



**Z23-000003**

**Proposed County-Initiated  
Comprehensive Plan Amendment:  
Equity and Environmental Justice  
Definitions and Policies**

Board of County Commissioners  
Public Hearing – September 26, 2023



# Proposed Amendments to Comprehensive Plan

Two Primary Focus Areas:

1. Updated definitions of “Equity” and “Environmental Justice” in Future Land Use Element
2. Updated policies for consideration of equity, environmental justice and neighborhood character as part of the County’s decision-making process on industrial and institutional land uses



## Background

- 2018 - “Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County” report published by Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at University of Florida
- 2019 – Various Comprehensive Plan updates focused on recognizing and eliminating disparities identified in the BEBR Report
- 2020 – County Charter Amendment approved by voters: “Identify and eliminate racial and gender bias in County policies”
- 2020 – County Commission resolution creating Equity Advisory Board

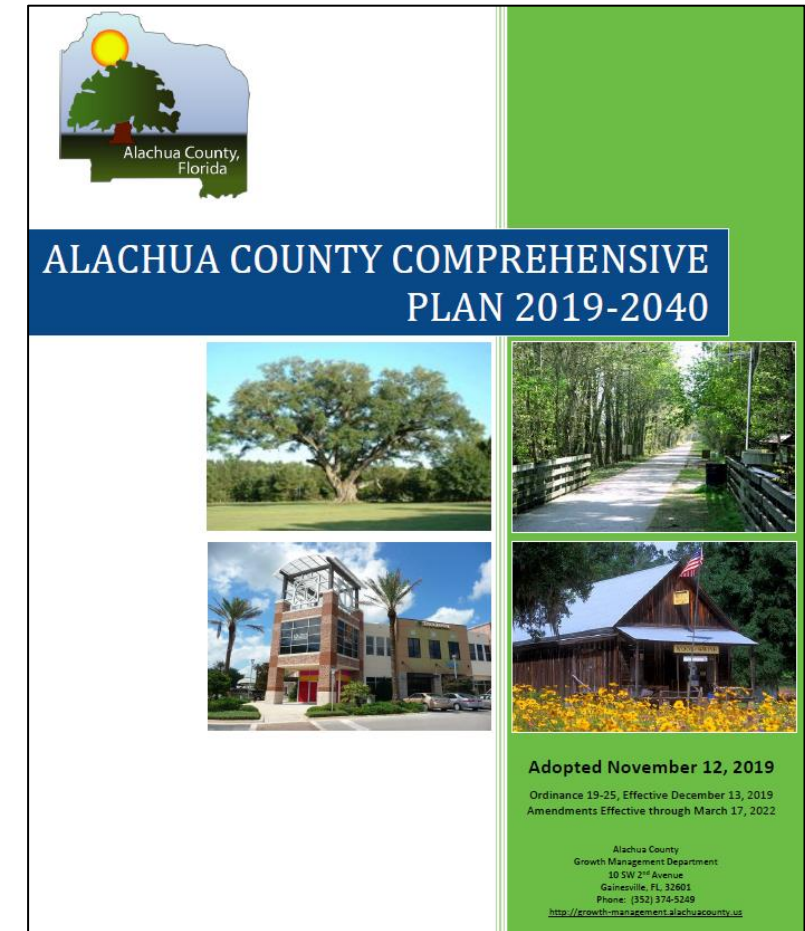
## Background

- August 2021 – Alachua County Equity Workplan Phase 1 adopted by BoCC
  - Identified need for updated definitions of equity and environmental justice and policies for consideration of equity in institutional and industrial land use decisions
- June 6, 2023 – Board of County Commissioners received presentation on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments and instructed staff to move forward with public hearings
- July 31, 2023 – Community workshop for public discussion and feedback on proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments
- August 16, 2023 – Planning Commission public hearing



## Equity in Alachua County Comprehensive Plan (as adopted)

- Promoting sustainable development that provides for a *balance of economic opportunity, social equity, environmental justice, and protection of the natural environment* has been a foundational principle of the Plan since the early 2000s.
- Equity is currently addressed within goals, objectives, and policies within several Plan Elements, including:
  - Future Land Use
  - Economic
  - Capital Improvements
  - Housing
  - Community Health



## Proposed Amendment: “Environmental Justice” Definition

~~**Environmental Justice:** No group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the cumulative negative social or environmental consequences resulting from land use decisions.~~

**Environmental Justice** means that no group of people, including those from marginalized racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups or persons with disabilities, should disproportionately bear the cumulative negative social or environmental consequences resulting from land use decisions. Principles of environmental justice recognize historically that the largest proportion of environmental burdens come from industrial development, energy production facilities, disposal of waste, and transportation systems, and that these burdens often fall on the communities that are least able to withstand the impacts of them, i.e. poorer and marginalized communities. Environmental justice is a principle and practice that emerged historically from people of color organizing to protect their environments, community rights, lands, and health.

