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# Executive Summary

## **VISIONING PROCESS**

Martin County was selected to be one of the five “sustainable communities” for the Florida Department of Community Affairs’s Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project. As part of the designation process, Martin County has agreed to complete several tasks in its first year, including the development of a sustainability Vision Plan. The objective of the Vision Plan is to bring together a wide range of business, civic, education, environmental, governmental and human service neighborhood representatives, along with interested citizens, to reach consensus on the goals and strategies that will result in a Sustainable Martin County by the year 2020. The Visioning Process provided an opportunity for Martin County residents to discuss and debate the critical issues that are shaping the future of the County.

The Visioning Process focused on the physical form of the County (i.e. the environment, land use and transportation) since these issues are primarily controlled and impacted by County government. While the process did not focus on the other “legs” of sustainability - economics and social equity – participants understood that the three legs are inherently interrelated, and comments regarding these issues were collected during the visioning process.

## **VISION**

The Visioning Process began with the exploration of the County’s vision for the year 2020. Key elements of the Vision are summarized below and illustrated on the Vision Plan Poster.

- Preserve Wetlands, Critical Uplands
- Preserve, Strengthen Agriculture
- Contain Development through the Urban Services Boundary (USB)
- Create Livable Communities (within the USB):
  - Vibrant city, town, village centers that serve surrounding neighborhoods, with a maximum 4 story building height
  - Strong neighborhoods
  - Extensive system of local streets, sidewalks and bikeways
  - Strategically located, high quality schools, libraries, post offices and other public buildings
  - Functional, attractive infrastructure
  - Extensive system of parks, greenways and open spaces
  - Strong development standards re: density, height, aesthetics

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Guiding Principles were developed to assist the County in achieving its vision of a more sustainable future. Twenty principles, focusing on the County’s natural and built environment, were developed.

## **Environment**

1. Conserve and recycle precious community resources
2. Use resources efficiently
3. Protect & enhance natural resources

## **Land Use**

4. Foster community belonging, unique sense of community identity
5. Encourage compact, mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional pedestrian-oriented development
6. Encourage redevelopment and infill development within the USB
7. Protect, enhance existing neighborhoods
8. Emphasize quality design, aesthetics of built environment
9. Create walkable neighborhoods, including existing, with amenities
10. Maintain an open space network with linkages to neighborhood parks, recreation areas and natural areas
11. Integrate open spaces, conservation areas, multi-modal transportation into neighborhoods
12. Protect/ celebrate community heritage and historically significant facilities
13. Encourage traditional communities; integrate gated communities
14. Preserve and promote agricultural areas
15. Utilize advanced production systems
16. Maintain a clearly defined edge between urban/ rural areas
17. Recognize and plan for potential natural disasters

## **Transportation**

18. Provide a highly connected street network comprised of small, narrow roads and redesign existing arterials/ design new collectors to be grand public space
19. Provide multi-modal transportation alternatives/ choices, including transit, trails, bikeways & sidewalks
20. Utilize advanced transportation systems

## **INDICATORS**

Indicators were developed to measure the County's progress towards accomplishing each Guiding Principle. Indicators are to be measured annually.

### **Environment:**

*Principle 1. Conserve & recycle precious community resources*

- Indicators:
- Ratio between recycled vs. landfilled material
  - Ratio between renewable/non-renewable energy use
  - % Urban Services Area dedicated to parks and open space

*Principle 2. Use resources efficiently*

- Indicators:
- Change in agricultural water consumption
  - Gross/per capita energy use
  - Gross/per capita water use

*Principle 3. Protect & enhance natural resources*

Indicators: Lands & Wetlands

- % Of environmental lands managed
- % Of protected land/conservation area, public park
- # Of acres of restored wetlands
- # Of septic tanks in critical areas

Water

- Water quality index measured at specific sites
- # Of diseased fish reported

Air

- Air quality index measured at specific sites

**Land Use:**

*Principle 4. Foster community belonging, unique sense of community identity*

Indicators:

- # Of gateways/entrance signs
- # Of homeowner/neighborhood associations

*Principle 5. Encourage compact, mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional pedestrian-oriented development*

Indicators:

- Percentage of mixed-use land use in CRA's (single family, multifamily, commercial)
- Increase in areas developed in mixed-use
- Distance to neighborhood store(s)

*Principle 6. Encourage redevelopment & infill development within the USB*

Indicators:

- # Of building permits in established neighborhoods – new & renovation
- Increased tax value within CRA's

*Principle 7. Protect & enhance existing neighborhoods*

Indicators:

- Increased taxable value in established neighborhoods
- # Of building permits in established neighborhoods – new and renovation
- Membership in neighborhood associations
- # Of code enforcement complaints

*Principle 8. Emphasize quality design, aesthetics of built environment*

Indicators:

- Linear feet of streetscaped roads
- Design standards adapted

*Principle 9. Create walkable neighborhoods, including existing, with amenities*

- Indicators:
- # Of street miles with sidewalks/bike lanes
  - # Of bike lane intersections

*Principle 10. Maintain an open space network with linkages to neighborhood parks, recreation areas, and natural areas*

- Indicators:
- Distance from home to neighborhood parks
  - # Of park acres per 1,000 people

*Principle 11. Integrate open spaces, conservation areas, multi-modal transportation into neighborhoods*

- Indicators:
- # Residences within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a conservation area
  - # Acres public open space accessible for recreation

*Principle 12. Protect & celebrate community heritage & historically significant facilities*

- Indicators:
- # Of facilities on National Historic Register
  - # Of historically/architecturally significant buildings
  - # Of attendees at museums, cultural sites, performances & events

*Principle 13. Encourage traditional communities, integrate gated communities*

- Indicators:
- % Of residents in gated communities
  - % Of gated communities with more than one entrance

*Principle 14. Preserve & promote agricultural areas*

- Indicators:
- Acres of agricultural land
  - % Acres of agricultural land (by use category)

*Principle 15. Utilize advanced production systems*

- Indicators:
- \$ Value of annual agricultural production
  - Amount of key agricultural index (product vs. acres in production)

*Principle 16. Maintain a clearly defined edge between urban & rural areas*

- Indicators:
- # Miles of USB frontage acquired/controlled by County/other public agencies

*Principle 17. Recognize and plan for potential natural disasters*

- Indicators:
- # Of people, businesses at risk in case of natural disaster
  - # Of uninsurable residences, businesses

