

Hernando County Comprehensive Plan
2040 PLAN
Section A. Chapter 6.
UTILITIES ELEMENT

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GOAL 6.01 – Utilities Operations and Services

Hernando County shall ensure the provision of utilities services to meet the needs of the unincorporated population. Utilities services include: water for consumptive use, wastewater disposal, stormwater drainage, and solid waste disposal.

[F.S. 163.3177(6)(c)]

Hernando County Utilities Services

Objective 6.01A: Hernando County Government intends to provide potable water supply, wastewater disposal, drainage and solid waste disposal systems.

Strategy 6.01A(1): Hernando County shall provide for utilities services consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and associated utility service master plans.

Strategy 6.01A(2): The County shall continue coordination with the City of Brooksville on operations in their first-right-to-serve area indicated in the adopted Water/Sewer Utility Service Interlocal Agreement in order to ensure the maintenance of appropriate levels of service.

Water Distribution Utility

Objective 6.01B: Hernando County shall provide a water distribution system that meets the consumption demands of residential, institutional, industrial and commercial uses and provides for adequate fire protection.

Strategy 6.01B(1): Hernando County shall adopt and maintain water treatment and distribution standards for potable water supply and fire protection that meet all local, state, regional and national requirements and will review and update those standards as needed.

Strategy 6.01B(2): For the purpose of water supply facility planning the adopted level of service standard shall be used as the basis for determining adequate supply.

Strategy 6.01B(3): Water supply systems should be interconnected where feasible in order to enhance water pressures and decrease service interruptions. This may include coordination of interconnections with the City of Brooksville's water system.

Strategy 6.01B(4): The County should periodically inventory and determine the condition of the existing water distribution system as a mechanism to identify and address deficiencies.

Strategy 6.01B(5): With the exception of the City of Brooksville, Hernando County shall be the sole franchiser of water production or supply within the County.

Objective 6.01C **The County shall adopt appropriate water shortage regulations that meet the minimum State requirements and address designated emergencies. More restrictive regulations may be adopted by the Board of county Commissioners as needed to meet water conservation goals.**

Strategy 6.01C(1): The County will coordinate with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to ensure that any adopted water shortage regulations and declared restrictions are consistent with the District.

Strategy 6.01C(2): The County may elect to extend restrictive time periods or limits on water consumption beyond SWFWMD restrictions and consistent with Florida Administrative Code for the protection of its groundwater quantity.

Strategy 6.01C(3): The Hernando County Utilities Department should coordinate with the Southwest Florida Water Management District to ensure consistent public education on the importance of water conservation.

Wastewater Supply Utility

Objective 6.01D: **Hernando County shall maintain and expand a wastewater collection and treatment system that meets the demands of residential, industrial and commercial customers.**

Strategy 6.01D(1): Hernando County shall adopt and maintain wastewater collection and treatment standards that meet all local, state, regional and national requirements and shall review and update those standards on a regular basis to maintain compliance with changing requirements.

Strategy 6.01D(2): For the purpose of wastewater facility planning the adopted level of service standard shall be used as the basis for estimating demand.

Strategy 6.01D(3): No new package plants shall be permitted except as a temporary measure. Developments allowed to utilize package plants shall enter into an agreement for service and be required to connect to central facilities when they are available.

- Strategy 6.01D(4):** Establish standards for connection of areas served by septic tanks when central facilities become available. In specific areas where it is determined that services are necessary to prevent imminent threat of contamination of groundwater or other compromise of public health, the County may require central facilities.
- Strategy 6.01D(5):** All new subdivisions with densities greater than two units per acre shall be served by central wastewater facilities.
- Strategy 6.01D(6):** The County should maintain standards for the disposal of septage including acceptance of sludge at county treatment plants for treatment.
- Strategy 6.01D(7):** The processing of sludge shall meet or exceed standards set by the State with regard to collection, storage, disposal, and land application uses.

Solid Waste Utility

- Objective 6.01E:** Hernando County shall maintain and expand a solid waste system or utility that meets the demands of residential, industrial and commercial development.
- Strategy 6.01E(1):** Hernando County shall adopt and maintain solid waste collection and disposal standards that meet all local, state, regional and national requirements and shall review and update those standards on a regular basis to maintain compliance with changing requirements.
- Strategy 6.01E(2):** For the purpose of solid waste facility planning the level of service standard shall be used as the basis for estimating demand.
- Strategy 6.01E(3):** The County may designate and periodically review the need for mandatory solid waste collection areas.
- Strategy 6.01E(4):** The County recognizes the special disposal needs of the construction industry and should maintain land use regulations that control location and standards for landfills designed to accept construction debris.
- Strategy 6.01E(5):** The County should investigate innovative and cost-saving technologies for the disposal of solid waste, including alternative waste disposal methods.

