



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

*May 1, 2018*

## **STATEMENT OF ISSUE**

### **Issue Area 3: Economic Opportunity and Affordable Housing**

This issue paper covers the following four topics:

- A. 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.
- B. **Joint planning strategies** with municipalities and utility providers to seek alignment on approaches **to promote greater economic progress and retain manufacturing.**
- C. 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).
- D. ... **jobs/housing balance** and reduction of commuting, ...

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## **BACKGROUND**

This issue analysis will address several interrelated issues regarding economic opportunity, social and economic equity, community infrastructure investment and jobs-housing balance. Both the Future Land Use Element and the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan address these issues from different perspectives, however the fundamental principle of improving the lives of Alachua County citizens is consistent. Further, many of the issues in this paper relate directly to the issues addressed in the Affordable Housing issue paper:

## **FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT**

### **PRINCIPLE 1**

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LAND DEVELOPMENT THAT PROVIDES FOR A BALANCE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, SOCIAL EQUITY INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

## **ECONOMIC ELEMENT**

### **GOAL 1**

Enhance the economic prosperity of all citizens of Alachua County and expand and diversify the County's tax base.

A community is defined as “a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.” Communities are built to serve the needs of the public that compose them, and include capital investments in infrastructure such as road, water and sewer facilities, schools and government buildings, parks, landfills, and a wide variety of related infrastructure necessary to sustain and satisfy the needs of towns and cities. Subsequent investment in repairing, maintaining and improving these facilities is required in order to ensure the long-term viability of the community and its infrastructure.

Locally, community investment has not been distributed equally. Since construction of Interstate 75 in the mid-1960s, a greater proportion of investment has taken place in the western areas of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. Several efforts to encourage greater investment in the eastern areas of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County have been made. A sampling of these efforts include the development of Plan East Gainesville (Figure 1), the community-driven revision to the Eastside Activity Center, the City of Gainesville's establishment and subsequent expansion of the Eastside Community Redevelopment Area, and most recently, the joint City of Gainesville and Alachua County [Opportunity Zones](#), which met criteria stipulated by the Federal Government, and build on a layer of incentives seeking to stimulate this economically depressed area of our community.

## **DATA AND ANALYSIS RELATING TO ISSUE**

### **Capital Investment**

Each of the Objectives of the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan seek to address ways

in which the Comprehensive Plan can enhance the viability of the community. Adequate investment in staffing and capital projects by Alachua County is necessary in order to maintain these investments and provide necessary services to the public. Recently, the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce engaged in a process to understand the infrastructure needs of the community, called the [Putting Children First Infrastructure Investment Initiative](#) or i3. Over nine months, the i3 Steering Committee engaged in a variety of meetings, public forums and community presentations, which resulted in the following [conclusion](#):

*... the infrastructure needs in our community are great, and that:*

- *repairing our K-12 public schools,*
  - *fixing our roads,*
  - *ensuring our public safety officers can communicate,*
  - *improving our parks and recreational facilities,*
  - *providing for our birth-to-five children,*
  - *upgrading our internet coverage,*
  - *and expanding transit options*
- are top-of-mind needs to our residents.*

*Having evaluated the needs as presented and researched funding options available to pay for these needs, the i3 Steering Committee and the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce support a School Board of Alachua County sales-tax initiative in 2018 to fund infrastructure repairs to our K-12 schools.*

The School Board will propose a ballot initiative for November 2018 to establish a local sales tax to fund capital projects for the School Board of Alachua County to make repairs and upgrades for local public schools.

#### Economic Opportunity and Social Equity

The core of the Economic Element can be found in Objective 1.5:

### **ECONOMIC ELEMENT**

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.5 - EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCE POVERTY**

