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SECTION 5 – REVIEW OF THE PLAN ELEMENT SUCCESSSES AND SHORTCOMINGS

PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES ELEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this section of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report is to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the Public Schools Facilities Element (PSFE) as a component of the Washington County Comprehensive Plan.

II. INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by the Washington County Planning Commission, the West Florida Regional Planning Council and the Washington County Planning Department in cooperation with other County agencies. While many issues will be presented and discussed in this section, those identified at the scoping meeting will be presented and further elaborated on in the Identified Issues Section of the EAR. This element addresses how other elements relate to major Issue # 9, which is the Public School Facilities Element. This Element details many Objectives and Policies, and as a newly adopted Element in the Comprehensive Plan, the goals, objectives, and policies established within it are beginning to be met and have effectively revised the Comprehensive Plan. EAR based Land Development Code revisions may be necessary based on the content of the PSFE as discussed herein.

III. GENERAL DISUCUSSION OF THE ELEMENT

- A. Element Overview. Over the past decade the Florida Legislature has progressively strengthened the ties between school planning and land use/comprehensive planning through amendments to Chapters 163 and 1013 of the Florida Statutes. As of 2005, Florida Statutes now require that local governments adopt a Public School Facilities Element (PSFE) as a part of their comprehensive plans in order to establish a framework for the planning of public schools and associated educational facilities, in accordance with (163.3177(12), F.S.). Washington County adopted a PSFE in May 2008 and is currently waiting on final approval from DCA. The Washington County PSFE establishes goals, objectives, and policies as the mechanisms by which to bring schools and associated facilities into the land use decision-making process as a key factor affecting those decisions.
- B. Past Successes of Coordinating Land Use Decisions and School Concurrency. In the past, coordination in planning public education facilities was handled by the adoption of agreements between the County, the municipalities, and the local School Board as the need arose. In 1999, some provisions for school concurrency were incorporated in the

Future Land Use element of the Washington County Comprehensive Plan. Beginning in 2000, requirements of the State growth management legislation resulted in Comprehensive Plan amendments to the Future Land Use element, the local Land Development Code, and interlocal agreements between the County, the municipalities, and the local School Board. The initial interlocal agreement was created in 2003; an updated agreement was accomplished in 2006. A joint use agreement was also entered into in 2006, providing for the County and the School Board to share the use of Hunter Park located in close proximity to Vernon Middle School and Vernon High School. These are examples of the successful intergovernmental coordination of public school facilities in Washington County. Given that population growth in Washington County has been consistently slow during the past decade, there has not been a capacity issue with the local schools in Washington County. Additionally, Washington County is a special facilities county, which makes it difficult to plan for long-term facilities without knowing when funding may be available. Despite these circumstances, Washington County has made a strong effort in the past to coordinate with its municipalities and the Washington County School Board.

Because of its historic slow growth, Washington County qualified for an exemption from the requirement to create a PSFE. However, in recognition of the potential for increased growth and on the recommendation of the Department of Community Affairs and the West Florida Regional Planning Council, the County has created and adopted a PSFE in May 2008. Based on proposed new developments as well as development in association with the West Bay Sector Plan, Washington County's population growth rate may shift in the near future to a more rapid growth pattern. As this occurs, the siting of public schools and associated facilities will be a crucial component of making land use decisions. The PSFE provides the mechanisms by which the County will work with the school board and developers to aid the County in siting and planning new educational facilities.

IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY AND THE MUNICIPALITIES OF CARYVILLE, EBRO, VERNON AND WAUSAU

All goals, objectives, and policies stated apply to all of the local governments mentioned in the title unless otherwise stated.

GOAL 1: Coordinate and maintain a high quality education system. Collaborate and coordinate with the School Board of Washington County (School Board) to ensure high quality public school facilities, which meet the needs of Washington County's existing and future population.

Objective 1: The County shall implement and maintain mechanisms designed to closely coordinate with the School Board in order to provide consistency between the County's comprehensive plan and public school facilities programs, such as:

1. Greater efficiency for the School Board and the County by the placement of schools to take advantage of existing and planned roads, water, sewer, parks, and drainage systems;

2. Improved student access and safety by coordinating the construction of new and expanded schools with road and sidewalk construction programs;
3. The location and design of schools with parks, ball fields, libraries, and other community facilities to take advantage of shared use opportunities; and,
4. The expansion and rehabilitation of existing schools so as to support neighborhoods.

