Technology and Research Park	Request for Extension
2. North Port Gardens	Request for Extension
3. Harborview Substantial Deviation	Request for Extension

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Council spearheads a number of initiatives designed to promote investment in our communities and enhance the economic conditions of the region. The following were the council's initiatives for 2008:

Feasibility Study for Regional Incubator Network

On August 28, 2008, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council was notified by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) that the Council was awarded a grant for \$30,000 to develop a Feasibility Study for the Regional Incubator Network. This total grant application was \$60,000 whereas the match dollars came from local sponsors throughout our region. The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, in conjunction with the Economic Development Strategy Committee, worked together for several months to submit the grant application to EDA. The issue of business incubation in our region is very important to the economic vitality of Southwest Florida. Expanding opportunities for new businesses to start, grow and succeed through the business incubator will create new jobs, as well as generate new tax revenues that can be reinvested into our region. Taking this step as a region is of strategic importance, as the feasibility study will provide the rationale and the ability for individual counties and cities to build their own incubators. This study has a projected completion date of August 2009.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee adopts the Climate Prosperity Project

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report was updated in September 2008 by the CEDS Committee and includes the addition of the Climate Prosperity Project. This project was started by Chairman and CEO of Global Urban Development Dr. Marc A. Weiss. According to Dr. Weiss, the strategy seeks to generate "substantial economic and employment growth; sustainable business; and community development by demonstrating that innovation, efficiency, and conservation in the use and reuse of all resources is the best way to increase jobs, incomes, productivity, and competitiveness. In addition, Climate Prosperity is the most cost-effective method of promoting renewable energy and clean technologies, protecting the environment, and preventing harmful impacts from global warming."

The project seeks to create jobs and protect the natural environment of Southwest Florida. Dr. Weiss believes economic

growth and climate protection are not at odds with one another. He believes the Climate Prosperity Project will provide the general framework for making places richer and healthier through sustainability in the 21st century. Southwest Florida now joins a number of other cities, counties and metropolitan regions conferring with Global Urban Development on Climate Prosperity Strategies. The list includes: Seattle/King County, Denver, St. Louis, Cleveland, Charlotte, San Antonio, Albuquerque, Southeast Michigan, Ventura, Fairfield and Montgomery County (Maryland). In December of 2008, a Climate Prosperity Guidebook will be published by the International Economic Development Council. For more information on the Climate Prosperity Project visit www.globalurban.org.

Lower West Coast Watersheds Subcommittee Addresses Stormwater Run-off Concerns

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) announced that its Lower West Coast Watersheds Subcommittee is continuing its efforts to address stormwater run-off in urban and suburban areas. This work is an effort to heighten community concern over current water quality issues that negatively impact in the bays, estuaries, and rivers in our region and in the Gulf of Mexico adjacent to our shores.

Water quality is one of the most important factors that affect everyone in the region, both economically in terms of eco-system uses and physically in terms of personal health, safety and welfare. Water quality of the bays, estuaries, rivers, lakes, wetlands, bayous and the Gulf of Mexico is critical to the prosperity and to the welfare of the residents of Southwest Florida. Recent increased frequency and duration of red tide and blue-green alga blooms, increased accumulation of red drift algae on local beaches, and other water related problems have heightened community concerns about water quality and cultural eutrophication of surrounding waters.

On February 16, 2007 the SWFRPC identified water quality as one of the most important regional issues. In order to address this issue, the Council instituted the Lower West Coast Watersheds Subcommittee. Mayor Mick Denham of Sanibel volunteered to chair the new subcommittee. A variety of public officials and experts volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

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As a first order of business the subcommittee identified five areas of concern that they wished to address. They decided not to include the water quality problems associated with the discharges of Lake Okeechobee coming from outside of Southwest Florida, but to address the issues occurring within the Southwest Florida watersheds. Those issues were identified as fertilizers, wastewater treatment plants, package wastewater treatment plants, onsite wastewater treatment plants (septic tanks) and stormwater from urban and suburban areas. The urban runoff was further subdivided into two categories, which included new urban stormwater runoff and retrofit runoff.

To date, the subcommittee has produced six resolutions that have been presented and approved by the regional planning council. These resolutions covered all the issues identified as problem areas by the subcommittee. These resolutions have been provided to county and city governments and other interested individuals throughout the six-county region so that they may take action to implement the Council's resolutions.

