III.7. Regional Activity Centers and other Mixed Use Future Land Use Designations

Mixed Uses are permitted in the Broward County Land Use Plan through the Regional Activity Center (RAC), Local Activity Center (LAC) and the application of flexibility (rearrangement of land uses and residential densities within a geographic area known as a flexibility zone).

As Broward County continues to increase in population and redevelopment occurs, mixed uses provide opportunities for providing employment, housing and essential needs and services within areas that can be accessed by walking or taking transit. This report provides a summary and an evaluation of the RAC and other existing mixed use provisions within the Broward County Comprehensive Plan and includes recommendations for changes to existing provisions as well as new options.

REVIEW OF REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER (RAC) CATEGORY

Regional Activity Centers are defined in Objective 10.02.00 and Policies 10.02.01 through 10.02.07 and in the permitted uses section Broward County Land Use Plan.

Local governments propose land areas for designation as RACs within the Broward County Land Use Plan through the amendment process. (POLICY 10.02.01)

Purpose and Intent
Regional Activity Centers (RACs) are intended to encourage attractive and functional mixed living, working, shopping, education and recreational activities. (OBJECTIVE 10.02.00)

RACs may be proposed for areawide DRIs, and centers of regional tourism, employment or education activity. (POLICY 10.02.07)

The Permitted Uses Section states that the RAC land use designation is intended to:
- encourage development or redevelopment of areas that are of regional significance;
- to facilitate mixed-use development;
- encourage mass transit;
- reduce the need for automobile travel;
- provide incentives for quality development and;
- give definition to the urban form.

The permitted uses section states that this designation will only be applied to areas that are of regional significance. Examples of areas which may be appropriate include downtown and redevelopment areas; regional employment centers, Areawide DRIs; centers for tourism, including beaches and associated development; and areas surrounding regional community facilities such as airports, colleges and universities, convention centers or governmental complexes.
**Transportation**
Non-motorized transportation as well as mass transit is encouraged in RACs to reduce reliance upon automobile travel. (POLICY 10.02.02)

To facilitate public transit access, integrated transportation systems are encouraged to serve RACs. (POLICY 10.02.03)

To enhance pedestrian movement and safety, the separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is encouraged with Regional Activity Centers. (POLICY 10.02.04)

**Land Use Activities**
Redevelopment activities are encouraged within RACs. (POLICY 10.02.05)

Adequate housing opportunities within RACs should be provided to allow people to both live and work in the RAC. (POLICY 10.02.06)

**Qualification Criteria**
The permitted uses section details the following criteria for RACs:

1. The designation shall not be approved where other land use designations within the Broward County Land Use Plan provide sufficient flexibility for the existing and proposed uses.

2. The density and intensity of land uses permitted with each RAC shall be specified in the Broward County Land Use Plan.

3. An interlocal agreement between the municipality and Broward County must be executed that provides for monitoring of development activity and enforcement of permitted land use densities and intensities shall be the responsibility of the affected municipality.

4. RACs shall include mixed land uses of regional significance.

5. RACs shall be either the subject of an Areawide DRI, centers of regional tourist activity, employment or education, or provide direct access to existing or proposed airports, ports and rail mass transportation facilities.

6. Each RAC is required to be a defined geographical area, delineated on the Future Broward County Land Use Map (Series).

**Approved RACs**
There are eight RAC's, located in the Town of Davie, City of Ft. Lauderdale (which has 4), City of Hollywood, City of Miramar and City of Pompano Beach designated within the Broward County Land Use Plan. (See Map 1, Section III.7.a)
STATUS OF EXISTING REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTERS
The permitted uses portion of the Broward County Land Use plan requires that monitoring of development activity and enforcement of permitted land use densities and intensities in RACs is the responsibility of each municipality. This section identifies each RAC its size, location, purpose and a summary of development status (existing and approved) based on information included in the Broward County Land Use Plan and provided by each of the municipalities.

