

Virtual Community Meeting

May 23, 2023

Whole Group Presentation

The third community meeting began at 6 pm via zoom. The presenter began by discussing the need and process for updating the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use section, indicating that a significant growth in residents and employment is expected in Hillsborough County over the next 20 years. The process for updating the Future Land Use Section was also reviewed, with an expected public hearing of the update in spring 2024 by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners. The presenter clarified the differences between Future Land Use and zoning and specified that this update only applies to Unincorporated Hillsborough County and that the three incorporated cities in Hillsborough County have their own comprehensive plans. Finally, the presenter discussed how the Comprehensive Plan worked together with the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transit Development Plan and Land Development Code.

Next, the results of Plan Hillsborough's survey were reviewed. Demographics of survey respondents were indicated, with most being Caucasian and working full time. A significant portion of respondents preferred not to answer these inquiries. The survey results indicated that high priorities included preserving natural areas, infrastructure and development, maintaining agricultural and rural lands and creating a variety of mobility choices. Having a variety of housing types was indicated as the lowest priority but was still rated 3.36 out of 5 stars by survey respondents.

The presenter provided a broad overview of three policies the Planning Commission is considering including in the Future Land Use update. The first is the Centers and Connections (C&C) policy, whereby property owners within a certain distance of corridors and activity centers could request increases in allowable density and intensity while agreeing to provide community amenities. As part of this discussion, a poll was taken which allowed meeting participants to indicate their priorities for new developments.

The discussion then moved to Transit Oriented Development, a type of development where growth is focused around major transit corridors and stations. The purpose of this type of development is to expand transportation options to increase access to daily needs, recreation, education and economic opportunities.

Finally, the presenter discussed the proposed edits to the Commercial Locational Criteria, existing adopted policies that govern the requirements for commercial development within residential, rural, agricultural and industrial Future Land Use categories. The Commercial Locational Criteria study was first started in 2021 and based on the Board of County Commissioners recommendation was folded into the overall Future Land Use section update. Staff was seeking additional feedback from the community on locating appropriately scaled commercial development adjacent to residential developments.

Further details about Centers and Connections, Transit Oriented Development and Commercial Locational Criteria were discussed in breakout groups, which are summarized below.

Breakout Sessions

Commercial Locational Criteria

Plan Hillsborough staff reviewed what IS and IS NOT changing with the proposed Commercial Locational Criteria (CLC).

What is changing:

- Addition of new Future Land Use category, Neighborhood Mixed Use-6, which allows commercial activity without permitting high density development
- Reviewing maximum development size per quadrant in rural and industrial areas
- Considering how auto-oriented uses (i.e., drive-through facilities, car washes, etc.) are handled in specific Future Land Use categories
- Utilize new Context Classification Map (in place of the outdated 2040 Cost Affordable Map) to determine appropriate locations for commercial development
 - Context Classification Map puts roadways into categories like urban, suburban, or rural to determine which type of development is appropriate.
 - Map shared during meeting is a draft and is not adopted.
 - Community Plans will not be superseded by the CLC.
- Establish minimum distance between new and existing commercial nodes to prevent strip commercial development.
 - Minimum distance based on road and development type. Urban areas would have a smaller minimum distance; rural areas have a larger minimum distance
 - Only applies to new commercial development
 - Waiver opportunities available
- Developments need to provide direct pedestrian access

What is NOT changing:

- Existing commercial entitlements are exempt
- Agricultural-related uses are exempt from CLC
- 22 Community Plans in Livable Communities Element
- Mixed use Future Land Use categories are not subject to CLC
- Floor area ratio based on the Future Land Use category
- 75% of site must be a certain distance from an intersection; required distance being reviewed and updated

After the presentation, an open discussion (breakout sessions) took place. First, staff explained that the currently used 2040 Cost Affordable Map was outdated and a new map needed to be used that examined the relationship between land use and transportation. The proposed map is

the Context Classification map, already adopted by the County, and the new criteria would require non-residential development to be located at the intersection of two roadways with a context classification. Staff also explained that the CLC is intended to address incompatible commercial uses next to residential development, while still allowing residents to access daily goods and services. As a follow up, staff clarified that big box stores require a more intensive zoning district and would not be considered as a possible compatible non-residential development in a residential area.

