



NARCOOSSEE ROAD - LAKE HART/LAKE WHIPPOORWILL RURAL SETTLEMENT STUDY

November 2008
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 Comprehensive Planning Section

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Introduction/Intent of Study

In cooperation with District 4 Commissioner Linda Stewart, Orange County Planning Division retained the services of The Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium to facilitate a series of community workshops to obtain input from property owners and other stakeholders along the Narcoossee Road corridor in and adjacent to the Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement. Three community workshops were held. The dates were October 11th and 25th and November 7, 2007.

The Narcoossee Road Corridor under analysis as part of this study, also known as County Road 15, is located between State 417 (Central Florida Greenway) to the north and the Osceola County line to the south, which is a distance of approximately 3.9 miles. Currently, the right-of-way section is rural in character with one travel lane in each direction flanked by drainage swales. The land use pattern along this segment of Narcoossee Road contains a mixture of future land use designations and development types. The future land types include Rural Settlement, low and medium density residential, commercial, institutional, rural/agricultural and conservation.

On October 10, 2006 the Orange County Board of County Commissioners approved two agreements that established partnerships for both the funding and the design and construction of a six-lane widening of Narcoossee Road. The accelerated funding for this project is comprised of impact fees and a grant established between Orange County and the Florida Department of Transportation.

Narcoossee Road is named for the town of Narcoossee in Osceola County, and is the main street into the town. The town was settled in the 1880s by English citrus growers. Legend has it the name "Narcoossee" is Native American for "Little Bear."

This report is the third land use analysis undertaken by the Orange County Planning Division pertaining to the Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement. The first study in 1993 resulted in a change in future land use for the Rural Settlement from Rural Settlement 1/5 (one unit per five acres) to Rural Settlement 1/2 (one unit per two acres) to more accurately address the established development pattern in the Rural Settlement. The second study in 2000 resulted in a new objective and new policies containing language to protect Rural Settlements in general and to address development impacts for the Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement in particular. In contrast to the earlier studies, this report has a greater focus on the Narcoossee Road corridor itself as it relates to the development impacts of the six-laning in progress.

Future Land Use

Development in the Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement (on the east side of Narcoossee), primarily between Kirby Smith Road to the north and Tyson Road to the south, is characterized by single-family homes on large lakefront lots, while development of properties fronting along the Narcoossee Road corridor in the Rural Settlement is dominated by mid-twentieth century mobile home parks, a KOA Campground, agriculture-related non-residential uses, such as equipment sales and rental, and a small commercial property developed with a restaurant.

The Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement, like most areas designated as Rural Settlements, was already developed at densities greater than one unit per acre at the time of adoption of the Comprehensive Policy Plan in 1991. The adopted future land use map depicting the Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement and its surroundings is found on the next page.

Development south of Tyson Road on the east side of Narcoossee Road consists of the Eagle Creek DRI, which is a suburban style development approved for an 18-hole golf course, single-family and multifamily homes with a town center containing commercial and office. At this point, only the golf course and single-family homes have been constructed. Eagle Creek is designated as Planned Development (PD)-Low Density Residential/Low-Medium Density Residential/Medium Density Residential/Commercial/Institutional/Parks and Recreation-Open Space /Conservation.

The west side of Narcoossee Road is primarily within the jurisdiction of the City of Orlando. While the majority of these properties are undeveloped, most have approved development plans, many of which are proposed as mixed-use. In addition, Orange County Public Schools is constructing a high school on the west side of Narcoossee Road near the intersection of Tyson Road. Properties to the south of the high school site include a proposed church and undeveloped portions of the Lake Nona DRI.

Development Trends and Pressures

Since the establishment of the Rural Settlement, development pressures continue to increase along the Narcoossee Road corridor. These development pressures involve development in unincorporated Orange County, the City of Orlando and in unincorporated Osceola County. The development pressures from the City of Orlando and unincorporated Orange County are discussed below.



Small restaurant on Narcoossee Road in Rural Settlement

City of Orlando Southeast Sector Plan

The west side of Narcoossee Road is largely within the jurisdiction of the City of Orlando. While the majority of these properties are currently undeveloped, many have committed development programs (approved development plans), some of which are proposed as mixed-use. In addition, Orange County Public Schools is constructing a high school on the west side of Narcoossee Road near the intersection of Tyson Road. Properties to the south of the high school site include a proposed church and undeveloped portions of the Lake Nona Development of Regional Impact.