Currently, a majority of local and municipal governments in the region are working on or have already passed ordinances that will affect fertilizer use in their jurisdictions. With respect to wastewater treatment plants and package plants, tougher permitting requirements have been established and Council staff is working on grants so that local water treatment facilities can be improved to limit nitrogen releases into local waterways. Additionally, Council approved additional review requirements for all new Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) to ensure more rigorous water quality reviews in the future.

Following up on the Council's successful efforts to provide mechanisms to assist jurisdictions and agencies in the improvement of the overall water quality in the region, the Council at their February 2009 meeting sunsetted the subcommittee and formed a new subcommittee that has been charged with the task to identify means to implement the previously approved resolutions. The new subcommittee

is currently identifying their work program to achieve the Council's desire to improve water quality in the region.

US Sugar Buyout

On June 24, 2008, a deal was announced by the Governor's Office to acquire all assets of the U.S. Sugar Corporation by the State of Florida. Property would be purchased by the South Florida Water Management District, and it would include over 187,000 acres (292 square miles) of land. The purchase would also include a sugar refinery, juice plant, railroad and associated machinery, buildings, and fixtures. The total purchase is valued at \$1.75 billion (minus the financing carryings costs) and is subject to further independent appraisals and reviews prior to closing. The Council will consider Resolution 2008-10 regarding the procurement of assets of the United States Sugar Corporation.

The SWFRPC Resolution #2008-01 Regarding Land Procurement in Glades County by the SFWMD and the US Corps of Engineers supports an effort by Glades County which calls for just and fair compensation in lieu of tax receipts involving procurement of future county lands. This initiative is being supported by the Council to alleviate financial hardship that is experienced by local governments when lands are acquired by Federal and State governments for environmental and conservation purposes and tax revenues that were previously paid by those lands are removed from County coffers thereby reducing the amount of money local governments have to provide services to the jurisdiction's population.



LEE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an intergovernmental transportation planning agency created by an agreement among Lee County, Bonita Springs, Fort Myers, Cape



Coral, Sanibel, Fort Myers Beach and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). State and federal laws require the formation of an MPO in urbanized areas with populations of more than 50,000 in order for surface transportation projects to be eligible for federal funding. The MPO is responsible for the comprehensive transportation planning process for all of Lee County and must plan for the movement of both people and goods within the county by all modes of travel - including highways, public transportation, bicycles and foot.

The MPO develops a long range transportation plan (LRTP) every five years. This document addresses the future multimodal transportation needs of the Lee County area. It is a plan which coordinates and guides the capital improvement programs of FDOT and the local governments which are members of the MPO, as well as recognizes the ongoing maintenance and operational activities of these entities. The plan is developed to meet the criteria of the Federal Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21), as supplemented by Florida Law. Additionally, the plan is developed within compliance of the new provisions of the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). During the first quarter of 2008, the MPO began its first steps towards creating the horizon year 2035 LRTP by collecting the data needs for the 2007 base year model validation. The Lee MPO and Collier MPO will develop a bi-county model validated using the Florida Standard Urban Transportation Model Structure (FSUTMS) for CUBE/Voyager. However, for the first time the bi-county model will contain a highway validation as well as a transit validation. The MPO will continue to work on the 2035 LRTP with an adoption date of December 2010.

Bicycle and pedestrian transportation issues have long been an important part of transportation planning efforts in Lee

County, but previous LRTPs have been limited to identifying bicycle and pedestrian projects on the state roadways. The development of a county-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan will

help provide a more consistent network of facilities across jurisdictional boundaries, and will also provide the local jurisdictions an opportunity to capture the bicycle/pedestrian box funding for high priority needs (currently it is listed in the MPO priorities as Congestion Management, Bicycle/Pedestrian and Transit Box, and will be funded in 2013/2014 in the amount of \$5,000,000). In addition, this will allow more projects/facilities to be eligible for possible enhancement funding consistent with recent discussions by FDOT to provide a certain amount of enhancement funding for regional projects. The development of a plan is an important step towards reducing single occupant vehicle travel on an increasingly constrained roadway network. Improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network will provide opportunities to reduce congestion, enhancing multimodal convenience, comfort and connectivity and improving accessibility at land use destinations or transit stops for people of all ages and abilities. Near the later part of 2008, MPO staff began developing a scope of services to initiate a Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that will be used to plan for an interconnected bicycle and pedestrian network throughout Lee County. The finalized master plan will be adopted as part of the 2035 LRTP.