Staff also emphasized that this is not an incentive-based policy, but rather a clarification and update of existing adopted criteria a developer must meet in order to add non-residential development into a residential area. Staff are also working on creating maps that delineate land for new development versus land for redevelopment that will be presented at a future outreach meeting. These maps will be displayed at a future community meeting.

The presenters clarified that residents need to contact the Development Services department for zoning maps and inquiries. A draft CLC map showing the potential for additional intersections to be considered for non-residential development is currently available on the Plan Hillsborough website, located [here](#). The existing adopted County Context Classification map is located [here](#).

Transit Oriented Development

The presenter began with an overview of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) policies that already exist in the comprehensive plans for Unincorporated Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa and explained that there are not currently examples in Hillsborough County because we don't have a sufficient transit system to support this type of development. TOD is a type of development where higher densities and mixed uses are constructed around transit stops to increase mobility options for residents and workers in these areas. There is currently some work toward these goals in the USF area connecting to downtown Tampa. TOD policies in the comprehensive plan are optional, not required.

In response to a question from a participant, the presenter explained the idea of fixed guideway transit, which is a transit system that operates in its own right of way rather than in general traffic lanes like the current bus system in Hillsborough County. He emphasized that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) defines TOD as development that built around fixed guideway transit stops. It does not include bus systems that use general traffic lanes because this form of transit may encourage higher density development in areas that are not appropriate. A participant followed up, asking if there was a way to move the policy away from the fixed guideway requirement as there is low likelihood that this type of transit will be constructed in Hillsborough County in the foreseeable future. The presenter encouraged participants to learn about the Centers and Connections policies that were also a part of the meeting and also directed participants toward the City of Tampa's transit emphasis corridors, which is similar to TOD.

Another participant asked if there are any plans to implement bus services from South Hillsborough County to Downtown Tampa and the airport. The presenter indicated that he would

pass on the comment to Hillsborough Area Rapid Transit (HART) for their consideration as they develop new bus plans.

Another participant asked about ferry service in the Tampa Bay area. The presenter indicated that, while we do have seasonal ferry service and there is discussion about ferry service from South Hillsborough County, it is too early to make any statements about ferry service and whether it would qualify for TOD. Incorporating TOD around potential ferry stations would conflict with existing Coastal High Hazard Areas which are prone to flooding and may not be suitable locations for increases in density.

A question was posed about charging stations. The presenter responded that park and ride stations in outer suburbs would be a good location for charging stations because commuters could leave their cars there and take transit into Downtown Tampa. However, there are no concrete plans for this, and it is too early to make any definitive statements.

A participant asked if there are any areas in Hillsborough County besides Fowler Avenue in the USF area that are being considered for TOD. The presenter indicated that there are no other areas currently being considered at this time.

The discussion moved to how we can use TOD with existing bus services in Hillsborough County. The presenter indicated that, while the existing bus service along 56th Street has seen increases in frequency, it is still not sufficient to be considered for TOD purposes without repurposing a lane and further increasing frequency.

Centers and Connections

The presenter began by explaining the Centers and Connections (C&C) policies. These policies are incentive-based and offer density and intensity bonuses. The C&C map was displayed to identify locations where C&C bonuses would be appropriate. These areas have been identified after receiving community feedback and reviewing community plans to identify nodes where increases in density and intensity are desired and appropriate. Community benefits would be awarded if certain criteria are met, such as bike/walk facilities, greenspaces, or other amenities. The presenter also identified the green circles on the map. These areas are intersections where C&C bonuses might be appropriate but are also in the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) and are prone to flooding, making them less appropriate for increases in density and intensity. Green centers not in the CHHA are primarily single-family areas. The proposal recommends that these areas would be more suitable for improvements in bike/walk infrastructure. Finally, the “connections” on the map were reviewed. These corridors were identified because they have existing transit routes or are already able to support more biking and walking. The presenters also indicated that they have received over 5,600 recommendations on the C&C map from the public through the survey that was distributed during the month of April 2023.