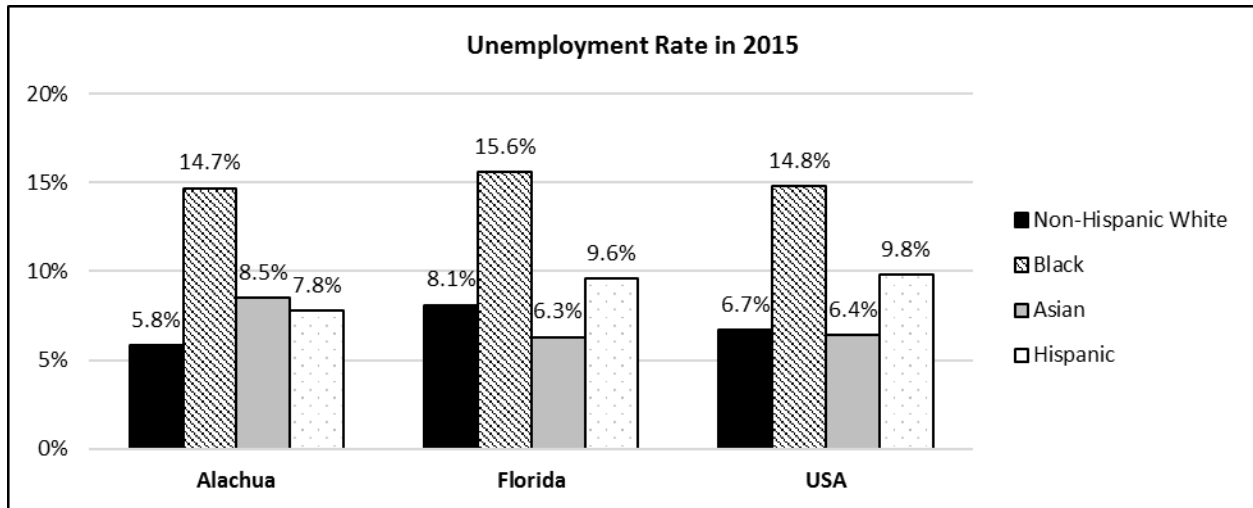
Provide sustainable economic opportunities for all segments of Alachua County. Particular emphasis shall be given to activities which increase economic opportunities for persons at or near the poverty level and to activities which redevelop economically distressed and under-utilized areas. Alachua County shall utilize the following indicators:

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

Poverty and lack of economic opportunity remains an issue in many communities, both nationally and locally.

The [Center for American Progress](#) reported in 2007 that 37 million Americans were living below the official poverty line (Greenburg et al. 2007). At the micro level, persistent poverty translates into lost potential for children or lower productivity and earnings for adults. At the

macro level, persistent poverty can impair the nation’s ability to remain competitive in a world of increasing global competition. Because having approximately 12 percent of the nation’s population living below the poverty level can impose enormous costs on society, it is all the more critical for practitioners to be acutely sensitive to the relevance of social equity rather than passively treating it as inconsequential during the planning and development process.



