



ALACHUA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2011-2030 EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL ISSUE SUMMARY

March 12, 2018

ISSUE STATEMENT

Issue Area 1: Land Use and Development Standards

This issue paper covers the following topics:

- A. Streamline Activity Centers policies and process to facilitate development and redevelopment as compact, mixed use, interconnected centers.

DATA AND ANALYSIS RELATING TO ISSUE

Activity Centers are part of the Urban Cluster concept of urban form and are characterized in the Comprehensive Plan as nodes of higher density and intensity land uses. Most of the Activity Centers were originally designated in the Comprehensive Plan in the 1980s and early 1990s. At that time, the unincorporated urban area (which later became the Urban Cluster line) was identified in the Comprehensive Plan for predominantly lower density residential uses. The Activity Centers were envisioned as the primary areas for more intensive non-residential development within the urban area. Each Activity Center had its own unique set of policies that were adopted in the Comprehensive Plan to address things such as allowable land uses, densities, and intensities, development standards, ingress/egress, zoning implementation, natural resource protection, and other site-specific considerations. To a great extent, these original Activity Center Plan policies focused on limiting development intensity and separating residential from non-residential development. Many of these original Activity Center Plan policies are still part of the Comprehensive Plan today.

Over the last 20 to 30 years, various amendments to the Comprehensive Plan have added more policy detail to the individual Activity Center Plans to address site-specific issues with certain properties. Some of the individual Activity Center Plans have been amended to enable large mixed use development projects within certain Activity Centers. Many of the individual Activity Center Plan policies could now be characterized as having a level of detail that is more appropriate for the land development regulations, or as development conditions. Also, many of the individual Activity Center Plan policies are now generally addressed in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan or in the Unified Land Development Code. Examples of such types of policies include:

- Limitations on numbers of residential units for certain parcels
- Identification of allowable uses for specific parcels

- Redundant standards that enable Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) design on certain parcels, when those standards are now generally applicable in the Urban Cluster
- Ingress/egress standards
- Tree canopy coverage standards
- Limits on certain land uses based on trip generation
- Parcel-specific buffering requirements
- Transportation concurrency references
- Landscaping requirements
- Setbacks for specific parcels
- Requirements for the use of Planned Development zoning

In recent years, the County's Comprehensive Plan and land development regulations have evolved to include more generally-applicable provisions for development in the Urban Cluster to enable mixed use interconnected development, promote higher densities, and to promote a multimodal transportation system without traditional concurrency. In addition, things such as standards for ingress/egress, landscaping, tree protection, setbacks, and buffering are now generally addressed in other parts of the Comprehensive Plan and in the Unified Land Development Code. In some cases, Activity Centers which were in the unincorporated County at the time they were designated in the Comprehensive Plan, have been fully or partially annexed into the City of Gainesville, therefore the individual policies are no longer applicable.

As part of the Evaluation and Appraisal-based update of the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2011, there were amendments to the general policies that apply to all Activity Centers. These amendments to the general policies enabled mixed use development in all areas of Activity Centers, and provided development standards to ensure an urban form that is compact, pedestrian-oriented, and provides for multimodal interconnectivity. Additionally, the requirement for the County to initiate Master Plans for all Activity Centers was eliminated. A new policy was also adopted that allows for development plans which are consistent with the new general policies for Activity Centers to proceed through the development plan review process, notwithstanding any conflicting provisions in the individual Activity Center plans.

Much of the land within the designated Activity Centers has already been developed, or is subject to approved preliminary or final development plans for large mixed use projects that have not yet been built (eg Springhills TOD, Santa Fe Village TOD, Newberry Village TOD). There is a relatively small amount of undeveloped land remaining in Activity Centers that is not covered by an approved development plan. Also, parcel ownership in most of the Activity Centers is fragmented and the remaining undeveloped parcels are mostly infill in character. In Appendix A of this report, there are maps of each Activity Center which show the areas that remain undeveloped. In Appendix B is a more detailed table showing the acreage of undeveloped land available within each Activity Center.

In light of the evolution of the County's planning concepts for the Urban Cluster and the general policies for Activity Centers, as well as the fragmented character of the undeveloped land remaining in Activity Centers overall, there is no longer a need for some of the more detailed

individual Activity Center Plan policies. Many of these policies have become obsolete or redundant, and are no longer effective in promoting the type of development that is more generally promoted in the Comprehensive Plan throughout the Urban Cluster. Updating the individual Activity Center Plan policies in light of the County's more recent goals, objectives, policies, and land development regulations will help to streamline the development process while achieving the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan for the Urban Cluster.

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUE

1. Revise Activity Center policies to better facilitate mixed use and interconnected development and redevelopment within Activity Centers, per Future Land Use Element Objective 2.1.
 - a. Eliminate outdated provisions within detailed Activity Center Plan policies in conflict with generally-applicable Activity Center policies or Unified Land Development Code requirements
 - b. Eliminate the designated Activity Center intensity levels (eg, "Low" and "High" Activity Centers as provided in Policy 2.1.2)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES RELATING TO ISSUE

FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT

GENERAL STRATEGY 3

Promote the spatial organization of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors through urban design codes, incorporating graphics that serve as predictable guides for community development. Implementation shall be through a combination of standard requirements and incentives, creating a planning framework that includes provisions to:

- Create neighborhoods that are compact, connected to adjacent development, have limited mixed uses at centers, and have interconnected, mixed modal streets with pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly areas.
- Integrate civic, institutional, and commercial activity in neighborhoods and districts, not isolated in remote, single-use complexes.
- Avoid large areas of single-use, similar densities, and similar types of units. A diverse mix of land uses, housing types and costs and densities shall be promoted. Identify locations or districts where special or single use activities shall be allowed or restricted (e.g., large scale retail or industrial areas).
- Link corridors that are regional connectors of neighborhoods and districts, ranging from parkways and transit lines to watersheds and greenways.
- Provide for infill where appropriate.

