



Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

BoCC Workshop: October 7, 2025

Topic Area: Environmental Protection and Resilience

Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update

Workshop Purpose

- Overview of adopted Comprehensive Plan Elements
 - Conservation and Open Space
 - Stormwater Management
 - Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer
 - Energy
- Review conceptual staff recommendations for Plan updates
- BoCC direction and input to staff on potential amendments to Plan
 - Staff will draft amendments based on BoCC discussion and direction

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BoCC Workshop Schedule for Issue-Based Discussion

- ✓ August 12th – Land Use and Development
- ✓ September 2nd – Housing and Economic Development
- **October 7th – Environmental Protection and Resilience**
- October 21st - Community Facilities and Services
 - Includes Transportation, Recreation, Solid Waste, Community Health
- December 2nd – TBD

State Deadline

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

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Conservation and Open Space Element – Overview

Goal: 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.

- Diverse strategies for conservation of natural systems:

Education

Public outreach

Regulations

Incentives

Acquisition

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Environmental conservation as a priority in decision-making

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Conservation and Open Space Element – Overview

- Conservation areas required to be protected on private or public lands:
 - Wetlands
 - Surface waters
 - 100-year floodplains
 - Listed species habitat
 - Significant geologic features
 - Strategic ecosystems
 - Champion trees and landmark live oak trees
- Low Impact Design (LID)
- Natural Resource Protection Standards
 - Air resources
 - Soils slopes, and erosion
 - Mineral resources (mining/excavation)
 - Geological resources
 - Groundwater resources and springs
 - Surface waters
 - Wetland ecosystems
 - Floodplains and floodways
 - Biodiversity (significant plant & wildlife habitat)
 - Strategic Ecosystems

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Conservation and Open Space Element – Overview

- **Human-Related Resources**
 - Energy development and conservation
 - Open space (in built environment)
 - Scenic quality
 - Vegetation management (land clearing, landscaping)
 - Agriculture and silviculture practices
 - Wildfire mitigation
 - Hazardous materials standards
- **Land Conservation**
 - County land acquisition program
 - Ecologically functional linkages
 - Other land acquisition programs
 - Historical and archaeological resources
 - Land management
- **Greenways Master Plan**

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Energy Element – Overview

GOAL: Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and fossil fuel consumption; mitigate the effects of rising energy costs; and promote the long-term economic security of Alachua County through energy conservation, energy efficiency and renewable energy production.

Sets long term goal for reducing community greenhouse gas emissions through prioritized strategies:

Priority 1 - Practice energy conservation

Priority 2 - Maximize energy efficiency

Priority 3 - Promote and invest in renewable energy production

Policy Focus Areas:

- Built environment
- Energy efficient land use
- Energy efficient transportation
- County Government initiatives
- Renewable energy
- Solid waste strategies
- Public outreach and education

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Stormwater Element – Overview

GOAL: Protect natural drainage features and the quality of waters, and protect new and existing developments in accordance with adopted levels of service for floodplain management, water quantity, and water quality.

- Standards for stormwater management systems for new development
- Floodplain management standards
- Maintenance of existing County stormwater management facilities
- Policies on protection of natural drainage features, including surface water and groundwater quality

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Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer Element – Overview

GOAL: 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.

- Coordination with potable water and sanitary sewer providers to ensure system capacity is available to serve new development within the Urban Cluster.
- New development in Urban Cluster required to connect to centralized potable water and sanitary sewer systems, with limited exception.
- Extension of potable water and sanitary sewer services into rural areas prohibited unless approved by BoCC based on special circumstances
- Minimum lot size standards for the use of private wells and septic systems in coordination with state requirements
- Promotes use of various strategies for water conservation and reuse