In recognition of the anticipated growth of Orlando International Airport (OIA) and the population and services that would be required to support it, the City of Orlando adopted the Southeast Sector Plan in 1998. The approximate boundaries of the Southeast Sector Plan are the Beachline Expressway to the north, the Central Florida Greenway (State Road 417) to the east, the Osceola County line to the south and OIA to the west. The vision of the Southeast Sector Plan is to create sustainable development that fosters a compact village mixed-

use land use form that discourages urban sprawl. The principles include building upon the traditions of older neighborhoods where neighborhoods are walkable and social interaction occurs, while protecting the natural environment.

Land ownership patterns in Southeast Sector Plan tend toward very large acreage parcels, making it easier to master plan as there are fewer property owners. Several of these properties have approved development programs, with many projects under construction or already constructed. A few of the major developments include Lake Nona, La Vina, East Park and Randal Park. Consistent with the requirements of the Southeast Sector Plan, each of the projects includes both residential and non-residential components.

As mentioned, the properties on the west side of Narcoossee Road between SR 417 and the intersection at Tyson Road have been approved for development, but no construction has yet occurred. These approved developments contrast with the Rural Settlement development pattern on the east side of Narcoossee Road, which consists primarily of large lot residential with a few non-residential sites, e.g. Pioneers Church, KOA campground, a restaurant, and an equipment rental facility.



Narcoossee Road - Eagle Creek DRI

City of Orlando Annexation

In 1994, the City of Orlando and Orange County entered into a Joint Planning Agreement (JPA). The JPA established a Joint Planning Area in which lands were recognized as suitable for annexation and more intense, urban-style development. The JPA determined the appropriate future land use designations on properties should the properties be annexed. The JPA also created a mechanism for providing and financing of fire services, including capital facilities planning, and water, wastewater and utility services territorial agreements. On December 31, 2005, the JPA expired.

In the two years since the JPA expired, development pressures have continued along Narcoossee Road, including the study area. The expiration has led to piecemeal development proposals and annexation requests into the City of Orlando. As it has for years, Orange County's Comprehensive Policy Plan contains policies designed to preclude urban development in the Lake Whippoorwill/Lake Hart Rural Settlement. As a result, speculative buyers and developers "shop" between the County and City regarding potential development of given properties on the east side of Narcoossee Road.

Recently, discussions regarding an Interlocal Agreement have taken place. At the time of this report, these discussions are still in progress.



Corner of Tyson Rd and Narcoossee Rd looking east

Urban Service Area

In the area of the Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement, the Urban Service Area boundary is Narcoossee Road, which is also the western boundary of the Rural Settlement. The ensuing years since the first study in 1993 and second study in 2000 have seen substantial growth and part and parcel of this growth has been expansions of the Urban Service Area boundary.

In 1993, the Board of County Commissioners approved the Lake Hart Development of Regional Impact, which included an expansion of the Urban Service Area boundary to take in ±2,170 acres located south of the BeachLine Expressway and east of Narcoossee Road.

Other Developments of Regional Impact in the area include the Moss Park DRI, and Eagle Creek DRI. The largest of these approved projects is the Moss Park DRI that includes 1,510,000 square feet of non-residential activity (retail/office/religious); 1,175 single family homes; 1,500 townhomes and apartments; 1,100 hotel rooms and dormitory rooms; 350 timeshare rooms, a 10,000 square foot volunteer center and 100 campsites.

With regard to utility service providers, customers east of Narcoossee Road are provided water from the Orlando Utilities Commission and sewer from Orange County Utilities.

Transportation

In terms of modes of mobility, the area is limited to the automobile as the primary mode of transportation because no transit is available. The closest bus lines circulate to and from OIA or terminate at Goldenrod Road and Narcoossee Road. A LYNX & FDOT Park 'n Ride facility is located near the intersection of Narcoossee Road and the Beachline Expressway (SR 528).