2.0 URBAN ACTIVITY CENTER POLICIES

OBJECTIVE 2.1 – GENERAL

Promote efficient use of land through designation of Activity Centers within the Urban Cluster which provide for nodes of higher density and intensity mixed uses that are interconnected with other commercial, employment, light industrial, and institutional centers within Alachua County through a system of multimodal corridors and a public transit system. Urban design standards for Activity Centers will provide for compact, mixed use, and pedestrian-friendly development, which is functionally integrated with surrounding land uses.

Policy 2.1.1 Activity Centers are identified and designated on the [Future Land Use Map](#).

Policy 2.1.2 Activity Centers shall be designated based on two classifications depending on the size, location and function of the Activity Center:

- (a) High intensity activity centers are intended for commercial, employment, institutional, light industrial, and visitor-related uses of a scale and type that typically serve a regional or larger market. High activity centers shall also contain higher density residential uses which are phased and interconnected with the non-residential uses in the Activity Center. High intensity activity centers attract commercial customers or employees from within Alachua County and surrounding cities or counties; are generally greater than 200 total acres in area; are located proximate to major interstate transportation corridors; have access to at least two arterial roadways; and are near existing or planned rapid transit corridors.
- (b) Low intensity activity centers are intended for commercial, employment, institutional, and light industrial uses of a scale and type that typically serve a community or group of neighborhoods. Low activity centers shall also contain residential uses which are phased and interconnected with the non-residential uses in the Activity Center. Low intensity activity centers attract commercial customers or employees primarily from within Alachua County; are generally less than 200 total acres in area; have access to at least one arterial and one collector roadway, and are near existing or planned bus, express transit, or rapid transit routes.
- (c) Detailed standards shall be included in the Land Development Code which distinguish between Low intensity and High intensity activity centers in terms of the type and scale of allowable land uses, requirements for mixed uses, and development design requirements.

Policy 2.1.3 New development and redevelopment within Activity Centers shall be consistent with the design standards of Policies 2.1.4 through 2.1.12.

Policy 2.1.4 A mixture of residential and non-residential land uses shall be provided in Activity Centers to reduce travel distances between different types of land uses and support pedestrian, bicycle and transit opportunities.

- (a) Mixed use development plans, including vertical and horizontal mixed uses, shall be allowable in all areas within Activity Centers.
- (b) In order to increase the variety of housing opportunities within walking distance of existing or future commercial and employment areas, residential uses shall be allowable as part of mixed use development in

non-residential Future Land Use designations, in accordance with the following:

- (1) Ratios of residential dwelling units to non-residential floor area shall be specified in the Land Development Code for mixed use development in accordance with this policy. The mixed use ratios will allow for existing commercial, office, or institutional uses within one-quarter mile of proposed residential development to be used in calculating the allowable number of residential units.
- (2) Residential uses in mixed use development in accordance with this policy shall be physically and functionally integrated with existing or proposed non-residential uses.
- (c) Within residential Future Land Use designations in Activity Centers, commercial, office, or institutional uses shall be allowable as part of mixed use developments, provided they are located within the same building as the residential uses, and do not exceed one-third of the usable floor area of the building.
- (d) Development projects which exceed minimum size thresholds shall be required to provide a mix of residential and non-residential uses. Minimum thresholds for acreage and non-residential floor area shall be established in the Land Development Code.

Policy 2.1.5 Development within Activity Centers shall be designed to produce compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed use development which is integrated within the surrounding community. Architectural and site design techniques shall be used to define pedestrian and public space and to provide human scale with the Activity Center. At a minimum, Activity Center sites and buildings shall achieve the following:

- (a) Land uses shall be organized around centralized public civic spaces, with pedestrian and bicycle routes connecting civic spaces to development within and surrounding the Activity Center.
- (b) Development shall be organized along a density and intensity gradient that takes into account surrounding land uses and existing and planned multimodal transportation corridors. The highest density and intensity development shall be located within walking distance of public civic spaces and existing or planned transit facilities.
- (c) Activity Centers shall be organized into an interconnected network of streets and blocks which minimizes walking distance between buildings and land uses. A range of average block perimeters shall be specified in the Land Development Code which take into account the level of the Activity Center, proposed land uses, and the availability of existing or planned transit service. Average block perimeters shall generally be smaller in areas located within walking distance of existing or planned transit service. Larger blocks shall be required to provide mid-block pedestrian connections.

