

Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

August 19, 2025

4:00 pm

Community Support Services, Conference Room A

218 SE 24th Street, Gainesville, FL 32641

Pages

1.	Call to Order	
2.	Approval of the Agenda	
3.	Old Business	
3.1	Update on Project Scope and Status of Fresh Food Pathways Food Hub Initiative – Avi Mallinger, Project Manager, New Venture Advisors	
4.	Approval of Minutes for 07-15-2025 meeting	1
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9.	Public Comment	
10.	Next Meeting	
11.	Adjournment	

DRAFT
Rural Concerns Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2025

4:00 pm

Extension Auditorium

22712 W Newberry Road, Newberry, FL 32669

1. Call to Order

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

In person: Dr. Rodney Clouser (Chair), Lyman Conover, Janet Hearn, Micky McMillan (Vice Chair), Missy Norman, Dr. Cindy Sanders, Brent Weisman, Kelsey Waters

Virtual: Tyrone Johnson

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jacobi Bedenfield, John Nix, Amy Van Scoik

STAFF PRESENT:

Ken McMurry, Senior Planner, Growth Management

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner, Growth Management

Angeline Jacobs, Planner, Growth Management

Holly Banner, Zoning Administrator, Growth Management

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Garrett Schendovich

Luckee Limon

Kathleen Serino

Chair Clouser called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm. There were 8 members present in person, which was confirmed to satisfy the requirement for at least a quorum under County Advisory Board Guidelines, and 1 member present virtually. He said that members of the public present would have a chance to participate at appropriate points on the agenda.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Chair Clouser asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Motion was made by Dr. Sanders to approve the agenda; seconded by Mr. Weisman.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

3. New Business

3.1 Proposed Changes to Alachua County Unified Land Development Code – Angeline Jacobs, Planner, Growth Management

3.1.1 Agritourism Substantial Offsite Impacts

Ms. Jacobs gave a brief presentation including Florida Statutes definitions of agritourism and ecotourism activities. She said there are no current County regulations for Agritourism Substantial Offsite Impacts but Florida Statutes provides for their regulation by local governments. She said that public hearings for these draft amendments are tentatively planned for August 12th and September 9th.

There were questions and discussion from Committee members regarding the State statutes, their allowances for agritourism and relation to bona fide agriculture, and the relationship between local and state authority for determining bona fide agriculture. There were questions and discussion on the draft code language regarding allowing for access to private roads, alternative language for regulation of parking and traffic impacts, concerns regarding property owners' responsibility for a traffic impact study and roadway improvements, time ranges for lighting requirements, and regulation of noise. There was additional discussion regarding restaurants and the proposed requirements for and enforcement of utilization of agricultural products grown and processed onsite, regulation of restaurants for agritourism purposes and statutory preemptions, and the proposed requirements for public road access.

There were questions from members of the public regarding the proposed requirements for public road access and utilization of agricultural products grown and processed onsite, and negative impacts of nighttime lighting on crops and wildlife.

3.1.2 Poultry on Single-family Parcels less than Five Acres

Ms. Jacobs gave a brief presentation, including that this item is for poultry for personal use and not at commercial agricultural scales, the current County code standards, a comparison to other Florida jurisdictions, and a proposed new poultry definition. She said that the Board discussed this item on June 3rd and approved a motion, which she presented. She said that a request to the Board to advertise a public hearing for these draft amendments is tentatively planned for the end of August.

There were questions and discussion from Committee members regarding retaining current language on enclosed feed containers, the potential for poultry numbers exceeding personal use, adding "quail" to the proposed definition and allowing the full range of listed species on all parcels less than 5 acres outside the Urban Cluster, and prohibiting drakes (male ducks) in addition to roosters. There were questions from members of the public regarding allowing for additional poultry quantities based on individual review and differentiating laying vs non-laying hens.

Ms. Jacobs said staff would take today's comments into consideration in preparation of draft language for the Board.

4. Approval of minutes for 05-20-2025 meeting

Motion was made by Ms. Norman to approve the minutes for the 04-15-2025 meeting; seconded by Ms. Waters.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

5. Attendance Report

Mr. McMurry said the current Attendance Report showed all members in compliance with the attendance policy at this time. He said the Attendance Report is always sent out with the meeting materials and that if members have any questions about their status, they should ask staff. He said all RCAC positions are currently filled but that the two position terms currently filled by Ms. Van Scoik and Chair Clouser will expire on September 30th. He said those upcoming vacancies would be posted soon and that current members are always welcome to reapply.

6. Chair Comments

Chair Clouser said that the RCAC annual workplan will be due in October. He encouraged members to review the current workplan before that for any suggested revisions.

7. Staff Updates

Mr. McMurry that there are currently no agenda topics scheduled for the August meeting. He said the Committee is not scheduled to meet in September and that for the October agenda, in addition to approval of the annual workplan, the RCAC annual elections of officers would also be scheduled.

He gave a summary of the current work on the Food Hub project being done by NVA consultants, including site visits for a potential facility and meetings with stakeholders and institutional buyers. He said all RCAC members should have received an email from NVA in the last month with an invitation to interview as a stakeholder and there was general confirmation that they had. Mr. Weisman and Ms. McMillan said they had each participated via a phone interview with NVA. There was discussion from Committee members regarding a Food Hub update for the August meeting, including information on the status of the current analysis, potential sites, involvement of local institutional buyers, and any projected effects on local producers.

Mr. McMurry also gave summaries of the current status of the County's Small Farmers Grant Program including the 2025 application cycle and recommended awards, an upcoming Agritourism Workshop in August at Cuscowilla Nature & Retreat Center, and a Countywide Farmers Market Survey Project that will begin in September. Dr. Sanders said that this is the last year that the Small Farmers Grant Program will be funded.

Mr. McMurry said that he had followed up with the County Attorney's Office regarding questions at the May RCAC meeting on whether members could communicate their priorities between meetings to staff who would send a summary to the Committee member representative attending the Food Hub focus group. He said that per the County Attorney's Office, such communication between members must occur in a publicly noticed meeting.

He said that on July 8th the Board appointed members to the new Agricultural Land Conservation Board and that RCAC member John Nix is one of the appointees. He said the new Senior Planner for that program has also been hired. Chair Clouser asked for clarification on the funding source for the Agricultural Land Conservation program; Mr. McMurry said he would get that information for the next meeting.

8. Committee Members Comments

Mr. Conover said that Florida Farm Bureau, UF/IFAS Center for Leadership, and the Mind Your Melon Foundation have released a survey on the mental health of Florida farmers. Mr. McMurry said he would send out a link to the survey to the Committee members. There was discussion of mental health issues in rural areas as a potential future meeting topic.

Ms. Norman asked about the status of the County Comprehensive Plan update and whether staff could provide relevant excerpts for RCAC review. Mr. Chumley said that there are upcoming County Commission workshops scheduled on August 12th on land use and development issues including the rural area, and September 2nd, October 7th, October 21st, and December 2nd with topics to be determined. He said staff would provide Plan excerpts to RCAC at the August meeting.

9. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

10. Next Meeting

Next Meeting – August 19th @ Health Dept.

11. Adjournment

Motion was made by Ms. Norman to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Conover.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Clouser called the meeting to a close at 6:00 pm.

07/16/2025

Attendance Report Rural Concerns Advisory Committee

Staff Liaison: Ken McMurry

Member Position	Term Start	Term End	01-21-25	02-18-25	03-18-25	04-15-25	05-20-25	07-15-25	Meetings Attended
Bedenfield, Jacobi Residing in Unincorporated Area Outside Urban Cluster...	12-10-2024	11-30-2027	P	P	A	P	P	A	4 of 6
Clouser, Rodney Member from UF-IFAS	10-01-2022	9-30-2025	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
Conover, Lyman Member from the Farm Bureau	12-10-2024	11-30-2027	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
Hearn, Janet Residing in Unincorporated Area Outside Urban Cluster...	10-01-2023	9-30-2026	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
Johnson, Tyrone Alternate Member Chosen At Large	12-10-2024	11-30-2027	P	A	A	P	P	P	4 of 6
McMillan, Micky Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	2-01-2024	9-30-2026	P	P	P	P	A	P	5 of 6
Nix, John Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	10-01-2023	9-30-2026	A	P	P	P	P	A	4 of 6
Norman, Missy Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	5-14-2024	9-30-2026	P	P	P	P	P	P	6 of 6
Sanders, Cindy Member from County Extension Office	10-01-2023	9-30-2026	P	A	P	P	P	P	5 of 6
Van Scoik, Amy Actively Involved in Agriculture and/or Silviculture	6-01-2023	9-30-2025	A	P	A	P	P	A	3 of 6
Waters, Kelsey Member Chosen At Large	5-13-2025	4-30-2028	—	—	—	—	P	P	2 of 2
Weisman, Brent Residing in Unincorporated Area Outside Urban Cluster...	6-25-2024	5-31-2027	P	P	P	A	P	P	5 of 6

P = Present

A = Absent

Attendance is defined as being physically present at the meeting for one hour or 50% of the length of the meeting, whichever is shorter. Any regular or alternate member whose attendance is less than 50% of the last 6 consecutive meetings shall automatically be removed from the advisory committee.

Rural Concerns Advisory Committee Meeting
August 19, 2025

Information for Agenda Item 7. Staff Updates
Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Excerpts Related to Rural and Agricultural Issues

At its meeting on April 15, 2025, Rural Concerns Advisory Committee received a presentation from staff on the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan and the evaluation and update process currently underway (please refer to the 04-15-2025 presentation slides also included in the Agenda Item 7. materials). As follow up, staff have excerpted the attached current Plan principles, strategies, objectives, policies, and maps related to rural and agricultural issues.

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan contains a wide range of guidance addressing rural and agricultural issues, including things such as maintaining the separation of rural and urban uses, allowed uses in the rural area, rural transportation, wildfire mitigation, natural resource protection and land conservation, economic development, and local food systems.

The attached excerpts are from the following Comprehensive Plan Elements (referenced at the top of each section):

- Future Land Use Element
- Transportation Mobility Element
- Housing Element
- Conservation and Open Space Element
- Intergovernmental Coordination Element
- Economic Element
- Community Health Element

(Note: Comprehensive Plan principles, strategies, objectives, and policies that are not included are not indicated in the attached excerpts.)

The full Alachua County Comprehensive Plan can be found at:

<https://growth-management.alachuacounty.us/CompPlan/FutureLandUse>

More information about the County's Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update process can be found at: <https://alachuacounty.civilspace.io/en/projects/alachua-county-comprehensive-plan-evaluation-and-update>

FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT

PRINCIPLE 2

Base new development upon the provision of necessary services and infrastructure. Focus urban development in a clearly defined area and strengthen the separation of rural and urban uses.

GENERAL STRATEGY 1

Minimize the conversion of land from rural to urban uses by maximizing the efficient use of available urban infrastructure, while preserving environmentally sensitive areas, according to the following:

- Designate and maintain on the [Future Land Use Map](#) an urban cluster that sets a boundary for urban growth.
- Provide incentives for higher average densities for residential development and mixed uses in the urban cluster, including density bonuses and transfer of development rights.
- Provide a range of urban residential densities with the highest densities located in or near urban activity centers, and lower densities located in outlying rural areas or areas of the County which have physical limitations to development.
- Utilize mechanisms such as land acquisition, conservation easements, variable lot sizes, and conservation subdivisions.
- Preserve ecosystems of a given area and incorporate hazard-resilient land planning.
- Time development approval in conjunction with the economic and efficient provision of supporting community facilities, urban services, and infrastructure, such as streets, utilities, police and fire protection service, emergency medical service, mass transit, public schools, recreation and open space, in coordination with policies in the [Capital Improvements Element](#).

OBJECTIVE 3.11 - RURAL COMMERCIAL USES

Policy 3.11.1 Rural Commercial-Agriculture uses are shown on the Future Land Use map. The standards for Rural Commercial-Agriculture uses outside of rural clusters are as follows:

- (a) Development of Rural Commercial-Agriculture uses shall be required to meet all concurrency requirements.
- (b) Development shall be required to minimize access from arterials and collectors. Whenever possible, driveways shall use common access points to reduce potential turn movements.
- (c) A maximum of 3,000 square feet of gross leasable area shall be permitted for non-residential uses on each Rural Commercial-Agriculture parcel.

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- (d) Permitted uses are limited to single family residential units. Uses permitted by special exception shall include local grocery stores consistent with Policy 3.11.1(c), small markets and produce stands, rural medical and veterinary clinics, sales and service of farm equipment and supplies, farmer's markets, agricultural products distribution and agricultural services as defined in the Alachua County Unified Land Development Code to serve the rural area.
- (e) The land development regulations for this land use category shall specify performance standards required to mitigate any adverse impact of such development on adjacent land uses and affected public facilities. Such performance standards shall include buffering and landscaping provisions, site design measures to locate such uses away from less intensive adjacent land uses, signage and parking restrictions, and intensity provisions (e.g. height and bulk restrictions). In the interim, until land development regulations consistent with these policies are adopted, the standards and criteria governing Rural Commercial-Agriculture development shall be implemented by the County's Development Review Committee process.
- (f) As part of an area-based Community and Neighborhood Planning program to be implemented as a follow up to the Comprehensive Plan update, the Future Land Use Map shall be reevaluated to consider reclassification of areas designated for Rural Commercial-Agriculture uses as Agriculture. (These parcels are undeveloped rural sites with commercial zoning classifications established prior to October 2, 1991.)

6.0 RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

OBJECTIVE 6.1 - GENERAL

Rural and agricultural areas shall be protected in a manner consistent with the retention of agriculture, open space, and rural character, and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, and efficient use of public services and facilities.

