

**EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT
OF THE
CITY OF FELLSMERE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CHAPTER THREE – SUCCESS & SHORTCOMINGS**

SUCCESSSES AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE PLAN

This chapter will summarize the major issues of the City that were first introduced in Chapter 1. An assessment will then follow as to whether the plan objectives within each element, as they relate to the major issues, have been achieved. The chapter will include, as appropriate, an identification as to whether unforeseen or unanticipated changes in circumstances have resulted in problems or opportunities with respect to the major issues identified in each element and the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the issue.

As presented in Chapter 1, the major issues facing the community are summarized below.

Maintain Historic Character of the Historic City. The City of Fellsmere, originally platted in 1911, has developed over the years with a classic small town character. The City is anchored by a town square in which prominently sits the historic elementary school – now converted to the Town Hall. The cross roads at the town square (CR 512 and Broadway) serve as the center of town and contain the historic business center and numerous historic structures. Within walking distance of the town square lie residential neighborhoods laid on a dense street grid. Pocket parks and recreational facilities are interspersed throughout the City allowing residents easy access to ample open space. These characteristics were lost in America for many decades and are now sought after in new neo-traditional developments and are known to reduce dependence on vehicular travel and thus green house gas emissions and energy requirements. As the City continues to develop outward from the city center, maintaining the historic character is paramount.

The primary element of the Plan that provides policies to address this issue is the Future Land Use Element. In addition, related and supportive policies may be found in the Transportation and Recreation Elements.

Complete Streets (Street lighting, Sidewalks, Paved streets). Within the City, only nine out of the thirty-six miles of local streets are paved, and virtually none provide street lights while only a small fraction contain sidewalks. The City feels the quality of life of its residents would be improved if the roads were designed as completed streets. Complete streets provide safe and secure means of travel and accommodate all modes of travel. Although the scale of the city-center is indeed walkable, without complete streets, walkability is reduced. As new development occurs within the City, complete streets will be even more important to ensure that the foundation existing within the historic city-center continues throughout the City.

The Transportation Element is the primary element containing policies that address this issue. Related and supportive policies can also be found in the Capital Improvements Element and the Intergovernmental Coordination Element.

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Expanded Bus Service. Currently, the income level of households within the City is skewed toward the lower ranges. Access to automobiles is not often available. Transit service is therefore important for many residents to carry out their daily chores. Unfortunately, given the limited resources of the transit provider and given the small number of riders in Fellsmere as compared to the County as a whole, transit service is limited. To provide expanded opportunities for our residents to access employment outside of the City, transit service to the eastern urbanized areas of the County has been initiated. As mentioned though, service frequency is limited.

The Transportation Element is the primary element containing policies addressing this issue. Related and supportive policies can also be found in the Future Land Use Element and Capital Improvement Element.

Codes to Meet Vision. As the City continues to grow, a strong desire exists to ensure that such growth will not result in the same standard nondescript, commonplace look that can be found anywhere in the Treasure Coast. Plan policies contain policies to ensure that strip commercial will not eventually line CR 512 as it spans from the historic city center to Interstate 95 and that residential communities are not filled with cookie-cutter homes on gated and disconnected street networks.

The primary element of the Plan that provides policies to address this issue is the Future Land Use Element. In addition, related and supportive policies may be found in the Transportation and Recreation Elements.

Implement Central Sewer System. Except for new commercial establishments on CR 512 and major multifamily establishments, the City is not served by a central sewer system. The County has planned and accommodated adequate capacity to serve the City's sanitary sewer needs. The City has yet to embark on required infrastructure extensions to serve each property. Since a majority of the local streets are still unpaved, now is the time to consider a central system. A specific plan of service and cost estimates along with potential funding sources to implement a central sewer system as well as other non-cost considerations have yet to be developed. The first order should be the development of a cost and revenue analysis to determine the optimum service method.

The primary element of the Plan that provides policies to address this issue is the Public Facilities Element. In addition, related and supportive policies may be found in the Intergovernmental and Capital Improvements Elements.

Capitalize on our Conservation Opportunities. The City of Fellsmere is nearly surrounded by major conservation tracts of the State. To the west lie Blue Cypress Lake and the Blue Cypress Marsh. To the south lies the Blue Cypress Water Management Area. To the east lie the Sand Lakes Conservation Area and an ACOE

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mitigation bank. Meanwhile to the northeast lies the St. Sebastian River Preserve. As part of its economic development initiatives, the City desires to capitalize on its conservation opportunities.

The primary element of the Plan that provides policies to address this issue is the Conservation Element. In addition, related and supportive policies may be found in the Intergovernmental and Capital Improvements Elements.

Economic Development. Although times are tough for most Americans and many governments at all levels, the City of Fellsmere has always struggled economically. For years, the City has had a higher percentage of unemployment, low income households, and substandard housing than the region on average. Historically, and even today, the economy of Fellsmere is largely dependent upon agriculture. With global competition and the ever looming threat of pestilence, the City strongly desires economic diversification. To this end, the City has taken strong, bold action to position itself for economic success. Having recently annexed over 20,000 acres of vacant land and embarked on a number of economic development initiatives, the City is pro-actively seeking economic development.

The City does not currently have an Economic Element. Objectives and policies related to economic development are interspersed throughout the plan.