

Wabasso Corridor Plan Update

Response to Comments from the 1st Wabasso Corridor Plan Update Meeting (Dasie Hope Center 6:00 p.m. on 8/2/2016) and Post Meeting Comments

Verbal Comments received at the meeting:

Problems:

1. Road Maintenance (84th Place, west side is not maintained: how can it not be a public road if it has a street sign?)

Answer: Although no specific location was provided, planning staff assumes this comment is talking about 84th Place west of 63rd Avenue. In that location, 84th Place is an unimproved right-of-way for a local side street. Between 63rd Avenue and 64th Avenue, 84th Place is one of many “paper street” rights-of-way throughout the county that has never been improved, or accepted as a public road. There are no plans for the county to improve such rights-of-way. The county does allow property owners to make access improvements in such rights-of-way if a permit is granted; improvements are privately maintained.

2. Postal Address (8450 62nd Avenue) “Vero Beach”: problems getting deliveries

Answer: City names used by the postal service are set by the Federal Government; consequently, the county does not have any control over postal location names. While the county establishes house numbers and street names, the county does not establish and cannot modify the postal service city designation.

3. Representation/Communication (owners/residents)

Answer: Through use of an e-mail group of Wabasso residents and interested parties, the county will now reach Wabasso citizens more effectively. For the Wabasso Corridor Plan Update, an e-mail group has been established by planning staff to provide updates directly to citizens. The email group is open for any citizen to join at any time. Also, a county website for the Wabasso Corridor Plan Update project has been established (<http://www.irccdd.com/wabasso>). In the future, the e-mail group will be used by the planning staff to provide citizens with on-going updates of public projects or proposed development within Wabasso.

4. Lying - Misrepresentation – Lack of Communication

Answer: Through the county website and e-mail group mentioned above, the county will reach citizens more effectively with complete and consistent information.

5. Drainage, a master drainage evaluation/plan is needed

Answer: Immediately after the end of the August 2016 community meeting, the Public Works Director spoke with Wabasso citizens and made a field visit to the south end of 64th Avenue in the Douglas Subdivision. He noticed that there is no positive outfall; consequently local flooding occurs in that area. Public Works staff is investigating the right-of-way situation in the area to identify potential solutions to the drainage problem.

6. Drainage poor in Lows Park Subdivision and 64th Avenue (Douglas Subdivision)

Answer: Plans to address the 64th Avenue drainage issue (south of the Daise Hope Center) were conceptually approved as part of the Liberty Park Planned Development. That development approval includes the construction of stormwater retention facilities west of 64th Avenue and east of 66th Avenue. When those facilities are constructed, drainage from 64th Avenue can be directed to them. Because the Liberty Park development has not commenced and may not commence for a considerable amount of time, Public Works will evaluate interim improvements (see item 5 above). With respect to Lows Park Subdivision, Public Works Department staff needs to investigate the issue further.

Issues:

7. Tower near park – Revenue from property – who benefits (located in Sebastian, next to Wabasso)

Answer: Tower is located within and falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Sebastian. After the August 2016 community meeting, county planning staff contacted the City of Sebastian staff for information about the tower and to see if the fenced compound around the tower can be more effectively screened.

8. Coordination with City of Sebastian, better tower site maintenance needed? Wabasso cemetery maintenance?

Answer: Since the first meeting, county staff has coordinated with City of Sebastian regarding the tower and about having Sebastian establish a notification process for future developments within Sebastian that are next to the West Wabasso area. That process will involve the City of Sebastian staff providing information to the county planning staff who will forward the information to the Wabasso email group. The West Wabasso Cemetery is owned and maintained by the West Wabasso Cemetery Association, Inc. and appeared to be well kept when staff visited the site August 2016.

9. U.S. 1/CR 510 roadway construction limits and timeframe, impact on business, traffic management

Answer: This county project will enter into the right of way (ROW) acquisition phase within the next year. Public Works anticipates that it will take approximately 3 years to acquire the necessary ROW for the project and approximately 2 ½ years to construct the project after the ROW is acquired.

10. Community identification, “Winter Beach” community designation sign was moved north on U.S. 1 and “Sebastian” sign was moved south – Preserve Wabasso identity

Answer: Wabasso Corridor Plan boundaries to the north and south along U.S. #1 follow a Census Designated Place (CDP) boundary. Community marker signs on U.S. #1 are under the jurisdiction of FDOT (State). County MPO staff has coordinated with FDOT regarding the location of the signs and the responsible party. FDOT is investigating the matter. If appropriate, FDOT may relocate the signs and, in coordination with the County, accommodate placement of a “Wabasso” sign on U.S. Highway 1.