- (d) Primary public entrances to buildings shall front adjacent public streets with sidewalks or a civic space; primary public entrances to buildings shall also be connected with the surrounding public sidewalk network.
- (e) Buildings shall be oriented to define the street edge in developed areas. Landscaping and street trees shall be used to define the street edge in open space areas.
- (f) Vistas created by street terminations within the Activity Center shall incorporate significant buildings or places to the maximum extent possible.
- (g) Shaded areas and protection from the elements for pedestrians shall be provided as part of the streetscape within developed areas.
- (h) Building facades shall provide variation in materials, roof lines, window patterns and reliefs. Multiple-story buildings shall articulate the division between the ground floor and upper floors. Minimum percentages of transparent glass on the facade of buildings shall be established in the Land Development Code.
- (i) A series of smaller, well defined customer entrances shall be used to break up long facades and provide pedestrian scale and variety. This may be achieved through the use of liner buildings.
- (j) Maximum building setbacks or build-to lines shall be established in the Land Development Code which allow sufficient space for pedestrian facilities and amenities, street trees, and utilities. Setbacks may be wider where a courtyard, plaza, public space or seating is provided as part of the streetscape in developed areas.

Policy 2.1.6 Activity Centers shall include a multimodal street network which provides interconnectivity of land uses within and surrounding the Activity Center.

- (a) Activity Centers shall be organized into an interconnected network of streets and blocks in accordance with Policy 2.1.5.c.
- (b) The internal street network shall include a pedestrian and bicycle circulation system that interconnects all land uses, including residential, non-residential, parks, plazas, squares, and open spaces. Primary pedestrian and bicycle paths shall avoid routes through parking, loading, and delivery areas.
- (c) Points of individual driveway ingress to and egress from the Activity Center to the arterial and collector roads system shall be minimized. Common access driveways and shared use public streets shall be utilized to the greatest extent feasible.
- (d) The street system shall provide multiple automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian linkages from the Activity Center to surrounding development as an alternative to arterial and collector roads system, except where such connections are precluded by the physical layout of existing development or environmental features.

- (e) Automobile-oriented uses shall have a limited number of driveways, and drive-in or drive-up windows shall be located to minimize conflict with pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
- (f) Pedestrian facilities shall be provided on both sides of all streets within the right-of-way. Streets providing access to single-family detached units may provide a multi-use path parallel to the street as an alternative to sidewalks, consistent with the [Transportation Mobility Element](#).
- (g) Street furniture, planters, trash receptacles and lighting shall be provided as part of the streetscape in non-residential and mixed use areas.
- (h) One-way streets shall be allowable as a means to reduce crossing distances and conflicts, impervious surfaces, and right-of way widths.
- (i) Developments contiguous to an Express Transit Corridor as provided on the [Express Transit Corridors Map](#) shall provide either site related turn out facilities (bus bays) consistent with stop spacing standards, or dedicated lane(s) as part of the development plan.
- (j) Developments contiguous to a Rapid Transit Corridor as provided on the [Rapid Transit Corridors Map](#) shall dedicate the necessary right-of-way proportionate to the impacts of the development. Transit Oriented Developments and Traditional Neighborhood Developments shall provide dedicated facilities consistent with [Future Land Use Element](#) Policy 1.6.7.11.
- (k) Street design standards shall be provided in the Land Development Code and shall address narrow pavement and right-of-way widths, turning radii, on-street parking, other design criteria for roads, alleys and lanes, and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for urban green streets. Standards shall promote walking and biking, ensure pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and allow for emergency and transit access.

Policy 2.1.7 Parking areas shall be designed to minimize intrusiveness and impacts on pedestrian circulation and accessibility to development through the following techniques:

- (a) On-street parking shall be included in developments in order to provide traffic calming and produce a comfortable and safe pedestrian environment.
- (b) Structured parking shall be encouraged in all Activity Centers in order to promote the efficient use of land and a compact development pattern.
- (c) Large expanses of contiguous off-street parking areas which discourage pedestrian access to development shall be prohibited. Where off-street surface parking lots are included in a development, the preferred location shall be interior to blocks or to the rear of buildings, with a limited number of access points from the adjacent street. Off-street surface parking lots may be located on the interior side of buildings, subject to limitations and design criteria to be specified in the Land Development Code. Off-street

surface parking lots shall generally not be located between buildings and adjacent pedestrian areas such as storefront streets and public squares.

- (d) Off-street surface parking lots shall be screened from streets, sidewalks, and open spaces.
- (e) Parking lots or structures shall be designed with safe and convenient pedestrian connections to business and residential entrances and public space to create a park-once environment.
- (f) Parking standards for Activity Centers shall be established in the Land Development Code, and shall address: parking maximums, shared parking to serve multiple uses with different peak usage times, and allowance for the use of semi-permeable paving materials; and limits on the amount of individual contiguous surface area allowed for paved parking.

Policy 2.1.8 Stormwater management facilities shall be sufficient to serve the functional purpose, and shall be designed as a public amenity that provides usable open space or an aesthetic feature that resembles natural areas. The use of shared stormwater facilities shall be evaluated as part of the development plan process, and utilized to the extent feasible. Low Impact Development (LID) techniques for stormwater management shall be encouraged.

Policy 2.1.9 Development standards for Activity Centers shall be adopted into the Land Development Code to implement Activity Center Policies 2.1.1 through 2.1.8. The development standards shall include provisions related to: permitted uses, mixed use ratios and phasing, transportation interconnectivity, block sizes, pedestrian-oriented design features, civic space standards, parking quantity and design, and dimensional standards such as build-to lines, building orientation, lot coverage, building heights, and building footprints. The Land Development Code shall also include alternatives to certain generally required development standards, where appropriate, consistent with Objective 2.1 and the purpose and intent of Policies 2.1.1 through 2.1.8, but provide alternative standards where needed to address unique environmental, topographic, or property boundary features or characteristics that preclude strict adherence to the generally required development standards.