Strategy 6.01E(6): The County should investigate the feasibility of implementing single-stream recycling or other alternative waste disposal methods for recycling.

GOAL 6.02 – Long-Term Utilities Planning

Hernando County shall engage in long-term planning for the construction of new facilities required to serve existing and new development consistent with local and regional population projections, sustainable demand projections, discouragement of urban sprawl, and maintenance of groundwater and natural systems. [F.S. 163.3177(6)(c)]

Objective 6.02A: Utilities supply planning shall be coordinated with long-term land use planning as outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.

Strategy 6.02A(1): The Hernando County Utilities Department shall prepare, and update as necessary, facilities plans to meet the needs of existing and projected development within the urban growth areas designated on the Future Land Use Map. Expansion of central potable water and wastewater services to areas within the Rural Future Land Use Category shall be restricted.

Strategy 6.02A(2): Interconnect systems for the purposes of maintaining water quality and quantity that traverse areas within the Rural Future Land Use Category shall not be used to provide service that encourages development.

Strategy 6.02A(3): Utilities supply plans shall be used to evaluate and regulate the location and timing of requests for land development.

Water Supply Plan

Objective 6.02B: Hernando County shall implement a coordination and analytical framework for water supply planning and scheduled updates covering at least a ten year planning period.

Strategy 6.02B(1): The County will coordinate and update all local hydraulic and supply modeling consistent with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD).

Strategy 6.02B(2): Hernando County shall prepare and implement a potable water supply facilities master plan covering a twenty-year (20) planning period and update it at least every five (5) years..

Strategy 6.02B(3): Water supply planning shall be consistent with the Southwest Florida Water Management District's adopted Regional Water Supply Plan for that portion of the district which includes Hernando County.

Strategy 6.02B(4): Water supply modeling should include the optimum needs of natural systems by using measures of saltwater intrusion, springs flows, groundwater movement, groundwater quality and other

measures for the purpose of maintaining the natural systems of Hernando County.

Strategy 6.02B(5): The County will coordinate with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) to cooperate in regional water supply planning, alternative water supplies, water conservation and other measures aimed at protecting the region's groundwater resources to meet future needs.

Objective 6.02C: Hernando County shall prepare and implement a water supply work plan.

Strategy 6.02C(1): Hernando County shall implement a water supply work plan for at least a ten year planning period addressing water supply facilities necessary to serve existing and future development. The work plan will be updated within 18 months following an update to the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Regional Water Supply Plan.

Strategy 6.02C(2): Annually assess the performance and effectiveness of the ten year water supply work plan and update the status of project development and potential funding sources, consistent with the SWFWMD Regional Water Supply Plan and the policies of this Comprehensive Plan in order to maximize the use of existing facilities and provide for future needs.

Strategy 6.02C(3): Utilize the water supply work plan to identify and plan for water supply sources and facilities required to serve existing and new development.

Strategy 6.02C(4): Hernando County adopts by reference the 2017 Water Supply Work Plan for a planning period of not less than 10 years. The County shall review and update the Work Plan at least every five years to be consistent with time frames outlined in this Chapter.

Strategy 6.02C(5): The Water Supply Work Plan shall be used to prioritize and coordinate the expansion and upgrade of facilities used to withdraw, transmit, treat, store, and distribute potable water to meet future needs.

Wellfield Siting

Objective 6.02D: Maintain established wellfield siting criteria and procedures to ensure the provision of potable water to meet future needs, maintain adequate quality, and prevent the degradation of natural systems.

- Strategy 6.02D(1):** Siting criteria shall include but not be limited to aquifer characteristics, sinkhole proclivity, saltwater intrusion, proximity to various development types, water quality, proximity to water bodies, and water supply planning criteria.
- Strategy 6.02D(2):** The County shall coordinate wellfield siting decisions with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority and the Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- Strategy 6.02D(3):** Hernando County shall develop water supplies to meet the demands of existing and projected populations and in accordance with the Southwest Florida Management District's Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs).
- Strategy 6.02D(4):** The County shall delineate protective buffers of appropriate sizes for water bodies with existing or future slated MFLs as areas where wellfield siting and groundwater withdrawal are restricted.