The County is currently working toward meeting this newly adopted objective.

Policy 1-1: Manage the timing of new development to coordinate with adequate school capacity. Where capacity will not be available to serve students from the property seeking a change, the County may use the lack of school capacity as a basis for denial of petitions for final subdivisions or site plans for residential development and capacity shall be considered as part of the Plan amendment and rezoning process.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 1-2: In cooperation with the School Board and the municipalities (Caryville, Chipley, Ebro, Vernon and Wausau), Washington County will implement the Interlocal Agreement for Public School Facility Planning between Washington County, all legislative bodies of the municipalities, as required by Section 1013.33, Florida Statutes, including procedures for:

1. Joint meetings;
2. Student enrollment and population projections;
3. Coordinating and sharing of information;
4. School site analysis;
5. Supporting infrastructure;
6. Comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings, and development approvals;
7. Education Plant Survey and Five-Year District Facilities Work program;
8. Co-location and shared use;
9. Implementation of school concurrency, including levels of service standards, concurrency service areas, and proportionate-share mitigation;
10. Oversight process; and,
11. Resolution of disputes.

The County has been working to meet this newly established policy. The Interlocal Agreement will become effective upon notice from DCA that the PSFE has been approved and formally incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1-3: The County shall include a representative of the school district, appointed by the School Board, as a voting member of the local planning agency, as required by Section 163.3174, Florida Statutes.

The County is currently meeting this policy; there is currently a representative of the school board serving as a voting member of the county's planning commission.

Policy 1-4: the County shall coordinate with the School Board and all applicable municipalities regarding annual review of school enrollment projections, and procedures for annual update and review of school board and local government plans consistent with Policy 4-2.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Objective 2: Enhance community/neighborhood design through effective school facility design and siting standards. Encourage the siting of school facilities so they serve as community focal points and so that they are compatible with surrounding land uses.

The County is focused on meeting this policy as new school facilities are planned.

Policy 2-1: Washington County will continue to coordinate with the School Board to assure that proposed public school facility sites are consistent with the land use categories and policies of the County Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement for Public School Facility Planning.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 2-2: Consistent with Section VIII, Policy 11-2 of the Washington County Future Land Use Element, "future schools shall be an allowable use in all land use categories but the Industrial and Conservation land use categories." Policy 11-3 of the same Section states that "The location and construction of new public educational facilities, or the expansion of an existing site within a Future Land Use category in which public educational facilities are an allowable use shall only be allowed upon a determination by the Local Governing Body that the proposed site is consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan". The Land Development Code may include standards for schools, consistent with the local government comprehensive plan.

The County is currently meeting this policy and may base the addition of school standards to the Land Development Code on this policy.

Policy 2-3: Public schools are to be located in agricultural land use categories only when no feasible site exists in nonagricultural categories, due to prohibitive land costs or location of available sites, and when necessary to service student populations in rural areas that are mainly located in agricultural areas. If no feasible site exists in nonagricultural categories, then a public school should be located in a portion of the agricultural FLUM category that is as close as possible to residential areas, and the land use on the site should be changed subsequently to a

“Public/Semi-Public” FLUM category. The local comprehensive plan intends for future schools to be sited as closely to residential areas as practical, preferably within walking and/or bicycle distance of the primary residential areas to be served. Public schools are to be located in agricultural land use categories only when no feasible site exists in nonagricultural categories, or when necessary to serve student populations in rural areas mainly located in agricultural areas.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 2-4: Consistent with section 163.31777(g), Florida Statutes, when considering the acquisition and establishment of public facilities such as parks, libraries, and community centers, the County shall, to the greatest extent possible, establish “a process for determining where and how joint use of either school board or local government facilities can be shared for mutual benefit and efficiency.”

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 2-5: Consistent with section 163.3177, Florida Statutes, the County will include sufficient allowable land use designations for schools proximate to residential development to meet the projected needs for schools.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 2-6: The policy of the County is to reduce hazardous walking conditions consistent with Florida’s safe ways to school program. The County, in coordination with the School Board, shall implement the following strategies:

1. The County may require under some circumstances all new Planned Unit Development (PUD), major subdivision developments abutting collector or arterial roadways (when the proposed development includes improvements or new construction to these facilities) and new development adjacent to or within 2 miles of school properties to be required to provide right-of-way and a direct access path for pedestrian travel to existing and planned school sites, and shall connect to the neighborhood’s existing and planned school sites, and shall connect to the neighborhood’s existing pedestrian network;
2. Coordination with the TPO Long Range Transportation Plans to ensure that funding resources are addressed for safe access to schools including the development of sidewalk inventories and lists of priority projects coordinated with the School Board recommendations;
3. The County may require under some circumstances Planned Unit Development (PUD), major subdivision developments abutting collector or arterial roadways (when the proposed development includes improvements or new construction to these facilities) and new development adjacent to or within 2 miles of school properties to be required to provide a proportionate fair share of School Board funds needed to take in students from said development into the existing bussing routes as dictated by the Department of Education to be the responsibility of the local School Board.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 2-7: The County and School Board will jointly determine the need for and timing of on-site and off-site improvements (including water, sewer, roads and drainage) necessary to support each new school or the proposed renovation, expansion or closure of an existing school, and will enter into a written agreement as to the timing, location, and the party or parties responsible for constructing, operating and maintaining the required improvements.

The County is focused on meeting this newly established policy as new school facilities and sites are proposed.

Objective 3: The County shall encourage sustainable design and development for educational facilities.

Policy 3-1: Coordinate with the School Board to continue to permit the shared-use and co-location of school sites and County facilities with similar facility needs, according to Section 163.31777(g), Florida Statutes.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 3-2: Coordinate in the location, phasing, and design of future school sites to enhance the potential of schools as recreation areas.

The County is focused on meeting this newly established policy as new school facilities and sites are proposed...

Policy 3-3: Washington County will continue to coordinate efforts to build new school facilities, and facility rehabilitation and expansions, to be designed to serve as and provide emergency shelters as required by Section 163.3177, Florida Statutes. Washington County will continue to fulfill the requirements of Section 1013.372, Florida Statutes, such that as appropriate new educational facilities will serve as public shelters for emergency management purposes and shall coordinate with the School Board regarding emergency preparedness issues and plans.

The County is currently meeting this policy and will continue to do so. Schools are constructed to appropriate standards as to include shuttering.

Objective 4: It is the objective of Washington County to coordinate petitions for changes to future land use, zoning, subdivision and site plans for residential development with adequate school capacity. This goal will be accomplished recognizing the School Board's statutory and constitutional responsibility to provide a uniform system of free and adequate public schools, and the County's authority for land use, including the authority to approve or deny petitions for comprehensive plan amendments, re-zonings or final subdivision and site plans that generate students and impact the Washington County school system.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 4-1: The County shall coordinate anticipated students growth based on future land use map projections of housing units with the School Board's long range facilities needs over the 5-

year, 10-year and 20-year periods and adequate provision of land in coordination with the FLUM.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 4-2: the County shall take into consideration the School Board comments and findings on the availability of adequate school capacity when considering the decision to approve comprehensive plan amendment and other land use decisions as provided for in section 163.3177(6)(a), Florida Statutes during the public hearing process.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 4-3: The County shall give priority consideration to petitions for land uses, zoning and final subdivision and site plans for residential development in areas with adequate school capacity or where school sites adequate to serve potential growth have been donated to or set aside for purchase by the School Board at raw land (pre-development approval) prices reflected in written agreement approved by the Washington county School Board.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 4-4: Where capacity will not be available to serve students from the property seeking a land use change, the County will coordinate with the School Board to ensure adequate capacity is planned and funded. Where feasible, in conjunction with the plan amendment early dedications of school sites shall be encouraged. To ensure adequate capacity is planned and funded, the School Board's long-range facilities plan over the 5-year, 10-year and 20-year periods shall be amended to reflect the needs created by the land use plan amendment.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy. There are some issues involved in meeting these policies that will need to be coordinated between the County and the School Board.

Policy 4-5: In reviewing petitions for future land use, rezoning, or final subdivision and site plans for residential development, which may affect student enrollment or school facilities, the County will consider the following issues:

1. Providing school sites and facilities within planned neighborhoods;
2. Insuring the compatibility of land uses adjacent to existing schools and reserved school sites;
3. The co-location of parks, recreation and community facilities with school sites (consistent with section 163.31777(g), Florida Statutes);
4. The linkage of schools, parks, libraries and other public facilities with bikeways, trails, and sidewalks;
5. Insuring the development of traffic circulation plans to serve schools and the surrounding neighborhood;

6. Providing off-site signalization, signage, access improvements and sidewalks to serve all schools;
7. The inclusion of school bus stops and turnarounds in new developments;
8. Encouraging the private sector to identify and implement creative solutions to developing adequate school facilities in residential developments;
9. School Board staff comments and findings of available school capacity for comprehensive plan amendments and other land-use decisions;
10. Available school capacity or planned improvements to increase school capacity; and,
11. Whether the proposed location is consistent with accepted policies of the School Board and as set forth in the State requirements for educational facilities regarding standards for siting, design and planning for school facilities.

