



DeSoto County

Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

1:00 PM

Comp Plan Workshop

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner JC Deriso
Commissioner Judy Schaefer
Commissioner Steven Hickox
Commissioner Elton Langford
Commissioner Jerod Gross

PRESENTATION

Comprehensive Plan

The Board of County Commissioners held its first workshop for the DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan update through the year 2050, with assistance from the Central Florida Regional Planning Council. The workshop focused on reviewing outdated land use policies, growth trends, infrastructure capacity, housing needs, agriculture, transportation, and long-term planning priorities. Jennifer Codo-Salisbury of CFRPC explained that the current Future Land Use Map is heavily agricultural, with most of the county designated at one dwelling unit per ten acres. Commissioners discussed whether the plan still reflects current conditions, particularly as citrus groves decline and development pressure increases. Several members supported exploring new rural residential categories, such as one home per five acres or two-and-a-half-acre ranchette lots, to provide more attainable housing while preserving rural character. The Board also discussed the need for workforce housing for teachers, first responders, and working families who do not qualify for subsidized housing but cannot afford current market prices. Concerns were raised that large master-planned communities alone will not meet the county's traditional preference for custom homes built on individual lots. Transportation and infrastructure were major topics. Commissioners noted increasing traffic congestion on U.S. 17, County Road 760A, and other corridors, along with concerns that approved growth may outpace roads, water, sewer, and county finances. Members discussed the need for strategic infrastructure planning, including future road corridors and utility expansion to guide development into appropriate areas. Agriculture preservation was another central issue. Speakers and commissioners noted that high land prices and citrus decline are making farming more difficult, while outside investors continue purchasing former groves for development. Residents urged the county to preserve farmland, open space, waterways, and historical resources. Public comment reflected a range of views. Some residents supported smaller family farms, environmental protections for the Peace River, and carefully planned growth. Others warned against becoming like nearby heavily developed areas. Several speakers emphasized that growth is inevitable and

should be managed responsibly rather than ignored. Overall, the workshop highlighted a common theme: the Board and residents want future growth to be deliberate, fiscally responsible, protective of rural identity, and aligned with infrastructure capacity. Additional workshops were scheduled to continue refining the county's long-term vision.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS & DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business before the Board, Chairman Hickox adjourned the meeting at 2:38PM

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

MANDY HINES
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

STEVE HICKOX
CHAIRMAN

BOCC 04-14-2026 Comp plan workshop speaker cards

Attachments: BOCC 04-14-2026 Comp plan workshop speaker cards

NOTE: For quasi-judicial matters, any party desiring a verbatim record of the proceeding of this hearing for the purpose of an appeal is advised to make private arrangements for the production of a record and anyone wishing to present documents or other written evidence to the Board must provide eight (8) copies of the written material . If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling 863-993-4800 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.