

ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVALUATION AND UPDATE 2025-2026

PROJECT SCOPE

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

Florida Statutes Section 163.3191 requires that:

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

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

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

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

ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVALUATION AND UPDATE 2025-2026

OUTLINE OF PROCESS AND TIMELINE

PROCESS INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW – FEBRUARY 25, 2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- BoCC workshop discussions
- County Advisory Committee discussions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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