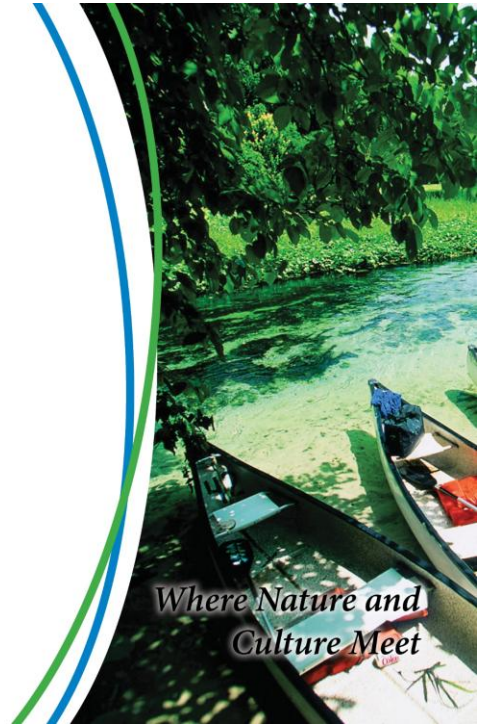




Tree Protection and Open Space CPA

**Board of County
Commissioners
Public Hearing
Z25-000006**



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Background



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

The item was transmitted to the State for review and no comments were received from review agencies.

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Current Policies



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

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

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Proposed Policies – Conservation areas





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

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Proposed Policies – Open Space



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

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Additional Updates



Policy 5.2.5 - Clarifies designation conservation resources as Open Space first and cleans up naming of rural subdivisions 

Definitions – Update definition of Champion Tree to reflect changes 

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Staff Recommendation



Adopt the Ordinance authorizing Application Z25-000006

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Questions



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Proposed Policy 3.1.1



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

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



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Proposed Objective 4.1



Objective 4.11 – CHAMPION TREES AND LANDMARK LIVE OAKS

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

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

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

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



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Proposed Policy 5.2.2



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



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Proposed Policy 5.2.3



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

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



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Proposed Policy 5.2.5



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

- (a) Nonresidential Development
- (b) Family Homestead Subdivisions
- (c) Rural Agriculture Unpaved Residential Subdivisions with no more than 9 lots
- (d) Towers, major utilities, and outdoor recreation

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



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Champion Tree Definition



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



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