- (a) Development plans which are consistent with Comprehensive Plan Objective 2.1 and Policies 2.1.1 through 2.1.8, and are consistent with other provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, and the Land Development Code standards for Activity Centers described in this policy, shall be allowable through the development plan review process, notwithstanding conflicting provisions in the specific activity center plans contained in Policies 2.5.1 through 2.5.9 of this Element.

Policy 2.1.10 The County shall initiate master plans for Activity Centers where necessary to promote redevelopment in accordance with Objective 2.1 and Policies 2.1.1 through 2.1.8. An Activity Center master plan shall include a generalized site plan for the entire Activity Center with related policies and standards to address allowable land uses, site and building design, transportation circulation and

connectivity, parking, natural resource protection, public civic space, stormwater management facilities, and specific redevelopment considerations. Activity Center master plans shall include a public participation process incorporating neighborhood meetings or charrettes, notice to property owners, and other components. The County shall explore potential opportunities for public/private partnerships in developing Activity Center master plans.

Master plans for Activity Centers shall include the following components:

- (a) A range of permitted land uses, residential densities, and non-residential intensity standards.
- (b) Dimensional standards for building height, scale, and orientation relative to adjacent streets.
- (c) Parking standards which establish maximum limits on parking for various land uses, and include opportunities for shared parking arrangements where adjacent land uses within a mixed use area have different peak usage hours.
- (d) Identification of conservation areas to be protected in accordance with the [Conservation and Open Space Element](#).
- (e) Identification of the location and function of roads, bicycle routes, pedestrian routes, and transit facilities within the development site, and interconnections of these transportation facilities with the surrounding existing and planned transportation network.
- (f) Provision of a range of housing types and sizes to provide for affordable housing.

Policy 2.1.11 Transit Oriented Developments meeting the requirements of [Section 1.7](#) of the Future Land Use Element and Traditional Neighborhood Developments meeting the requirements of [Section 1.6](#) of the Future Land Use Element are allowed within Activity Centers, notwithstanding any conflicting provisions in Policies 2.1.1 through 2.1.10 of this Element. Any Transit Oriented Development or Traditional Neighborhood Development shall be consistent with natural resource protection policies adopted as part of specific Activity Center Plans in Section 2.2 of the [Future Land Use Element](#) or in other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 2.1.12 New activity centers and expansion of the boundaries of existing activity centers shall require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to establish the Activity Center boundaries and level in the Comprehensive Plan. Such Comprehensive Plan Amendments shall be considered based on the following:

- (a) The findings of a market study or employment study, such that:
 - (1) The market study shall document the need for location and type of new Activity Centers or for expansion of existing Activity Centers, through analysis of factors including population projections within the relevant market or service areas, identified in Section 3.0 Commercial Policies, based on estimated build out of the future land uses.
 - (2) The employment study shall document the need for location and type of new Activity Centers or for expansion of existing Activity Centers,

through analysis of factors including employment rates, economic development needs, income levels, and jobs-housing balance within the relevant service area based on estimated build out of the future land uses.

- (b) Location of new activity centers shall generally be near intersections of multi-modal corridors, and sites shall be adequately sized to allow development of a mix of non-residential and residential land uses, while providing for integration and interconnectivity with existing and future neighborhoods.
- (c) Availability and capacity of urban services and infrastructure including multimodal transportation, recreation, potable water and sanitary sewer, public schools, solid waste disposal, stormwater management, and public safety.
- (d) Primary and secondary land uses for new or expanded activity centers shall be determined based upon the needs of the community, character of the surrounding area, and market considerations identified in a market study.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 – ACTIVITY CENTER PLANS

Development occurring within designated Activity Centers shall be consistent with the applicable policies and standards contained in this section and with Policies 2.1.4 - 2.1.12.

Policy 2.1.1 Activity Center Plan – Springhills

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Policy 2.2.2 Interim Development Guidelines - Millhopper Activity Center.

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Policy 2.2.3 Activity Center Plan - Oaks Mall Activity Center

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Policy 2.2.4 Activity Center Plan/Special Area Study - Archer Road and 34th Street

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Policy 2.2.5 Activity Center Plan/Northwest 53rd Avenue and U.S. 441

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Policy 2.2.6 Tower Road/24th Avenue Low Activity Center Interim Guidelines

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Policy 2.2.7 Archer Road/Tower Road Activity Center Plan

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Policy 2.2.8 North Main Street/53rd Avenue Low-Industrial Activity Center

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Policy 2.2.9 Jonesville Low Activity Center/Employment

