

**Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Update:
Draft Revisions to Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Maps
For Board of County Commissioners Meeting
February 14, 2019**

**Draft Revisions to Comprehensive Plan
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Text key for proposed changes:

Proposed additions are underlined

Proposed deletions are ~~struck through~~

Existing language in normal font

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RECREATION MASTER PLAN POLICIES

Recreation Element

GOAL 1

TO PROVIDE AN INTEGRATED RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM FOR ALACHUA COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Develop and maintain an enhanced system of activity-based and resource-based recreational facilities that consist of a broad range of developed and protected sites and programmed recreation that is integrated by service area throughout the County from the neighborhood to the regional scale and accessible to all residents of Alachua County.

...

Policy 1.1.9 The Countywide Recreation Master Plan shall be updated by the year 2020 and every ten (10) years thereafter. The parks and recreation component of the Recreation Master Plan shall be updated every five years. The Recreation Master Plan will accomplish the following objectives:

- a. update the County's inventory of public parks, trails and greenways, and conservation lands;
- b. (new) consider the potential role of open space provided in developments as pocket parks and neighborhood parks and how such open space should be counted toward meeting the level of service standards for recreation;
- c. determine residents' needs and priorities;
- d. develop a new long-range parks and recreation vision in response to the community's needs, trends and best practices;
- e. develop a phasing, funding and implementation strategy.

Policy 1.1.10 The Recreation Master Plan shall be used to update comprehensive plan policies and level of service standards, the Capital Improvements Plan, land development regulations and park/recreation impact fees.

Policy 1.1.11 The Recreation Master Plan shall be developed in collaboration with the City of Gainesville and other municipalities, state agencies and other parks and recreation providers in Alachua County.

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SOLID WASTE/INCINERATION POLICIES

Solid Waste Element

GOAL 1

TO PROVIDE CLEAN, EFFICIENT, ECONOMICAL, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE RESOURCES IN ALACHUA COUNTY.

...

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Provide for safe operation and maintenance of publicly owned solid waste management facilities, in compliance with all stipulations and conditions of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) permits; and other applicable local, state or federal regulations; provide for protection of water, soil and air resources, in compliance with local, state, and federal permit requirements including monitoring of groundwater at all public landfill sites.

...

Policy 1.2.5

~~Due to the toxic nature of incinerator and mass burn facilities, no such facility will~~ not (revised) be included in the County solid waste system. The use of tires, plastics or plastic derived materials as a fuel source or as feedstock for a waste to energy facility is prohibited in the County solid waste system. This policy does not prohibit the combustion of vegetative yard trash, vegetative biomass and vegetative storm debris. Hazardous waste or other material for which there is no alternative method of disposal shall be disposed of as mandated by Federal law.

Future Land Use Element

4.0 INDUSTRIAL POLICIES

Policy 4.1.5 The use of tires, plastics or plastic derived materials as a fuel source or as feedstock for waste to energy facility is prohibited.

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5.0 INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

OBJECTIVE 5.5 - PUBLIC UTILITY, COMMUNICATION, OR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Infrastructure and utility structures, such as communication towers, personal wireless service facilities, radio and television antennas, water and sewer, and energy generation and distribution facilities shall be designed and located to eliminate or minimize adverse visual impacts on the landscape.

Policy 5.5.4 Landfills and transfer systems shall be designed to have a minimal impact on the environment. The use of tires, plastics or plastic derived materials as a fuel source or as feedstock for a waste to energy facility is prohibited.

Conservation and Open Space Element

OBJECTIVE 5.7 - HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Act to reduce the risks associated with hazardous materials and encourage the reduction of hazardous waste generation. Protect and enhance the quality and safety of the environment by requiring that disposal methods for hazardous waste and handling and storage methods for hazardous materials are properly designed, operated, and monitored.

Policy 5.7.1 Land use policies, engineering practices, Federal and State financial incentives, and regulatory and non-regulatory programs shall be utilized to prevent or reduce community and environmental exposure to hazardous materials.

