

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION DATA AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The following is the Data and Analysis necessary to support the adopted Charlotte 2050 Plan goals, objectives and policies.

A major objective of the local comprehensive planning process is the “*coordination of the local comprehensive plan with the comprehensive plans of adjacent municipalities, the County, adjacent counties, or the region...and with the State Comprehensive Plan*”, (Section 163.3177(4)(a), Florida Statutes). In accordance with Section 9J-5.015 of the Florida Administrative Code, the purpose of this Intergovernmental Coordination element (ICE) is as follows:

To identify and resolve incompatible goals, objectives and policies and development proposed in local government comprehensive plans and to determine and respond to the needs for coordination process and procedures with adjacent local governments, and regional and State agencies.

This element addresses these requirements by identifying units of government and other agencies that have, or should have, mechanisms of coordination to implement the elements of this plan. It then provides an analysis of the adequacy of the coordination mechanisms, and identifies problem areas requiring improvements. The element concludes by providing a formal set of goals, objectives and policies (GOP), which are adopted as a separate document, to maintain and foster intergovernmental coordination.

The goals of this element are to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of government; provide for consistency in decisions and actions between various departments and agencies; and to improve citizen awareness and participation.

The following recommendations are contained within this element:

1. Emphasizing coordination in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan through the following:
 - Development of shared recreational facility agreements between Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda and the School Board of Charlotte County.
 - Establishment or expansion of agreements with independent districts for common issues of interest.

- Establishment and strengthening of mutual agreements with adjoining jurisdictions for assessment of land use proposals having inter-jurisdictional impacts, such as issues pertaining to rezoning, drainage, roads, and recreation.
 - Coordination with private utility providers within the County.
 - Coordination of activities with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).
2. Coordination of Level of Service (LOS) standards with local, State, and Federal entities (e.g., Water Management District, Florida Department of Transportation). For example, there is local and regional planning council review in the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process. Roadway funding from developers may be allocated between communities impacted by particular developments. More arrangements of this kind would be beneficial.
 3. Coordination with adjacent local governments to ensure that impacts of development are addressed through the following:
 - Reciprocal communication with adjacent local governments regarding proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Atlas when the proposal is located within one-half mile of the jurisdictional boundary.
 - Consideration of the existing comprehensive plans of affected local governments during inter-jurisdictional review of development proposals and amendments.

Utilization of Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council's (SWFRPC) intergovernmental coordination process to determine whether development proposals would have significant impacts on Charlotte County and other local governments' resources and to develop remedies to mitigate the impacts.

RELATIONSHIP TO 2050 PLAN

The ICE necessarily relates to every other element of the Comprehensive Plan. There are two potential reasons for this being the case: (1) the substance of other elements has the potential to at least indirectly affect the resources of localities other than the unit of government responsible for that resource; and (2) the facility or resource is directly of concern to agencies at more than just the local level.

Examples of the first category of intergovernmental issues are: roads crossing governmental boundaries (Transportation element), rivers and estuaries that are downstream from sources either in, or flowing through, other counties or municipalities (Natural Resources element and Coastal Planning element).

Examples of the second category of intergovernmental issues are water management district control of usage of water resources for potable water to supply local land uses (Infrastructure element), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) funding, regulation of beach re-nourishment, and land acquisition projects (Recreation and Open Space element, Natural Resources element, and Coastal Planning element). Coordination on land use planning is also required with the Charlotte County School District (Public School Facilities element).

LEGISLATION

Chapter 163, Florida Statutes contains the State's Local Government Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulation Act. The Act provides Charlotte County with the authority to plan for future development and growth and to adopt and amend a comprehensive plan. 163.3177(h) describes the ICE of the local comprehensive plan.

Chapter 9J-5 of the Florida Administrative Codes provides the standards and criteria for local government comprehensive plans. As noted in Part I of this element, Chapter 9J-5.015 of the Code requires that the ICE must provide for coordination with "*plans of school boards and other units of local government providing services but not having regulatory authority over the use of the land,*" provided such plans exist; may contain a voluntary dispute resolution process for settlement of intergovernmental disputes; and must describe joint processes for collaborative planning and decision making on a number of issues. Furthermore, the Code requires that, within one year of adoption of the ICE, each County, the district school board, and any unit of local government service providers in that County, establish by interlocal or other formal agreement, the joint processes described above.

There are many policies throughout the State Comprehensive Plan, Ch. 187, Florida Statutes, that impact on intergovernmental coordination, including land use, public facilities, transportation, government efficiency, and plan implementation. This element is designed to be compatible and support these policies.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

This element provides an inventory and analysis of the linkages between various levels and sections of government. It also discusses intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and needs in reference to major planning bodies and activities, as well as in reference to each of the elements in the comprehensive plan.

There is a large volume of interlocal agreements, grant agreements, mutual aid agreements, maintenance agreements, etc., that Charlotte County has with other local governments and

various governmental agencies. There are also a great number of agreements with private parties, development agreements, and contracts for construction and services. Agreements also exist with State and Federal agencies for such things as road maintenance, aid to libraries, dredging, and various services to the elderly. In 2004, Charlotte County completed an Interlocal Service Delivery Agreement Report (ISDAR) that summarizes the community's interlocal agreements. The ISDAR documents the cooperation and coordination that the County continues to undertake.