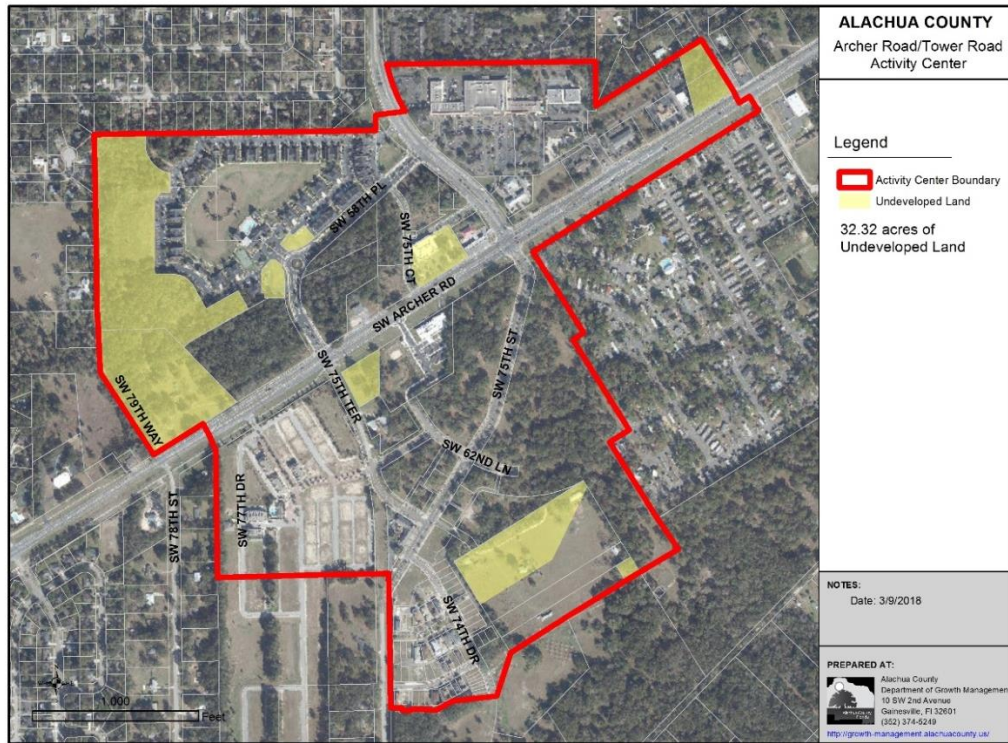
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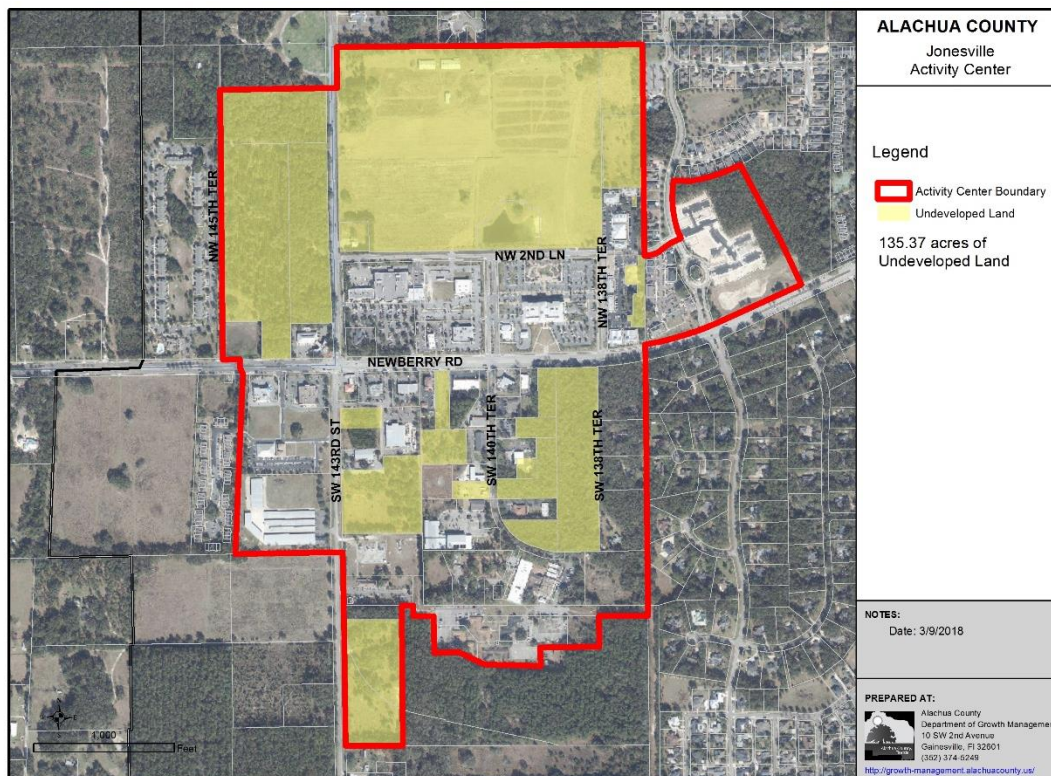
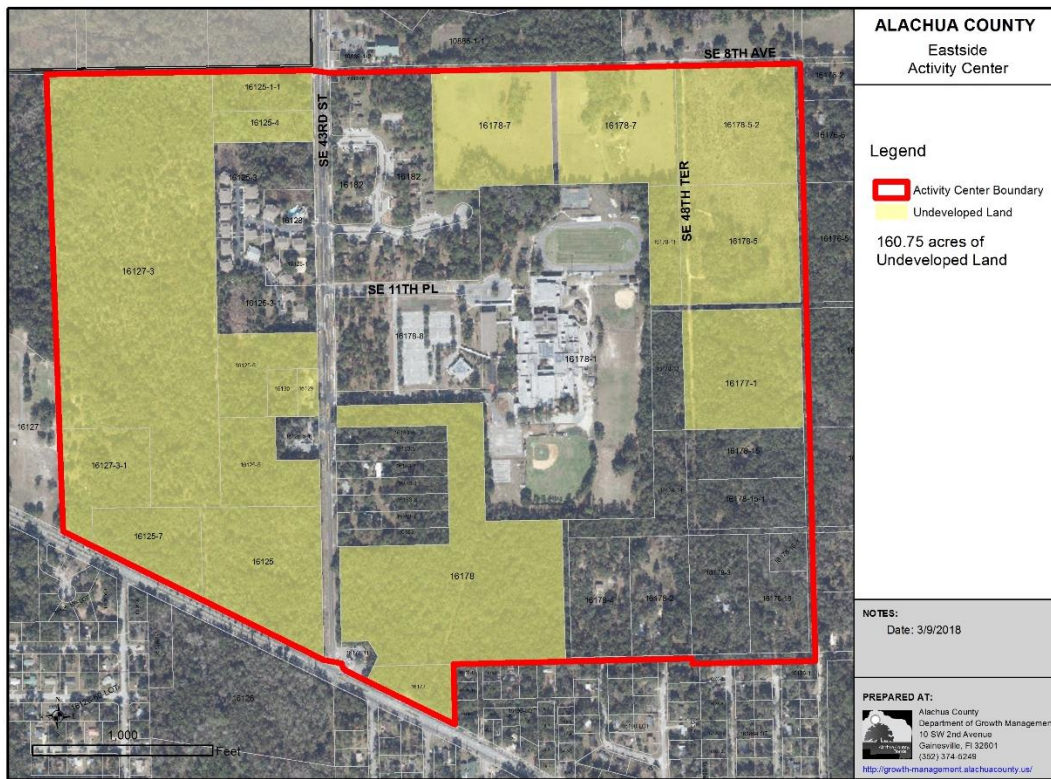
Policy 2.2.10 Eastside Activity Center Master Plan