## Proposed Amendment: “Equity” Definition

~~**Social Equity:** Principle of fairness, with attention to provision of opportunity to those portions of the community that are less well off; as applied to Comprehensive Plan, related issues include the provision of affordable housing, economic opportunity, and choice of living environments for all members of the community without regard to sex, race, age, religion, ethnicity, national origin, etc.~~

**Equity** means redressing injustices that were previously incurred, fully incorporating all segments of the community in the decision-making and planning processes and establishing measures to prevent future inequities from occurring. Such efforts include expanding opportunity and promoting equal access to public services, providing equal service quality, ensuring procedural fairness, and striving for equal opportunity in such areas as education, health, employment, mobility, and housing.

In the context of sustainability, equity refers to how burdens and benefits of different policy actions are distributed in a community. The more evenly they are distributed, the more equitable the community is, and this is reflected in economic, ecological, and social outcomes. Equity in sustainability includes putting forth efforts toward rectifying previous environmental injustices, avoiding environmental injustices going forward, and providing equal access to participate in sustainability activities and shape their development.

## Proposed Amendment: Industrial Land Uses

**Policy 4.2.1.** Industrial land uses shall not be located adjacent to residential or agricultural areas without adequate buffering or integrating design and business practices to eliminate or minimize adverse impacts. Land use decisions concerning location of industrial uses shall take into consideration environmental justice, equity, and community, historical, and neighborhood character; this shall include consideration of the residents of the community, their relationship to the land, and the characteristics of the land itself. In considering community, historical, and neighborhood character, particular consideration shall be given to recognizing, protecting and preserving the resilience, collective desires, and resources of historically burdened communities. Historically burdened communities are those where the residents, often from racially or ethnically marginalized communities, face inequities and have disproportionate burdens associated with land use.

*Language above would also be added to Policy 4.4.1 regarding “Heavy Industrial” land uses*



## Proposed Amendment: Institutional Land Uses

**Policy 5.2.2** Institutional facilities shall be designed and located for integration into the surrounding community. Land use decisions concerning location of institutional uses shall take into consideration environmental justice, equity, and community, historical, and neighborhood character; this shall include consideration of the residents of the community, their relationship to the land, and the characteristics of the land itself. In considering community, historical, and neighborhood character, particular consideration shall be given to recognizing, protecting and preserving the resilience, collective desires, and resources of historically burdened communities. Historically burdened communities are those where the residents, often from racially or ethnically marginalized communities, face inequities and have disproportionate burdens associated with land use.

## Proposed Amendment: Implementation Section

**Policy 7.1.2** Proposed changes in the zoning map shall consider:

- (a) ...
- (b) ...
- (c) the relationship of the proposed development to existing development in the vicinity and considerations relating to environmental justice, equity, and redevelopment opportunities.
- (d) ...



## Proposed Amendment: Implementation Section

**Policy 7.1.17** The land development regulations shall provide for evaluation of certain land uses through processes by which special exceptions, special use permits, and temporary use permits may be granted. These certain uses include uses with intensities or characteristics that may create an adverse impact on surrounding neighborhoods or institutions which are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the size, extent and character of that use is compatible with the surrounding uses. The regulations to implement this policy shall identify the general category of uses that will be subject to this process and the specific factors which will be utilized to evaluate whether or not a special exception, special use permit or temporary use permit should be granted. For special exceptions and special use permits, these factors shall include, but are not limited to, consideration of environmental justice, equity, and community, historical, and neighborhood character.

## Planning Commission Recommendation (8/16/2023)

Recommend that the Board of County Commissioners approve transmittal of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment Z23-000003 to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 163.3184. \*

*\* Additional comment included in motion that a robust community engagement process is needed to ensure these amendments are applied in practice.*

## **Next Steps**

### **Public Hearing Process for Comprehensive Plan Amendment per FL Statutes:**

1. Local Planning Agency Hearing (Planning Commission): August 16, 2023
2. **BoCC First Hearing on Transmittal for State Review: September 26, 2023**
3. State Agency Review Period: Approximately 30-35 days
4. BoCC Second Hearing on Final Adoption: November-December, 2023



## Staff Recommendation

Approve transmittal of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment Z23-000003 to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 163.3184.