Town of Davie RAC-South Florida Educational RAC
Acreage: Approximately 2,244 acres
General Location: Between University Drive and Florida’s Turnpike, south of State Road 84 and north of Griffin Road.
Purpose: Site is a center of regional education and employment activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Davie-South Florida Educational RAC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fort Lauderdale Central Beach
Acreage: Approximately 220 acres
General Location: South of Sunrise Boulevard, north of Holiday Drive, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.
Purpose: Site is a center of regional tourist activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fort Lauderdale Central Beach RAC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation &amp; OS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Peak Hr Trips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ft. L BAP= Consistent with the Ft. Lauderdale Beach Action Plan which restricts development growth to no more than 3,220 peak hour traffic trips.
Downtown Ft. Lauderdale Regional Activity Center
Acreage: Approximately 643 acres
General Location: South of Sunrise Boulevard, north of Davie Boulevard, between U.S. 1 and N.W. 7 Avenue.
Purpose: Site has direct access to a Tri-County Commuter Rail Station and a Broward County Mass Transit Station.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>% allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>5,100 DUs</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*N 240 Res Units</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*S 194 Res Units</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>No Specified limit</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>No Specified limit</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>No specified limit</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reserve units limited to projects w/density of 50 DU per acre

The Downtown Fort Lauderdale RAC is also a Chapter 380, F.S. Regional Activity Center, which means that the Development of Regional Impact Thresholds for residential, hotel, motel, office, retail and certain multi-use (at least 35% residential) developments are increased.

Northwest Fort Lauderdale Regional Activity Center
Acreage: Approximately 1,093 Acres
General Location: Located between Northwest 27 Avenue and U.S. 1/Federal Highway, south of Sunrise Boulevard and north of Broward Boulevard.
Purpose: Site is designated Chapter 163 Redevelopment Area and has direct access to a Tri-County Commuter Rail Station and a Broward County Mass Transit Station.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>% allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>10,900 DUs</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>13,500,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>4,500,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facility</td>
<td>1,500,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>500,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation &amp; OS</td>
<td>11.5 acres min.</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South Fort Lauderdale Regional Activity Center
Acreage: Approximately 270.1 acres
General Location: Located between Southwest 4th Avenue and U.S. 1/Federal Highway, south of Southwest/Southeast 10 Street and north of State Road 84

South Fort Lauderdale RAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>% allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>253 DUs*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>6,000,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Park</td>
<td>4,000,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facility</td>
<td>1,000,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and OS</td>
<td>11.5 acres min.</td>
<td>Not Reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The City has added units through the recertification process to permit a total of 461 units within the RAC.

Downtown Hollywood Regional Activity Center
Acreage: Approximately 384 Acres
General Location: Bound on the west by 22 Avenue extended, on the north by Johnson Street, on the east by 17 Avenue and on the south by Washington Street.
Purpose: Site has direct access to a Tri-County Commuter Rail Station and a major Broward County Mass Transit Hub.

Downtown Hollywood RAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>% allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>4,500 DUs</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>530,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>132%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>1,200,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hollywood reported that the original existing retail square footage in the RAC exceeded the maximum permitted square footage.

Miramar Regional Activity Center
Acreage: Approximately 2,205 acres
General Location: North of Bass Creek Road between Palm Avenue and Flamingo Road.
Purpose: This area is the subject of an Areawide Development of Regional Impact.

Miramar RAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>% allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>5,460 DUs</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>2,212,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Arvida/Pompano Park Regional Activity Center-Pompano Beach

**Acreage:** Approximately 238.9 acres  
**General Location:** South of Atlantic Boulevard between Powerline Road and the Seaboard Coastline Railroad.  
**Purpose:** Site has direct access to a Tri-County Commuter Rail Station and is a DRI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Uses</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>% allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>1,500,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>11,500,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Facility</td>
<td>200,000 Sq. Ft.</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Office and Industrial were combined in the plats*

#### Recent RAC Requests

Recent RAC amendments have been proposed in Deerfield Beach, Pompano Beach and Hallandale Beach. Each of these amendments was deferred prior to the official transmittal of a proposed amendment to the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

**Deerfield Beach RAC.** This RAC proposal includes approximately 83 acres within an approved Chapter 163, F.S. Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) located east of the Intracoastal Waterway. This area is the center of hotels and retail/commercial uses that cater to Deerfield Beach and South Florida tourists. The initial development levels were modified after work with Planning Council staff. The final proposed RAC designation represented an increase of 610 hotel rooms and approximately 76,000 square feet of commercial use from what is currently permitted by the Broward County Land Use Plan.

Due to unresolved concerns regarding the impacts of increased development on the barrier island, the proposed amendment was deferred by the County Commission.

