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Estero Development Report January 2017

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THE VILLAGE OF ESTERO PLANS OUR FUTURE

After nearly two years of organizing and hiring staff, the Village will spend 2017 creating three major plans, with the help of the citizens of Estero, to guide the Village's future.

After quickly establishing its ability to review all development proposals and adopting plans for the Village Center, the Village now turns its attention to three major planning areas:

- ❖ Our initial Comprehensive Plan
- ❖ A Comprehensive Transportation Study
- ❖ A Stormwater Master Plan

All of these plans will be prepared with as much public input as the residents of Estero are willing to provide.

The Comprehensive Plan will serve as a roadmap for how Estero develops over the next five, 10 and 20 years. The Village also has

commissioned a comprehensive traffic study and initiated a stormwater plan, both of which will help the Village Council prioritize capital spending.

To the casual observer, it may seem there hasn't been much "action" in the Village during its formative months; however, there has been a tremendous amount of planning taking place. This deliberate planning will determine how Estero looks and functions for generations to come.

"Our mission is to help the village grow responsibly," noted Scotty Wood, chairman of the Estero Planning and Zoning Board (PZB). "The keyword is *responsibly*."

The PZB is a state-mandated local planning agency, tasked with facilitating public hearings and evaluating zoning requests. Its counterpart, the Estero Design Review Board (DRB), includes architects and engineers who volunteer their time to help Estero function well and look its best.

"People do not realize how much time it takes to go through all these detailed plans," said Village Council member Jim Boesch. "I get comments that there are some developers who won't build in Estero because 'you guys are too strict;' I love it! And I think the residents of Estero love it, too."

VILLAGE CENTER

Citizen input has long been valued in establishing Estero's development standards. Last summer, the Village adopted a Comprehensive Plan for the Village Center. The first approved development consistent with this plan is Genova, which is currently under construction on the southwest corner of Corkscrew Road and Via Coconut Point. Genova will feature Italianate architecture and will include 205 "resort-lifestyle, luxury condominiums," as well as a public pocket park and connectivity to Estero Community Park. The new community will use "stealth security" to give a non-gated appearance with gates hidden within landscaping.

Also within the Village Center, Estero North Point is preparing for future development. This 100-acre property sits north of Hertz between U.S. 41 and Via Coconut Point. The developer has not yet proposed any specific uses, but interior roadways and infrastructure have been proposed and are now under review.



VILLAGE OF ESTERO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Similar to the planning process for the Village Center, public input is now being sought for the community-wide Village of Estero Comprehensive Plan. This all-encompassing, big-picture plan will include goals, objectives and policies for the Village's future land use, transportation priorities, housing needs, infrastructure, conservation, recreational spaces, intergovernmental coordination, capital improvements and public school facilities.

About 125 members of the public attended the Comprehensive Plan kick-off workshop on January 11 at Legacy Church. They answered questions like: "How do you think Estero should develop/change over the next 20 years?" and "What is your biggest concern about Estero?" Suggestions gathered by the consultant (LaRue & Associates) indicated residents are very concerned about traffic issues. Other comments showed a desire for additional recreational areas, bike paths, affordable housing and a civic center.

Residents also were concerned with roadway median landscape improvement. The first roadway and landscaping project the Village will be undertaking will be on Estero Parkway, where an integrated complete streets design will include beautifully landscaped bike and pedestrian pathways.

Estero has a long history of planning, which predates its incorporation. In 2002, the Estero community organizations spearheaded efforts to create the Estero Community Plan within

Lee County’s Comprehensive Plan. This is the basis for current efforts to formulate a Village of Estero Comprehensive Plan.

“It’s something we’ve done right and something we’re continuing to develop and will hopefully be improving,” Wood said. “We want to have a well-coordinated look.”

The next opportunity for public input on the Comprehensive Plan will be a “Vision Workshop” in February. Residents who want to stay informed on the process should sign up for email or text communications at: www.larueplanning.com/projects.html. The PZB will invite public input to a Comprehensive Plan meeting every month throughout most of 2017.

The Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2017.

VILLAGE TRAFFIC STUDY

“Land use and transportation are the biggest, most important and most complex issues,” stated Estero Community Development Director Mary Gibbs during a recent Village Council meeting.

This is why the Village of Estero kicked off a Traffic Study the same month as the kickoff for the Comprehensive Plan. New developments within Estero’s borders, as well as developments outside Estero’s boundaries approved by Lee County, are adding to traffic problems. Of particular concern is the bottleneck around the Corkscrew Road/I-75 Interchange.



Kimley Horn has been selected as the consultant for the Traffic Study and will be collecting traffic counts Feb. 14-17 (peak season). The Traffic Study is scheduled to be completed in summer 2017.

The study will identify problem arterial road access points, intersections, and accident locations and indicate needed improvements to handle traffic volumes. Public input is strongly encouraged as part of this process.

To alleviate congestion at the Interstate 75 interchange, the Village also is working with the Florida Department of Transportation to expedite interim improvements.

The Village plans to share the results of its Traffic Study with Lee County to help with decision making beyond Estero’s boundaries. The county has commissioned its own traffic study of east Corkscrew Road, where several large residential developments have been proposed.

Two new mines also have been proposed for the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area (DR/GR) east of Estero. Any new development will add to already congested traffic on Corkscrew Road.

“Corkscrew Road is a county road and is the responsibility of Lee County, but we will need to work with them to assure that the road continues to be acceptable,” said Mayor Nick Batos in a statement conveying the consensus of Village Council.

STORMWATER MASTER PLAN

Another study will take an in-depth look at how water flows into Estero from the east and identify issues with stormwater runoff and flooding. The Village has commissioned J.R. Evans Engineering to develop a Stormwater Master Plan for the community, which will assess the existing conditions of the rivers and streams in Estero and evaluate feasible solutions for deficiencies. Estero’s major tributaries are the Estero River (north and south branches), Halfway Creek, Spring Creek and Estero Bay.

“It’s pretty progressive to incorporate, and a year and a half later, you’re doing a stormwater plan,” Gibbs noted of the Village’s ambitious efforts this year. She commends Estero’s leadership for taking on multiple issues so quickly to ensure the Village has a solid plan for future growth.



Village Council is committed to encouraging high quality development which will benefit the community as a whole, Mayor Batos said.

“It’s a great time to live in Estero because you have an opportunity to influence what Estero is going to be like years from now,” noted ECCL Interim Chairman Don Eslick. “So many Village-wide policies will be decided this year.”

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SUMMARY

THE 2016 PZB ANNUAL REPORT

The Village of Estero Planning & Zoning Board (PZB) recently submitted its annual report to Village Council, providing a recap of 2016 activities. The board met 19 times throughout the year, including 12 regular meetings, five special meetings and two joint workshops with the Design Review Board (DRB).

The PZB is responsible for conducting all public hearings on zoning requests within the Village of Estero and making recommendations to Village Council.

New developments which were reviewed and approved in 2016 are: The Colonnade assisted living facility, Genova condominium development, The Reef Phase II student apartments, Estero United Methodist Church expansion, the Shoppes at Coconut Trace commercial planned development and ABC Fine Wine & Spirits new building.

New developments still under review include Estero Crossing mixed use development and the Via Coconut Urban Place apartments and retail development. The board also recommended denial of Coconut Point Tract 1A's proposal for 200 apartments. Other PZB activities include signage deviation

requests, special use permits, vacating activity, parking deviations and plat approvals.

The board also assisted in developing the new Land Development Code for the Village Center in 2016, and currently is managing the Village of Estero initial Comprehensive Plan development process.

JANUARY ACTIVITIES

In January, the PZB and DRB considered several development proposals and zoning amendments, a recap of which follows.