The interface points of intergovernmental coordination are important. Formal coordination mechanisms continue to exist through the water management districts established pursuant to Ch. 373 Florida Statutes, and related boards as well as the SWFRPC. In 1992, the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was formed for transportation planning. City and County public works staff meet together to coordinate on roads, water, and sewer. The County also coordinates with City and School District staff regarding school facility planning and school concurrency issues in accordance with the Updated Interlocal Agreement for Coordinated Planning and School Concurrency. To advance coordination of transportation plans between Charlotte and Sarasota Counties, in 2003, the MPO signed an interlocal agreement with the Sarasota-Manatee MPO in accordance with Section 339.175 Florida Statutes. Formalized coordination continues with State and Federal agencies through planning, permitting, and review processes. However, an informal working relationship between officials and staff in different jurisdictions and agencies continues to drive coordination.

Charlotte County's policy is to withhold approval of development proposals until the applicant has received all other required permits from the appropriate agencies. This practice benefits the County and other agencies by reducing redundancy, and prevents inter-agency conflict over a given project. Charlotte County also provides copies of its proposed Future Land Use Map amendments and rezoning petitions to the SWFRPC, the City of Punta Gorda, the City of North Port, DEP, Lee, Sarasota, and DeSoto counties, SFWMD, SWFWMD, the Florida Division of Historical Resources, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC). Charlotte County takes the agencies' comments seriously and addresses their concerns through its review and approval processes. Likewise, Charlotte County receives, reviews, and, where necessary, provides comments on proposed land use changes, pending legislation, and other similar materials from these agencies as appropriate.

RESOURCES SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED BY OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Local resources identified by Charlotte County that are subject to impact and require intergovernmental coordination are: the roads classified on the traffic circulation map; the landfill, hurricane evacuation routes and shelters, parks and recreational facilities; potable water and sanitary sewer facilities impacted by inter-jurisdictional service agreements; public schools where attendance zones cross jurisdictional boundaries; Charlotte County government offices and facilities located south of Charlotte Harbor, existing and future land uses (including consideration

of density, intensity, and compatibility) within one-half mile of jurisdictional boundaries; Charlotte Harbor; the Shell and Prairie Creek area; and drainage basins crossing jurisdictional boundaries.

SWFRPC

The SWFRPC, which is referred to in several different contexts in this element, is a regional planning agency established pursuant to Ch. 186, Florida Statutes. Because SWFRPC is the major existing regional intergovernmental coordination agency it is of great utility in the comprehensive planning process. Charlotte County enjoys an excellent working relationship with them.

The SWFRPC is composed of representatives of Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota Counties, and various municipalities within those counties, including Punta Gorda. Supporting Policy and Analysis Map (SPAM) Series Map #94 shows the member counties of the SWFRPC. The SWFRPC has a full-time professional planning staff, and is responsible for the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP), which contains the following mechanisms for intergovernmental coordination involving local governments: regional clearinghouse review for State and Federal environmental agencies, the local planner's technical advisory committee, mediation of planning conflicts between local governments, and other specialized processes. The SWFRPC has near equal representation between large and small counties, which makes it a useful agency for mediating disagreements with large neighbors. They also conduct special studies and provide an outstanding library that is frequently used by local government planners throughout the region.

Both the City of Punta Gorda and the County are members of the council, and elected officials from both local governments participate actively on the SWFRPC board. Also, planning staff from both local governments participate actively in the SWFRPC-Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and work with council staff in various planning and permitting processes.

SWFRPC is a review agency for all amendments to comprehensive plans. Under the formal review process, SWFRPC reviews local plan amendments for consistency with the SRPP and forwards its comments to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Findings of inconsistency with the SRPP may initiate administrative proceedings against a local government that can keep those plan amendments from taking effect. As such, Charlotte County considers the SRPP to ensure consistency with the spirit of its goals.

SWFRPC also reviews the County Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR). The SWFRPC plays a significant role in the intergovernmental coordination process through implementation of a formal dispute resolution process. Chapter 186.509, F.S. mandates the following:

“Dispute resolution process.--Each regional planning council shall establish by rule a dispute resolution process to reconcile differences on planning and growth

management issues between local governments, regional agencies, and private interests. The dispute resolution process shall, within a reasonable set of timeframes, provide for: voluntary meetings among the disputing parties; if those meetings fail to resolve the dispute, initiation of voluntary mediation or a similar process; if that process fails, initiation of arbitration or administrative or judicial action, where appropriate. The council shall not utilize the dispute resolution process to address disputes involving environmental permits or other regulatory matters unless requested to do so by the parties. The resolution of any issue through the dispute resolution process shall not alter any person's right to a judicial determination of any issue if that person is entitled to such a determination under statutory or common law.”

GENERAL INTER-COUNTY COORDINATION

Charlotte County shares borders with four counties, as well as touching two additional counties at section corners. SPAM Series Map #94 shows the arrangement of Charlotte County amidst these other counties, as well as the local jurisdictions that impact the County.

