

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURES MANUAL:

Hillsborough County has been working to overhaul its Comprehensive Plan amendment process. The Planning Commission voted to find the latest draft of these proposed updates consistent, subject to the addition of language that the Application Submission be “based on data and analysis” per section 163, Florida Statutes. The latest draft overhauls the Neighborhood Meeting requirement and provides small clarifications to other areas of the procedures manual.

The biggest change from the prior draft is to the neighborhood meeting requirements. If the applicant initiates a neighborhood meeting, the applicant must notify the Planning Commission of their intent and provide notice within 15 days of giving that intent. The applicant must also provide a notification form to the Planning Commission staff. This form will have the applicant’s contact information, and residents/property owners will have a right to request a meeting subject to the citizen-initiated neighborhood meeting rules below.

If an affected citizen requests a neighborhood meeting, the citizen must notify Planning Commission staff of the request, who will then in turn notify the applicant that a meeting has been requested. A citizen may request a neighborhood meeting up to 60 days prior to the Planning Commission public hearing, and the actual meeting must take place no later than 45 days prior to the Planning Commission public hearing. Once a neighborhood meeting has taken place—whether applicant-initiated or citizen-initiated—no additional neighborhood meetings can be requested. All time and location restrictions for neighborhood meetings remain the same, with the added language that meeting locations must be ADA accessible or otherwise provide reasonable accommodations upon request.

The latest draft retains the mail notification requirements of 500 feet. Staff defended this distance, noting that neighboring counties such as Pinellas also require a notice radius of 500 feet. This notification must be postmarked at least 21 days prior to the Planning Commission Public Hearing and at least 30 days prior to the first BOCC Public Hearing.