

# **Land Development Code - Section 804 - Ecological Corridors (Critical Linkages)**

**Board of County Commissioners Workshop  
September 15, 2015**



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## **RECAP**

- In 2000, a lawsuit over lack of environmental protection resulted in a Settlement Agreement requiring modifications to the Comprehensive Plan.
- In 2002, Pasco County initiated a study to evaluate wildlife habitat protections.
- Study supported a regional conservation strategy for habitat and natural resource protection.

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**COMPRHENSIVE PLAN**  
**GOAL CON 1: REGIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY**

***Protect, conserve, enhance, and manage the natural land and water resources of Pasco County through a regional conservation strategy that protects the most significant natural resources of the County through a combination of standards for specified **critical linkages**, land acquisition, land use strategies, managing and preserving public lands, land use policies, wetlands, and water resources.***

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## RECAP

- Recommendations resulted in County amendment to Conservation Element of the Comprehensive Plan in 2005.
- Comprehensive Plan Policy CON 1.2.2 outlines development standards and currently requires that the LDC be amended by 2010 to adopt implementation measures for corridors.
- Staff has reinitiated the LDC implementation process.

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## UPDATE

- Staff conducted 4<sup>th</sup> public workshop at the request of the LPA.
- Public notice on workshop initiated via mailing (235), email (100+) and website.
- Meeting was well attended (55+).
- Staff collected additional public comments and met with various property owners.
- Completed responses to all public comments and revised draft ordinance.
- Responses and revised ordinance distributed to the public and made available on County website.

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## UPDATE

Workshop  
focused on  
frequently  
asked  
questions

Why is the County  
doing this?

When does the  
ordinance apply?

How will it affect  
future  
development?

Is my property  
exempt?

Can the  
boundaries be  
modified?

Can the ordinance  
devalue my  
property?

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When does  
the ordinance  
apply?

- Only when an applicant wants to rezone to greater density or intensity.
- **What is “density?”** The number of allowable dwelling units authorized per acre.
- **What is “intensity?”** How much office, industrial or commercial activity there is per parcel - measured by use, size, traffic generated, or floor-to-area ratio.

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## Can the ordinance devalue my property?

- The ordinance will not be considered in the appraisal process.
- Property will be assessed at highest and best use.

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## Public Comment



- Staff has responded to over 70 individual questions on the ordinance
- Significant changes to ordinance made as a result of public comment
- FAQ developed

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## DRAFT ORDINANCE KEY POINTS

- Assists in achieving County's conservation strategy and compliance with the 2000 settlement agreement
- Applicability is ***only*** triggered by increase in density or intensity
- Contains certain exemptions
- Incentives incorporated into ordinance:
  - Density Transfer
  - Compensation in lieu of Density Transfer; or
  - Combination of transfer and compensation
  - Boundary Modifications and Reduction incorporated
  - Other Incentives: reduced setbacks, park requirements, landscaping and tree requirements, increased lot coverage and building heights

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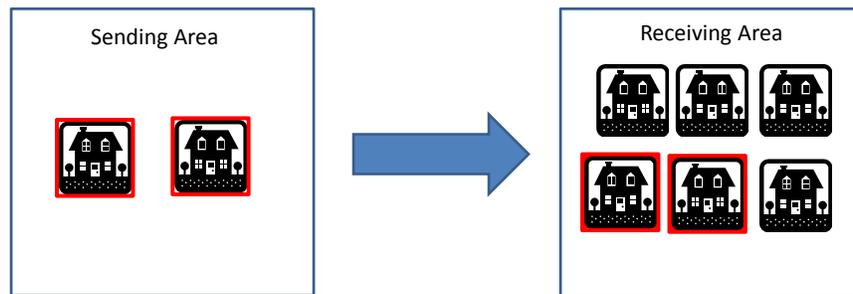
### **Exemptions – these types of development activities do not trigger the implementation of LDC Section 804**

- Prior Development Approvals in accordance with Existing Zoning
- All Development Applications not Increasing Density or Intensity
- Prior Development Approvals prior to effective date of ordinance adoption (i.e. MPUD, site plan)
- All lawfully permitted uses and structures within a Critical Linkage existing prior to the effective date of ordinance adoption
- Existing residential units constructed at a density greater than one (1) dwelling unit per acre
- Pools, fences, walls, not considering intensity/density increases

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## Density Transfer

Allows density transfer from land inside the Critical Linkage [**sending area**] to land onsite or offsite outside of the Critical Linkage [**receiving area**].