The next Design Review Board meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 5:30 p.m. The next Planning and Zoning Board meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 9:30 a.m.

TOTAL WINE & MORE

Total Wine & More is planning to open by fall 2017 in Coconut Point Mall in the space vacated by Sports Authority. The store sells beer, wine and liquor for off-site consumption. Proposed hours of operation are Sunday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday/Saturday 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. The PZB approved an amendment to add "package store" to the schedule of uses for a limited area in the Coconut Point Mixed-use Planned Development.



ESTERO TOWN CENTER (ALDI)

About 100 residents from The Vines at Estero Country Club and other neighboring communities attended the Jan. 10 Design Review Board meeting to hear a presentation on the Estero Town Center’s proposal for a 19,054-square-foot Aldi grocery store and an adjacent medical office/retail building.

This property is directly north of Walmart on the east side of U.S. 41. Estero Town Center was previously zoned by Lee County for 26,775 square feet of retail. This was a public information meeting so public testimony was heard but no action was taken. Eight residents voiced concerns about traffic, safety, security, noise and light pollution. Many Vines residents do not want Aldi to share an entrance off of U.S. 41 with their community while

others are opposed to another entrance/exit to US 41 so close to several others.

Aldi representatives presented architectural and landscaping designs, revised to reflect recommendations noted by the DRB during an Oct. 26 workshop. Aldi’s presentation may be viewed [here](#).

MARRIOTT TOWN PLACE SUITES

Marriott is close to completion of its new hotel on Via Coconut Point behind Dillard’s department store. The Design Review Board approved Marriott’s request for minor changes to its facade and monument sign.

UNIVERSITY HIGHLANDS

The DRB approved University Highlands’ request to initiate site preparation along Highland Oaks Drive, which is north of Miromar Outlets on the west side of Ben Hill Griffin Parkway. University Highlands agreed to add some perimeter landscaping along Ben Hill Griffin in order to improve the appearance of out parcels until they are developed.

APPLICANTS SOUGHT FOR BOARD VACANCIES

Estero Village Council is accepting applications to fill vacancies on both the Planning & Zoning Board and the Design Review Board. These are volunteer positions, but experience is required in land use, design, engineering, landscaping or planning.

The PZB meets every third Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. The DRB meets the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m.

Applications must be submitted by Feb. 10 to Village Clerk Kathy Hall: Phone (239)221-5035 or email hall@estero-fl.gov. More information about these positions may be found on the Village website: <http://estero-fl.gov/>.



ESTERO'S RESIDENTIAL PERMITS PICK UP IN DECEMBER; ANNUAL TOTALS AT LOWEST LEVELS SINCE 2012

During December, 2016, fourteen (14) residential permits were issued in Estero. The permits, including two duplex homes, were spread among five developments: Estero Place, Tidewater, West Bay, Oaks of Estero, and Pebble Pointe. The total value of all residential permits issued during the month was \$5,319,667, making December one of the busiest months this year.

In 2016, one hundred seventy (170) housing units were permitted. One hundred (100) permits, including ones for both duplexes and single family homes, were issued to Tidewater. This development by Del Webb is being constructed at Estero Parkway and Ben Hill Griffin.

With only one major development under construction during the year, the number of units permitted and their total dollar value marked their lowest levels since 2012.

The table below compares 2016 figures with those of the previous 16 years.

Year	Annual Housing Units	Building Value	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	2,088	\$291,811,402	\$139,756	41%
2001	2,104	325,403,253	154,659	47
2002	1,500	278,888,919	185,926	51
2003	1,425	231,712,400	162,605	47
2004	1,646	365,109,794	221,816	60
2005	2,833	627,683,225	221,561	46
2006	1,310	343,633,334	262,316	39
2007	432	123,191,025	285,164	38
2008	167	56,356,637	337,465	81
2009	164	53,242,861	324,652	76
2010	194	39,205,544	202,090	79
2011	181	37,949,095	209,664	83
2012	341	59,611,615	174,814	75
2013	448	77,060,791	172,011	75
2014	351	63,893,083	182,032	67
2015	749	90,062,253	120,243	16
2016	170	53,917,016	317,159	71

Note: The building values above exclude the value of the underlying land.