Policy 5.7.8 Any hazardous waste treatment, storage, transfer, and collection site, as well as facilities storing or utilizing significant amounts of radioactive materials, shall be permitted only upon demonstration that the facility shall meet all applicable federal, state, and local regulations and that the facility shall not endanger public health and safety or have significant impacts on the environment. All publicly and privately operated landfills and solid waste disposal sites, including construction and demolition landfills, shall be regulated, inspected, and monitored, consistent with FDEP regulations and applicable county regulations consistent with Objective 1.4 and accompanying policies contained in the Solid Waste Element of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, in order to evaluate and minimize the impact of such landfills on the environment and the public health and safety, particularly in areas of the county where the Floridan Aquifer is shown as high vulnerability on the Alachua County Floridan Aquifer High Recharge Area map. The County's development regulations shall define the circumstances, if any, in which construction and demolition debris landfills will be permitted in areas where the Floridan Aquifer is shown as high vulnerability.

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Policy 5.7.9 The use of land, water or air for uncontrolled disposal of any waste shall be prohibited. This policy does not preclude the proper use of manure, mulching of yard waste, composting, or regulated use of septic sludge for land application.

Policy 5.7.10 The use of tires, plastics or plastic derived materials as a fuel source or as feedstock for a waste to energy facility is prohibited.

ENERGY ELEMENT

GOAL

REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS 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.

STRATEGY

Priority 1

Practice energy conservation.

Priority 2

Maximize energy efficiency.

Priority 3

Promote and invest in renewable energy production.

5.0 COUNTY GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

OBJECTIVE 5.1

Adopt and implement practices within Alachua County Government that contribute to the energy conservation goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

...

Policy 5.1.3 Alachua County shall develop a ~~Utility Savings Reinvestment account~~ Energy Conservation Investment Program (ECIP) using savings from conservation and efficiency enhancements to County facilities. These funds shall be reinvested in conservation enhancements through each year's capital improvements program.

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Policy 5.1.4 The County shall consider developing and implementing a plan to significantly reduce fossil fuel use in the County fleet by 20% from 2010 levels by the year 2020 for the transportation of waste to the landfill by creating a zero waste initiative in coordination with the municipalities and University of Florida.

OBJECTIVE 5.2

Increase the use of renewable energy in County government.

Policy 5.2.1 Alachua County shall purchase or produce renewable energy for at least ~~10%~~ 50% of total County government (cumulative) consumption by ~~2015, and 20% by 2020~~ 2045.

Policy 5.2.2 The County shall incorporate renewable energy production into County facilities where appropriate.

Policy 5.2.3 Pursue funding to develop alternative energy facilities that would be capable of producing energy from ~~anaerobic digestion~~, solar energy, biodiesel or other forms of sustainable energy resources.

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CLUSTERED RURAL RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION POLICIES

Future Land Use Element

OBJECTIVE 6.2 – RURAL/AGRICULTURE

RURAL RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS

- Policy 6.2.6** No subdivision may be created without paved public road access and all subdivisions created must have internal paved roads that meet county standards, except as provided under Policy 6.2.6.1 below. Residential subdivisions of more than six lots in the Rural/Agricultural area shall be designed to provide:
- (a) Paved, interconnected, internal, and local roads that are dedicated to a responsible maintenance entity.
 - (b) Limited driveways, including the use of common access driveways, on rural collector and arterial roads.
 - (c) Paved public road access.
- Policy 6.2.6.1** Subdivisions of no more than six lots may be created from any parent parcel existing as of October 2, 1991, with access to a private easement road internal to the subdivision if such internal subdivision road provides a direct connection to a public road with sufficient right of way to meet county standards. Such internal subdivision roads must meet county standards for minimum width, stabilization requirements, and maintenance. A parent parcel, existing as of October 2, 1991, shall not be divided into more than six lots without having paved roads throughout the subdivision.
- Policy 6.2.7** The Development Review Committee shall not authorize more than 150 lots smaller than eight acres in the Rural/Agricultural area in any calendar year except for lots that are clustered according to the provisions of 6.2.9 – 6.2.14.
- Policy 6.2.8** New rural residential subdivisions of parcels legally created prior to October 2, 1991, which contain more than 100 lots, including cumulative phases or continued subdivision of land in common ownership or partnership as of October 2, 1991, shall be allowed only after adoption of a comprehensive plan amendment based on a completed special area study. This study, developed through the Community Planning Program, shall address factors such as transportation impacts, community services, fire protection, impacts on surrounding land uses, and environmental issues. This requirement for a comprehensive plan amendment is not applicable to a rural residential subdivision that exceeds 100 lots as a result of incentive density bonuses for clustering.