Policy 6.1.1 The County shall encourage the continuation of productive agricultural uses through an integrated program of strategies, including innovative land use regulations in conjunction with transfer of development rights and support for use of local, State, and Federal incentives including pursuit of funds from state and federal programs for purchase of agricultural conservation easements and purchase of development rights. The County shall initiate a stewardship program utilizing strategies from but not limited to the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act, Section 163.3177 (11) (d) F.S. and Section 570.70, F.S., as appropriate to Alachua County.

Policy 6.1.2 Protection of important agricultural areas, based on factors such as the existing agricultural uses, soils, land use patterns, and economics of the county's agricultural community, shall be encouraged.

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- Policy 6.1.3** The most recent, applicable best management practices for agriculture and silviculture shall be required consistent with Section 5.5, Agricultural and Silvicultural Practices, of the Conservation and Open Space Element. The County shall encourage sustainable and conservation-oriented agricultural practices for agriculture and silviculture, and shall work with landowners to facilitate participation in the County's Transfer of Development Rights program, voluntary certification programs whose standards meet or exceed best management practices, agricultural and conservation easements, and federal and state cost-share programs. The land development regulations shall be reviewed for the inclusion of incentives to encourage voluntary participation in certification programs.
- Policy 6.1.4** The County shall support the development of markets and programs that promote the sale of locally produced agricultural goods, including but not limited to farmers markets, community gardens, farm to institution programs, and agritourism opportunities. The County shall partner with local community groups and organizations and other local governments to pursue funding sources for the development of a sustainable local food system.
- Policy 6.1.5** Agricultural pursuits shall be allowed in all land use classifications, provided that the health, safety and welfare of the general public and the protection of the natural environment are assured. The land development regulations shall include standards for agricultural pursuits and related uses in the Urban Cluster, including but not limited to farmers markets, community gardens, laying hens, and other small scale agricultural uses as allowable uses in appropriate areas.
- Policy 6.1.5.1** In order to provide access to fresh, nutritious local foods in the Urban Cluster, farmers markets shall be allowed in the Cluster within mixed-use and non-residential areas as permitted uses subject to the standards provided in the land development regulations and site plan approval by the Development Review Committee.
- Policy 6.1.5.2** Community gardens shall be allowed in the Urban Cluster in areas with an urban residential land use designation, mixed-use areas or in Activity Centers as permitted uses subject to the standards provided in the land development regulations and administrative approval by the Growth Management Department.
- Policy 6.1.5.3** The land development regulations shall include standards for the allowance of laying hens in residential areas within the Urban Cluster, such as standards for coops/runs, setbacks, and number of hens permitted per lot.
- Policy 6.1.5.4** The land development regulations shall include standards for the allowance of other small scale agricultural uses in residential areas within the Urban Cluster, such as aquaculture, apiculture, poultry and rabbit raising.

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- Policy 6.1.6** The land development regulations shall specify performance criteria and standards for intensive agricultural operations such as concentrated animal feeding operations and dairies to ensure protection of water quality and natural systems.
- Policy 6.1.7** Clean debris and construction and demolition debris landfills may be permitted through the special use permit process in areas identified as Rural/Agriculture, subject to performance criteria in the land development regulations, including the protection of groundwater quality.
- Policy 6.1.8** The land development regulations shall include thresholds that address the size, intensity and impacts of off-site agricultural product packaging and processing facilities and wood product processing and wood manufacturing facilities, below which such uses may be appropriately located in areas identified as Rural/Agriculture. Uses exceeding the established thresholds shall either be allowed in areas identified as Industrial on the Future Land Use Map or processed as a materials oriented industrial use in the Rural/Agriculture area subject to a Comprehensive Plan Amendment in accordance with Policy 4.1.1, Section 4.0, Industrial, of the Future Land Use Element. The land development regulations shall provide standards for wood product processing and wood manufacturing facilities that may be allowed in Rural/Agriculture areas subject to Board of County Commissioners approval in order to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses and minimize or eliminate impacts to natural resources. Standards shall address at a minimum hours of operation, buffering and screening, hazardous materials and wood waste management, setbacks, ingress and egress, parking, sales, product storage and display, and shall require the use of best management practices to minimize or eliminate impacts to natural resources and surrounding properties such as use of reclaimed wood products, reuse of scrap materials and recycling of wood product on-site and noise, odor and air pollution controls.

OBJECTIVE 6.2 - RURAL/AGRICULTURE

Areas identified for Rural/Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map are for agricultural activities including forestry and other agricultural uses, such as cattle grazing, cultivation of field crops, vegetable crops, dairies and those commercial or other uses on a limited scale serving or ancillary to agricultural activities, such as farm equipment and supplies, sales or service, farmers' markets, agritourism activities, composting, limited agricultural processing and wood product processing and wood manufacturing as provided in Policy 6.1.8 above, and agricultural products distribution. Rural residential uses, home-based businesses, rural event centers, heritage tourism and ecotourism activities, resource-based recreation and outdoor activity-based recreation are also allowed. Other uses involving animals not normally associated with agricultural activities, which would be suitable in the Rural/Agricultural areas, such as animal sanctuaries, kennels, and commercial animal raising, may be approved by the County Commission. New residential uses at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per five acres

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shall be permitted subject to the restrictions in Policy 6.2.7, except that the total allowable dwelling units may be increased pursuant to the Planned Development-Transfer of Development Rights program in accordance with 6.2.5.1 or the incentive bonuses for clustering of rural residential subdivisions in accordance with Policies 6.2.9 - 6.2.14.

Policy 6.2.1 Road construction to support new development in the Rural/Agricultural area shall be the responsibility of the private land developer. Public funds may be allocated to roads designated as part of the State primary and County road system or those roads determined to be needed for the benefit of the general public and designated for construction by the State or Board of County Commissioners. The County shall only assume operation and maintenance responsibilities for a road that is dedicated to the County and that meets the standards of the Subdivision Regulations and the Transportation Mobility Element.

Policy 6.2.1.1 Safety improvements shall be appropriate in any area of the County.

Policy 6.2.2 Central water and sanitary sewer lines shall not be extended into the Rural/Agricultural area, unless these services are needed to correct a public or environmental health threat, or as necessary for the efficient delivery of services to the Urban Cluster, as provided in the adopted Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer element.

Policy 6.2.3 Stormwater facilities consistent with the level of service standards for drainage shall be required as a condition of new development.

Policy 6.2.4 The land development regulations shall insure adequate internal traffic circulation on dedicated local roads and shall minimize driveway access to rural collector and arterial roads.

Policy 6.2.5 Parcels containing natural resource areas as identified in the Conservation and Open Space Element shall be conserved in accordance with those policies, such that the natural functions of the resource area are not significantly altered. This shall be accomplished either through clustering of new developments in accordance with Policy 6.2.9 through 6.2.14 below, or for developments of less than 10 lots that might not be clustered in accordance with these policies, through a development plan that assures the permanent protection of natural resources consistent with the requirements of the Conservation and Open Space Element; the land development regulations shall detail the requirements for management and permanent protection of the ecological value of natural resources in those developments that are not clustered through legally enforceable mechanisms that provide protection of those resources equivalent to the protection under Policies 6.2.12(c) through 6.2.12(e).

Policy 6.2.5.1 In order to implement COSE Policy 4.10.6, Planned Developments with Transfers of Development (PD-TDR) may be proposed for two or more separate parcels under the same ownership to facilitate transfers of development rights from regulated conservation areas, as defined in Conservation and Open Space Element

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Policy 3.1.1, to less sensitive areas designated as Rural/Agriculture on the Future Land Use Map. The PD-TDR will allow units of density to be transferred from one or more contiguous parcels (sending parcels) to one or more geographically separate parcels (receiving parcels). All parcels involved shall be rezoned as PD-TDR-S or PD-TDR-R. As a result of the transfer, receiving parcels may be developed at a gross density that exceeds that provided on the receiving parcel by the Rural/Agriculture land use category. The process and standards for PD/TDR developments shall be consistent with rural clustering policies with the following additional requirements:

- (a) The parcel (s) from which density will be transferred shall be designated PD-TDR-S on the zoning map. The parcel receiving the density shall be designated PD-TDR-R. The sending parcel shall be so designated in perpetuity unless both the sending and receiving parcels are considered for rezoning simultaneously and the overall density in the rural area is not increased.
- (b) The maximum number of units that can be transferred shall be the lesser of:
 - (1) The number of units that could be developed on the sending parcel(s) under the Rural/Agriculture maximum gross density of 1 units per 5 acres, plus bonus units consistent with Policy 6.2.10(d); or
 - (2) The number of upland acres, excluding wetlands and wetland buffers, on the sending parcel(s).
- (c) The sending parcel(s) must be at least 50% field-verified conservation areas, as defined in Conservation and Open Space Element Policy 3.1.1. The sending parcels shall include all individual parcels that have been created after the adoption of this amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan or from a date 5 years prior to the application for a PD-TDR, whichever is later.
- (d) Units not transferred to an initial receiving parcel(s) as part of the original PD-TDR approval shall remain with the sending parcel(s). At a subsequent time, the remaining units may only be directed to additional receiving parcels by way of a major amendment to the approved PD-TDR Master Plan. All sending and receiving parcels shall be identified on the PD-TDR Master Plan.
- (e) Sending parcels shall be designated as conservation management areas on the PD-TDR Master Plan. Residential densities of one dwelling unit per 40 acres to one dwelling unit per 200 acres may be retained on the sending areas where consistent with a Conservation Management Plan. Retained density must be clustered on the least sensitive portion of the property. The amount of density to be retained shall be based on what is necessary to protect the integrity of the ecological system and conservation resources.
- (f) Development of receiving parcels shall be consistent with COSE policies 3.1.1 - 3.1.3 and the objectives and policies in COSE 3.6.

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- (g) An area equal to at least 50% of the combined acreage of the sending and receiving areas for a PD-TDR shall be permanently set aside as open space on the sending parcel(s). Additionally, a minimum of 20% of the receiving parcel(s) shall be designated as open space consistent with COSE Policy 5.2.2.
- (h) The maximum density allowed on the receiving parcel will be the number of units based on the Rural/Agriculture land use designation for the receiving area, plus the additional units transferred from the sending area, subject to the minimum lot size requirements for developed areas of rural clustered subdivisions specified in Policy 6.2.13. Allowance of this maximum density shall be subject to an evaluation of factors, including: proximity to developed areas; availability and capacity of public infrastructure and services; environmental suitability; and compatibility with surrounding land uses. A finding shall be made whether or not the receiving parcel location and proposed density are appropriate based on these factors.
- (i) The land development regulations shall include provisions to assure implementation of the planned development as a unified development plan.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS

Policy 6.2.6 No subdivision may be created without paved public road access and all subdivisions created must have internal paved roads that meet county standards, except as provided under Policy 6.2.6.1 below. Residential subdivisions of more than nine lots in the Rural/Agricultural area shall be designed to provide:

- (a) Paved, interconnected, internal, and local roads that are dedicated to a responsible maintenance entity.
- (b) Limited driveways, including the use of common access driveways, on rural collector and arterial roads.
- (c) Paved public road access.

Policy 6.2.6.1 Subdivisions of no more than nine lots may be created from any parent parcel existing as of October 2, 1991, with access to a private easement road internal to the subdivision if such internal subdivision road provides a direct connection to a public road with sufficient right of way to meet county standards. Such internal subdivision roads must meet county standards for minimum width, stabilization requirements, public safety, emergency vehicle access, and maintenance. A parent parcel, existing as of October 2, 1991, shall not be divided into more than nine lots without having paved roads throughout the subdivision.

Policy 6.2.7 The Development Review Committee shall not authorize more than 150 lots smaller than eight acres in the Rural/Agricultural area in any calendar year except for lots that are clustered according to the provisions of 6.2.9 – 6.2.14.

Policy 6.2.8 New rural residential subdivisions of parcels legally created prior to October 2, 1991, which contain more than 100 lots, including cumulative phases or

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continued subdivision of land in common ownership or partnership as of October 2, 1991, shall be allowed only after adoption of a comprehensive plan amendment based on a completed special area study. This study, developed through the Community Planning Program, shall address factors such as transportation impacts, community services, fire protection, impacts on surrounding land uses, and environmental issues. This requirement for a comprehensive plan amendment is not applicable to a rural residential subdivision that exceeds 100 lots as a result of incentive density bonuses for clustering.

Policy 6.2.9 Clustering

The preferred design for new rural residential subdivisions is that they be clustered in order to protect the characteristics and features of rural areas through the following goals:

- (a) Protect natural and historic resources.
- (b) Support continued agricultural activities by preserving viable soils and effective land masses.
- (c) Provide opportunities for agriculture areas such as community gardens.
- (d) Minimize land use conflicts.
- (e) Provide recreational and habitat corridors through linked open space networks.
- (f) Achieve flexibility, efficiency, and cost reduction in the provision of services and infrastructure.
- (g) Reduce natural hazard risks to life and property.

Policy 6.2.10 Density and Intensity

The overall development density shall not exceed the maximum gross density of one dwelling unit per five acres for the Rural/Agriculture land use category, except as a result of the provisions for accessory dwelling units found in Policy 6.2.10.1, family homestead exceptions found in Policy 6.2.14(c), temporary permits issued by the Growth Management Department or as a result of incentive bonuses for clustering as provided under subsection (d) below, subject to the resource protection standards in the Conservation and Open Space Element. These standards include the following requirements:

- (a) Impacts to wetlands and surface waters shall be avoided, minimized, and mitigated in accordance with Conservation and Open Space Element Policies 4.7.4. and 4.6.6.
- (b) Density and open space requirements for new rural residential subdivisions shall be consistent with requirements for adequate

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protection of conservation areas in Conservation and Open Space Element Objective 3.6.