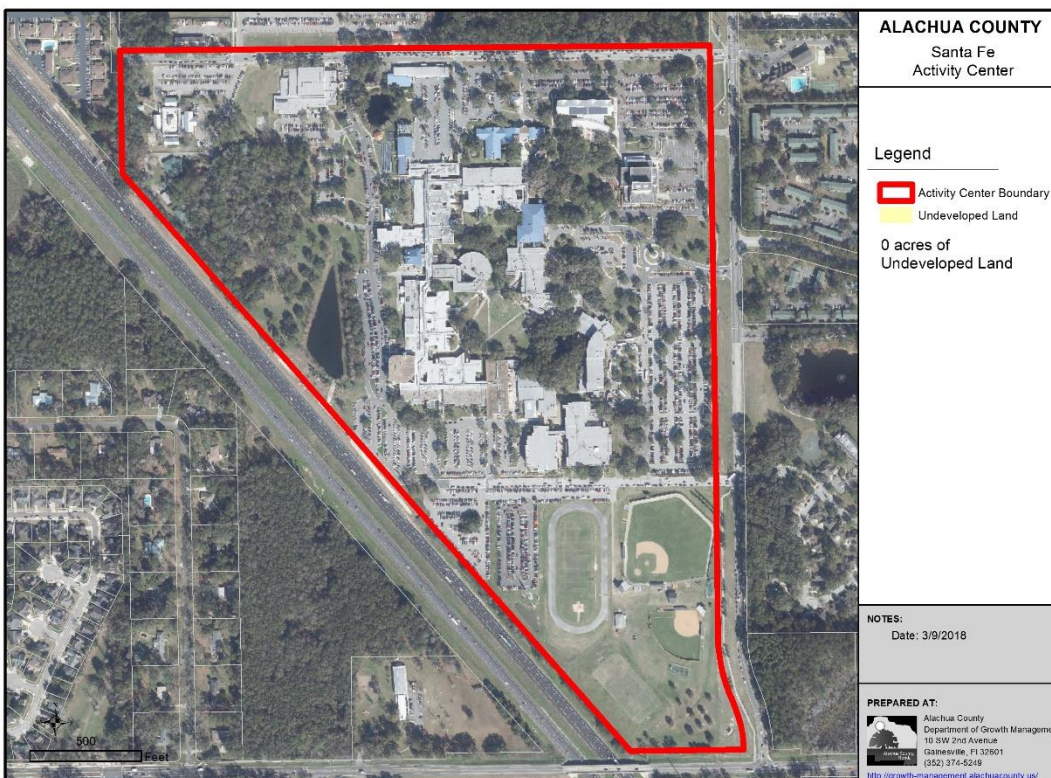
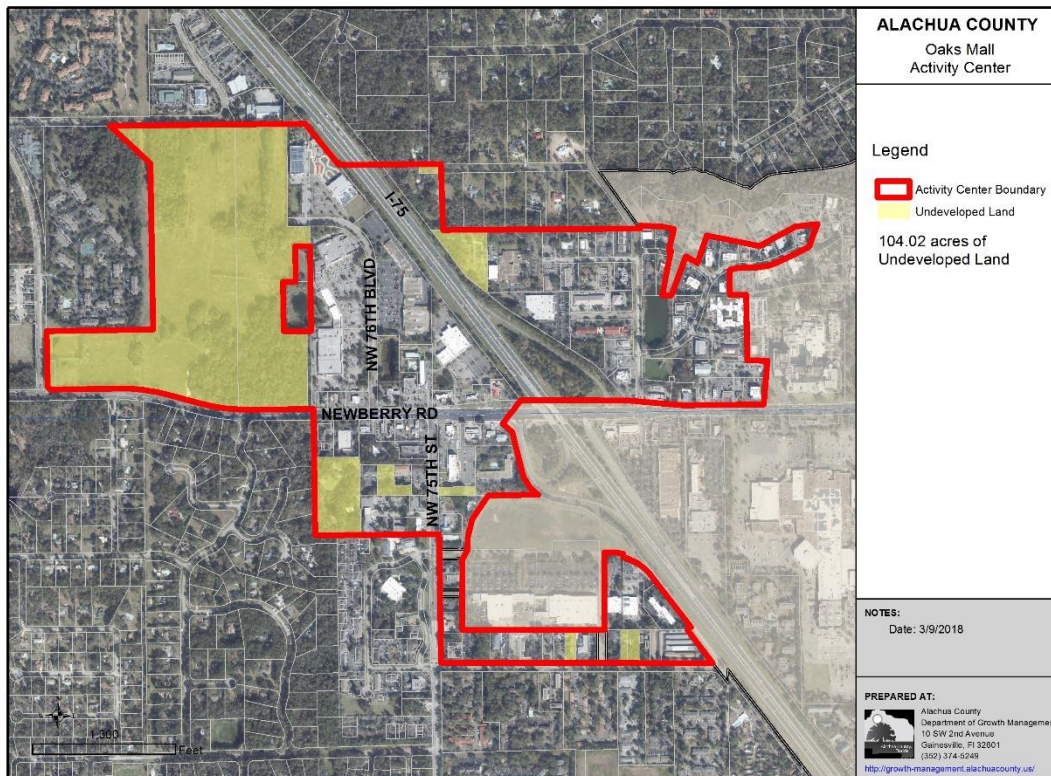
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