



Meeting Summary

RLSA Restudy Public Workshop Sustainable Development

*October 25, 2018, 6:00-8:00 PM, South Regional Library
8065 Lely Cultural Parkway, Naples, 34113*

I Introduction

Speaker: Mr. Kris Van Lengen, Collier County

Mr. Van Lengen, Collier County Community Planning Manager, opened the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m. stating that the discussion will be about the built environment. He explained that the presentations will be in sections, allowing for questions and answers before each presenter. Sustainability, smart development and some of the Group 4 policies will be the main concepts. Then the audience will be asked what they would like to discuss at the next meeting. Mr. David Weeks will present and discuss population concepts. Mrs. Laura DeJohn will discuss growth patterns and how development has occurred in Southwest Florida. Mr. Van Lengen will discuss selected provisions of Group 4 and Group 5 policies. Finally, Dr. Amanda Evans will facilitate the group discussion.

Mr. Van Lengen explained that the next meeting on November 29th will further explore sustainable development. David Genson representing Barron Collier will discuss successes, challenges, and lessons learned in developing Ave Maria. The Growth Management Oversight Committee (GMOC) meets next on December 6th and the Committee will be discussing the direction for future meetings that will be aimed at building consensus on any proposed policy changes. The public is encouraged to participate at the GMOC meeting. The first meeting in 2019 will include revisiting Group 1 policies and consensus building.

Mr. Van Lengen highlighted opportunities for participation, noting that Facebook Live is available for anyone not able to attend meetings in person. Past meeting archives including workshop summaries, PowerPoint presentations and videos can be accessed at www.colliercountyfl.gov/gmprestudies. Feedback can be emailed to RLSArestudy@colliercountyfl.gov. Comment cards are collected at the end of the meeting and are appreciated.

II Population Concepts

Speaker: Mr. David Weeks, Collier County Comprehensive Planning Manager

Mr. Weeks introduced statutory requirements that apply to every county in Florida, including the requirement for a growth management plan (GMP). The County must have population projections and estimates, both permanent and seasonal. The County is required to use the state's population figures unless otherwise approved by the state to use an alternative methodology. Collier County uses the medium range projections provided by the state. When the GMP was adopted in 1989, population growth was explosive, and the high range of population growth projections were used. Growth eventually slowed down, and the mid-range projections are now used. Collier County determines land needed for future growth that far exceeds a 10-year period. Mr. Weeks explained that the latest population estimates available are for 2017. For the Rural Lands Stewardship Area (RLSA) the population for 2017 is 5,000 people and the projected 2040 population is 47,000. The population is concentrated in Ave Maria or small communities north of Immokalee along State Road 29, State Road 82, and in small farms south of Immokalee. The population difference anticipated between 2017 and 2040 equals an average increase of 1,800 people per year over the 23-year timespan.

Historical growth for Collier County dates back to the 1930 census, with fewer than 3,000 people. Over time, there have been explosive ten-year periods of growth ranging from 65% to 126% increases in population. From 2010 to 2018, there was a 16% change and growth is now tapering off. Mr. Weeks summarized that population projections and estimates in 2018, 2013, and 2008 portray a rather steady growth rate for Collier County.

Collier County's permanent population projection methodology is from the published estimates and 5-year increment projections received from the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR). The County uses census ratios in small geographic areas known as Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs) that consider dwelling units and permanent population, divided to identify the ratio of persons per household, and then certificates of occupancy are monitored each year for determining annual population growth in the TAZ. This gets aggregated based on geographic area and then officials arrives at population estimates. The estimates are published in April, and then converted in October considering the County's fiscal year cycle.

Mr. Weeks said that Collier County's peak season population is 20% more than the October permanent population. The 2018 projected population is 442,420, which reflects a 74,000 person increase due to season. Some areas of the county experience greater seasonal influx than others. Areas such as Immokalee have seasonal influx due to migrant laborers and trucking industry employees associated with agriculture activity in and around Immokalee.

The concept "build it and they will come" is a spin-off from the movie Field of Dreams. In reality, before development occurs, the developer considers demographics, the national, local and regional economy, infrastructure capacity (available water, wastewater, roads, fire and police protection), regulatory changes that could impact the success of the development, and competition. Other considerations include events like red tide that could impact decisions by people who might relocate to this area. Unless causes of issues are addressed, the issues can deter development. Mr. Weeks explained that regulatory matters also impact development, such as County land use allowances

including the RLSA program, state and federal permitting, and subsequent County approvals and development of the infrastructure and building permits, before vertical construction can begin.