The MPO is responsible for the development and implementation of a balanced, integrated, and multimodal transportation program that efficiently moves passenger and freight traffic. In 2008, the MPO has successfully positioned itself to integrate freight and goods movement considerations into its transportation program. The MPO's 2030 LRTP update was enhanced to specifically acknowledge freight transportation needs. The freight element of the LRTP was meant to be an initial summary that highlights the freight system and provides guidance for future expansion and enhancements of the county's freight program. This initial summary

CONTINUED...

was built off the Southwest Florida Freight Study, completed by FDOT District One. This study focused on the Southwest Florida Region, and Lee County determined it needed a more comprehensive freight analysis at the county level. Through the completion of the Lee County Freight and Goods Mobility Analysis, Lee County has now taken the next step in the development of its freight program, which will also be part of the 2035 LRTP. The objectives of the Lee County Freight and Goods Mobility Analysis are to help identify the freight transportation investment needs in Lee County; establish an ongoing freight program for Lee County; enhance the integration of freight into the existing transportation program; establish initial truck routing policies and plan; and promote the development of key freight partnerships between the State, MPO, the county, cities, other major public agencies, and the private sector. In order to achieve these objectives, it was necessary to develop a regional freight profile that describes the county's freight flows; presents key economic and demographic trends that impact freight movements; identify key freight needs and regional developments impacting freight supply and demand; review and identify zoning and transportation policies affecting truck mobility; and provide recommendations for an ongoing freight program and truck routing policies.

The MPO's website, www.mpo-swfl.org, was launched in May 2006, and during 2008 the website had 6,899 hits. If you would like to receive updates throughout the year on current issues that the Lee County MPO Board is undertaking via the Transportation Advisory Network distribution list, or to take the MPO's Public Participation Plan Survey, please contact Meghan Marion at 239-338-2550 ext. 219, by email at mmarion@swfrpc.org or visit the MPO's website.



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The implementation of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) created a new relationship among all levels of government, businesses, community leaders, environmental, public interest groups, and citizens. The law made citizens full partners in preparing for emergencies as well as managing chemical risks. All of these groups play an important part in the implementation of EPCRA. It is virtually impossible in our society to avoid daily contact with chemicals. The products we depend upon to make life easier are often exposed to one or more chemical processes. Chemicals are indeed everywhere, and how we handle chemical products, by-products and waste are not only a personal responsibility, but a community responsibility as well. While protective laws are a response to public needs, it is up to all citizens to understand these laws and their impact on the community.

Awards Initiative

In 2008, the Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee was pleased to honor Richard Zvoloski of Collier County Emergency Management 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.



Zvoloski is shown below receiving his award. Pictured on his right is Mr. Mike Murphy of the Florida State Emergency Response Commission conferring the award on behalf of the Commission. To his left is Chairman Bruce Porter of the Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee. Mr. Zvoloski has served on the Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee since July 11, 2003, and has assisted by coordinating Federal EPA and State hazardous materials training, participating in regional exercises, and serving on ad-hoc committees, and in leadership roles since his tenure began on the LEPC.

Hazardous Materials Program - Facility Compliance

In 2008, there were more than 1,000 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 2008, the Florida Department of Community Affairs reported the 10 top chemicals in the region in the order provided (see chart).

Top 10 Hazardous Materials and Inventory Levels	
Chemical	Inventory Level (lbs.)
Sulfuric Acid	2,957,064
Methyl Bromide	1,414,866
Ammonia	367,761
Chlorine	324,700
Aldicarb	77,299
Sulfur Dioxide	31,700
Nitric Acid	24,200
Endosulfan	23,503
Paraquat Dichloride	20,057
Phorate	16,266

Hazardous Materials Training

Hazardous material training is an important mission of the LEPC. In 2008, a total of 306 individuals (see below) benefited from the training conducted by the LEPC. Training programs included the following:

- Hazardous Materials Awareness Level Course, February 6, 2008
- Air Monitoring for Hazardous Materials Technicians, March 17-10, 2008
- Emergency Response Guidebook & CHEMTREC Course, September 12, 2008
- Hazardous Waste Operations/Hazmat Response Course, September 12, 2008
- Clandestine Drug Lab Awareness and Operational Level Course, September 25-26, 2008



Program Training by Occupation				
Profession	Awareness	Operations	Technician	Total
Fire	18	68	30	116
Law Enforcement		8		8
EMS	35	4		39
Other	124	9		133
Public Works	10			10
Total	187	89	30	306

Emergency Preparedness Exercise Training

Hazardous materials exercises are an important component of the mission of the committee to provide a safe and sustainable emergency response community. Moreover, exercises promote emergency preparedness, test emergency plans, train personnel and demonstrate operational capability. In 2008, the Southwest Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee conducted both table-top and full-scale exercises. The regional events incorporated a simulated air crash, hostages at a local Collier County high school, and a chemical disaster. Below is a tactical discussion during the full-scaled exercise of April 29, 2008.

