SouthShore Areawide Systems Plan

Community Vision

In this year of 2003 we look forward accounting for past decades of growth and change in our community and see that much has occurred in Apollo Beach, Gibsonton, Riverview, Ruskin, Sun City Center, Wimauma, Balm and all of SouthShore.

Our community’s cultural diversity is celebrated. We are proud of our reputation for good government. We have a diverse and healthy economy in which our citizens and businesses prosper.

We have mastered the balance of growth with conservation and preservation. The results have produced compact and livable communities surrounded by protected natural environments. Our good neighborhoods are served by a balanced transportation system, efficient utilities, and neighborhood-oriented goods and services.

Our citizens feel secure in their neighborhoods and our children can look forward to a future with opportunity, thanks to the excellence of their educational experiences from a variety of area institutions. Because we value the well being of all our citizens, we have widespread quality health care, and social services are available to those in need.

Much of the quality of life we have achieved has come about as the result of a vision for the future, which we set in place back in 2002. This vision has given us direction and motivation. It has been the key factor in the building of our prosperous and livable community.
Preface

The recommended strategies contained in this plan are designed to achieve the Vision and are not necessarily constrained by current funding or resources. Like other Comprehensive Plan policies, they are intended to establish a framework for decisions about growth and development, and will be implemented over time by both public and private actions as resources become available. The strategies respond to regional issues divided into three distinct systems: transportation, environmental/natural, and cultural/historical. The vision and implementing strategies do not propose to change allowable land use, maximum densities or transfer of density. They advocate compatibility among subsequent future community planning efforts and a desired future for the SouthShore area. One of the greater achievements of the Strategies is the interconnectivity of each system. Strategies developed for transportation systems reflect provisions to recognize cultural/historical resources and environmental/natural resources. Likewise, strategies developed for environmental/natural resources reflect provisions to recognize the two other distinct resource systems.

Transportation Vision Statement

Looking forward into the future, our communities are served by a balanced transportation system. A thoughtfully planned system of roadways accommodates automobile traffic and is complemented by strategically placed activity centers, connected by mass transit. Community groups actively participated in planning transportation facilities, resulting in a harmonious integration of roads and communities. People have choices in how to get around; they can safely walk, bicycle, drive a car, take the bus or rail transit line. The whole array of transportation options is designed to be user-friendly with sidewalks, bike lanes, and tree-shaded environments everywhere.

- Identify, where appropriate, “co-location” of greenways and corridor co-existence is achievable.

- Pursue an enhanced transportation funding package for an integrated transportation system as a result of collegial commitments from local, state, and federal agencies.
• Reserve and acquire reservations and acquisitions that reflect current and future rights-of-way shall meet our transportation system needs and accommodated pedestrian traffic (i.e. sidewalks, trails and bike paths). The reserved corridors will be acquired, as needed, supplementing the established system in place in 2003.

• Water-borne craft connections between St. Petersburg, Tampa and Sarasota

• Create of efficient Emergency Management Plans, which include directionally controlled evacuation routes, emergency medical services and shelters.

• ACCELERATE THE PLANNING / DESIGN / CONSTRUCTION PROCESS; enabling the “Areawide Systems Plan,” before development segmented our region, thereby losing the opportunity for the “Plan” to be implemented. (This is considered to have been one of our greatest achievements.)

1. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY – Incorporate the transportation corridor plan will the Comprehensive Plan. Use the Capital Improvements Program to schedule improvements that keep pace with growth within SouthShore.

   a. Implement the system plan with recognition of local values and conditions.

   b. Implement intelligent transportation systems (ITS) that are consistent with adopted County ITS plans and regional architecture to better utilize existing and proposed corridors.

2. COORDINATION STRATEGIES - Coordinate transportation planning and greenway trails planning, right-of-way and corridor protection to accommodate future development. In order to protect the rights-of-way needed to implement the SouthShore Corridor plan map and to avoid encroachment into such rights-of-way by buildings, parking area and other types of developments, acquiring the needed rights-of-way in advance of development.

   a. Implement the SouthShore Corridor Plan as shown on Map 25 of the Transportation Element.

   b. Provide adequate space for alternative modes of transportation such as bikeways, and sidewalks along appropriate transportation corridors.
c. Review new development to determine if the development is within or adjacent to rights-of-way identified on the map to ensure adequate space is available for alternative modes.

d. Assure that the integrity of established communities is protected through accepted techniques and principles of land use transition expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

e. Ensure additional buffering and wildlife undercrossing(s) are considered for the following roadways:
   - Rhodine Road Extension
   - Big Bend Road Extension.