The widening of Narcoossee Road to six lanes between SR 417 and the Osceola County line mentioned earlier is due to begin construction the first quarter of 2008. The typical section will include a 15.5 landscaped median, three 11-foot wide vehicle travel lanes in each direction, 4-foot wide bike lanes and 6-foot wide sidewalks. Other improvements include the installation of curb and gutter and an underground, piped stormwater collection system and associated stormwater ponds. These upgrades will enhance other modes of transportation such as bicycle and pedestrian, along with future transit routes.

The Orlando Utilities Commission Railroad right-of-way runs along the Central Florida Greenway (SR 417), then crosses Moss Park Road and then runs along Wewahootee Road, just to the north of the Rural Settlement. This rail right-of-way may potentially be used in future light rail projects.



Narcoossee Road in Rural Settlement

Environmental Conditions

Earlier Lake Whippoorwill studies contained analyses and maps specifying environmental conditions such as soil, wetland, floodplain and wildlife information. A focal point of conditions in this area are the soils, which contain fine sands and muck, which can have the effect of constraining development due to both stability issues and septic system compatibility. This point is reiterated in the Innovation Way Study (Orange County 2005). Many larger projects in the area have required removal of soil and/or fill (along with mitigation for disturbing environmentally sensitive lands discussed below) to facilitate development.

The study area is within the Lake Hart Drainage basin, which is a sub-basin of the Kissimmee River Drainage Basin. The predominant surface water flow within the Kissimmee River Basin is to the south and west and falls within the jurisdictional boundaries of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Florida's Water Management Districts regulate and govern stormwater management systems constructed to manage excess rainfall runoff within their jurisdictional boundaries.

As discussed later in this report, the design of the stormwater ponds could act as a buffer between the more intense, transitional uses along Narcoossee Road and the Rural Settlement to the east. These ponds could serve two functions; water quality treatment and physical buffer.

The Split Oak Forest Mitigation area, Moss Park and the Econolockhatchee River are located just east of the study area. Proximity to these parks and open spaces lends itself to sightings of numerous forms of wildlife including listed species. Federally listed species reported near the study area include the wood stork, bald eagle, eastern indigo snake and American alligator. State listed species include the Florida sandhill crane, gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel plus wading birds such as the heron, egret and ibis.



House surrounded by established live oak canopy on Lake Hart

Workshop Feedback

The Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium and Orange County staff facilitated the three workshops held in the fall of 2007.



One of the Community Workshops at Northlake School

October 11, 2007

The first workshop was conducted on October 11, 2007. This workshop introduced the objectives of the workshop series, including discussions of the existing land use, details of the proposed Narcoossee Road widening and development trends to create a preliminary course of action or potential scenarios for future land use for the Narcoossee corridor in the Lake Hart/Lake Whippoorwill Rural Settlement.

October 25, 2007

At the second workshop on October 25, 2007, staff presented two scenarios (conceptual plans and statements) based upon feedback from the first workshop. Scenario #1 is a status quo scenario with no changes to the future land use. Scenario #2 would allow non-residential uses or mixed-uses along the immediate

Narcoossee Road corridor (potentially be creating a parallel or frontage type road).

November 7, 2007

At the third workshop, the two scenarios were presented again, with further refinement to Scenario #2. Two draft statements were presented and analyzed by the attendees. Afterwards, the facilitator asked for a ranking (or polling) on any consensus regarding the two scenarios. The results of which are attached. The consensus testing portion of the Narcoossee Workshops determined that there was no clear consensus. While many of the residents polled during the third workshop did not favor any changes in the future land use along the east side of Narcoossee Road, some property owners wanted change, while still others were open to change.

Conclusion

Based on overall reactions and evaluations from the participants at the workshops along with market trends and development history, two potential scenarios are described below.

Two Scenarios

Scenario #1: Status Quo

Applications requesting changes to the future land use map are evaluated on a case-by-case basis based on the individual merits of the proposed change.

Advantages: This scenario maintains the Rural Settlement. No further action required at this time.

Disadvantages: Creates an environment of piecemeal applications instead of orderly, consistent development.

The six-laning of the roadway, along with outside growth pressures from the City of Orlando and nearby DRIs, have changed the overall character of the area. Annexation requests are very likely to occur given the fact that the JPA with the City of Orlando has expired along with the potential for higher density and intensity options under City development rules. A significant portion of the Narcoossee Road frontage in the Rural Settlement is under the same ownership. Considerable investment has been made by this property owner. If not allowed to develop at a greater intensity than currently permitted, this property owner would be more likely to annex, thereby leaving the County and the rural settlement residents with no control over development of the site.

