



# **Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update**

**BoCC Workshop: September 2, 2025**

**Topic Area: Housing and Economic Development**

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# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Workshop Purpose

- Review of Housing and Economic Elements
- Review conceptual staff recommendations for Plan updates
- BoCC direction and input to staff on potential amendments to Plan
  - Staff will draft specific amendments based on BoCC discussion and direction

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Upcoming BoCC Workshop Schedule

- September 2nd – Housing and Economic Development
- October 7th – Environmental Protection and Sustainability
- October 21st - Community Facilities and Services
- December 2nd – TBD

## State Deadline

- Must transmit Plan amendments for state review by April 1, 2026
- At minimum, County must transmit those amendments needed to reflect changes in state statute.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Housing Element Overview

**Goal 1:** Promote safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for current and future residents.

**Objective 1.1:** Provide for the development of affordable housing, dispersed throughout the County, through policies which focus on the following areas:

- Land use and facilities
- Methods to promote the dispersion of affordable housing, and
- Manufactured housing

**Objective 1.2:** Evaluate land development regulations for their impacts on housing prices.

**Objective 1.3:** Collaborate with community partners to implement affordable housing initiatives.

**Objective 1.4:** Provide funding for affordable housing activities to ensure access to housing for all income levels.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Housing Element Overview

**Goal 2:** Maintain and improve the existing supply of affordable housing and provide for the redevelopment of neighborhoods.

**Objective 2.1:** Provide a systematic approach to the identification, preservation, and redevelopment of neighborhoods and existing affordable housing across the County.

**Objective 2.2:** Promote construction and rehabilitation techniques that enhance the long-term usability and affordability of housing.

**Objective 2.3:** Provide funding for rehabilitation and redevelopment.

**Objective 2.4:** Ensure that the land development regulations are consistent and conducive to cost-effective redevelopment in neighborhoods.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Housing Element Overview

**Goal 3:** Ensure access to housing opportunities for those residents with specialized housing needs.

**Objective 3.1:** Provide access to housing opportunities for groups identified as having special needs.

**Objective 3.2:** Ensure that the land development regulations concerning the provision of special needs housing comply with statutory requirements and do not present barriers to the development of special needs housing.

**Objective 3.3:** Provide a dedicated funding source for the provision of Special Needs housing, and form partnerships with local advocacy groups or organizations providing such housing.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Housing Element

1. Broadly update Housing Element to **align with the 2024 Alachua County Housing Plan**. Ensure that goals, objectives, and policies reflect current Board priorities and strategies as articulated in the 2024 Housing Plan.
2. Incorporate general policies regarding use of **infrastructure surtax funds** for affordable housing.
3. Incorporate general policies on the County's **affordable housing trust fund** as a dedicated funding source for affordable housing.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Housing Element

4. Add policy to recognize the potential for **motel conversions** for affordable housing.
5. Workforce Housing – Add definition and references to "**affordable workforce housing**" in Element (required by statute)
6. Incorporate appropriate cross references to **inclusionary housing** provisions that were recently adopted in the Future Land Use Element.
7. General updates to names of housing partner agencies and programs.



# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Economic Element Overview

**Goal 1:** Promote the economic prosperity of all citizens of Alachua County, address economic equity, and expand and diversify the county's tax base.

### **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.

### **Objective 1.2.    ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Provide a **comprehensive economic development strategy** for Alachua County.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Economic Element Overview

### Objective 1.3 E. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The County shall **evaluate and ensure that the types of new or the expansion of existing businesses and industries developing and locating in Alachua County contribute to maintaining a clean environment** (air, water, soil) including measures to increase energy conservation, reduce greenhouse gas production, consistent with Energy Element Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 and Conservation and Open Space Policy 4.1.2, and are **located in areas with suitable infrastructure and compatible land uses**. Each employer shall be a good neighbor by preventing adverse impacts on the environment with emphasis given to the Conservation and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Objective 1.4 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

**Coordinate** educational, vocational, and technical **training opportunities with the needs of new and existing employers**. In collaboration with other institutions, **create an environment in which all residents may become as self-sufficient as possible**, through educational and employment opportunities with a **goal to address economic opportunity and eliminate disparities identified in the “Understanding Racial Inequity In Alachua County” Report (2018)**.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Economic Element Overview

### **Objective 1.5 EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCE POVERTY**

Provide **sustainable economic opportunities** for all segments of Alachua County with a goal to **eliminate** disparities identified in the “Understanding Racial Inequity In Alachua County” Report (2018). Particular **emphasis shall be given to activities which increase economic opportunities for persons at or near the poverty level and to activities which redevelop economically distressed and under-utilized areas**. Alachua County shall utilize the following indicators:

- a. per capita incomes for Alachua County.
- b. percentage of persons living at or below the poverty level.
- c. unemployment rates.

