

Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission

March 19, 2025

6:00 pm

County Administration Building - Jack Durrance Auditorium

12 SE 1 Street, 2nd Floor, Gainesville, FL 32601

	Pages
1. Call to Order	
Chair will call the meeting to order	
2. Approval of the Agenda	1
3. Approval of Minutes	2
4. Legislative Item: Z25-000006 Comprehensive Plan Amendment	4
County Initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment to add Tree Protection policies to the Conservation and Open Space Element	
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Presentation	
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7. Planning Commissioner Comments	
8. Adjournment	

Alachua County
Local Planning Agency & Planning Commission Agenda
Public Hearings

*The Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission will have an in-person meeting on **Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.***

The public may attend in person at 12 SE 1st Street, Gainesville, FL, Second Floor, Jack Durrance Board Room.

If any accommodation is needed for persons with disabilities, please contact the Alachua County Equal Opportunity Office at least two business days in advance at (352) 374-5275 (voice) or (352) 374-5284 (TDD) or 711 Florida Relay Service. Printed materials are available in alternate format upon request.

I. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

All persons wishing to participate and speak on an issue at the public meeting have the right, through the Chair, to ask questions of staff or other speakers, to seek clarification of comments made by staff or other speakers, and to respond to the comments or presentations of staff or other speakers. All persons who present written materials to Commissioners for consideration must ensure that a copy of those materials is provided to the Clerk for inclusion in the Board's record of proceedings and official minutes

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR December 18, 2024 MEETING

III. EXPARTE COMMUNICATION/PARTY STATEMENT/SWEARING IN

IV. LEGISLATIVE ITEM: Z25-000006 - County-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment to add Tree Protection policies to the Conservation and Open Space Element

V. LEGISLATIVE ITEM: Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Process Overview Presentation

VI. ATTENDANCE REPORT

IV. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

General information: All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard. Persons wishing to comment on the above scheduled items may file written comments with the Director of the Department of Growth Management, Office of Planning and Development prior to the scheduled hearings. All persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at this public hearing or meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

If any accommodations are needed for persons with disabilities, please contact the Alachua County Equal Opportunity Office at (352) 374-5275 (voice) or (352) 374-5284 (TDD). Staff Reports on zoning items are generally available on Friday of the week preceding the Planning Commission meeting. For further information, please contact the Office of Planning and Development, of the Department of Growth Management, 10 SW 2nd Avenue, 3rd Floor, Gainesville, Florida 32601, (352) 374-5249.

Alachua County Local Planning Agency/ Planning Commission Meeting Minutes:
December 18, 2024

The Alachua County Planning Commission held a public meeting on December 18, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held **in person**.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Raymond Walsh, Chair
Kristen Young, Vice-Chair
Jancie Vinson
Barry Rutenberg

Samuel Mutch absent
Melissa Norman absent
Gailine McCaslin absent
Kay Abbitt absent

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Hays, Director, Growth Management
Jerry Brewington, Senior Planner, Development Services, Growth Management
Lalit Lalwani, Civil Engineer III, Public Works
Courtney Wilson, Senior Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney Office
Patricia McAllister, Clerk, Development Services, Growth Management

Meeting Called to Order:

Meeting called to order by Chair Walsh at 6:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
Motion was made by *Commissioner Young* to **approve** the agenda.
Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.
Action: The **agenda** was **approved** with a vote of **4-0**.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 20, 2024
Motion was made by *Commissioner Rutenberg* to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2024 meeting.
Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Vinson*.
Action: The **minutes** for the November 20, 2024 Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission meeting were **approved** with a vote of **4-0**.

3. **EXPARTE COMMUNICATION/PARTY STATEMENT/SWEARING IN**
 - *Courtney Wilson* asked if there were any Ex Parte communications for this meeting.
No ExParte communications were disclosed.
 - *Courtney Wilson* read the party statement into the record and stated there were no party requests for this meeting
 - *Patricia McAllister* swore in staff, the applicant and members of the public for this meeting.

4. **QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEM: Z24-000009 (Special Use Permit for Private School)**

A request by Clay Sweger of eda, inc. agent, for Iglesia Casa Del Alfarero Asambleas of Dios Alachua FL Inc., owners, for a special use permit to allow a private educational facility. The site has a future land use designation of Low Density Residential (1 to 4 dwelling units/acre) and non-residential Planned Development (PD) zoning. The site is approximately 8.6 acres, has a tax parcel number of 04201-000-000 and is at 12100 NW 39th Ave.

Staff Presentation:

Jerry Brewington presented this application. *Mr. Brewington* stated this private school would be for grades Kindergarten through 12th grade and would not exceed 300 students. Staff recommends approval of this application with the bases and conditions as noted in the staff report.

Commissioner Questions for staff:

Commissioner Rutenberg questioned whether this school would be a one story or a two-story building.