Wastewater Facilities Plan

Objective 6.02E: **Hernando County shall prepare a wastewater disposal work plan and maintain a framework for implementation and updates.**

- Strategy 6.02E(1):** Hernando County shall prepare and implement a wastewater facilities master plan covering a twenty-year (20) planning period and update it at least every five (5) years.
- Strategy 6.02E(2):** The wastewater master plan shall include a county-wide inventory that is updated periodically to establish sub-regional wastewater treatment service areas, project needs, prospective sites for facilities, cost, revenue analysis and timing.
- Strategy 6.02E(3):** The wastewater plan shall incorporate flexibility in system design to accommodate efficient expansion to meet future demand and to accommodate future upgrades in technology and effluent treatment levels.
- Strategy 6.02E(4):** Wastewater plan updates shall consider, at a minimum:
- a. changes in state law impacting treatment and technical facilities requirements;
 - b. an inventory and evaluation of areas served or proposed to be served by septic systems;
 - c. update on the status of remaining package plants and scheduling to take them off-line;
 - d. wastewater reuse facilities planning;

- e. county-wide identification of facilities programming and/or treatment upgrades to reduce nutrient and other contamination impacts to groundwater from all types of wastewater disposal systems, especially in priority springsheds.

Drainage Planning

Objective 6.02F: **Hernando County in coordination with the Southwest Florida Water Management District shall maintain and update its countywide drainage basin study and flood maps and shall develop and implement a countywide program that seeks to protect natural drainage features and restore modified features where feasible.**

Strategy 6.02F(1): The County shall continue to participate in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program as required by federal and state law to identify best management practices (BMPs) that optimize drainage function for each basin. The County shall also require BMPs for development and redevelopment within each basin or across multiple basins.

Strategy 6.02F(2): The County shall prioritize and implement basin best management practices (BMPs) for optimizing drainage functions. Cooperative assistance, grants, public-private partnerships and other means may be sought to implement BMPs.

Strategy 6.02F(3): The County shall inventory and map all stormwater systems including structures, conveyances and holding/treatment areas consistent with its NPDES permit requirements.

Objective 6.02G: **The County shall develop an integrated stormwater master plan utilizing a comprehensive basin management approach.**

Strategy 6.02G(1): The County shall adopt drainage levels of service for basins or groups of basins or future drainage districts. Levels of service may define stormwater treatment requirements, infrastructure capacities, design layouts, best management practices or other appropriate standards.

Strategy 6.02G(2): The County will implement adopted stormwater master plans through the use of retention sites, flood mitigation areas, cooperative agreements with other agencies and drainage easements in order to construct future stormwater improvements and structural best management practices (BMPs).

Solid Waste Planning

Objective 6.02H: The County will explore new technologies as an alternative to traditional landfill facilities. The County intends to maintain a long-term plan for solid waste that anticipates construction needs and evaluates methods for maximizing the efficiency and useful life of solid waste disposal facilities.

Strategy 6.02H(1): Hernando County shall prepare and implement a solid waste facilities master plan covering a twenty-year (20) planning period and update it as needed.

Strategy 6.02H(2): The County shall establish a five-year planning period for permitting, construction phasing and operational needs for solid waste disposal technology.

GOAL 6.03 – Environmental Protection

Prevent negative impacts on the quantity and quality of Hernando County’s groundwater and natural resources through the use of operational and treatment efficiencies, design and technology advances, restriction of harmful activities, and protection of resource integrity. [F.S. 163.3177(6)(c)]

Wellfield Protection

Objective 6.03A: Implement and maintain a wellfield protection ordinance that sets zones of influence around current and future wellfields and restricts activities that would compromise the quality and quantity of groundwater within the zones of influence.

Strategy 6.03A(1): Wellfield protection zones shall be established and mapped based on successive levels of hydrologic influence to current and future projected withdrawal zones and on the best available hydrogeological data. The aerial extent of wellfield protection zones shall be periodically reviewed as needed.

Strategy 6.03A(2): The wellfield protection ordinance shall specify protection measures for wellfields and wellfield protection zones including:

- a. protection against adverse effects of bacterial and chemical contamination;
- b. control of storage, handling, use or production of all known hazardous or toxic substances;
- c. protection against significant point and non-point sources of groundwater pollution primarily through land use restrictions.

Strategy 6.03A(3): Hernando County shall coordinate with the Southwest Florida Water Management District to implement a system of monitoring wells to provide the hydrogeologic and groundwater data needed for protection of wellfield sites and wellfield protection zones.