To wrap up the topic of development absorption, Mr. Weeks explained that when a project gets approved it may be a year or several years before necessary permits are obtained to allow construction of infrastructure and buildings. When a project is approved, it doesn't mean immediately it will be developed or that there is demand for the development. Some PUDs have obtained approval and sat dormant for 10-12 years. For example, Lely Resort at US 41 & Collier Boulevard was approved in 1985 with 10,150 dwelling units; today the residential units are about halfway built out and the commercial components are about halfway built out. The developer estimated a 40-year absorption, which would conclude in 5-7 years from now.

Mr. Weeks said that experience shows the larger the project is, the less likely it is that the approved number of dwelling units will be actually built. Lely Resort might be built out as far as the land is considered at 6,500 dwelling units although it has approval now for 8,946 units. The theoretical approval is what is approved, and the actual buildout is what is actually built. While it might be feasible in the future to redevelop or replace existing development with new or higher density development, it is typical for larger projects not to build all units they are authorized to build. Remaining units are called ghost units by the County. Ave Maria was approved in 2004 with 11,000 dwelling units. These projects take time even after the permitting is obtained. Rural Lands West will take decades to build.

Mr. Weeks then opened discussion and questions from the audience. An audience member asked how many units have been built in Ave Maria? Mr. Weeks said there is a regulatory glitch. Ave Maria is not required to submit an annual report to the County. Annual reports are required for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). Ave Maria was a Development of Regional Impact (DRI), but the Florida legislature did away with DRIs a few years ago. The audience member asked if communities in the RLSA will have to submit an annual report? Mr. Weeks said no, RLSA communities will not submit an annual report, and that is something the County should fix. An audience member asked if a Development Order (DO) count is available? Mr. Weeks said the County could get a DO count, but it is not prepared for the meeting tonight. Mr. Van Lengen said he would obtain the requested Ave Maria information and post on the website.

III Growth Patterns

*Speaker: Mrs. Laura DeJohn, Director of Planning and Landscape Architecture,
Johnson Engineering, Inc.*

Mrs. DeJohn introduced herself and indicated she has been working on behalf of Collier County in support of the RLSA public workshops. She said that she will present a high level review of the Group 4 policies, and quoted that the Group 4 policy objective is to enable conversion of rural lands to

other uses in appropriate locations, while discouraging urban sprawl, and encouraging development that utilizes creative land use planning techniques by the establishment of Stewardship Receiving Areas (SRAs). To gain perspective about growth patterns and community development, look nearby to downtown Naples and the early mid-1900s large-scale platting of Golden Gate Estates. From a planning perspective these developments were not sensitive to nature because the homogenous grid did not accommodate any existing land or water features.

The outcomes of historic Collier County land development plans can be seen in Collier County today. She depicted piecemeal land development examples such as two-acre Estates lots and PUD communities that have been pieced together across the County's landscape over time. Developers can anticipate the type of people that want to move and live here and can design land to accommodate these people.

She pointed out an example of development proposed to fill in where very limited space is left to develop. The piecemeal development pattern is being perpetuated, and is also seen moving further east into Lee County along Corkscrew Road. Residential development projects displayed along Corkscrew Road illustrate how a large scale outcome results from several individual projects being approved over time, based on their own individual merits. These developments aggregate to form a 6,000-acre area where 6,000 single-family homes will be built, with no consideration for commercial uses or services.

Relating this information back to the study areas, the RLSA was originally agricultural land subdivided into 5-acre tracts where individual homesites would be allowed across the landscape. What came about from the RLSA program was an effort to do something better. If you want to do something to protect rural lands, it should be well planned, creative and not piecemealed. Geographically the RLSA is a very large area that will not be built in a short amount of time. There are multiple private interests involved in the RLSA, family legacies, land values and property rights that need to be protected. Public interests include ecological values in this area, fiscal impacts of growth and community sustainability.

Mrs. DeJohn explained that the design with nature concept is a fundamental planning theory. The evolution of Babcock Ranch is an example of designing with nature. This community evaluated and identified the most valuable land areas, displayed as green areas on the map, and then determined the areas for development as seen in the gray areas on the map. The footprint for developable areas is based on protecting the most valuable areas. This concept was the same foundation for RLSA. High quality environmental areas were the areas set aside for protection first, then the remaining areas are available for property owners to use as allowed per their property rights, such as agriculture or other types of development. As described previously, individual owners doing what they want with their property results in piecemeal development. The RLSA approach is a much more difficult formula than the piecemeal approach. The RLSA requires more intense collaboration with property owners to plan smarter growth.