## **Transportation:**

*Principle 18. Provide a highly connected street network comprised of small narrow roads & redesign existing arterials, design new collectors to be grand public spaces*

- Indicators:
- # Of parallel corridors for each collector/arterial
  - % Of commercial destinations that arrives via local street
  - % Of miles of planted medians

*Principle 19. Provide multi-modal transportation alternatives/choices including transit, trails, bikeways & sidewalks*

- Indicators:
- # Miles of new bike/trail/sidewalks
  - # Of bicycle parking areas in CRAs / # of bike spaces being used
  - Annual transit ridership
  - Population within ¼ mile of public transit

*Principle 20. Utilize advanced transportation systems*

- Indicators:
- # Of advanced transportation vehicle registrations (i.e., buses, taxis, etc.)
  - Aggregate \$/resident for transportation
  - \$ Spent on “intelligent” systems, e.g., timed intersections

## **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

In addition to the Vision, Guiding Principles and Indicators, Recommended Actions were developed as a result of the Martin County Sustainable Communities Visioning Process. The following is a summary of the actions, organized by key issues:

- Codify the Vision
- Focus on Design and Implementation
- Protect and Promote the Environment
- Invest in Urban Center, Neighborhoods, Schools and Parks
- Promote Civic Involvement and Inter-agency Coordination
- Measure and Monitor Progress

### **Codify the Vision**

1. Review the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations for conflicts with the Countywide Vision Plan and Guiding Principles, and revise as necessary.
2. Develop a County-wide Master Plan that shows natural systems to be preserved, including creeks, streams, rivers, greenways, parks, forests and conservation lands; the boundaries of existing *and proposed* cities, towns, villages and neighborhoods; the proposed transportation network; and areas to be preserved for agriculture.

3. Utilize the Master Plan and Guiding Principles to develop detailed, long range Vision Plans (Small Area Plans) for Hobe Sound, Rio, Jensen Beach, Palm City, Port Salerno and Indiantown to guide development and address local issues. Work with the City of Stuart to build consensus regarding a Vision for Stuart and the surrounding areas. The plans must address all elements of each community, including neighborhoods, streets and drainage, parks and open space, natural environment, commercial activity centers and public buildings within the context of the overall County-wide Master Plan.
4. Develop high quality design standards for each of these towns and villages, *as well as the unincorporated areas in between them*, in order to define both desirable and undesirable site planning and design practices in accordance with the Guiding Principles.
5. Incorporate intensity and density provisions in mixed use zoning classifications.
6. Revise the PUD Zoning District to incorporate best development practices.
7. EAR Recommendations:
  - Perform land Use Analysis based on recommendations of the Hazard Mitigation Report
  - Develop standards to discourage urban sprawl
  - Revise the COR zoning for TND and Mixed Use
  - Evaluate techniques (e.g. Overlay zoning) to limit development on coastal lands that are environmentally sensitive
  - Conduct a study to reduce the USD area, as well as the Agricultural Ranchette and Estate Density residential designated areas
  - Study the commercial and industrial inventory and consider reductions in these categories
  - Study techniques to encourage redevelopment of existing shopping centers
  - Create design guidelines
  - Complete LDRs
8. Incorporate DCA's *Best Development Practices* into Small Area Plans, Comprehensive Plan, LDRs and other planning/design tools.
9. Analyze alternative techniques for maintaining the Urban Services Boundary edge in the future, including the acquisition of land/development rights; zoning overlay with development restrictions; special land development requirements, and others. Conduct a Board of County Commission workshop to discuss alternative techniques and to select preferred alternatives for implementation.
10. Develop and adopt a detailed, multi-modal 2025 Transportation Plan – including roadways, bridges, bike lanes/paths, trails, greenways and transit in accordance with the Guiding Principals – in conjunction with the Small Area Planning efforts.



11. Develop local thoroughfare plan to define locations of future roadways within each community via “small area plan” studies (CRA’s).
12. Develop graphic Roadway Design Standards for typical roadway sections, including local streets, collectors and arterials. Include roadway lane widths, bike lanes, curbs, sidewalks, drainage and street trees. Include connection requirements, spacing, traffic calming measures, design/enforcement speeds, etc. Work with FDOT, the MPO and local municipalities to adopt the same standards throughout the County. Incorporate DCA’s *Best Development Practices* into Small Area Plans, Comprehensive Plan, LDRs and other planning/design tools.
13. Complete ordinance for protection, restoration of historically/architecturally/culturally significant resources throughout the County.

#### **Focus on Design and Implementation**

14. Develop annual, neighborhood – based Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) with the Neighborhood Advisory Boards to determine top priorities for implementation.
15. Hire an Urban Designer to participate in the Development Review process and to negotiate site and building design with site developers. Allow flexibility in the Land Development Regulations - through the existing PUD Ordinance or other means – to negotiate design regulations and standards on a project-by-project basis.
16. Establish the Sustainable Martin County Partners Alliance to review all proposed public and private projects – especially the siting of public buildings - for consistency with the 20 principles of Sustainability.

#### **Protect and Promote the Environment**

17. Establish a countywide habitat management plan that includes countywide objectives; roles of both public and private landowners; private landowner initiatives; land acquisition; reforestation; restoration and other habitat management techniques/practices.
18. Establish a system of greenways within and around the Urban Services Boundary, based on existing natural systems and drainage patterns, to define and separate towns and villages; to discourage urban sprawl within the USB; to accommodate storm drainage, wildlife habitat areas and recreation; and to define/maintain the edge of the USB.
19. Establish a long-range, phased Implementation Plan for acquisition and/or protection of top priority environmental lands and/or greenways.
20. Develop a Management Plan for each conservation parcel, outlining permitted uses and recommended resource management techniques.
21. Designate a permanent funding source for natural lands management.