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Policy 6.2.9 Clustering

The preferred design for new rural residential subdivisions is that they be clustered in order to protect the characteristics and features of rural areas through the following goals:

- (a) Protect natural and historic resources.
- (b) Support continued agricultural activities by preserving viable soils and effective land masses.
- (c) Provide opportunities for agriculture areas such as community gardens or farms.
- ~~(c)(d)~~ Minimize land use conflicts.
- ~~(d)(e)~~ Provide recreational and habitat corridors through linked open space networks.
- ~~(e)(f)~~ Achieve flexibility, efficiency, and cost reduction in the provision of services and infrastructure.
- ~~(f)(g)~~ Reduce natural hazard risks to life and property.

Policy 6.2.10 Density and Intensity

The overall development density shall not exceed the maximum gross density of one dwelling unit per five acres for the Rural/Agriculture land use category, except as a result of the provisions for accessory dwelling units found in Policy 6.2.10.1, family homestead exceptions found in Policy 6.2.14(c), temporary permits issued by the Growth Management Department or as a result of incentive bonuses for clustering as provided under subsection (d) below, subject to the resource protection standards in the Conservation and Open Space Element. These standards include the following requirements:

- (a) Impacts to wetlands and surface waters shall be avoided, minimized, and mitigated in accordance with Conservation and Open Space Element Policies 4.7.4. and 4.6.6.
- (b) Density and open space requirements for new rural residential subdivisions shall be consistent with requirements for adequate protection of conservation areas in Conservation and Open Space Element Objective 3.6.
- (c) Development of property that is determined to be a strategic ecosystem shall require a special area plan pursuant to Conservation and Open Space Element Objective 4.10 unless it is determined that sufficient protection can be achieved through clustering.

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- (d) As an incentive to cluster new residential subdivisions, if a new residential subdivision in the Rural/Agriculture area is clustered with a minimum of 50% of the development in open space, a total of 2 units in addition to the number of units based on the gross density of 1 unit per 5 acres are allowed, plus 1 additional unit per every 10 acres of conservation area or agriculture area such as community gardens or farms set aside as open space; plus 1 additional unit per every 20 acres of other non-conservation area set aside as open space.

Policy 6.2.10.1 To provide for a greater range of choices of housing types, affordable housing, and the promotion of infill into existing neighborhoods while maintaining rural character, one accessory dwelling unit shall be allowed on residential lots in the Rural/Agriculture area without being included in gross residential density calculations as follows.

- (a) Performance criteria shall be detailed in the land development regulations and include elements such as size, site design, access, and parking requirements. In no instance shall an accessory dwelling unit be permitted on a lot with less than one acre of buildable area outside the boundaries of any conservation areas.
- (b) Prior to the issuance of a building permit for the construction of an accessory dwelling unit in an existing residential area, the applicant shall provide proof of homestead exemption status establishing ownership and principal residence of the lot.
- (c) Permanent occupancy by the owner of either the primary or accessory dwelling unit shall be required for all accessory dwelling units.
- (d) The accessory dwelling unit shall meet all applicable requirements of the Florida Department of Health for the well and septic system.

Policy 6.2.11 Design Sequence

The design of rural residential clustered subdivisions shall be sequenced according to the following four-step process:

- (a) Identify open space area, including natural resources consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 3, agricultural areas, and potential open space network connections consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 6.3.
- (b) Identify developed area and locate home sites.
- (c) Align streets and trails.
- (d) Delineate lot lines.

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Policy 6.2.12 Open Space Area in Clustered Subdivisions

A portion of a clustered rural residential subdivision shall be designated and maintained as undeveloped open space area.