Community Safety Outreach Initiatives

Annually for a number of years, the Committee has coordinated and supported initiative promoting Hazardous Materials Awareness Week in the region. Also, local governments were encouraged to endorse chemical safety in their jurisdictions by passing proclamations and inviting either Fire Chiefs or County Emergency Managers to receive the promulgated instruments and by speaking on the issue during the official meeting following the passing of the instrument. Additionally, chemical information and notifications were published in the print media.

Provided below is a picture taking during the regional table-top exercise of March 26, 2008. The event was held in Collier County, and over thirty (30) public and private agencies were participants in the. The table-top event was held mainly to address issues and facilitate discussions likely to confront the full-scale activity.



Tactical Discussion April 29, 2008



Regional Tabletop Exercise March 26, 2008

CHARLOTTE HARBOR NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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 2008 follow.

HIGHLIGHTS

CCMP Update

On March 24, 2008, the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) Update was adopted. Through a different organization and the use of color graphics, the document was reduced from 750 pages to 160 pages with more content. 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 plan addresses hydrologic alterations, water quality degradation, fish and wildlife habitat loss, and stewardship gaps. Priority action SG-Q was added to address climate change issues. As a result, CHNEP to climate change grants are discussed in a later section. The update may be found at: <http://www.chnep.org/CCMP/CCMP.htm>.

Environmental Indicators Update

On May 17, 2008, CHNEP updated its Environmental Indicators to reflect the CCMP update. Twelve priority indicators were selected to highlight in a Watershed Report. Contracts have been issued to address data gaps for publication of a 2009 Watershed Report. Two important contracts were completed to provide data related to environmental indicators. They include the Tidal Shoreline Conditions map and a Historic Subbasins map.

Children's Book

Adventures in the Charlotte Harbor Watershed was published! In 2001, a Children's Book was identified as a major environmental education gap for the study area. This 64-page illustrated book for children was developed in partnership with Carol Mahler who wrote the book, Rachel Rebekah Renne who illustrated it and many others who contributed and reviewed it. 20,000 copies were printed. All seven school districts in the counties that participate in the CHNEP distributed the book to their third grade students. (Manatee gave the books to their fifth grade students.) Jelks Family Foundation provided \$5,000 toward the 2009 printing of the Children's Book. The book is also posted at: <http://www.chnep.org/info/ChildrensBook/ChildrensBook.htm>.

Fertilizer Ordinances

CHNEP's host agency, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, adopted a resolution outlining recommendations for local fertilizer ordinances on March 15, 2007. CHNEP endorsed it and forwarded the resolution to its partners. To date, ten of the eleven local governments shared by CHNEP and SWFRPC have adopted an ordinance regulating content, timing of application, and location of application of lawn fertilizer. CHNEP assisted Sarasota and Charlotte County governments to develop and print brochures to inform its citizens about the ordinances.

2008 Watershed Summit

The third Triennial Watershed Summit was held from March 25-27, 2008. It is an important step in the CHNEP process of bringing public and private stakeholders together to inform the community regarding ongoing studies and critical environmental issues facing the region. The Summit is an opportunity to review progress and discuss current and emerging issues affecting the Charlotte Harbor watershed. The theme was From Data to Policy: Our Partnership in Action and will result in a special issue of the Florida Scientist in 2009. More can be seen at: <http://www.chnep.org/Events/Summit08/Summit08.htm>.

ON-GOING WORK

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. A Science Forum was started in 2007 and continued through 2008. Science Forum meets the morning of the TAC and includes presentations of recent science findings. Judy Ott replaced Catherine Corbett as CHNEP Scientist.

Grants Received

In 2003, a commitment to pursuing grant opportunities was implemented as a component of the Long Range Financial Strategy. Early successes included sheparding public support for the acquisition of the 72,000-acre Babcock Ranch. In 2008, several grants were successfully obtained through CHNEP's grant applications efforts.

