

# **Recommended Land Use Scenario for the Urban Village**

*Prepared for the*

URBAN VILLAGE SUBCOMMITTEE AND  
FOCUS GROUP MEETING:  
AUGUST 6, 2007

by the Urban Village Planning Team

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## **Background**

At the May 2, 2007 meeting, the Urban Village Subcommittee reviewed four proposed land use scenarios for the Urban Village area. These scenarios were No-Change, Core Park, Activity Node, and Density Maximization, featuring various levels of density and population. Upon reviewing the four proposed scenarios, the Subcommittee moved to refer back to staff the issues of density in the Urban Village for a recommendation, keeping in mind the Subcommittee's discussion at the meeting. The discussion included the following general criteria for a new fifth land use scenario:

- Provide a range of minimum residential densities which “raise the bar” higher and “push the market” to provide higher densities in the area.
- Minimum densities around 24 to 40 units per acre should be used as a general guide, but Planning Team staff has the flexibility to recommend appropriate minimum densities, taking into account market factors.
- The highest density and intensity land uses should be concentrated around the SW 34<sup>th</sup> Street/SW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridors, with densities and intensities stepping down as they move to the west and north toward environmentally sensitive areas.
- The Subcommittee is generally supportive of the concept of a mix of non-residential uses within the residential areas. The 1.1 million square feet of non-residential which was proposed in the previous Activity Node and Density Maximization Plans is too high and should be scaled back.

The Subcommittee also requested that staff provide examples and photos of residential developments in the local area to get an idea of what various residential densities look like in the community.

## **Recommended Subcommittee Action**

Recommend that the MTPO refer to the City and County Commissions a recommendation to initiate joint Comprehensive Plan Amendments to implement the “Plan #5” land use scenario for the Urban Village, including establishment of a joint Multi-Modal Transportation District (MMTD).

## **Next Step**

The next step will be to forward the Subcommittee's recommendation to the full MTPO with the necessary background information. The MTPO will then review the Subcommittee's recommendation at a future meeting, and will have the option to refer to the City and County Commissions a recommendation to initiate joint Comprehensive Plan Amendments to implement the “Plan #5” land use scenario for the Urban Village, including establishment of a joint Multi-Modal Transportation District (MMTD).

## **New Land Use Scenario: “Plan #5”**

The staff planning team developed a new land use scenario that takes into account the May 2 recommendation of the Subcommittee. The new scenario, known as “Plan #5”, has the following general features:

- Establishment of two new land use categories:
  - Urban Village Mixed Use ( $\geq 24$  and  $\leq 40$  units per acre)
  - Urban Village Mixed Use High Density ( $\geq 40$  and  $\leq 75$  units per acre)
- Higher densities concentrated near SW 34<sup>th</sup> Street and SW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Phasing of land use changes based on the year-built of developed properties
- Mix of residential and non-residential uses
- Option “M” road network, plus Radio Road extension

Plan #5 would apply two new land use categories in the study area: “Urban Village Mixed Use” ( $\geq 24$  and  $\leq 40$  units per acre) and Urban Village Mixed Use High Density ( $\geq 40$  and  $\leq 75$  units per acre). The minimum residential densities of 24 and 40 units per acre are generally consistent with the recommendations of the Urban Village: Southwest 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue Transportation Design Proposal (UF Study) which has been accepted by the MTPo as a completed planning document. These minimum densities are also generally consistent with the Subcommittee’s recommendation from the May 2, 2007 meeting.

The higher density areas proposed in Plan #5 (Urban Village Mixed Use High Density) are generally concentrated near SW 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SW 34<sup>th</sup> Street, with the lower density areas (Urban Village Mixed Use) in the west and north parts of the study area, near existing environmentally sensitive lands. This is consistent with the Subcommittee’s recommendation and with the recommendation of the UF Study.

Although the UF Study does not recommend establishing maximum densities within the Urban Village, the staff planning team believes that maximum densities are necessary in order to accurately evaluate and plan for the future impacts of increased density on public services, and to satisfy State planning requirements. The Department of Community Affairs (DCA), in implementing Florida planning statutes, requires that Comprehensive Plans provide some mechanism which identifies a maximum amount of residential or non-residential development which may occur on a property. The maximum density is the most widely used method of satisfying this requirement.

