

**RIVERVIEW COMMUNITY PLAN**  
**Comprehensive Plan Amendment**  
**CPA 05-09**

**I. Introduction**

The Riverview Community Plan area lies in the southeast portion of unincorporated Hillsborough County and is within the “SouthShore Areawide Systems Plan” boundary. It is home to approximately 44,000 residents, the population is estimated to grow to 74,000 residents by 2025. The community plan area is comprised of approximately 55.88 square miles (35,769 acres). Socially, it is a readily identifiable community, featuring schools, services, and infrastructure; however, it has no town center. The Riverview community is in transition, a rapidly suburbanizing, no longer rural community but with many agricultural landscapes.

**II. Community Plan Boundaries**

The Riverview Community Plan area is generally located south of Bloomingdale Avenue/Alafia River; west of Balm Boyette/Boyette Road; east of Tampa Bay/I-75, and north of Bullfrog Creek/SR 672. See attached Riverview Community Plan Boundary Map.

**III. Vision Statements**

*Community Vision*

As the community has grown, Riverview's small town charm and atmosphere has been maintained. The community has a town center containing a peaceful, family-oriented and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere in which all safely live, work and play.

A strong sense of “community identity” and spirit, with versatile recreational and economic opportunities as well as cultural and educational resources, stimulates both the young and elderly. The recreational and economic opportunities uniquely afforded them by the Alafia River were maximized while also prioritizing the protection of it and other natural resources.

*Vision Concept*

Physically, Riverview is a diverse community sharing the characteristics of both suburban and rural areas, loosely defined by historical development patterns and predominant land uses. The Advisory Committee and the Planning Team addressed these issues and illustrated their vision graphically by developing the “*Riverview District Concept Map*”. See attached figure 10.

It identifies distinct visions for the Riverfront, Downtown, Highway 301, Residential, Industrial, Open Space, and Mixed Use districts. These unique districts reflect community assets and guide development.

### **1. *Highway 301 Corridor District Vision***

Visitors and residents know they have arrived in Riverview as they pass through gateway entrances. This is a mixed-use area with high densities and a variety of businesses. The gateways are the beginning of a pleasant drive or walk along well-maintained, tree lined streets with center medians, bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, adequate lighting and traffic signals. Strict traffic laws are enforced to protect the pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environment. The retail and commercial businesses have benefited from the redesign of the US 301 corridor. The historical buildings have been marked and maintained to indicate their historical importance.

### **2. *Downtown District Vision***

Riverview Downtown is the hub of the community where people gather, enjoy the river, or attend one of the many outdoor entertainment events at the riverfront amphitheater.

Convenient to transportation links, this hub contains not only a variety of prosperous businesses, but also medical facilities, and a large community college and vocational center that host many social, recreational, and cultural events. Its campus seamlessly fits into the surrounding area while adding incalculable value to our community. The state-of-the-art childcare facilities for children of all ages are conveniently located within walking distance of businesses and residential communities.

The interlocking paths and trails connect the various elements of the downtown area. The recreation park offers many athletic events, both organized and pick-up games. The tree-lined streets with colorful landscaping adds to the visual experience of Riverview. Subdued and consistent signage, updated storefronts, new restaurants, bookstores and other businesses have revitalized the downtown area.

### **3. *Riverfront District Vision***

The beautiful Alafia River has been maintained with superior water quality and ecosystems. Good planning has kept the original charm of the river, while also providing River-walks on both sides of the river that offer opportunities for a variety of activities in and around the water. The boat ramps have ample space and are convenient for all types of recreational watercraft. Law enforcement has encouraged boating safety and discouraged the high-risk antics of those who endanger others. This area is a short walk to the Downtown Area via the interlocking network of paths.

Property in this area has been reduced in density and intensity. The community has acquired property along the river to improve public access to this natural resource.

#### ***4. Mixed Use District Vision***

In the areas where commerce, education, agriculture and residential subdivisions merge, Riverview has handled the transition gracefully. Unincorporated areas maintain their neighborhood identity, while commercial businesses have upgraded their image by adhering to the community plan's building façade and storefront criteria. Small businesses are encouraged to locate and remain in Riverview due to a business-friendly environment. The older neighborhoods enjoy upgraded infrastructure with improved fire hydrant access, new sidewalks, curbs and drainage.

#### ***4. Residential District Vision***

The area south of the Alafia River along US Highway 301 has been developed as primarily residential. The residential district appeals to people of many economic and cultural backgrounds. In this area, managed growth permits higher densities. The improved infrastructure containing fiber optic communications, sidewalks, pedestrian-friendly crosswalks, adequate lighting and signage is well maintained and controlled by strict code enforcement. Local government promptly addresses houses that fall into disrepair and neglect.