Withdrawal of Groundwater in the Public Interest

Objective 6.03B: Establish standards and procedures to ensure that the withdrawal of groundwater or surface water from Hernando County shall only take place if it does not negatively impact the quality and quantity of potable water required for the County’s projected population and natural systems.

Strategy 6.03B(1): Hernando County should pursue and identify funding opportunities for beneficial wastewater reuse, water conservation and other alternative water supplies in order to responsibly utilize and maintain the quality and quantity of its underlying groundwater.

Strategy 6.03B(2): Public Facility Zoning shall be required for any proposed potable water wellfields to review the impacts on surrounding and proposed land uses and the aquifer. The zoning process may be used to require mitigation of significant negative impacts.

Strategy 6.03B(3): The County shall coordinate with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority and the Southwest Florida Water Management District on major water supply issues.

Water Conservation

Objective 6.03C: **A program to conserve potable water supplies shall be coordinated with the Southwest Florida Water Management District, addressing both demand reduction and supply enhancement methods, including the provision of reuse water to reduce potable water consumption.**

Strategy 6.03C(1): Evaluation studies shall be prepared, in conjunction with Southwest Florida Water Management District, of user patterns and supply system conditions to identify areas where water conservation methods could have a positive effect on potable water supply.

Strategy 6.03C(2): Water conservation methods shall include but not be limited to regulatory, fiscal, operational, and educational programs.

Strategy 6.03C(3): Programs shall be evaluated based on:

- a. potential for water savings;
- b. program costs, including impacts on revenues;
- c. environmental impacts;
- d. customer impacts;
- e. social acceptability;
- f. technical feasibility;
- g. political practicability.

Strategy 6.03C(4): Review existing ordinances, codes, and inspection procedures for adherence to applicable water conservation standards, including those contained in the Florida Statutes and the Florida Building Code.

Strategy 6.03C(5): Reduce the need for landscape irrigation systems by increasing the use of Florida-friendly methods which incorporate the use of native plant material and drought tolerant plants.

Strategy 6.03C(6): Establish incentive programs for the conservation of publicly supplied potable water.

- Strategy 6.03C(7):** Where available, reuse water and other non-potable sources of water shall be utilized for irrigation.
- Strategy 6.03C(8):** The County shall prioritize the distribution of reuse water based upon consumption patterns and availability.
- Strategy 6.03C(9):** Maintain per capita water usage at or below 150 gallons per day as indicated in the Water Supply Work Plan and encourage continued demand reductions. The strategies used to maintain and improve this rate will be implemented through water conservation measures, including cisterns, increased system efficiencies, and reuse of treated wastewater effluent.

Reclaimed Water

Objective 6.03D: Utilize wastewater treatment and disposal technologies that conserve, reclaim and/or reuse wastewater.

- Strategy 6.03D(1):** Implement a strategy to expand capacity of reclaimed water infrastructure to three(3) million gallons per day by 2020 and identify new users of reclaimed water for irrigation purposes. The Southwest Florida Water Management District's Regional Water Supply Plan sets a long-term goal of providing at least 3.17 million gallons per day of reclaimed water by the year 2035.
- Strategy 6.03D(2):** Expand the existing reclaimed water system distribution network to serve additional large consumers to reduce potable water usage for irrigation.
- Strategy 6.03D(3):** The County will support the Southwest Florida Water Management District's reclaimed water projects and the implementation of new regulations and programs designed to increase the volume of reclaimed water used.
- Strategy 6.03D(4):** Maintain and periodically update the wastewater plan reclaimed water component to assess and improve existing wastewater reclamation and reuse operations, and, to identify new opportunities.
- Strategy 6.03D(5):** Hernando County should consider regulatory criteria for new subdivisions for use of reclaimed water in golf courses, residential irrigation and other appropriate uses in accordance with the standards and recommendations of the reclaimed water master plan.

Wastewater Treatment Advancements

Objective 6.03E: **The County shall investigate ways to improve wastewater treatment to levels sufficient to protect the quality and quantity of receiving groundwater and surface water environments.**

Strategy 6.03E(1): Advanced secondary and tertiary treatment shall be considered for future permanent sewage treatment plants and expansions of existing plants where reclaimed water can be provided to customers.

Strategy 6.03E(2): The County should consider methods to alleviate nutrient pollution from septic tanks including connection to central systems and the appropriate use of advanced on-site systems for single or multiple lots.