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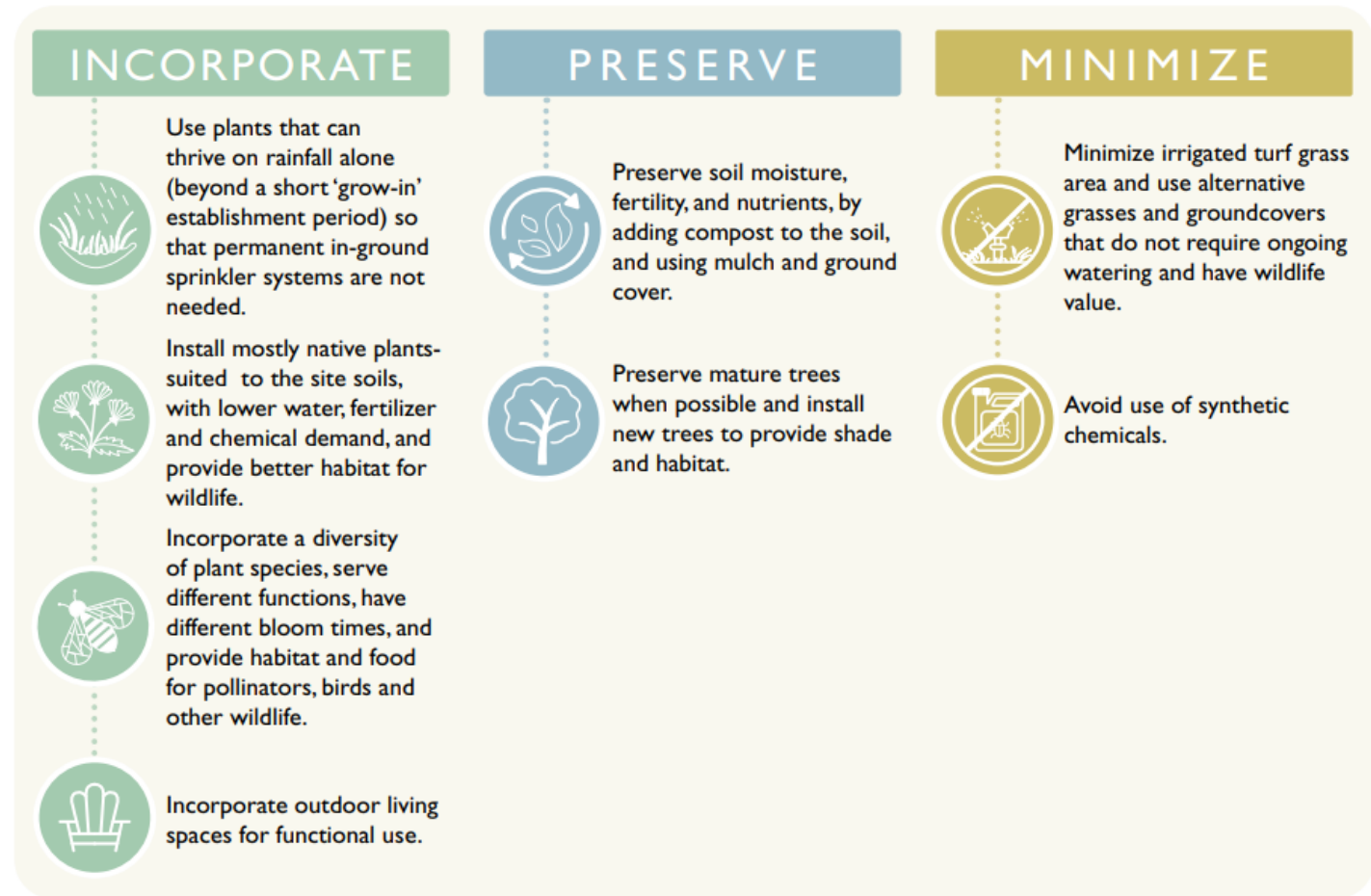
Recommended Plan Updates – Environmental Protection Policies

- Enhanced Nutrient Reducing Septic Systems
 - Currently required by statute (House Bill 1379, 2023) for new systems on lots less than 1 acre located within BMAP areas. Need to incorporate policy language into Plan consistent with this new requirement.
 - Evaluate implications, benefits, and feasibility of expanding requirement for enhanced nutrient reducing septic systems to include all new systems on any size lot (consider countywide, within certain geographic areas, or proximate to conservation resources)
- Add Alachua County's Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) water quality projects into Comp Plan as required by HB 1379.
- Wetland Protection Policies
 - Allow for administrative review and approval for smaller (e.g., ¼ acre or less) wetland impacts. Include enabling language in Comp Plan with detail to be provided in ULDC.