Sources:

For 2016, see Village of Estero Community Development: <https://estero-fl.gov/wp-content/uploads/library/Community%20Development%20Applications/Building%20Permit%20Applications/Building%20Permit%20Reports/Village%20of%20Estero%20Building%20Permit%20Report%20%28October%201st%20through%20October%2031st%2C%202016%29.pdf>

For prior years, see Lee County Permit Reports for the "Village of Estero": <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/reports>

ESTERO'S COMMERCIAL PERMITS INCREASE IN DECEMBER; ANNUAL TOTAL LESS THAN 2014 AND 2015

The value of commercial permits in Estero in December, 2016 totaled \$3,689,141. That makes December the best month since April when a \$14.9 million was issued for the Marriott Hotel, which is currently under construction on Via Coconut Point at Coconut Rd. December's permits included \$1.9 million for Dunkin Donuts and Valvoline at the Shoppes of Grand Oak.

While the annual permit value was less than in 2014 and 2015, the \$100+ million Hertz investment heavily influenced both prior years. In addition, 2015 included over \$20 million in new senior living facilities.

The table below compares 2016 totals with those of the previous 16 years.

Year	Total
2000	\$77,250,835
2001	44,116,526
2002	23,135,139
2003	23,234,725
2004	60,859,820
2005	111,037,977
2006	184,709,240
2007	157,614,045
2008	39,261,677
2009	9,752,556
2010	9,322,546
2011	11,717,593
2012	11,879,291
2013	14,656,213
2014	139,285,611
2015	68,338,852
2016	39,716,393

Note: The building values above exclude the value of the underlying land.

Sources:

For 2016, see [Village of Estero Community Development](#):

For prior years, see Lee County Permit Reports for the "Village of Estero": <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/reports>

ESTERO'S SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES INCREASE 23% IN DECEMBER; INCREASE 8% FOR THE QUARTER; DECLINE 1% FOR THE YEAR

In December, 2016, the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) recorded sixty-five (65) single family home sales in the Village of Estero. This represents a 23% increase from December, 2015. For the fourth quarter of 2016, sales were up 8% while annual sales were off 1% from 2015.

At the end of the year, there were 444 listings of currently active unsold homes (i.e. "inventory"). This level equates to about a 9 month supply. Both the inventory level and the months of supply figure remained about the same in December.

Pending sales at December 31 totaled 72 homes. While this is down somewhat from November, it approximates last December's level.

Distressed sales this year totaled only 4% of sales, while distressed sales in inventory approximated only 1% each month for the last three quarters. These percentages remain at their lowest levels since 2012.

Sales figures are shown below:

Period	2014	2015	2016	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	29	34	46	12	35
Feb	33	35	39	4	11
Mar	25	65	54	-9	-17
Qtr 1	87	134	139	5	4
Apr	47	69	67	-2	-3
May	49	71	47	-24	-34
June	51	63	66	3	5
Qtr 2	147	203	180	-23	-11
July	33	51	42	-9	-17
Aug	31	36	57	21	58
Sept	33	44	35	-9	-20
Qtr 3	97	131	134	3	-2
Oct	38	41	33	-8	-19
Nov	35	33	39	6	18
Dec	43	53	65	12	23
Qtr 4	116	127	137	10	8
Yearly Totals	447	595	590	-5	-1

Continued thanks to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for supplying us monthly sales and inventory figures.

Notes: 1) "Distressed sales" include short-sales and sales of bank owned property in which the bank receives less than their loan amount.

2) Figures include homes in the new Village of Estero (excluding homes in the Estero portion of Pelican Landing, which are not separately shown in the MLS). Also not included are figures for multi-family homes.