

North Port Challenges and Opportunities

Michael Fuino

City Attorney Candidate

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Challenge & Opportunity No. 1: Growth Management

- North Port was home to 21 individuals just 65 years ago
- Today it is the second fastest growing city in the United States with a population of 94,700 and expects 250,000 at full build-out
- Increase of 20,000 residents from 2020 census and nearly double the size of the 2010 census
- Land mass of 104.1 square miles makes it one of largest in State
- Primed for development and redevelopment opportunities
- Therefore, top challenge and opportunity is growth management

Growth Management Issues: Affordable Housing

- Live Local Act was State's answer to the housing affordability crisis in 2023
- Amended in 2024 and 2025
- 2025 amendments include:
 - Authorization, but not requirement, for affordable housing on land zone for religious institutions
 - Prohibition against density transfers or amendments to DRI
 - Prohibition from requiring more than 10% of the total square footage of mixed-use projects to be used for non-residential purposes
 - Prohibition against height restrictions
 - Administrative approval if consistent with LDR and comp plan

Growth Management Issues: Development Review

- Development permit and review timelines controlled by s. 166.033, Florida Statutes
- North Port must:
 - Specify in writing the minimum information that must be submitted for development approvals
 - Confirm receipt of a development review application within 5 business days
 - Approve, deny, or approve with conditions a development review application that doesn't require a public hearing within 120 days
 - Approve, deny, or approve with conditions a development review application that does require a public hearing within 180 days
- Penalty of 10-100% application refund for missing these timelines

Growth Management Issues: Platting

- Critical but often overlooked part of the development process
- 2025 legislative session overhauled Chapter 177, Florida Statutes
- Biggest change is the requirement for administrative determination of any plat or replat
- Staff has 7 business days from submittal to notify applicant of any missing documents and provide a decision timeline
- North Port must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the plat request by the decision timeline date unless the applicant requests an extension of time

Challenge & Opportunity No. 2: Storm Response

- Hurricanes Ian and Milton both impacted North Port
- Ian was particularly brutal—deadliest storm to hit Florida in 87 years that cost seven souls their lives
- 2025 legislative session produced comprehensive emergency management and post-storm reforms codified at Ch. 25-190, Laws of Florida

Storm Issues: Emergency Management Response Reforms

- The emergency management response reforms include:
 - Notification to the Governor and FDEM of a person designated as North Port's emergency contact and the contact's alternate
 - Coordination with water management districts and other stormwater management operators to identify infrastructure within North Port's stormwater service area
 - Preparation and response information that must be made available on North Port's publicly accessible website

Storm Issues: Post-Storm Relief Reforms

- The post-storm relief reforms include:
 - Prohibition against a moratorium on construction, reconstruction, or redevelopment of any property for 1 year if 100 miles of a storm's track
 - Prohibition against a more restrictive or burdensome amendment to the Comp Plan or UDLC for 1 year if 100 miles of a storm's track
 - Prohibition against a more restrictive or burdensome procedure for review of a site plan, permit, or DO for 1 year if 100 miles of a storm's track
 - Expedited post-storm permitting plan
 - Prohibition against an ordinance for substantial improvements or repairs that includes a "lookback period"
- Where Mother Nature meets Growth Management

Challenge & Opportunity No. 3: Legal Office Management

- The job of the City Attorney is two-fold
 - Legal advice to the City's officers and directors
 - Management of the City Attorney's legal office
- Management of the Office
 - Office stabilization through relationship building
 - Office organization based on attorney strengths and interests
 - Hiring a new assistant city attorney
 - Creation of a year-end review scoresheet
 - Informal and formal employee reviews
 - Staff meetings

Conclusion

- North Port's expansive growth along with Florida's natural weather creates unique opportunities and challenges
- A well-managed City Attorney's Office will help the City's leaders reach their goals and meet the City's challenges

Questions?