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Recommended Plan Updates: Low Impact Design (LID) for Development

- Existing objectives and policies in Comp Plan call for encouraging or requiring LID strategies in new development.
- Staff is investigating additional ways to implement these policies through codes and programs such as potential requirements or incentives for:
 - Reducing overall development footprint
 - Reducing land clearing and preserving more existing tree canopy on site
 - Fertilizer and irrigation-free developments
 - Landscaping standards for new single-family residential lots
 - Soil amendments



Source: *The New Yard Pattern Book for Florida's Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition*

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Recent ULDC Landscaping Code Updates Relating to LID

- **Resilient Landscapes – New Subsection**
 - Reduced irrigation & fertilizer use, protection of native soils, and preservation of existing vegetation
 - Limits permanently irrigated turfgrass to functional uses
 - Encourages alternative groundcovers and drought tolerant turf grass species
- **Soil Amendments:** Encouraged with recommended standards
- **Low Impact Design Techniques**
 - Requires use of LID techniques/Green Stormwater Infrastructure technologies for parking area stormwater runoff in developments with >40 parking spaces
- **Native Species:** Requires minimum 75% native species for trees, shrubs, groundcovers
- **Landscaping Credit for Existing Plants:** Specifies characteristics to determine credit and to facilitate use

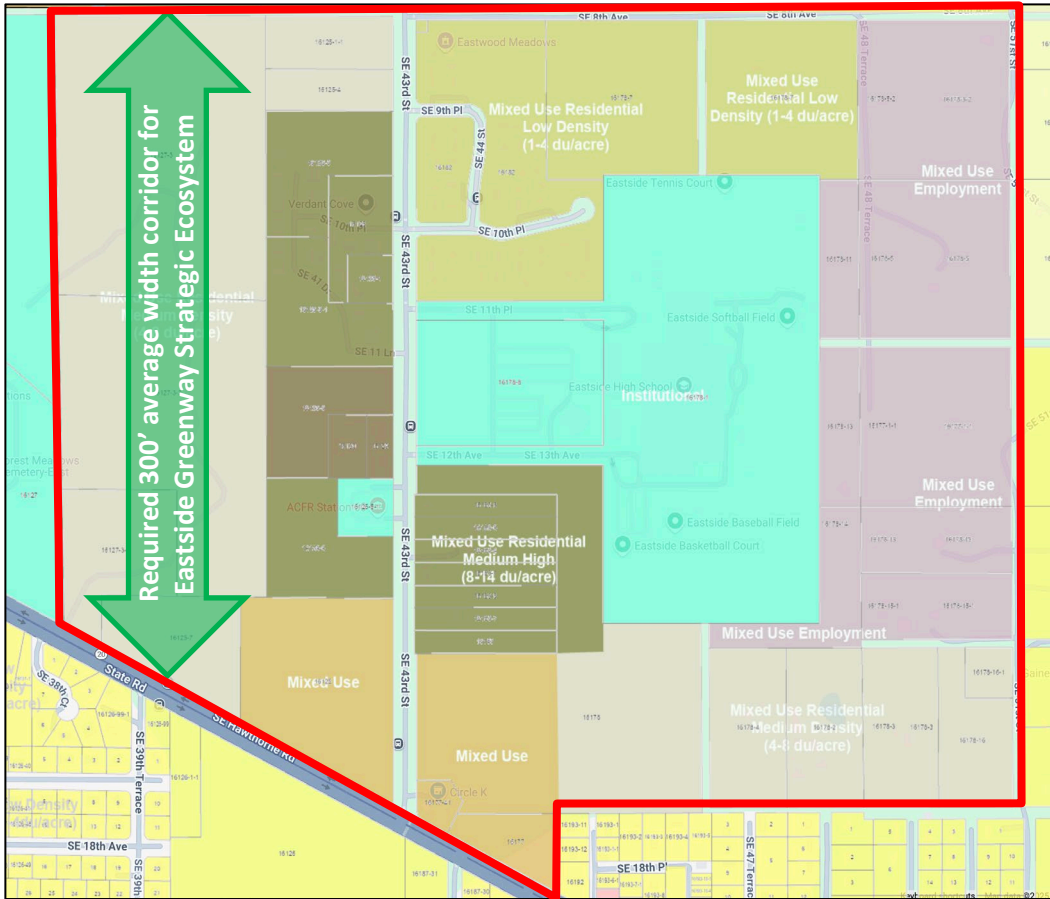
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Recommended Plan Updates – Other Environmental Protection Policies