11. Zoning change from limited commercial to heavy commercial approved despite some residents desires – Heavy Commercial restriction

Answer: With county support, last spring a rezoning applicant and neighbors near the rezoning site (location: west of U.S. #1 and north of 77th Street) in the Wabasso area got together and created a voluntary restrictive covenant which limits uses at a site rezoned to heavy commercial. Future rezoning requests, if any, will be required to go through a public hearing and notification process. In addition, county staff will provide early notice to Wabasso citizens about any such proposal via the email group. Lastly, county staff is considering a Wabasso-specific zoning notification and “pre-zoning application meeting” policy that will provide for an upfront community meeting for review of any future heavy commercial or industrial rezoning proposal in the Wabasso Corridor.

12. Concerns over transition between road projects (coordinating state and county projects)

Answer: Public Works and the County MPO will continue to coordinate with FDOT regarding FDOT’s CR 510 widening project from 58th Avenue to CR 512 and the county’s CR 510 widening project and U.S. #1 intersection project from 84th Street to 87th Street.

13. Will corridor criteria limit commercial development in Wabasso? Are they too stringent or too costly?

Answer:

The Wabasso Corridor development criteria do contain some provisions that add costs above meeting standard land development code requirements such as monument signs versus pole signs, quality building exterior finishes, and increased landscaping. With respect to increased cost, the Wabasso Corridor criteria generally prohibit using cheap building materials such as corrugated or ribbed metal panels, smooth finish concrete block (stucco finished concrete block is acceptable), plywood, and plastic for exterior walls. Also, within the Wabasso Corridor, additional understory trees are required to be placed in buffer yards between residential and commercial uses, and foundation plantings are required for commercial buildings (includes canopy trees, understory trees, palm trees and shrubs). Other corridor aesthetic criteria that generally do not add to construction cost are in place, such as criteria that focus on allowable building colors and smaller sign sizes.

Regarding Wabasso area sites with existing commercial, industrial, or multi-family uses along CR 510 and US Highway 1, those sites are not required to comply with the Wabasso Corridor aesthetic requirements until the owner chooses to initiate improvements to those sites (i.e. submits an application for a building expansion or change of use). In such a case, the Wabasso Corridor requirements would apply only to the expansion area. Site upgrades may also be required (“compatible property” requirement) when a building renovation is done.

Besides requests from a property owner, corridor requirements may also apply at the point in time when the County or State purchase right-of-way and site changes are triggered. At that time, a “cure plan” may be required to address any necessary site alterations (i.e. relocation of lost parking do to the road frontage acquisition). With a cure plan, generally the county or state would cover the costs associated with site changes and improvements, including any Wabasso Corridor requirements that are applied.

In 2010, the County revised landscape size, type, and plant number requirements including corridor landscaping requirements. Those revisions retained good landscaping effects and reduced landscaping costs by 30%.

In summary, the corridor criteria may cost more, but will enhance the visual quality of the corridor and property values.

14. Historical resources impacts: will changes to the plan have an effect?

Answer: The Corridor plan update will not have any negative impact on historical resources. Existing historical resource requirements will remain in place. Those requirements include: county staff review of alterations to historic structures for historic integrity preservation prior to issuance of building permits; certain building code exemptions for historic structures to incentivize preservation; nonconformity allowances to preserve historic resources; transfer of development rights incentives to preserve archaeological sites; and conservation easement tax relief opportunities for archaeological resource protection.

15. Right-of-Way acquisition for C.R. 510: will compensation pay to replace a home – make residents whole?

Answer: When acquiring right-of-way, the County or State must pay fair market price. The right of way acquisition process will follow the current guidelines for acquisition of property for roadway construction, and those guidelines include obtaining an independent appraisal. On a case by case basis, it will be determined whether an entire property will be taken or only a portion, and the development potential of any remainder. For FDOT’s CR 510 project, final ROW needs will not be known until Location Design Conceptual Approval (LDCA) is granted by the Federal Highway Administration in mid-2018.

16. Notify all interested parties, create a new Wabasso Corridor Plan Committee (at least half of the members be native/full time residents)

Answer: An interested parties e-mail list has been created and is open to all Wabasso citizens. Everyone on the email list will be notified. The Wabasso Corridor Plan update will involve input from all citizens and is not committee dependent. If needed, a new ongoing Wabasso Corridor Plan Committee could be formed but at this time there is no proposal or apparent need for a committee.

17. Stakeholders? Who are the community members?

Answer: All residents and business owners within the Wabasso Corridor plan area as well as interested parties are invited to participate in the plan update and/or join the email group.

18. New affordable residential development needed (West Wabasso)

Answer: If a developer wants to build a new affordable residential development in West Wabasso, staff will support that project by expediting permit processing, assisting with getting grants, and arranging for meetings with residents. Local SHIP Rehabilitation Assistance to owner occupied, very-low and low income households will be provided through Indian River County's affordable housing program (State Housing Initiatives Partnership {SHIP} Program).