The maximum density of 75 units per acre was chosen because it corresponds with the maximum allowable density in the City’s Urban Mixed Use 1 (UMU-1) land use category. This is not, however, the highest density land use category available in the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Under the Plan #5 scenario, there would be opportunities for higher density development to occur within the City limits, while still allowing for urban mixed use development and multi-modal transportation opportunities in the Urban

Village. For reference, the proposed maximum density of 75 units per acre in the Urban Village is lower than the planned Gainesville Greens (150 units per acre) or University Corners (112 units per acre) developments within the City.

In order to achieve the higher densities proposed in Plan #5, alternative vehicle parking and stormwater management provisions would likely be necessary. Typical surface stormwater ponds, along with surface parking areas, cover a large portion of a development parcel. It would be difficult to develop at the minimum densities proposed under Plan #5 using traditional on-site surface parking and stormwater ponds, particularly on the numerous smaller parcels (less than 10 acres) within the Urban Village. Parking structures would likely need to be provided by developers, or through some type of public-private partnerships. In the attached local examples of density, the higher density developments (50+ units per acre) utilize on-site or off-site parking garages. These higher density examples are also located in areas where centralized stormwater systems are currently available.

A two phased approach to the Future Land Use Map amendments is proposed for the study area. The purpose of having two different phases is to acknowledge the age and redevelopment potential of existing development in the area. There are several recently built developments in the Urban Village, and these properties are not likely to redevelop at higher Urban Village densities in the near future. There is no benefit to including these recent developments in the first phase of amendments, therefore, the Phase 1 amendments would be limited to older developed properties and vacant land. These are the areas that would be most likely to develop or redevelop at the higher densities in the short term future. For planning purposes, the Phase 1 amendments include vacant land and properties with existing development that is more than 15 years old.

The Phase 2 amendments generally include properties that have been developed in the last 15 years. These more recently developed properties may not be candidates for redevelopment in the short term, but may have redevelopment potential by the planning horizon of 2050. The exclusion of recently developed properties from Phase 1 reduces the potential traffic and infrastructure impacts in the short term to a more manageable level.

As the new land use category names imply, mixed uses would be encouraged or required. In order to evaluate future public service impacts, staff estimated how much non-residential could be expected in the study area under the new land use scenario. A multiplier of 20 square feet per person was used to arrive at an estimated non-residential building area between 361,936 and 639,124 square feet. This is based on the national average for retail building area per person. Given the amount of existing retail building area in the Butler Plaza and Oaks Mall areas, it is unlikely that the amount of retail in the Urban Village study area will approach this estimate. The estimate, therefore, is assumed to be the total non-residential area, including retail and office.

**TABLE 1. Urban Village Plan #5 Summary Data**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Average Residential Density</b>	<b>Non-Residential Floor Area</b>
<b>Plan #5</b>				
Phase 1 (242 acres)	14,115 – 24,746	7,057 – 12,373		282,293 – 494,920
Phase 2 (61 acres)	3,982 – 7,210	1,991 – 3,605		79,643 – 144,204
<b>Total (303 acres)</b>	<b>18,097 - 31,956</b>	<b>9,048 - 15,978</b>	<b>30-53 du/ac</b>	<b>361,936 - 639,124</b>

*Notes:*

*Population and Dwelling Units are calculated based on buildout to the minimum and maximum densities for the Plan #5 Future Land Use categories.*

*Average residential density is the potential gross density at buildout for the entire Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas of the Plan #5 Scenario.*

*Example: 9,048 dwelling units/303 acres = 30 dwelling units per acre*

**TABLE 2. Comparison of Plan #5 to Previously Considered Scenarios**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Average Residential Density</b>	<b>Non-Residential Floor Area</b>
No-Change (adopted land use)	11,154	5,577	18 du/ac	272,500
Core Park	11,371	5,686	20 du/ac	437,205
Activity Node	30,619	15,310	50 du/ac	1,172,410
Density Maximization	61,250	30,625	100 du/ac	1,172,410
<b>Plan #5</b>	<b>18,097 - 31,956</b>	<b>9,048 - 15,978</b>	<b>30-53 du/ac</b>	<b>361,936 - 639,124</b>

*Note: This table compares the buildout conditions of Plan #5 to the buildout conditions for the 4 land use scenarios considered at the May 2, 2007 meeting.*

### **Concurrency Option: Multi-Modal Transportation District (MMTD)**

In order for the Urban Village area to develop at a high level of densities and intensities, an approach to addressing concurrency issues needs to be implemented. A concurrency management system is needed to allow future development to be approved in this area, even if the road network is not operating at an acceptable level of service.