- (c) Development of property that is determined to be a strategic ecosystem shall require a special area plan pursuant to Conservation and Open Space Element Objective 4.10 unless it is determined that sufficient protection can be achieved through clustering.
- (d) As an incentive to cluster new residential subdivisions, if a new residential subdivision in the Rural/Agriculture area is clustered with a minimum of 50% of the development in open space, a total of 2 units in addition to the number of units based on the gross density of 1 unit per 5 acres are allowed, plus 1 additional unit per every 10 acres of conservation area or agriculture area such as community gardens set aside as open space; plus 1 additional unit per every 20 acres of other non-conservation area set aside as open space.

Policy 6.2.10.1 To provide for a greater range of choices of housing types, affordable housing, and the promotion of infill into existing neighborhoods while maintaining rural character, one accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed on residential lots in the Rural/Agriculture area without being included in gross residential density calculations as follows.

- (a) Performance criteria shall be detailed in the land development regulations and include elements such as size, site design, access, and parking requirements. In no instance shall an accessory dwelling unit be permitted on a lot with less than one acre of buildable area outside the boundaries of any conservation areas.
- (b) Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the construction of an accessory dwelling unit in an existing residential area, the applicant shall provide proof of homestead exemption status establishing ownership and principal residence of the lot.
- (c) Permanent occupancy by the owner of either the primary or accessory dwelling unit shall be required for all accessory dwelling units.
- (d) The accessory dwelling unit shall meet all applicable requirements of the Florida Department of Health for the well and septic system.

Policy 6.2.11 Design Sequence

The design of rural residential clustered subdivisions shall be sequenced according to the following four-step process:

- (a) Identify open space area, including natural resources consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 3, agricultural areas, and potential open space network connections consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 6.3.

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- (b) Identify developed area and locate home sites.
- (c) Align streets and trails.
- (d) Delineate lot lines.

Policy 6.2.12 Open Space Area in Clustered Subdivisions

A portion of a clustered rural residential subdivision shall be designated and maintained as undeveloped open space area.

- (a) Percentage of site. Clustered Rural residential subdivisions shall designate a minimum of 50% of the site as open space area.
- (b) Design Principles. Open space shall be selected and designed according to the following principles, consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element policies for the identification and protection of natural resources:
 - (1) Protect natural, historic, and paleontological resources and agricultural areas of the site identified through a site specific inventory.
 - a. Conservation areas shall receive top priority for inclusion as part of the designated open space area, and may only be impacted in accordance with Conservation and Open Space Element policies specific to the resource.
 - b. Agricultural areas with viable soils and effective land masses shall be evaluated for inclusion as part of the designated open space area after resource protection criteria are met. Agricultural uses consistent with 6.2.12(c) Permitted and Prohibited Uses and in accordance with requirements for management plans in 6.2.12(e)(3) are encouraged to be included as part of the designated open space area.
 - c. Historic and paleontological resources shall be included as part of the designated open space area when appropriate in accordance with the Historic Preservation Element.
 - (2) Design the open space area as a single contiguous area with logical, straightforward boundaries to eliminate or minimize fragmentation.
 - (3) Form linked open space networks with existing or potential open space areas on adjacent properties, other developments, or greenways, consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 6.3.
- (c) Permitted and Prohibited Uses.
 - (1) Permitted uses in the open space area are natural resource conservation areas, non-intensive agriculture for food production including community gardens, non-intensive silviculture consistent

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with (3) below, common open space, resource-based recreation uses which maintain the undeveloped area in a natural state, permeable stormwater facilities consistent with Stormwater Element Policy 5.1.9, community energy systems, and common water supply systems and common septic system drainfields.

- (2) More intensive agriculture uses such as concentrated animal density generally associated with milking barns, feed lots, chicken houses, or holding pens shall not be allowed in any clustered rural residential subdivision.
 - (3) Intensive silviculture uses of planted monoculture “plantation” forests, with intensive management regimes that include practices that are adverse to the natural resource values and functions of a natural forest system, shall not be allowed in any clustered rural residential subdivision. Only natural forest management in accordance with provisions of the applicable open space management plan consistent with 6.2.12(e)(3) may be considered.
- (d) Permanent protection. All future development in designated open space areas is prohibited.
- (1) All open space shall be maintained and remain undeveloped in perpetuity using a legal instrument that runs with the land to set forth conditions and restrictions on use.
 - (2) All open space area and lots shall be restricted from further subdivision through an instrument in a form acceptable to the county and duly recorded in the public record which assures the preservation and continued maintenance of the open space.
 - (3) The boundaries of designated open space areas shall be clearly delineated on plans, including record plats, and marked in the field to distinguish these areas from developed areas.
- (e) Ownership, maintenance, and management plan.
- (1) Ownership methods. Ownership and maintenance of open space shall be by one or a combination of the following:
 - a. Original landowner with provision for transition of ultimate ownership and control to one of the entities below
 - b. Homeowners association
 - c. Established land trust
 - d. Non-profit conservation or agricultural organization
 - e. Alachua County, with county approval
 - f. Other public agency (e.g. Water Management District)

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- (2) Maintenance. Unless otherwise agreed by the County, the cost and responsibility of maintaining common facilities, including but not limited to open space, private roads, shared water systems, and stormwater systems, shall be borne by the owner(s) of the open space. If the open space is not properly maintained, the County may assume responsibility of maintenance and charge the property owner or homeowners association a fee which covers maintenance and administrative costs.
- (3) Management plan. An open space management plan shall be required to accompany the development plan, subject to county review and approval. The management plan shall establish management objectives consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element objectives and policies for preservation, enhancement, and restoration of natural resource values, protection of public health and safety, and outline procedures and define the roles and responsibilities for managing the open space. The management plan shall identify how any agriculture and silviculture operations shall avoid impacts to conservation resources according to standards in the land development regulations. Management shall include wildfire mitigation and any existing silviculture operations are required to be managed to a point where they can be made an acceptable fire risk and must transition to natural forest management. The land development regulations for open space ownership, maintenance, and management in clustered rural subdivisions shall be updated consistent with applicable Goals, Objectives, and Policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Criteria for the timing of transfer of ownership and maintenance from original landowner to the homeowners association, such as some percentage of the lots sold or built upon, consistent with Florida Statutes 720.307 shall be specified in the land development regulations. As part of the update of these regulations, recommended practices for any agricultural activities within the open space, from sources such as University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS) (e.g., for things such as animal stocking and crop planting rates), and principles of regenerative agriculture, shall be considered to the extent they are consistent with policies in the Comprehensive Plan including natural resource protection.

Policy 6.2.13 Developed Area

The developed area of the clustered rural residential subdivision shall be located outside the open space area. The land development regulations shall prescribe in detail design standards for the configuration of lots and homes, the provision of water and wastewater, roads, stormwater, and buildings and structures. At a minimum, all

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developed areas must be designed to comply with the following principles, to the extent feasible considering the location and protection of natural resources:

- (a) Flexible home siting and lot sizes. Diversity and originality in home siting, lot size and design are encouraged to achieve the best possible relationship between the development and the features on the land through the following strategies:
 - (1) Ownership lines should follow existing features, such as tree lines or contours.
 - (2) Lots smaller than one acre may be allowed provided that well and septic System configuration, location, and operation and maintenance comply with public health and environmental quality standards, subject to the following:
 - a. The number of lots less than one acre shall be determined and located consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Policies 3.6.11 and 4.5.5(f).
 - b. Common septic systems may be utilized to serve lots less than one acre, consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Policy 4.5.5(f), subject to performance criteria in the land development regulations specifying criteria such as system configuration, location, and management.
- (b) Development impacts within developed area. Development impacts and disturbance caused by buildings or construction to topography and existing site features within the developed area shall be minimized through the following strategies:
 - (1) Locating residences and structures adjacent to tree lines and wooded field edges and avoiding placement in open fields, consistent with Firewise principles.
 - (2) Preserving the maximum amount of natural vegetation by careful siting of development.
 - (3) Limiting the size of building envelopes and locating them in areas most suitable for development.
 - (4) Locating roads to minimize cut and fill (follow existing features, e.g. tree lines, access roads, contours).
 - (5) Providing buffers and setbacks from wetlands and surface waters.
 - (6) Use of common driveways.
 - (7) Encouraging community wells and septic systems within the most suitable soils.
 - (8) Designing stormwater to maximize overland flow through natural drainage systems and grassed overland (roadside and lot line) swales. The use of plants

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and natural land forms shall be required to slow, hold, and treat runoff from development.

- (c) Development impacts to open space and adjacent offsite areas. The total amount of impacts and disturbance to the site, including the open space area, and to adjacent areas offsite shall be minimized through strategies such as:
 - (1) Providing buffers and setbacks to protect resources and natural vegetation from development impacts consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 3.6.
 - (2) Providing buffers and setbacks to protect the ability to engage in agricultural activities in neighboring areas. The width and type of buffer shall be based on the scale of the agricultural activity and other site specific factors such as topography, and shall include a minimum buffer width of two hundred feet when the developed area is adjacent to intensive agricultural uses.
 - (3) Locating developed areas and providing buffers and setbacks to eliminate or minimize the presence of development from adjacent properties.
- (d) Development impacts to adjacent public roads shall be minimized through the following strategies:
 - (1) Providing internal paved local roads, or private easements that serve no more than nine lots consistent with Future Land Use Element Policy 6.2.6, which meet County standards and minimize access to adjacent public roads.
 - (2) Minimizing the number of driveways accessing adjacent public roads and the number of lots with direct frontage on adjacent public roads.
 - (3) Locating developed areas and providing buffers and setbacks to minimize the presence of development from adjacent public roads.

Policy 6.2.14 Applicability

- (a) New rural residential developments of 10 or more lots shall be developed as clustered rural residential subdivisions in accordance with the policies and requirements under this section and implementing land development regulations.
- (b) New rural residential subdivisions meeting all requirements for cluster development may be allowed through the development review process, provided they are consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies and land development regulations.
- (c) Exceptions to the density and intensity standards in the Rural/Agriculture area may be granted for use of a parcel as a homestead by family members that meet the family relationship criteria under Future Land Use Element Policy 7.1.20 as provided in the Land Development Regulations.
- (d) Alternatives to the requirements for Rural/Agricultural areas may be established by special area plans adopted jointly by Alachua County and a municipality pursuant

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to Interlocal agreements under Section 1.5 of the Alachua County Charter and Policy 1.1.1 of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the County Comprehensive Plan. Such special area plans shall establish policies for land use and other relevant issues such as provision of infrastructure and services within areas delineated in such joint special area plans. In order for these alternative policies to apply, the joint special area plan with a municipality must be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plans of the both the County and the applicable municipality.

OBJECTIVE 6.3 - RURAL EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Rural Employment Centers are recognized as areas outside the urban cluster that can support light industrial and limited commercial uses not otherwise associated with surrounding rural/agricultural land uses.

- Policy 6.3.1** The Future Land Use Map shall depict existing Rural Employment Center boundaries. The Planned Development (PD) zoning mechanism shall be used for the Employment Center to ensure that proposed development is consistent with the goal, objectives and policies of the Plan. The PD zoning process shall ensure that level of service standards identified in the Plan are met; that proposed development does not adversely impact surrounding properties and that environmental resources are adequately protected.
- Policy 6.3.2** Development in a rural employment center may be permitted with lot sizes of one acre or greater for development on private wells and septic tanks (or on lots as small as one-half acre with both a central water and sewer system), consistent with the Potable Water/Sanitary Sewer Element and Conservation and Open Space Element Policy 4.5.5(f). As part of a designated brownfield site, Alachua County may assist with redevelopment efforts in the Hague Rural Employment Center taking place under the Brownfield Redevelopment Act (F.S. 376.77) including expedited review of development applications.
- Policy 6.3.3** The following uses may be permitted within a rural employment center provided that the appropriate policies and standards within the Comprehensive Plan are met.
- (a) Within the Hague Rural Employment Center Only: Business and professional services, retail sales and services, food service, personal services, entertainment and recreation activities and the processing, packaging, warehousing and distribution of agricultural products. Retail sales and services uses shall not exceed 10% of the existing gross square footage within the rural employment center.
 - (b) Office uses consistent with 3.9.1 and light industrial uses consistent with Policy 4.3.1.
 - (c) Conference and training facilities.

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Policy 6.3.4 The following existing rural employment centers are depicted on the Future Land Use map series:

- (a) McGinley Industrial Park, and
- (b) Hague Rural Employment Center.

Policy 6.3.5 Joint ventures in pursuing employment activities between the County and smaller municipalities shall be encouraged within those cities.

Policy 6.3.5.1 The following rural community employment center is depicted on the Future Land Use map series:

- (a) Hawthorne Rural Community Employment Center (SR 20, west of and adjacent to Hawthorne).
 - (1) Uses within the rural community employment center should utilize common means of ingress/egress to the maximum extent possible. Access to SR 20 (Hawthorne Road) shall be minimized in order to preserve and maintain traffic mobility on the roadway, which is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System.
 - (2) Light Industrial land use, research and development oriented, with accessory manufacturing of research and development related products shall be allowed on up to 42 acres in the ECO2 Rural Community Employment Center.
 - a. Development of the Light Industrial land uses shall be in the form of a Planned Development.
 - b. Maximum Floor Area Ratio shall be .5.
 - c. Minimum buffer shall be 25 feet with screening which shall consist of a combination of fencing or landscape material to ensure the height, type, location, and degree of opacity are sufficient to provide an effective visual and acoustical buffer giving consideration to the existing and proposed uses.
 - d. Rural/Agricultural land use shall be allowed as an interim land use. Residential development on Rural/Agriculture land shall be buffered and screened in accordance with Policy 6.3.5.1(a)(2)c.
 - (3) Implementation of this Rural Community Employment Center shall be coordinated with the City of Hawthorne, as follow up to annexations of portions of the Rural Community Employment Center by the City of Hawthorne.