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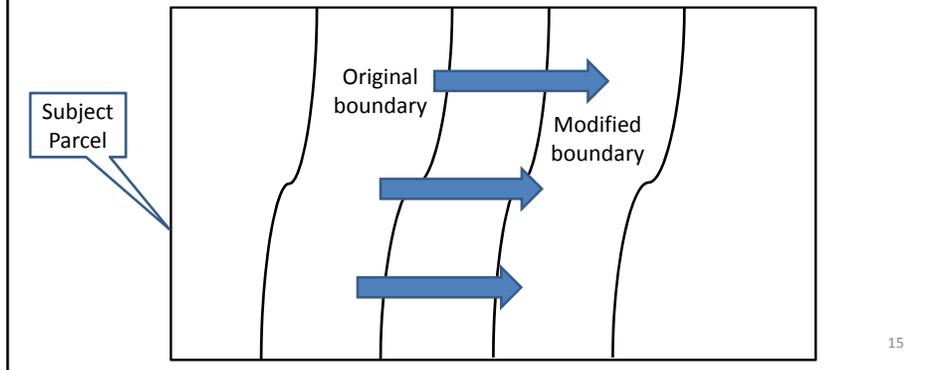
## Compensation in Lieu of Density Transfer

- Unutilized transferable density within a linkage may be eligible for compensation by the County.
- Compensation will be based on the average of (2) appraisals; one by County and one by property owner.
- Appeal process available for either party if not satisfied with valuation.

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## Linkage Boundary Modifications

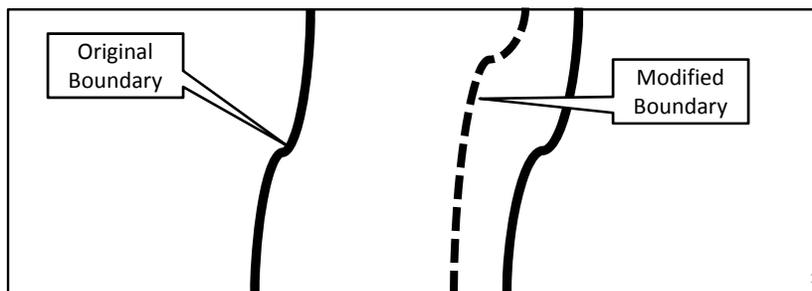
Movement must maintain **width**, ecological **function** and **connectivity** to publicly-owned parcels; no negative impact to adjacent owners.



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## Linkage Boundary Modifications

- May be reduced because some areas are highly disturbed along edge of linkage
- May be reduced because land within linkage receives score below 25 using site selection scoring in Guidelines



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## Support and Benefits

- Protecting, Conserving, and Managing the County Natural Resources are major goals of the County's Strategic Plan and Business Plan.
- Recent Urban Land Institute (ULI) report recommended the continued conservation and natural resources protection efforts.
- Environmental Stewardship is a necessary element of strategic development.
- Conservation land increases adjacent property values

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## Support and Benefits

- A reasonable and practical regulatory component is necessary to achieve County's conservation strategy goals.
- The draft Parks Master Plan incorporates corridors into the Greenways, Blueways, and Trails plan.
- Preserving natural Pasco for future generations.
- Supports numerous ecosystem services such as clean air, clean water, erosion control, carbon sequestration, jobs, recreational opportunities, and flood protection.