22. Work with other agencies to establish a water quality-monitoring program, including the collection of baseline data and the establishment of monitoring stations.
23. Work with other agencies to establish an air quality-monitoring program, including the collection of baseline data and the establishment of monitoring stations.
24. Participate in NPDES and identify sources of water pollution and develop mitigation strategies.
25. Expand county-wide recycling program.
26. Work with other agencies to develop a county-wide plan to retrofit existing stormwater drainage systems to control flooding, and to maintain high water quality in the St. Lucie and Loxahatchee Rivers, the Indian River Lagoon and Estuary, and Lake Okeechobee (& WO).
27. Continue implementation of the stormwater program to fund stormwater capital improvements.
28. Implement Land for Healthy Rivers and Natural Resources Protection One Percent Infrastructure Sales Tax Program.
29. Establish County Environmental Land Management Program (currently being implemented).
30. Establish Wetlands LDR (currently being implemented).
31. Continue to apply for FCT grants, other state/federal acquisition funding programs.
32. Complete the acquisition of the Pal Mar parcel(s).
33. Implement the uplands LDR.
34. Work with the SFWMD to minimize draw down impacts from wellfields; implement recommendations from the Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan.
35. Implement St. Lucie Inlet Management Plan and develop a beach management program.
36. Incorporate DCA's *Best Development Practices* into Small Area Plans, Comprehensive Plan, LDRs and other planning/design tools.
37. Inventory and monitor environmentally significant resources throughout the county and develop an action plan for protection, restoration and management.

**Invest in Urban Centers, Neighborhoods, Schools and Parks**

38. Develop a County-wide Parks and Open Space System Master Plan, including Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks and Urban Open Space.

39. Continue to use impact fees, other funding mechanisms to pay for proposed land acquisition/capital improvement projects.
40. Hire a full time grant writer/funding coordinator.
41. Work with the Martin County School Board to wisely locate and acquire school sites in community population centers.
42. Work with the state university system to provide educational opportunities throughout the County.
43. Implement “quick victory” improvements in the CRA areas as soon as possible; publicize the County’s implementation efforts.
44. Establish incentives to encourage infill development in existing neighborhoods, commercial areas.
45. Implement identified Hazard Mitigation projects.
46. Apply for a “Front Porch Community” designation for one of the CRA areas.

#### **Promote Civic Involvement and Inter-agency Coordination**

47. Strengthen intergovernmental coordination efforts with the City of Stuart and the Martin County School Board, as well as other Counties and Cities. Use a third party facilitator to discuss/resolve issues at regularly scheduled (semi-monthly, quarterly) meetings.
48. Research comparable coastal communities (e.g. Marin County, California; Nantucket, Massachusetts) to identify models for Martin County growth patterns and management tools. Coordinate site visits with Commissioners to exchange ideas with other elected officials, staff and community leaders.
49. Build the Martin County Sustainability Resource Center to demonstrate sustainability concepts, and to serve as the site for continuing civic involvement.
50. Designate a Neighborhoods Coordinator (through Community Development) to work with Neighborhood/Homeowners Associations to organize, develop grass-roots programs (e.g., District F Coordinator).
51. Create subcommittees of the Sustainable Martin County Partners Alliance to focus on various aspects of the vision, including an Environmental and Recreation Lands Advisory Committee; Agriculture Lands Advisory Committee; Hazard Mitigation Committee; and others.

#### **Measure and Monitor Progress**

52. Establish an Indicators Review process that includes annual public meetings – similar to the Visioning Workshops – conducted in each community:

53. Evaluate adequacy of Martin County's LOS criteria (Tindale Oliver Study) annually.

## REMAINING CONFLICTS

The Visioning Process revealed two basic conflicts in Martin County. These conflicts relate to the perception that residents must be forced to choose between preservation of the natural environment, economic growth, and a high quality of life.

### **Economics**

Some residents believe that the County's strict development guidelines and the limited areas designated for commercial/industrial development limit Martin County's economic development potential.

The Guiding Principles emphasize high quality, aesthetically pleasing development. The Principles also emphasize infill development and the redevelopment of existing commercial sites in order to meet market demand. Inherent in the County's Vision for sustainability is that the County's emphasis on a high quality of life – including a healthy, beautiful natural environment; good schools and parks; and safe, clean and thriving neighborhoods and town centers – will attract the desirable, quality-oriented investors and commercial developers required to sustain the local economy. It is important that this vision be communicated to community business leaders so that the County is sending a clear, unified message regarding the type of businesses it is trying to attract.

### **Transportation**

Some residents believe that roads – any roads – are bad because they destroy precious wildlife habitat and wetlands; encourage strip commercial growth; and contribute to further urban sprawl. To date most of Martin County's roads have been built according to State and Federal Guidelines, with little consideration given to local quality of life issues.

The County's Vision is that roads are not inherently bad, but that the *quality* of design determines a road's impacts. If properly designed, new/redesigned roads can improve aesthetics; provide for public recreation; reduce congestion; provide alternative modes of transportation; and protect wildlife habitat and open space. The key to gaining these benefits is good planning and design.

### **Conclusions**

The County has already taken steps to resolve these conflicts. The recent Economic Summit was a good start to building an Economic Development Vision consistent with the County's overall Vision for Sustainability, and the process should be continued. A consensus needs to be reached regarding the types of businesses that the County wants to attract and/or promote in order to deliver the quality of life desired by residents, as outlined in the Guiding Principles.

Development of the County's 2025 Plan, Small Area Plans and Roadway Design Regulations will provide a forum to discuss roadway conflicts. Key roadway decisions – such as additional roadway lanes, corridors and/or bridges – should be made within the context of the Guiding Principles.

No additional consensus building or conflict resolution processes are proposed at this time. Residents are tired of planning, and want to see actual physical improvements in their neighborhoods and communities. The County should identify its top priorities; roll up its collective sleeves; and focus on the design and implementation of the projects that will contribute to a more sustainable Martin County.

## INTRODUCTION

### What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is one of the "hot" concepts guiding planning and growth management in today's communities. How to define the concept is a continuing topic for debate. The term became popular in the 1980s with publication of the report *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development. The definition of sustainability established by the Commission and still most commonly used is "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The movement towards being more "sustainable" is a result of increasing population accompanied by increasing demands on our natural, economic and social resources. The forces driving sustainability in today's society include:

- Limited Resources
  - Urbanization
  - Scientific Knowledge
  - Technology
  - Social Awareness
  - Health & Safety Concerns
  - New Economics
- (Public Management Magazine, 1998)

Applying this abstract concept to create tangible policies and programs that improve a community's economy, environment and quality of life is a challenging task for planners and policy makers. Local governments are learning to deal more effectively with the competing demands for limited resources.