OBJECTIVE 6.4 - RURAL CLUSTERS

Rural clusters are historic rural settlements outside of the urban cluster. These clusters serve as a focus for an existing rural community. They generally lack public services and facilities

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identified as necessary for more intense urban development. Policies and related development regulations for Rural Clusters shall preserve their existing rural character, ensure compatibility with the surrounding Rural/Agriculture areas, and protect the historic and natural resources which make these communities unique. The following communities are designated as Rural Clusters:

- Cross Creek
- Evinston
- Campville
- Grove Park
- Rochelle
- Windsor
- Lochloosa
- Island Grove
- Orange Heights
- Melrose
- Earleton
- Hague
- Santa Fe

Policy 6.4.1 The County shall initiate proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments to delineate parcel-based boundaries for Rural Clusters on the Future Land Use Map based on the following guidelines in (a) through (e). Until such time as those boundaries have been delineated, the guidelines in (a) through (e) shall be used to determine how the Rural Cluster land use designation and related policies apply to individual properties.

- (a) Rural Clusters shall generally include developed areas approximately 1/2 mile from the easily discernable focal point of the cluster. The focal point is usually the intersection of two rural roads or some other prominent feature around which the community seems to be centered.
- (b) The cluster shall be construed as containing all of the developed areas and undeveloped infill areas, but not undeveloped land beyond the extent of developed areas.
- (c) For the purposes of these guidelines, developed areas include areas with commercial uses, non-farm residential areas where lot sizes are generally below five acres, and usually below one acre, and other specialized uses not normally found in a rural setting. Platted, undeveloped subdivisions or other pre-existing developments where densities are higher than one unit

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per acre should be included, even if not developed, provided that the various lots or parcels are largely in different ownerships. The extent of non-conformity of these lots or parcels from County setback, access, and other regulations shall be considered in determining Rural Cluster boundaries.

- (d) The cluster may contain open space or conservation areas if these areas can be logically included given the other standards listed above. Such areas in the cluster shall be consistent with policies in the Conservation and Open Space Element.
- (e) Consideration may be given to natural features (including otherwise defined open space or conservation areas) or man-made features (such as jurisdictional boundaries, highways, railroads, or distinctive land use areas) that help form a logical boundary.

Policy 6.4.2 Residential development within Rural Clusters may be permitted with lot sizes of one acre or greater.

Policy 6.4.2.1 To provide for a greater range of choices of housing types, affordable housing, and the promotion of infill into existing neighborhoods while maintaining rural character, one accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed on residential lots in the Rural Cluster land use designation without being included in gross residential density calculations as follows.

- (a) Performance criteria shall be detailed in the land development regulations and include elements such as size, site design, access, and parking requirements. In no instance shall an accessory dwelling unit be permitted on a lot with less than one acre of buildable area outside the boundaries of any conservation areas.
- (b) Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the construction of an accessory dwelling unit in an existing residential area, the applicant shall provide proof of homestead exemption status establishing ownership and principal residence of the lot.
- (c) Permanent occupancy by the owner of either the primary or accessory dwelling unit shall be required for all accessory dwelling units.
- (d) The accessory dwelling unit shall meet all applicable requirements of the Florida Department of Health for the well and septic system.

Policy 6.4.3 Commercial or institutional development may be permitted within a rural cluster, subject to the following standards:

- (a) Commercial uses shall be limited to rural support services, retail sales, or personal services intended to serve the immediate population (such as farm implement sales, grocery stores, veterinarian services or clinics to serve the rural and farming community, pharmacies, medical or dental

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offices, hospitality uses supportive of agritourism and heritage tourism activities, or co-operative or farmers markets to promote the sale of locally grown products.

- (b) There shall be a maximum of up to 30,000 square feet of total commercial floor area for each Rural Cluster. The amount of commercial development appropriate for any Rural Cluster should be relative to the population being served. The size and scale of new commercial development or redevelopment shall be consistent with the size and scale of the existing land uses in the Rural Cluster.
- (c) Any new commercial land uses shall be located at the focus or center of the Rural Cluster, near the intersection of major roadways.
- (d) There shall be an interconnected, paved and internal traffic circulation system on dedicated local roads, and minimal development impacts on rural collector and arterial roads.
- (e) Industrial development shall not be allowed.
- (f) Institutional land uses may be permitted in accordance with Section 5.0 of the Future Land Use Element.

Policy 6.4.4 Zoning and development standards shall be established in the Unified Land Development Code to implement the objective and policies for Rural Clusters. Such standards shall include provisions for integration of any new non-residential development with existing uses in the Rural Clusters, including site and building design measures such as provision of open space, landscaping and buffering, parking lot design, building massing and scale, and limitations on signage and lighting, to produce development that is compatible with the surrounding rural land uses.

Policy 6.4.5 The County shall consider the development of special area plans for Rural Clusters, where necessary to address unique needs and circumstances that are not addressed through the generally applicable Comprehensive Plan policies. Any special area plans for Rural Clusters shall:

- (a) Incorporate the community's vision and goals
- (b) Protect the historic rural character of the community
- (c) Ensure compatibility of the Rural Cluster with the surrounding 'Rural/Agriculture' areas
- (d) Enhance the community's livability
- (e) Consider the need for community amenities
- (f) Protect natural resources
- (g) Explore opportunities for nature-based and heritage tourism

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- (h) Consider opportunities to link Rural Clusters through the use of nature trails, bikeways, etc.

Policy 6.4.6 Any new residential subdivision proposed in a Rural Cluster shall be allowed only after delineation of the Rural Cluster boundaries on the Future Land Use Map pursuant to Policy 6.4.1.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVE 7.1 - GENERAL

To establish standards through the adopted goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan in conjunction with the adopted maps within the Future Land Use Element and within the other elements to guide decisions affecting land use and development. To provide for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan through land development regulations and an ongoing Capital Improvements Program. To provide a process for Plan revision, Map amendments, and establishment of Special Area Plans, incorporating citizen participation.

Policy 7.1.3 As part of the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan and any proposed amendments to the Urban Cluster, determine a sufficient and nonexcessive amount of land within the Urban Cluster to accommodate urban uses for a ten year and twenty year time frame.

- (a) The determination (methodology is shown in Appendix A) shall be based on a comparison of:
 - (1) a forecast need for land for urban residential and non-residential development based on projected population, average household size, a residential vacancy rate, and a market factor. The market factor for the ten year time frame shall be 2.0. The market factor for the 20 year time frame shall be 1.5.
 - (2) land available in the Urban Cluster for urban residential and non-residential uses. Mapping of environmentally sensitive areas shall be utilized as a factor for determining land availability.
- (b) If the comparison shows that the land available is less than the forecast need for land, the following measures shall be considered:
 - (1) revisions to density standards and land development regulations, or other measures, to accommodate greater population within the existing Urban Cluster
 - (2) coordination with municipalities regarding possible reallocation of forecast need to the incorporated areas
 - (3) phased expansion of the Urban Cluster

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- (c) If the forecast need for one type of land use exceeds the supply of land for that particular use, a revision to the allocation of land uses within the Urban Cluster shall be considered before the Urban Cluster is expanded.
- (d) If this methodology determines expansion of the Urban Cluster is warranted, the evaluation of appropriate location shall be subject to analysis including the following economic, infrastructure, transportation, and conservation and recreation criteria:
 - (1) rural character and viable agriculture land and the potential impact of expansion of the Urban Cluster on existing agricultural uses
 - (2) economic development considerations including affordable housing
 - (3) relationship to existing and planned future urban services and infrastructure
 - (4) access to the regional transportation network and multi-modal transportation systems
 - (5) Conservation and Preservation land uses
 - (6) planned recreation/open space or greenway systems
- (e) In addition to meeting the requirements identified above, any proposed amendment to expand the Urban Cluster must include a commitment to purchase development rights at a rate equivalent to or greater than the proposed increase in density or intensity through the Transfer of Development Rights program in accordance with Section 9.0 of this Element.

Policy 7.1.28 A planning framework that includes geographically focused special area plans shall be implemented to promote and provide cohesive communities. These plans shall include both rural and urban areas, and utilize neighborhoods (including village centers), districts (including activity centers), and corridors as basic planning components. This planning framework shall be implemented through a Community and Neighborhood Planning program, which empowers communities and neighborhoods to develop plans that address the specific needs and circumstances of their area. The County shall provide guidance to the program to assure that county-wide comprehensive planning goals are met. These plans shall incorporate the community and neighborhood vision and goals and shall include provisions to:

- (a) Enhance the community's livability
- (b) Protect the character of the neighborhood
- (c) Provide amenities for neighborhood residents
- (d) Plan for neighborhood traffic management

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(e) Protect natural resources

Special Area Plans may form the basis for policies in the Comprehensive Plan focusing on a particular geographic area, Land Development Code provisions for special areas, identification of capital projects to address specific needs and circumstances, or other initiatives by the County or through public/community partnerships.

Policy 7.1.31 The Agricultural Enclave future land use category is established for those properties in the unincorporated area that meet all the criteria of the "agricultural enclave" definition as provided in Section 163.3164(4), Florida Statutes, and for which the Board of County Commissioners approves a comprehensive plan amendment according to the procedures identified in Section 163.3162(4), Florida Statutes. The allowed uses and permitted densities and/or intensities for each area that receives an Agricultural Enclave future land use designation shall be established in the Comprehensive Plan and implemented through Planned Development rezoning. All other applicable requirements of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan and Unified Land Development Code for development of a property shall apply.

Policy 7.1.31.1 The 136 acre property to the southeast of the SW Archer Road (SR 24)/SW 107 Street intersection consisting of tax parcels 07075-001-000, 07076-000-000, 07077-000-000, and 07093-000-000 is designated as an Agricultural Enclave on the Future Land Use Map 2011-2030 and allows single family residential units with a maximum density of 0.8 units/acre.

9.0 TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

OBJECTIVE 9.1 - TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAM

To create a tool that, in addition to other County policies and regulations, will protect the County's environmental resources and promote viable agriculture and the rural landscape while encouraging efficient use of services and infrastructure by concentrating development in more suitable areas of the County.

Policy 9.1.1 Transfers of development rights may be proposed for two or more separate legally created parcels to facilitate transfers of development rights from regulated conservation and viable agriculture areas to areas within the Urban Cluster or potentially within other municipalities.

Policy 9.1.2 Sending Areas

- (a) Agricultural Sending Areas shall be defined as any legally created parcel or combination of contiguous parcels that meet the following criteria:
 - (1) property has an approved agricultural classification from the Alachua County Property Appraiser;
 - (2) property is located outside the Urban Cluster; and

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- (3) property is ≥ 160 acres.
 - a. An exception to the size threshold may be permitted where the property is determined to be contiguous to another designated sending area.
 - b. An exception to the size threshold may be permitted where the property is determined by the County to be of exceptional agricultural value.
 - c. No agricultural sending area property may be smaller than 40 acres in size.
- (b) Conservation Sending Areas shall be defined as any legally created parcel or combination of parcels that meet the following criteria:
 - (1) property contains Strategic Ecosystems or is on the Alachua County Forever (ACF) active acquisition list; and
 - (2) property is ≥ 160 acres.
 - a. An exception to the size threshold may be permitted where the property is contiguous to an established Preservation area or designated sending area.
 - b. An exception to the size threshold may be permitted where the property is determined by the County to be of exceptional conservation value based upon ground-truthing of the property.
 - c. No conservation sending area property may be smaller than 40 acres.
- (c) Calculating Development Rights
 - (1) Development rights available for transfer shall be equal to the lesser of the following, minus the residual units not to be included in the transfer:
 - a. number of residential units otherwise allowed on the sending area property; or
 - b. number of upland acres on the sending area property.
 - (2) As an incentive to transfer development rights away from a sending property, a total of 2 development rights in addition to the number of rights granted through the calculations identified above are allowed, plus one additional right per every 10 acres of conservation area on site and one additional right per every 20 acres of non-conservation area on site, consistent with Policy 6.2.9 of this Element.

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(d) Residual Uses

- (1) Agriculture – Residential densities of up to one dwelling unit per 40 acres may be retained in the sending area and continuation of agricultural uses in accordance with the most recent best management practices (BMPs) adopted by the State. When mapped conservation areas are located on site, Conservation Sending Area residual guidelines apply.
- (2) Conservation – Residential densities of up to one dwelling unit per 200 acres may be retained on the sending parcel where consistent with a Conservation Management Plan.
 - a. Higher densities of up to one dwelling unit per 40 acres may be proposed where it can be demonstrated that there is no impact on resource protection and where consistent with the Conservation Area Management Plan.
 - b. The amount of density to be retained shall be based on what is necessary to protect the integrity of the ecological system and conservation resources.
 - c. Continuation of agricultural uses is allowed in accordance with the most recent best management practices (BMPs) adopted by the State.
 - d. Residual units shall be developed in a clustered pattern, when necessary, to protect the integrity of the environmental resources on and adjacent to the site.