Mrs. DeJohn queried, do RLSA strategies accomplish this balance as described? Is the development being done sustainably? Are green development goals met? Are sustainable design standards implemented? Are smart growth and compact walkable communities available? Sustainability is making sure that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability also protects the environment, including maintenance of agriculture, and upholds the rights of property owners. Mrs. DeJohn cited the American Planning Association Policy Guide on Smart Growth that this approach to growth and planning can not only deliver dynamic attractive communities with greater choices for consumers but can be a powerful tool for farmland, open space and habitat preservation.

Policy 4.6 includes these sustainably concepts, including protecting the environment, maintaining agriculture and being cost-efficient. Mrs. DeJohn said the Restudy effort is an evaluation of whether there are better methods to accomplish the objectives. As a member of the Development Services Advisory Committee (DSAC), she said efforts are underway to explore green development options through the Florida Green Building Coalition. This is an example of how Collier County is continually looking into sustainable development concepts.

An audience member said it was useful to see the history and the development overtime which were not of best practice. He said we are now looking at projects in this area which are huge in scale, and asked if designing or thinking of things so large in scale is the appropriate thing to do? Mrs. DeJohn said the alternative to large scale planning is the piecemeal style. She said we have to ask what is the best way for Collier County to move forward with growth because growth will continue. Large scale planning is a thoughtful approach. Piecemeal development is a less thoughtful approach. The audience member agreed, but still thinks Rural Lands West is too large of an area for planning. He worries that communities and their needs are evolving, so it does not seem logical forecast for something so large.

Another audience member said it seems the proposed development concepts are aspirational, but are you actually working with developers to achieve these ideas? Mrs. DeJohn said she is not a consultant for developers in the County's rural areas. However, other consultants have the same information and follow the same program and the goals outlined in the GMP. The purpose of this Restudy is to make sure the RLSA goals are being met. Do the current goals outlined in Policy 4.6 protect our natural environment, maintain economic viability of agriculture and discourage sprawl? If not, the purpose of this Restudy is to look for improvements and alternatives to meet the outlined goals.

Another audience member recommended to provide the following information to DSAC. She said we should look at how we can force higher density planning and mixed-use development planning to actually get walkable and bikeable towns. That didn't happen in Ava Maria and it's a random sprawl town. She said in Ave Maria you cannot get everywhere with a baby carriage. A better idea is to plan a community with one or multiple town centers with the right amenities and density highest at the town center, then density should reduce as it goes out. The audience member stressed the need to rework the rules to maintain high density in town centers. She said in terms of

planning communities, one of the problems is developers build giant golf communities here, and we need to do more community planning like Mercato. The audience member said we need shops, churches, restaurants, daycares, and things communities need to thrive located where people can access within the community so residents do not have to leave their community. Ava Maria residents must drive so far to reach a food store. Mrs. DeJohn appreciated the thoughtful comments and indicated that density is not going to be a matter fully addressed by the DSAC. She also indicated that Mr. Van Lengen will discuss density and requirements next, which may help address her ideas.

Another audience member asked where does stormwater runoff go and where are detention ponds located? What happens to the water? Mrs. DeJohn said we had a great presentation last month from the County Stormwater Manager, Jerry Kurtz, and he described historical methods to channel water off of properties through canals efficiently, but how the RLSA is different because of lessons learned. In the RLSA, there are areas that allow for continuing the natural stormwater drainage patterns of the area.

IV Selected Development Provisions

Speaker: Mr. Kris Van Lengen, Collier County

Mr. Van Lengen said the Group 4 policies are broad with 28 policies and topics that include program goals, location, compatibility, credits and infrastructure. He noted that comments cards are on the tables, and he encouraged participants to suggest policies to discuss at the next meeting. He referred to the paperwork that was provided on the audience tables outlining Group 4 policies. Also provided was highlighted material reflecting the five year review recommendations. He encouraged the audience to review all of the material, and indicated the highlighted goals and others are equally important. Group 4 policies include location of SRAs, method of approval, administration, master plan requirements, goal statements, compatibility, transportation requirements, SRA components, public facilities, coordination with the School District, infrastructure, fiscal neutrality, credit requirements, public benefit uses, Area of Critical State Concern (ACSC) special provisions, historical resources, and lighting.