3. LIVABLE ROADWAYS STRATEGIES – Reflect in future and improved roadway corridors their surrounding character, neighborhood and/or historical and environmental features (e.g. rural roads in rural areas).

a. Design roadways of appropriate scale to preserve the scenic characteristics of the surrounding area, such as neighborhood identity, historic or environmental features, points of interest, and other aspects of community character.

b. Discourage roadway design that encroaches upon or adversely affects environmentally sensitive areas or publicly owned natural preserves.

c. Develop roadway corridor landscape guidelines that represent the visual identity the community desires to achieve for specific road segments. Guidelines should utilize but shall not be limited to, the principles of landscape design defined in Florida Friendly Landscape and Florida Yards and Neighborhood procedures. In some cases, low volume irrigation can be considered in medians, to accommodate special features or special areas within SouthShore.

d. Encourage appropriate roadway design and/or traffic calming methods to minimize neighborhood traffic intrusion and to protect neighborhoods from adverse impacts of through-traffic. Such designs may include, but are not limited to rotaries, roundabouts, signage, traffic diverters, on-street parking, bulb-outs, and medians.

e. Implement the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, when needed.
f. Provide for, as development occurs and where possible, the interconnection of internal neighborhood streets, and interconnection to the surrounding transportation network by establishing a basic grid network of access and open space, as identified in “Principles for Good Neighborhoods” endorsed by the BOCC in April 1992.

g. Increase and encourage participation in the “Adopt a Road” programs.

h. All currently designated truck routes and proposed new collectors and arterials shall be available for consideration to continue as or as potential new truck routes with the exception of the following roads:

- 19th Ave. N.E. from US 41 to US 301
- 21st St. extended from SR 674 to Big Bend Rd.
- Big Bend Rd. from US 301 to its eastern terminus

i. To achieve a balance between the need for future road capacity and the need to preserve the community character and environmental resources, the following corridors will be subject to a more detailed examination of alternatives to expansion as community-based planning occurs:

- SR 674 between I-75 and Westlake Dr. (Sun City Center, Wimauma and Ruskin)
- US 41 between 19th Ave. N.E. and SR 674 (Ruskin)
- US 41 between Elsberry Rd. and Leisey Rd. (Apollo Beach)

4. PUBLIC TRANSIT STRATEGIES–Increase public transportation in SouthShore. Consider, and when appropriate encourage, a light rail system, exclusive transit lanes, and water borne transportation as well other alternative modes, to serve major employment destinations.

a. Evaluate bus ridership demand within parts of SouthShore that can be efficiently and effectively served by transit, as development occurs and population increases. This includes the potential need for evening or late shift transit service.

b. Evaluate the effectiveness of a potential light rail ridership serving SouthShore.
i. Study the potential of water borne craft connections between SouthShore and neighboring places of interest such as St. Petersburg, Tampa, and Sarasota.

5. PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS STRATEGIES – Effectively link and expand the network of greenway trails, sidewalks, bikeways, golf cart paths where permissible, and other pedestrian pathways creating a walkable environment in SouthShore.


   b. Participate in and monitor updates to the Hillsborough County Master Sidewalk Plan to establish an interconnected system of sidewalks throughout the area.

   c. Implement the Hillsborough County Greenways Master Plan within SouthShore.

   d. Ensure the implementation of the adopted Scenic Corridor Map and associated regulations.

6. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – Create efficient Emergency Management Plans, which include directionally, controlled evacuation routes, emergency medical services and shelters.

   a. The County shall coordinate all emergency management activities including evacuation orders with all local, state and regional response agencies and with adjacent local governments to effect a safe and efficient evacuation and return of County residents.

   b. Continue to notify households of the need to evacuate at various threat levels.

   c. Include through the development review process, the review of new development on evacuation clearance times and the number of persons requiring public shelter. This requirement shall apply to those developments located in the vulnerability zone and those located along or impacting evacuation routes.
**Environmental Vision Statement**

*Looking forward into the future, our community is working to achieve harmony between positive development and nature. The environmental quality of our air, water and soil has improved. The Bay and the supporting water systems are clean and healthy, supporting growing wildlife and recreation. Our conservation and management of sensitive lands and species habitats is a regional model. An extensive, interlocking network of environmental resources extends throughout the SouthShore area.*