Low-Impact Development Drainage Design

Objective 6.03F: **The County should incorporate Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater design into a series of best management practices (BMPs) where appropriate. A properly designed Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management system provides treatment where runoff is reduced and treated through a series of site-specific best management practices.**

Strategy 6.03F(1): The County should pursue funding for and implement low-impact development (LID) design and management for selected County infrastructure projects to use as demonstration of techniques for minimizing pollutant discharge in sensitive areas such as the Coastal Zone and high aquifer recharge locations.

Solid Waste Volume Reduction

Objective 6.03G: **Hernando County should develop a strategy with long-term and short-term actions aimed at reducing the solid waste stream and providing alternative sustainable disposal options.**

Strategy 6.03G(1): Explore alternative waste disposal technologies that reduce or eliminate the volume of waste being landfilled.

Strategy 6.03G(2): Utilize a recycling program as a means of reducing solid waste volumes. The recycling program should include public education on reducing, reusing and recycling everyday household waste in Hernando County.

Hazardous Waste Handling

Objective 6.03H: **Hernando County shall regulate and monitor the disposal of hazardous waste and the location of uses that generate hazardous waste, and shall identify and implement alternative treatment methods to landfilling hazardous and environmentally damaging materials. [F.S. 163.3177(6)(d)2.i]**

Strategy 6.03H(1): Hernando County shall operate a program which allows residential holders of small amounts of hazardous waste to deliver them to the County for disposal.

Strategy 6.03H(2): Hernando County should utilize methods of solid waste disposal which recycle, decompose or dilute environmentally damaging materials prior to landfilling.

Strategy 6.03H(3): Hernando County shall require compliance with all Federal and State regulations pertaining to hazardous waste and storage tanks, and shall support provisions of the Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning and Response Act and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act by:

- a. visiting facilities subject to regulations in order to ensure compliance;
- b. enforcing compliance with those regulations that are locally assigned by state law.

Strategy 6.03H(4): Hernando County shall administer a monitoring and compliance program for small-quantity hazardous waste generators to the extent required by state and federal law including:

- a. establish and annually update an assessment roll of potential small quantity generators;
- b. notify small quantity generators of proper waste management requirements;
- c. notify small quantity generators of available hazardous waste management alternatives;
- d. report annually, or as required by law, to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection with updated information on hazardous waste management and small quantity generator program.

Strategy 6.03H(5): Non-residential development proposals within the Coastal Zone that entail storage, handling, use or disposal of hazardous or toxic materials or waste should not be approved unless designed or conditioned to prevent any impacts on coastal waters and/or coastal water-dependent or water-related uses. Marinas and working waterfront uses should include Florida Department of

Environmental Protection Clean Marina standards and features pursuant to the Coastal Management Element of this Plan.

GOAL 6.04 – Utilities Level of Service

Hernando County shall ensure that new development is compatible with available local water supplies, wastewater service capacity supplies, drainage and stormwater handling capacity and solid waste disposal service capacity and shall ensure that acceptable levels of service are provided. [F.S. 163.3180(1)]

Objective 6.04A: Development must be served with potable water, wastewater handling, drainage and solid waste disposal that meet accepted level of service standards. The Land Development Regulations shall ensure a review of the potable water, wastewater handling, drainage and solid waste needs for new developments.

Strategy 6.04A(1): For those areas of the County which are served or will be served by a community water system, the level of service standard for facility capacity is 350 gallons per equivalent residential unit per day.

Strategy 6.04A(2): For those areas of the County which are served or will be served by central wastewater facilities, the level of service standard for facility capacity is 280 gallons per equivalent residential unit per day.

Strategy 6.04A(3): Development using any interim potable water or wastewater system shall be required to connect to a public system when available.

Strategy 6.04A(4): Any interim or permanent wastewater treatment plant shall be required to meet all treatment standards of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) under Florida Statute 403 and related sections, and to receive a permit from FDEP prior to receiving a construction permit from Hernando County.

Strategy 6.04A(5): Any interim or permanent septic tank shall be required to meet all density, setback and construction standards of the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) under Florida Statute 381 and related sections, and to receive a permit from FDOH prior to receiving a construction permit from Hernando County.

Strategy 6.04A(6): All new stormwater systems shall be built to the standards as amended from time to time of the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Expansion or redevelopment on existing sites shall correct any deficiencies that do not comply with current standards. This requirement constitutes the County's Drainage Level of Service standard until countywide or basin wide standards are adopted.

Strategy 6.04A(7): The level of service standard for solid waste generation and disposal capacity is 4.75 pounds per capita per day.