### What are Sustainable Communities?

Local governments that adopt the concept of sustainability in their planning efforts are acknowledging the interrelatedness of the environment, economic growth and quality of life in their community. Communities that seek to be more sustainable, begin to exhibit similar characteristics, including:

- Placing high value on quality of life
- Respecting the natural environment
- Infusing technology with purpose
- Optimizing key resources
- Maintaining scale and capacity of natural and human environments
- Adopting a systems approach to problem solving
- Supporting life cycles of natural and human systems
- Being responsive and proactive
- Valuing diversity of natural and human systems

- Preserving heritage and local uniqueness  
(Public Management Magazine, 1998)

Communities seeking to be more sustainable must develop policies and programs that have a long-term vision and maximize community benefit, as opposed to focusing on short-term convenience to appease political will. The process to develop policies and programs for sustainable communities emphasizes collaborative & consensus based decision making in search of a common purpose. The focus of these policies is to be intergenerationally responsible & highlight interdependence of members of a community to achieve a better quality of life or solve community problems. In short, sustainable communities do not maintain the status quo but rather seek to continually improve their natural, economic and social environments through innovative policies and programs developed from the consensus building process. These policies must be implemented incrementally to be successful, and must serve as the organizing concept for planning of communities into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Sustainability in Florida**

The concept of sustainability has special urgency in the state of Florida. The ever-increasing growth rate in the state has had far-reaching effects including environmental degradation, increase in sprawl, social problems, and unpredictable economic fluctuations. Florida has taken several steps to ensure that it has a viable future for our children and theirs. The first step toward smarter growth in Florida began with the Growth Management Act in 1975 which requires every county and municipality to adopt, implement and follow a local comprehensive plan. The purpose of comprehensive planning is to establish goals, objectives and policies through which to achieve a community's future vision. Ensuring a sense of community vision is essential to develop a successful, sustainable community. The Act was considerably strengthened in 1985 and requires that every plan:

- Guide and control future development;
- Overcome present problems and deal effectively with future problems which may result from the use and development of land;
- Preserve, promote, protect and improve the public health, safety and comfort and good order; and,
- Protect human, environmental, social and economic resources.

More recently, Florida has taken the lead in the sustainability movement with the development of the Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project. The Governor's Commission for a Sustainable South Florida was formed for the sole purpose of developing a blueprint for sustainable development. It was the Commission's task to recommend planning strategies that would consider environmental restoration and conservation in conjunction with promoting a sustainable economy and quality communities. The ultimate goal of the Commission was to "ensure that today's progress is not achieved at tomorrow's expense."

The results of the Commission's study concluded that urban sprawl had resulted in growth and development patterns that "were not sustainable, economically or environmentally." The Commission recommended that Florida develop a program that promoted "sustainable



communities" in which sprawl would be curtailed by urban development boundaries and whose "economically vibrant urban centers would provide a safe, quality, and livable lifestyle." The program, which would create a new relationship with the State, would combine fiscal and de-regulatory incentives to contain sprawl and develop truly sustainable communities. The 1996 Florida Legislature endorsed the Commission's recommendation with the passage of the Florida Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project, encoded as section 163.3244, Florida Statutes.

After development of the program, local governments wishing to become designated sustainable communities were asked to submit applications to the Department of Community Affairs. Communities were evaluated against criteria that included proven commitment to principles of sustainable development, intergovernmental cooperation, and the capability to successfully carry out demonstration activities. Martin County was selected to be one of the five "sustainable communities," which also included the City of Boca Raton, City of Ocala, City of Orlando, and the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County. The purpose of selecting "demonstration" communities was to provide models for sustainable communities throughout the state. Programs and initiatives developed by the selected "sustainable communities" would promote six broad principles of sustainability which include:

- Restoration of key ecosystems;
- Achieving a cleaner, healthier environment;
- Limiting urban sprawl;
- Protecting wildlife and natural areas;
- Advancing the efficient use of land and other resources;
- Creating quality communities and jobs.

Designation as a sustainable community allows a local government to be eligible to receive reduced state oversight both of local comprehensive plan amendments and of developments of regional impact. In addition, innovative planning initiatives that exceed minimum criteria established by the comprehensive plan will be encouraged through the partnering of state agencies.

As part of the designation process, the state has developed agreements with each community specifying programs and projects to be undertaken that promote sustainable development. Martin County has agreed to complete several tasks in its first year as one of the "sustainable communities." These tasks include the development of a sustainability vision plan that contains measurable indicators and a comprehensive action plan. Other tasks include the development of the Martin House to illustrate affordable, sustainable housing design, and a hazard mitigation plan. The entire Martin County/Department of Community Affairs agreement is included in Appendix A.

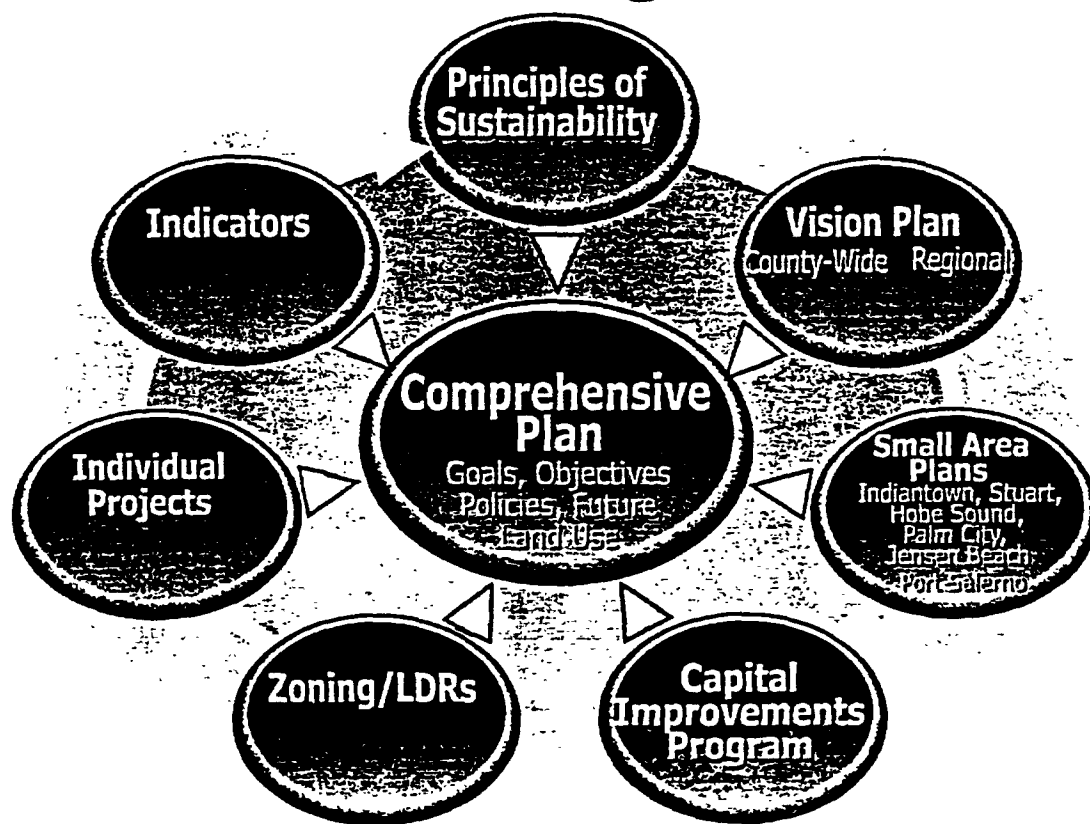
### **Martin County Sustainable Communities Vision Plan**

