

Alachua County Planning Commission/Local Planning Agency November 14, 2018

Agenda Item Summary

Topic: Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Update - Draft policy changes relating to the proposed greenway master plan/open space policies, public facilities (fire, solid waste, and recreation), energy, local food, intergovernmental coordination/annexation, equity, economic opportunity, and community health.

Item Description:

This item is part of a series of meetings with the Planning Commission to discuss draft changes to the goals, objectives, policies, and maps of the Comprehensive Plan as identified in the Evaluation and Appraisal of the Plan, and based on discussions of general strategies subsequently developed by staff and reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. This presentation and discussion will focus on draft policy changes relating to the proposed greenway master plan/open space policies, public facilities (fire, solid waste, and recreation), energy, local food, intergovernmental coordination/annexation, equity, economic opportunity, and community health. These draft policy changes relate to various elements of the Comprehensive Plan including the Economic, Recreation, Solid Waste, Capital Improvements, Conservation and Open Space, Community Health, Energy, Intergovernmental Coordination, Public School Facilities, and Future Land Use Elements.

Prior to developing the draft policy changes, staff prepared a series of Issue Papers with relevant data and analysis on the issues and potential strategies for addressing the issues as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan. This information was presented to the County Commission and the Planning Commission throughout the spring and summer of 2018. **Staff will provide a presentation on the draft policy changes to the Planning Commission, and is seeking input and recommendations from the Planning Commission. The draft policy changes will be considered at public hearings as part of the next step in the Comprehensive Plan update process in early 2019.**

Background:

On March 13th, the County Commission approved a letter from the Chair notifying the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity of areas where changes to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan are needed to address statutory changes, as well as to address local issues, as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Notification letter followed a scoping process that lasted several months, seeking input from the public, County advisory boards (including the Planning Commission), community groups, and the Board of County Commissioners to identify local issues to be evaluated as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Subsequently, staff has prepared draft revisions to the Comprehensive Plan to address the statutory changes and local issues, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Planning Commission and direction provided by the Board of County Commissioners.

The following sections provide a summary of the proposed policy changes to the Comprehensive Plan. Also included are the Issues that were submitted to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (page 5) as well as the BoCC motions (pages 6 and 7) providing direction to staff regarding proposed strategies to address the Issues.

Overview of Draft Policy Changes

Greenway Master Plan and Open Space Policies

- Proposal for a new “Greenways Master Plan Map” within the Conservation and Open Space Element (COSE) which identifies an interconnected network of trails, natural areas, and other open space areas for purposes of linking together shopping, schools, neighborhoods, and conservation/open space areas.
- Revisions to COSE Policy 5.2.2, which clarify a three-tiered priority system for open space set asides within new development. The first priority is conservation resources, the second is open space linkages to adjacent properties, other open spaces or greenways, and the third is other pervious open spaces.
- Revisions to COSE Policy 5.2.3 clarifying the permanent protection standards for conservation area open spaces.
- New Policy 5.2.9 allowing some provision for alternatives to 20% open space set-asides when no primary conservation resources or secondary open space/greenway linkage potential is available. Alternatives include a potential payment in lieu of and/or using the Planned Development-Transfer of Development Rights (PD-TDR) provisions in the Land Development Regulations.
- Various other nomenclature revisions in the COSE and the Recreation Element to refer to the new Greenways Master Plan.

Recreation

- New policies added to address the update of the Countywide Recreation Master Plan and subsequent update of level of service metrics for recreation facilities.
- Revision to Policy 1.3.2 to include the proposed Greenway Master Plan (see Section above).
- Addition of definitions for “Greenway Master Plan” and “Sustainable Landscaping”.
- Update Recreation Facilities Schedule of Capital Improvements for the period FY 2019 to FY 2023 in Table 3 of the Capital Improvements Element.

Solid Waste

- Draft change to Policy 1.1.1 would revise the solid waste Level of Service to 0.8 tons per person per year.
- Draft change would eliminate the prohibition on incineration in the County’s solid waste system in Policy 1.2.5 to allow use of such facility if a net environmental benefit can be demonstrated through acceptable measures.
- Draft change to Policy 1.5.2 would revise the methodology for calculating diversion rate to reference FDEP methodology.
- Draft changes revise compliance rate for mandatory commercial recycling program.

Fire Level of Service Guidelines

- Draft change would eliminate the fire response time guideline for the “Urban Service Area” in Policy 1.2.5(a)(1) of the Capital Improvements Element (the adopted fire response time guidelines for the Urban Cluster and the rural areas would remain unchanged).
- Add language in Policy 1.2.5(a)(4) calling for periodic updates of the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Master Plan. The future updates of the Master Plan would include an evaluation of capital and related operational needs and identification of funding sources that could be established as part of a financially feasible plan to meet the fire level of service guidelines, and would serve as a basis for consideration of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan to establish level of service standards for Fire Rescue services and Emergency Medical Services.