There are a few formal agreements with Lee County, Sarasota County and the City of North Port. An agreement with Lee County allows residents of the Lee County portion of Boca Grande to use Charlotte County's franchise to collect their garbage and also use Charlotte County's landfill for disposal. There is an agreement with Sarasota County's Solid Waste Department permitting residents in the south portion of Sarasota County to dispose of household waste on a limited basis at West Charlotte Mini-Transfer & Recycling. Charlotte County and Sarasota County are also parties to the interlocal agreement that established the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (RWSA). An agreement exists with North Port for maintenance and traffic enforcement of Hillsborough and Chancellor Boulevards. There are also mutual aid agreements between Charlotte County Fire/EMS and the North Port Fire District.

Individual agreements also exist with other area counties. DeSoto County and Charlotte County have agreements for mutual aid. DeSoto County is a party to the Peace River agreement. Glades County is a party to the multi-County agreement with SWFRPC. Agreements with Hendry County are limited to the multi-County agreements on mutual aid and SWFRPC creation.

SWFRPC serves as a coordination forum among four of Charlotte County's surrounding counties. However, it does not have any coordinating functions with DeSoto County with which Charlotte County shares a lengthy border and the Peace River. Coordination between Charlotte County, the surrounding counties, and the SWFRPC has been fairly good, though informal, and it is certainly necessary to the comprehensive planning process.

Despite the limited number of agreements between Charlotte County and the adjoining counties, as further highlighted in this section, each are represented on various joint authorities, boards,

and commissions that serve southwest Florida. This interaction aids with cooperation and the development of compatible goals by the Counties.

INTRA-COUNTY COUNTY COORDINATION

The Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) holds an annual joint workshop with the School Board of Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda, quarterly meetings with the City and the Charlotte County Development Authority, as well as meetings with other agencies as needed. The BCC will continue to use agreements in support of coordination and cooperation.

Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda have various agreements addressing potable water and sewer service, mutual aid, the landfill, and the Shell Creek-Prairie Creek water supply area for Punta Gorda.

There are informal communication efforts between the staffs of Charlotte County and Punta Gorda. When a planning or zoning initiative is proposed that is located in proximity of the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda boundary, the staff of that jurisdiction contacts the other staff and solicits input. The County and City should jointly establish a formal process whereby the respective Growth Management Departments notify each other of plan amendments, actions affecting the municipal boundary, specified zoning, subdivision, and site plan reviews, and then provide the neighboring jurisdiction an opportunity to comment on the given item. All of this could be better addressed through the creation of a joint planning area.

The agreements between Charlotte County and local agencies are mostly with the School Board and the various fire control districts. Direct relationships between local governments and other entities, through contracts and agreements, have continued to expand in recent years. A substantial number of agreements were generated with the various utilities in the County and the Municipal Services Benefit Units (MSBU) or the Municipal Services Taxing Units (MSTU) formed to pay for improvements. Agreements with Punta Gorda continue for recycling, education, the justice center, fire academy training, traffic light maintenance, and formation of the MPO.

The Charlotte County Development Authority is a five-member elected body that is not responsible to the BCC, and has some jurisdiction over facilities such as the Charlotte County Airport. The Development Authority is represented on the MPO Technical Advisory Committee, supporting intergovernmental coordination. The coordination relationship between the Development Authority and the BCC are helpful in carrying out the comprehensive planning process.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DCA is the State Land Planning Agency designated by the legislature, and as such, directs the formulation and implementation of all County comprehensive plans. The coordination relationship between DCA and counties is governed by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. DCA's administrative responsibility is to ensure consistency of proposed plans and plan amendments with the law. It coordinates review of plans and plan amendments with other agencies; receives petitions from affected parties objecting to a plan or plan amendment; and works to resolve disputes in most cases before they are taken to an administrative hearing.

Future Land Use

The way in which land is used can have profound impacts on nearby jurisdictions, making it necessary to communicate with the other jurisdictions regarding future land use. Below is a discussion of some of the coordination efforts as they pertain to land use. However, as land use is such a wide topic that touches all of the other elements, further analysis is included in the respective element analyses.

County staff present and discuss development proposals such as rezonings, plan amendments, and DRIs to the BCC. When there are issues of significance, the appropriate staff is requested to gather information, perform analysis, and present information.

Transportation

Intergovernmental coordination of transportation-related elements of the Comprehensive Plan is organized through the MPO. The MPO provides a forum for transportation planning services, coordinates intergovernmental needs and goals, and facilitates public involvement. The MPO Board consists of elected officials from Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda along with an Airport Authority Commissioner. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Secretary, District One, has a non-elected official on the Board. The MPO Board's policies are implemented by its staff.

Federal funds for transportation improvements available through the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provides the MPO with regional planning influence. The Federal funds include the responsibility for cooperation and coordination among its members by requiring that the MPO adopt a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The regional plan must accomplish the objectives of the planning process to improve mobility, foster economic growth and development, minimize fuel consumption, and minimize air pollution. SAFETEA-LU allows the MPO some discretion in determining how the objectives are achieved and requires that it consider a range of options to achieve the objectives of the planning process. The LRTP is based on community priorities, Federal and State regulations, the Florida Transportation Plan, system plans (e.g, the Transit Development Plan and bicycle/pedestrian plans), area plans, and local comprehensive transportation and land use elements. The MPO uses the LRTP to develop MPO Transportation Improvement Program priorities, area plans, and other transportation plans.