Mr. Van Lengen summarized that the Group 4 policies as they exist today, the recommendations from the five year review committee, and Attachment C are the printouts provided on the tables. Mr. Van Lengen said his presentation will focus on the forms of development referenced in Policy 4.7, and that Attachment C shows the level of goods and services required for towns, villages, hamlets and Compact Rural Developments (CRDs). He said the Congress of New Urbanism was a source for determining sizes of required goods and services, and a more recent tool is the (Collier Interactive Growth Model (CIGM)). He noted that Ave Maria and Rural Lands West provide more goods and services than the minimums required.

Mr. Van Lengen highlighted that towns are defined as areas 1,000 to 4,000 acres, villages are 100 to 1,000 acres, hamlets are 40 to 100 acres, and CRDs need to be better defined. Some elements, such

as public schools and parks, are not counted toward the acreage in towns and villages. Benefits of compact and mixed-use development provide a diversity of housing, housing affordability, internal mobility, external mobility, scaling for goods and services, economic development, community character and fiscal benefits to local government and taxpayers.

Towns, as described in Policy 4.7.1, provide an urban community level of goods and services, human scale, balance of land uses, mixed-use town center, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, parks, full range of schools, and corporate offices. The Land Development Code has provisions and detailed requirements to regulate development. Collier County welcomes suggestions for improvements. He clarified that towns cannot be located in Areas for Critical State Concern (ACSC).

He said that Land Development Code Section 4.08.07 more specifically provides for transects from core to edge. Architectural standards, landscape, streetscape, lighting, building heights, setbacks, parking and environmental standards are also provided in the Land Development Code.

The five year review provided ideas for improvement on Policy 4.7.1 including the requirement for a more formalized "Mobility Plan" to address transit, park and ride facilities, and increasing the town size range to be 1,500 to 5,000 acres. The Rural Fringe Mixed Use District Restudy has suggested to add a housing analysis requirement to address workforce accommodation in the towns and villages so they are more self-sufficient.

Villages are smaller than towns with a lower threshold for goods, services and parks. Villages still require a village center focal point, interconnected sidewalks, parks or public green space, and are an appropriate location for schools. The five year review provided ideas for improvement in village criteria, including an increase in the size range to 100 to 1,500 acres, requiring a mobility plan similar to towns, and allowing corporate office and light industrial as an option in villages.

In the discussion of hamlets, Mr. Van Lengen said that these could be eliminated. An example in the vicinity of Brantley Boulevard was shown. The structure for hamlets is similar to the piecemeal growth pattern. Mr. Van Lengen said he thinks hamlets should be eliminated but is open to discussion on why they should be kept.

Compact Rural Developments (CRDs) support concepts like eco-tourism and accommodate transient lodging facilities. Mr. Van Lengen said that uses in CRDs need to be better defined. The CRD designation is generally a catch-all to accommodate different uses in the future. An audience member said a concern is trailer communities. Mr. Van Lengen agreed that it is important to look at the definition of CRDs more closely.

The requirement for goods and services is at different levels for towns, villages and other forms of development ranging from 10 to 65 square feet of gross building area per dwelling unit. The idea is to have dynamic levels of activity within the towns and villages. The mix of uses formula requires residential development to be supported with goods and services and employment and civic uses that in turn contribute to mobility, efficiency and character.

Mr. Van Lengen pointed out that Group 4 policies are about SRAs, which is where development goes if and landowner opts into the RLSA program. Group 5 policies are for landowners outside of SRAs who do not choose to own, buy or spend stewardship credits. Underlying zoning is still in effect, and Group 5 policies provide tightened restrictions and requirements when landowners develop without invoking RLSA Overlay. Mr. Van Lengen noted that the policies are structured such that an owner cannot petition the Board of County Commissioners for development of a gated community unless they go through the stewardship program and develop according to the criteria applicable to SRAs.

When not developing through an SRA, various uses are allowed within the baseline zoning of Agriculture including farming, mining, recreation, cemeteries and other conditional uses. Residential uses are allowed at a density of one unit per five acres under Agricultural zoning.

Mr. Van Lengen summarized that Group 5 policies impose strict environmental rules and restrictions for development, including that site clearing and nonpermeable surfaces are restricted and an Environmental Impact Statement is required. Property within the ASCS is subject to even tighter restrictions. Wildlife surveys and habitat management plans are also required for non-residential development.