Commissioner Young questioned if the school hours are standard from 7 am to 6 pm, if there is flooding on this property, if there is adequate stacking to alleviate traffic on 39th avenue and if the secondary access is just for emergency vehicles.

Commissioner Walsh asked if there were plans to widen 39th Avenue in this area.

Applicant: *Clay Sweger* made a brief presentation and was available to answer questions. Mr. Sweger stated there is not a flooding issue on this property as there are adequate stormwater facilities and this private school will connect to central sewer and there are existing buffers.

Staff Response:

Jerry Brewington stated we do not have a building plan for this school yet so we do not know if it is proposed to be one story or two at this time. *Mr. Brewington* stated the hours are standard and they are the recommended hours for this private school. *Mr. Brewington* also stated there is adequate vehicle stacking for this property and the secondary access for this property is only for emergency vehicles.

Jeff Hays stated there are no current plans for widening of 39th Avenue in this section.

Motion was made by *Commissioner Vinson* to **approval** Z24-000009 with the bases and conditions as noted in the staff report

Motion was **seconded** by *Commissioner Young*

Public Comments: None

Action: Z24-000009 was approval with a unanimous vote of 4-0.

5. **ATTENDANCE REPORT:** Distributed in packets. No attendance issues.

6. **PLANNING COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**
Commissioner Walsh wished everyone "Happy Holidays".

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.



**ALACHUA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT
STAFF REPORT**

Application Number: Z25-000006

Staff Contact: Chris Dawson, Principal Planner (352) 374-5249

SUBJECT: County-initiated text amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Conservation and Open Space Element to add additional tree protection policies and modify the policies for determining Open Space within developments.

APPLICANT/AGENT: Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

CHRONOLOGY: Local Planning Agency Hearing: March 19, 2025
County Commission Transmittal Hearing: TBD
County Commission Adoption Hearing: TBD

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Recommend the Board of County Commissioners transmit the Amendment to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment.

BoCC ACTION (transmittal):

BoCC ACTION (adoption):

Staff Report Exhibits: Exhibit 1 – Proposed text amendments to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two years, the Board of County Commissioners has discussed the need for additional protection for certain types of trees in new developments. Although the County has amended its land development regulations to attempt to provide for this additional protection, the Commission, through a series of workshops, has identified specific trees for enhanced protection, and the need to provide some flexibility in the Open Space designation criteria to retain additional canopy throughout developments.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment would amend the list of Conservation Areas in the Conservation and Open Space Element to include Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks. Landmark Live Oaks will be defined in the ULDC. In addition, new policies describing this Conservation resource are included in the amendment. Finally, updates to the Open Space policies are included to recognize the different type of protection that Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks will need compared to other Conservation areas, and to clarify criteria used to select Open Space. Some additional changes are proposed to reflect changes in the Future Land Use Element and to better reflect the intent to designate Conservation areas prior to selecting other Open Space.

BACKGROUND

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan has included Policies 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 since at least 2005. These policies provide the basis for tree protection regulations adopted in the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). These policies, generally, provide direction to preserve some portion of existing tree canopy on a site. Additionally, the policies direct that Champion and certain specimen trees should be avoided during development.

Since 2006, the ULDC has included tree protection regulations for new development similar to those in effect today. Over that time, the ULDC has moved from a requirement to protect 20% of the tree canopy, to requiring reduced tree canopy preservation for certain types of developments, such as cottage neighborhoods or transit oriented development. As the Commission has reviewed Preliminary Development Plans over the last several years, they have identified a preference for certain types of trees to be protected which requires additional language in the ULDC. The additional policies proposed with this amendment support the Commission's desire to protect certain trees (Champion and Landmark Live Oaks) with an enhanced standard, while still identifying general tree canopy preservation requirements for all development.

The Amendment would designate certain trees as a Conservation area. The Comprehensive Plan identifies certain environmental features (e.g., wetlands and significant geological features) as Conservation areas and affords them the significant protection. This protection includes retention of the feature and protection from future development. Designation as a Conservation area will ensure that, like other important natural features, Champion and Landmark Live Oaks will be protected. Finally, the definition of Champion Tree is proposed for update.

The Open Space changes included in the amendment recognize that protection of trees as a Conservation area will need to function differently than for other Conservation areas. The ULDC will

identify specific tools for protection of Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks. Additionally, the changes provided for somewhat more flexibility in designation of Open Space by allowing the designation of Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks to count towards a development's required Open Space wherever they may be located.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is internally consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and specifically with the following goals, objectives, and policies. In the following section, the applicable Comprehensive Plan policies are shown in italics followed by a discussion of how the proposed amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use Element

***Policy 1.2.1.2** Landscapes, buffers, natural areas or transitional development practices shall be utilized in site planning to lessen impacts and integrate development along the edges of different land use categories, screen undesirable views, preserve tree canopy and vegetation in accordance with the Conservation and Open Space Element, and facilitate the safe movement of traffic and pedestrians in vehicle use areas. Such practices may take the form of any combination of the following*

- (a) undisturbed natural areas of non-invasive trees and plants;*
- (b) landscaped open spaces with canopy trees and under-story trees and plants;*
- (c) physical elements that do not impede the interconnectivity of pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile facilities, such as landscaped screens, walls, or fences; or*
- (d) development practices to use massing, scale of structures, design, and transitions of intensity of uses to provide for building types, building sizes, and activities that are similar to or compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and community.*

The proposed Amendment provides for the preservation of tree canopy. Specific regulations about how these Conservation areas can be used will be detailed in the ULDC.