**Pompano Beach RAC.** This RAC proposal consists of approximately 146 acres included within the City’s approved Chapter 163, F.S. CRA. This area is also located in the Atlantic Boulevard Zoning Overlay District which has an old Florida/Maritime design theme. The RAC was proposed to promote cohesive development and redevelopment of an area which attracts tourists and residents from throughout the region in order to improve entertainment amenities, increase recreational opportunities and stimulate...
economic growth. The proposed RAC designation represents an increase of approximately 54,000 square feet of commercial, 1,144 dwelling units and 467 hotel rooms over what is currently permitted by the Broward County Land Use Plan.

Due to unresolved and negative impacts concerning public school facilities, hurricane evacuation and parks and recreation facilities the amendment was deferred pending completion of the Planning Council’s Barrier Island study and review of the Regional Activity Center Land Use category.

**Hallandale Beach RAC.** This proposal consisted of approximately 738 acres, including residential, commercial, hotel, industrial, commercial recreation, community facilities, and recreation and open space. The proposed RAC designation represented an increase of approximately 6,350 dwelling units from what is currently permitted by the Broward County Land Use Plan. The proposal is not under active consideration as it was deferred by the City.

**Pembroke Pines RAC.** A new RAC has been proposed for Pembroke Pines. This amendment is currently being reviewed by Planning Council staff. This proposed RAC consists of approximately 146 acres owned by the City of Pembroke Pines. Its current Future Land Use designation is Employment-Center High. It is proposed to consist of 133,000 square feet of retail uses, 340,000 square feet of office uses, 120,000 square feet of community facilities, 750 dwelling units (425 multi-family units and 325 townhouse units) and a 150 room hotel. The community facility uses are proposed to include a civic center and city hall offices.

The proposed amendment to the City of Pembroke Pines Comprehensive Plan also includes a designation of the area as a Chapter 380, F.S. Regional Activity Center and a designation as a Regional Development District (subject to an amendment of the South Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan). Both of these designations allow for increased Development of Regional Impact Thresholds, which would allow the proposed development to occur without having to undergo the Chapter 380, F.S. DRI review process.

Additionally, the amendment proposes that the commercial, office, community facility and hotel uses be adjusted from time to time if necessary so long as the total traffic impact of the development is not exceeded as determined by Broward County in connection with approval of the plat or plats for the amendment site. Once a plat is approved for the anticipated uses, any change in those uses may require an amendment to the plat note, a land use plan amendment would not be required unless the total traffic impact is exceeded.

**ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL ACTIVITY CENTER CATEGORY**
The Regional Activity Center land use category was established with the adoption of the 1989 Broward County Land Use Plan to provide a flexible category to facilitate
development of mixed uses in areas considered to be of regional significance and importance. A major impetus for the category was the need to reduce automobile travel demand and facilitate mass transit by creating mixed commercial and residential centers where people could live and work. The category as initially adopted required that “Regional Activity Centers either be the subject of an Area-wide Development of Regional Impact, or provide direct access to existing or proposed airports, ports or rail mass transit transportation facilities”. The emphasis was clearly on regional and mass transportation. The requirement was later modified and expanded by plan amendments to add “centers of regional tourism industry, employment or education”.

The RAC category and purposes were broadly defined with the boundaries, permitted uses and densities and intensities for each individual RAC to be specified within the Broward County Land Use Plan. No performance criteria were required for the RACs and land use compliance monitoring was the responsibility of the local jurisdiction. Three areas were initially designated RAC including the Miramar Regional Activity Center (Area-wide Development of Regional Impact), Downtown Ft. Lauderdale Regional Activity Center and Arvida/Pompano Park (Development of Regional Impact) Regional Activity Center. As described in the review above, five RAC’s have since been added and four more proposed.

To a large degree, the RAC category has been successful in achieving the objective of furthering the development of intense mixed use centers within the Broward urban area. The development and redevelopment of downtown Ft. Lauderdale and Hollywood with mixed residential, office and entertainment uses is particularly noteworthy. However, the very success of the RACs in promoting development, coupled with the proliferation of new proposed RACs has raised the following issues and concerns.

RACs on the Barrier Island. The current RAC definition specifically identifies “centers of tourist activity such as beaches and associated development” as appropriate for RAC designation. However, recent proposals to add three new RACs on the barrier island have raised concerns about the appropriateness of using the category to promote more intensive uses within the area most vulnerable to hurricanes-the coastal high hazard area. The State of Florida Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Regional Plan for South Florida and Broward County Comprehensive Plan all discourage increases in intensity and density of land uses within the coastal high hazard area. In response to these concerns, the County Commission requested the Broward County Planning Council prepare a report to address the RAC/barrier island issues. The report titled “Regional Activity Center Land Use Category and Broward County’s Barrier Island” was completed in January and provided support data, analysis and recommendations considered within this review.