During open discussion, the group discussed specific centers in South Hillsborough County and how they were identified. A participant asked if this policy language is intended to house a

percentage of new county residents or if it is intended to be a supplement to new development. It was clarified that, with the Future Land Use update, the Planning Commission is also considering development outside of these centers. This proposed policy is one method for housing new residents, but not the only method. Staff also clarified that any increases in density would need to be consistent with the surrounding area.

There was also discussion that certain areas that are identified on the C&C map already have large medium density development and that it would be undesirable to see further increases in density in these areas. Staff emphasized that this is a draft map and that the Planning Commission is continually collecting feedback on and refining this map.

Another point of concern was how lobbyists are sometimes allowed to supersede the comprehensive plan or zoning regulations and if there were any policy language that would prevent this from happening. It was clarified that C&C is incentive based and would require property owners to opt in.

Open Question and Answer Session

After the breakout groups, the whole group engaged in an open discussion to address comments and questions from the participants. The following comments and questions were heard from meeting participants:

- If an intersection meets CLC criteria, does that mean that commercial would be allowed in areas that are currently residential?
 - Staff comment: Commercial uses are currently allowed in residential categories as long as they meet the criteria included in all other goals, objectives, policies, and community plans.
- Who is giving the feedback that helped identify the CLC intersections? Adding density and activity to certain areas would worsen problems that already exist. Also, these plans will have limited effectiveness because the Board listens more to lobbyists than to county planners or citizens.
 - Staff comment: If a property is already entitled to a certain type of development, then they go directly to Site Development to have their plans approved. If not, the Board of County Commissioners makes all final decisions regarding rezonings. Comments can be made directly to the Board at the applicable meetings.
- How do CLC, TOC and C&C work together? Is there a map of overlays that show the geography of these policies and how they would affect each other? Also, look into Forward Pinellas's Targeted Employment and Industrial Lands Study for ideas about HB1339, affordable housing, and proximity to commercial uses. Use SB 102 to identify surplus land and potential tax incentives to help direct development decisions.
 - Staff comment: An affordable housing density bonus already exists in the Comprehensive Plan. The Future Land Use section already includes bonuses for mixed use.

- What part does housing affordability in this update? Have current affordability incentives been effective and how can we make them more so?
 - Staff comment: The Housing Section of the Unincorporated Hillsborough County was updated recently. These updates incorporate elements that are intended to lead to more affordable housing options.
 - Staff comment: The Planning Commission brought in a consultant to review current affordable housing density bonus. As a result of this analysis, additional ways to incentivize affordable housing were passed by the Board of County Commissioners and are now part of the Housing Section.
- How can we increase input from renters and other unheard voices at these community meetings?
- We need to do more to address structural issues that exclude people, like single family zoning. The policies proposed will not do enough to address the influx of people Hillsborough County is experiencing and the people who are being priced out of housing opportunities.
- For new developments, we need to look at ecosystem and environmental impact.
 - Staff comment: Incentives and bonuses are intended to maximize existing infrastructure, increase affordable housing options, and preserve undeveloped land.
- We should prioritize infrastructure before building too much new development to make sure we don't overbuild.
- The relationship between the Planning Commission and other departments, like zoning and development services, should be stronger. We need a more cohesive approach to development.
 - Staff comment: Talk to your commissioners and elected officials. Make sure they hear these concerns as well because they are the final decision makers.
- Are we making changes to the Future Land Use Map?
 - Staff comment: We are only updating policy language at this point. Potential changes to the map will be considered after the policy language is adopted. There is currently no timeframe for updates to the Future Land Use Map.