V Group Input

Mr. Van Lengen initiated the question for the audience to discuss: Do Towns, Villages, Hamlets and Compact Rural Developments provide the right pattern of development within the RLSA? If not, what changes would you recommend?

Dr. Amanda Evans said comments on Facebook Live will be included in the feedback tracker and encouraged the audience to continue participating. Dr. Evan reminded the audience that all comments are recorded in the feedback tracker.

An audience member asked if any information is available on the number of people needed to support specific uses, like a gas station, hospital, or grocery store. Mr. Van Lengen said the CIGM models what is needed in terms of goods and services to support certain uses. Developers know that projects like Ava Maria need a Publix and that it will not be profitable for a while, but that need must be fulfilled. Roughly 12,000 people are needed to support such a use.

Dr. Evans followed up linking this discussion to the group question, guiding the audience to provide a consensus on what policies work and which need improvement. Dr. Evans encouraged the audience to provide suggestions for improvement, noting that it is difficult to make recommendations without specific suggestions for improvement. Understanding that some people are not comfortable speaking within the group, she mentioned the comment cards provided on the table for written feedback.

Dr. Evans pointed out to the Facebook Live audience that this meeting is not about the Rural Lands West project, and is about the Rural Lands Stewardship Area restudy. While the public's comments

on the Rural Lands West project are important, she said they are not applicable for the restudy effort being discussed at this meeting.

After the audience work session, the feedback of the work groups was presented, starting with the Purple Group. The Purple Group reached a consensus that villages and towns make sense, and hamlets and CRDs do not make sense. Action items included: requiring rules for high density at town centers and cores, with variable density moving outward; offer incentives to get more open land; certain essential services are needed before occupancy; and stronger zoning laws are needed to fill in gaps, such as rules on pervious surfaces. The Purple Group supported variable affordable housing options and green building standards. This group wanted to see developers that are experienced in town center development. Finally, the Purple Group expressed concern and wants the Board of County Commissioners to hear the recommendations presented and pass them.

The Yellow Group reached consensus that hamlets do not make sense and require too much supporting infrastructure and services. The AARP self-sustaining livable community model was recommended for villages. The group said a provision should be provided for wildlife to travel and use their natural habitat without crossing streets and major highways. Questions included: what demographic is anticipated and what services do they need? Are they transient, seasonal, elderly, or aging in place?

The Green Group reached consensus on requiring a ¼-mile radius for walkability for all neighborhoods with amenities at the center. Mobility efficiency should be considered, and cars may not even be needed. Minimize automobile centrality. Government support should be provided for amenities. Streamline the process to make sure people have what they need. Increase minimum densities and increase clustered development. The separation between SRAs should be defined so they are not sprawling together and rather so that they have edges. Amenities must be put in developments even if the services must be subsidized, and maybe tax dollars can be provided to support the town center at the beginning stages of development.

The Pink Group had consensus items including: staging permitting so that not all developments are constructed at once; do not permit new developments until current residential projects reach a defined level of development buildout; and the developer should be on the hook for infrastructure during all the years of buildout. The group inquired will this zoning overlay bring new urbanism or more sprawl? Will the overlay bring the green space desired? Who is the target audience? Consider development placement relative to HSAs and other sensitive areas. The groups recommended action items include: restudy the credit methodology and the RLSA worksheet to take into account best available science for panthers and other habitat; the ¼-mile average walkability radius is important; green space and smart growth patterns are desired.

The Blue Group reached consensus that: SRA policies should include requirements for new urbanism principles to encourage compact and walkable towns; towns that are six miles long with golf courses should be held to requirements that make them compact and walkable; adopt more criteria to guide the development of towns, villages and hamlets; require architectural standards for

towns and villages; the minimum density should be increased to encourage walkability; landowners should not earn credits for impacting habitat in WRAs or primary panther habitat; the master mobility plans should be more detailed in SRAs to show interconnected street networks; SRAs should not be built in primary panther habitat; and the best available science needs to be used.

Dr. Evans said reoccurring topics, such as panthers and other protected species, will be revisited in future meetings. Mr. Van Lengen said the wrap up discussion of Group 1 Policies will cover the credit system and panther habitat scoring and that the County needs to consider a third-party opinion on the best available science on future panther viability.

VI Adjourn

Dr. Evans said the comments and discussion has been very valuable and encouraged additional comments to be provided by email or on comment cards. The meeting ended at approximately 8:10 p.m.