Outreach

The CHNEP is continuing the publication of its newsletter, *Harbor Happenings*, the annual calendar, and its web site. *Harbor Happenings* is now being translated into Spanish and placed on the web site. The newsletter provides information on a wide variety of topics including latest research findings, restoration accomplishments, changes in legislation, upcoming events, and information about CHNEP's partners including the water management districts. CHNEP staff and committee members have provided presentations at a variety of venues and on a variety of topics.

Research

The CHNEP conducts research through partners, contractors, and by staff. 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.

Completed elements of the CHNEP research program include:

- ◆ Tidal Shorelines Conditions geodatabase from Photo-

Science was completed. Digital data from Volunteer Shoreline monitoring program tied to parcel data.

Partners completed the following projects under CHNEP's Research and Restoration Partners Program:

- ◆ Final report for FY05 Research and Restoration Partner project "Valisneria americana restoration in the Caloosahatchee River."

Restoration

Numerous students and boaters volunteered to participate in a mangrove restoration event which took place on the east and west walls of Charlotte Harbor.

- ◆ CHNEP Scientist completed 10-24-07 draft Water Quality Plan Formulation document for the Southwest Florida Feasibility Study.
- ◆ Kick-off for Upper Peace River BMAP, included valuable presentation by David Tomasko.
- ◆ Final Report to the South Florida Water Management District on the Hendry Creek Basin Onsite Treatment and Disposal System Voluntary Homeowner Management Program.
- ◆ Presentation on OSTDS management and Hendry Creek Pilot Project results to SWFRPC subcommittee considering developing resolution on OSTDS management.
- ◆ The City of Punta Gorda chosen as the adaptation plan site for the Climate Ready Estuary pilot program.



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 nineteen years.

Good Wheels, Inc., the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Lee County and the joint service area of Glades and Hendry Counties, is responsible for the actual arrangement and/or delivery of transportation services for transportation disadvantaged persons.

The Local Coordinating Board (LCB) is appointed and staffed by the planning agency, overseeing and annually evaluating the CTC. The LCBs also provide assistance to the CTCs in identifying local service needs and provide information, advice and direction to CTCs on the coordination of services. 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 para-transit services and needs in each service area.

As the five-year contract for the Community Transportation Coordinator expired on June 30, 2008, the planning agency staff began the process of selecting a Community Transportation Coordinator through the Request For Proposal (RFP) process in February 2008. The RFP Review Committee met on April 28, 2008 to review the proposals received and rank the respective proposers according to the established evaluation criteria set forth in the Request For Proposal. Good Wheels, Inc. was selected as the CTC for both Lee County and the joint service area of Glades and Hendry Counties. The new CTC contract runs from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2013.

Projects last year included beginning the preparation of a major update to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) for each service area. This year, the format of the TDSP was changed to include a public participation section as well as including the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom programs in the Needs Assessment portion of the Development Plan. The Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan has three components:

- 1) Development Plan – identifies the long-term goals and objectives for the local program;
- 2) Service Plan – identifies the operational and administrative structure and
- 3) Quality Assurance - describes the methods utilized to evaluate the services provided by the Community Transportation Coordinator.

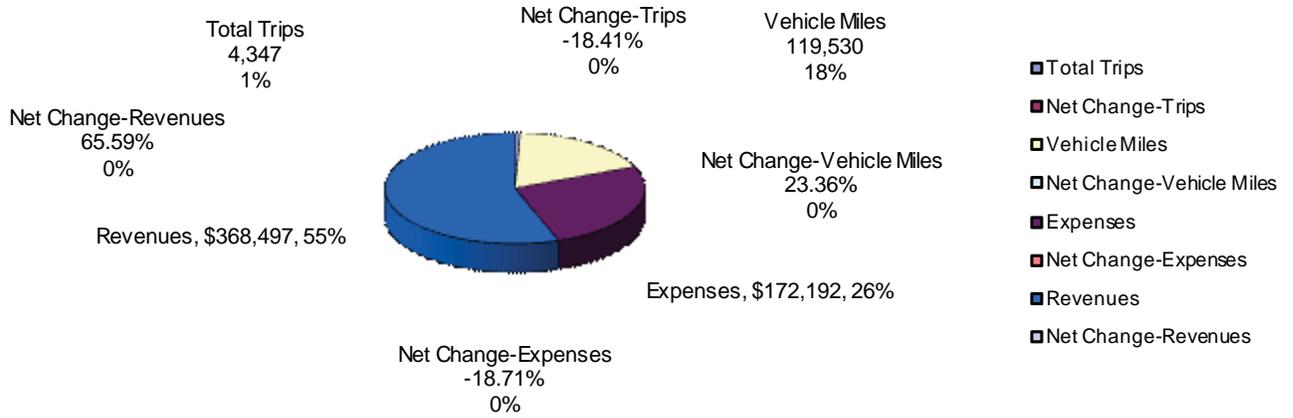
A major topic of discussion this year were the cutbacks in Medicaid funding and restrictions on Transportation Disadvantaged Non-Sponsored funding which have resulted in Good Wheels, Inc., the CTC for Lee County and the Glades-Hendry Joint Service Area, being more restrictive in providing transportation service to persons with disabilities for anything other than medical trips. With the current funding shortfall, these passengers will experience even further cutbacks which will affect those with life-sustaining and medically necessary services. The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, in conjunction with the Community Transportation Coordinators, planning agencies and other various governmental agencies, worked feverishly during the year to try and find a solution to these cutbacks.

