

SOUTH SHORE > NEWS

County planners talks with residents about U.S. 41



Becky Stafford, left, and Mariella Smith of Ruskin check out a map of Ruskin and Apollo Beach at a Hillsborough County open house on a proposed overlay for U.S. 41.

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By **LOIS KINDLE** | The Tampa Tribune

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RUSKIN - About 50 area residents and business owners met with officials from the Hillsborough County Development Services Department May 12 to learn about a proposed U.S. 41 zoning overlay district and give their input.

The introductory open house, which took place at the SouthShore Regional Library, was intended to spur community interest in participating in the planning process, which will happen over the next six to eight months.

An overlay is a land development tool for establishing standards that are "placed on top of existing zoning and planning regulations," said Jose Fernandez, principal planner and project manager. "They supplement or replace underlying regulations to achieve community preferences and desires."

Fernandez was quick to point out that an overlay does not change land uses, densities or intensities.

The proposed overlay will impact properties along an eight-mile stretch of U.S. 41 between Big Bend Road and the Little Manatee River as part of the implementation of existing community plans for Apollo Beach and Ruskin, which were approved in August 2005. Once in place, standards for landscaping, signage, architecture, site design and more would go into the land development code.

Fernandez said an overlay promotes economic development and the identity of both Ruskin and Apollo Beach. It also improves appearance and enhances property values along the U.S. 41 corridor. Changes would occur as properties are redeveloped, he said.

"One size doesn't fit all," he said. "Overlays are crafted to the community's needs."

A critical element in the process is public input. Residents, business owners, local organizations and other interested parties are encouraged to participate. The department is forming a working committee of volunteers from both communities to help planners determine what should be included in the overlay.

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May 18, 2011

Hillsborough County wants residents' suggestions for U.S. 41 renewal plan

By Shelley Rossetter, Times Staff Writer

RUSKIN - Hillsborough County is seeking comments on how to improve the appearance of a stretch of U.S. 41 between Big Bend Road and the Little Manatee River.

For the next six months, county officials will hold meetings to establish a plan to improve the road's appearance through the use of landscape, architecture and signs, said Jose Fernandez, the project's principal planner.

"It will be guided by the residents to reflect what the community wants," Fernandez said.

By improving the area's appearance, officials aim to promote community identity, enhance property values and promote economic development.

It's all part of the community planning efforts started years ago, said Fred Jacobsen, a director of the South Hillsborough Economic Development Council.

The decisions made now will create guidelines for future developers to give the area a unified look, Jacobsen said.

Residents will be able to have their say on what they want as well as what they don't want, he said.

The next meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on June 30 at the South Shore Regional Library, 15816 Beth Shields Way in Ruskin.

Shelley Rossetter can be reached at srossetter@sptimes.com or (813) 661-2442.

On the Web

To learn more, go to hills

boroughcounty.org/pgm

St. Petersburg Times



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SOUTH SHORE > NEWS

County to host meeting on U.S. 41 zoning overlay

By [LOIS KINDLE](#) | The Tampa Tribune

Published: May 11, 2011

RUSKIN - Hillsborough County officials are asking area residents and business owners to attend an introductory open house on May 12 to learn about and provide input on the proposed U.S. 41 zoning overlay district.

The gathering will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. at the SouthShore Regional Library, 15816 Beth Shields Way, Ruskin.

The overlay would impact properties along U.S. 41 between Big Bend Road and the Little Manatee River as part of the implementation of existing community plans for Apollo Beach and Ruskin. While it does not affect the zoning of properties or take away any property rights, it will establish standards typically addressing landscaping, signage, architecture and site design, said Jose Fernandez, county planner.

"The overlay is aimed at promoting economic development, improving visual appearance, promoting the identity of the communities involved and enhancing property values along the U.S. 41 corridor," he said.

Planning and Growth Management staff will make a brief presentation at 7 p.m. to explain the overlay, describe its intent and provide an overview of the process that will be followed. They will be available afterward to provide information and answer questions.

"We want to hear from the community and what it needs," Fernandez said.

The open house is the public's opportunity to have a say in what those standards will be, to help shape the discussion, he said.

Spanish-to-English translation will be available at the meeting.

For information, call Fernandez at (813) 307-3455.

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