

THONOTOSASSA COMMUNITY PLAN

Revised by the BOCC

August 21, 2003

I. Introduction

The Thonotosassa area has a long and rich history spanning Native American communities, agricultural production and rural residential development. Thonotosassa was home to Seminole Indians and a Native American village is known to have existed near the lake as late as 1843. Lake Thonotosassa, the largest freshwater lake in Hillsborough County, provides the area's defining natural feature.

After the end of the Second Seminole war in 1852, settlers came to the area and began to develop an agricultural community with citrus production being the major enterprise. By 1925, the community's population reached 300 and Thonotosassa had become Hillsborough County's premier fruit-growing region, supporting four citrus packing house, three churches, three general stores, a hotel and an ice manufacturer. Goods and people were transported to Tampa by railroad which was constructed by Henry Plant and opened in 1893.

While citrus still dominated the area as late as the 1890's, Thonotosassa has become attractive to people who desire a rural-residential life style while remaining in close proximity to urban areas. The community has developed the Community Plan to protect the history, character and values of Thonotosassa.

II. The Thonotosassa Community Plan

The Community Plan document consists of a Future Land Use Map, a Vision Statement, Goals, Comprehensive Plan Strategies and Community Plan Proposals for guiding the future development of the Thonotosassa community. The Community Plan proposals in the document are not included in the Comprehensive Plan. Separating the proposals from the Vision, Goals and Comprehensive Plan Strategies will give the Steering Committee and its predecessor group the ability to implement the Plan Document with a minimum of bureaucratic interference. The Comprehensive Plan amendment process is lengthy and time consuming and involves review by the Board of County Commissioners, the Planning Commission and the Florida Department of Community Affairs. The ability of citizens to be more responsible for self governance and for solving problems depends on minimizing complexity and bureaucratic delays.

The Plan document and the Community's boundaries were developed by the citizens Steering Committee during the planning process. The citizens defined community boundary is shown on Map 1.

It is generally bounded by U.S. 301 to the north, Interstate-4 to the south, McIntosh Road to the east and the Tampa Bay Bypass Canal and Interstate-75 to the west.

III. Vision, Culture and Values Statement

In the Thonotosassa community, residents are actively involved in the government and civic affairs. Growth has been directed in ways that have enhanced the community's character and quality of life. The Main Street downtown area is the traditional center of community life and a commercial success. Many families here lived in the community for multiple generations and residents continue to enjoy rolling terrain with vistas, open spaces and trees. Agriculture and the tradition of keeping domesticated farm animals such as horses, chickens, pigs, goats, cattle and quail is still a part of the community's landscape and economy. It's a diversified, self-supporting community with a mix of uses and housing types varying from mobile homes parks to large estates. Residents don't have to travel out of the area for shopping, and there are good paying jobs available locally. Among the residents, there is a sense of belonging to one community and being close to and enjoying nature. Clean air and water, wildlife and especially the recreational opportunities centered around Lake Thonotosassa, such as boating and fishing in addition to biking, running, horseback riding and hunting, is a cherished part of the Thonotosassa lifestyle.

IV. Goals

1. Community Control - Empower the residents, property owners and business owners in setting the direction and providing ongoing management of Thonotosassa's future growth and development, toward a community that adds value and enhances quality of life.
2. Sense of Community - Ensure that new development maintains and enhances Thonotosassa's unique character and sense of place, and provides a place for community activities and events.
3. Rural Character, Open Space and Agriculture - Provide improved yet affordable infrastructure and a balance of residential, commercial, and **other**

land uses while maintaining the rural nature of the Thonotosassa area. This goal includes encouragement for agriculture, protection of property owner's rights and values, and the establishment of open spaces and green spaces and low density, rural residential uses.

4. Diversity of People, Housing and Uses – Maintain the existing diversity of the housing types and styles. Provide for commerce and jobs but protect the community identity and limit the location, type and size of new businesses to fit the surrounding area.
5. Environment – Protect water, wildlife, air, soil and trees through effective planning, consistent enforcement of existing regulations, and incentives. The Thonotosassa community values its natural environment and wants to see it protected in a way that balances environmental protection and private property rights.
6. Improve Reputation and Civic Pride – Enhance civic pride and the reputation of Thonotosassa by establishing and maintaining traditions, preserving the community's nature and cultural heritage, and developing and disseminating information to residents and visitors about the community.

V. Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- Form a Thonotosassa Community Advisory Committee to become effective voice for the community.
- Designate Main Street as Thonotosassa's downtown, develop a central gathering place and make downtown a focal point of commercial and community activity.
- Establish the community's boundaries and designate gateways.
- Amend the Future Land Use Map to change all areas within the Thonotosassa study area that are currently designated as Agricultural Rural and Agricultural Estate to Residential-1.
- Require minimum lot sizes of 1 acre for residential development within the Residential-1 Future Land Use category.
- Protect the area's rural character.
- Support agricultural uses throughout the community.
- Retain the current boundaries of the Urban Service Area and continue to restrict central water and sewer services with the Rural Service Area.
- Allow commercial uses along County Road 579 south of Pruett Road.

VI. Future Land Use Map Changes

To implement Goal 3 of the Thonotosassa Community Plan, the Future Land Use Map is to be amended to change the future land use designations of all areas within the Thonotosassa community that area currently designated Agricultural/Rural and Agricultural Estate to Residential-1 with a required minimum lot size for residential development of 1 acre. This change is shown on Map 2.

The Residential-1 density of 1 dwelling unit per acre, with a minimum lot size of 1 acre, is consistent with the community's character. The requirement for a 1 acre minimum lot ensures that residential development will be rural in scale and prevent "clustering" that would allow smaller lots that are inconsistent with the rural residential development.