



ESTERO COUNCIL OF
COMMUNITY LEADERS

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CONTENTS

Feature: East Corkscrew Road Needs Improvement, Now! ..	2
Development Review Summary February 2018	7
Village Council Actions	7
Planning and Zoning Board Actions	8
Design Review Board Actions.....	9



FEATURE: EAST CORKSCREW ROAD NEEDS IMPROVEMENT, NOW!

Estero residents who live along east Corkscrew Road say they must take uncomfortable risks daily just to exit their communities and head toward town.

“Getting out between 7 and 9 in the morning and then about 3 to 6 p.m. when school’s out, it’s very difficult,” states Lou Frattarelli, a resident of The Preserve at Corkscrew and a member of the East Corkscrew Alliance (ECA). “You’re basically trying to dart between traffic and taking a risk.”

How bad is it?

According to the 2017 Village of Estero Area-Wide Traffic Study conducted by Kimley Horn, Corkscrew Road is nearing failure east of Interstate 75. The segment from Ben Hill Griffin Parkway to Alico Road is currently operating at an estimated 86-to-100-percent of capacity during the afternoon peak hour and is projected to be at 183 percent of capacity by 2027 without some form of improvement. This is primarily due to four new residential communities east of Estero’s boundaries which have been recently approved by Lee County or are pending approval:

Wild Blue, The Place at Corkscrew, Verdana and Pepperland Ranch. A fifth community under county jurisdiction, Corkscrew Shores, has been under construction for four years and is currently adding more vehicles each month. A sixth community, Corkscrew Crossing, is currently going through the Village's zoning process. Together, these new communities would nearly double the number of people living along this segment of Corkscrew Road by 2027.

"Infrastructure improvements are not keeping pace with approved developments," said ECCL Transportation Director Bob King. "It's the cart in front of the horse."

A recently installed traffic signal at the entrance to Bella Terra is helping residents of this large neighborhood (1,899 doors) exit their community, but a major traffic increase will be coming from the east within the next five years.

What's coming to the east?

Construction on 1,325 residences in The Place at Corkscrew began in April 2017, and the builder estimates completion by June 2024. Wild Blue has been approved to build 1,000 units, but no start date has been set. Verdana is in the approval process to build 1,460 residences; it is anticipated construction will begin in 2018 and run through 2028. Pepperland Ranch is in the development order process with plans to build 700 units by the

end of 2019. Construction of 648 units began in Corkscrew Shores in November 2013 with buildout anticipated by 2020. Within Estero's boundaries, Corkscrew Crossing is seeking approval to build 640 residences.

The total number of new units comes to 5,125. Within 10 years, total traffic on east Corkscrew Road is estimated to become 105,383 trips per day. In addition to residential developments, Lee County has approved a Comprehensive Plan amendment allowing the proposed 1,804-acre Troyer Brothers Mine to be added to the existing Future Limerock Mining Overlay within the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area (DR/GR) which surrounds east Corkscrew Road. Another proposed mine, Old Corkscrew Plantation, is seeking to mine 1,837 of its 4,200 acres. Both mines would exit on State Road 82, but trucks could choose to travel via Alico Road or Corkscrew Road from there, generating about 1,900 truck trips per day per mine.

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What about Interstate 75 backups?

Many of the current 57,919 daily trips on east Corkscrew Road are leading to and from the I-75 interchange, which is currently failing to handle traffic at peak hours. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) recently announced plans for interim improvements at the Corkscrew Road interchange with construction to begin in spring 2019.

Interim improvements include an additional turn lane for both northbound and southbound I-75, along with merge lane extensions and lighting improvements. These interim improvements are expected to bring the I-75 interchange to an acceptable level of service through 2029. Additionally, a traffic signal and frontage road at the entrance to Lowe's is likely to be installed concurrently with I-75 interchange improvements, allowing safer egress for residents of Corkscrew Woodlands and the Island Club, said Village Manager Steve Sarkozy.



What is Lee County doing?

Although the western end of Corkscrew Road is within the Village of Estero, the entire road is owned and maintained by Lee County. The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has recognized traffic safety issues in this area and has a plan to widen Corkscrew Road to four lanes from Ben Hill Griffin Parkway to Alico Road. However, design and construction are currently scheduled for the time period of 2021 to 2030 — four to 14 years from now. Additionally, no source of funding has been identified for this project estimated to cost \$76.4 million.

As part of Lee County's Environmental Enhancement and Preservation Overlay Study (aka. "Corkscrew Road Study"), the proportionate share funding for road improvement costs is being determined for Wild Blue, The Place, Verdana and Pepperland Ranch. However, it is unlikely these developers will be assessed costs covering the entire \$76.4 million needed.