The residential areas are convenient to all other areas of Riverview due to the transit system, pedestrian-friendly streets and bike trails. Thoughtful planning has controlled the traffic and the intelligent highway system speeds residents to and from their destinations.

#### ***6. Industrial District Vision***

With improved infrastructure, readily available high tech capabilities and its convenient location near I-75, I-4, and the Selmon Expressway as well as its location on U.S. Hwy 301, Riverview is truly the commerce crossroads for east Tampa and Central Florida's west coast. The area is also easily accessible by foot, bike, transit or vehicle for the many residents of the Riverview community. Many new industries and businesses are attracted to this area, thus providing a large number of jobs for workers in all classifications. Our industrial partners are good neighbors as well. Even though our industrial businesses are clean and non-polluting, they continue to be tightly monitored.

#### ***7. Open Space District Vision***

Riverview is proud of its roots and its diverse character. Encouraging and promoting active and passive open areas in the community has been a priority. The community has been successful in preserving and enhancing the rural character and natural open expanses within the community. In particular, a large quantity of Boyette Scrub lands have been acquired from willing sellers and added to the county owned lands creating an extraordinary regional asset. Additionally, a variety of new parks and open space have been incorporated system into the Hillsborough County Greenway and Trails Master Plan and thus provided a system of open space connecting the entire community.

#### **IV. Goals**

The plan's vision is supported by the following thirteen goals (listed in priority order) with accompanying strategies:

##### **Goal 1 Achieve better design and densities that are compatible with Riverview's vision.**

- Develop Riverview district-specific design guidelines and standards.

The standards shall build on recognizable themes and design elements that are reflective of historic landmarks, architecture and heritage of Riverview. The mixed-use, residential, non-residential and roadway design standards shall include elements such as those listed.

##### Mixed Use-Commercial-Residential

- Incorporate traditional neighborhood development (TND) and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques and principles in design standards.
- Develop visually pleasing sign standards that prohibit pole signs and require monument signs. It also is the desire of the community to limit or keep out any additional billboard signs.
- Avoid "strip" development patterns for commercial uses.
- Enhance the ability to walk or bike between adjoining commercial areas.
- Promote aesthetically pleasing subdivision entrances, formal and manicured landscapes and other amenities such as street furniture, public art, and creative paving techniques.

- Promote diversity in housing type and style to counter generic subdivision look.
- Provide appropriate and compatible buffers and transitions to existing, adjacent land uses particularly with agricultural operations and the lands acquired for preservation and/or open space.
- Require natural and attractive stormwater retention facilities, such as standards for gently sloping grass sides/banks and prohibiting hard (i.e. concrete, asphalt) surfaces and aeration techniques: screen and buffer ponds with natural vegetation or berms or at a minimum vinyl fencing with vines, prohibit plain exposed chain link fencing. Encourage master stormwater facilities.

### Transportation

- Develop distinctive roadway design and landscape standards for new developments and redevelopment projects that complement the community's uniqueness as well as encourage buffers to parking areas, water retention areas and sidewalks. Techniques may include landscaping, berming and median enhancements.
- Use standards for new and redeveloped projects that incorporate transit-friendly street design along bus routes (bus stops, bus bulges, bus lanes, etc.) such as those found in the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Infill code.

### Miscellaneous

- Develop key design elements and landscape designs for local parks that would promote a unique sense of place and establish community landmarks.
- Improve drainage standards to enhance aesthetics and ensure adequate drainage prior to onsite development.
- In appropriate areas, as described in the District Map, identify and reduce residential densities in the Future Land Use Element.
- Consult with developers regarding residential site design and the creation of neighborhood character.
- Improve enforcement of all county land development codes.

**Goal 2 Reflect the vision of Riverview using the Riverview District Concept Map. The Riverview District Concept Map will illustrate the unique qualities and**

**land uses related to distinct geographic areas identified as "districts".** (see Figure 10)

The following specific districts are incorporated into the Riverview District Concept Map. Require future development and redevelopment to comply with the adopted Riverview District Concept Map.

1. ***Hwy 301 Corridor*** – Provide a safe, attractive and efficient corridor system that contributes to the character and economic well-being of the community and provides a sense of arrival.
2. ***Downtown*** – Focus and direct mixed-use development to create an aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly downtown.
3. ***Riverfront*** – Recognize the historical, environmental, scenic, and recreational value of the Alafia River.
4. ***Mixed Use*** – Focus and direct development toward walkable mixed-use town center locations throughout the community while respecting existing land use.
5. ***Residential*** – Encourage attractive residential development that complements the surrounding character and promotes housing diversity.
6. ***Industrial***–Attract employment centers and desirable industry with appropriate infrastructure in areas without conflicting with surrounding land use.
7. ***Open Space*** – Build upon the county owned Boyette Scrub lands by acquiring lands from willing sellers.