Scenario #2: Conditional Changes

The county recognizes that higher development intensities allowed in the City of Orlando, the roadway improvements underway, the frontage of Narcoossee Road in the Rural Settlement is no longer rural in natural. However, the adjacent rural settlements need to be recognized. The second scenario is based on allowing future land use changes so long as these changes are appropriate and certain conditions are met. Conditional approval would require Planned Development (PD) future land use and zoning, along with construction of and/or dedication of right-of-way (in addition to cross-access easements/agreements) for an access road running parallel to Narcoossee Road. Other conditions of approval may include, but are not limited to the following:

Mixed-use shall be encouraged. Mixed-use in the form of vertical mixed-use is especially encouraged, e.g, ground floor commercial with office above. Auto-oriented and drive-though uses shall be discouraged unless designed and

oriented in such a way as to minimize views of the drive aisles/windows from the public realm.

The mass and scale of proposed development should serve as a transition between Narcoossee Road and the residential areas to the east. Building height may be up to 45 feet along Narcoossee Road. Monolithic, long stretches of building wall shall be avoided.

The proposed development also shall have a high standard of design. Wherever possible, architectural styles or architectural elements shall reflect or emulate elements of residential architecture with the use of porches, minimum transparency, and other elements.



Example of compatible or transitional office development
Image courtesy of www.orlandobizspace.com



Example of neighborhood commercial use (courtesy City of Davison, Michigan)

Site planning controls will be used to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area (buffers, landscaping, parking and access, setbacks, building height, signage, lighting, etc.) Specifically, ponds in large buffers between the proposed development and the lake will serve as buffers in addition to providing necessary stormwater quality treatment.

Additional design measures shall include taking care to preserve existing vegetation including significant stands of trees; requiring connection to central water and sewer provided by OUC and Orange County Utilities in addition to stormwater management systems that employ Best Management Practices (BMPs).

To facilitate linking equestrian trails in the area such as Eagle Creek, proposed development shall be required to connect to trail systems wherever feasible.

Other Conditions of approval as necessary.

Advantages: Allows Orange County to view proposed development in a more holistic way, allows for more development options for property owners and reduces likelihood of annexation of properties. Orange County can apply conditions of approval for development along Narcoossee Road in such a way

that the character of the Rural Settlement and the water quality of Lake Whippoorwill are protected.

Disadvantages: May be perceived by area residents as an erosion of the Rural Settlement, leading to potential future land use change requests east of the Narcoossee Road study area (i.e., Lake Hart, Lake Mary Jane).

Community Meeting

A community meeting was held July 9, 2008 at Northlake Park Community School. Orange County staff presented to the community the two scenarios and the findings from this report. Input from the community is summarized below.

Community Meeting

July 9, 2008

Synopsis: Seven county staff members and approximately 30 residents or property owners were in attendance.

Orange County staff summarized the process up through the present and presented the two scenarios and findings of the report. Several residents or property owners asked questions related to annexations with the City of Orlando, specifically related to the Joint Planning Agreement that expired. Staff responded that annexations are requested by property owners and that staying with the status quo (Scenario #1) may prompt more annexations than Scenarios #2 that gives the county some leeway in ensuring compatible uses and design standards appropriate for the corridor and rural settlement. Some residents seemed to understand the need for a change in planning scenarios for the area, even if it meant more (controlled) development under Scenario 2.

Residents and property owners were encouraged to email or call staff with comments regarding both scenarios and their vision for the area.

Board of County Commissioners

The study has been scheduled for the November 18, 2008 Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners will make a recommendation to staff regarding the two scenarios. The final document will be used a guide for review of applications.

Board of County Commissioners

Discussion Agenda Item

November 18, 2008

Synopsis: The Board of County Commissioners directed staff to add provisions in the study regarding signage and historic landmark language. The study will be implemented through the incorporation of amendments to the Comprehensive Policy Plan.

APPENDIX I: THE FLORIDA CONFLICT RESOLUTION CONSORTIUM
MEETING SUMMARIES