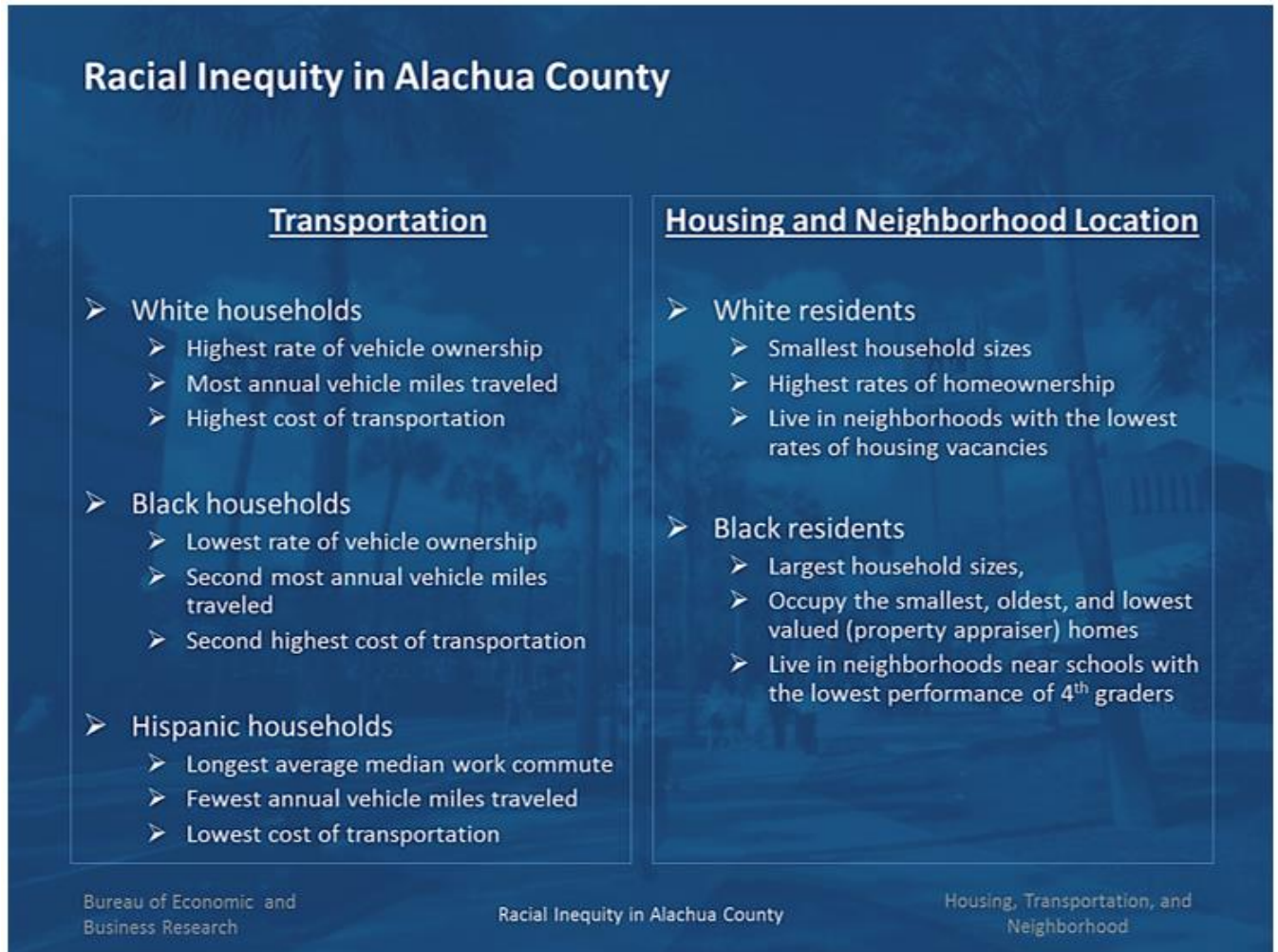
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

The “Friendship 7” refers to a group of local governments and community organizations (Alachua County, Alachua County Public Schools, City of Gainesville, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Santa Fe College, UF Health, and University of Florida) which jointly commissioned an analysis and report titled “[Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County](#)”, which was prepared by the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (January 2018). The foreword states:

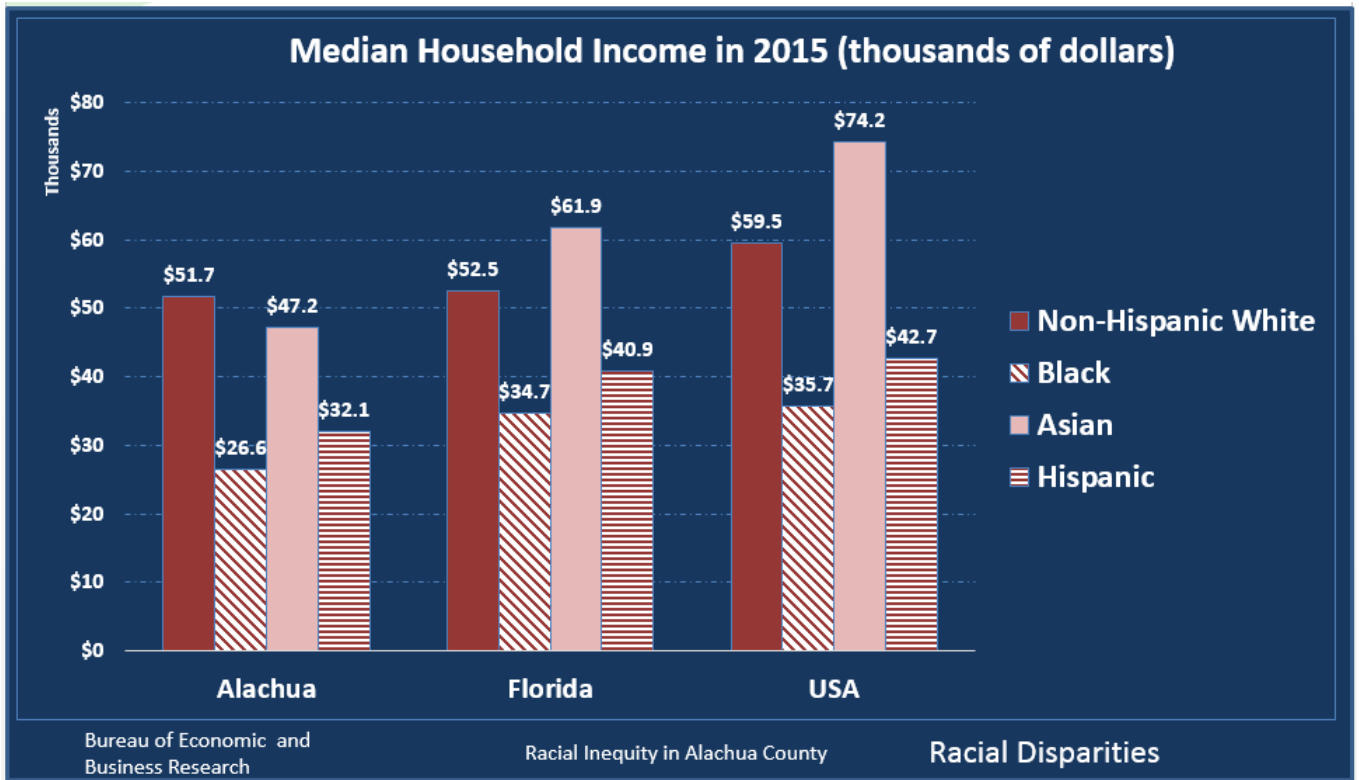
*“Racial inequity is a long-standing issue in many communities across the United States, affecting the opportunities of minority individuals and families. In March 2016, the United Church of Gainesville and the Alachua County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sponsored a weekend-long seminar to focus community efforts on inequities in the Alachua County area. The seminar featured speakers from the Dane County, Wisconsin Race to Equity Project. This project collected existing national, state, and local data documenting racial disparities in the county and comparing those disparities to Wisconsin and the United States overall. Their study led to a community-wide focus on how their community can work together to meet the challenge of narrowing the gaps in quality of life among all racial and ethnic groups.*

*A group of Gainesville, Florida community leaders representing Alachua County, Alachua County Public Schools, City of Gainesville, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Santa Fe College, UF Health, and University of Florida saw value in completing a similar project. Wishing to understand and document racial inequity in Alachua County, this group called for the development of a baseline report grounded in quantitative findings to document and provide insights about the extent, nature, and source of racial inequality in Alachua County. The University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) led this project in collaboration with the University of Florida Program for Resource Efficient Communities (PREC).”*

