

CAPITOL CONVERSATIONS

A mostly regular newsletter of Tallahassee topics of interest to special districts



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A New Category of Development Proposed

[SB 354](#) by Senator Stan McClain and [HB 299](#) by Representative Lauren Melo propose to establish Blue Ribbon Projects (BRP) and among other things, the legislative intent language says its purpose is to incentivize large landowners to be good stewards of the natural environment while at the same time promoting a more sustainable pattern of development.

The bills require BRP developments to be a minimum of 10,000 contiguous acres with at least 60 percent designated as a “reserve area.” A reserve area is defined in the bill and means land that is set aside for environmental conservation, wildlife corridors, wetland and wildlife mitigation, productive agriculture and silviculture, parks, recreational activities, utility sites, reservoirs and lakes, and uses that support such activities. The House version also allows the reserve area to include conservation easements granted to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs) and activities permitted by conservation agreements entered into with the DACs.

Up to 40 percent may be a dense, mixed-use development area with 10 percent of the 40 allocated to nonresidential land use. This development area must have a dense, walkable, mixed-use, human-centered development pattern that incorporates new urban design, including towns, villages, and hamlets that have reserve area between them. A portion of the development area must be allocated to uses intended to provide economic development and create high wage jobs.

A BRP must have a BRP plan, which is the master development plan for the project that addresses the land uses within the development area and reserve area, and the interrelationships between such areas. It must identify water supplies and available sources of water, transportation facilities and future transportation corridors necessary to serve the development, and regionally significant public facility needs necessary to support the project’s permitted density.

The development area may be developed in phases to accommodate growth projections in the geographical area in which the project is located.

The bills create a streamlined local approval by requiring the applicant for a BRP development to apply to the appropriate county or municipal government for approval, but the local government’s review of the application is limited to determining whether the proposed BRP meets legislative requirements. If the BRP meets those requirements, the local government must approve the project administratively without further action by the local government or any quasi-judicial or administrative reviewing body.

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