Conservation and Open Space

Policy 5.4.2 *New development shall conserve existing trees and native vegetation by use of sound arboricultural and horticultural practices that provide for the protection and long-term survival of the vegetation, as part of an overall strategy to achieve landscape, habitat preservation, and open space requirements. Conservation may entail grading restrictions, vegetation clustering, protective buffers, and density and intensity limitations, consideration of alternative layouts of permitted uses, and similar techniques that provide for the long-term survival of vegetation.*

Policy 5.4.3 *The County shall protect trees according to a species specific hierarchy. Trees shall receive priority for protection based on species, in conjunction with other features including size, age, condition, historic association, and uniqueness. Removal or damage of champion trees shall be prohibited, and removal or damage of designated specimen trees shall be avoided, or mitigated if*

removal or damage cannot be avoided. Specific protections shall be provided in the land development regulations.

The proposed Amendment provides additional protection for Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks by designating them as Conservation areas. These additional protections are consistent with the idea of a hierarchy of tree canopy preservation. Further, their inclusion as Conservation areas requires them to be included in designated Open Space areas. Specific standards for protections will be detailed in the ULDC.

Energy

Policy 3.2.2 *The County shall protect and seek to increase tree canopy in the Urban Cluster.*

The proposed Amendment would offer additional protections to Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is intended to provide additional resource protection, and to provide additional flexibility in the designation of Open Space for new development. Alachua County's Comprehensive Plan and land development regulations are based on the concept of gross residential density and allow for flexibility in lot sizes and residential development types. It is not anticipated that this amendment will change the affordability of housing in Alachua County.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **transmittal** of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment Z25-000006 as shown in Exhibit 1 to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment pursuant to Section 163.3184, Florida Statutes, with the following basis:

The proposed amendment is internally consistent with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, and specifically the following goals, objectives and policies as discussed in the previous section of this report.

Exhibit 1 – Proposed Text Amendment to Alachua County Comprehensive Plan

Underlined text is proposed to be added ~~Struck through~~ text is proposed for deletion.
Regular text is currently adopted language.

Conservation and Open Space Element

OBJECTIVE 3.1 - CONSERVATION LAND USE CATEGORIES

A conservation land use category shall be established to recognize and protect natural resources within privately owned lands in Alachua County utilizing appropriate regulatory, acquisition, and incentive mechanisms.

Policy 3.1.1 Conservation areas shall consist of natural resources that, because of their ecological value, uniqueness and particular sensitivity to development activities, require stringent protective measures to sustain their ecological integrity. These areas shall include:

- (a) Wetlands;
- (b) Surface waters;
- (c) 100-year floodplains;
- (d) Listed species habitat;
- (e) Significant geologic features; ~~and~~
- (f) Strategic ecosystems; and
- (g) Champion trees and Landmark Live Oaks

Objective 4.11 – CHAMPION TREES AND LANDMARK LIVE OAKS

Protect and conserve Champion trees and Landmark Live Oaks, as determined in the land development regulations, to support biological systems, provide for ecological benefits to the developed environment and maximize the enjoyment of natural settings.

Policy 4.11.1 The land development regulations shall establish standards for designating Champion trees and Landmark Live Oaks, with a focus on large, long-lived, high-quality trees. Canopy areas associated with preserved trees may be counted towards a development’s required Open Space consistent with COSE Policy 5.2.2.

Policy 4.11.2 Outside of the preservation of large, long-lived high-quality trees, the land development regulations should incentivize new development to preserve other existing tree canopy consistent with COSE Policies 5.4.2 and 5.4.3.

Policy 4.11.3 Preserved trees and tree canopy should be accessible to the public, where appropriate, to provide for enjoyment of the natural systems associated with them. The land development regulations shall establish standards for limited impacts within the tree canopy area.

OBJECTIVE 5.2 - OPEN SPACE

To permanently preserve public Open Space within developments within Alachua County that protects natural resources, provides recreation, and augments the community network of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Policy 5.2.1 Open Space shall be provided on at least ten percent of every development, except as specified in Policy 5.2.5.