State transportation dollars also fund significant portions of area transportation improvements. FDOT has a primary role in the planning and implementation of the transportation components of the comprehensive plan and, less directly, in the Future Land Use element since it must reflect an adequate ability to move people and goods. Significant changes in the relationship between local governments and FDOT resulted from the formation of the MPO, and the transportation funding process required by SAFETEA-LU. FDOT is represented on the MPO board as well as on the staff level Technical Advisory Committee. The utility of this relationship to the comprehensive planning process is great and its quality has been improved throughout the MPO structure and process.

In 2003, the MPO signed an interlocal agreement with the Sarasota-Manatee MPO. The agreement, formulated in accordance with Section 339.175 Florida Statutes, supports coordination of policies through development of a joint regional LRTP and joint regional project priorities. The agreement advances coordination of transportation plans between Charlotte and Sarasota Counties.

Natural Resources and Coastal Planning

The Natural Resources and Coastal Planning elements provide the foundation for the County's involvement in the permitting programs administered by a variety of regional, State, and Federal agencies. The County has standing as an affected party, and may provide comments to the various agencies including SWFWMD, SFWMD, DEP, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACoE), as provided through these agencies' specific permitting programs. While the Natural Resources and Coastal Planning elements acknowledge the lead authority of these and other agencies in the enforcement of their regulatory and permitting mandates, the County makes available local information and knowledge of which the lead agency may not be aware. This not only allows a more thorough review of permit applications, it also ensures that local issues are addressed to the greatest extent allowed through the specific permitting process.

The County's role of providing comments during permit review windows is often reciprocated by these agencies. For example, DCA routes plan amendments to DEP in order to receive that agency's comments regarding environmental impacts that may result from a proposed change in land use. Similarly, FFWCC participates in the DRI review process and provides written comments and recommendations to the County and SWFRPC.

The USACoE has jurisdictional responsibility over the navigable waters of the United States and over wetlands. Clearing and filling activities in wetlands require permits from them. Also, dredging, filling, and construction activities in Charlotte Harbor all require permits from USACoE. Area wide drainage improvements contemplated in the Drainage Section of the Infrastructure element should be planned in consultation with the USACoE because of the potential impact on wetlands. Coordination is generally at the development plan review stage and is useful in carrying out the Comprehensive Plan policies.

Charlotte Harbor is one of the most important natural resources of Charlotte County. In 1995, the Harbor was selected for inclusion in the National Estuary Program (NEP) administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) is locally administered by the SWFRPC with technical assistance from the Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota. In 2000, a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan was completed for Charlotte Harbor. The management plan has goals, quantifiable objectives, and priority actions. The priority actions are the specific strategies for achieving the goals and quantifiable objectives for the three priority problems: hydrologic alterations, water quality degradation, and fish and wildlife habitat loss. BCC endorsed the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan by being a signatory. BCC is also represented on the Policy Committee that establishes general policy for CHNEP and has ultimate authority in program administration. The management plan supports coordination between the many agencies. The Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan was updated in 2008.

Charlotte Harbor can be potentially impacted by upstream development. The Peace River is the major tributary and is subject to impacts from mining and agriculture upstream in DeSoto County and Hardee County. The Peace River Basin Board and the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority are regional forums for coordination. The Peace River is a principal intergovernmental concern with jurisdictions outside Charlotte County. Existing forums established through the water management district may be adequate for discussion of broader policy issues but this element needs to include policies, agreed upon through "cross acceptance," for review of upstream development proposals and mitigation of impacts.

The Peace River Basin Board is a basin board within SWFWMD that covers parts of Polk, Hardee, DeSoto, Highlands, and Charlotte Counties. The Peace River Basin Board has taxing authority for funding projects through ad valorem taxes. Its board is appointed by the Governor. The projects of the Basin Board are largely driven by local government requests. Charlotte County could benefit from Basin Board funding for which it is eligible.

The Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority is composed of elected officials from Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, and DeSoto Counties. There are three such authorities within SWFWMD boundaries. The Authority is a water supplier as a result of the acquisition of the General Development Utilities Plant on the Peace River, and also reviews utilization of water resources.

SWFWMD is the governing board for the Peace River Basin Board. SWFWMD is the permitting agency that approves water withdrawals for consumptive use, and approves stormwater management plans for development. While the basin boards manage individual projects within their jurisdictions, SWFWMD manages larger regional projects with which local projects must be coordinated.

SFWMD serves the same purpose as SWFWMD. The City of Punta Gorda is within SWFWMD but a portion of South Charlotte County lies within the SFWMD boundary. The Telegraph Swamp area south of the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area drains southward to Lee County and is in SFWMD's jurisdiction.