The concurrency option for the Urban Village area that has received the most discussion to this point is the establishment of a Multi-Modal Transportation District (MMTD). An MMTD is an area where primary priority is placed on assuring a safe, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian environment, with convenient interconnection to transit. Such areas must incorporate community design features that reduce vehicular usage while supporting an integrated multi-modal transportation system. Common elements include the presence of mixed-use activity centers, connectivity of streets and land uses, transit-friendly design features, and accessibility to alternative modes of transportation.

According to Chapter 163.3180 (15) (a), Florida Statutes:

*“Multimodal transportation districts may be established under a local government comprehensive plan in areas delineated on the future land use map for which the local government plan assigns secondary priority to vehicle mobility and primary priority to assuring a safe, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian environment, with convenient interconnection to transit. Such districts must incorporate community design features that will reduce the number of automobiles trips or vehicle miles of travel and will support an integrated, multimodal transportation system.”*

The Multi-Modal Transportation District designation is accomplished by amending a local government comprehensive plan. A proposed MMTD must be reviewed and approved by both the Florida Department of Community Affairs and the Florida Department of Transportation. Local governments must demonstrate that an area qualifies as an MMTD based upon the following existing or planned future design elements defined in Chapter 163.3180(15)(b), F.S.:

- A complementary mix and range of land uses;
- An interconnected network of streets to encourage walking and bicycling, with traffic calming where desirable;
- Appropriate densities and intensities of use within walking distance of transit stops;
- Daily activities within walking distance of residences, allowing independence to persons who do not drive; and
- Public uses, streets, and squares that are safe, comfortable, and attractive for the pedestrian, with adjoining buildings open to the street, and with parking not interfering with pedestrian, transit, automobile, and truck travel modes.

The document *Multimodal Areawide Quality of Service Handbook* (FDOT, 2004) provides guidelines for local governments to achieve the successful designation of a Multi-Modal Transportation District. The Handbook provides for MMTD designation in a downtown or urban core area, regional activity center, or traditional town or village in accordance with certain criteria. In these areas, planning efforts would focus on enhancing multimodal elements, guiding redevelopment, and encouraging appropriate infill. An MMTD could also be applied to a new or emerging area, where adopted plans and regulations would need to ensure internal and external connectivity, a mix of uses, densities, and urban design features necessary to support alternative modes of transportation.

The Urban Village has elements of both an emerging area and an established area. The majority of the 512-acre study area is developed, although there is still a significant amount of vacant or undeveloped land (about 153 acres). The majority of this vacant or undeveloped land, however, has environmental limitations. The study area has existing older development that is 20 to 30 or more years old, which could potentially be considered for redevelopment. There are elements of a multi-modal framework already in place, and current transit ridership is high, but multi-modal facilities and services would likely need to be expanded in order to satisfy the requirements of an MMTD.

The Urban Village also has elements of an “emerging area.” There have been several new developments in recent years, but the development pattern has remained one of single-use, automobile oriented development. In order to establish a successful MMTD, adopted plans would need to be amended to ensure appropriate connectivity, mix of uses, and urban design features necessary to support multiple modes of transportation.

The *Multimodal Areawide Quality of Service Handbook* contains general performance measures that are designed to accomplish specific multi-modal objectives. These measures include the following:

1. 80 percent of all facilities contained in bicycle and pedestrian networks function at level of service C or better;
2. All parcels within one-fourth (1/4) mile of a transit stop should be served by pedestrian facilities operating at level of service C or better; and
3. 80 percent of employees and dwelling units in a multimodal district must be located within one-half (1/2) mile of a transit stop.

According to the Handbook, there is no minimum size standard for multimodal districts, however, the Handbook does state:

*“..... it is important that a prospective district achieve the critical mass necessary to promote, encourage, and sustain pedestrian, bicycle, and transit usage. The minimum area should be of sufficient size to attain the levels of activity, intensity and density necessary to sustain multimodal transportation systems.”*

The FDOT Handbook characterizes a “good candidate” for an MMTD as having “a mix of mutually supporting land uses, good multimodal access and connectivity, an interconnected transportation network and the provision of alternative modes of transportation to the automobile.” Although certain elements are required for designation, many of the Handbook’s guidelines are recommendations and not rigid standards or thresholds. Flexibility is provided during the review process for proposed districts that fail to meet all applicable standards.