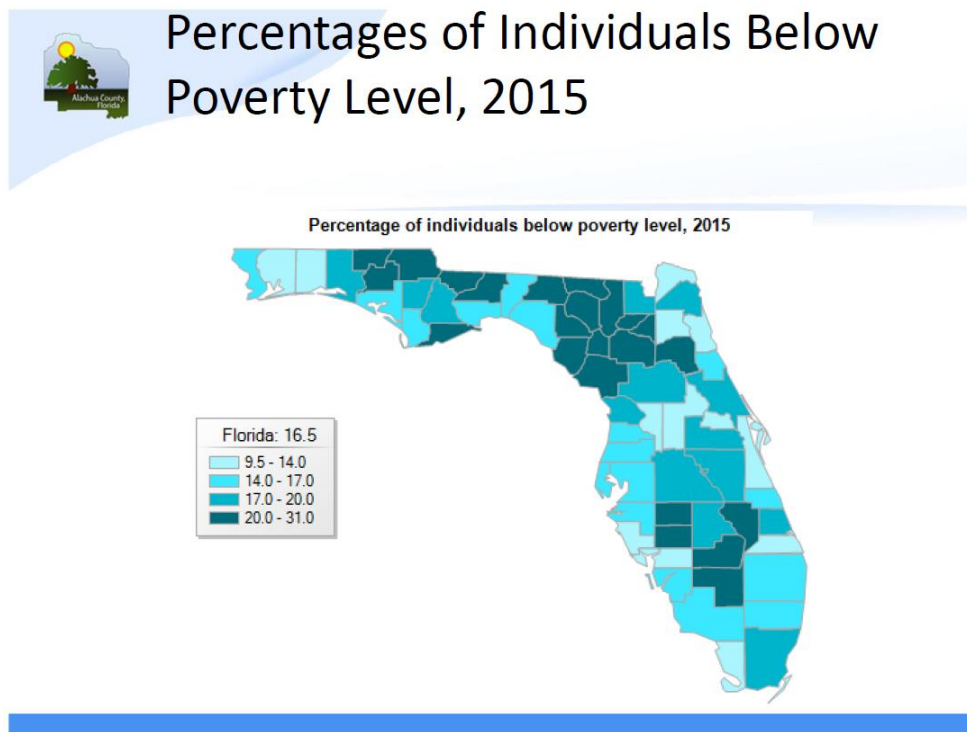
Selected excerpts from the report are attached in Appendix A of this paper. Snapshots capturing some of the findings based on BEBR data in the report are below. The first graphic addresses differences in Transportation, Housing and Neighborhood Location and highlights the differences by race.



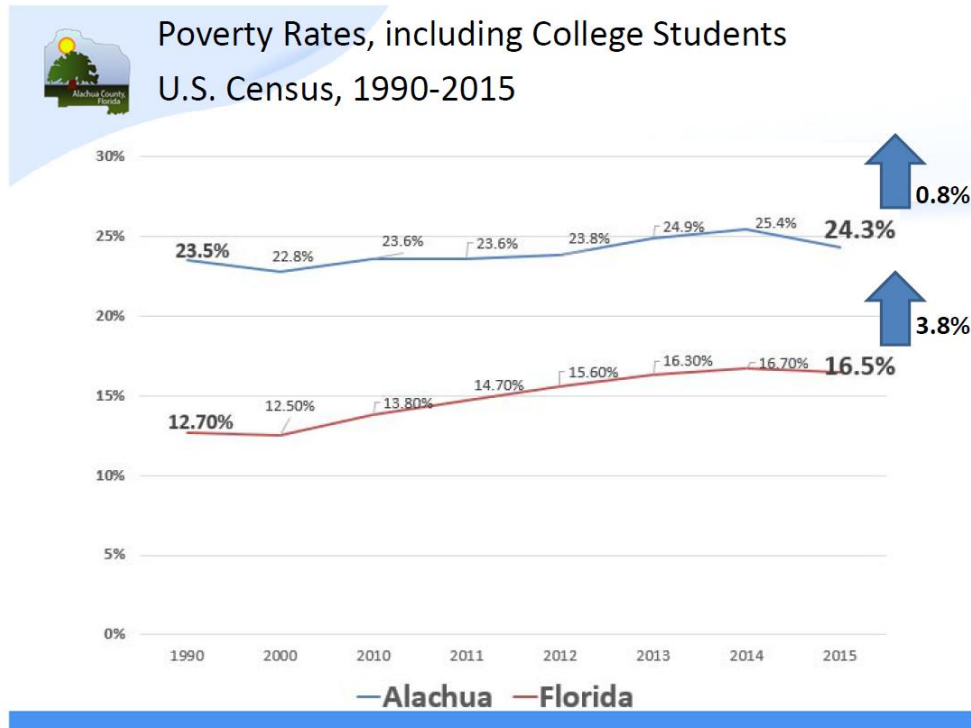
The second graphic shows the comparative Median Household Income in 2015 for Alachua County, Florida, and the United States, and shows that for all races, median household income in Alachua County trails that of Florida and the United States.



Poverty remains an issue in Alachua County, and poverty rates are higher than in Florida overall, as depicted in the following map and graph:



Source: U.S. Census data



Source: U.S. Census data

An overall summary of the Issues that contribute to racial inequity in Alachua County is provided below and is described in greater detail in Section V of the [Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County](#) report and is also provided in the Selected Excerpts found in Attachment A of this paper.