Policy 5.2.2 Open space is not intended to diminish other conservation requirements in this Element. The open space requirement in Policy 5.2.1 shall be fulfilled first with any of the conservation areas listed in Policy 3.1.1 followed by any significant habitat, if such exist on the site. All Conservation Areas or significant habitat within Open Space, with the exception of Champion Trees and Landmark Live Oaks, shall be maintained and remain undeveloped in perpetuity using a legal instrument that runs with the land and sets forth conditions and restrictions on use. The ULDC shall provide alternative options for protection of conservation resources based on quality, size, connectivity, and any other specified criteria. The boundaries of all Open Space shall be clearly delineated on plans, including recorded plats, and marked in the field to distinguish Open Space from developed areas.

Policy 5.2.3 After the requirements of Policy 5.2.2 have been met, additional Open Space shall minimize the fragmentation of open space areas and be one piece of contiguous land, at the periphery of the development to allow for connection to adjacent open space, with limited exceptions as defined in the land development code. The Open Space shall be located to best meet the following goals:

- (a) Augment required conservation areas
- (b) Provide accessible open space in the form of community gardens, community fields, greens, and pocket parks
- (c) Promote greater accessibility, resource protection, and connectivity by being contiguous or linked through multiuse paths to greenways, trails, public parks, and Open Space on adjoining parcels.

Policy 5.2.4 Open space in clustered rural residential subdivisions and Planned Developments with Transfers of Development Rights (PD-TDR) shall be preserved in accordance with policies under Objective 6.2 of the Future Land Use Element.

Policy 5.2.5 After meeting the requirements of Policy 5.2.2 to preserve any conservation resources listed in Policy 3.1.1 or significant habitat, the following types of development are not required to provide additional Open Space:

- (a) Nonresidential Development
- (b) Family Homestead Subdivisions

- (c) Rural Agriculture ~~Unpaved Residential Subdivisions with no more than 9 lots~~
- (d) Towers, major utilities, and outdoor recreation

Developments not required to provide additional open space shall still provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between designated greenways when applicable.

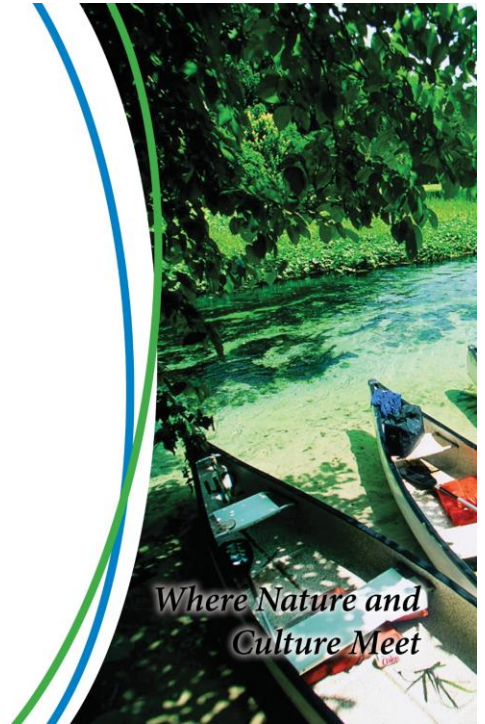
Definitions:

Champion Trees: Those trees that have been identified by the Florida ~~Forest Service~~ Division of Forestry as being the largest of their species within the State of Florida or by American Forests ~~the American Forestry Association~~ as the largest of their species in the United States. ~~The current list of champion trees in Gainesville and Alachua County is on file in the office of codes enforcement. This list is subject to revision and will be updated yearly.~~



Tree Protection and Open Space CPA

**Planning
Commission Public
Hearing
225-000006**



1

Background



Board of County Commissioners, through a series of workshops, has identified specific trees for enhanced protection, and the need to provide some flexibility in the Open Space designation criteria to retain additional canopy throughout developments.

2

Current Policies



Policy 5.4.2 *New development shall conserve existing trees and native vegetation by use of sound arboricultural and horticultural practices that provide for the protection and long-term survival of the vegetation, as part of an overall strategy to achieve landscape, habitat preservation, and open space requirements. Conservation may entail grading restrictions, vegetation clustering, protective buffers, and density and intensity limitations, consideration of alternative layouts of permitted uses, and similar techniques that provide for the long-term survival of vegetation.*

Policy 5.4.3 *The County shall protect trees according to a species specific hierarchy. Trees shall receive priority for protection based on species, in conjunction with other features including size, age, condition, historic association, and uniqueness. Removal or damage of champion trees shall be prohibited, and removal or damage of designated specimen trees shall be avoided, or mitigated if removal or damage cannot be avoided. Specific protections shall be provided in the land development regulations.*

3

Proposed Policies – Conservation areas



- **Policy 3.1.1 – Add Champion trees and Landmark Live Oaks as a Conservation area**
- **New Objective 4.11 and Policies 4.11.1 – 4.11.3 describe the protection for Champion trees and Landmark Live Oaks**

4

Proposed Policies – Open Space



- **Policy 5.2.2 – Identify that Champion trees and Landmark Live Oaks do not require permanent protection**
- **Policy 5.2.3 – Removes the prescriptive requirement that Open Space be a single contiguous piece on the edge of a development**

5

Staff Recommendation



Find the Amendment consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommend that the Board of County Commissioners transmit the amendment to the State Land Planning Agency for Review

6



Questions





Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update Process Overview

Planning Commission Meeting: March 19, 2025

Purpose of Presentation

- Overview of the County's Comprehensive Plan evaluation and update process and timeline for 2025-2026.
- No specific action required by Planning Commission today
- Any recommendations on policy focus areas or process can be built into the workplan going forward.



ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2040



Adopted November 12, 2019
Ordinance 19-25, Effective December 13, 2019
Updated through February 18, 2024

Alachua County
Growth Management Department
10 SW 2nd Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601
Phone: (352) 374-5249
<http://growth-management.alachuacounty.us>

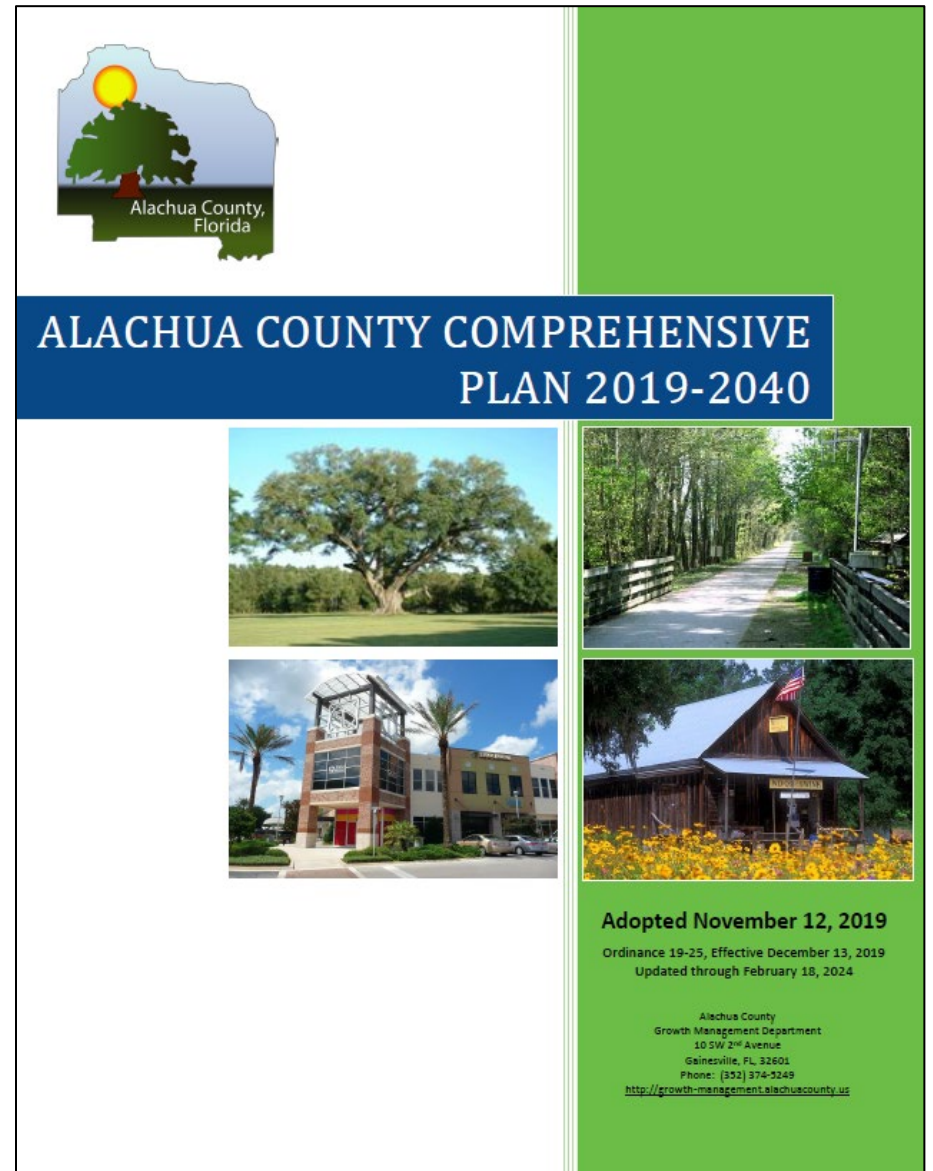
What is the Comprehensive Plan?

- Long-range planning document (~20 years).
- Expresses the community's vision in terms of goals, objectives, policies, and strategies.
- Identifies community assets and needs.
- Based on broad community input and adopted by the County Commission.
- Basis for Land Development Regulations (LDRs)
- Guides local government decision-making.
- Required by statute for all local governments.