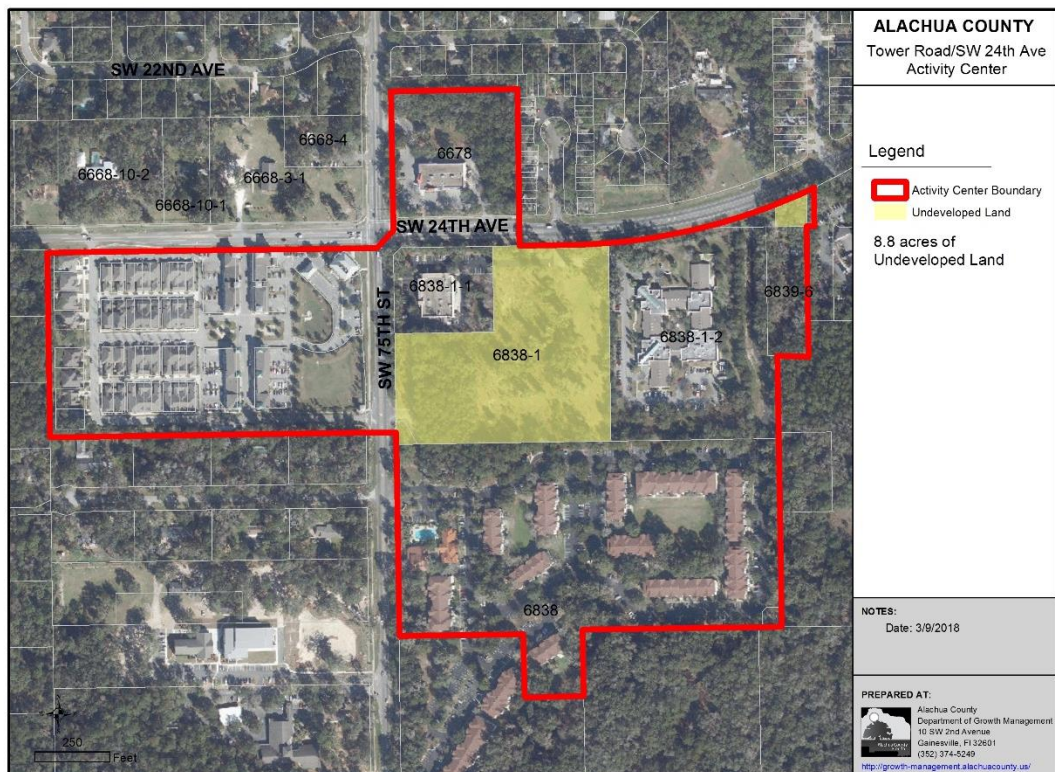
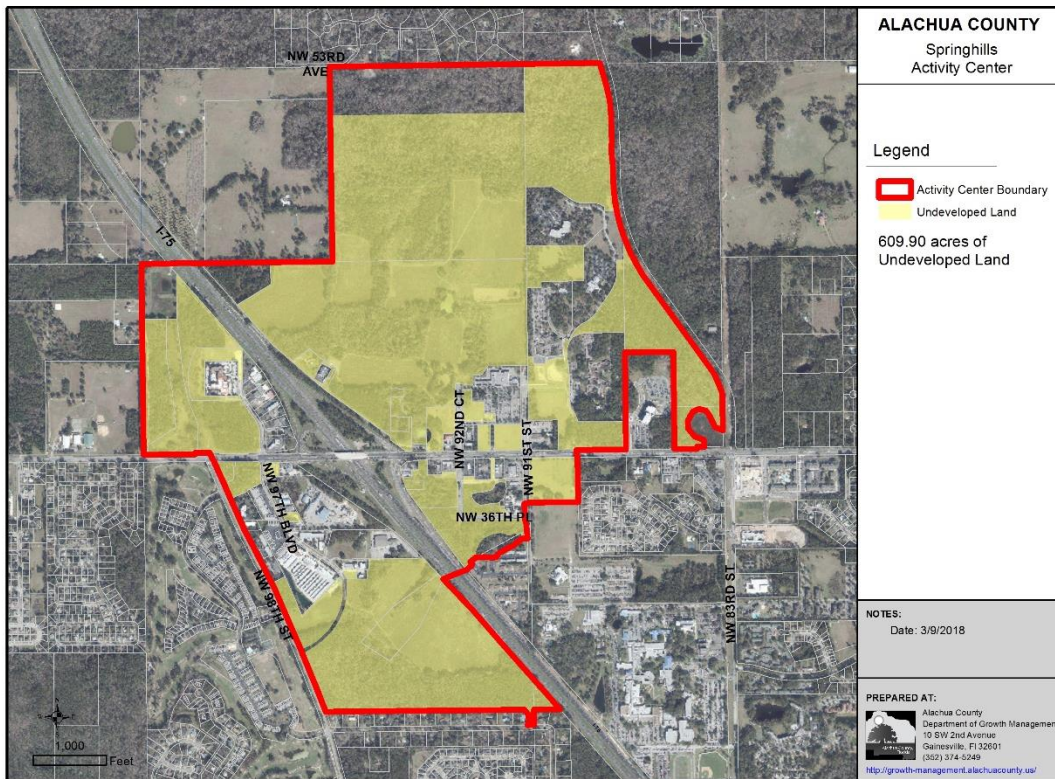
APPENDIX A - Activity Center Maps