Policy 9.1.3 Receiving Areas

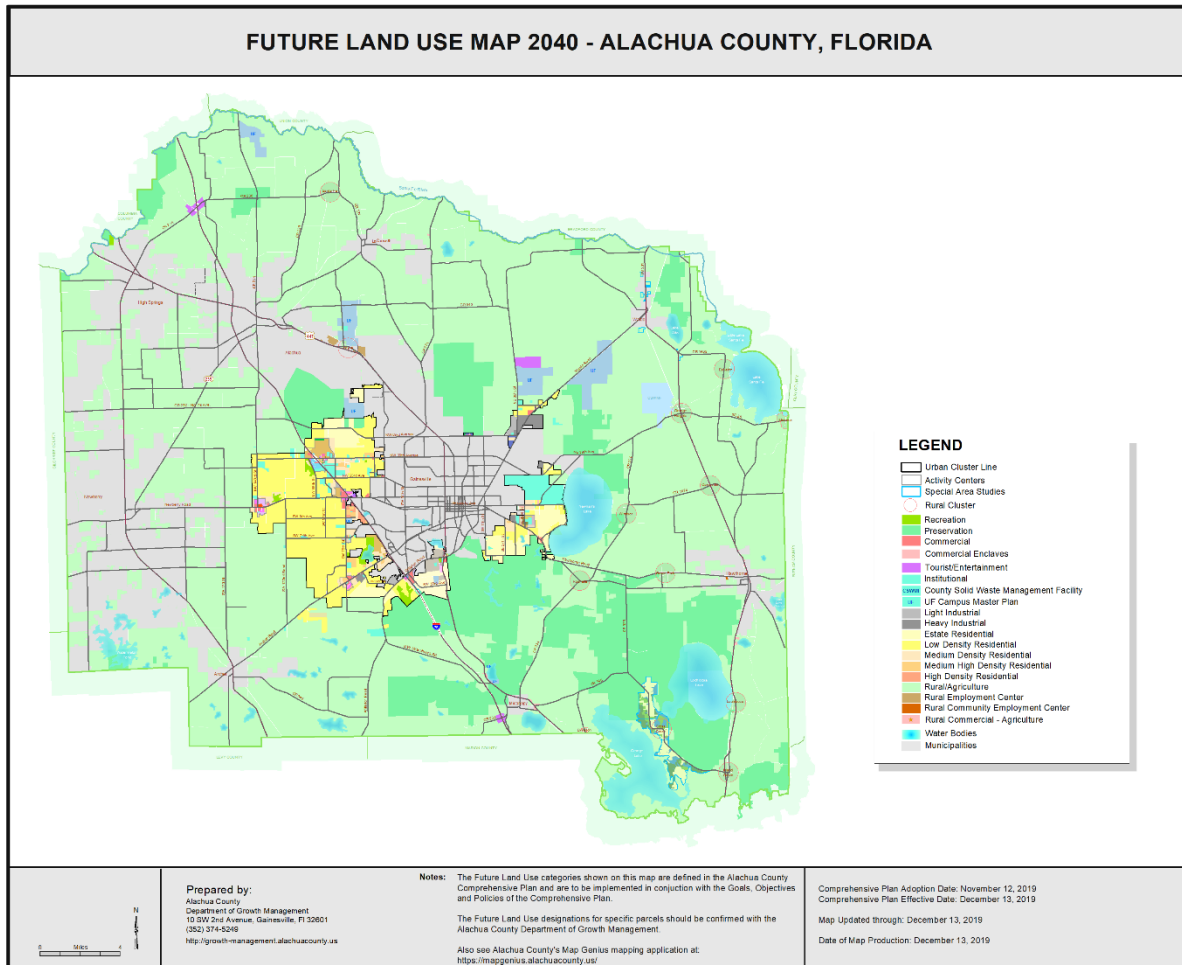
- (a) Receiving areas may be located within any of the municipalities in Alachua County through the establishment of interlocal agreements.
- (b) Any proposed amendment to expand the Urban Cluster must include a commitment to purchase development rights at a rate equivalent to the proposed increase in density or intensity in accordance with Policy 7.1.3(e) of this Element.

Policy 9.1.4 Program Administration

- (a) The County shall create and maintain a publicly accessible database of development rights.
- (b) Sending property owners shall record a conservation or agricultural easement on the sending parcel and commit to a County-sponsored rezoning of the parcel to a sending area zoning designation.

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FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT MAP SERIES



Map a. Future Land Use Map 2040 Alachua County

TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.2 - Rural Transportation Mobility Districts

To protect and support agricultural activities, preserve the character of rural communities and encourage development in areas where infrastructure can be provided in a financially feasible manner, the unincorporated area outside the Urban Cluster as identified in the Comprehensive Plan shall be established as Rural Transportation Mobility Districts. Developments within Rural Transportation Mobility Districts are required to mitigate impacts to roadways within the Rural and Urban Transportation Mobility Districts as established in the adopted Mobility Fee.

Policy 1.2.1 Alachua County shall adopt the following level of service guidelines based on daily traffic for functionally classified roadways in order to maximize the efficient use and safety of roadway facilities:

Mode of Travel	Level of Service (LOS)
Motor Vehicle	C

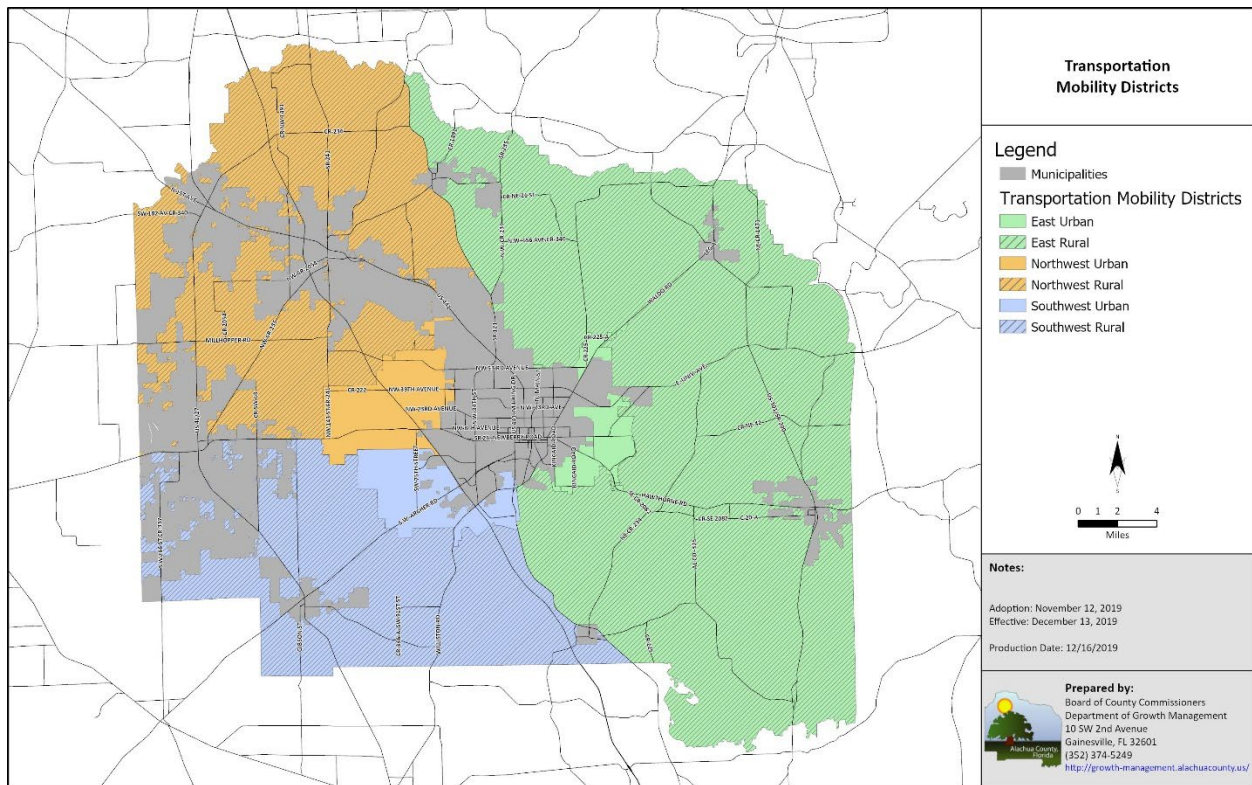
Policy 1.2.2 Alachua County has established level of service guidelines for rural areas to coordinate capital improvement planning and land use to ensure that growth does not occur faster than the County's ability to provide for infrastructure in a financially feasible manner. The level of service guidelines shall not compel or require the County to widen or construct new roadways outside of the Urban Cluster in order to provide capacity to support new development or to address the unmitigated impact of development from adjacent municipalities and counties.

Policy 1.2.3 Amendments to the Future Land Use Element and/or Map, including Sector Plans and Special Area Plans, will be coordinated with the Transportation Mobility Element and the Capital Improvement Element through the evaluation of the impact of additional traffic projected to result from proposed land use plan amendments. This evaluation shall include assessment of the impact on the level of service of individual affected roads based on the roadway functional classification and number of lanes.

Policy 1.2.4 Where the evaluation of a proposed Future Land Use amendment indicates that the level of service on affected individual roads segments would be reduced below the adopted level of service guidelines, the amendment shall be accompanied by corresponding amendments to identify roadway modifications needed to maintain the existing individual segment by segment level of service guideline, as well as the scheduling of such modifications in Alachua County's Five Year Capital Improvement Program.

TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY ELEMENT

TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY ELEMENT MAP SERIES



Map 10. Transportation Mobility Districts

HOUSING ELEMENT

GOAL 3

TO ENSURE ACCESS TO HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE RESIDENTS WITH SPECIALIZED HOUSING NEEDS, ALACHUA COUNTY SHALL IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Alachua County shall provide access to housing opportunities for groups identified as having special needs.

Policy 3.1.2 Alachua County shall continually review its development regulations to ensure that farmworker housing needs are addressed.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Alachua County shall ensure that the land development regulations concerning the provision of housing for those with special needs comply, at a minimum, with the statutory requirements, and do not present barriers to the development of special needs housing.

Policy 3.2.1 The development regulations shall allow densities for farmworker housing which may be in excess of the maximum densities shown on the Future Land Use Map. Such farmworker housing may be permitted by a special use permit or other appropriate mechanism to allow living accommodations of multiple farm employees and their families on one parcel without regard to duration, while performing agricultural labor.

Policy 3.2.2 Alachua County may require farmworker housing which exceeds the density permitted on the Future Land Use Map to be provided by manufactured homes which can be removed once the need for provision of farmworker housing is no longer present. Such ordinance shall ensure that all appropriate federal, state and local regulations are met especially with regard to the provision of water and wastewater facilities.

HOUSING ELEMENT DEFINITIONS

Special Needs Households: Special needs households include persons who are elderly, physically disabled, homeless, at risk of being homeless, or have extremely low incomes. These special needs populations may include more specifically defined subgroups such as farm workers, ex-felons re-entering the community, youth aging out of foster care, survivors of domestic violence, persons with severe and persistent mental illness including co-occurring disorders, or persons with developmental disabilities.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 5.5 - AGRICULTURAL AND SILVICULTURAL PRACTICES

The County shall encourage the retention of agricultural and silvicultural operations that are conducted in accordance with best management practices.

Policy 5.5.1 The most recent federal, state, and water management district BMPs shall be required, as applicable, to all agricultural and silvicultural activities, including but not limited to the following:

- (a) Silviculture Best Management Practices, published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), 2000.
- (b) BMPs for Agrichemical Handling and Farm Equipment Maintenance, published by FDACS and FDEP, 1998.
- (c) Water Quality BMPs for Cow/Calf Operations, published by the Florida Cattlemen's Association, 1999.
- (d) Protecting Natural Wetlands: A Guide to Stormwater BMPs, published by the U.S. EPA, 1996.

Policy 5.5.2 Where the use of BMPs is required, property owners shall identify and verify to the County the use of the most recent applicable best management practices.

Policy 5.5.3 The County shall cooperate with agricultural and silvicultural operations, as well as the appropriate federal, state, and regional agencies, to address weaknesses in the implementation and effectiveness of BMPs related to issues such as water quality and habitat protection. The County shall participate in State Division of Forestry compliance audits and coordinate site inspections to address natural resource concerns.

Policy 5.5.4 County policies and regulations should be reviewed for guidance with respect to agricultural and silvicultural practices. Federal, state, water management district, and county resource quality standards shall be maintained.

Policy 5.5.5 The County shall encourage and recognize those operations which receive industry certification of forest management practices, including the following:

- (a) Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
- (b) American Forest and Paper Association's Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).
- (c) American Forest Foundation's American Tree Farm System.
- (d) Green Tag Forestry.
- (e) Forest Stewardship Program (FSP).

Policy 5.5.6 The land development regulations shall be reviewed for the inclusion of incentives to encourage voluntary participation in certification programs whose standards meet or exceed best management practices.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- Policy 5.5.7** The County shall seek funds for pilot projects in agricultural and silvicultural areas that demonstrate the use of conservation practices.
- Policy 5.5.8** The County shall work with agricultural and silvicultural land owners and operators, the U.F. Agricultural Extension Office, the Florida Division of Forestry, the Florida Farm Bureau, and other appropriate entities to develop conservation management plans for lands that contain conservation areas.
- Policy 5.5.9** Agricultural and silvicultural lands which have value for historic or natural resources conservation, recreation, or open space purposes shall be identified and, based upon willing landowner participation, may be included as part of the County's land conservation program.

OBJECTIVE 5.6 - WILDFIRE MITIGATION

Protect life, property, and the economy by eliminating or minimizing the present and future vulnerability to wildfire hazards.