**Goal 3 Enhance the community's "sense of place", small town spirit and gateways.**

- Increase gateways to create a sense of arrival using landscape features, public art and signage at strategic areas.
- Create community events and activities that promote the heritage and environmental qualities of Riverview, such as water-related events, art shows highlighting local artists, and walking tours.
- Promote distribution of local publications, newsletters, and other media to inform and foster a sense of community for Riverview residents particularly in the Downtown District.
- Establish community-gathering places, such as a "town square" or plaza in which people of all ages can socialize and honor special events.
- Encourage the exchange of ideas and information with local schools to bolster community spirit and support for local initiatives.

**Goal 4 Provide safe, attractive, efficient multi-modal transportation, including vehicular, bicycle/pedestrian and transit.**

- Protect the capacity of low-volume neighborhood and uncongested roads.
- Explore opportunities for constructing a bridge across the Alafia as an alternative north-south transportation route.
- Prioritize and improve major connector roadways and intersections to improve safety and efficiency concurrently as the community grows.
- Provide sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and connections to the Hillsborough County Greenway and Trail Master Plan, and extend crossing signal times and use traffic calming techniques along major thoroughfares.
- Expand mass transit, such as more bus stops and routes and park and ride facilities.
- Diligently enforce traffic speed laws.
- Provide safe and efficient emergency evacuation routes.
- Continue to implement the *Livable Roadways* strategies and "Guidelines for Landscaping Hillsborough County Roadways" (or updated replacement documents) for enhancing the appearance of major roadways (such as Boyette Road, US 301, Riverview Drive and Balm-Riverview Road).
- Encourage increased participation in Keep Hillsborough County Beautiful Program (KHCB).
- Implement access management standards such as frontage roads, joint access points, rear lot access points, and managed turning movements.
- Discourage speeding and cut-through traffic by designing roadways with traffic calming measures and using appropriate design speeds to prevent implementation of reactive traffic calming techniques (i.e. speed humps) after construction).
- Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation and the County to ensure adequate notice, education and awareness of hazardous material truck and disposal routes and activities.
- Prepare and adopt a US Highway 301 Corridor Plan Overlay that also designates mixed-use town centers.
- Enhance the appearance of US Highway 301 with attractively landscaped medians, tree plantings, sidewalks and the provision of pedestrian-scale lighting.

- Establish east/west pedestrian crossings along US Highway 301 to facilitate access to retail opportunities and other destinations (i.e., library, school, neighborhoods). To this end, consider a pedestrian overpass and traffic calming techniques as options.
- Remove roadside vendors at busy intersections (Hwy. 301/Big Bend Road, Boyette Road and Balm Riverview Road).

**Goal 5 Improve and expand public facilities, services, and park systems, including the existing Civic Center.**

- Coordinate local efforts with state and other agencies to centrally locate and provide desired community health care programs.
- Create a youth center, increase and diversify community-sponsored youth programs, including local sport and cultural activities and educational/vocational opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for library/media resources (i.e., bookmobile, satellite branches, co-op with schools, and partnership with local businesses).
- It is the desire of the community to have a regional park, sports complex and community pool within the Riverview community.
- Increase and expand neighborhood and community park facilities to provide for highly accessible (within a 5-10 minute walking distance) and safe community park system.
- Collaborate with local groups and clubs to develop special purpose parks and amenities that appeal to different cultural interests and age groups, e.g. Scout camp, youth-oriented or skateboard park.

**Goal 6 Prioritize the significance of improved quality, enjoyment, and protection of the Alafia River and other natural resources such as open space.**

- Promote environmental education and awareness programs to promote water conservation, Florida Friendly landscaping techniques, and to protect water quality and environmental resources.
- Reduce to the extent possible Future Land Use Map densities and intensities along the Alafia River to maintain, preserve, and protect the environmental quality and wildlife habitat of the Alafia River and surrounding watershed.
- Protect the water quality and wildlife habitat associated with the Alafia watershed.



- Support environmental agencies such as the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Department of Environmental Protection in protecting and restoring shoreline integrity and river ecosystems.
- Expand and expedite acquisition for fee or less than fee of environmental lands, open space and environmental restoration projects through the Greenways/Trails Master Plan, ELAPP, etc.
- Implement a plan for voluntary stewardship with willing landowners, through acquisition/easement tools and cost sharing.
- Support and enforce protection and restoration of natural shoreline integrity and river watershed.

