

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES LOCAL BILL STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 1143 Acme Improvement District, Palm Beach County

SPONSOR(S): Pafford

TIED BILLS: IDEN./SIM. BILLS:

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Local & Federal Affairs Committee	15 Y, 0 N	Flegiel	Rojas
2) State Affairs Committee	16 Y, 0 N	Moore	Camechis

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The Wellington Medical Arts District (Medical Arts District) is an ongoing development project centered around the Wellington Regional Medical Center (Medical Center). The goal of the Medical Arts District is to use the Medical Center to attract new medically related uses and offices to create 5,000 – 6,000 jobs in western Wellington.

The Acme Improvement District (Acme) is a dependent special district of the Village of Wellington that is responsible for building and maintaining the drainage infrastructure within Acme's boundaries. Acme is also authorized to construct and maintain roads and parks and provide utilities within its boundaries.

In 2012, the Legislature extended the boundaries of Acme to include the Medical Arts District. At the same time, the Legislature contracted the boundaries of the Lake Worth Drainage District to remove the Medical Arts District from its jurisdiction. The purpose of this district realignment was to allow the Village of Wellington to develop the Medical Arts District using the powers of Acme.

The boundary expansion description in the 2012 act contained several errors. Due to the errors, the boundaries failed to include the Medical Center and southern portions of the Medical Arts District, erroneously included portions of suburbs to the north of the Medical Arts District, and created a gap in the boundary line on Acme's north border.

The bill corrects the boundaries for Acme contained in ch. 2012-256, L.O.F., by including the Medical Center and southern portions of the Medical Arts District, excluding the suburbs to the north of the Medical Arts District, and closing the boundary line gap. The bill also expands the boundaries to include five acres of land located along the northern edge of the Medical Arts District.

This bill will take effect upon becoming a law.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Wellington Medical Arts District

The northwest corner of State Road 7/U.S. 441 and Forest Hills Blvd. in Palm Beach County is the current home to the Wellington Regional Medical Center (Medical Center). In an effort to promote economic development and job creation in the area, the Village of Wellington is planning to create a dependent special district that will serve as “a premier wellness and healthcare treatment, medical education, and research destination.”¹ This dependent special district will be known as the Wellington Medical Arts District (Medical Arts District) and will cover approximately 212 acres, including the Medical Center.

Acme Improvement District

The Acme Improvement District (Acme) was created in 1953 as an independent special district with the responsibility of building and maintaining the drainage infrastructure within the district’s boundaries.² In 1995, the Florida Legislature incorporated the Village of Wellington.³ Acme was subsequently designated as a dependent special district of the village. In addition to providing and maintaining the district’s drainage infrastructure, Acme is authorized to construct and maintain roads and parks and provide utilities within its boundaries.⁴ At present, Acme borders the proposed Medical Arts District to the south and west.⁵

Lake Worth Drainage District

The Lake Worth Drainage District (Drainage District) is an independent special district that was created by judicial decree in 1915. The Drainage District is tasked with building and maintaining the drainage infrastructure within its boundaries. It is currently funded by a special assessment made on a per-acre basis.

Expansion of Acme District

In 2012, the Legislature passed ch. 2012-256, L.O.F., which removed the Medical Arts District from the Drainage District and placed it into Acme.⁶ This was done to allow the Village of Wellington and Acme to provide the needed infrastructure for the Medical Arts District. Because Acme has more general powers than the Drainage District, placing the Medical Arts District into Acme allowed revenue bonds to be issued for improvements such as roads, utilities, and parks. This facilitated the immediate development of the Medical Arts District. The drainage services for the Medical Arts District continue to be provided by the Drainage District through a service agreement with Acme.

The boundaries passed by the 2012 Legislature to include the Medical Arts District within Acme contained several errors. Due to the errors, the boundaries failed to include the Medical Center and southern portions of the Medical Arts District, erroneously included portions of suburbs to the north of the Medical Arts District, and created a gap in the boundary line on Acme’s north border.

Effect of Proposed Changes

¹ Letter to Representative Joseph Abruzzo from Jeff S. Kurtz, Attorney for Acme Improvement District (Sept. 29, 2011) (on file with Community & Military Affairs Subcommittee).

² Chapter 28557 (1953), L.O.F.

³ Chapter 95-496, L.O.F.

⁴ Chapter 2003-330, L.O.F.

⁵ See Map of Acme Improvement District, <http://www.wellingtonfl.gov/images/stories/eServices/docs/AcmeDistrict.pdf>.

⁶ Chapter 2012-256.

The bill corrects the boundaries for Acme contained in ch. 2012-256, L.O.F., by including the Medical Center and southern portions of the Medical Arts District, excluding the suburbs to the north of the Medical Arts District, and closing the boundary line gap. The bill also expands the boundaries to include five acres of land located along the northern edge of the Medical Arts District.

The bill is effective upon becoming law.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Amends the boundaries of the extension of the Acme Improvement District contained in ch. 2012-256, L.O.F.

Section 2: Provides that the bill will take effect upon becoming law.

II. NOTICE/REFERENDUM AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. NOTICE PUBLISHED? Yes ☒ No ☐

IF YES, WHEN? December 1, 2013

WHERE? *The Palm Beach Post*, a daily and Sunday newspaper, published at West Palm Beach in Palm Beach County, FL.

B. REFERENDUM(S) REQUIRED? Yes ☐ No ☒

IF YES, WHEN?

C. LOCAL BILL CERTIFICATION FILED? Yes, attached ☒ No ☐

D. ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FILED? Yes, attached ☒ No ☐

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES: None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY: None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS: None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 20, 2014, the Local & Federal Affairs Committee adopted one amendment and reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The amendment clarifies the boundaries of the land that the bill adds to the Acme District and also adds an additional five acres to the Acme District.