- Policy 5.6.1** Areas of wildfire hazard within Alachua County shall be mapped and ranked using features such as plant community type and development stage, canopy cover, hydrography, soils, slope, aspect, and elevation. The initial mapping shall be based on the Fire Risk Assessment Model contracted by the Florida Division of Forestry for completion in 2002. Mapping shall be reviewed annually and, as necessary, updated in response to changing fuel conditions.
- Policy 5.6.2** The County shall educate the public, especially those at high risk from wildfires, and make them aware of proactive steps that they can take to mitigate wildfire damage.
- Policy 5.6.3** The County shall advance the directives and policies of local emergency management operational plans and the Alachua County Local Mitigation Strategy.
- Policy 5.6.4** The County shall implement a Firewise Medal Community Program that involves community fire preparation, evaluation and awards for program involvement. The County shall seek recognition of this program by the state Firewise Communities Recognition Program.
- Policy 5.6.5** Alachua County shall carefully consider all land uses in areas at risk from wildfire and restrict or prohibit certain land uses as necessary to assure public health, safety, and welfare and the protection of property. Land uses and specific development plans for which adequate wildfire mitigation cannot be provided, or that would preclude or severely limit the use of wildfire mitigation or natural resource management options such as prescribed fire, shall not be authorized in severe wildfire hazard areas.
- Policy 5.6.6** Development in wildfire hazard areas shall comply with the following minimum standards:

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- (a) All new development shall complete and implement a wildfire mitigation plan specific to that development, subject to review and approval by the Alachua County Fire Rescue Department, which shall be incorporated as part of the development plan approved for that development.
 - (1) The mitigation plan shall include project and parcel design features, such as defensible project perimeters, interior project fuel breaks, individual site defensible space, landscaping guidelines and plant material suggestions, and the placement of structures.
 - (2) The mitigation plan shall include provisions for periodic inspection by the County to verify construction, implementation, and maintenance of the wildfire mitigation features in accordance with the plan. The inspection period may range from once a year to once every three years depending upon the site conditions.
 - (3) The wildfire mitigation plan requirements shall be implemented for the entire life cycle of all developments requiring plans.
- (b) Structures shall be designed to minimize the potential for loss of life and property from wildfires, through requirements for outdoor sprinkler systems, fire-resistant building materials or treatments, landscaping with appropriate vegetation species, and site design practices.
- (c) Water storage facilities, accessible by standard fire-fighting equipment, shall be provided, dedicated, or identified for fighting wildfires. Where public supply is available, fire hydrants of sufficient pressure shall be required.
- (d) Streets, roads, driveways, bridges, culverts, and cul-de-sacs shall be designed to assure access by firefighting equipment, providing for weight class, cornering, turnaround and overhead clearance.

Policy 5.6.7 The County shall pursue available funding for community/volunteer service programs for fuel management on lands owned or managed by Alachua County.

Policy 5.6.8 The County shall implement a fuels management program that consists of the following:

- (a) Practices such as prescribed burning, mechanical fuel reduction, and thinning, as necessary and appropriate to reduce wildfire hazards consistent with natural resources protection.
- (b) Increased public awareness of the benefits of prescribed burning and the inevitability of resulting smoke.
- (c) Acknowledgment by occupants in areas where prescribed burning is appropriate that they have been informed that prescribed burning may be used to manage wildfire hazards and that smoke will be present.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- (d) Special focus on the wild land-urban interface as an area exposed to wildfire hazard.

6.0 LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE 6.1 - PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Establish and maintain a land conservation program for the purchase, preservation, and management of natural areas and open space to complement the regulatory approaches identified in other sections of this element.

Policy 6.1.1 A land conservation master plan shall be developed to detail the vision, goals, and organizational framework for a county-wide system of natural areas and trails for wildlife and people.

Policy 6.1.2 The land conservation master plan shall identify the components of the land conservation program, including but not limited to:

- (a) The Alachua County Forever program.
- (b) Open space and greenways programs.
- (c) Coordination with other land acquisition and management programs.
- (d) Private donations and dedications.
- (e) Regulatory mechanisms.
- (f) Taxation policies, such as agricultural and conservation assessments.
- (g) Purchase of agricultural conservation easements and purchase of development rights for agricultural areas.

Policy 6.1.3 The County shall coordinate the efforts of various components of the land conservation program in order to maximize opportunities to acquire lands for appropriate conservation and recreation purposes.

OBJECTIVE 6.2 - ALACHUA COUNTY FOREVER

Implement the Alachua County Forever program.

Policy 6.2.1 The County shall establish and maintain the Alachua County Forever program to acquire and manage environmentally significant lands for the protection of water resources, wildlife habitat, and natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation.

Policy 6.2.2 Alachua County Forever shall be funded for a minimum of 20 years, as approved by voter referendum on November 7, 2000.

Policy 6.2.3 The emphasis of Alachua County Forever shall be to increase the acreage of environmentally significant lands managed in perpetuity for conservation purposes.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- Policy 6.2.4** Lands shall be selected for acquisition under the Alachua County Forever program based on an evaluation of environmental, social, and management criteria as adopted by the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners.
- Policy 6.2.5** During the acquisition of environmentally significant lands, the County shall give priority to acquiring the optimal acreage needed to maintain the integrity of the natural plant communities or ecological units involved.
- Policy 6.2.6** All acquisitions under the Alachua County Forever program shall be based on voluntary participation by a willing property owner.
- Policy 6.2.7** Resource-based recreation may be considered on and adjacent to land acquired through Alachua County Forever provided the associated activities do not have significant adverse impacts on the ecological integrity or ecological or historical values of the resources in these areas.

OBJECTIVE 6.3 - ECOLOGICALLY FUNCTIONAL LINKAGES

Develop a linked network of protected natural areas and open space that can be managed to support the protection, enhancement and restoration of functional and connected natural systems while providing unique opportunities for recreation, and economic development.

- Policy 6.3.1** The County shall prioritize maintenance of ecologically functional linkages between ecological corridor core areas as shown on the Critical Ecological Corridors Map through various programs and activities, including:
- (a) Implementation of development review
 - (b) Special area planning for Strategic Ecosystems
 - (c) Land acquisition programs and associated management plans
 - (d) Transfer of Development Rights program (see Future Land Use Element Section 9.0)
 - (e) Intergovernmental coordination efforts with municipalities, adjacent counties, regional entities, state and federal agencies
 - (f) Outreach programs to promote the value of conserving linked ecosystems/corridors and support tax incentives that promote the preservation of mapped ecological core areas.
- Policy 6.3.2** Where necessary to connect publicly owned recreation and conservation lands to develop the greenways system, the County shall encourage public acquisition of land and other means of voluntary landowner participation.
- Policy 6.3.3** To protect sensitive ecosystems and habitat corridors, the County shall locate and design public access in an environmentally sensitive manner, including limiting or prohibiting public access where necessary to protect such resources.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Policy 6.3.4 The County shall coordinate with local municipalities in order to include appropriate incorporated properties as part of the greenways system.

OBJECTIVE 6.4 - OTHER ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

Coordinate with other programs for the acquisition and management of natural areas and open space for recreational, open space and conservation purposes.

Policy 6.4.1 The County shall seek to maximize the effectiveness of local revenue sources by using them to leverage funds available from federal, state, municipal, private non-profit, and Water Management District programs, such as Florida Forever, Florida Communities Trust (FCT), Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL), and Save-Our-Rivers (SOR).

Policy 6.4.2 The County shall provide support, in the form of information, coordination, assistance in obtaining grants, and other support activities to organizations and agencies that acquire and protect natural areas and open space for conservation, open space, and recreational purposes.

Policy 6.4.3 The County shall pursue Florida Communities Trust funds, and support the municipalities in submitting applications, for acquisition projects that maximize environmental and social considerations, including but not limited to:

- (a) Preserving natural communities or listed species habitat.
- (b) Restoring or enhancing degraded natural areas.
- (c) Protecting or enhancing water quality.
- (d) Enhancing greenways or recreational trails.
- (e) Providing appropriate access to natural areas, including water bodies.
- (f) Directing development to urban infill, redevelopment, or downtown revitalization areas.
- (g) Preserving historical, cultural or archaeological features.

OBJECTIVE 6.5 - ACQUISITION TOOLBOX

Encourage the use of multiple, diverse land acquisition strategies.

Policy 6.5.1 The County shall use and promote a variety of tools for acquiring and protecting natural areas and open space. Acquisition tools shall include, at a minimum, fee simple purchase, conservation easements, conservation trusts, land donations and dedications, transfer or purchase of development rights, long-term leases, and tax incentives.

Policy 6.5.2 These tools shall be used in the most cost effective manner that ensures long-term protection of natural areas and open space.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- Policy 6.5.3** The County shall proactively seek private land donations and dedications, and shall establish guidelines for accepting them.
- Policy 6.5.4** The County shall discuss with landowners the alternatives for protecting environmentally significant lands which have qualified for acquisition by federal, state, regional, or local land management agencies, in an effort to discourage more intense land uses.
- Policy 6.5.5** The County shall provide educational programs on the benefits of incentives available for private donation or protection of environmentally significant lands. The County shall inform the public of state and federal cost sharing available for conservation.
- Policy 6.5.6** The County shall encourage private land owners to utilize multiple-use management techniques to provide both economic (e.g., silviculture) and ecological (e.g., provision of wildlife habitat) benefits and shall develop a technical assistance manual addressing such techniques.

OBJECTIVE 6.6 – MANAGEMENT

Improve the environmental stewardship of all preservation, conservation and recreation areas within Alachua County.

- Policy 6.6.1** The County shall provide public education on the benefits of natural systems functions to decrease the effects of human intrusion into areas designated for limited public access.
- Policy 6.6.2** The County shall take an active role in the development of management plans for preservation, conservation and recreation areas in Alachua County that are not owned by the County.
- Policy 6.6.3** The County shall continue to manage natural resources in County- owned preservation areas in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Suwannee River and St. Johns River Water Management Districts, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, local municipalities, and other agencies, as appropriate.
- Policy 6.6.4** Within one year of acquisition, the County shall develop site specific management plans for all preservation, conservation and recreation lands owned, leased or purchased by the County. The County shall review these plans periodically, at least every three years, to ensure compliance with conservation objectives.
- Policy 6.6.5** The County shall restore and enhance degraded natural areas on County-owned preservation, conservation and recreation lands, including removal of invasive non-native plants and animals, reforestation, re-establishment of burn regimes for

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

fire-adapted ecosystems, and restoration of shorelines and natural hydrology, as needed.

Policy 6.6.6 The County shall manage and maintain County-owned preservation, conservation and recreation areas to ensure the ongoing conservation of desirable plants and animals and their associated ecosystems, and to control the invasion and spread of undesirable non-native plants and animals.

Policy 6.6.7 Management techniques such as prescribed burning and mechanical removal shall be used in County-owned preservation, conservation and recreation areas where necessary and appropriate for ecological reasons or fuel reduction.

Policy 6.6.8 Where consistent with natural resources protection, the County may provide public access to preservation and conservation areas, including water bodies. A hierarchy will be established to determine the appropriate type of access, with special attention given to environmentally sensitive design, location and construction.

Policy 6.6.9 Multiple use opportunities, including resource-based recreation, shall be considered in County-owned preservation and conservation areas where consistent with conservation of wildlife habitat, watershed protection, erosion control, maintenance or enhancement of water quality, and aquifer recharge protection.

Policy 6.6.10 The County shall manage, and support stewardship strategies that maximize biodiversity at the species, natural community, and landscape levels.

Policy 6.6.11 The County shall provide continued funding for ongoing operation and maintenance costs associated with County-owned lands.

7.0 GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

OBJECTIVE 7.1 - Greenways Master Plan

Develop a linked greenway system that provides unique opportunities for recreation, multi-modal transportation, and economic development.

Policy 7.1.1 The County Commission shall adopt a Greenways Master Plan that functionally integrates the County's bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, conservation lands, parks, and Open Spaces. The Greenways Master Plan is intended to guide and prioritize future Open Space designations, construction of bicycle/pedestrian facilities, and public land acquisitions needed to complete the Plan, consistent with respective program policies.

Policy 7.1.2 The County shall strive to coordinate the Greenways Master Plan with public parks, conservation lands, and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure within the County's municipalities.

Policy 7.1.3 The County shall locate and design Greenways Master Plan infrastructure so as to protect sensitive ecosystems or natural features.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- Policy 7.1.4** The County shall seek grant funds from established federal and state greenways funding programs for construction and maintenance.
- Policy 7.1.5** The County shall approve a master management plan for the Greenways Master Plan, and specific plans for lands acquired, preserved, or otherwise included in the greenways plan. The management plans shall address natural resources protection, public access, recreation, education, and opportunities for economic development that is complementary to maintaining the system. The management plans shall identify anticipated costs and departments responsible for implementation of the plans.
- Policy 7.1.6** The County shall develop a strategy for identifying and providing for publicly accessible open spaces of native flora and fauna in or near neighborhood settings. Resource-based recreation such as picnicking and hiking shall be encouraged.
- Policy 7.1.7** The County shall coordinate with local municipalities in order to include appropriate incorporated properties as part of the greenways plan.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT DEFINITIONS

Agriculture: The use of land predominantly for the cultivation of crops and livestock including: cropland, pastureland, orchards, vineyards, nurseries, ornamental horticulture areas, groves, confined feeding operations, specialty farms, and silviculture.

Best Management Practices (BMPs): A series of guidelines or minimum standards adopted for area wide application, typically associated with agricultural, silvicultural, golf course, and similar operations, designed primarily to prevent soil erosion and water pollution, and to protect certain wildlife habitat values in riparian and wetland areas.