The intent of the Vision Plan is to bring together a wide range of business, civic, education, environmental, governmental and human service neighborhood representatives, along with interested citizens to consider alternative scenarios for the future development of Martin County. The objective of the plan is to reach consensus on the goals and strategies that will result in a

Sustainable Martin County by the year 2020.

The Vision Plan for Sustainability will become an integral part of the County's planning and growth management strategy. The Vision Plan will lead to the development of small area plans that take a closer look at the redevelopment of the County's communities using sustainable principles. The small area plans and associated recommendations will drive the capital improvements program and zoning and land development codes. All of these strategies will be evaluated using the sustainability indicators established in the Vision Plan. Finally, the comprehensive plan will reflect all of these elements in its goals, objectives and actions and serve as the foundation of the planning process. The following flowchart illustrates the connection of the Vision Plan with Martin County's existing planning process.

## The Planning Process



## METHODOLOGY

To begin development of the Vision Plan, Martin County contracted Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart (Glatting Jackson) to develop and implement the visioning process. The process began with extensive data collection on the definition of sustainability and sustainable communities, the requirements of the Martin County/DCA agreement, comparable sustainable development projects, and the identification of various resource sources related to the sustainability movement. The Martin County Board of County Commissioners decided to focus on three key issues related to sustainability in the Vision Plan including the environment, land-use and transportation. These issues form the basis of the action plan. However, research and the visioning process included exploration of economic and social issues.

The process also began with the development of an "in-house" visioning team. The purpose of the visioning team was to develop an open, valid, and objective visioning process for Martin County in accordance with the contract between DCA and Martin County. The visioning team included the following participants:

Randall Reid	Keith Holman	Steve Heuchert
Nikki van Vonno	Maureen Frank	Cindy Simpson
Laura Merker	Joann Kennedy	Sue Adams
Richard Rollo	Eileen Weisgerber	
Doris Giesing	Bob Whitty	
Krista Storey	David Graham	
Bart Stuart	Meridith Fox	
Taryn Kryzda	Diane Lankford	

The County also created a Citizens Advisory Committee to provide feedback during the visioning process. Members were appointed by County Commissioners, and included:

Wanda Barina	Port Salerno
Tom Carr	Palm City
Melissa Cousins	Port Salerno
Michael Diterlizzi	Palm City
Edward Geary	Stuart
Robert Myers	Palm City
Gene Rifkin	Stuart
Doris Singer	Palm City
Douglas Smith	Jensen Beach
Bill Summers	Indiantown
Ken Young	Jensen Beach
Roger Sarver	Stuart
Kathy Spurgeon	Stuart
Fred Linn	Jupiter
Greg Vann Buckle	Hobe Sound
Beth Tschinkel	Stuart
Jarrett Guthrie	Stuart

To kick-off the Vision Plan, the visioning team participated in a visioning workshop on December 1 and 2, 1998, facilitated by Glatting Jackson. Topics discussed at the workshop included sustainability concepts and principles, "hot" issues in Martin County, guiding principles for the County's future, and indicators for assessment of the plan. From the information collected at the workshop, a preliminary vision plan was developed.

The next step in the process was to hold community workshops throughout Martin County to present the preliminary vision plan to the public and collect additional input. A total of seven workshops were held across the County during January and February 1999. Workshops were held in Indiantown, Stuart (2), Hobe Sound, Palm City, Jensen Beach and Port Salerno. To begin the workshops, a survey was administered ascertaining public opinion on the sustainability guiding principles for sustainability, developed from the visioning workshop. In addition, citizens were split into small groups and asked to provide comments on how to make their communities more sustainable. This information was reviewed and organized to identify key issues that were specific to the individual communities as well as the entire county. From this analysis, general recommendations were developed to modify the Vision Plan.

From the input received at the visioning and community workshops, a detailed action plan related to the key issues in Martin County was developed. The preliminary indicators were also amended to reflect the information received during the visioning process. The action plan and associated indicators are included in the Executive Summary.

## ANALYSIS

### Review of Existing Policies and Programs

Martin County adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1982, recognizing the County as a leader in growth management efforts in Florida. The growth management policies in the plan were developed with considerable public oversight and input. Some of the elements of the current (1990) plan that make it a model for sustainable principles and smart growth initiatives are the urban service area boundary, and requirements for wetlands protection, uplands preservation and concurrency.

The urban service area boundary is Martin County's "urban growth boundary," which limits utility extensions and intensity of development outside the boundary. The boundary is important because it makes public facilities and services more efficient, protects farmlands and environmental resources, stimulates redevelopment, and diminishes land speculation. Another important element of the plan is the requirement that there will be no permitted impacts to wetlands. Protection of uplands is also a high priority including requirements to preserve up to 25% of rare, unique and endangered habitat and common native habitat on site. In addition, 20% of the developed site must be landscaped and the landscaping does not count as preservation area. Finally, concurrency requirements help the County grow "smarter" by requiring that public services be in place at a level acceptable to the community at the time a development is completed and occupied. For a more thorough discussion of these goals and objectives, see Appendix B.

### Visioning Workshop

The visioning workshop was held on December 1 and 2, 1998 at the Downtown Holiday Inn in Stuart, Florida. After discussion of the basic concepts and principles of sustainability, participants were asked to identify existing issues relating to sustainability in Martin County. The summary of the existing issues is provided in Appendix C.