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## Flood Protection

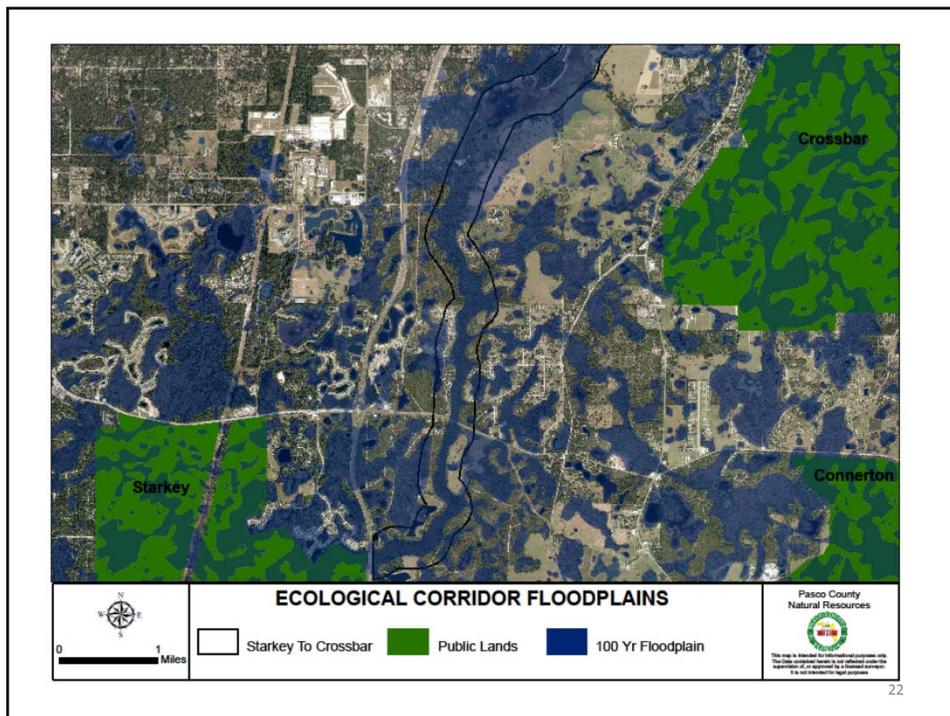
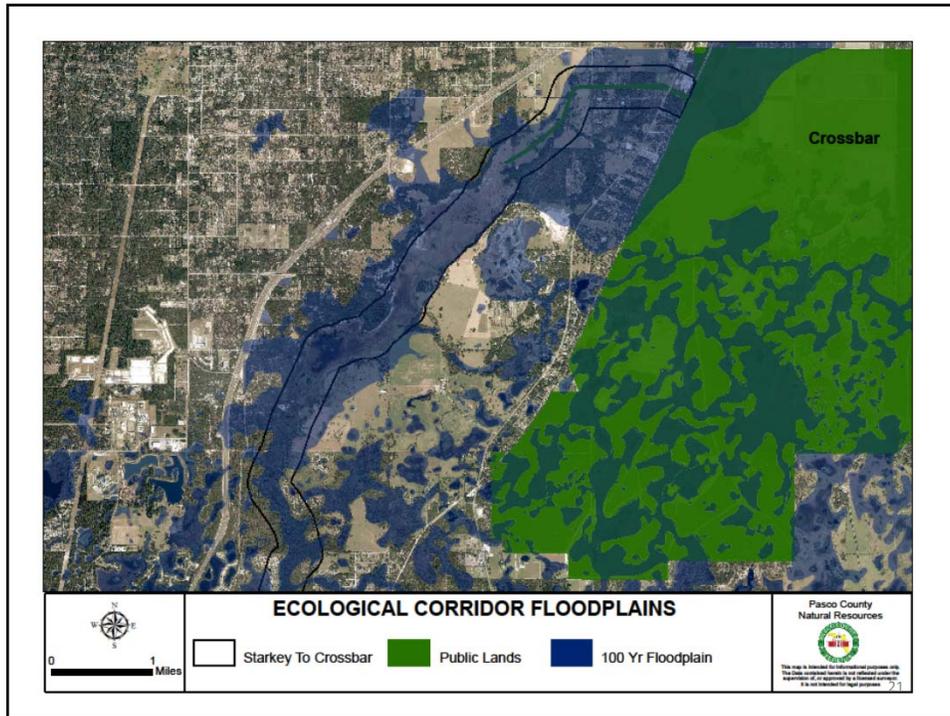
- Significant portions of the corridors are located in the 100 year floodplain.
- Protection of the floodplain is a direct benefit (ecosystem service) of preserving the ecological corridors.
- Corridors will assist in preventing future flooding by managing land use within the 100 year floodplain.