Definition of Regional and Boundaries. The RAC category identifies types of development (RACs shall include mixed land uses of regional significance) which must be included in RACs, but there is no definition or criteria for determining what is regional. Each RAC is also required to be a defined geographical area, however, there
are no guidelines or criteria for how such boundaries should be delineated. Several recent RAC proposals are relatively small in size and it could be argued that they are not of regional significance. It is noted that Local Activity Center designation had not yet been added to the land use plan when these proposals were developed. These RAC proposals might more appropriately fit within the Local Activity Center category. Including a definition of regional impact within the Land Use Plan would provide direction to local governments as to which category is appropriate and reduce the potential of proliferation of RACs.

As recommended in the Planning Council’s report, criteria should also be added to ensure that boundaries follow logical limits (e.g. major roadways and frontage, and redevelopment parcels) incorporating tracts that are planned for development and/or redevelopment. Boundaries should not be proposed in an effort solely to meet RAC criteria to capture and/or relocate density or intensity to areas not meeting the intent of the RAC category.

**Land Use Compatibility.** By the very title of the category, the RAC category implies intense development with regional impacts. Each RAC specifies the overall intensity and density of land uses permitted within the boundaries, but the location of uses is not specified. There are also no performance standards addressing location of uses or land use compatibility either within the RAC or with surrounding neighborhoods. Thus, neighborhoods within and bordering existing and proposed RACs are expressing concerns about how development within RACs will impact existing neighborhoods.

**Achievement of Objectives.** A major objective of the RAC category is to reduce automobile travel and encourage mass transit. However, there are no performance standards or planning requirements which further the accomplishment of the objectives. The recently approved Local Activity Center includes performance measures requiring adoption of policies and guidelines to accomplish category objectives. A similar approach should be considered for the RAC category.

**Property Rights.** One of the issues raised in the Planning Council’s report is that the RAC land use designation permits conversion of property rights for the subject area from that of specific development rights associated with an individual parcel to that of a “pool” of development rights “shared” by numerous parcels. As a result, allocations by a municipality from the “pool” of shared property rights within an RAC may result in individual parcels being allocated less or no (re)development rights in comparison to what an individual parcel was permitted prior to the RAC designation. At issue is how to proceed in instances where densities and intensities permitted in the RAC is exhausted.

**REVIEW OF LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTER LAND USE CATEGORY**

The Local Activity Center category is a new land use category adopted in late 2002 as part of the Group II amendment cycle. The category is defined in Objective 10.03.00
and Policies 10.03.01 through 10.03.10 and in the permitted uses section of the Broward County Land Use Plan.

Local governments may propose land areas for designation as LACs within the Broward County Land Use Plan through the amendment process. (POLICY 10.03.01) Currently, there are no designated LACs, although several amendment proposals are in progress.

**Purpose and Intent**  
Local Activity Centers (LACs) are intended to encourage compact development reflecting characteristics which includes a mixture of community-serving uses such as commercial, office, employment, civic and institutional, recreation and open space and residential, characterized by an efficient infrastructure, close-knit neighborhoods and sense of community, preservation of natural systems, promotion of pedestrian circulation and convenient access to mass transit facilities (OBJECTIVE 10.03.00).

To support a balanced mix of land uses characterized by compactness, pedestrian friendly design, neighborhood-scale and framed by architecture and landscape design appropriate to local history and ecology.

**Transportation**  
Land Use element policies must be included in the local comprehensive plan that:

- Ensure that the proposed LAC will support the location of uses within a five-minute, i.e. quarter mile walk. (POLICY 10.03.02)
- Ensure that the proposed LAC will support the location of uses and internal circulation such that pedestrian mobility is a priority (POLICY 10.03.02)
- All land uses in the LAC shall be directly accessed via pedestrian ways, and accessible to existing and future alternate public transportation modes, including bicycle and transit. (POLICY 10.03.02)
- Require design guidelines that incorporate pedestrian and bicycle paths and greenways to accomplish fully connected routes to all destinations. Paths are required to be defined by buildings, trees and lighting and incorporate designs which discourage high speed traffic. (POLICY 10.03.07)
- Convenient access to mass transit or multi-modal facilities. (POLICY 10.03.08)
- Policies that encourage internal transit systems to serve the residents and employees with the proposed LAC (e.g. trolley, community transit services).
- Transit shelter should be incorporated in the local design guidelines to provide safe and comfortable service and encourage transit usage. (POLICY 10.03.09)

