

Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission
Technical Advisory Group
External Process Subcommittee

Notes from meeting 11/19/07:

Subcommittee members present: Rhonda Evans, EPA (recorder), Patricia Metz, USGS, Dale Meryman, Meryman Environmental, Eric Fehrman, Pinellas County

The subcommittee discussed several issues, including:

1. Duplicity

Definition of issue: While discussing the EPC review process as it relates to other agencies, members of the subcommittee felt that duplication of tasks and reviews was a perceived problem for EPC. Duplication arises when EPC reviews the same site with same methods (i.e. UMAM) but offers no new information or any additional protection measures, yet may result in delay of project.

Resolution discussion: improving relationships with other agencies (i.e. improving and following MOA with SWFWMD), identifying areas where one agency can take the lead over the other, addressing ways to speed up the review process to avoid time delays, identifying specific types of processes where EPC can provide additional resource protection or site specific review criteria that would improve the process and resource protection. These could include: developing habitat specific guidelines for using UMAM, identifying critical resources for protection, and assisting with compliance and enforcement.

2. Identifying areas for delegation of authority to EPC

Definition of issue: EPC can seek delegation of authority for conducting aspects, such as site review, compliance inspections or enforcement actions, from other permitting agencies such as FDEP or SWFWMD. This would reduce duplication and enhance the best use of agency funds while improving resource protection.

Resolution discussion: Development of MOAs with other agencies (committee felt it needed more information on existing processes so that improvements could be discussed), identify areas where EPC can be delegated authority to conduct site specific reviews, and investigating any opportunities for assisting with compliance inspections, etc. There was also some discussion regarding addressing EPC's opportunities to address issues early in the process through rezonings, construction plans and other local government activities.

3. Early definition of project issues and identifying high quality wetlands

Definition of issue: As the local government entity and frequently the first agency involved in a project, EPC has opportunities to identify issues and problems early in the process. Additionally, through local government land use and planning activities, EPC can identify resource protection opportunities and develop improved processes for site specific reviews. Additionally, there is a need to define issues early in the process in order to avoid time delays for the applicant.

Resolution discussion: Opportunities discussed included identifying high quality wetlands, defining additional measures for UMAM (i.e. not changing UMAM but defining criteria to

be evaluated based on wetland type, addressing more site specific measures, etc.), and getting involved early on at the local level (such as during rezonings, planning, etc.) to define potential problems or opportunities.

4. Better resource protection

Definition of issue: As the external processes are reviewed and defined, there are opportunities for EPC to coordinate with other agencies in order to provide better overall resource protection.

Resolution discussion: Issues discussed included: working with UMAM to provide more consistent agency to agency scoring, staff training, identify areas where coordination issues occur and define opportunities for MOAs and other activities to improve resource protection, define critical resources and provide information to other agencies.

NOTE: At the full TAG meeting, it was decided to combine the External Process Subcommittee with the Internal Process Subcommittee. Their next meeting will be 10 a.m. on Thursday, November 29th at the EPC upstairs conference room.

Resources needed: Existing information on MOAs and current processes