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SECTION 6 – MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Local Government Comprehensive and Land Development Regulation Act require that the Comprehensive Plan be evaluated and updated periodically through the preparation and adoption of an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) (Ch. 163, F.S.). It is the intent of the Act that the evaluation and appraisal process be continuous throughout the period of plan implementation.

This report presents procedures to be followed in the monitoring, updating, and evaluation of this comprehensive plan in compliance with Ch. 9J-5.0053, F.A.C. These procedures, which will be adopted as part of the Washington County's Comprehensive Plan, address the following:

1. Citizen participation in the planning process;
2. Updating appropriate baseline and measurable objectives to be accomplished in the first increment period of the planning period, and for the long-term period;
3. Accomplishments in the first increment of the planning period describing the degree to which the goals, objectives and policies have been successfully reached;
4. Obstacles or problems which resulted in under achievement of goals, objective and policies;
5. New or modified goals, objectives or policies needed to correct discovered problems, and;
6. A means of ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

These requirements have been met by the County.

II. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following procedures are recommended for monitoring and evaluating Washington County's Comprehensive Plan.

A. Updating Baseline Data.

It is recommended that a process be established to monitor changed conditions necessary for maintaining the comprehensive plan database. The database may be used to monitor progress in achieving comprehensive plan objectives and should be used in the preparation of the evaluation and appraisal report.

While this information is available, the collection of the data has proved to be time consuming and inefficient in that resolutions, revisions to policies, data and statistics are not being compiled in a central location in a manner making it easily accessible to researchers. All departments should work together to coordinate changes and updates so that a data base is easily accessible to all.

A list of specific areas to be monitored should be established based on comprehensive plan objectives. The following types of information should be included:

- demographic data
- land development approvals
- issuance of state permits
- program activities (housing, rehabilitation, transportation, improvements)
- changes in level of service for public facilities
- archaeological/historical resources
- changes in status of treated/endangered species
- changes in municipal boundaries

B. Preparation of the Annual Report. The Annual Report is recommended as a management tool suitable for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan recommends specific programs and activities. The responsibility for implementation of programs and activities is assigned to the various departments in the County, as well as to each respective municipality.

The Annual Report provides a format to monitor progress towards achieving plan objectives through specific programs and activities. The Annual Report has the following functions:

- report of the activities of each department and each respective municipality during the past year
- establish a work program for upcoming year
- relate past year's activities to the implementation of the comprehensive plan
- relate the proposed work program to implementation of reasonable objectives in the comprehensive plan
- identify constraints, problems, or opportunities in implementation of the comprehensive plan

A standardized format should be developed for the Annual Report.

The Annual Report is prepared by the County Planning Office, the governing body of each respective municipality, and is submitted to the County Commission. It may be considered advisory, or submitted to the County Commission for approval. The Washington County Planning Commission reviews the Annual Report to determine if problems or changed conditions warrant a comprehensive plan amendment. The Annual Report is also a useful tool for reviewing a department's and/or a municipality's operating budget based on the proposed work program.

III. PREPARATION OF THE EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT

The Washington County Planning Commission shall be responsible for the preparation of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR). The EAR shall be based upon the database and any additional data or analysis needed to identify changed conditions, or measure the extent to which goals or objectives have been achieved and policies implemented. The Annual Reports of the departments, the municipalities, and any comprehensive plan amendments shall also be considered.

Public workshops shall be held by the Washington County Planning Commission to consider the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. Public participation in this process shall be encouraged. The Washington County Planning Commission may establish a comprehensive plan review advisory committee committed to make recommendations concerning the evaluation of the comprehensive plan.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTION OF THE EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT

A minimum of two public hearings shall be held for the consideration of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report. One shall be held by the Washington County Planning Commission to recommend the EAR and any comprehensive plan amendments to the Washington County Commission and the governing body of each respective municipality. The second shall be held by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners and the governing body of each respective municipality to adopt, or adopt with changes, the EAR within 90 days after receiving it from the Planning Commission. The hearings shall be advertised according to state law.