- (a) Percentage of site. Clustered Rural residential subdivisions shall designate a minimum of 50% of the site as open space area.
- (b) Design Principles. Open space shall be selected and designed according to the following principles, consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element policies for the identification and protection of natural resources:
 - (1) Protect natural, historic, and paleontological resources and agricultural areas of the site identified through a site specific inventory.
 - a. Conservation areas shall receive top priority for inclusion as part of the designated open space area, and may only be impacted in accordance with Conservation and Open Space Element policies specific to the resource.
 - b. Agricultural areas with viable soils and effective land masses shall be ~~included~~ **evaluated for inclusion** as part of the designated open space area after resource protection criteria are met. Agricultural uses **consistent with 6.2.12(c) Permitted and Prohibited Uses and in accordance with requirements for management plans in 6.2.12(e)(3)** are encouraged to be included as part of the designated open space area.
 - c. Historic and paleontological resources shall be included as part of the designated open space area when appropriate in accordance with the Historic Preservation Element.
 - (2) Design the open space area as a single contiguous area with logical, straightforward boundaries to eliminate or minimize fragmentation.
 - (3) Form linked open space networks with existing or potential open space areas on adjacent properties, other developments, or greenways, consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 6.3.
- (c) Permitted ~~and Prohibited U~~ses.
 - (1) Permitted uses in the open space area are natural resource conservation areas, non-intensive agriculture **for food production** including community gardens, **farms, and orchards, non-intensive** silviculture **consistent with (3) below, and** common open space, resource-based recreation uses which

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maintain the undeveloped area in a natural state, permeable stormwater facilities consistent with Stormwater Element Policy 5.1.11, community energy systems, and common water supply systems and common septic system drainfields. **Agricultural uses such as larger scale food production, livestock, and equestrian-related uses may be permitted subject to performance standards required in management plans in 6.2.12(e)(3).** A residential unit used as a homestead just prior to the creation of the clustered subdivision can continue to be used as a homestead within the open space area and not counted toward the total number of units allowed in the rural clustered subdivision.

- (2) More intensive agriculture uses such as concentrated animal density generally associated with milking barns, feed lots, chicken houses, or holding pens shall not be allowed in any clustered rural residential subdivision.
- (3) More intensive silviculture uses of planted monoculture “plantation” forests, with intensive management regimes that include practices such as regular applications of fertilizer and herbicide treatments, shall not be allowed in any clustered rural residential subdivision. Only natural forest management, as recognized by the Florida Forestry Association, in accordance with provisions of the applicable open space management plan consistent with 6.2.12(e)(3) may be considered.**
- (d) Permanent protection. All future development in designated open space areas is prohibited.
 - (1) All open space shall be maintained and remain undeveloped in perpetuity using a legal instrument that runs with the land to set forth conditions and restrictions on use.
 - (2) All open space area and lots shall be restricted from further subdivision through an instrument in a form acceptable to the county and duly recorded in the public record which assures the preservation and continued maintenance of the open space.
 - (3) The boundaries of designated open space areas shall be clearly delineated on plans, including record plats, and marked in the field to distinguish these areas from developed areas.
- (e) Ownership, maintenance, and management plan.
 - (1) Ownership methods. Ownership and maintenance of open space shall be by one or a combination of the following:

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- a. Original landowner
 - b. Homeowners association
 - c. Established land trust
 - d. Non-profit conservation or agricultural organization
 - e. Alachua County, with county approval
 - f. Other public agency (e.g. Water Management District)
- (2) Maintenance. Unless otherwise agreed by the County, the cost and responsibility of maintaining common facilities, including but not limited to open space, private roads, shared water systems, and stormwater systems, shall be borne by the owner(s) of the open space. If the open space is not properly maintained, the County may assume responsibility of maintenance and charge the property owner or homeowners association a fee which covers maintenance and administrative costs.
- (3) Management plan. An open space management plan shall be required to accompany the development plan, subject to county review and approval. The management plan shall establish management objectives **consistent with conservation objectives and policies and public health and safety**, outline procedures, and define the roles and responsibilities for managing the open space. Management shall include wildfire mitigation. **Any current and ongoing silviculture activities must transition to a natural forest management regime with specific objectives to improve the health and diversity of the forest community, exclude bedding and herbicide application, with particular management emphasis on preserving, enhancing, and restoring the natural resource values and functions of the forest system. Agriculture activities shall be subject to performance standards in the land development regulations consistent with recommended practices from University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF IFAS).**
- The management plan shall identify how agriculture and silviculture operations shall avoid impacts to conservation resources according to standards in the land development regulations.**

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Policy 6.2.13 Developed Area