SWFWMD and SFWMD complete District Water Management Plans consistent with the requirements of Section 373.036, Florida Statutes and Section 62-40.520, Florida Administrative Code. District Water Management Plans provide comprehensive long-range guidance for the actions of the two water management districts in implementing their responsibilities under State and Federal laws. To facilitate comparison and coordination of the plans of the water management districts, the District Water Management Plans are organized to reflect the four areas of responsibility of the water management districts: water supply, flood protection and floodplain management, water quality and natural systems. This common format is also used for the District Water Management Plan annual reports to help track the progress each district has made in implementing its district water management plans. To further assist with coordinating the policies between SWFWMD and SFWMD, especially for jurisdictions like Charlotte County that must develop coherent water policies that conform to the rules of both water management districts. The County reviews and comments on both District Water Management Plans. Also, SWFWMD and SFWMD executives meet and representatives of both sit as ex-officio members on the SWFRPC, which encourages formulation of a joint policy on Charlotte County.

The Myakka River Management Coordinating Council oversees the Myakka River Wild and Scenic River Plan. The segment of the Myakka that lies within Sarasota County was designated by the Florida Legislature under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Wild and Scenic River Plan controls development and other activities on the river along a 200 foot corridor extending along either side of the river. Charlotte County is represented on the Council, which meets three times a years to discuss issues of concern. Charlotte County developments near the protected corridor are matters appropriate for intergovernmental coordination. This coordination relationship is useful in protecting a regionally significant resource and the quality of the relationship is good in terms of communication.

Regarding Charlotte Harbor, Charlotte County and Punta Gorda have a relationship with the United States Coast Guard. The agency provides important educational, law enforcement, and emergency resource functions. A Regional Harbor Board promotes a non-regulatory, educational approach to boating practices within Charlotte, Collier, Manatee, Sarasota, and Lee Counties by adopting common guidelines. The Board was formed in July of 1995 by a memorandum of agreement between DEP, the Florida Sea Grant College Program, WCIND, SWFRPC, and the Boater's Action and Information League (BAIL).

The Marine Advisory Committee is an advisory committee formed by BCC. It includes members from marine-oriented organizations throughout the County and four members-at-large. This body provides input on recreational, coastal management and conservation issues. Because of the

mutual interest of the City and the County in Charlotte Harbor, the activities of this committee do provide some coordination benefit. The Committee advises the County on the expenditure of Boating Improvement Program funds and WCIND funds.

WCIND has representation from Charlotte County. Coordination with WCIND supports the comprehensive planning process by funding dredging and navigational improvement projects. The Environmental Lands Management Study III (ELMS III) law requires indemnification of dredge spoil disposal sites to be coordinated with WCIND and located on the Future Land Use Map if appropriate. Coordination with WCIND is useful to the comprehensive planning process.

FFWCC's relationship centers on aspects of habitat and preservation. Coordination with the agency has resulted in acquisition of lands in the Charlotte Flatwoods through the Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever programs. The relationship has utility for the comprehensive planning process and the quality of the relationship is good.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has responsibility for the Endangered Species Act, which plays a part in conservation policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The primary coordination relationship is in the review of individual development proposals. The coordination takes place through FFWCC.

In terms of soils and agriculture, there are several relationships. The Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is an elected body that works closely with the Federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Assistance with soil analysis, water conservation, and agricultural site planning (crop selection and location, drainage, farm pond excavation) is available to Charlotte County through NRCS's office in Fort Myers. The County has an agreement with SWCD to help improve the environment and safeguard natural resources by assisting with the inventory of soil, water and plant resources, helping with land use planning for the future, providing soil maps and interpretations, and by providing other technical assistance. The County cooperates with SWCD in such things as the development and implementation of land and water use programs using resources, data, and technical information provided by SWCD, counsel with SWCD concerning present and future plans for development, and considers and comments on SWCD's long range plan and projects for watershed protection as they apply to the County's plans and activities. This coordination relationship works well and it is useful in carrying out the comprehensive planning process insofar as it helps to sustain the viability of local agriculture.

The Florida Department of Agriculture's main connection with the local comprehensive plan is through the Future Land Use element. Cattle, citrus groves, and other crops are important in Charlotte County. These activities require substantial land and water resources and they contribute to seasonal demands for housing and services. An interest of the agency is land planning policies that sustain valuable agricultural production areas in Charlotte County. Coordination should be achieved in concert with other agricultural and soil conservation agencies. An appropriate forum is the County's Agriculture and Natural Resources Advisory Committee

(ANRAC). Though coordination with the agency is limited, the potential utility and quality of the relationship are good.

The intergovernmental relationship with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is primarily through the Soil Conservation Service, which is discussed above in the context of the SWCD. An indirect link with the USDA through the Cooperative Extension Service could be helpful in formulating and implementing landscaping programs and regulations.

Infrastructure

Coordination in public facilities has occurred as a matter of necessity. The Peace River agreement is an example of coordination between adjacent counties. Charlotte County has been regulating stormwater for years, and has been assuming a greater role in stormwater management as it has developed. Charlotte County reviews subdivision plats and development proposals to ensure that development is approved and constructed in accordance with the standards established by the Comprehensive Plan. The County's review also considers the standards of both Water Management Districts ensuring coordination with their District Water Management Plans. Coordination between City and County public works staff, the respective advisory boards, and the governing bodies on stormwater management increased due to implementation of the federally mandated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Act. An annual report is submitted to DEP documenting that the County is meeting the permit requirements of the NPDES Act. Solid waste issues are coordinated between the City and the County. Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda have an interlocal agreement to promote public awareness, support, and cooperation in solid waste management and recycling programs for the protection of the County's natural environment.