The County is working to meet this newly established policy.

Objective 5: The County shall implement school concurrency by managing the timing of residential and mixed use developments that are likely to generate school age students so as to insure adequate school capacity is available consistent with adopted level of service standards for public school facilities.

Policy 5-1: Consistent with the Interlocal Agreement, the County and School Board agree to the following standards for school concurrency in Washington County:

1. Level of Service Standard: consistent with the Interlocal Agreement, the uniform, district-wide level-of-service standards are initially set as follows, and are hereby adopted in the County’s Public School Facilities Elements and Capital Improvements Element:

TYPE OF SCHOOL	LEVEL OF SERVICE
Elementary	100% of permanent FISH capacity
Middle	100% of permanent FISH capacity
K-8	100% of permanent FISH capacity
High	100% of permanent FISH capacity

Potential amendments to the level of service standards shall be considered at least annually at the staff working group meeting to take place no later than (April 15) of each year. If an amendment is proposed by the School Board, it shall be accomplished by the execution of an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement by all parties and the adoption of amendments to the comprehensive plans. The amended level of service shall not be effective until all plan amendments are effective and the amended Interlocal Agreement is fully executed. No level of service shall be amended without a showing that the amended level of service is financially feasible, supported by adequate data and analysis, and can be achieved and maintained within the period covered by the first five-years of the Capital Facilities Plan. After the first 5-year schedule of capital improvements,

capacity shall be maintained within each year of subsequent 5-year schedules of capital improvements.

2. **Concurrency Service Areas:** The concurrency service areas shall be as shown in Map PSFE 1. Potential amendments to the concurrency service areas shall be considered annually at the staff working group meeting to take place each year no later than (April 15). If an amendment is proposed by the School Board, it shall be accomplished by the execution of an amendment to the Interlocal Agreement by all parties and the adoption of amendments to the comprehensive plan. The amended concurrency service area shall not be effective until all plan amendments and the amended Interlocal Agreement is fully executed. No concurrency service area shall be amended without a showing that the amended concurrency service area boundaries are financially feasible and that the LOS standards will be achieved and maintained for the 5-year period.
3. **Maximizing Concurrency Service Areas:** Concurrency service areas shall maximize capacity utilization, taking into account transportation costs, limiting maximum student travel times, the effect of court-approved desegregation plans, achieving social-economic, racial and cultural diversity objectives, and other relevant factors as determined by the School Board's policy on maximization of capacity. Other considerations for amending concurrency service areas may include safe access (including factors such as the presence of sidewalks, bicycle paths, turn lanes and signalization, general walk ability), diversity and geographic or man-made constraints to travel. The types of adjustments to school operations that will be considered in the County shall be determined by the School Board's policies on maximization of capacity.
4. **Student Generation Rates:** Consistent with the Interlocal Agreement, the School Board staff, working with the County staff and Municipal staffs, will develop and apply student generation multipliers for residential units by type and projected price for schools of each type, considering past trends in student enrollment in order to project school enrollment. The student generation rates shall be determined by the School Board in accordance with professionally accepted methodologies, shall be updated at least every two years and shall be adopted into the County Comprehensive Plan.
5. **School Capacity and Enrollment:** The Department of Education permanent Florida Inventory of School Houses (FISH) capacity is adopted as the uniform methodology to determine the capacity of each school. Relocatables are not considered permanent capacity. School enrollment shall be based on the annual enrollment of each school based on actual counts reported to the Department of Education in October of each year.
6. **Concurrency Availability Standard:** The County shall amend the concurrency management systems in its land development regulations to require that all new residential units be reviewed for school concurrency at the time of final subdivision or site plan. The county shall not deny a final subdivision or site plan for residential development approval due to a failure to achieve and maintain the adopted level of service for public school capacity where:
 - a. Adequate school facilities will be in place or under actual construction within three years after the issuance of the final subdivision or site plan; or,

- b. Adequate school facilities are available in an adjacent concurrency service area and the impacts of development can be shifted to that area; or,
- c. The developer executes a legally binding commitment to provide mitigation proportionate to the demand for public school facilities to be created by the proposed development of the property subject to the final subdivision or site plan (or functional equivalent) as provided in the Interlocal Agreement.