#### *Hot Issues*

Next, participants were asked to refine the existing issues list into a list that included the most critical or "hot" issues in the County relating to sustainability. The purpose of this exercise was to develop a focus on important issues that would guide the remaining exercises planned for the workshop. The following is a summary of the "hot" issues identified by the visioning team:

#### Transportation

- Palm City Alternative
- U.S. 1 Corridor
- Connecting/ Gated Communities

### Land Use

- Density
- Relationship to Transportation
- Strip Commercial
- Infill
- TNDs/ Village, Town Centers
- Locally appropriate design/ planning
- Annexation
- Urban Service Boundary
- Gated communities

### Environment

- Linkages
- Systems

### *Visioning Exercise*

To assist participants in developing a vision for a “sustainable Martin County,” they were asked to participate in a visioning exercise. The exercise required small groups to adopt the persona of different “typical” Martin County residents, and respond to a series of questions about the future Martin County. The questions and responses for this exercise are included as Appendix D. The following is a summary of the responses organized by key issues.

### Economy/Employment

- Environmental/ economic balance
- Stable economy
- Employment opportunities within County

### Education

- Great schools
- Educational opportunities, including evening classes
- Community centers
- High tech four-year university

### Environment

- Acquired/ protected environmentally sensitive lands
- Clean river, protected, restored
- Clean air
- Increased bio-diversity
- Pristine environmental lands

### Health and Safety

- Quality health care
- Safe, quiet neighborhoods
- Sheriff's substations in communities

### Housing

- Affordable housing

### Infrastructure

- Storm water control

### Land Use

- No buildings higher than four stories
- Neighborhood schools
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Functioning agricultural areas
- Infill/ redevelopment
- Landscaped public areas
- Pedestrian-oriented downtowns
- Urban services boundary
- Places to hang out

### Recreation

- Bike paths
- Parks
- Concerts
- Access to conservation lands

### Transportation

- Light rail system
- Multi-modal system, including Tri-Rail
- Bike paths along roadways

### Heritage

- Protected historically significant facilities

### *Guiding Principles*

Based on the vision developed during the visioning exercise, participants were asked to break into small groups to brainstorm principles that would guide "sustainable" policies and programs in the County. Each group developed policies that were organized according to key issues and are included as Appendix E. Through a consensus building process, the individual group lists were consolidated to produce a common list of guiding principles agreed upon by the visioning team. The following is a summary of the guiding principles:

### Community

- Foster community belonging, unique sense of community identity
- Support and encourage ethnic, cultural diversity

### Economy/Employment

- Create a diverse economic base with clean, high-paying jobs
- Support local agriculture, businesses, products & services

### Education

- Enhance life-long educational opportunities

### Environment

- Protect & enhance natural resources
- Conserve and recycle precious community resources

### Government

- Support education of participatory governance, promote intergovernmental cooperation & coordination

### Health and Safety

- Assure access to health care and reduce/ eliminate toxic substance and community health risks

### Housing

- Provide diverse housing types for different age/ income levels within each neighborhood

### Infrastructure

- Use resources efficiently
- Utilize advanced transportation, communications and production systems

### Land Use

- Integrate open spaces, conservation areas, multi-modal transportation into neighborhoods
- Encourage compact, mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional pedestrian-oriented development
- Preserve and promote agricultural areas
- Protect, enhance existing neighborhoods
- Create walkable neighborhoods, including existing, with amenities
- Encourage redevelopment and infill development within the USB
- Maintain an open space network with linkages to neighborhood parks, recreation areas and natural areas
- Maintain a clearly defined edge between urban/ rural areas
- Encourage traditional communities; integrate gated communities
- Emphasize quality design, aesthetics of built environment

### Recreation/Culture

- Encourage fine/ performing arts



### Transportation

- Provide multi-modal transportation alternatives/ choices, including transit, trails, bikeways & sidewalks
- Provide a highly connected street network comprised of small, narrow roads and redesign existing arterials/ design new collectors to be grand public space

### Heritage

- Protect/ celebrate community heritage and historically significant facilities

These principles were further refined at subsequent workshops; for the purpose of the Vision Plan, emphasis was placed on Land Use, Transportation and the Environment. A new principle was also added in - "Recognize and plan for potential natural disasters" – to address the need for hazard mitigation as an element of sustainability.

### *Indicators*

Following the development of a vision and guiding principles, participants were asked to consider techniques for evaluating the success of the County's policies and programs related to sustainability. An integral part of the Vision Plan is the development of indicators to measure the success of the sustainability movement in Martin County.

An indicator is a measurement of a community condition and usually focuses on a small piece of a larger system to provide insight into the larger system. Indicators provide a means of quantifying the result of a policy or program. In addition, indicators can be tracked over time, providing a means of collecting trend data. Indicators are selected based on their connection to the issues, measurability, comprehensibility, and affordability for measurement. In addition, indicators that are decision oriented are the most useful in the evaluation process.

To be effective, indicators should be evaluated on a regular basis and documentation of the evaluation should be provided to public decision-makers. The indicators for each key issue developed by the visioning team follow:

### Community

- Attendance at town meetings, homeowner association meetings, special events
- % of people - voter turnout
- Level of volunteerism hours
- # of graduates of Martin County Citizen's Academy
- % of eligible voters who vote in local elections
- # of identified neighborhoods

### Economy/Employment

- # of high paying, clean, quality jobs
- # of unemployment benefit claims
- \$ of disposable income
- \$ of earned income

- # new businesses

#### Unemployment Rate

- Average wage
- State job classification breakdown/ changes
- Tourism indicators (hotel "stays", rental cars)
- % of Martin County labor force that is employed in Martin County
- # of employees per net acre of land designated for employment uses

#### Education

- Attendance of Martin County residents at centers of higher education
- # of Merit scholars
- standardized test scores
- drop out rates
- # of participants in adult education
- # of students in class per teacher
- # of Vocational tech certificates awarded
- Higher education enrollment
- % of high school graduates who attend college
- Graduation rate