Energy

- Draft changes delete reference to Utility Savings Reinvestment account and refer to the Energy Conservation Investment Program.
- Draft revision to Policy 1.5.4 revises approach to reducing fossil fuel use through zero waste initiative.
- Draft revision to Policy 6.1.2 revises the methodology for calculating diversion rate to reference FDEP methodology. (Mirrors Solid Waste Element Policy 1.5.2).

Local Food

- Add language in Policy 6.1.1 of Energy Element that calls for Alachua County to participate in a study to establish baseline measures and measurable targets towards the increase of local food use by Alachua County institutions/agencies.
- Add language in Policy 9.1.3 of the Energy Element that identifies various educational strategies and coordination measures through IFAS/Alachua County Agricultural Extension to promote local farming and food production in Alachua County.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Draft changes to the Intergovernmental Coordination Element would eliminate references to the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act (BAA) and the map of municipal annexation Reserve Areas. The BAA, which was repealed by the State Legislature in 2016, was a Special Act that governed annexation in Alachua County. It included provisions for intergovernmental coordination on annexation and service delivery, and a Map of Reserve Areas, which were exclusive areas reserved for annexation by municipalities.
- Replace references to the BAA with references to Chapter 171, Florida Statutes, which is the general law governing annexation in the State of Florida. Objectives and policies have also been revised to provide for coordination with municipalities on annexation and related service delivery issues, not tied to the BAA (see Intergovernmental Coordination Element Objectives 1.1 and 4.1, and their subsequent policies).

- Adds language which provides for the use of Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements in accordance with Chapter 171, Part II of Florida Statutes (see Intergovernmental Coordination Element Policy 4.1.3).
- Revise policies to provide for consideration of the consolidation of County and City public services (see Intergovernmental Coordination Element Policy 5.1.8).
- Remove specific references to the Countywide Visioning and Planning Committee and replace with general references to coordination with municipalities (see Intergovernmental Coordination Element Policy 8.1.1).

Equity and Economic Opportunity

- Revise policies in several elements of the Comprehensive Plan relating to economic diversity and sustainability, economic development strategy, education and employment, and economic opportunities and reduction of poverty, to include goals to reduce or eliminate disparities identified in the “Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County” Report (Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), 2018).
- The draft changes relating to equity and economic opportunity are primarily included in the Economic, Community Health, Future Land Use (Plan East Gainesville Policies), Capital Improvements, Public School Facilities, and Capital Improvements Elements. The attached matrix titled “Matrix of Current and Proposed Comprehensive Plan Policies Relating to Equity and Addressing Areas of Disparity Identified in Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County (BEBR, 2018)” provides an overview of both the existing policies in the Comprehensive Plan that address equity, and the proposed revisions to those policies based on the 2018 BEBR Equity Study.

Community Health

- Includes mental and dental as complementary service, with specific policies
- Healthiest Weight Management focus (instead of Obesity)
- Target date to end food insecurity (by 2050)
- Reproductive health care by community based providers
- Defines/Requires Equity and Health Impact Assessment
- Promote equitable access to services and the safety net system
- Incorporates Health in All Policies
- Includes substance abuse prevention and tobacco prevention
- Adds disabled access to Pedestrian Safety efforts

Issues Identified for Evaluation & Update of Comprehensive Plan

Included in notification letter approved by BoCC on March 13, 2018 and submitted to Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Changes Needed to Address State Statutory Requirements:

1. Update objectives, policies, and maps regarding intergovernmental coordination on annexation in light of the repeal of the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act (Chapter 2015-199, Laws of Florida, repealing the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act).

Local Issues:

1. Recreation Master Plan update, including assessment of recreation level of service standards, need for activity-based recreation in Urban Cluster; greater shared use of school facilities for efficient provision of active recreation; and planning and implementation of countywide greenways and trails network, including a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian system that incorporates open space as connector routes.
2. Fire Rescue level of service guidelines
3. Solid Waste level of service standards and policies relating to waste reduction and diversion strategies.
4. Potential tools for effective and efficient delivery of services by County and municipal governments, such as interlocal agreements, consolidation, and other mechanisms.
5. Community Health Element with focus on areas such as equity, mental health, substance abuse, childrens' services, rural services and oral health.
6. Facilitate renewable energy investment and update objectives for fossil fuel reduction.
7. Promote adequate staffing and capital investment that maintains and strengthens infrastructure to ensure economic opportunity, environmental justice and social equity, taking into account similar communities' approaches; consider local "i3 initiative" identifying critical infrastructure needs.
8. Joint planning strategies with municipalities and utility providers to seek alignment on approaches to promote greater economic progress and retain manufacturing.
9. Evaluate issues relating to "living wage", income inequality, and related disparities, taking into account the report, ["Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County"](#) published by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (January 2018).
10. Facilitate the provision of broadband internet and other wireless services to underserved areas to reduce access inequality through policies in the Comprehensive Plan or possible consideration of a Communications Element.
11. Facilitation of the local food economy.