### **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.**

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Economic Element Overview

### 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

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Economic Element Overview

### 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.**

### Objective 1.9

**Encourage the use of community gardens, green roofs and edible landscapes** by Alachua County residents.

### Objective 1.10

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

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Economic Element

### 1. Build on the County's Core Competitive Advantages: Education & Healthcare

- Recognize and leverage strengths in education and healthcare as a driver of economic development.
- Prioritize industries directly tied to the County's strengths, such as life sciences, bio-sciences, and medical research.
  - This will help attract and retain higher-wage employers.
- Align workforce with industry needs: Emphasize partnerships with educational institutions like UF and Santa Fe College to create workforce pipelines for higher-wage, certificate, and technical programs.
  - Ensures that local talent meets the demands of modern industries, especially those shaped by AI advancements.
- Promote research parks: Continue to recognize and support research and technology parks as valuable assets for the community and give them high priority.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Economic Element

### 2. Cultivating a Unique Market Differentiator: Food and Food Systems

- Elevate local food systems from a general policy topic to a central pillar of County's economic identity.
- Support Local Producers: Nurture small producer sector with strategic support and capital investments. This includes strengthening policies that encourage agricultural entrepreneurship and value-added opportunities, such as local food processing.
- Invest in Infrastructure: Include a policy framework for supporting critical infrastructure investments, such as a Food Hub.
- Connect to Tourism: Include policies that formalize the connection between food culture and tourism, promoting agritourism, and farm-to-table experiences.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Economic Element

### 3. Leveraging Quality of Life: "Where Nature and Culture Meet"

- "Where Nature and Culture Meet," represents a significant economic driver. Policies in the element should integrate this concept as a core business attractant and a source of tourism revenue.
- Arts & Ecotourism: Update policies to recognize that arts, cultural events, and ecotourism as major contributors to Florida's economy and the County's quality of life.
- Sports Visitation: Add policies to acknowledge the importance of sports tourism and the Board's investment in assets like the Sports Events Center.
- Marketing and Data-Driven Decisions: The updated element should empower the new Tourism & Economic Development (TED) Department to serve as the community's overall Economic Development Organization (EDO). This would include telling the community's story through marketing and using data to inform decisions that align with the Board's priorities.



# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

## **Staff Recommended Key Update Areas - Economic Element**

- Update home-based business language for consistency with Sec. 559.955, Florida Statutes (update required by statute).
- Consider adding policy language to acknowledge the Forward Focus – Eastern Alachua County initiative related to economic development.

# Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

**Next BoCC Workshop: October 7, 2025, 9:30 am**

**Grace Knight Conference Room, County Administration Building**

**Topic: Environmental Protection and Sustainability**

**General County web site:**

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

**Comprehensive Plan Update Micro Site:**

*Contains additional information, frequent updates and resident questionnaire*

<https://alachuacounty.civilspace.io/en/projects/alachua-county-comprehensive-plan-evaluation-and-update>

**Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update**

Alachua County is in the process of evaluating and updating its Comprehensive Plan for the next 20 years. The last major evaluation and update of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan was in 2010-2013.

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan is a document adopted by the Board of County Commissioners that articulates broad strategies and specific policies that guide future development and decision-making for the County. The Comprehensive Plan covers various subject areas such as land use, natural resources protection, housing, transportation, parks, economic development, community health, historic preservation, capital investment, and energy. It is designed to enhance the overall quality of life for all residents of Alachua County.

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. 163.317(2) 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.

Florida Statutes also require local governments to comprehensively evaluate and update comprehensive plans to reflect changes in local conditions. This might include changes in demographic trends, land development activity, service delivery plans, community needs and priorities. The update will also take into account other recent planning efforts by the County such as the Parks Master Plan, Fire Master Plan, Climate Action Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and Forward Focus: Eastern Alachua County.

[Click here](#) to view the currently adopted Alachua County Comprehensive Plan.

**PROJECT PHASES**

- Scoping of Local Issues: March 2023 - September 2023
- Data Collection and Analysis: May 2023 - September 2023
- Prepare Draft Amendments to Plan: September 2023 - January 2024
- Public Hearings on Transmittal of Amendments for State Review: January 2024 - March 2024
- State Agency Review: April 2024 - May 2024
- Public Hearing on Adoption of Plan Amendments: June 2024 - July 2024

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- Comprehensive Plan Summary
- Presentation Comprehensive Plan Update Overview

**Comprehensive Planning Process**

The diagram illustrates a continuous cycle of planning. It starts with 'Update' (involving 'Plan Evaluation & Update' and 'Public Input'), leading to 'Implementation' (involving 'Plan Implementation' and 'Public Input'). This is followed by 'Monitoring' (involving 'Plan Monitoring' and 'Public Input'), which leads to 'Evaluation' (involving 'Plan Evaluation & Update' and 'Public Input'), which then feeds back into the 'Update' phase.

**OPEN**

**Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update Questionnaire**

Closes October 31, 2025 at 7:59 PM

Your opinion matters! Share your thoughts about Alachua County's Comprehensive Plan.

[Participate Now](#) Approximately 20 minutes

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