



Florida Department of Transportation

RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

MIKE DEW
SECRETARY

August 7, 2018

Mr. Richard Greene, AICP
Development Services Director
City of West Palm Beach
401 Clematis Street
P.O. Box 3147
West Palm Beach, FL 33402

Dear Mr. Greene:

**SUBJECT: DEO #18-1ESR – Okeechobee Business District
FDOT Agency Review**

The Florida Department of Transportation (“Department”) has reviewed the proposed Okeechobee Business District Comprehensive Plan amendment for the City of West Palm Beach with a Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) reference number “18-1ESR.” This letter, identifying deficiencies and concerns, serves as the Department’s agency response.

In accordance with ss. 163.3161(3) and 163.3184(3)(b), Florida Statutes, the Department’s review focused on major transportation issues, including adverse impacts to transportation facilities of state importance. These facilities include the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) and significant regional resources and facilities, such as Okeechobee Boulevard, that are identified in the Strategic Regional Policy Plan by the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. These facilities are vital to the economic vitality, growth and quality of life of the county, region and state.

Comments

1. The City has not demonstrated through data and analysis, the long term adequacy of transportation facilities to meet established acceptable levels of service, as required by ss. 163.3177(1)(f), 163.3177(3)(a)3, 163.3177(5)(a), and 163.3177(6)(a)8.a, Florida Statutes. The City’s analysis of the amendment more specifically fails to address existing and projected levels of service and facility needs on Okeechobee Boulevard. No trip generation and assignment of project traffic on the network was provided. This

information is vital to plan for needed facilities and services and to formulate policy recommendations regarding effective mitigation strategies to avoid adverse impacts.

2. Per s. 163.3177(2), Florida Statutes, there is an appearance of an internal inconsistency in the comprehensive plan between the future land use amendment and City Transportation Element Policy 2.3.5-h. According to this policy, the Downtown Master Plan (DMP) and the Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA) are predicated on a set of assumptions needed to provide and implement the transportation goals of the comprehensive plan. This Okeechobee Business District (OBD) amendment, being contained within the DMP boundaries, alters the land use assumptions and potentially the function of the DMP districts and the intended mitigation strategies in a way that may not have been conceived by the TCEA as originally adopted and could result in adverse impacts to the State Highway System.

Recommendations to eliminate, reduce or mitigate adverse impacts

Recommendation for comment #1:

The City should provide sufficient time prior to the adoption of this amendment to engage agency stakeholders and the public regarding the impacts of the OBD to the transportation network. The impacts should be determined by conducting a transportation analysis based on professionally accepted methodology as agreed to by agency stakeholders, including the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency, Palm Beach County, the Town of Palm Beach, and the Department.

The City is a participant on a multi-stakeholder committee and a technical subcommittee that were recently formed in response to the City's proposed West Palm Beach Mobility Plan. The Department is providing technical assistance to the stakeholders to analyze the vision and strategies of the Mobility Plan to determine long term impacts to Okeechobee Boulevard. This effort will work towards achieving consensus regarding the traffic engineering methodology to use for analyses that will identify projected impacts and will provide beneficial information for the prioritization of improvements to maintain mobility. The Department recommends that the adoption of this amendment be delayed so that pertinent information can be considered by the City and adjustments made to the OBD amendment as warranted. Results of this effort are scheduled to be presented to the multi-stakeholder committee in December of this year.

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Recommendation for comment #2:

Prior to adopting the OBD amendment, the City should update its TCEA objectives and policies to ensure that identified TCEA mitigation and transportation improvements correspond to the impacts resulting from changes to the DMP that have occurred since the original TCEA adoption in the 1990's.

The Department commits to working with all agency stakeholders to develop traffic solutions that will maintain the flow of trips on the Okeechobee Boulevard corridor; and we thank you for being part of this effort. If you have any comments or questions about this letter, please contact Mr. Larry Hymowitz at (954) 777-4663.

Sincerely,



Stacy L Miller, P.E.
Director of Transportation Development
District Four

SM:lh

cc: Lorenzo Aghemo, Director – Palm Beach County Planning Division
Verdenia C. Baker, County Administrator – Palm Beach County
Kirk Blouin, Town Manager – Town of Palm Beach
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