Bona Fide Agricultural Purposes: Good faith commercial agricultural use of the land, provided the land is classified for assessment purposes by the property appraiser as agricultural to pursuant to Chapter 193, Florida Statutes. In determining whether the use of the land for agricultural purposes is bona fide, the following factors may be taken into consideration:

- (1) The length of time the land has been so utilized;
- (2) Whether the use has been continuous;
- (3) The purchase price paid;
- (4) Size, as it relates to specific agricultural use;
- (5) Whether an indicated effort has been made to care sufficiently and adequately for the land in accordance with accepted commercial agricultural practices, including, without limitation, fertilizing, liming, tilling, mowing, reforestation, and other accepted agricultural practices;
- (6) Whether such land is under lease and, if so, the effective length, terms, and conditions of the lease; and
- (7) Such other factors as may from time to time become applicable.

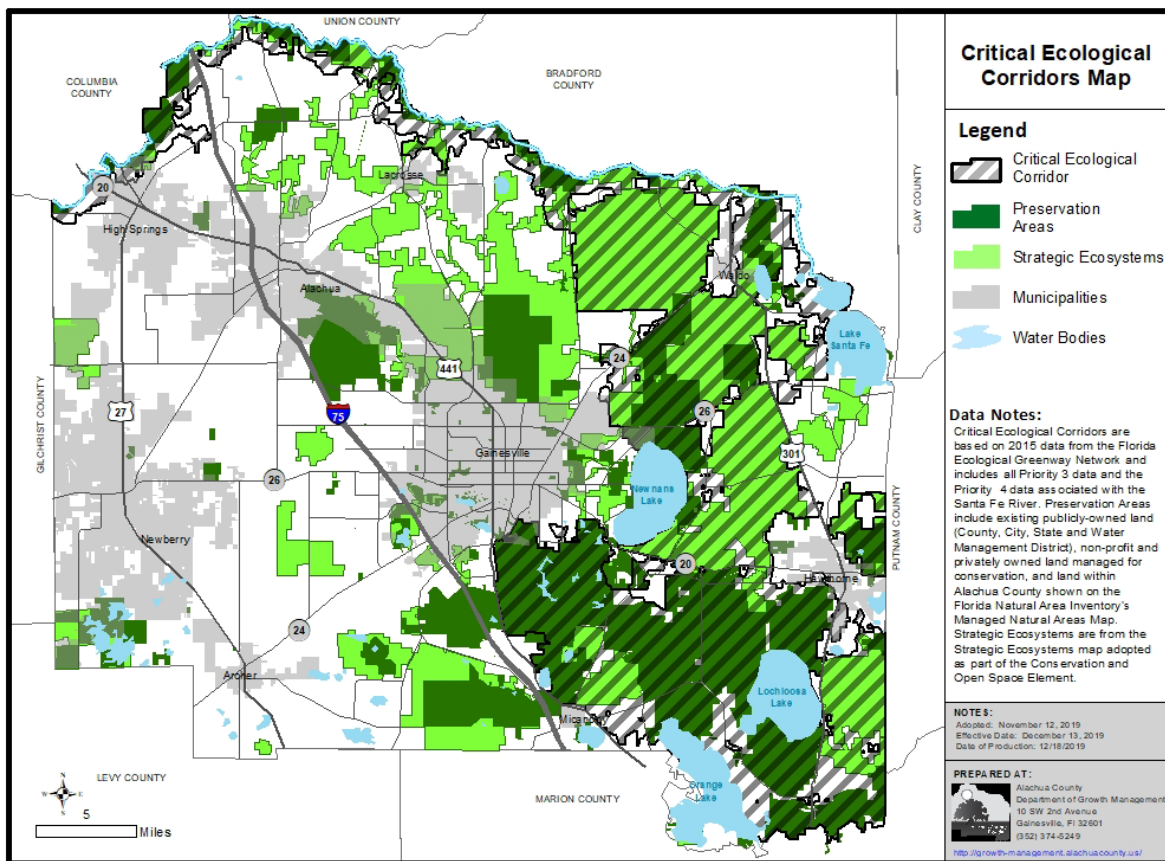
CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Greenway: A corridor of protected open space that is managed for conservation, recreation purposes. Greenways follow natural land or water features or abandoned railroad corridors or canals, and link natural reserves, parks, cultural and historic sites.

Important Agricultural Areas: The important farmlands that are identified by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. These include prime and unique farmlands, and additional farmland of statewide and local importance as described in 7 Code of Federal Regulations 657.

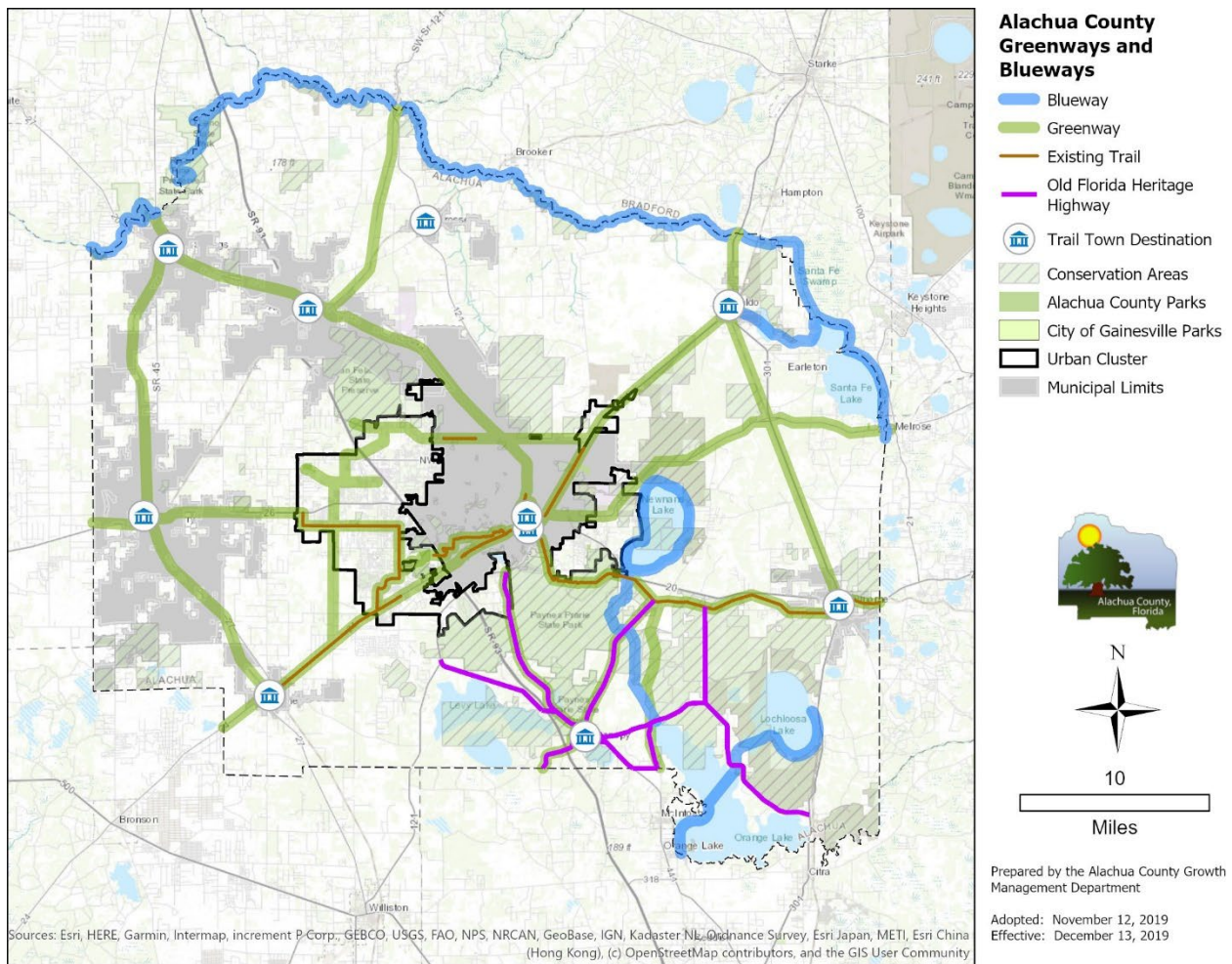
Silviculture: The art and science of producing and tending a forest by manipulating its establishment, composition and growth to best fulfill the objectives of the owner. This may, or may not, include timber production.

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT MAP SERIES



Map 5. Critical Ecological Corridors

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



Map 7. Alachua County Greenways and Blueways

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 5.1

Coordinate the provision of services and information.

Policy 5.1.12 In addition to the current inter-local arrangements between Alachua County and Gilchrist County, further regional approaches to Solid Waste management should continue to be assessed in terms of their potential for enhanced economies of scale and effectiveness as a means of managing solid waste in an environmentally sound manner.

OBJECTIVE 7.1

Coordinate long range transportation planning and traffic circulation issues with relevant state and regional agencies and local governments.

Policy 7.1.9 Alachua County shall coordinate with the railroad industry and appropriate entities, including the Florida Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, Alachua County School Board, and municipalities to develop re-use strategies should rail abandonments or conversions be proposed.

OBJECTIVE 8.1

Coordinate the protection of the environment.

Policy 8.1.1 Alachua County shall coordinate the environmental protection of land, air, and water with the appropriate agencies and jurisdictions for the benefit of people, wildlife, and plants.

- (a) The County shall coordinate with non-governmental organizations, State and federal government agencies, municipalities and adjacent counties to extend ecologically functional linkages between ecological core areas on the Critical Ecological Corridors Map in accordance with Policy 6.3.2 of the Conservation and Open Space Element.
- (b) The County shall coordinate with municipalities to implement relevant guiding principles and action strategies to protect natural resources countywide.

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.1 - ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Diversify the County's economy. Achieve a diversified and sustainable economic base in Alachua County to minimize the vulnerability of the local economy and to provide economic opportunity for all segments of the population that shall include strategies to achieve the elimination of disparities identified in the "Understanding Racial Inequity In Alachua County" Report (2018) and attract and retain high-quality employers and employees within the workforce.

Policy 1.1.2 Alachua County shall promote economic development efforts that build on and complement existing commercial, industrial and agricultural assets in the local economic system.

Policy 1.1.3 Alachua County shall implement the goals of the Alachua County Visitors and Convention Bureau to promote North Central Florida as a tourism destination through events, advertising and accessible recreation sites. The County shall promote tourism, including eco-tourism, agritourism, heritage tourism and tourism-related businesses which complement the County's environmental, social and economic quality.

Policy 1.1.6 Consistent with Energy Element Objective 2.2 and Future Land Use Element Objectives 6.1 and 6.2, Alachua County shall encourage the location and development of energy conservation, alternative energy, reuse/recycling based industry and sustainable food production and processing businesses and industry clusters in order to achieve a higher level of sustainable economic development.

- (a) Alachua County shall promote a Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ)/Resource Recovery industrial park focused on sustainable production of goods or materials that may include recycled content or resources collected by the County curbside recycling program or otherwise removed from the County's waste stream.
- (b) Consistent with Future Land Use Element Policy 6.1.4, industries and business sectors that create a market for local agricultural products shall be encouraged to locate or expand existing local business in Alachua County.
- (c) Highlight local specialty foods and farmers markets as part of the County's tourism marketing efforts.

OBJECTIVE 1.2 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Provide a comprehensive economic development strategy for Alachua County.

Policy 1.2.11 Alachua County recognizes the value of industries related to the development of energy conservation, alternative energy, reuse/recycling based products and sustainable food production and processing and encourages the location of these businesses and industry clusters consistent with Energy Element Objective 2.1. These industries shall be given high priority.

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Policy 1.2.12 Alachua County shall promote industries and businesses that support cultural, nature-based and/or eco-tourism activities.

OBJECTIVE 1.6 - LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Create livable communities that are attractive to diverse populations and new economic development opportunities, and promote greater economic prosperity, innovation, quality of life, and public safety.

Policy 1.6.1 It is a goal of Alachua County for high-speed internet access to be available throughout the County as a means to encourage economic development, enhance education and healthcare access, facilitate inclusion and engagement of citizens, promote planning and resilience, and enhance public safety and emergency response.

OBJECTIVE 1.7

Maximize local resource & energy-efficient food production and processing within the County's local foodshed. A robust local food system will:

- maintain agricultural land and support rural land stewardship
- protect incomes for family farms and provide local employment
- stimulate local food industries and enhance agritourism
- protect public health by improving food safety issues at harvesting, washing, shipping and distribution, and increasing the nutritional value of food
- increase food security and resiliency through providing affordable local food, protecting agricultural knowledge and traditions, and supporting biodiversity in our food crops

Policy 1.7.1 Partner with community groups and other local governments in the region to delineate and promote a local foodshed for the development of a sustainable local food system.

Alachua County will participate in a study to establish baseline measures and measurable targets towards the increase of local food use by Alachua County institutions, including:

- (a) Identify and partner with relevant agencies and organizations, such as the City of Gainesville, area retailers, UF IFAS Extension, Florida Farm Bureau, Florida Organic Growers, UF Field to Fork, Working Food, Alachua County School Board, UF, UF Health, and SFC.
- (b) Identify components of the local food economy, such as appropriate food shed, distribution system, and local food segment of retail purchases. Set target goals and develop methodology to identify and track local food use by Alachua County institutions.

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Policy 1.7.2 Work with local governments, institutions and community groups within the defined foodshed area to determine processing facilities and other food-related infrastructure needed to process locally grown foods.

Policy 1.7.3 The land development regulations shall permit and encourage dispersed, small scale agricultural production and sale direct to the public.

Policy 1.7.4 Increase support for farmers' markets through partnerships with local governments, institutions and community groups.

OBJECTIVE 1.8

Increase the use of locally grown and/or processed foods in County facilities where food is provided and encourage other local government facilities to do the same.