19. Focus improvements in Western portion of corridor ("West Wabasso") – so far left behind

Answer: West Wabasso will be a focus in the corridor plan update. Since 1995, over time, numerous public improvement projects/activities have been completed in West Wabasso including:

- Road paving and drainage improvements
- Bringing potable water and sanitary sewer to the community
- Improving the West Wabasso park with pavilions, walking trails, basketball courts, tennis courts
- Assisting with Dasie Hope Center improvements
- Street lighting
- Sidewalk along 64th avenue
- Residential rehabilitation/roof repairs
- Demolition of abandoned homes
- Improving old Douglas School (Douglas Headstart Center)

The corridor plan update can help identify and address additional improvements needed in West Wabasso.

20. Tradeoffs for improvements/takings/cost of improvements (who pays for beautification?)

Answer: Property/business owners pay for beautification of their sites when developed. In return, they will have a visually enhanced site that compares well with other sites in the Wabasso Corridor and other commercial corridors, and improved property value.

21. Wabasso due for improvements

Answer: A general list of publicly funded improvements during the 1995-2016 timeframe of the current Wabasso Corridor Plan is summarized under item #19, above. A chart of those improvements is attached. Future improvements depend on community needs, including needs identified as part of the Wabasso Corridor Plan update, opportunities for improvement projects, and funding.

22. Why are improvements grant-dependent?

Answer: Improvements cost money and require design and management efforts. The County increases its services to the entire county, and to Wabasso specifically, by applying for grants and leveraging local funds to match funds from non-local sources. For instance, from 1995-2016, \$923,841.50 in local funds were used to obtain \$3,224,605.05 in non-local funds for a combined total of \$4,148,446.55 for improvement projects in West Wabasso. When grants have not been available, the County has used its funds without grants for projects in Wabasso such as \$141,439.30

in county funds for West Wabasso Park improvements, \$112,547.84 for Dasie Hope Center improvements, \$128,919.52 for Douglas Headstart Center, streetlight, and sidewalk improvements.

In summary, the County uses grant funding as much as possible to stretch resources for additional services and improvements as much as possible, but is not “grant-dependent”.

23. Vero Beach and Sebastian look much better (spend tax money in Wabasso)

Answer: Incorporated cities have limited areas to serve and have higher property tax rates vs. the unincorporated county that has an expansive service area and lower property tax rates. Even so, the purpose of the Wabasso Corridor Plan is to enhance aesthetic improvements, including the West Wabasso area, when private development projects and public projects are designed and constructed.

24. Improve communication

Answer: Better communication with Wabasso citizens will be provided through e-mail and updates to county website (see item #3, #4, #8, and #16 above).

25. Businesses need support to beautify the area

Answer: Improvements will be made to beautify the area through public road and park projects and through private development projects. Staff will investigate and identify any programs that may be used to assist business development/redevelopment in West Wabasso.

Opportunities:

26. Developers can coordinate with the community about their projects (provide community benefits?)

Answer: That type of coordination would be beneficial both to developers and residents and is fully supported by staff. Staff will invite citizens to attend public project review meetings with development applicants and will request that developers arrange for meetings with residents. Although developer/citizen meetings and specific results cannot be mandated by the County, past experience indicates positive results from such meetings.

27. Apply corridor plan requirements to roads/public projects/ROW

Answer: The current Wabasso Corridor Plan requires consideration of aesthetic upgrades along the U.S. #1 and CR 510 Corridors when those roads are being improved. That requirement will continue to apply to public projects within the corridor, including the FDOT CR 510 and County CR 510/US 1 projects.

28. Additional communications on upcoming projects, private and public

Answer: Communication with Wabasso citizens will be improved through use of an e-mail group open to all citizens and county website (see item #3, #4, #8, #16, and #24 above).

29. Naming areas, subareas by residents (perhaps use old family names?)

Answer: If the Wabasso community comes to a consensus on naming something, the BCC can consider that item when it considers adoption of the corridor plan update.

30. Rename the street (from current name of CR 510) to give it an identity (“Gateway to the Causeway” as an example of something different)

Answer: See item #29, above.

31. Additional protections for historical buildings/resources may be needed. Will they be protected for CR 510 expansion project? Redevelopment?

Answer: As provided by County development code Chapter 933, County environmental planning staff will assess historic designation potential for various structures within the Wabasso Corridor and will coordinate with FDOT and County Public Works regarding future roadway projects (see item #14, above).

32. Make the plan more current and up-to-date

Answer: Staff is reviewing the current plan in detail and will propose updated items for review by Wabasso citizens and the BCC.