**Land Use Activities**  
- Park land and/or open space accessible to the public must be included. (POLICY 10.03.03)
- Housing opportunities must be included. (POLICY 10.03.04)
- Community needs for affordable housing and include policies which encourage affordable housing such as: use of “affordable housing units”, direction of public...
housing program funds into the LAC, reduced lot size for dwelling units, construction of zero lot line and cluster housing, vertical integration of residential uses with non-residential uses and accessory dwelling units. (POLICY 10.03.05)

- Policies which promote the rehabilitation and use of historic buildings. (POLICY 10.03.06)
- The development of key intersections or major transit stops to create nodes of development should be promoted in LACs. (POLICY 10.03.10)

Qualification Criteria:
The permitted uses section details the following criteria for LACs:

1. A specific geographic area no greater than 160 gross contiguous acres, unless within an approved Chapter 163, F.S. redevelopment area. When 75% of area originally designated is developed/redeveloped consistent with Objective 10.03.00, an expansion of up to 100% may be proposed.

2. The density and intensity of land uses permitted with each LAC shall be specified in the Broward County Land Use Plan.

3. Uses proposed must include residential and park land/or open space. One or more other uses such as commercial, civic, institutional, or employment-based activity shall also be included within a LAC.

4. Park land (includes squares, greenbelts, greenways and playgrounds) must reflect no net loss of acreage of existing and designated parks within the LAC.

5. Residential density above the amount provided by the current Future Land Use designations, the local government must first utilize at least 75% of available flexibility and reserve units from the flex zone in which the LAC is located, before an increase in density is requested via the land use amendment process (except for Chapter 163, F.S. redevelopment areas).

6. The LAC must have a geographic configuration of appropriate depth and frontage to support the location of uses oriented around a five minute, ¼ mile walk. Multiple nodes of activity oriented around the five minute ¼ mile walk may be included in one LAC.

7. Seventy-five percent of the land in a LAC must be within ¼ mile of mass transit or multi-modal facilities or are included within an adopted plan to be located within a quarter-mile of mass transit or multi-modal facilities upon buildout of the LAC. Where no such facilities are in place, or planned to be in place at the time of the proposal, the local government shall require design standards in the local land use element for a Local Activity Center that ensures that the primary priority
is a safe, comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment that will:

- Allow for convenient interconnection to transit
- Reduce the number or automobile trips internally
- Ultimately support an integrated multi-modal transportation system

8. Proposed LACs must demonstrate consistency with the goals, objectives and policies of the Broward County Land Use Plan.
9. Within six months of approval, all LAC’s must execute an interlocal agreement between the municipality and Broward County which provides that monitoring of development activity and enforcement of permitted land use densities and intensities shall be the responsibility of the affected municipality.

PROPOSED LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTERS
Recently, LAC amendments have been proposed by Dania Beach, Plantation and Oakland Park. The proposed amendment to the Broward County Land Use Plan for Dania Beach LAC has been reviewed by DCA and the various review agencies as a proposed amendment to the Broward County Land Use Plan. The proposed amendments for LACs in Oakland Park and Plantation are currently being reviewed by Broward County Planning Council staff.

Dania Beach
The Dania Beach LAC is proposed to consist of approximately 157 acres of a portion of its proposed Chapter 163, F.S. Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). This area is proposed to contain a mix of land uses that promote a compact, urban neighborhood land use pattern. The area will include a small conservation land use area, recreation and open space through greenways, new parks and pedestrian friendly landscapes. Community Facilities (city hall, police fire station, and post office) as well as commercial, residential and hotel. The proposed LAC designation represents an increase of approximately 2,465 dwelling units, 640 hotel rooms and 0.6 acres of Conservation and a reduction of 28.6 acres of Commercial Recreation, 658,000 square feet of Commercial, 0.6 acres of Community Facilities and 7.6 acres of Industrial from what is currently permitted by the Broward County Land Use Plan.