The County has not yet released the full findings from its study. However, it is notable that Lee County reduced its building impact fees by 55 percent during the recession of 2007-08 in an effort to stimulate the economy and has never brought them back to pre-recession levels. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is scheduled to consider impact fee funding levels during its March 6 meeting. If raised to the 100 percent collection level, impact fees for the 4,485 units planned on east Corkscrew Road could generate \$47.8 million.

The BOCC also is considering Growth Increment Funding (GIF), which Commissioner Larry Kiker said could generate \$50 million for the Corkscrew Road widening project. Other funding sources could include local option gas tax revenue and excess toll revenue.

What Can Estero Do?

Although Corkscrew Road is maintained by the county, more than 11,000 Estero residents currently live along the corridor from Ben Hill Griffin Road to Bella Terra Boulevard.

During its October 2017 monthly membership meeting, the ECCL passed a resolution asking the Estero Village Council to authorize a study to determine the safest and most cost-effective method to improve traffic congestion on east Corkscrew Road within the Village boundaries, as soon as possible. Estero residents living in the large communities along the south side of Corkscrew Road are already experiencing major egress issues, and the problem is rapidly getting worse.

“When you four-lane the road, you have not helped them because now they have to go across four lanes,” said King. “The four-laning alone is not the complete answer. It must be combined with another form of control to provide safe egress.”

The ECCL resolution requests that Village Council study a series of roundabouts as a way to calm traffic, increase roadway capacity, divert some truck traffic and improve the safety of egress from

communities on the south side of Corkscrew Road. ECCL research, including input from local traffic safety engineers, suggests four possible locations for roundabouts: at the entrances to Corkscrew Shores, The Preserve at Corkscrew and Wildcat Run, and at Stoneybrook Golf Drive, which is the main entrance to Pinewoods Elementary School. Lee County recently added plans to extend the holding lane for cars turning into Pinewoods Elementary from westbound Corkscrew Road as part of the County’s Capital Improvement Program.



The Lee County MPO is currently considering roundabout technology elsewhere in the county and has funded a study to evaluate 18 intersections in the Fort Myers area. Using the estimated cost for a roundabout in the MPO report as a basis, the probable cost per roundabout on Corkscrew Road would be about \$750,000, making total cost for four roundabouts an

estimated \$3 million. The cost is not significantly more than installation of traditional stoplight intersections, King noted. Roundabouts statistically produce fewer crashes because they offer fewer potential conflict points.

Along with roundabouts, the Village could advocate for a “complete streets” concept by adding improvements like pedestrian and bike paths, landscaping and sound barriers.

Are there other options?

The ECCL resolution asks the Village to commission a study including the feasibility of roundabouts, but it does not limit the scope for studying other solutions. The emphasis is on finding the safest way to handle increasing traffic on east Corkscrew Road in the most cost-effective manner and in the shortest timeframe. Additionally, the ECCL Transportation Director has met with Lee DOT officials in hopes of getting road improvements expedited.

“The County is willing to hear what we have to say,” added Frattarelli. “If we keep up the pressure on the commissioners, the schedule may be moved up.”



Development Review Summary February 2018

A hotel is being proposed at Miromar Outlets, and an apartment complex may be coming to the Coconut Point area. Two senior living communities also are making their way through the development process.



In 2017, the Planning & Zoning Board (PZB) heavily focused on drafting the Village of Estero Comprehensive Plan. Now that the draft Comprehensive Plan has been submitted to the State for review, the PZB will focus its efforts on developing Estero's Land Development Code, which takes the policies enumerated in the Comprehensive Plan and provides detailed guidance to land owners and developers, serving as the Comprehensive Plan's "playbook."

Village Council reviewed the PZB's 2017 Annual Report during its Feb. 21 meeting and interviewed 11 applicants for the PZB and the Design Review Board (DRB). Additional interviews will be conducted at the March 7 Village Council meeting.

The next Design Review Board meeting will be Wed., March 14, at 5:30 p.m. The next Planning & Zoning Board meeting will be Tuesday, March 20, at 5:30 p.m.

Interactive Maps can be found on the ECCL website <http://EsteroToday.com/community-planning/>.