In Glades County, the Community Transportation Coordinator, Good Wheels, Inc. provided 4,347 total trips, a decrease of 18.41% from 2007. Vehicle miles for 2008 were 119,530, an increase of 23.36%. Expenses decreased 18.71% over 2008 for a total of \$172,192. Revenues increased 65.59% over 2008 for a total of \$368,497.

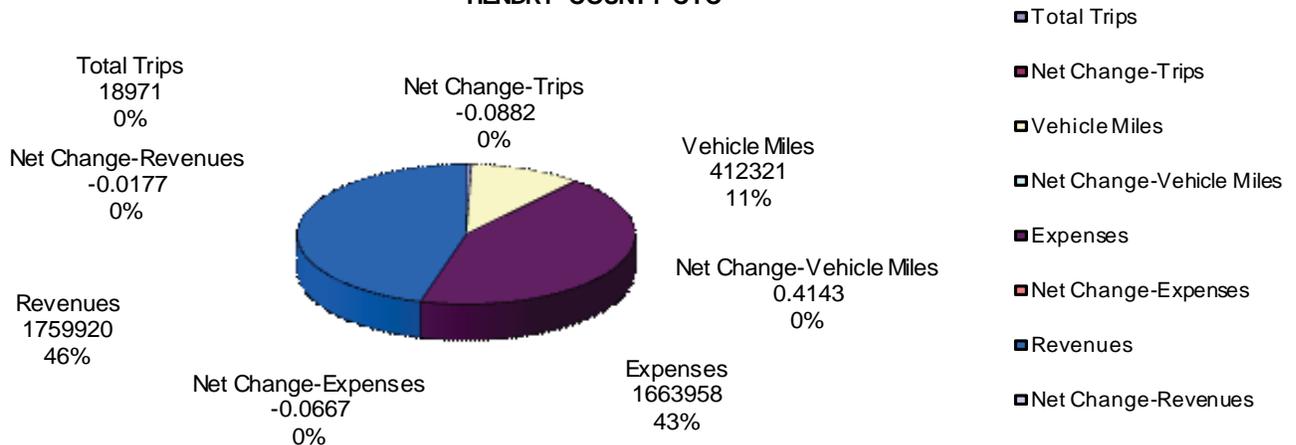
In Hendry County, the Community Transportation Coordinator, Good Wheels, Inc. provided 18,971 total trips, a decrease of 8.82% from 2007. Vehicle miles for 2008 were 412,321, an increase of 41.43%. Expenses decreased 6.76% over 2007 for a total of \$1,663,958. Revenues decreased 1.77% over 2007 for a total of \$1,759,920.

In Lee County, the Community Transportation Coordinator, Good Wheels, Inc. provided 135,064 total trips, a decrease of 4.37% from 2006. Vehicle miles for 2008 were 1,554,710, a decrease of 7.26%. Expenses increased 18.57% over 2007 for a total of \$3,746,826. Revenues decreased 15.37% over 2007 for a total of \$3,283,836.