The developed area of the clustered rural residential subdivision shall be located outside the open space area. The land development regulations shall prescribe in detail design standards for the configuration of lots and homes, the provision of water and wastewater, roads, stormwater, and buildings and structures. At a minimum, all developed areas must be designed to comply with the following principles, to the extent feasible considering the location and protection of natural resources:

- (a) Flexible home siting and lot sizes. Diversity and originality in home siting, lot size and design are encouraged to achieve the best possible relationship between the development and the features on the land through the following strategies:
 - (1) Ownership lines should follow existing features, such as tree lines or contours.
 - (2) Lots smaller than one acre may be allowed provided that well and septic System configuration, location, and operation and maintenance comply with public health and environmental quality standards, subject to the following:
 - a. The number of lots less than one acre shall be determined and located consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Policies 3.6.11 and 4.5.5(f).
 - b. Common septic systems may be utilized to serve lots less than one acre, consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Policy 4.5.5(f), subject to performance criteria in the land development regulations specifying criteria such as system configuration, location, and management.
- (b) Development impacts within developed area. Development impacts and disturbance caused by buildings or construction to topography and existing site features within the developed area shall be minimized through the following strategies:
 - (1) Locating residences and structures adjacent to tree lines and wooded field edges and avoiding placement in open fields, consistent with Firewise principles.
 - (2) Preserving the maximum amount of natural vegetation by careful siting of development.
 - (3) Limiting the size of building envelopes and locating them in areas most suitable for development.

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- (4) Locating roads to minimize cut and fill (follow existing features, e.g. tree lines, access roads, contours).
 - (5) Providing buffers and setbacks from wetlands and surface waters.
 - (6) Use of common driveways.
 - (7) Encouraging community wells and septic systems within the most suitable soils.
 - (8) Designing stormwater to maximize overland flow through natural drainage systems and grassed overland (roadside and lot line) swales. The use of plants and natural land forms shall be required to slow, hold, and treat runoff from development.
- (c) Development impacts to open space and adjacent offsite areas. The total amount of impacts and disturbance to the site, including the open space area, and to adjacent areas offsite shall be minimized through strategies such as:
- (1) Providing buffers and setbacks to protect resources and natural vegetation from development impacts consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element Section 3.6.
 - (2) Providing buffers and setbacks to protect the ability to engage in agricultural activities in neighboring areas. The width and type of buffer shall be based on the scale of the agricultural activity and other site specific factors such as topography, and shall include a minimum buffer width of two hundred feet when the developed area is adjacent to intensive agricultural uses.
 - (3) Locating developed areas and providing buffers and setbacks to eliminate or minimize the presence of development from adjacent properties.
- (d) Development impacts to adjacent public roads shall be minimized through the following strategies:
- (1) Providing internal paved local roads, or private easements that serve no more than six lots consistent with Future Land Use Element Policy 6.2.6, which meet County standards and minimize access to adjacent public roads.
 - (2) Minimizing the number of driveways accessing adjacent public roads and the number of lots with direct frontage on adjacent public roads.
 - (3) Locating developed areas and providing buffers and setbacks to minimize the presence of development from adjacent public roads.

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Policy 6.2.14 Applicability

- (a) ~~New rural residential subdivisions of parcels legally created prior to October 2, 1991, consisting of 25 or more lots shall be clustered according to the policies and requirements under this section.~~ **New rural residential developments of 10 or more lots shall be developed as clustered rural residential subdivisions in accordance with the policies and requirements under this section and implementing land development regulations.**
- (b) New rural residential subdivisions meeting all requirements for cluster development may be allowed through the development review process, provided they are consistent with Comprehensive Plan policies and land development regulations.
- (c) Exceptions to the density and intensity standards in the Rural/Agriculture area may be granted for use of a parcel as a homestead by family members that meet the family relationship criteria under Future Land Use Element Policy 7.1.20 as provided in the Land Development Regulations.
- (d) Alternatives to the requirements for Rural/Agricultural areas may be established by special area plans adopted jointly by Alachua County and a municipality pursuant to Interlocal agreements under Section 1.5 of the Alachua County Charter and Policy 1.1.1 of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element of the County Comprehensive Plan. Such special area plans shall establish policies for land use and other relevant issues such as provision of infrastructure and services within areas delineated in such joint special area plans. In order for these alternative policies to apply, the joint special area plan with a municipality must be adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plans of the both the County and the applicable municipality.

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