Achua County Comprehensive Plan Elements

- Future Land Use
- Transportation Mobility
- Housing
- Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer
- Solid Waste
- Stormwater
- Conservation & Open Space
- Recreation
- Public School Facilities*
- Intergovernmental Coordination
- Capital Improvements
- Economic Element*
- Historic Preservation*
- Community Health*
- Energy*
- Property Rights

* Per Florida Statutes, these are “optional elements” that are included in the County’s Comprehensive Plan. Other elements are required by Statute.



ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN 2019-2040

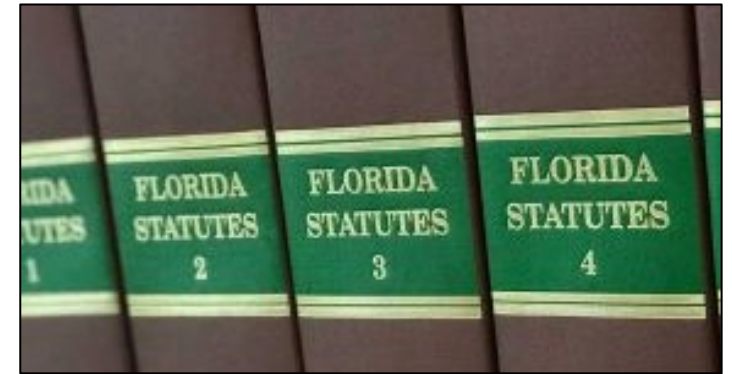
Adopted November 12, 2019
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Alachua County
Growth Management Department
10 SW 2nd Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32601
Phone: (352) 374-9249
<http://growth-management.alachuacounty.us>

State Requirements for Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

Section 163.3191, Florida Statutes

- Every 7 years, each local government must evaluate its comprehensive plan to determine if amendments are necessary to reflect changes in state statutory requirements since the last update of the plan, and to reflect a minimum planning period of 10 years.
- Alachua County must notify the State of its determination by April 1, 2025.
- Local governments must also evaluate and update the Plan to reflect changes in local conditions.
- Any necessary amendment to the comprehensive plan must be transmitted for state agency review within 1 year.



Process for Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Update

- **Part 1** – Determination whether any amendments are needed to reflect changes in statutory requirements
 - Staff has reviewed and determined that amendments *are needed*.
 - Notification letter to State will be considered by BoCC on March 25, 2025.
 - Notification letter must be submitted to State by April 1, 2025.
- **Part 2** – Local issues scoping and proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

Process Part 2: Local Issues Scoping and Plan Amendments

- Any Plan amendments necessary to reflect local issues and changes in statutory requirements must be prepared and transmitted within 1 year of County's notification letter to State (by April 1, 2026)
- Local issues will be identified through broad-based community engagement process in 2025 and 2026

Local Issues Scoping

A variety of strategies will be used to solicit input on local issues to be considered as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update, such as:

- Board of County Commissioners workshops
- County Advisory Committee discussions
- Community workshops
- Public Surveys/Questionnaires
- General publicity via press release, print media, social media, web site, and email lists.
- Attendance at community events
- Meetings with interested local organizations
- Discussion with key staff of County departments

Examples of Local Issues to be Considered in Plan Update

- General review and update of outdated policies and references
- Update population projections and other demographic data
- Urban Cluster capacity analysis
- Review Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) policies
- Review stormwater management policies for new development
- Review Eastside Activity Center land use policies
- Review Commercial land use policies