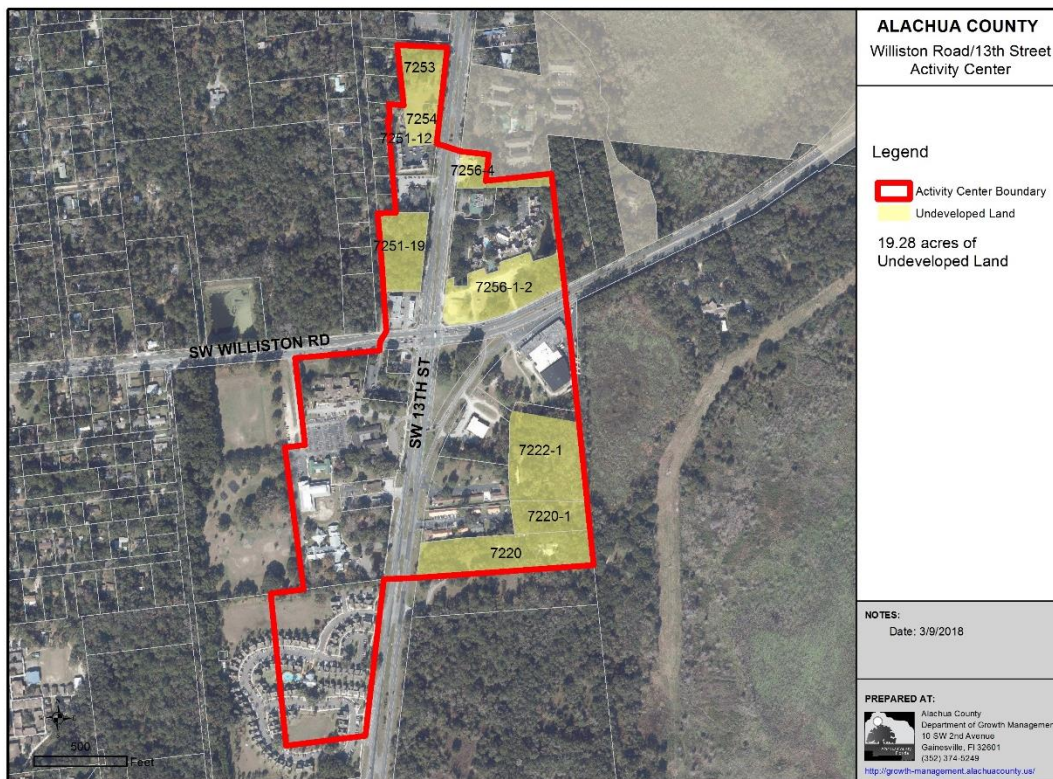
Note: Areas shown on the following maps as “undeveloped land” include land that is currently not developed as well as land that is covered by approved preliminary development plans. The Table in Appendix B shows the portion of the undeveloped land that is covered by preliminary development plans. Land that is covered by an approved final development plan would be considered developed.











APPENDIX B - Undeveloped Land within Activity Centers

Numbers given in acres

Activity Center	Undeveloped Land - Portion that is not Covered by any Approved Development Plans	Undeveloped Land - Portion that is Covered by Approved Preliminary Development Plans	Total Undeveloped Land
Archer Road/Tower Road	8.35	23.97	32.32
Eastgate	4.31	--	4.31
Eastside	160.75	--	160.75
Jonesville	67.13	68.24	135.37
Millhopper	2.00	--	2.00
North Main Street/53rd Avenue	36.48	--	36.48
Oaks Mall	14.73	89.29	104.02
Springhills	145.85	464.05	609.90
Tower Road/24th Avenue	0.23	8.57	8.80
Williston Road/13th Street	19.28	--	19.28
Williston Road/I-75	58.01	--	58.01
Totals	517.12	561.91	1171.24

Source: Alachua County Department of Growth Management,
March 2018

Note: Undeveloped lands include both land that is not developed and land that is covered by approved preliminary development plans. Both categories have been shown separately in the above table. Lands that are covered by approved final development plans are considered to be developed, even if the development plans are not yet built.