



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

**Application Number: Z25-000007**

Staff Contact: Michael Castine, Senior Planner, (352) 374-5249

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**SUBJECT:** County-initiated amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan: 2019-2040 to incorporate by reference the updated Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035 as required by Sections 163.3177(6)(c) and 163.3177(4)(a), Florida Statutes.

**APPLICANT/AGENT:** Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

**CHRONOLOGY:** Local Planning Agency Hearing: 5/21/2025  
County Commission Transmittal Hearing: TBD  
County Commission Adoption Hearing: TBD

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approve transmittal to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment.

**LPA RECOMMENDATION:**

**BoCC ACTION (transmittal):**

**BoCC ACTION (adoption):**

**Staff Report Exhibits:** Exhibit 1 – Proposed text amendments to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan  
Exhibit 2 – Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan

## **INTRODUCTION**

Application Z25-000007 is a proposed amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan policies addressing water supply planning including amendments to the Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element, the Conservation and Open Space Element, the Capital Improvements Element, and the Intergovernmental Coordination Element. The proposed amendment would update several policy references in the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the recently updated Alachua County/City of Gainesville Joint Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035. Chapter 163.3177(6)(c) and 163.3177(4)(a), Florida Statutes, establishes the requirements for local government Comprehensive Plans regarding water supply planning. The adopted Alachua County Comprehensive Plan contains a variety of objectives and policies addressing water supply, water conservation, intergovernmental coordination and associated capital facilities planning related to water supply.

County staff has worked jointly with City of Gainesville staff and Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) staff to update the Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan for the time period of 2025-2035 (Joint WSFWP). Adoption of the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan are necessary to satisfy statutory requirements and ensure that the Joint WSFWP is consistent with the [North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan \(NFRWSP\)](#) adopted by the respective Governing Boards of the St Johns River Water Management District and the Suwannee River Water Management District on January 17, 2017 and updated and approved on December 12, 2023. The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, shown in strike-through and underline format, are provided in **Exhibit 1** of this report. The updated Joint WSFWP is provided in **Exhibit 2** of this report.

## **BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

In 2005, the Florida Legislature added requirements for water supply planning to the Florida Statutes, Chapter 163, Part II and Chapter 373, relating to Growth Management. In 2010 the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) performed Water Supply Assessments for areas within their respective jurisdictions and the results predicted unacceptable impacts to river and spring flows in the northeastern part of the SRWMD with in portions of the region. The Water Supply Assessments in 2010 identified a need to designate within the region four Water Resource Caution Areas (WRCAs) which included Alachua County including the City of Gainesville (see Figure 1, Joint WSFWP). Designation of the WRCA identified the need to develop a Regional Water Supply Plan for the designated areas (per Sec. 373.709, F.S.). Subsequently, the St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and SRWMD engaged in a collaborative public process to jointly develop the North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan 2015-2035 (NFRWSP), which was approved by the respective Districts' Governing Boards on January 17, 2017 and which was updated and approved on December 12, 2023. The NFRWSP area encompasses all or parts of Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Nassau, Putnam, St Johns, Suwannee, and Union counties and addresses the water supply issues of the region and provides a framework to meet the water needs of the NFRWSP area through 2035.

Chapter 163, Section 3177(6)(c)4., F.S., requires local governments to prepare and adopt a Water Supply Facilities Work Plan into their comprehensive plans within 18 months after final approval of the pertinent regional water supply plan or its update. Therefore, for local governments within the NFRWSP area the deadline to amend their comprehensive plans to adopt the Work Plan is June 12, 2025. The Work Plan must cover at least a 10-year planning period and identify water supply projects and conservation and reuse activities needed to meet the projected future water demands (see [North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan, Appendix J-M](#)). The Joint WSFWP adopts the water supply projects included in the NFRWSP (see Joint WSFWP Tables 5 and 6).

The Joint WSFWP describes the origins of water supply planning and the local implementation of the NFRWSP, and consists of the Statutory history of water supply planning, background information on the NFRWSP and regional water supply issues, data and analysis regarding projected area-wide population growth, available water supply, population projections with GRU service area, water supply and demand in the GRU service area, water conservation and water reuse projects, intergovernmental coordination and water supply concurrency, water supply and conservation projects, and existing and proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan policies for Alachua County and the City of Gainesville.

Because Gainesville Regional Utilities is the principal water supplier in the portion of unincorporated Alachua County within the urban cluster as designated in the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, County staff has worked with City of Gainesville staff and Gainesville Regional Utilities staff to develop the Joint WSFWP. The Joint WSFWP implements the NFRWSP by identifying and adopting the water conservation measures implemented by Alachua County and the water supply capital projects that will be constructed by GRU, providing for intergovernmental coordination, and providing for an update of the Joint WSFWP within 18 months of an update of the NFRWSP. Several of the alternative water supply capital projects identified by GRU in the Joint WSFWP are located in the Urban Cluster of unincorporated Alachua County and generally consist of recharge wetlands projects and several phases of reclaimed water main extensions. The water conservation projects include WaterStar and landscape irrigation retrofit rebates, water consumption and conservation tracking, and commercial water conservation projects. The alternative water supply and water conservation projects are listed in Tables 5 & 6 of the Joint WSFWP (pages 23 & 24).

Alachua County is not a water supplier, therefore the County's responsibilities for water supply planning are to include data and analysis regarding population and water demand projections to ensure that the County's water needs for the 2025-2035 planning period will be met by GRU, and to include information from GRU that adequate water sources and infrastructure are available to serve the projected water demand. The Joint WSFWP data and analysis demonstrates adequate water supply sources and infrastructure based on the projected demand due to population increase and GRU's permitted water supply capacity for GRU to serve the water supply needs of City of Gainesville and the urban cluster of unincorporated Alachua County for the 10-year planning period.

