

**Thursday, September 1, 2011
Ocala 2035 Vision
Leadership Group Meeting
Training Room, Citizen Service Center**

The following members were in attendance:

Paolo Mastroserio, Chair
Steve Albright
Jaye Baillee
Bob Dumond
Summer Gill
Narvella Haynes

Ira Holmes
Jerome Johnson
Ruth Reed
Fred Roberts
Clark Yandle

The following members were not in attendance:

Ken Ausley
Barabara Fitos
Nancy Ledding

Gilbert Martinez
Todd Rudnianyn

The following City staff members were in attendance:

Tye Chighizola
Pete Lee
Mike Daniels

Lisa Walsh
Peggy Cash

Consultants in attendance:

Curtis Ostrodka
Geoffrey McNeill
Bill Ray

I. Proposed Future Land Use Classifications

Mr. Ostrodka reported that refinements were made to the Future Land Use Map (FLU) and classifications since the last meeting.

A PowerPoint presentation was shown with three goals being outlined:

1. Consistent with the Ocala 2035 Vision - Mr. Ostrodka noted that land use classifications are being more precisely outlined on the map. When the map was first drawn during the visioning process the lines were larger and blurred. Lines will be drawn along parcel lines eventually.
2. To respect existing development rights - Mr. Ostrodka commented that the process should not cause angst for current or future property owners.
3. Simplify the City's Future Land Use Map – Mr. Ostrodka remarked that the City's current map has so many land-use classifications that the map is hard to follow. The number of land-use classifications is being greatly reduced. There are 18 existing classifications. There were 4 classifications proposed, but that number has increased to 7. The proposed classifications are more functional than the existing classifications. Descriptions are functional based on location. Mr. Ostrodka noted that one size does not fit all. Each area is uniquely different.

Mr. Ostrodka reviewed the FLU classifications as shown in the PowerPoint presentation. The previous names and the proposed "functional" names were displayed. He said the City won't want to allow

someone to build anything anywhere. There are specific concentrated places as outlined in the Vision. Each Special District will have a unique name to describe the specific character of the area.

Mr. Ostrodka explained that Low Intensity remains along corridors. He said it was discussed that this is not the designation actually wanted for some of the areas, but those areas are already developed as such. Having a design overlay for corridors has been discussed. Gateways have previously been discussed, but what they will actually be has not been determined. They should be something that invites people into the City. Along the corridors, architectural guidelines would be encouraged, but not required.

Mr. Ostrodka advised that there will be a Special District Classification. These were previously proposed as being "Medium High Intensity." These areas will serve the community and neighborhood. Each area will be named based on unique characteristics such as "Croskey Park" or "SE 36th Avenue & Maricamp."

The downtown area will be named "Downtown." This area was previously named "High Intensity." It will include the central business district, North Magnolia and the hospital area.

Existing and future residential areas will have a "Neighborhood" Classification. Currently there are different densities associated with different residential zoning categories. The proposed classification will not be set up like that. The housing mix will be determined by zoning. He noted that there will be an opportunity for some commercial development for personal services, retail, etc. Commercial uses would not be along an entire street; commercial uses could possibly be limited to corners. The goal is to make neighborhoods walkable.

Mr. Ostrodka identified the "Employment" Classification as not being subject to form based coding. He said these areas would not be developed with pedestrians in mind. Development review would be different; it would not be appearance-based.

The "Corridor Overlay" Classification is automobile-oriented. It will require form based design guidelines.

Mr. Ostrodka referred to the PowerPoint presentation which displayed the map developed from the Ocala 2035 Vision process. He noted that the first step was the Vision. The next step is the Future Land Use Map, which is what this group is currently finalizing. He showed a proposed 2035 Future Land Use Designations Design Map.

The next step is identifying Community Areas. One area has been identified; it is the West Ocala area, a map of which was shown. A map titled 2035 Proposed Community Areas was displayed. It showed the entire City divided into 9 Community Areas. The next step will be to develop Community Area Policies.

The fifth step is to address zoning, and develop a form-based code. Work is scheduled to begin on this process next year. The "form" based code will be about what a block or street looks like instead of an individual building. "Best Practices Design Guidelines" will also be prepared. The final step looks at the block/parcel. Mr. Ostrodka noted that the steps move from being very general (broad) to very specific (pointed) as outlined on an inverted triangle in the PowerPoint presentation.

II. Community Areas

Mr. Ostrodka reported that the West Community area is still being better defined. Community Areas were previously discussed as one of the steps of “How does it all fit together?” shown in the PowerPoint presentation.

III. Proposed Transportation Corridors

Mr. Daniels pointed out that major transportation corridors have been identified. It needs to be determined how the roadways will function and what improvements need to be made. After that the residential collector streets will be looked at as to how they can be improved. Mr. Ostrodka noted that some roadways will need to go on a diet. Policies to promote “complete streets” need to be developed.

Mr. Lee commented that gateways are not just for the City, gateways are also needed for the downtown to promote “a sense of arrival.” Ms. Baillee noted that a huge focal point for the Chamber right now is the promotion of the Florida Scenic Byway for Black Bears. Mr. Chighizola interjected that the gateways and corridors should be tied in with the way-finding signage that the City is currently working on.

Ms. Baillee commented that she likes how neighborhoods are named and asked if there will be an opportunity to name neighborhoods in the future. Mr. Lee responded that there will; areas need to be “branded.” Mr. Ostrodka noted that as Community Areas are identified, neighborhood/sub-areas within them will also be identified.