BoCC Direction on General Strategies for Comprehensive Plan Update

As provided at BoCC Meetings of April 3rd, April 17th, and May 1st, 2018

GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

1. As part of the Comprehensive Plan and land development regulation overhaul, develop a green infrastructure master plan, which ties together the policy objectives of the Alachua County wide bicycle master plan, the county wide recreation master plan, Old Florida Heritage Highway Work Program, and the open space policy language in the Comprehensive Plan and land development regulations into a plan that has a time frame for county wide build out, giving the county the ability to target resources and planning opportunities towards the building of a coherent network, tying together shopping, schools, neighborhoods, conservation areas. Staff should reach out to city of Gainesville and to see if there are opportunities to coordinate with their planning process on the infinity loop.
2. Direct staff to resolve contradictions in the Comprehensive Plan or code that may conflict with the corridor design manual and other parts of the code to be clear that the required design for transportation infrastructure is the corridor design manual.

RECREATION

1. Coordinate the update of the Countywide Recreation Master Plan (2005) with the City of Gainesville
 - a) Reconcile Recreation Master Plan initiatives with Wild Space Public Places funding
2. Address Level of Service Standard revision as part of the Recreation Master Plan update; Reevaluate RMP for policies, goals, and objectives that have not currently been translated into our Comp Plan or Land Development Regulations or Capital Improvement Plan
3. Use service areas/park districts to analyze the needs within the Urban Cluster
4. Identify targeted areas for shared use of school facilities
5. Update Recreation Facilities Schedule of Capital Improvements

FIRE LEVEL OF SERVICE

1. Delete Policy 1.2.5(a)(1) to eliminate the Urban Service Area response time guidelines
2. Review establishing [separate] level of service guidelines for emergency response and transport response; and provide information and recommendations regarding the impact of moving [the level of service guideline response time] from 6 minutes to 8 minutes and 12 minutes to 15 minutes in the rural area, and potentially altering the current Fire Master Plan to determine the financial impact.
3. Provide information on any unique and/or best practices that have been implemented around the country to position emergency response resources to improve safety responses throughout the community within the current budget limits.

SOLID WASTE

Revise Level of Service standard for solid waste and resource diversion to FDEP recommendations as appropriate.

ENERGY

Review Energy Element Policies and revise as appropriate, to include standardized methodologies for measuring emissions, energy consumption, and renewable energy generation and consumption.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

1. Incorporate the concept of Health Equity into various policies of the Community Health Element.
2. Add policies targeting health focus areas (Obesity, Mental Health, Reproductive Health, Substance Abuse including Tobacco Prevention, Oral Health).
3. Strengthen “Health in All Policies” framework (i.e. health linkages to transportation, housing, economic development, access to food, and conservation and open space)

LOCAL FOODS

Proceed with the following staff recommendations for developing strategies for the Comp Plan on local food economy:

1. Set Cooperative and Partnership Goals to promote investment in local farms and the local food system including mechanisms such as conservation easements, acquisition of development rights and similar strategies
2. Identify ways to support affordable access to healthy, local food for low-income residents, including incentives to healthy corner stores and increasing opportunities for mobile fresh market access
3. Review clustered subdivisions in FLUE to increase incentives for preservation of agriculture within open space areas
4. Invest in local food infrastructure to retain our food and natural resources, reduce waste, provide jobs and more food security
5. Support local food grant efforts with letters of support and technical assistance
6. Promote County agritourism and local food businesses via County Communications, VisitGainesville, Florida Scenic Highways Program & Original Florida Tourism Task Force.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION/ANNEXATION

1. Eliminate references to the Alachua Boundary Adjustment Act (BAA) from the Comprehensive Plan, including the map of municipal Reserve Areas. Revise objectives and policies to provide for coordination with municipalities on annexation and related services delivery issues, not tied to the BAA.
2. Add policy language to provide for the use of Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements to establish municipal service areas and unincorporated service areas pursuant to Chapter 171, Part II, of Florida Statutes.
3. Revise policies as needed to provide tools for consolidation of public services that are provided by the County and municipalities.
4. Delete Stormwater Element Policy 6.1.3 regarding county development permit requirements in relation to state or federal agency permit requirements. Florida Statutes are sufficient and no additional policy is required.