

Alachua County

Office of Planning and Development Staff Report

ANALYSIS OF REQUEST

Background

At its June 25, 2015 quarterly retreat, the Board of County Commissioners received a presentation on Citizen Standards for Paving. This proposed standard would provide for repaving of roadways without the addition of paved shoulders, turn lanes or other enhancements. At that meeting, the Board provided direction to Staff to continue to develop information supporting the application of the standard. This Policy change would be required in order to move ahead with the Citizen Standards for Paving.

At its February 23, 2016 Public Hearing to consider the change, the Board expressed concern about the removal of the requirement to provide paved shoulders or bicycle lanes. The Board asked for additional information about how the policy might be applied. In response, Staff has had discussions with the Board about the implications of not changing the policy.

At the transmittal hearing on May 12, 2016, the Board provided direction to Staff on language to be transmitted to the State Land Planning Agency. The Board also requested that Staff present the item to the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board. After transmittal, no State or Regional entities provided comments on the application and the State Land Planning Agency provided its clearance letter on June 16, 2016.

At the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Board, Staff provided a presentation and listened to comments made by the Board. Generally, the BPAB was not supportive of the amendment and voted to unanimously recommend that the Board not adopt the amendment, or to revise the language to further clarify what a fiscal constraint is. The Board may wish to consider additional language regarding the definition of a fiscal constraint.

Summary of Change

CPA 01-16 is a County-initiated text amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan: 2011-2030 to amend Policy 1.6.8 of the Transportation Mobility Element. The policy amendment is intended to modify the requirement to provide bicycle lanes or paved shoulders for resurfacing projects. The Policy currently requires that any addition of turn lanes or any resurfacing or reconstruction projects on swale-section roadways include the addition of paved shoulders or bicycle lanes. Existing Policy 1.6.8 is as follows:

Bike lanes or paved shoulders shall be provided whenever turn lanes are constructed on a rural cross-section arterial or collector roadways. Bike lanes or paved shoulders shall be provided in conjunction with the resurfacing or reconstruction of all rural cross-section arterial and collector

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roadways unless prohibited due to stormwater, environmental or right-of-way constraints.

CPA-01-16 proposes to modify the Policy to address three separate capital project types: addition of turn lanes, reconstruction, and resurfacing. As provided for today, the proposed change would require that paved shoulders or bicycle lanes be added where turn lanes are added or a reconstruction project is proposed. However, for the third category, paved shoulder or bicycle lanes would become an encouraged element. The revised Policy 1.6.8 would read as follows:

The addition of bicycle lanes or paved shoulders in conjunction with roadway improvements on existing open drainage collector and arterial roadways shall be reviewed as detailed below:

- (a) Bicycle lanes or paved shoulders shall be provided whenever auxiliary lanes or medians are constructed on open drainage arterial or collector roadways unless prohibited due to stormwater, environmental or right-of-way constraints.
- (b) Reconstruction projects for collector or arterial roadways with open drainage shall include the addition of bicycle lanes or paved shoulders unless prohibited due to stormwater, environmental or right-of-way constraints.
- (c) Bicycle lanes or paved shoulders shall be provided in conjunction with the resurfacing of all open drainage arterial and collector roadways; however, where fiscal constraints exist, the County may consider adjacent or parallel multi-use paths.

The revised policy continues to require, by default, the addition of paved shoulders or bicycle lanes on open drainage arterial and collector roadways as part of resurfacing projects. However, the new part (c) provides the Board with some flexibility to consider alternate implementations on repaving projects when a fiscal constraint exists. The policy provides examples of alternatives to providing paved shoulders or bicycle lanes, but also allows the Board to make other choices.

Staff envisions that, as a matter of implementation, for any project that is identified as having a fiscal constraint the Board would be provided with cost estimates both for providing the paved shoulders or bicycle lanes and for any alternative. The Board would then decide what the final design of the resurfacing project would be based upon the information provided and any public input.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

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There are no additional Comprehensive Plan policies that are directly in conflict with the proposed change. Principle 1 of the Transportation Mobility Element is “to establish and maintain a safe, convenient, and efficient automobile, transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation system, capable of moving people and goods throughout the county.” In order to maintain the transportation system, it is necessary for the Board to have flexibility in resurfacing projects.

Objective 1.6 of the Transportation Mobility Element is to “Provide a system of safe, pleasant, convenient, and continuous bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the community.” As the revised Policy 1.6.8 will still require the addition of bicycle lanes or paved shoulders for reconstruction projects and projects that add auxiliary lanes or medians, Alachua County will continue to make strides toward a larger bicycle network. Additionally, nothing in the revised Policy would prohibit the addition of bicycle lanes or paved shoulders as part of resurfacing projects. Where funding is available, the Board may make the choice to include these improvements.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The change to Policy 1.6.8 of the Transportation Mobility Element will have little effect on affordable housing. Resurfacing projects are generally paid for using gas tax revenue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **adoption** of CPA-01-16 with direction to notify the the State Land Planning Agency that the amendment has been adopted with the following bases.

Bases:

1. The amendment will further the ability of the County to meet Principle 1 of the Transportation Mobility Element by potentially allowing resurfacing projects for a lower cost.
2. The proposed amendment will continue to allow the County to provide a safe bicycle network when reconstruction projects are considered or where auxiliary lanes or medians are added to the County’s arterial and collector network.