Mr. Mastroserio pointed out that a person traveling down US441 doesn’t know they’ve reached Ocala; a person traveling down the same roadway knows when they’ve reached Gainesville. Mr. Lee stressed that corridor improvements are needed. There will be a need to prioritize which sections of corridors are more important and how they are to be treated with landscaping, paving, etc. Mr. McNeill said that while working on the West Ocala Area Plan, VHB has become familiar with these corridors and has looked at specific design elements. Roadways can be changed with landscaping, way-finding, etc. There does need to be a sense of arrival. He identified Ocala as a City of corridors, neighborhoods and a strong downtown. He said that West Ocala is being addressed as a community and not as different neighborhoods. Areas need to be looked at for where investments should be made and then specific areas/districts need to be prioritized.

Mr. Ostrodka said the intent and sense of purpose for the Future Land Use Designations needs to not just come from staff, but needs to come from the Leadership Group and ultimately the public. He asked if the Group is on board with what has been presented. Mr. Lee acknowledged that changes were made and wanted to make sure everyone is in agreement with them. Mr. Albright said he agrees with residential neighborhoods being looked at individually instead of with the existing land use and zoning designations. Mr. Ray commented that residential is compatible with residential whether it is 2 units per acre or 6 units per acre.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that there will be provisions for “mom and pop” type businesses within neighborhoods.

The Group discussed the Downtown area and was in agreement that it should include the hospitals down to SE 17th Street, and North Magnolia. Mr. Mastroserio suggested there are ways to realign roadways to better connect the area.

Mr. McNeill explained possible ways to change Pine Street, from SR200 to the downtown. He suggested looking outside the box for ways to reconnect or knit pieces back together. Mr. Yandle commented that Pine Street is a “vital artery” through the City. Mr. Lee noted that roadways do not necessarily have to lose lanes to reconnect areas. Mr. McNeill said that they’re looking at ways for pedestrians to cross Pine Street safely. It needs to be determined how the West Ocala area fits into the FLU map. The area will be looked at in more detail and all areas will need to fit into the FLU map. He commented that there are ways to maximize the value of Pine Street to the downtown. Mr. Yandle explained that the North Magnolia group worked with FDOT to provide a way for pedestrians heading east to cross Pine Street. He commented that FDOT was not too willing to work with them; Pine Street is a main transportation corridor through the City.

Mr. Mastroserio suggested that the Leadership Group go on a field trip to look at various roadways and to have a brainstorming session concerning the corridors. Mr. Lee suggested that the Group needs to define how streets are to look. Mr. Yandle said there needs to be a better way to plan future roadways for bikes, pedestrians and landscaping. He noted that sidewalks are utilized and necessary. Mr. Lee commented that the goal is to try and move away from “car blight.” No matter which district, there should be a sense of arrival. Mr. Johnson said that how sidewalks are designed also needs to be determined. Mr. Lee said that this is something that will be addressed in the future. It was commented that sidewalks are intermittent throughout the City; pedestrian access is needed. A discussion ensued concerning sidewalk development.

Mr. McNeill commented that at some point it needs to be recognized that the resident is more important than the person passing through town. Streets need to be redesigned to make them safe for pedestrians and bicyclists. Priorities need to be set. DOT is all about moving people from Point A to Point B but the points aren’t even identifiable.

Mr. Lee asked the Group if it wants to proceed as proposed today, and asked for the Group’s endorsement to move forward. And, he suggested setting an agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Clark Yandle commented that he is fairly pleased with what was presented, and moved to proceed as proposed. Mr. Steve Albright seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Mastroserio reiterated that the Group needs to go on a field trip to look at specific roadways including 1st Avenue.

Mr. Yandle commented that Pine Street was designed to take people “through” Ocala. Mr. Ray remarked that it doesn’t invite people to stay.

It was discussed and decided that Mr. Mastroserio, as the Chair, would meet with staff and determine field trip locations and an agenda for the next meeting.

It was discussed that part of the challenge is to make a trip down the boulevard more inviting, but that may not be the priority. Mr. Mastroserio suggested that local roadway improvements may need to be addressed from a cost perspective.

Mr. Yandle suggested that SR40 be shifted to the north. He commented that it would be a positive move. Mr. Lee said that Mr. Mastroserio could make that suggestion to City Council. Mr. Yandle pointed out that there have been many meetings and discussions concerning SR40. He said that moving SR40 to the north would not be an expense as described in the past. It would be an investment; it has a perceived value. Mr. Lee commented that the benefits would be seen over time. Mr. Chighizola suggested bringing in a representative from FDOT. Mr. Lee said that should be done later. Mr. Ray agreed. He said it would be better to present a specific idea to FDOT. Mr. Yandle suggested keeping in mind the relocation of SR40 when working on the West Ocala Community Plan.

Mr. Chighizola reported that a request is going to be made to design professionals to submit a plan for the Tusawilla area. Mr. Yandle said that SR40 and the proposed linear park is an issue to consider in the plan. Mr. Lee said that traffic needs to be slowed down through Ocala. Mr. Chighizola said that FDOT has agreed to narrowing the lanes to 11 feet and widening the median. Mr. McNeill said the thought process needs to be about who is being served by the roadway. Tusawilla Park needs to be opened up to the downtown. He commented that SR40 will always be a barrier if it is viewed as one. He noted that SR200, SR40 and Hwy27 will always be the gateways to the downtown.

The meeting was adjourned.