**Goal 7 Encourage economic development by supporting local business while attracting a variety of new uses and services, particularly high technology businesses.**

- Provide incentives for the redevelopment of commercial structures to enhance building facades, signage, landscaping, general buffering and access management.
- Promote the benefits of high accessibility to urban areas via major highway system.
- Support local efforts to draw tourism and promote community events and festivals.
- Encourage well-designed, family-oriented businesses and recreational opportunities particularly in the Downtown District including movie theaters, bowling alleys, arcades, and miniature golf centers.
- Upgrade existing infrastructure to state-of-the-art, technologically advanced infrastructure.

**Goal 8 Enhance the Alafia River's recreational and economic opportunities particularly non-motorized access.**

- Prepare and adopt a river public access master plan that features the Alafia River, as the centerpiece of recreational and community facilities, including public shoreline access, viewshed protection, and boat ramps and canoe launches particularly near Bells Shoals Road. Inventory county-owned lands and incorporate leftover parcels (such as road ends) to expand public access.
- Identify and acquire riverfront lands for community and neighborhood riverfront parks and playgrounds.

- Increase recreational opportunities such as boating, waterskiing and fishing along the Alafia River in areas designated in the public access master plan.
- Prioritize boat ramp access for local residents.
- Expand bay access outside Riverview, such as Simmons Park and Williams Park boat ramps to foster local serving only ramps with in Riverview.
- Place appropriately scaled commercial uses such as restaurants and local retail establishments that complement recreational uses (e.g. canoe rental, bike shop, bait and tackle) along the river.

**Goal 9 Attract, locate and support appropriate industry and employment with state-of-the-art infrastructure.**

- Provide state-of-the-art infrastructure for existing and prospective industry.
- Make locating appropriate industry in Riverview as free of obstacles as possible by utilizing a team approach to site selection and permitting.
- Orient marketing to clean, locally based industries that provide well-paying employment opportunities.
- Provide incentives to attract employment centers.
- Recognize accomplishments and assets that local industry brings to the community.
- Continue to protect environmental resources and maintain quality standards through comprehensive monitoring education and regulation.

**Goal 10 Maintain and support high quality schools also serving as community amenities.**

- Continue to maximize joint planning and cooperative funding of community facilities to be co-located with school facilities.
- Collaborate with school principals and higher education administrators to address the effects of emerging growth pressure issues on the quality of service provided by the school system.
- Expand after-school programs for youths.
- Work with local schools to co-develop roadway and pedestrian facilities.
- Promote educational diversity to serve individuals of all ages and interests.
- Support local efforts to attract and develop a community college/vocational center.

- Work with education officials to locate satellite and specialty schools in Riverview.

**Goal 11 Interconnect districts and public places with concepts for walkability, particularly schools and parks.**

- Develop a pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trail pathways plan that connects key destinations such as the Civic Center, Camp Christina' schools, neighborhoods and parks and links environmental greenways through various districts. Use techniques such as cooperative agreements, easement based public lands, and public rights-of way.
- Incorporate Riverview's park and open space system into the Hillsborough County Greenway and Trails Master Plan.
- Implement strategies in the MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan such as safe bicycle and pedestrian routes for adults and children, and pedestrian facility design standards.
- Collaborate with private sector developers, government agencies and non-profit organizations to provide safe roadway, sidewalk and pathway connections, biking and equestrian linkages and other pedestrian amenities.
- Encourage "walk to school" programs, e.g. "walking school buses," to increase safety and to reduce school-related automobile trips.
- Provide sidewalks, pathways and/or trails wide enough (wider than 5 feet) for people to easily pass each other or travel side-by-side.

**Goal 12 Recognize, preserve, and expand historic and cultural resources and places in Riverview.**

- Identify and document additional historical structures and places such as the Women's Club and Moody house.
- Make information available and utilize existing incentives for developers and property owners to preserve and promote adaptive re-use of historic structures and locations.
- Create and maximize opportunities to establish partnerships with the private sector for the conservation and recognition of Riverview's heritage through techniques such as markers, signage, and incorporation into gateways' design themes.
- Define a coordinated vision for the arts and provide a variety of artistic and cultural events and programs.

### **Goal 13 Support and promote agriculture.**

- Encourage the establishment and continued operation of local feed stores, farmer's markets, farm supply stores and other related business in the area.
- Convey public awareness of the importance of agriculture in the economy and to the heritage of Riverview.
- Balance agriculture's need for protection from incompatible uses while acknowledging the market conditions affecting its continued viability.
- Ensure that new non-agricultural uses provide adequate buffers on their property adjacent to existing agricultural uses.