1. **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES** – Manage environmental resources and species habitats to maintain, protect and enhance the flora and fauna using an integrated, inclusive approach.
   
   a. Incorporate detailed refinement and expansion of the approved Hillsborough County Greenways Systems Plan map, during Community Plan development, including future natural and recreational corridors.

   b. Implement the goals and objectives of the Greenways Master Plan, within SouthShore, for new development and redevelopment.

   c. Implement guidelines for new development and redevelopment to identify environmental linkages, and integrate environmental resources (i.e. waterways and greenways) within prospective development plans.

   d. Improve local efforts to control and eradicate invasive non-native plant and animal species on public and private lands through: 1) better coordination among county, state and regional agencies; 2) prioritizing sites for removal efforts, and 3) increasing public education on invasive plants.

   e. Enhance participation and expand opportunities for use of the Hillsborough Beautiful and Solid Waste Recycling Program.

   f. Continue to identify, protect, acquire, and manage open space for the purpose of conservation,
preservation and provision of open space corridors and park and recreational needs through programs such as the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection (ELAP) Program.

g. Coordinate with the land acquisition programs of regional, state, and federal agencies such as ELAP Program, to encourage the connection of existing publicly owned parcels of land into a greenway system.

h. Continue to work with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) and other government agencies to insure the atmospheric purity of the air and soil in SouthShore.

2. WATER RESOURCES STRATEGIES – Properly manage water resources, water quality, water supply and water availability to sustain the community’s desired lifestyle in SouthShore.

   a. Evaluate and implement the, “Linking Land and Water Management in the Alafia River Watershed” and “Linking Land and Water Management in the Little Manatee River Watershed” reports as endorsed by the Board of County Commissioners.

   b. Investigate septic tank usage as a contributor to groundwater and surface water pollution and develop a program to resolve septic use that contributes to water quality degradation.

   c. Identify and implement a process whereby permits that are issued by other agencies and that affect the County’s participation under the National Flood Insurance Program are reviewed. Agencies that may be involved include the County Health Department for septic permits, the State Department of Transportation for roadwork and the Tampa Port Authority for dock, dredging, and rip rap permits.

   d. Promote the use of and encourage adherence to the principles of the Florida Friendly Landscapes and the Florida Yards and Neighborhood programs to ensure excessive water usage is not designed into landscape plans.

   e. Continue to work with Tampa Bay Water (TBW), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Environmental Protection Commission (EPC), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP) and
Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and other government agencies to ensure the existence of an adequate potable water supply and to protect watersheds by maintaining water quality standards through comprehensive monitoring education and regulation in SouthShore.

f. Continue to work with Tampa Bay Water, DEP, EPC, and SWFWMD and other government agencies to regulate and prohibit development that would significantly harm water quality or significantly alter volume or flow in the bay, rivers and natural systems of SouthShore.

3. SHORELINE ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES - Maintain and/or obtain public accessibility through emerging development along our shorelines. Such accessibility shall be designed in a manner that protects the integrity of the natural system.

a. Inventory existing public access points and determine if access, both parking and physical, is sufficient to meet demand.

b. Utilize and enhance, where feasible, existing public access rights-of-ways and easements in shoreline areas. Improve citizen awareness of public access to shoreline access.

c. Encourage regional cooperation with adjacent jurisdictions and the State to provide new public shoreline access and enhance existing public access in order to ease overuse of existing facilities.

4. PHOSPHATE MINING STRATEGIES – The mining of phosphate in SouthShore generates significant economic benefits. However, the unregulated mining activity of the past was responsible for degradation of environmental systems. Guidance in the planning, management and regulation of phosphate mining and land excavation is necessary to preserve and protect natural systems and emerging development in SouthShore.

a. Continue to support the multi-agency regulation of phosphate industry mining activities.

b. Encourage a collaborative community planning effort among public and private...
sectors to initiate a long-term reclamation/redevelopment plan for the phosphate mining and land excavation property in South East Hillsborough County.
**Cultural/Historic Vision Statement**

Looking forward into the future, the SouthShore region of Hillsborough County supports a diverse population with people living in unique communities, interspersed with farms, natural areas, open spaces and greenways that preserve and enhance the natural heritage.