In evaluating a subdivision plat or site plan for concurrency, any relevant programmed improvements in the current year and years 2 or 3 of the 5-year schedule of improvements shall be considered available capacity for the project and factored into the level of service analysis. Any relevant programmed improvements in years 4 or 5 of the 5-year schedule of improvements shall not be considered available capacity for the project unless funding for the improvement is assured through School Board funding to accelerate the project, through proportionate share mitigation, or some other means of assuring adequate capacity will be available within 3 years. Relocatable classrooms may provide temporary capacity while funded schools or school expansions are being constructed.

- 7. Subdivision and Site Plan Standards: In the event that the School Board comments that there is not sufficient capacity in the affected concurrency service area to address the impacts of a proposed development, the following standards shall apply. Either (i) the site plan or final subdivision must provide capacity enhancement sufficient to meet its impacts through proportionate share mitigation; or (ii) the site plan or final subdivision must be delayed to a date when capacity enhancement and level of service can be assured; or (iii) a condition of approval of the site plan or final subdivision shall be that the project's development plan and/or building permits shall be delayed to a date when capacity enhancement and level of service can be assured. The amount of mitigation required shall be determined by the Department of Education's most current cost per student station applicable to Washington County.
- 8. On an annual basis, Washington County shall ask the School Board to provide information from their five-year Capital Facilities Plan to determine the need for additional school facilities. The School Board shall provide to the county, each year, a general education facilities report. The educational facilities report shall contain information detailing existing facilities and their locations and projected needs. The report shall also contain the School Board's capital improvement plan, including planned facilities with funding representing the district's unmet needs. Washington County shall coordinate with the School Board to ensure that the 5-year district work plan maintains the continued financial feasibility of the Capital Improvement Plan over the 5-year period. The School Board will add any projects that address LOS to the new fifth year of the Capital Improvements Element every year.

The County agrees to the standards in this policy and is working to meet this newly established policy.

Policy 5-2: Options for providing proportionate share mitigation for any approval of additional residential dwelling units that triggers a failure of level of service for public school capacity shall include the following:

1. Contribution of, or payment for, acquisition of new or expanded school sites; and/or
2. Construction or expansion of permanent school facilities; and/or
3. Explore the creation of mitigation banking within designated areas based on the construction of a public school facility; and/or
4. Explore the creation of Educational Facility Benefit Districts in conjunction with established concurrency service areas.

Mitigation shall be directed to projects on the School Board's Five-Year Capital Facilities Plan that the School Board agrees will satisfy the demand created by that development approval, and shall be assured by a legally binding development agreement between the School Board, the County, and the applicant executed prior to the issuance of the final subdivision, site plan or functional equivalent. If the school agrees to the mitigation, the school board must commit in the agreement to placing the improvement required for mitigation on its Five-Year Capital Facilities Plan. This development agreement shall include the landowner's commitment to continuing renewal of the development agreement for required mitigation until all impacts for public school facilities created by the actual development of the property are mitigated.

The County is focused on meeting this newly established policy as new school facilities and sites are proposed.

Policy 5-3: The amount of mitigation required shall be determined by calculating the number of student stations for each school type for which there is not sufficient capacity using the student generation rates applicable to a particular type of development and multiplying by the local costs per student station for each school type applicable to Washington County, as determined by the School Board, in addition to any land costs for new or expanded school sites, if applicable.

The County is focused on meeting this newly established policy as new school facilities and sites are proposed...

Objective 6: The School Board will manage funding, with cooperation from the County, and will study the possible use of school impact fees as a way to realize the cost of new development and its impact on land use in regards to the ability of the School Board to provide adequate facilities, as needed.

Policy 6-1: Make decision regarding the use and amount (if applicable) of school impact fees.

This is an issue that has not yet been explored by the School Board.

Objective 7: Washington County shall strive to continually monitor and evaluate the Public Schools Facilities Element in order to assure the best practices of the joint planning processes and procedures for coordination of planning and decision-making.

Upon completion of the approval process, the County will accomplish this objective.

Policy 7-1: Washington County and the School Board will coordinate during updates or amendments to the Washington County's Comprehensive Plan and updates or amendments for long-range plans for School Board facilities.

Upon completion of the approval process, the County will accomplish this objective.