#### Environment

- % of environmental lands managed
- Volume of recycled materials in County
- Monitoring water quality index to state standards
- % of protected land/ conservation area, public park
- % of agricultural land urbanized
- % of impervious space
- Pollutant loading per acre of land
- # of acres of restored wetlands
- Ratio between recycled vs. landfilled material
- % of increase in sightings of wildlife
- # of diseased fish reported
- Salinity in river at Roosevelt Bridge
- Annual Audubon count
- # of homeowners participating in FLA yards
- Opinion poll re: health of environment
- Number of well/ septic app's by size of lot
- WQ in surface water
- # of species & population (healthy)
- Amount of bait sold
- # of designated Florida Yards
- Regional environmental agreements
- Ground water (potentiometric pressure) quality
- Gallons released from Lake Okeechobee
- Salinity of river

- # of septic tanks in critical areas

#### Government

- Amount \$ from other funding sources
- Response to annual survey
- % of citizens participating in public processes
- # of joint meetings with schools, cities, neighboring counties
- # of lawsuits
- # of inter-local agreements, i.e., contracts, service agreements

#### Health and Safety

- Crime rate
- Health statistics
- # of children of unwed mothers
- Emergency response time
- Rate of substance abuse
- % of population uninsured
- Crime recidivism rates

#### Housing

- Building permit valuations by new projects
- # of affordable housing units (County definition)

#### Infrastructure

(No Indicators)

#### Land Use

- # zones designated/ acquired/ developed for active recreation
- Distance from home to neighborhood parks
- Distance between preserved open space (connectivity)
- # of bicycle parking areas in CRA's
- % of park acreage per 1,000 people
- Acres of parkland/ residential
- % of land preserved as natural lands
- Acres of reserved land
- # miles of frontage acquired/ controlled by County/ other public agencies
- # of conservation area linked to neighborhoods
- # of neighborhood associations
- # of remodeling permits
- % of redeveloped areas in USB
- % of redeveloped areas in villages
- % of redeveloped areas in towns
- Acres of new developed land - # of dwelling units
- Increase in areas developed in mixed use
- # of mixed use units

- \$ of public and private investment in CRA areas (include value of in-kind, volunteer and sweat equity)
- # of OCC licenses within CRA's
- # of residences within CRA's
- Percentage of mixed use land use in CRA's (single family, multifamily, commercial)
- # of building permits in established neighborhoods - new & renovation
- Increased taxable value in established neighborhoods
- Increased taxable value in commercial districts
- Increased tax value within CRA's
- # of improvements permits issued
- # of permits within existing lots
- Amount of key agricultural Index (production vs. acres in production)
- # of acres in agriculture production (USDA Farm Report)
- % of agriculture lands & use categories
- \$ of value of annual production
- Amount consumed & grown within County
- Change in agricultural water consumption
- Gross agriculture product sales
- Local agriculture sales
- # of flooding complaints
- # of residences in 100-year floodplain
- Linear feet of streetscaped roads
- # of code enforcement complaints
- Visual preference survey

#### Recreation/Culture

- # facilities, square footage constructed for fine/ performing arts
- # acres accessible to public for recreation (passive)
- # of participants at events or recreation programs
- # of attendees at museums, cultural sites, performances & events

#### Transportation

- Distance to neighborhood stores(s)
- # of total miles
- # of clients served
- # of vehicle registrations and types
- # of accidents
- # of lane miles of roads
- # miles per capita of multi-laned roads
- # of gasoline taxes/ sales
- # of miles of bikepath
- # miles of new bike/ trail/ sidewalks
- % of street miles with sidewalks/ bike lanes
- # of roads constrained
- L.O.S.
- Survey auto miles driven per capita per day

- % of commercial outlet's market that arrives via local street
- Auto miles traveled per capita per day
- # of purposes served by parking once
- Non-arterial connections / Res. – Commercial
- Ratio of collectors to arterials
- Aggregate \$/ resident for transportation

#### Heritage

- # of community landmarks that identify communities

### **Community Workshops**

Following the visioning workshop, seven public workshops were held in communities in Martin County to gather input from residents on the issue of making Martin County more sustainable. The workshops began with a discussion of sustainability concepts and principles. In addition, sustainable policies already in place in Martin County's growth management program and comprehensive plan were highlighted. The preliminary vision plan was also presented to the workshop participants.

#### *Survey*

Citizens were asked to rate their agreement with the guiding principles developed by the visioning team and outlined in the preliminary Vision Plan. The survey instrument used during the workshops follows.

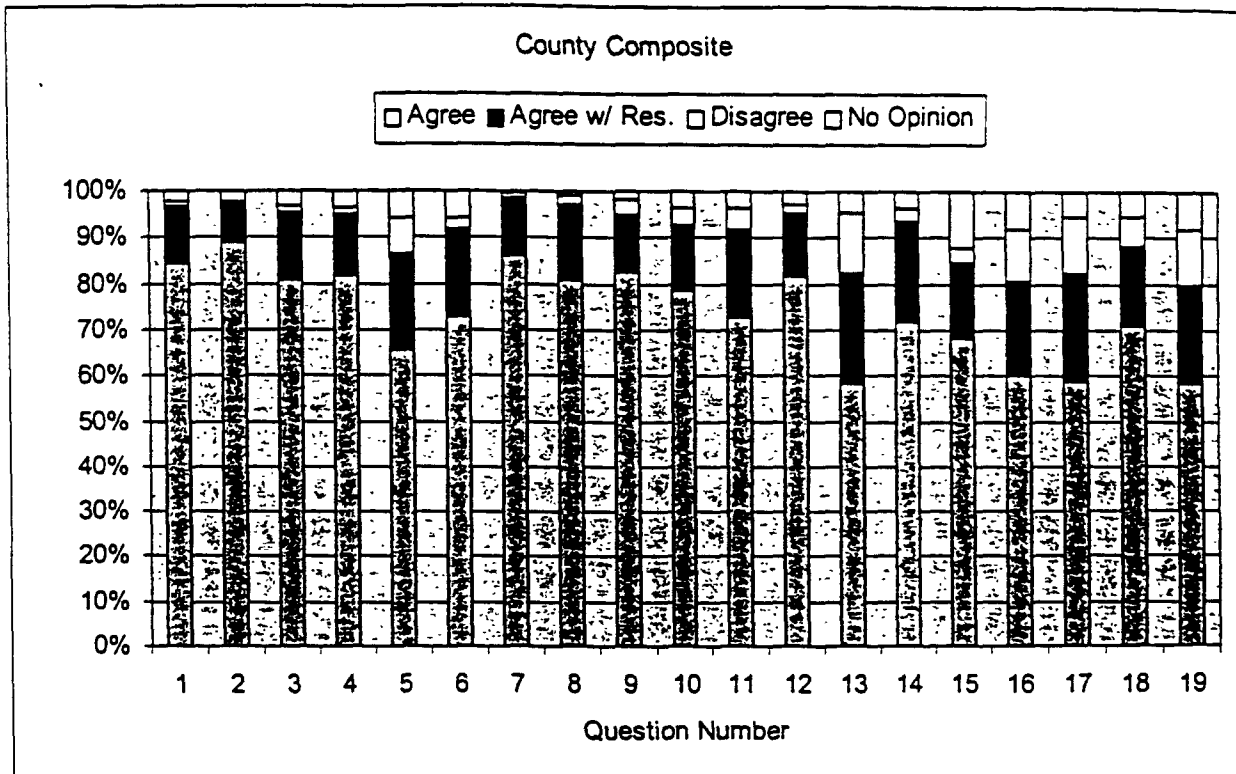
The results of the survey were tabulated for each workshop and are included in Appendix F. A County composite that summarizes the total number and percentage of responses to each survey question was also developed. The following table and graph summarize the total responses to each guiding principle.