Comprehensive plan amendments based upon the EAR shall be adopted pursuant to the procedures in State Statutes. If the plan is amended at the time the EAR is adopted, the County shall transmit the EAR, any amendments, and a complete copy of the plan as it will be amended to the Florida Department of Community Affairs for review.

When amendments to the comprehensive plan do not occur simultaneously with the adoption of the EAR, the EAR shall contain a schedule for adoption of proposed amendments within eighteen months after the EAR is found to be sufficient by the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The Evaluation and Appraisal Report shall be transmitted to the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) when the amendments are sent for review.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation in the evaluation and amendment of the plan should be consistent with the public participation procedures contained in Ch. 9J-5.004 F.A.C. and Ch. 163 Florida Statutes. The following procedures shall guide public participation in preparation of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Public Access to Documents: Any Comprehensive Plan executive summaries and supporting documents shall be accessible to the public for inspection during regular business hours at the Washington County Administrative Offices, Town or City Hall of each respective municipality, and other designated locations.

- Public Notification: The Planning Commission shall ensure that adequate public notice is given concerning evaluation and appraisal process and proposed amendment of the comprehensive plan and all meetings where such matters are to be considered.
- Public Comments: The public shall be encouraged to provide written and oral comments concerning the evaluation and appraisal process and proposed amendment of the comprehensive plan. Opportunity for public comment shall be provided at all public meetings considering such issues. All comments received shall be retained as part of the public record.

VI. PLAN AMENDMENTS

Comprehensive Plan amendments are a form of ongoing evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan. Types of plan amendments include:

- Twice yearly amendments to the plan
- Small scale development activity amendments (Ch. 163.3187) (l) (c), F.S.)
- Amendments related to Developments of Regional Impact
- Emergency amendments

A summary of comprehensive plan amendments should be reported annually by the Planning Commission. The Florida Department of Community Affairs also requires that the local government provide a semiannual report summarizing the type of frequency of use of the small scale amendments process. The cumulative impact of the comprehensive plan amendments should be considered in the preparation of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR).

VII. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The following issues should be considered in the design of procedures for monitoring the implementation of the comprehensive plan:

- A. Plan Implementation Requirements. The section of the plan containing goals, objectives and policies must describe specific plans, programs, activities, and land development regulations that implement the plan. Comprehensive plan objectives must be specific and measurable. The need for monitoring these measurable objectives should be considered in the preparation of the comprehensive plan.
- B. Legal Status of the Comprehensive Plan. The legal status of the comprehensive plan as defined by Florida Statute (Ch. 163 F.S.), requires that all development orders, land development regulations and all expenditures by the local government be consistent with the comprehensive plan. It is essential that the plan be continuously monitored to ensure that government actions are consistent with the plan.
- C. Concurrency Requirements. The concurrency requirements mandate that the local government cannot issue a development order or permit the results in a reduction in the level of service for public facilities below the level of service for public facilities below the level of service provided in the Comprehensive Plan (Ch. 9J-5.0055, F. A.C.).

The implications of the concurrency requirement indicate that the local government will be responsible for (1) monitoring existing levels of service and (2) monitoring the cumulative impact of development approvals on public facilities. These functions should become an integral part of comprehensive plan implementation. Establishing and maintaining a comprehensive plan database will ensure the adequate information is available to implement the concurrency requirement.

D. The Capital Improvements Program and Budget

1. Capital Improvement Element. All public facilities must be consistent with the Capital Improvements Element (Ch. 163.3177, (3)(b), F.S.). The Capital Improvements Element must be updated annually. The five-year Capital Improvements Schedule becomes the capital improvements program for the County and each respective municipality, the first year of which is the capital budget for the fiscal year. The annual update of this element provides a means of monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Operating Budget. The County's operating budget and the operating budget of each respective municipality are tools for allocating resources to the appropriate department for implementation of the comprehensive plan. When the departments submit their budget request for the fiscal year the work program shall identify that portion of the department's budget which is related to the implementation of specific comprehensive plan objectives.

By the year 2010, the format for this program should be coordinated with various department heads and developed as outlined in this section.