The EPA is responsible for implementing Federal environmental legislation (e.g. the Clean Water Act) that prescribes quality standards for potable water and sanitary sewer operations, as well as stormwater quality. Permitting and monitoring processes provide the opportunity for coordination on a regular basis. The EPA's enforcement of its regulations can potentially be very expensive to local governments. Coordination with EPA is useful to the comprehensive planning process and the quality of the relationship as a means of communication is adequate.

The SWCD addresses issues associated with the Infrastructure element. Charlotte County's unincorporated areas continue to be served by various private water and sewer utilities. Charlotte County owns and operates Charlotte County Utilities (CCU). In recent years, CCU has purchased a number of the private utilities, notably in the West County area. For purposes of this element, it should be noted that these utility relationships are not by and large intergovernmental relationships, except for the relationship between Charlotte County and Punta Gorda Utilities and the Englewood Water District. CCU and Punta Gorda Utilities are negotiating an interlocal agreement allowing the opportunity for the County to purchase water from Punta Gorda or for the County to sell water to the City at some future date, or for either to help each other during an emergency. Respective utilities staff and elected officials are holding joint meetings in an effort to

arrive at an agreement. Another agreement is being negotiated among Charlotte County, Punta Gorda, and the RWSA to allow an interconnection with the City. The RWSA must get BCC's approval prior to running the line through Charlotte County.

CCU has an agreement with City of North Port to allow water interconnects. The agreement also provides for interconnects that allow either entity to provide water to the other in case of emergency such as drought or a hurricane.

The Englewood Water District is a governmental entity providing services but does not have regulatory authority over the use of the land. The water district's service plans must comply with the Future Land Use element, the accompanying Future Land Use Map, as well as the Urban Service Area. The Englewood Water District and the County must coordinate future activities to ensure that they complement the County's growth management efforts. CCU has an interlocal agreement with Englewood Water District for sanitary sewer service. Under the agreement, Englewood accepts and treats excess flows of up to 0.4 mgd from CCU's Rotonda service area.

The Public Works and Engineering Departments of the City and County work together to resolve road maintenance difficulties along the shared border. The County has agreements with Punta Gorda to maintain traffic signals and to provide street striping services on request. In the past, the County and the City have developed agreements to complete road and drainage improvements along roads that straddle the border. The relationship between the respective staffs needs improvement regarding right-of-way annexation issues. SPAM Series Map #95 shows the anticipated annexation plan of the City.

Environmental Health is a large State agency that is focused mainly on human services. However, septic system permitting is also an important responsibility. Environmental Health is providing technical assistance that will assist the County with a septic system management program. As the County develops and implements this program, coordination with Environmental Health will be a major component for success. The quality of the existing relationship is good.

The coordination that exists with Florida Power & Light (FPL) for land use and traffic circulation is informal. The same applies to telecommunication service providers. Coordination is generally at a development review level to avoid conflicts with utility easements and infrastructure.

Recreation and Open Space

Charlotte County's Comprehensive Plan has a Recreation and Open Space element that establishes LOS standards for recreational facilities. The County and the City coordinate with DEP in the acquisition of property for preservation. Additional public access to barrier island beaches is an issue that requires continued cooperation with State agencies.

The Charlotte County Historical Advisory Committee is a nine member body that is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. It provides input on the management of the County's historic resources.

The Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC), active with the County's archaeological heritage, provides coordination between various levels of government. CHEC is a not-for-profit organization composed of four corporate members: Charlotte County, the City of Punta Gorda, the Charlotte County School Board, and the Peace River Audubon Society. Each member supports CHEC through policy directives, financial assistance and donations of in-kind services.

In order that continuity of historic preservation efforts be maintained across jurisdictional boundaries, it is necessary to communicate and coordinate preservation efforts that affect these areas. In areas immediately outside Punta Gorda, it is necessary to coordinate efforts to maintain the atmosphere that the City has created within its limits.

Limited intergovernmental coordination with the Department of State occurs through the Division of Historical Resources. Since historic resources are fairly limited, the scope of this coordination relationship is also limited. The quality of the relationship is good.

SAFETEA-LU calls for coordination between the US Department of Transportation, FDOT, the MPO, and the Department of State's Division of Historical Resources when a transportation project has impact on a historical site or project. All of the above agencies work together to ensure that historic resources are preserved.

The United States Department of the Interior has an indirect intergovernmental relationship with local governments through which it coordinates enforcement of the Historic Preservation Act through State's Division of Historical Resources. The agency is responsible for the National Register of Historic Places. Charlotte County faces the task of identifying and managing scattered historic and archaeological resources. However, the coordination relationship between the agency and the County government is limited since so much of the building stock is less than fifty years old.

Cultural Facilities and Services - The main coordinating cultural body in the County is the Charlotte County Arts and Humanities Council, which is partially funded by the County. It promotes more than sixty associated organizations, and sometimes funnels government grant money to arts organizations. The department responsible for parks and recreation assists in coordinating and facilitating cultural resource activities throughout Charlotte County.

The Division of Cultural Affairs within the Department of State provides grant programs, guidance, and assistance to the Arts and Humanities Council regarding cultural facilities and services. The relationship among all of the arts agencies is good.