This proposed amendment was approved for transmittal by Broward County at the August 12, 2003 Public Hearing for Group II 2003 Amendments. The proposed amendment has been reviewed by the Department of Community Affairs and other state review agencies. On October 20, 2003 the Department of Community Affairs issued a letter with no objections, recommendations or comments for the proposed amendment. This amendment will be considered for second reading by the Broward County Planning Council in November and for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners in December 2003.
Plantation
The Plantation LAC is proposed to consist of approximately 346 acres. Located primarily along the SR 7 corridor, this area known as the Plantation Gateway Redevelopment District is a designated Chapter 163, Community Redevelopment Area and Safe Neighborhood Improvement District. The land use plan amendment is requested to permit medium density residential development throughout the district. This LAC is proposed to consist of 11,375,467 square feet of commercial, 1,960 dwelling units (737 high rise units, 853 garden apartments and 370 townhouses), 10.62 acres of Community Facility and 3.64 acres of Park. Current Broward County Future Land Use designations in this area consist of approximately 282.64 acres of Commercial, 14.45 acres of Medium-High (25) Residential and 10.62 acres of Community Facilities.

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTER LAND USE CATEGORY
The Local Activity Center Land Use Category was approved in 2002 providing an alternative to the Regional Activity Center to facilitate mixed use/pedestrian oriented development at a local scale. Since no LACs have yet been mapped, it's not possible at this time to evaluate the success or failure of the category. Recent amendment proposals are an encouraging sign that the category meets local needs. However, several issues relating to the criteria have been expressed to staff by local planners which should be given consideration.

The first issue is with the requirement the local government must first utilize at least 75% of available flexibility and reserve units from the flex zone in which the LAC is located, before an increase in density is requested via the land use amendment process (except for Chapter 163, F.S. redevelopment areas). The concern with this requirement is that it penalizes local governments for designating an LAC by reducing their ability to utilize flex to promote redevelopment activities in other areas of their jurisdiction. Since the County has determined that the development of Local Activity Centers is desirable and has created a new category to facilitate them, consideration should be given to deleting this requirement. It is noted that other sections of this report discuss the need to find ways to accommodate the County’s projected population, including utilizing flexibility to promote desired redevelopment.

The second issue is with the geographic requirement that LACs have an appropriate depth and frontage to support the location of uses oriented around a five minute, ¼ mile walk. The concern with this requirement is that it may preclude designation of transit oriented development directly related to transportation corridors. A solution to this concern, discussed in detail below, is the creation of one or more transit oriented design land use categories which would be appropriate for transportation corridors.
TRANSIT ORIENTED LAND USES

While the Countywide Land Use Plan contains some policies which provide support for transit oriented redevelopment, these provisions do not provide a land use category or other incentives for the development of transit oriented land use patterns.

As identified in the Transit Oriented Land Use Patterns (TOLUPs) major issue portion of this EAR, neither the RAC or LAC designation allow for a mixed use area that is geographically linear like the “High Accessibility Corridors” first conceived of in the June 1972 Broward County Urban Design Study. A mixed use Future Land Use Category could provide densities and intensities of use necessary to support transit within the corridor and appropriate amounts of various land uses necessary for opportunities to satisfy daily needs (live, work, shop, educate, play, medical etc.) without having to rely on the automobile.

One option which should be considered is the creation a land use designation or land use overlay for existing or planned high priority transit corridors. The purpose of this category would be to facilitate development of relatively dense and intense mixed land uses along the corridor and around transit stations or stops. The SR 7/US 441 would be most likely test case for a transit oriented development category. The corridor is an aging commercial strip characterized by obsolete shopping centers and other uses. The south section of the road is planned for a major reconstruction by the Florida Department of Transportation. Bus transit use is heavy on the corridor and plans are being made by the Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide premium transit service. The corridor is also currently the subject of an intense urban design effort, being facilitated through a cooperative effort of the municipalities along the corridor (the State Road 7 Collaborative) and South Florida Regional Planning Council.

Another option would be development of a transit oriented design category to be applied to areas surrounding regional transit stations such a tri-rail. This category would facilitate the development of relatively intense and dense mixed uses in areas connected to and within walking distance of regional transit stations.

