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MEMORANDUM

TO: Howey-in-the-Hills Planning Board
CC: J. Brock, Town Clerk
FROM: Thomas Harowski, AICP, Planning Consultant
SUBJECT: 2023-2024 EAR Review Program
DATE: October 23, 2023

As we have reviewed the comprehensive plan and development code issues over the past few months, one of the tasks that has been identified is the undertaking of periodic review and update of the comprehensive plan. The review, called the Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR), is required every seven years by state law. The last review by the Town was undertaken in 2017 with the EAR-based comprehensive plan amendments being approved in 2018. Given the self-examination of the comprehensive plan the Town has been doing, this seemed like an appropriate time to undertake the full EAR-based amendment process.

During the last review, the staff prepared a series of reports, one for each element of the comprehensive plan, which were reviewed by the Planning Board. Where amendments to the goals, objectives and policies were needed, the Planning Board made recommendations to the Town Council. Eventually, the EAR-based amendments were adopted, approved through the standard state review process, and the comprehensive plan document was edited and updated. Staff is proposing a similar process for this review.

The staff recommendation is to begin the process with an update to the key sets of data for information such as population projections, changes to land use, changes to public services, and identification of development trends affecting the Town. This information and analysis stage seems like a good place to begin and the objective will be to present a report at the November Planning Board meeting. Prior to that meeting is the joint workshop with the Town Council and the Planning Board on November 1st which will present a package of comprehensive plan recommendations that were generated by the review and comment process that was recently concluded. The output from this meeting can then be considered along with any other proposals for revisions to the Future Land Use Element. Beginning in December, we can initiate the individual element reviews of goals, objectives, and policies that can lead to proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan. The intended approach is to look at two elements at each meeting where one of the major elements will be paired with the smaller or single-purpose elements. If discussion extends beyond one meeting, the schedule can be adjusted as

needed. The following schedule is offered as the initial proposal for review at the October Planning Board meeting.

| Month | Primary Element | Secondary Element |
|----------|---------------------------|---|
| November | Data Updates | Data Updates |
| December | Future Land Use | Public Participation Property Rights |
| January | Traffic Circulation | School Concurrency |
| February | Housing | Intergovernmental Coordination |
| March | Public Facilities | Capital Improvements |
| April | Recreation and Open Space | Conservation |

In addition to the updates to the data, inputs to the review will include any required changes mandated by recent state law, community inputs from our recent review process, and any other sources of relevant information that may be available. As always, the meetings will be open to the public and there will be opportunities for general public comment. We expect to use a similar report style to that applied in 2017. A copy of one of the 2017 reports is attached to give an idea of the report style. The report format was as follows:

- Introduction
- Data and Analysis Review
- Changed Conditions
- Goals, Objectives and Policies
- Action Recommendations

Several of the maps supporting the comprehensive were correctly criticized as being difficult to read, so one of our objectives will be to provide improved maps. The Board will want to consider if all of the maps included in the comprehensive plan need to be continued in the updated plan. Some of the maps repeat data that is readily available from other sources and in some cases are difficult to read and understand just based on the scale involved. For example, the plan includes a map of contour elevations which even in an improved presentation will be difficult to read just based on the scale involved. This information is readily available from Lake County sources including the property appraiser’s web site. Because the original source data for many of the maps is no longer available to the Town, reproducing updated maps will be time consuming and relatively expensive. We will want to make sure the mapped data needs to be included in the plan document.

Another choice to consider is whether the data and analysis sections of the plan need to be formally adopted as part of the plan. This is the approach currently used in the Town’s plan. Many communities include only the goals, objectives and policies along with the required maps as the officially adopted plan document. This option reduces the bulk of the comprehensive plan document which will hopefully make it more understandable for the general public. The supporting data and analysis reports are

retained as separate documents that are available for public review as the basis for the planning decisions made in the adopted plan documents.