- Strengthen policies regarding protection of floodplains from development impacts by prioritizing floodplain avoidance over structural/engineering solutions
- Idylwild Serenola and Cross Creek Special Area Plans (SAP)
 - Maps of upland habitat and tree canopy in Future Land Use Element are outdated and need update
- Land conservation section needs general updates
 - Program name, terminology, outdated references, etc.
- Address connection between land conservation program acquisitions and future land use plan
 - How does property's land use designation factor into potential acquisitions?

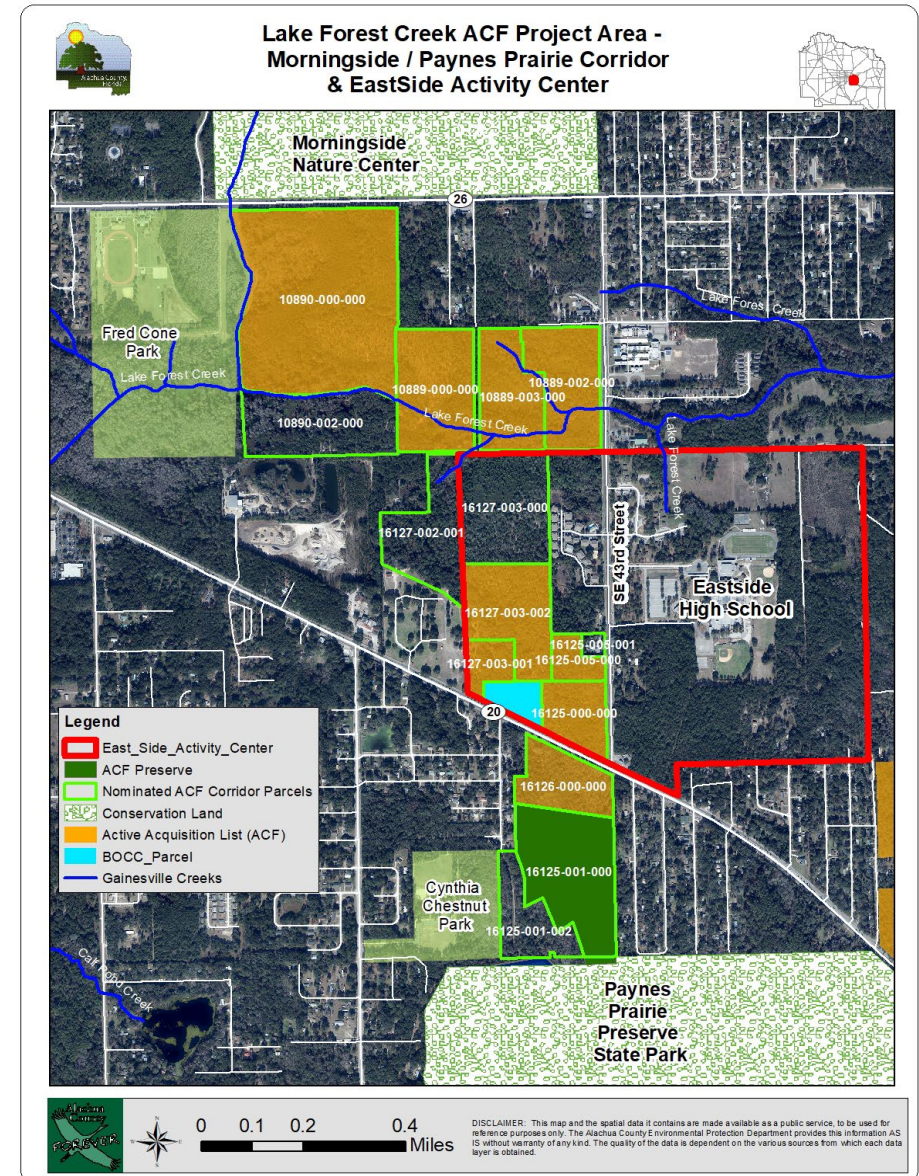
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Case Study: Eastside Activity Center