Housing

Charlotte County's non-profit housing development corporation is the Housing Corporation of Charlotte County, Inc. The Corporation contracts with Charlotte County to administer the City's and County's State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP). The executive director of the Housing Corporation works with Charlotte County's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC), an appointed body, to identify needs and solutions to County housing problems. The AHAC also works closely with local non-profit housing organizations to identify possible projects. Additionally, the City of Punta Gorda is a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement community. CDBG funds may be used in support of affordable housing projects.

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC), which deals with affordable housing projects, has an intergovernmental coordination relationship with the City and the County through SHIP. In addition to providing funding for housing, the SHIP program requires a plan to address affordable housing needs. The SHIP plan must be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan's Housing element. The relationship has utility in planning and implementation for housing needs.

Charlotte County's AHAC provides advice to BCC regarding affordable housing matters, including SHIP funding. AHAC offers a forum for local agencies and housing service providers that facilitates coordination on SHIP and CDBG planning processes. Charlotte County does not have a public housing authority but the Charlotte County Housing Finance Authority issues bonds for affordable housing projects. The Punta Gorda Housing Authority (PGHA) manages a Section 8 Voucher program serving Punta Gorda and Charlotte County. PGHA is working on redevelopment of public housing units in the City that were destroyed by Hurricane Charley. Coordination with the FHFC concerning SHIP and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for CDBG (City only) is facilitated through the planning processes for these programs. Coordination through Charlotte County's Housing Finance Authority and AHAC is good in terms of its utility and quality, but the intergovernmental aspect of this coordination is really between City and County staff and between local governments and FHFC and HUD.

One area of a potentially enhanced relationship with the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS) is in the Housing element. The County could potentially have a stronger relationship with HRS with respect to housing, as there could be more coordination regarding housing and services for special needs populations, low income persons, the elderly, and the homeless.

HUD has an intergovernmental coordination relationship with the City of Punta Gorda through the CDBG program. HUD relationships also exist with the PGHA for public housing and the Section 8 Voucher Program. These coordination relationships have utility in carrying out affordable housing objectives and the relationships generally work well in terms of communication.

Capital Improvements

Capital improvements utilizing local, State or Federal funding requires coordination through a financially feasible capital improvement plan. There are many reasons that this coordination is necessary: some capital facilities serve multiple jurisdictions, their construction impacts may cross jurisdictional boundaries, efficiencies might be gained through shared facilities, and various permitting agencies may be involved. Local governments and other agencies have to address impacts and mitigation across jurisdictional boundaries.

There are no permanent bodies in existence whose sole purpose is to coordinate intergovernmental relations in regard to capital improvements. When a capital project is proposed, the affected parties coordinate among themselves. For every capital improvement, all relevant bodies work together, and the local government looks for possible efficiencies through shared facilities and services.

Public Schools

Coordination between Charlotte County and the School Board on school siting is very important. In May 2003, the Charlotte County Board of Commissioners, the City of Punta Gorda, and the Charlotte County School Board adopted an Interlocal Agreement for School Facility Planning in agreement with Section 163.3177(6)(h)1 and 2, Florida Statutes. The Agreement provides a formal process for maintaining the coordination among all parties regarding comprehensive land use and school facilities planning issues. In 2008, this Interlocal Agreement was updated to reflect changes in growth management legislation, including provisions for school concurrency. It is now called, the Updated Interlocal Agreement for Coordinated Planning and School Concurrency. Minor revisions were made to it in May of 2009 and again in May 2010.

In support of the agreement, BCC conducts an annual meeting with the Punta Gorda City Council and the School Board to facilitate communication and encourage coordination. At the meeting, issues such as changes in land use, school siting, and population changes are discussed in hopes of establishing more meaningful cooperation regarding the range of issues related to school siting. In addition to the issues identified above, the Staff Working Group, which is made up of County, City, and School District staff, also meets regularly to discuss traffic implications, utility provision, impacts of development (school concurrency) and LOS for schools. These are all issues that require coordination between the County, the City, and the School Board on a regular basis. As required by the interlocal agreement, the School Board has appointed a non-voting representative on the Planning and Zoning Board to review staff reports dealing with residential projects that might impact school capacity.

In terms of public school facilities, the School Board has a joint use agreement with the department responsible for parks and recreation. The County has a facility development and use agreement with the School Board. The School Board also coordinates with the County's Emergency Management Office concerning the use of schools for hurricane shelters.

In 2005, the Florida Legislature added public schools as a mandatory concurrency item similar to other facets of public infrastructure. To satisfy these requirements, a new Public School Facilities element (PSFE) was added to the Comprehensive Plan. It was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in September of 2008. School concurrency was implemented in Charlotte County in March of 2009.