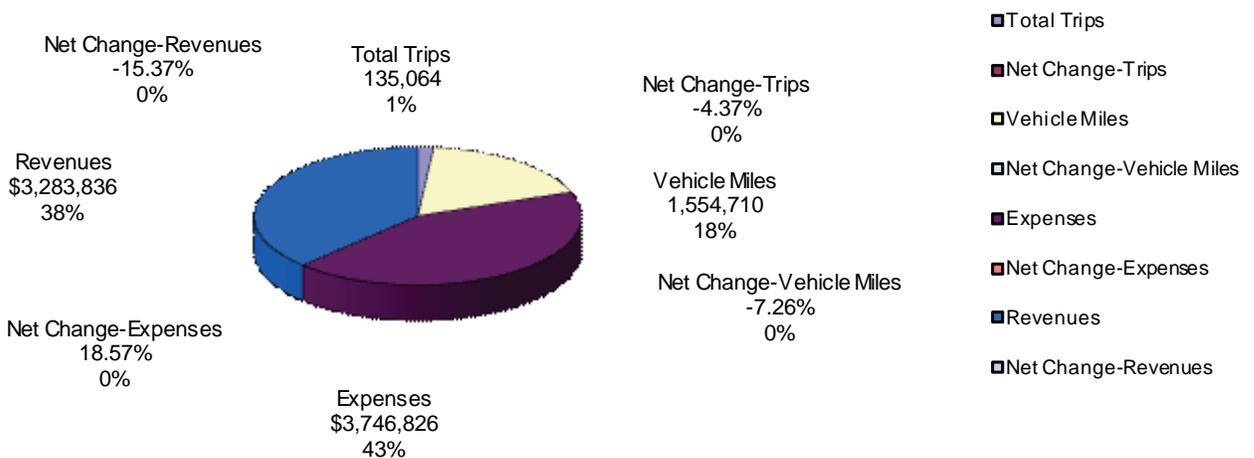
GLADES COUNTY CTC



HENDRY COUNTY CTC



LEE COUNTY CTC



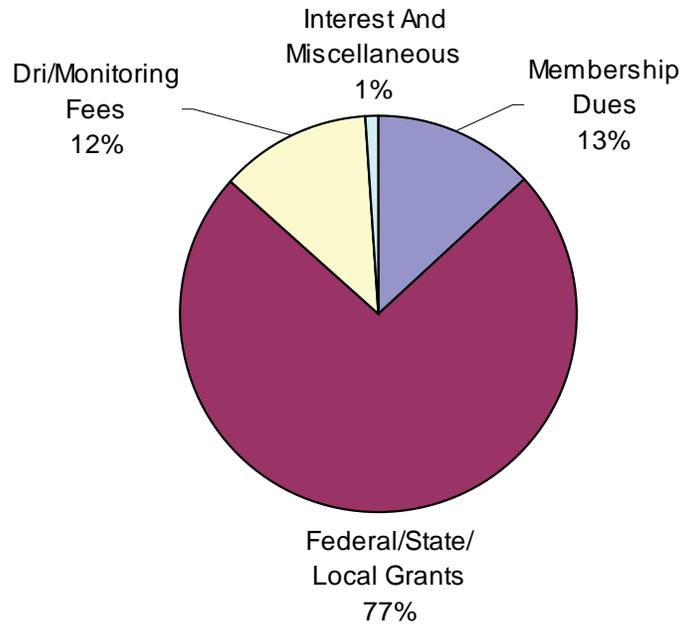
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

In its annual Independent Auditor's Report to the Council, 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, 2008 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