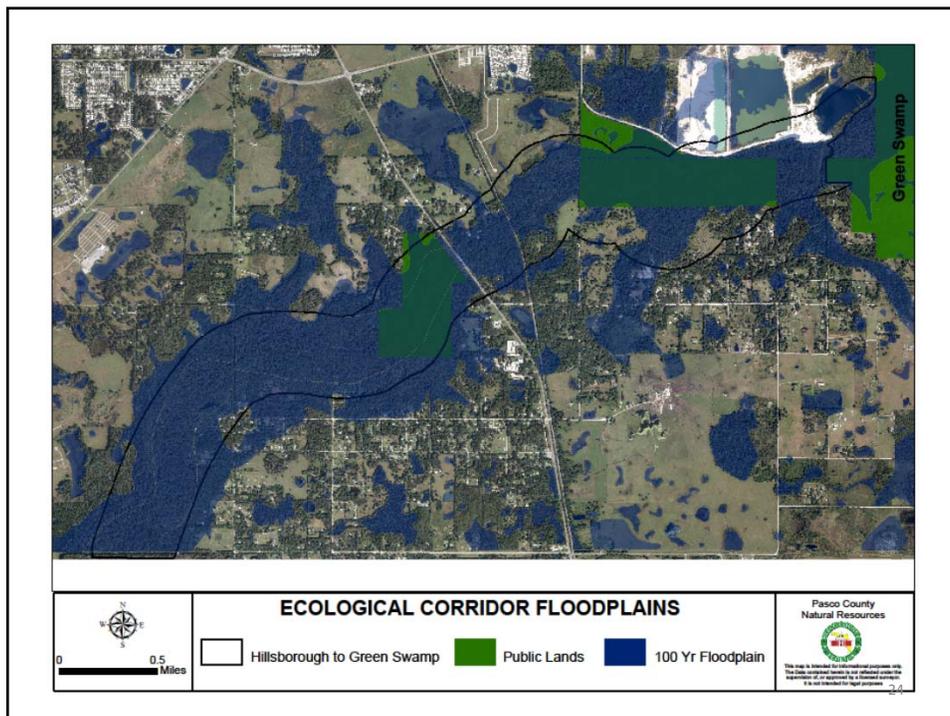
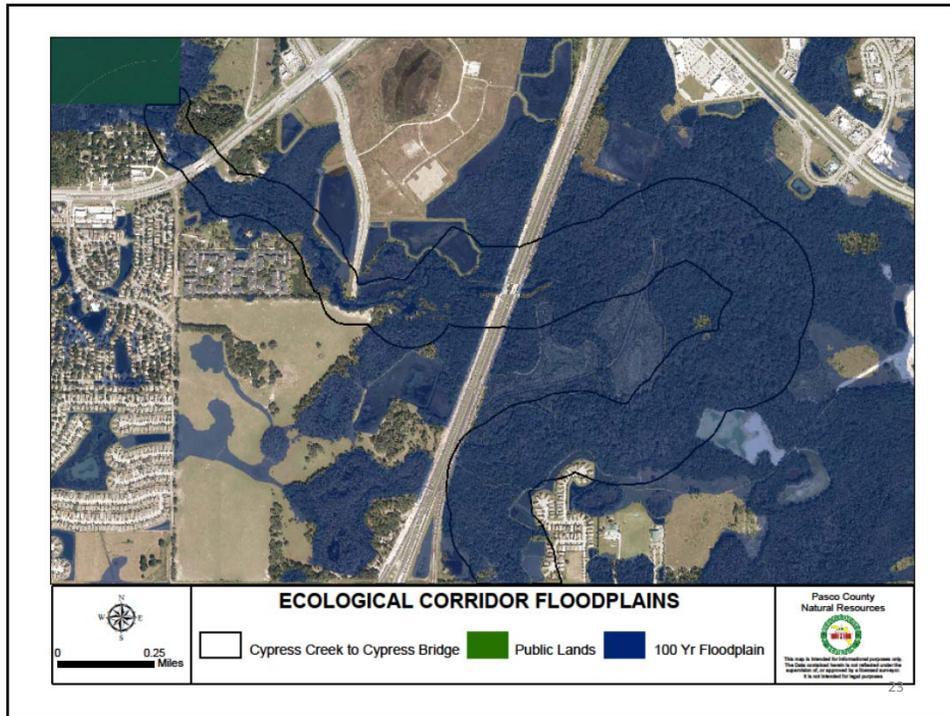
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## Flood Protection

Corridor	Total Acres	Floodplain AC	% Floodplain
Starkey to Crossbar	2765.48	2213.31	80
Starkey to Connerton	1146.01	634.25	55
Connerton to Cypress Creek	174.81	142.56	82
Connerton to Crossbar	829.8	632.18	76
Starkey to South Pasco	480.67	362.24	75
Cypress Creek to Cypress Bridge	386.67	350.97	91
Hillsborough to Green Swamp	1340.68	1098.97	82

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## Next Steps

BCC Workshop September 15<sup>th</sup>?

BCC 1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing October 20<sup>th</sup>?

BCC 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing November 3<sup>rd</sup>?

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## Summary

- Helps to implement Settle Agreement
- Consistent with Comprehensive Plan
- Flexible implementation and incentives
- Protecting floodplains and natural resources
- Preserving a small piece of natural Pasco for future generations (1.5% of the total County land)

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**QUESTIONS?**

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