Policy 1.8.1 Work with the Alachua County Jail to develop a plan for an agricultural program to grow food onsite and teach sustainable farming methods.

Policy 1.8.2 Alachua County shall work to facilitate partnerships between local farmers and local government organizations such as the Alachua County School Board to implement the 2009 Alachua County Hunger Abatement Plan and future updates and provide healthy, fresh foods in local schools and other institutions.

OBJECTIVE 1.10

Support and encourage local agricultural operations in the use of sustainable agricultural practices including organic farming.

Policy 1.10.1 In accordance with the policies of Objective 6.1 of the Future Land Use Element, the County shall work with landowners to facilitate participation in programs that meet or exceed best management practices, cost share programs, and to assist in the pursuit of funding sources to aid in the development of a sustainable local food system.

Policy 1.10.2 Reduce use of and dependence on fossil-fuel based synthetic fertilizers in Alachua County consistent with adopted Best Management Practices and Florida Statutes, incorporating research based information.

Policy 1.10.3 Work with IFAS and local agricultural groups to encourage use of sustainable agricultural practices that maximize carbon sequestration, conserve energy and water, minimize soil erosion and protect ecosystems and water quality.

Policy 1.10.4 Partner with IFAS, local farmers, and community groups to develop and implement educational strategies on the benefits of purchasing locally grown and/or processed foods.

- (a) County Extension, in partnership with Florida Department of Agriculture, shall provide GAP [Good Agricultural Practices] and BMP training for county

ECONOMIC ELEMENT

farmers to facilitate crop production in partnership with Florida Department of Agriculture.

- (b) Focus efforts of IFAS/County Extension Ag education and Master Gardener program to increase participation of at-risk youth.
- (c) Alachua County Extension will work with government agencies, businesses, County departments, schools, farmers, organizations actively working with pollinators, and the public to increase both food resources and suitable nesting habitat for pollinator species. Approaches may include:
 - (1) Adopting and implementing policies that promote pollinator health and habitat;
 - (2) Exploring alterations to current County land management practices that improve habitat of pollinators on County-owned land;
 - (3) Educating the general public and County departments on the issue of pollinator decline and strategies that can be implemented to improve pollinator health and habitat; and
 - (4) Creating and fostering partnerships that assist in the advancement of pollinator health at the local, regional, and federal levels.

ECONOMIC ELEMENT DEFINITIONS

Foodshed: The area of agricultural land needed to meet all or a significant portion of a population center's food needs. Commonly used measures for personal foodsheds are a 100 mile radius from a person's home for necessary foodstuffs. Scope and scale of a foodshed area requires input from consumers, producers and the community at large in establishing a vision for the necessary food systems to support the targeted population.

COMMUNITY HEALTH ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.3

Promote a healthy community by providing for healthy weight management and prevention of obesity and other chronic conditions by addressing nutrition and the built environment.

Policy 1.3.1 Alachua County shall promote access to healthful, affordable and nutritious food.

Policy 1.3.1.1 Promote food security and public health by encouraging locally-based food production, distribution, and choice in accordance with the Future Land Use Element.

Policy 1.3.2 Alachua County shall partner with local organizations and develop standards to promote community food systems.

Policy 1.3.2.1 Standards for community agriculture shall be developed in coordination with the UF IFAS and Extension agents and local and regional agricultural organizations. Existing standards will be utilized to the greatest extent possible.

Policy 1.3.2.2 As provided in the Future Land Use and Energy Elements, Alachua County shall promote and develop standards for uses, including produce stands, farmers markets and food cooperatives, to facilitate location of fresh produce providers within or in close proximity to residential areas.



Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update Process Overview

Rural Concerns Advisory Committee: April 15, 2025

Ken McMurry, Senior Planner
Alachua County Growth Management Department

Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update Process Overview

Purpose of Presentation

- Overview of the County's Comprehensive Plan evaluation and update process and timeline for 2025-2026.
- No action required today
- Any recommendations on policy focus areas for the Comprehensive Plan update are encouraged and welcome.

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

- Long-range planning document (~20 years).
- Expresses community's vision in terms of general goals, objectives, and policies.
- 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.

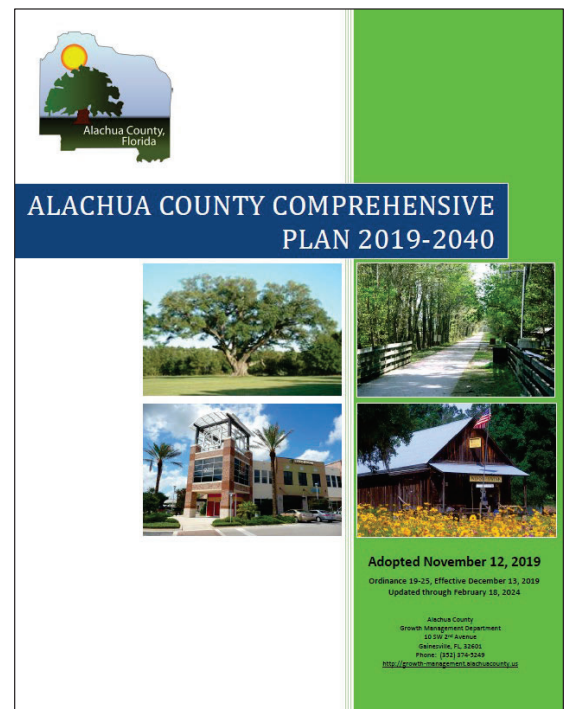
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Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Elements

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

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

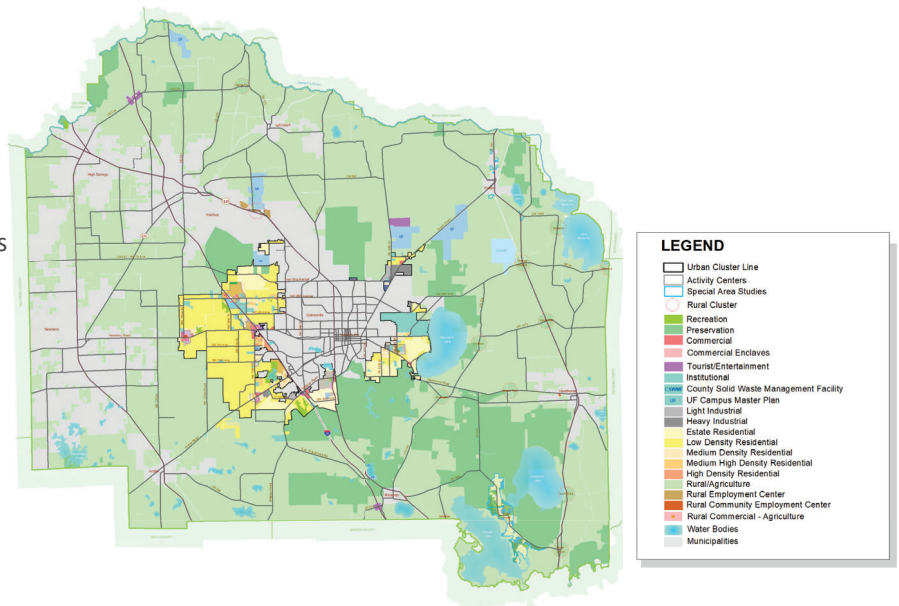
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Future Land Use Map 2040 – Alachua County, Florida

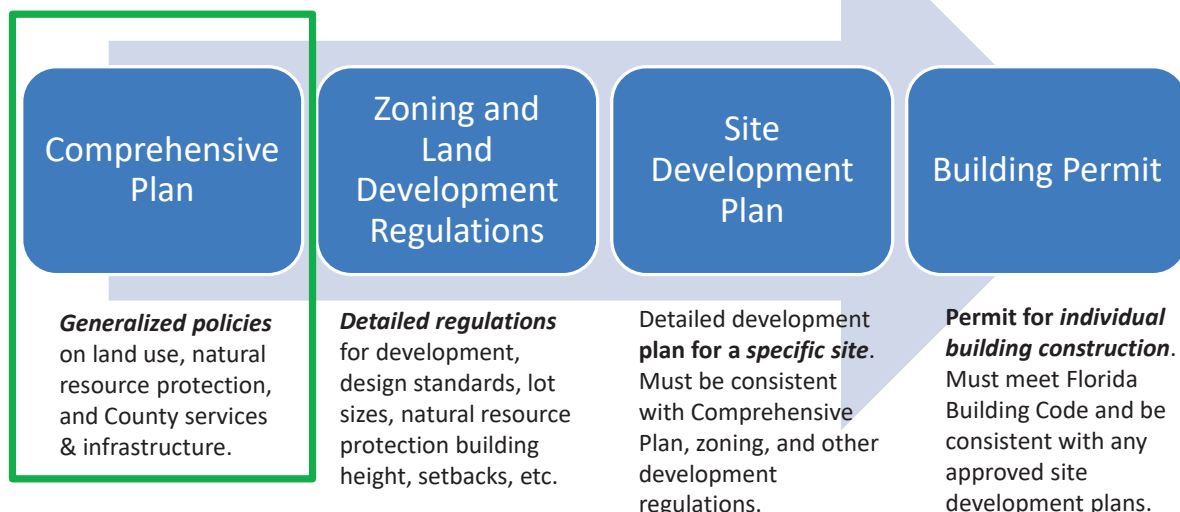
Future Land Use Element includes –

- Focus urban development in an urban cluster that:
 - Sets a boundary for urban growth
 - Maximizes efficient use of urban infrastructure
 - Strengthens the separation of rural and urban uses
- Rural and agricultural areas shall be protected in a manner consistent with:
 - Retention of agriculture, open space, and rural character
 - Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas
 - Efficient use of public services and facilities



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Planning and Zoning Process

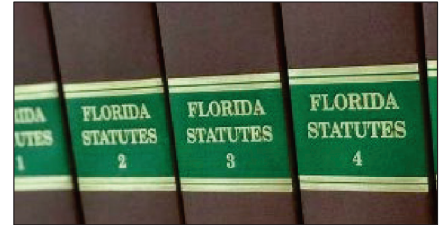


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State Requirements for Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

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 amendments to the comprehensive plan must be transmitted for state agency review within 1 year.



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Process for Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Update

Completed

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 was submitted to State by April 1, 2025.

We are here

Part 2 – Local issues scoping and proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

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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 (protection of rural/agricultural areas)
- Review policies on urban agriculture and local food systems
- Review Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) policies, Commercial land use policies
- Review stormwater management policies for new development

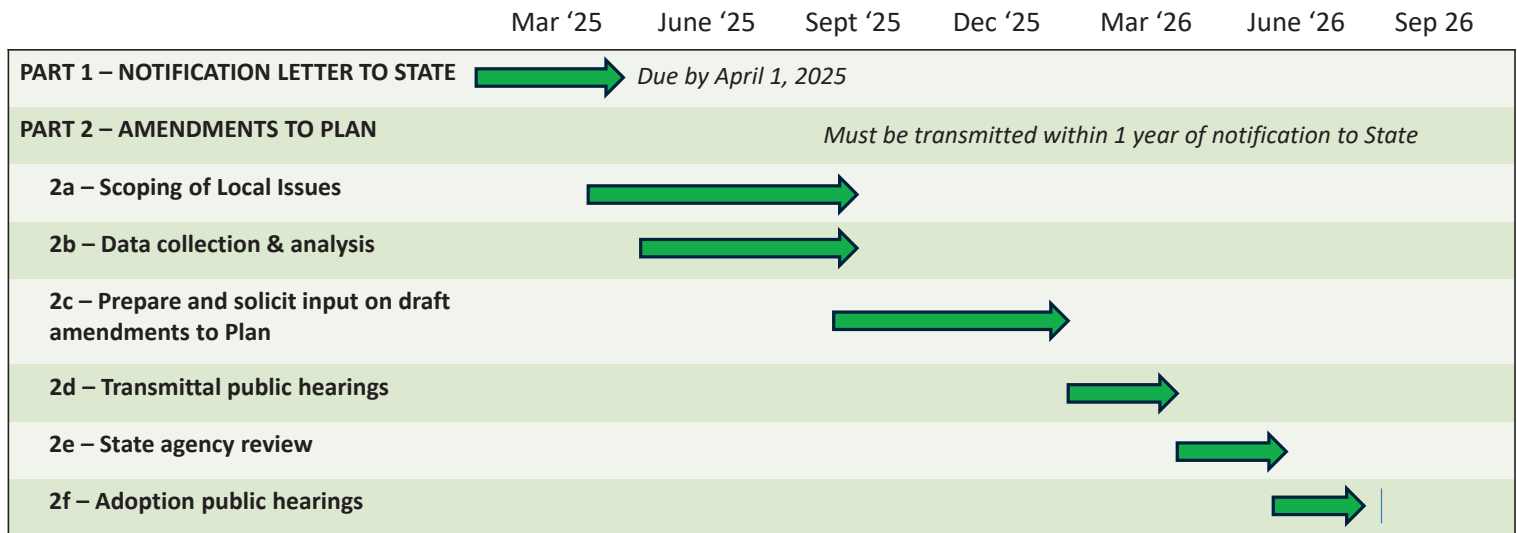
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Examples of Local Issues to be Considered in Plan Update

- Review Transportation and Capital Improvements Element to ensure alignment with recent Mobility Fee updates
- Review Economic Element to ensure alignment with current County priorities and strategies, and the County's Strategic Plan
- Recently-completed or ongoing County planning efforts will inform the Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update (Climate Action Plan, Forward Focus Eastern Alachua County, Parks Master Plan, Fire Master Plan, etc.)

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Process Overview and Timeline



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Questions and Discussion

Web Site:

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

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