33. Help for affordable/low income housing

Answer: Help for very low and low income households is available through Indian River County’s State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program. The SHIP Program provides down payment and closing cost assistance to first time, very low and low income homebuyers. The SHIP Program also provides rehabilitation and emergency rehabilitation assistance to very low and low income owner occupied households (see item #18, above).

34. Better define the Wabasso boundary (road signs)

Answer: FDOT has been contacted regarding community signs along U.S. #1 (see item #10, above).

35. Additional funding for CR 510 upgrades (federal, state, local), especially west of US 1

Answer: MPO and the county will continually look for grant opportunities and apply for all applicable grants when they become available.

36. Work better together

Answer: The corridor plan update and associated changes will improve communication, coordination, and focus attention on items important to the Wabasso community.

37. Alternative transportation options, bicycle and pedestrian improvements

Answer: The Public Works Department and MPO are working on this with the design of future roadway projects and sidewalks as needed and where funding is available. The MPO will coordinate with FDOT regarding pedestrian crossing at the intersection of 64th Avenue and CR 510 as part of CR 510 improvements.

The MPO Bike Ped Plan identifies sidewalks on both sides of the CR 510, 66th Avenue, 58th Avenue, and US 1 corridors throughout the Wabasso Study Area. It identifies sidewalks on both sides of 77th

Street between 58th Avenue and US 1. Finally, it recommends sidewalks on one side of Old Dixie Highway and on 77th Street between 58th and 66th Avenue.

Local neighborhood street sidewalks are not typically eligible for MPO funding and therefore were not identified in the Bike Ped Plan. Subject to sufficient right-of-way, logical sidewalk locations on local streets would include approaches to community centers, churches, bus stops, parks, and businesses where sufficient ROW for a sidewalk exists.

38. Historic preservation on CR 510 and U.S. #1

Answer: The county will try to protect all historical buildings and resources as feasible and will coordinate with FDOT on this issue (see item #14 and #31, above).

Doing Well Now:

39. Corridor Committee did a good job (maybe “illegal” in its current composition?)

Answer: Special corridor requirements will continue to apply. At this time, no committee is needed for the plan update or implementation (see item #16, above).

40. Corridor Plan has worked well (appearance of projects), may need updating

Answer: Will continue to apply corridor plan requirements on public sector and private development projects. Updates are currently being formulated (see item #32 above).

41. Monument signs (Corridor plan sign requirements) are good

Answer: Will continue to require monument signs.

42. Landscape (Corridor plan landscaping requirements) are good

Answer: Will continue to apply enhanced landscape requirements.

Written Comment Received at the Meeting:

43. Need to communicate the Wabasso Corridor road construction start and finish dates as well as beginning and ending location.

Answer: This will be done through the new e-mail group and through coordination with FDOT and County Public Works. Attached is information on the location and limits for the FDOT CR 510 project and the County CR 510/U.S. #1 project (see item #3, #4, #8, #16, #24, and #28, above).

Written Comments Received after 8/15/16:

44. Is U.S. #1 widening justified?

Answer: The long-range widening plan will affect the segment of US 1 from 53rd Street to CR 510, and the project will be conducted by FDOT. FDOT always performs a justification study first, before proceeding with a road project. Since this type of roadway widening project is very complicated and expensive, the planning, design, engineering and funding begin well in advance of actual construction. In this manner, the added roadway capacity is planned to accommodate future traffic demand at the time of construction (e.g. after 2040). In the MPO’s 2040 Long Range Transportation

Plan, the US 1 widening is only 80% funded. As such, project construction is anticipated to begin after 2040. At that time, U.S. 1 will be at or very near capacity with its current 4 lanes.

45. If U.S. #1 widening is certain, then 79th Street turn lanes should be improved

Answer: Staff will coordinate with FDOT on this item. Roadway design is scheduled to begin in fall of 2016. Staff will forward your comment regarding 79th Street to FDOT's design consultant for consideration.

46. Effect of U.S. #1 widening on environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife?

Answer: Several in-depth studies were recently completed to determine impacts to keep sensitive species and habitats as a result of the project. Based on a comprehensive Endangered Species Biological Assessment completed in March of 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred that the project will not adversely affect listed or protected plant and/or animal species. In addition, a wetland study was conducted to determine potential impacts to wetlands within the scope of work. Based on that study, impacts to natural wetland areas will not occur as a result of the project.

Summary:

Comments received from community at Meeting #1: 43

Post-meeting comments received by staff: 3

Total Comments: 46

Revision Date: 9/28/2016

F:\Community Development\WABASSO\2016-17 Corridor Plan Update\Agenda and procedure for community meetings\1st meeting 8-2-16\Response to comments from 8-2-2016.docx