Sustainable growth and development is clustered and well planned to preserve the area’s environment, cultural identity and livability. The area enjoys a healthy, thriving economy that is the foundation for continued community progress. South Shore is a highly desirable place to live, work and do business because of its well-educated workforce and high quality of life.

a. **CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL PROTECTION STRATEGIES** – Employ an integrated, inclusive approach to sustainable growth and development that is well planned to maintain the cultural and historic heritage and unique agricultural and archaeological resources of SouthShore.

b. Encourage and support the preservation of areas of archaeological, cultural and/or historical significance as shown on the SouthShore Cultural/Historical map.

c. Encourage and support the identification and preservation of significant older structures such as houses, outbuildings, bridges, and fences to retain a sense of identity, visual beauty, and history.

d. Support communities and neighborhoods in preserving and revitalizing downtown centers using economic development and historic resource incentives whenever possible.

e. Assist the Historic Preservation Board, historical societies, museums, and other preservation organizations in SouthShore in their public education and preservation efforts.

f. Continue to support the agricultural activities that have historically been an important part of SouthShore heritage and maintain agriculture as an integral part of the SouthShore economy, landscape, and natural resource base. Identify and implement
incentive-based program(s) to provide for the continued use of viable agricultural lands and discourage the premature conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use.

g. Support aquaculture and agri-businesses services and facilities, such as equipment sales and service, research, facilities, nurseries and greenhouses, packinghouses, and fertilizer services.

h. Recognize that the State of Florida has adopted the “Florida Right to Farm Act” (F.S. 823.14) limiting the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed a nuisance When new development is proposed adjacent to or near active agricultural operations.

2. ECO-TOURISM STRATEGIES – Utilize the environmental features of SouthShore as assets that attract tourism in the area. Promote the development of Eco-tourism opportunities for both economic and educational benefit.

a. Encourage civic groups, community groups, and chambers of commerce to market South Shore as an eco-tourism destination and promote local events and festivals within the greater SouthShore area. Techniques could include developing an annual calendar of events, advertising, and literature (i.e. newspaper articles news editorials,) for distribution.

b. Promote Eco-tourism that respects and draws upon the natural environment. Recognize eco-tourism opportunities within publicly owned lands by improving public access and parking within SouthShore. Improve citizen awareness of public access to County owned lands within SouthShore.

3. COMMUNITY CHARACTER STRATEGY – Retain the unique community character of the South Shore communities.

a. Encourage citizens to participate in their civic associations, chambers of commerce, schools and homeowners associations to work toward implementation of the vision.
b. Recognize and enhance individual community identity by developing community plans for Ruskin, Riverview, Gibsonton, Wimauma, Sun City Center and Apollo Beach and encourage broad based public participation in those efforts.

c. Increase options in the Land Development Code to accommodate the retrofitting of existing communities to include a broader range of internal mixed uses, such as: 1.) mixed density housing; 2.) local-serving goods/shopping; 3.) civic uses and; 4.) neighborhood scale employment.

d. Work with local and regional groups, civic associations and chambers of commerce to identify opportunities for the co-location of future recreational, community, cultural, civic centers, with civic amenities (i.e. schools, libraries, emergency services, post offices, government agencies), and use those facilities as focal points of the communities.

4. DIVERSIFIED HOUSING STRATEGY - Maintain housing opportunities for all income groups.

   a. Explore and implement development incentives throughout SouthShore that will increase the housing opportunities for all income groups, consistent with and furthering the goals, objectives and policies within the Comprehensive Plan Housing Element.
TRANSPORTATION
POLICY 1.5.1
and
SOUTHSHORE CORRIDOR PLAN
(Map 25)
TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.5: Provide for and promote coordinated transportation planning, right-of-way and corridor protection, and project implementation across jurisdictional boundaries.

Policy 1.5.1:
By December 31, 2004, Hillsborough County shall prepare a Corridor Plan which identifies right-of-way requirements, general alignments and standards for all transportation corridors within the Urban Service Area, in support of development patterns as defined in the Future Land Use Element. Until the Corridor Plan is approved, the currently adopted Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization “Needs Assessment” and the SouthShore Corridor Plan (See Maps 24 and 25 of Appendix H and list in Appendix G) will be the interim Corridor Plan for the purposes of determining rights of way and facility needs relating to development approvals and determining the eligibility for impact fee offsets.