A third option would be to amend the flexibility provisions of the land use plan to provide density bonuses for transit oriented development similar to the current provisions for affordable housing. Bonus density allocations of flex or reserve units could be made available for residential projects that include transit oriented design features or incorporate transit into the project. Extra units could be made available to affordable housing projects that incorporate transit features (transit-oriented design, etc.). This would provide additional incentives to encourage mobility and promote location efficiency for the essential needs of the project’s residents.
OTHER MIXED USE CATEGORIES

The Commercial category of the Broward County Land Use Plan is a very flexible category which permits many land uses including retail, office, wholesale and light storage, hotels, recreation, community facilities, transportation facilities, recreational vehicle parks and utilities. Residential uses are permitted within the Commercial Land Use category through the application of flex with certain restrictions and limitations.

Residential uses are permitted in mixed commercial/residential structures subject to first floor being used for commercial uses and no more than 50 percent of the building area being used for residential uses.

Mixed commercial and residential projects greater than 5 acres in size (or 10 acres in urban infill, redevelopment and downtown revitalization areas) are allowed to include free-standing multi-family residential uses through application of flex as long as that residential use does not exceed 5 acres or 40% of the total gross acreage of the parcel whichever is greater. Specific zoning regulations must establish criteria to ensure proper integration and compatibility of land uses within and surrounding the development.

Free standing multi-family uses are allowed in commercial areas which provide an opportunity for mixing uses within a geographic area rather than within a site. These are limited to projects 5 acres or less or 10 acres (in urban infill, redevelopment and downtown revitalization areas).

The above rules are complex and it may be appropriate to conduct a review to determine if any of the provisions are too constraining to accommodate desired mixed use development. At minimum, simplification is desirable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional Activity Centers

1. Revise the RAC permitted uses to ensure that Regional Activity Centers are truly regional in character. Minimum thresholds should be established for dwelling units, office and retail square footage and other uses. As one guideline, RACs should be larger than 160 acres, the maximum set for Local Activity Centers.

2. Revise the RAC permitted uses to specifically preclude designation of additional Regional Activity Centers on the barrier island.

3. Add criteria to ensure that RAC boundaries follow logical limits (e.g. major roadways and frontage, and redevelopment parcels) incorporating tracts that are planned for development and/or redevelopment. Boundaries shall not be proposed in an effort
solely to meet RAC criteria to capture and/or relocate density or intensity to areas not meeting the intent of the RAC category.

4. Expand the criteria which must be met for RAC designation to address the potential adverse impacts on land uses within and surrounding the RAC. These criteria should require each RAC to include standards addressing urban design, density and intensity and location of land uses.

5. Require RACs to include performance and design standards providing for an interconnected street network that includes a safe and attractive pedestrian environment and connections to multi-modal transit facilities.

6. Require RACs to address transportation impacts including the identification of transportation improvements and alternatives.

7. Require proposed amendments to existing RAC boundaries and permitted uses to meet the new criteria recommended above.

8. Require local governments to provide individual notice to all property owners within a proposed RAC of the local government’s agenda item to consider the local amendment. The local government individual notice to all property owners within the proposed RAC shall contain explanatory information concerning the RAC category, including the potential effect on individual property rights.

Local Activity Centers

1. Revise the Local Activity Center category to delete the requirement that the local government must first utilize at least 75% of available flexibility and reserve units from the flex zone in which the LAC is located, before an increase in density is requested via the land use amendment process (except for Chapter 163, F.S. redevelopment areas).

Transit Oriented Land Uses

1. Work with the State Road 7/US 441 Collaborative to establish a Linear Transit Corridor Future Land Use Category or Overlay to facilitate development of mixed land uses along the corridor and around transit stations or stops. The Linear Transit Corridor or Overlay may also be applicable along other existing and planned high priority transit corridors.

2. Develop a new Future Land Use Category that can support Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Land Use Patterns to promote the redevelopment of areas in Broward County surrounding regional transit stations such as Tri-Rail. This category will include performance and design criteria to facilitate the development of relatively intense and dense mixed uses with a “sense of place” in areas connected to and within walking distance of regional transit stations.
3. Amend the Flexibility provisions of the Land Use Plan to provide density bonuses of flex or reserve units for transit oriented development.
   a. Bonus density allocations could be made for residential projects that include transit oriented design features, incorporate transit into the project, and even include a percentage of affordable housing units in the overall project.
   b. Bonus density allocations for projects which are entirely comprised of affordable housing and incorporate transit oriented design features.

Other Mixed Use Categories

1. Review and revise the existing Commercial Land Use category to simplify and clarify the current permitted use provisions which address flexibility for residential uses.