VILLAGE COUNCIL ACTIONS

Planning & Zoning Board Annual Report

Village Council reviewed the [Planning & Zoning Board's 2017 Annual Report](#) during the Feb. 21 Council meeting. The report noted the following construction activity in 2017:

- **Genova:** Construction began for 204 condominium units at the southeast corner of Corkscrew Road and Via Coconut Point.
- **Lee Health Coconut Point:** Construction began on a \$140 million healthcare facility south of Coconut Road and east of U.S. 41 to include a 24/7 emergency department, Healthy Living Center and many medical services and offices.
- **The Place at Corkscrew:** Construction began on a 1,325-home community on Corkscrew Road east of I-75.
- **Tidewater:** Construction continued on this 385-home senior community at the southwest corner of Estero Parkway and Ben Hill Griffin Parkway.
- **Corkscrew Shores:** Construction continued on this 648-home community on Corkscrew Road east of I-75.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD ACTIONS

Burgerim Restaurant

The Burgerim Restaurant received approval from the PZB to sell beer and wine between the hours of 10 a.m. and midnight at its new location planned to open in Coconut Point Mall at 23111 Fashion Drive, the former location of Johnny Rockets. Burgerim will seat 56 indoors and another 24 on the patio. It is a casual dining concept serving hamburgers, salads and sandwiches. No outdoor entertainment will be allowed at this location.

Phoenix at Estero

The PZB voted to recommend that Village Council approve a request from Phoenix at Estero to increase the height of its proposed building from two stories to three stories. This will allow 140 units for this assisted living facility planned to be built on seven acres at 10251 Arcos Avenue in Plaza del Sol, northeast of the intersection of Three Oaks Parkway and Corkscrew Road. The Phoenix at Estero presentation may be viewed [here](#).

Corkscrew Crossing (aka. Monte Cristo)

Corkscrew Crossing is proposing a modification to its Master Concept Plan including a reduction in the number of residential units from 724 to 625. The change would permit an increase in the number of single-family homes and a decrease in the number of multifamily units. Proposed unit types include single family, multifamily, townhouse, two-family attached and single family zero lot line properties. Corkscrew Crossing received its original

zoning approval from Lee County in 2008. It is located on 396 acres south of Corkscrew Road, east of Wildcat Run and west of The Preserve at Corkscrew and Bella Terra. Its southern border connects with preservation land including the Edison



Farms property recently acquired by Lee County for conservation. About 218 acres of Corkscrew Crossing will be preserve land. This was a public information meeting; no action was taken. The Corkscrew Crossing presentation may be viewed [here](#).

Miromar Hotel

Miromar Development Corp. is seeking to build a 175-room hotel at the northwest corner of Miromar Outlets. This area is currently used for surface parking and is adjacent to Germain Arena. Plans include a pedestrian walkway with shade trees and a lake boardwalk feature. This was a public information meeting; no action was taken. The Miromar Hotel presentation may be viewed [here](#).

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD ACTIONS

Estero Country Club at The Vines

The DRB approved Estero Country Club at The Vines' request for a Land Development Code deviation, along with a development order for golf course renovations. The Country Club, located north of Estero Parkway and east of U.S. 41, plans to construct new putting greens, renovate fairways and modify the cart parking area. The deviation will allow riprap and wooden bulkheads to harden the shoreline of four lake edges. The Estero Country Club presentation may be viewed [here](#).



Shoppes at Estero Grande

The DRB approved a development order for the Shoppes at Estero Grande, a 8,689-square-foot commercial development located west of U.S. 41 at its intersection with Estero Parkway. Tenants include a Starbucks with a drive through. The design of Estero Grande includes raised crosswalks with pavers, covered walkways and several bike racks. The Estero Grande presentation may be viewed [here](#).

Lee Health Coconut Point

The DRB approved signage for the new Lee Health Coconut Point facility under construction on Via Coconut Point east of U.S. 41 and south of Coconut Road. The signage will mimic architectural features used on the building and will identify the main entrance and the emergency entrance. Lee Health's presentation may be viewed [here](#).



Edera (Coconut Point Tract 1A)

Edera is a multifamily development with 180 apartments proposed at the southeast corner of Via Coconut Point and Williams Road. The complex will have 398 parking spaces, 151 of which will be underneath the building. Apartments will have a one-year minimum lease. Proposed amenities include a pocket park, onsite bike sharing and trolley service around Coconut Point. The developer has committed to landscaping in the Williams Road/Via Coconut Point roundabout and approach medians, as well as a school bus stop shelter. This was a public information meeting only; no action was taken. The Edera presentation may be viewed [here](#).



The Colonnade of Estero

The DRB held a workshop for The Colonnade of Estero, a three-story continuing care retirement community to be built on 21 acres on the northeast corner of Corkscrew Road and Sandy Lane. This is a project of Volunteers of America. It will include 151 independent living apartments, 60 assisted living apartments, 64 skilled nursing suites and 32 memory support suites. The campus also will include medical offices and retail buildings. The Board made several suggestions on design, including a varied roof line, landscaping improvements and relocation of the pool. The Colonnade's presentation may be viewed [here](#).