Future Land Use Map (Strategic Ecosystem corridor width not to scale)

- Designated in Comp Plan for higher density and intensity mixed uses.
- Strategic Ecosystem corridor set-aside required by Comp Plan policy.
- Corridor provides key ecological connection
- Four parcels on ACF active acquisition list



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Recommended Plan Updates - Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer Element

- Add protection of groundwater and surface water resources as part of Element Goal.
- GRU potable water level of service standard (Policy 1.1.1) – revisit this with GRU
 - Average: 124.5 gallons per capita per day (including residential and non-residential uses)
 - Peak: 200 gallons per capita per day (including residential and non-residential uses)
- Add BMAP nitrogen reduction requirements as potential basis for requiring connection to municipal well and septic systems where there has been evidence of septic system failure or well contamination. Also consider advanced treatment septic systems as an alternative to connection to municipal systems. (Policy 2.1.7)
- Add creation of compost or similar processes as a potential disposal method for biosolids from wastewater treatment facilities. (Policy 6.1.2)

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Recommended Plan Updates - Energy Element

- Greenhouse gas reduction goal (Objective 1.1) – needs update
 - Current goal is to reduce by 80% from 2009 baseline by 2050, with intermediate goal of 40% reduction by 2020, and a short-term goal of 5% annual reduction.
- Water conservation goal (Policy 1.1.3) - needs update
 - Current goal is to reduce total water consumption in the County by 10% from 2010 levels by 2020.
- Vehicle miles traveled per capita goal (Policy 4.2.1) – needs update
 - Current policy goal is to reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita within the Urban Cluster by 10% from 2010 levels by 2020.
- Non-automobile transportation mode share goal (Policy 4.2.2) – needs update
 - Current policy goal is to increase non-automobile transportation mode share to 5% in the Urban Cluster by 2020 and 10% by 2030.

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Next BoCC Workshop: October 21, 2025, 1:30 pm

Grace Knight Conference Room, County Administration Building

Topic: Community Facilities and Services – Includes transportation, recreation, solid waste, and community health

Comprehensive Plan Update Micro Site:

Contains project information, frequent updates and resident questionnaire

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

General Web Site:

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

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 2018-2019.

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. 163.327(2) or to reflect changes in state requirements in this part after 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 shows a circular process with four main stages: Update, Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation. Each stage is supported by specific activities: Update (Public Participation, Policy Development, Plan Amendment, Review & Approval); Implementation (Plan Implementation, Review & Approval, Policy Development); Monitoring (Data Collection, Reporting, Review & Approval); Evaluation (Data Collection, Reporting, Review & Approval).

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 (Approximate time 20 minutes)

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