## **PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT TEXT CHANGES**

Underlined text is proposed to be added

~~Struck through text~~ is proposed for deletion

Regular Text is adopted policy language

### **POTABLE WATER & SANITARY SEWER ELEMENT**

Policy 7.1.5      The Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035 ~~2018-2028~~ is herein incorporated by reference.

### **CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

Policy 4.5.12      The County shall cooperate with the Suwannee River Water Management District, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and local governments to update the Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035 ~~2018-2028~~, conduct current and future water conservation programs and prepare an emergency water management conservation plan.

### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT**

Policy 2.1.2.1      Alachua County shall continue to review proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan for consistency with the North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan and the Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035 ~~2018-2028~~.

Policy 6.1.1      Alachua County shall coordinate with local governments that supply potable water and/or sanitary sewer services to the unincorporated area to implement the Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035 ~~2018-2028~~, level of service standards and concurrency management systems, as provided for in the policies of the Potable Water/Sanitary Sewer Element.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is internally consistent with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan as adopted, and specifically the following provisions.

### ***GOAL 1 (Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element)***

*To provide an adequate, safe, efficient, economical, reliable and environmentally sound system of potable water supply and sanitary sewer collection, treatment and disposal to meet the needs of the current and projected Alachua County population.*

**Objective 7.1**

*Coordinate with relevant agencies and water suppliers to protect the potable water supplies and sources.*

The proposed amendment to adopt the updated Joint Water Supply Facilities Work Plan (WSFWP) maintains existing water supply planning policies and will ensure continued coordination among water suppliers and ensure protection of water supplies and sources.

**GOAL (Conservation and OpenSpace Element)**

*To conserve, manage and restore or enhance the natural and human-related resources of Alachua County to ensure long-term environmental quality for the future.*

**OBJECTIVE 4.5**

**GROUNDWATER AND SPRINGS**

*Protect and conserve the quality and quantity of groundwater and springs resources to ensure long-term public health and safety, potable water supplies from surficial, intermediate, and Floridan aquifers, adequate flow to springs, and the ecological integrity of natural resources.*

The Joint WSFWP updates data including population increase and water demand projections and is designed to monitor and conserve groundwater for public health, ensure long term water supply and protect water flow to springs.

**GOAL 1 (Intergovernmental Coordination Element)**

*Coordinated and cooperative comprehensive planning, land development regulation, and service provision with agencies and governmental units affecting Alachua County.*

**OBJECTIVE 2.1**

*Establish mechanisms to address the resolution of intergovernmental issues related to impacts of development proposed in the comprehensive plan upon municipalities within the County, adjacent counties, the region and the state.*

**OBJECTIVE 6.1**

*Coordinate with relevant state or regional agencies, local governments, or other entities with operational and maintenance responsibility for such facilities in establishing levels of service standards and guidelines.*

The purpose of the Joint WSFWP is to establish and maintain mechanisms for coordination among water suppliers and state and regional agencies to share information regarding water supplies and demand on

resources. The proposed amendments updated the existing water supply planning policies and will ensure continued coordination to share information related to water supply and demand within the area.

### **EFFECT OF AMENDMENT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment is not expected to have an effect on the provision of affordable housing in Alachua County. This amendment revises adopted policies which reference the updated Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities Work Plan 2025-2035; this clarification would have no relationship to the cost of housing.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends transmittal** of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment Z25-000007 to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment pursuant to Section 163.3184, Florida Statutes based on the following:

The proposed amendment is internally consistent with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, and specifically with the following provisions:

#### ***GOAL 1 (Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element)***

*To provide an adequate, safe, efficient, economical, reliable and environmentally sound system of potable water supply and sanitary sewer collection, treatment and disposal to meet the needs of the current and projected Alachua County population.*

#### ***Objective 7.1***

*Coordinate with relevant agencies and water suppliers to protect the potable water supplies and sources.*

The proposed amendment to adopt the updated Joint Water Supply Facilities Work Plan (WSFWP) will ensure continued coordination among water suppliers and ensure protection of water supplies and sources.

#### ***GOAL (Conservation and OpenSpace Element)***

*To conserve, manage and restore or enhance the natural and human-related resources of Alachua County to ensure long-term environmental quality for the future.*

#### ***OBJECTIVE 4.5 - GROUNDWATER AND SPRINGS***

*Protect and conserve the quality and quantity of groundwater and springs resources to ensure long-term public health and safety, potable water supplies from surficial, intermediate, and Floridan aquifers, adequate flow to springs, and the ecological integrity of natural resources.*

The Joint WSFWP is designed to monitor and conserve groundwater for public health, ensure long term water supply and protect water flow to springs.

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*Coordinated and cooperative comprehensive planning, land development regulation, and service provision with agencies and governmental units affecting Alachua County.*

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*Establish mechanisms to address the resolution of intergovernmental issues related to impacts of development proposed in the comprehensive plan upon municipalities within the County, adjacent counties, the region and the state.*

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*Coordinate with relevant state or regional agencies, local governments, or other entities with operational and maintenance responsibility for such facilities in establishing levels of service standards and guidelines.*

The purpose of the Joint WSFWP is to establish and maintain mechanisms for coordination among water suppliers and state and regional agencies to share information regarding water supplies and demand on resources.

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**Exhibit 2 – Joint Alachua County/City of Gainesville Water Supply Facilities  
Work Plan 2025-2035**