

WINTER HAVEN

The Chain of Lakes City

January 6, 2009

Dan Evans
Florida Department of Community Affairs
Office of Comprehensive Planning
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

RE: Letter of Understanding for Major Issues to be included in the Winter Haven Evaluation and Appraisal Report

Dear Mr. Evans:

The City of Winter Haven requests that the Department enter into a "Letter of Understanding" agreeing upon the following five (5) community issues for further study in the Evaluation and Appraisal Report:

Community Issue 1- Revitalization of Core Area Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods surrounding downtown have remained in the same general condition as they were a decade ago. Given the public investments that have been made in and around the downtown, why has private capital been slow in following? The City will examine what revisions may need to occur to the Comprehensive Plan to further encourage private investment into this important part of the City.

Community Issue 2- Mixed Use Development

A real interest exists for higher-density, infill development centered on the City's historic core; however, very little of this type development has occurred. The City will examine what revisions may be needed to the Comprehensive Plan to discourage inefficient land use and further encourage a sustainable, denser development pattern centered on the urban core.

Community Issue 3- Developing and Funding Water Supply Alternatives

It is anticipated that further restrictions will be implemented by the water management district resulting in additional reductions in permitted groundwater withdrawals. At a time when the City's population continues to grow at a rate of over 3 percent annually,

P.O. Box 2277 ♦ 451 Third Street NW ♦ Winter Haven, Florida 33883-2277
Telephone: 863.291.5600 ♦ Fax: 863.297.3090 ♦ www.mywinterhaven.com

alternative water supplies will be key in meeting future potable demands. The City will examine the Comprehensive Plan to determine how best to incentivize continued water conservation and how best to develop alternate water supplies.

Community Issue 4- Development of Alternative Methods of Transportation

The amount of funding available to expand the existing roadway network is becoming tighter as overall revenues have decreased. At the same time, costs associated with expanding roadways have increased significantly over the past ten years. In light of these realities, alternative modes of transportation within the City need to be explored. The City will examine the type and form of possible alternatives to include mass transit, additional pedestrian linkages, etc.

Community Issue 5- Perception of a Lack of Affordable Housing Options

Housing choices, both from type and price point, continues to be a critical issue to residents. The City will evaluate what revisions to the Plan may need to occur to facilitate a choice of housing options. This analysis will include what incentives are available to encourage the private sector in partnering with the City in the provision of housing; keeping in mind housing's important economic development role.

The above issues were developed from input received at six (6) community meetings held on November 13, 17, 18, and 20, 2008, and December 3 and 4, 2008; comments submitted by City staff; and responses received from an on-line survey posted on the City's website. As part of the community meetings, staff from State agencies, Polk County, the Polk County School Board, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, and adjoining municipalities were invited to attend and provide input.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (863) 298-7932. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sean H. Byers, AICP
Senior Planner

Cc: David L. Greene, City Manager
Dale L. Smith, Assistant City Manager
Frederick John Murphy, City Attorney
David J. Dickey, Community Development Director