Examples of Local Issues to be Considered in Plan Update

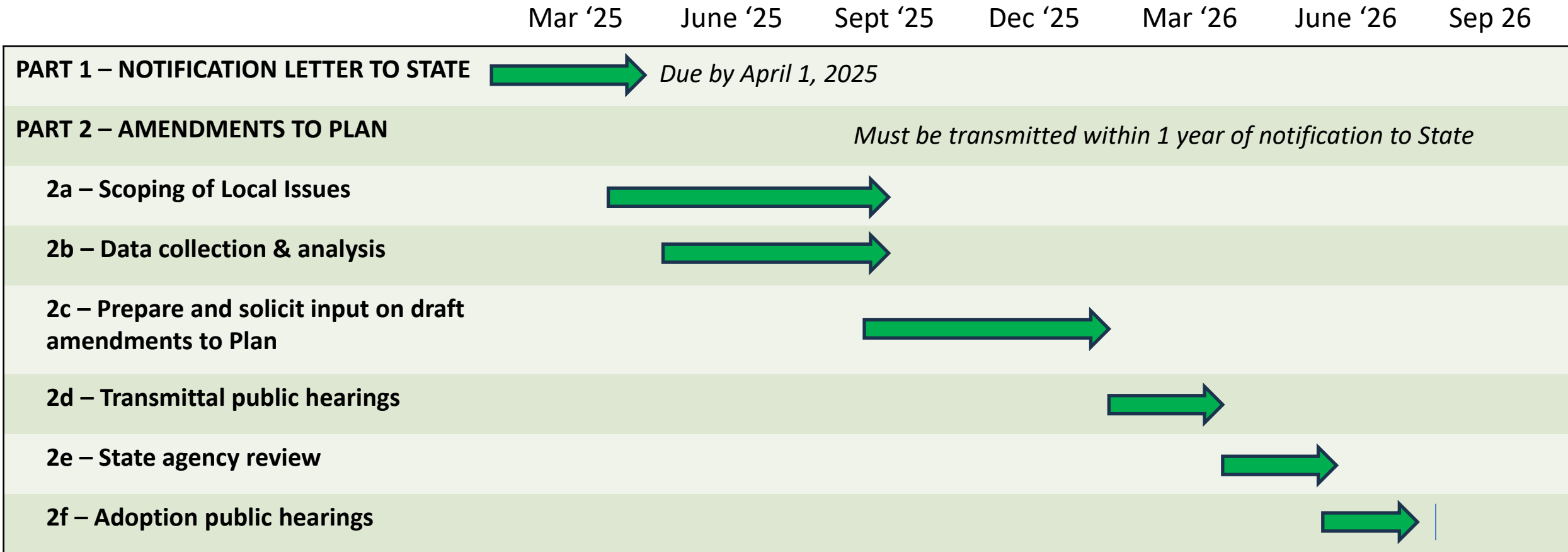
- Update Transportation Element to reflect work on Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan and Safe Streets for All
- Review Transportation and Capital Improvements Element to ensure alignment with recent Mobility Fee updates
- Consider revision to recreation Level of Service standards based on recent Parks Master Plan
- Review Economic Element to ensure alignment with current County priorities and strategies, and the County's Strategic Plan

Local Issues Scoping - Other County Planning Efforts

Recently-completed or ongoing County planning efforts will inform the Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update:

- Climate Action Plan
- Parks Master Plan
- Fire Master Plan
- Equity Audit of Comprehensive Plan
- Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan
- Forward Focus Eastern Alachua County
- Affordable Housing Efforts

Process Overview and Timeline



Questions and Discussion

For more information, contact:

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner
Alachua County Department of Growth Management
(352) 374-5249
BDChumley@alachuacounty.us

Web Site:

<https://growth-management.alachuacounty.us/Planning/CompPlanUpdate>

ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVALUATION AND UPDATE 2025-2026

PROJECT SCOPE

Alachua County will be evaluating and updating its Comprehensive Plan beginning in 2025 through 2026. The last major evaluation and update of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan was in 2018-2019. The current update will address the requirements of Florida Statutes as well as issues of local interest.

Florida Statutes Section 163.3191 requires that:

At least once every 7 years, each local government shall evaluate its comprehensive plan to determine if plan amendments are necessary to reflect a minimum planning period of at least 10 years as provided in s. 163.3177(5) or to reflect changes in state requirements in this part since the last update of the comprehensive plan, and notify the state land planning agency as to its determination.

The Florida Department of Commerce establishes due dates for local governments to make their determination as to whether any amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are necessary to reflect changes in state statutory requirements. Alachua County's due date for making its determination is April 1, 2025. If it is determined that amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are needed, those amendments must then be transmitted for state agency review within 1 year of the County's determination letter.

Section 163.3191 Florida Statutes also requires local governments to comprehensively evaluate and, as necessary, update comprehensive plans to reflect changes in local conditions. This might include changes in the County's demographic data, land development trends, new or revised service delivery plans, changing community needs and priorities, intergovernmental planning considerations, or consideration of other planning efforts by the County that are currently underway or have taken place since the last update of the Comprehensive Plan (e.g., Climate Action Plan, Parks Master Plan, Fire Master Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and Forward Focus: Eastern Alachua County).

The following pages provide a scope and timeline for the update of the County's Comprehensive Plan in 2025 and 2026. While this scope provides a general outline of the process, it is anticipated that additional meetings, workshops, and public outreach strategies will be needed on specific local issues or concerns.

ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVALUATION AND UPDATE 2025-2026

OUTLINE OF PROCESS AND TIMELINE

PROCESS INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW – FEBRUARY 25, 2025

BoCC Presentation: Introduction and Overview of Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update Process

PART 1: NOTIFICATION LETTER TO STATE (January - April 2025)

- Staff will review the Comprehensive Plan and identify updates that are necessary to reflect changes in state requirements since the last evaluation and update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2018-2019.
- A letter will be transmitted to State Land Planning Agency with the County's determination whether any Comprehensive Plan updates are necessary to reflect changes in state requirements. This determination is due April 1, 2025.
- **BoCC Action Needed:** Approval of letter to the State Land Planning Agency with the County's determination (**March 25, 2025**)

PART 2: IDENTIFICATION OF LOCAL ISSUES AND AMENDMENTS TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (April 2025 – July 2026)

This part will involve identifying local issues and preparing amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to address state requirements and local issues. Pursuant to the statute, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that are necessary to reflect changes in state requirements (if any) must be transmitted within 1 year of submitting the County's determination letter described in Part 1 to the State Land Planning Agency. Every effort will be made to transmit all state-required and local issue amendments in one batch within the 1-year timeframe. However, depending on the number and complexity of local issues to be considered, and given the 1-year deadline to transmit the amendments, some of the local issue updates may need to be transmitted separately (whether or not this will be necessary will be determined as the process moves forward).