COORDINATION OF COUNTY FACILITIES

Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

There are numerous interlocal agreements regarding fire and emergency medical services. The Englewood Area Fire District, the City of Punta Gorda Fire Department, and the North Port Fire District Authorities share automatic mutual aid with the Charlotte County Fire/EMS Department. If one fire department needs help dealing with an emergency, the neighboring fire departments assist. The Englewood Fire Control Department will go one mile into Charlotte County to aid in dealing with an emergency. North Port will respond to calls in the northern half of Charlotte County, and the Charlotte County Fire/EMS responds within the eastern portion of the City of North Port. There are also agreements with Sarasota County, the Bayshore Fire and Protection District, the Boca Grande Volunteer Fire Department, and the Cities of Cape Coral and North Fort Myers Fire Departments. The Bayshore interlocal agreement stipulates that Charlotte County Fire/EMS pays for three fire fighters and a portion of the administration costs, and supplies the facilities and equipment for Station 9 in Punta Gorda. The Bayshore Fire Department supplies the rest of the fire fighting personnel, and assumes responsibility for fire protection in the southeastern section of the County. The Punta Gorda agreement is one of mutual aid; each fire department will automatically go one mile within the jurisdiction of the other department. Charlotte County Fire/EMS has also agreed to respond to calls for help from the Boca Grande Volunteer Fire Department. These mutual aid agreements all function well in practice. Charlotte County Fire/EMS is also covered under the State-wide mutual aid plan.

Hurricane Shelters

Hurricane evacuation and shelter efforts are coordinated by the County Emergency Management Office, the Red Cross, the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee, and all other Florida counties. The decision to open shelters is done together with the County and the School Board. Under Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, all suitable school facilities must be made available to the Emergency Operations Center; this includes schools, buses and cafeterias. The Charlotte County Emergency Management Office has direct communication with the local Red Cross headquarters at all times. In the event of activation of the County Emergency Operations Center, the Red Cross would send a liaison to help with the coordination of registration at the shelters. Charlotte County and Punta Gorda are parties to a State-wide mutual aid agreement. The County Emergency Management Office is in constant communication with the DCA Division of Emergency Management, and the County has the capability to link via satellite with any other County. All of these agreements and coordination efforts are vitally important to the safety of people in Charlotte County. Further coordination to try to establish hurricane shelters outside of

the Category 3 Hurricane Vulnerability Zone is necessary to ensure that safety. The County could also pursue agreements with public and private agencies that own land in such places to cooperatively develop evacuation shelters or to ensure that any development on such properties would include shelter capacity.

Justice Facilities and Services

There is a mutual aid agreement in place ensuring that operational assistance is available from other Sheriff's Offices in the State during times of crisis, catastrophic disasters, civil unrest, or jail escape. In addition, the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) has a cooperative agreement with the Lee County Sheriff's Office to accommodate law enforcement on Gasparilla Island/Boca Grande, which lies within Lee's jurisdiction but is physically accessible through Charlotte County. CCSO also has a working relationship with Lee and other counties that aim to combat auto theft. There is also a working agreement between the Punta Gorda City Police and CCSO to provide concurrent services with the Punta Gorda City Police being the initial primary responder within the city limits. When funding allows, CCSO coordinates with the School Board in having School Resource Officers at several schools and various programs for Charlotte County students. As part of community oriented policing, CCSO coordinates safety efforts with various citizens' groups. The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) has County-wide jurisdiction to provide law enforcement when called upon. Its main responsibility, however, is handling traffic related problems.

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) maintains officer records, controls officer training curriculum, certification exams, and officer discipline. FDLE regulates CCSO in many ways, and offers funding for various programs.

Health and Social Service Facilities and Services

Given the multiplicity inherent in the nature of social services, coordination is very important. At a minimum, agencies need to be aware of what other agencies are doing and how they do it. This helps to avoid duplication of services and possible conflicts. Charlotte County's social service agencies have strong coordination between them. Sometimes different State agencies have different rules and regulations that do conflict, and the County agencies try to resolve the differences. Prior to the 2004 hurricane season, the County and local community recognized the need and value in working closely together to prioritize needs and coordinate service delivery. Coalition networks including the Emergency Assistance Clearing House (EACH), Our Charlotte Elder Affairs Network (OCEAN), the Charlotte County Collective (C3), the Alliance for a Safe and Drug Free Community, and the Indigent Health Care Advisory Board promote coordination and cooperation among the County's social service providers. After hurricane season 2004, the human services community developed an even stronger desire to work together in the recovery efforts by pooling funding, identifying unmet needs, and coordinating service delivery. An out growth of the recovery efforts is the establishment of the non-profit Inter-Faith, Inter-Agency Network of Charlotte County (IINCC). IINCC assists in the collaboration of human services agencies, available resources, and volunteers.

In July 2005, the County implemented the 2-1-1 telephone line that provides information and referrals on health and human services. The service directs residents to over 400 health and human services agencies and 650 programs. The 2-1-1 telephone call center also serves as an excellent resource for the human services agencies in providing accurate information on available resources, identifying unmet needs, and coordinating the local service delivery system.

Government agencies such as the County Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, the County Public Health Unit, and Charlotte Community Mental Health Services all try to coordinate efforts to avoid duplication of services and in the hope of providing effective health and social services. Overall, these efforts have been successful, and the coordinating relationships are good.

DCA also regulates some of the activities of the County's Department of Human Services, and offers funding for a small amount of their activities.

The Department of Elder Affairs (DEA) provides a large amount of funding for the Department of Social/Senior Services, and provides an advisory and approval function of the various plans that Human Services offers. An advisory, funding and plan approval function also exists with the Charlotte County Council on Aging.