Issues that contribute to racial inequity in Alachua County:

1. Geography of Alachua County
2. Limited provision of services (affecting education)
3. Education system
4. Lack of wealth accumulation
5. The justice system vis-à-vis minorities

The primary conclusions (Section VII) of the [Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County](#) report emphasize the importance of both education and employment to economic opportunity and social equity.

*“Racial inequity is a massive tangle of issues that are deeply connected and all potential solutions are constrained by the available resources. An important lesson from this project is that all these factors and forces are interconnected and cannot be pulled apart. While an improvement in one area might be possible, it can be negated by other connecting factors that may have resources drawn away from them in an effort to improve that one area. Nonetheless, there are two areas that are worth attention.*”

*First, both the experts and minorities widely recognize that providing a high quality educational experience for them will have a significant impact. A successfully educated resident will have a higher lifetime income, more and better employment opportunities, and is less likely to become involved with the criminal justice system. Additional education beyond a high school diploma is recognized as beneficial, but a high school diploma is perceived to be the baseline. Moreover, going to college is not necessary to get a good job, but getting good skills training is essential.*

*Second, finding employment is often seen as a challenging task by minority residents. More jobs are needed that pay a living wage; more employers are needed who are willing to hire minorities, even those with a criminal record. Jobs are essential to lift people out of poverty, improve educational outcomes, and reduce crime.”*

Living Wage

A living wage is the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs, which are defined to include food, housing, and other essential needs such as clothing. Again, Economic Element Objective 1.5 addresses the core of the issue:

**OBJECTIVE 1.5 - EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCE POVERTY**

Provide sustainable economic opportunities for all segments of Alachua County. Particular emphasis shall be given to activities which increase economic opportunities for persons at or near the poverty level and to activities which redevelop economically distressed and under-utilized areas. Alachua County shall utilize the following indicators:

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

The table below shows the living wage for Alachua County:

**Living Wage Calculation for Alachua County**

<b>Hourly Wages</b> (each adult working full-time)	<b>1 Adult</b>	<b>2 Adults</b> <b>2 Children</b>
Living Wage	\$10.93	\$14.99
Poverty Wage	\$5.00	\$5.00
Minimum Wage	\$8.25	\$8.25

Living Wage Calculator  
Dept. of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT, 2018



In 2016, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners enacted a living wage ordinance which raised the minimum wage for county employees and county-contracted workers to \$14.57, which is 125% of the federal poverty level. A living wage is an important measure to promote economic opportunity and reduce income disparity.

### Joint Planning Strategies

In addition to Plan East Gainesville, recent efforts to provide greater economic opportunity include a recent joint partnership by Alachua County and the City of Gainesville to nominate portions of eastern Alachua County and the City of Gainesville as [Opportunity Zones](#). These areas met criteria stipulated by the Federal Government, and currently have a layer of incentives seeking to stimulate this economically depressed area of our community.

The City of Gainesville proposed designating those areas of the City of Gainesville that lie within the recently re-constituted Enterprise Zone (the area roughly lying east of 6th Street to the City limits and north to NW 53rd, south to SW 16th Avenue). With the re-constituted Enterprise Zone, the City of Gainesville is looking to facilitate development and economic opportunities in this area.

Alachua County proposed designating those areas of the County that lie in the East side of the unincorporated County. Last year, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners approved for applicants in the East side of the unincorporated County to receive a 50 percent reduction in application fees for Comprehensive Plan amendments, Zoning Changes, or Development Review applications. The intent of the reduced fees in this area is to help incentivize economic development on the east side.