Part 2a: Scoping of Local Issues (March 2025 – September 2025)

This part will involve identifying issues of local interest that may be considered as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff will seek input on issues to be considered through a broad-based public engagement process, which will include, but is not limited to:

- Board of County Commissioners Workshops
- County Advisory Committee meetings such as:
 - Planning Commission
 - Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (EPAC)
 - Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)
 - Citizen Climate Advisory Committee
 - Equity Advisory Board (EAB)
 - Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC)
 - Rural Concerns Advisory Committee (RCAC)
 - Alachua County Historical Commission (ACHC)
- Community Workshops
- Public Surveys/Questionnaires
- General publicity via press release, social media, print media, web site, and other available methods
- Attendance at community events
- Meetings with key staff of County departments
- Meetings with interested local organizations

Upon completion of the above local issues scoping, staff will present an outline of potential local issues and Comprehensive Plan updates to the BoCC.

BoCC Action Needed: Confirm local issues to be considered for Comprehensive Plan Update (~September 2025)

Part 2b: Data Collection and Analysis Relating to Issues (May 2025 – September 2025)

This part will involve compiling relevant data and conducting necessary analysis relating to the local issues identified in the scoping process in Part 2a. This part will also involve reviewing other County planning documents to ensure that the County’s Comprehensive Plan accurately reflects those plans. Regional and state plans will also be reviewed to ensure that the County’s Comprehensive Plan is not in conflict with those plans.

Part 2c: Prepare Draft Comprehensive Plan Amendments (September 2025 – January 2026)

This part will involve preparing draft amendments to the Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, policies, and maps based on the Scoping process in Part 2a and the data gathered in Part 2b. Public input and comment on draft changes will be solicited through various methods such as:

- BoCC workshop discussions
- County Advisory Committee discussions

- Meetings with interested local organizations
- Sharing draft changes with the public at large and providing opportunities for input and comment.
- General publicity about the availability of draft changes via press releases, social media, web site, and other available methods.

Part 2d: Public Hearings on Transmittal of Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments (January 2026 – March 2026)

- Alachua County Planning Commission Public Hearing (Jan-Feb 2026)
- Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing (Feb-March 2026)

Part 2e: State Agency Review (March 2026 – May 2026)

Pursuant to Florida Statutes, proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments that are transmitted by the local government for state agency review are processed through the State Coordinated Review process. Under this process, the various state reviewing agencies have 30 days to provide comments to the State Land Planning Agency (Department of Commerce), which then has 60 days to review the Plan amendments and issue an Objections, Recommendations, and Comments Report to the local government. In total, this review will take about 90 days to complete.

Part 2f: BoCC Public Hearing on Adoption of Comprehensive Plan Amendments (~July 2026)

The BoCC must hold a public hearing to consider final adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments by ordinance within 180 days of receipt of the State’s Objections, Recommendations, and Comments Report.

Attendance Report for the last 6 meetings

Local Planning Agency and Planning Commission

Staff Liaisons: Patricia McAllister, Chris Dawson

Member	Start	End	Terms	01/17/24	05/15/24	08/21/24	09/18/24	11/20/24	12/18/24	Meetings Attended
McCaslin, Gailine	08//24	7/31/28	1	--	--	P	P	P	A	3 of 4
Mutch, Samuel	08//24	7/31/28	1	--	--	P	P	P	A	3 of 4
Norman, Melissa	03/22/22	7/31/25	1	P	P	P	P	P	A	5 of 6
Sarah Rockwell*	12/24		1	--	--	--	--	--	A	0 of 1
Rutenberg, Barry	10/24/23	7/31/27	1	P	P	P	P	A	P	5 of 6
Vinson, Jancie	9/27/22	7/31/26	1	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
Walsh, Raymond	9/28/21	7/31/25	1	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
Young, Kristen	8/28/18	7/31/26	1	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6

[P=Present] [A=Absent] [C=Cancelled] [PNQ=Present No Quorum] [ANQ=Absent No Quorum] [NR=Member Active No Attendance Record]

[--=Member Not Active]

**** Our school board member is appointed by the Alachua County School Board.***

*****LPA/PC meetings for February 21, 2024; March 20, 2024; April 17, 2024, June 19, 2024, July 17, 2024 and October16, 2024 were cancelled.***

No attendance is necessary for those meetings.