Martin County Sustainable Communities Visioning Process	Land Use and Transportation Vision Survey

	AGREE	AGREE WITH RESERVATIONS	DISAGREE <small>(STATE REASONS &amp; RISK)</small>	NO OPINION/ NEED MORE INFO <small>(STATE REASONS &amp; RISK)</small>	COMMENTS
<b>Environment</b>					
1 Conserve & recycle precious community resources					
2 Use resources efficiently					
3 Protect & enhance natural resources					
<b>Land Use</b>					
4 Foster community belonging, unique sense of community identity					
5 Encourage compact, mixed use, residential, commercial, institutional pedestrian oriented development					
6 Encourage redevelopment and infill development within the UGB					
7 Protect, enhance existing neighborhoods					
8 Emphasize quality design, aesthetics of built environment					
9 Create walkable neighborhoods, including existing, with amenities					
10 Maintain an open space network with linkages to neighborhood parks, recreation areas, and natural areas					
11 Integrate open spaces, conservation areas, multi-modal transportation into neighborhoods					
12 Protect/celebrate community heritage and historically significant facilities					
13 Encourage traditional communities, integrate gated communities					
14 Preserve and promote agricultural areas					
15 Utilize advanced production systems					
16 Maintain a clearly defined edge between urban/rural areas					
<b>Transportation</b>					
17 Provide a highly connected street network composed of small, narrow roads and redesign existing streets/ design new collectors to be grand public space					
18 Provide multi-modal transportation alternatives/choices, including transit, trail, bikeways and sidewalks					
19 Utilize advanced transportation systems					

Martin County Sustainable Communities Visioning Process				
Land Use and Transportation Vision Survey				
		AGREE WITH		NO OPINION
Question	AGREE	RESERVATIONS	DISAGREE	NEED MORE INFO
#1	84.5%	12.2%	0.9%	2.4%
#2	88.7%	8.8%	0.3%	2.1%
#3	80.8%	14.9%	1.2%	3.0%
#4	81.6%	13.6%	1.3%	3.5%
#5	65.3%	21.1%	7.7%	5.9%
#6	72.6%	19.1%	2.5%	5.7%
#7	86.3%	12.4%	0.6%	0.6%
#8	80.7%	16.7%	1.6%	1.0%
#9	82.4%	12.7%	2.9%	2.0%
#10	78.4%	14.3%	3.8%	3.5%
#11	72.5%	19.3%	4.6%	3.6%
#12	81.6%	13.9%	1.6%	2.9%
#13	58.1%	24.3%	13.0%	4.7%
#14	71.7%	22.2%	2.6%	3.5%
#15	68.1%	16.6%	3.1%	12.2%
#16	60.1%	20.5%	11.4%	8.1%
#17	58.9%	23.7%	11.8%	5.6%
#18	71.0%	17.3%	6.3%	5.3%
#19	58.4%	21.5%	12.3%	7.8%

\*NOTE: The total number of responses varies for each principle; so many participants did not respond to all principles.



The compilation of the survey data shows that residents generally agree with the majority of the guiding principles developed by the visioning team. The principles with the highest level of support related to the protection and enhancement of natural resources, especially using resources more efficiently. In addition, participants strongly support the protection and improvement of the quality of existing communities regarding the aesthetics of the built environment and preserving community heritage. In addition to rating the principles, the survey allowed participants to provide comments or questions on the individual principles. A compilation of these comments is included as Appendix G.

### *Small Groups*

After completion of the survey, workshop participants were asked to break into small groups and provide input on issues related to sustainability in the County. The small group discussions were initiated with the question: "How do we make your neighborhood/community more sustainable." Group facilitators instructed participants to identify their number one comment or issue regarding sustainability and their community. Comments received during this portion of the workshop were highly varied in reference to specific community needs. However, comments regarding countywide policies and programs were fairly consistent. The results of this exercise were reviewed and organized according to key issues for each community. The summarized group comments are included for each community are included as Appendix H.



### *Conclusions from Community Workshops*

The following is a list of general conclusions that resulted from the seven community workshops held in Martin County:

- Residents support the Guiding Principles for Sustainability developed at the visioning workshop.
- Residents support current County policies regarding the urban services boundary, no wetland impacts, upland habitat protection and the four-story height limitation.
- Residents are very concerned about local (neighborhood) quality of life/sustainability issues – such as code enforcement, traffic, drainage and affordable housing – as well as Countywide issues.
- Many residents do not clearly understand how the Martin County planning / development approval process relates to improving the quality of life in their neighborhoods.
- The effects of sprawl and the quality of development *within* the Urban Services Boundary is as much of a threat to sustainability – if not more so - than the threat of potential sprawl *beyond* the Urban Services Boundary.

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A** - Contract between DCA and Martin County
- Appendix B** - Overall Goals for the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan
- Appendix C** - Existing Issues
- Appendix D** - Visioning Exercise
- Appendix E** - Alternative Visions - Policies
- Appendix F** - Community Workshop Summary Tables of Survey Data
- Appendix G** - Community Workshop Survey Comments
- Appendix H** - Breakout Group Comments