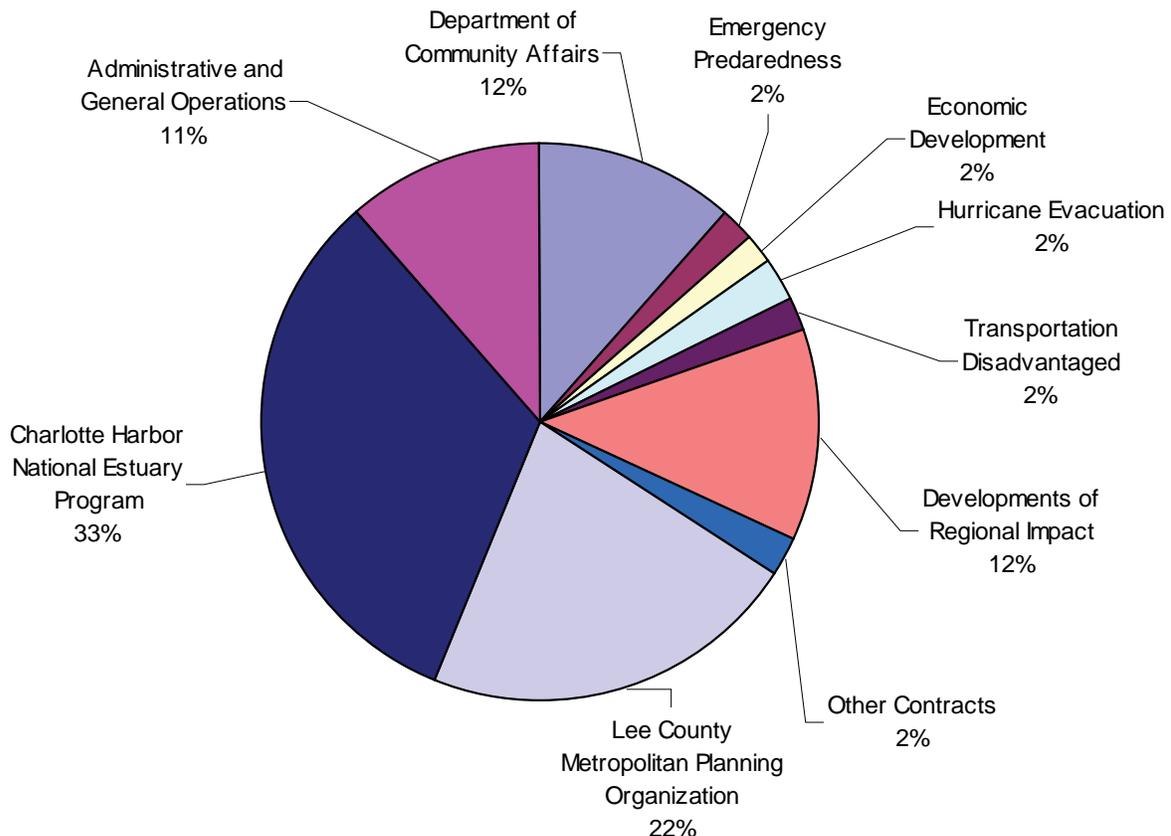
The Council's fund balance stood at \$637,988 on September 30th, an increase of \$72,145 from the prior year-end balance. The Council received new grants this fiscal year which accounted for the increase in fund balance.

Total expenses decreased 1.91% and revenue decreased by 5%.

2008 Council Revenue



2008 Council Expenses



TECHNOLOGY

In 2008 the Structure and Technology Working Group was created to help understand the RPC's need for new technology. The creation of this group was not only to help enhance and implement new technology to improve and streamline workflow, but also to create a more eco-friendly environment. There were a number of initiatives discussed and implemented in 2008:

Going Wireless

The first item that we addressed was to implement a wireless connection for our conference room. This was mainly put into operation to create a "going green" focus for Council meetings. As an alternative to printing out agenda packets, Council members could bring laptops and connect wireless to follow an electronic version of the agenda located on the RPC's website. This is very helpful for not only Council meetings, but also very useful for subcommittees and other meetings.

Web Conferencing

The second item addressed was to create the ability to hold web conference meetings. After researching different web conferencing solutions we found that the Florida Department of Management Services offers a WebEx web conferencing service. This would give us the ability to hold web conference meetings, which would promote more attendance by allowing members to attend via the web conferencing application. Ultimately using less gas and less travel time, and providing more attendance via the web.

Conference Calls

After researching several options for web conferencing, staff was made aware of an inexpensive solution through the Florida Department of Management Services to implement a conference call solution. Staff was able to save a considerable amount of money per minute by enrolling in this service. This was another way for staff to allow less travel time for meetings.

Document Management System

Another major issue facing the staff of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council is a dedicated document management system. During several meetings different options

were discussed. Staff continues to research possible solutions to manage the large amount of data. This also ties directly to a disaster recovery mechanism that the RPC is working towards relating to Information Systems.

Agenda Management

The committee also researched on how to streamline the agenda for the Council meetings. The agenda has been broken up into sections which include: 1) Consent Agenda, 2) Administrative Agenda and 3) Regional Issues Agenda. The Consent Agenda consists of items that are required by Florida Statutes (DRIs, Comprehensive Plans, IC&R, etc.), along with items that don't require discussion unless one or more the members request to have an item pulled for discussion purposes. The Consent Agenda is approved by the Council making a motion on all items within the Consent Agenda, instead of individually. The Administrative Agenda was created to consist of items for the Council's consideration regarding their subcommittees and staff policies and procedures. The final section of the agenda, Regional Issues, was created for presentations and other items and/or issues that the Council wishes to review and discuss.



Southwest Florida

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