### Jobs-Housing Balance

The concept of jobs-to-housing balance generally refers to a ratio of the number of jobs to the number of households within a community or other geographic area. The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan has various objectives and policies (Particularly Economic Element Objective 1.5 and subsequent Policies) that promote a jobs-housing balance by promoting compact urban development patterns and mixed use development within the Urban Cluster. Jobs-housing balance is defined in the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan (Future Land Use Element Definitions), as follows:

***Jobs-Housing Balance:*** *Provision of employment choices in reasonable proximity to adequate and affordable housing to ensure efficiency of the transportation system, by bringing jobs and workers in a given context area into numerical balance, usually at somewhere between 1.3 and 1.7 jobs per household.*

### **Jobs-housing Balance, Alachua County, 2016**

Number of Households	106,197
Number of Jobs	126,951
Job-Housing Balance	1.2

*Number of Households Source: University of Florida Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, Florida Housing Data Clearinghouse. Retrieved from <http://flhousingdata.shimberg.ufl.edu> on 2/20/18.*

*Number of Jobs Source: State of Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Alachua County Profile. Retrieved from <http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/area-profiles/county/Alachua.pdf> on 2/20/18.*

Based on the countywide data above, the jobs-housing balance for Alachua County is about 1.2 jobs per household, which is close to the general range of 1.3 to 1.7 that is identified in the Comprehensive Plan definition of “jobs-housing balance”. In addition to the overall countywide jobs-housing measure, there is a geographic component which is also important. As the definition states, jobs-housing balance involves having, “employment choices in reasonable proximity to adequate and affordable housing to ensure efficiency of the transportation system”.

Toward that end, the land use policies in the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan promote, and in some instances require, a mix of non-residential and residential uses for new developments within the Urban Cluster. Policies in the Comprehensive Plan promote a greater mix of residential and non-residential land uses within the Urban Cluster in order to ensure that there are more employment, retail, and office areas in closer proximity to residential areas. The County’s Mobility Plan, which was adopted into the Comprehensive Plan in 2010, provides a policy framework for Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND) and Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) which are higher density and intensity, mixed use developments within the Urban Cluster for which complimentary policies were established in the Future Land Use Element. There are requirements in the Comprehensive Plan for these types of developments to provide a mix of higher density residential and non-residential land uses which helps to ensure that there are potentially more employment opportunities in close proximity to residential areas.

The Comprehensive Plan requires that any proposed development project that exceeds certain thresholds for number of dwelling units must be developed as a mixed use TND or TOD. Specifically any proposed development within an Urban Residential land use category that will contain 150 or more dwelling units and is contiguous to a planned Rapid Transit or Express Transit Corridor is required to be developed as a mixed use TND or TOD; also, any proposed development within an Urban Residential land use category that will contain 300 or more dwelling units shall be developed as a mixed use TND.

The County has approved several mixed use TND and TOD development projects in the last few years, and many of those projects have either just been built or are beginning to be built. These development projects, once they are built, will contain both residential and non-residential components, which will contribute to a more geographic balance of jobs to housing, and should help to reduce commuting distances within the Urban Cluster. Staff recommends the continued implementation of the policies promoting mixed use development in the Urban Cluster, as discussed above, as a strategy on the issue of jobs-housing balance.

## **POTENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING ISSUE**

1. Review Economic Element Policies and other Policies and revise as necessary to further promote and identify tools and strategies for accomplishing equity objectives.
2. Develop a pilot program to retain manufacturing jobs and businesses such as focusing on electric rates and other issues.
3. Annual review of Capital Improvement Program to target investments to promote economic opportunity, environmental justice and social equity to reduce disparities.
4. Continue to seek grants and designations providing incentives to expand economic opportunity and redevelopment.

## **REFERENCE MATERIALS**

[Putting Children First Infrastructure Investment Initiative](#)

[Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County](#)

[Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County Housing Transportation Neighborhoods](#)

[Jobs-Housing Balance](#)

[Planning for Equitable Development](#)

[Plan East Gainesville](#)

[Worlds Apart Inequality between Americas Most and Least Affluent Neighborhoods](#)

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES RELATING TO ISSUE**

### **FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT**

#### **PRINCIPLE 1**

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LAND DEVELOPMENT THAT PROVIDES FOR A BALANCE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, SOCIAL EQUITY INCLUDING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

#### **GENERAL STRATEGY 2**

Promote land development that maximizes the use of public investments in facilities and services, ensures a proper level of public services for all new development, and preserves existing amenities. Land use decisions shall be made consistent with public facility improvements which shall be provided in accordance with the following priorities:

- in areas where the lack of public facilities threatens the health and safety of the community;
- in urban areas that are lacking adequate public facilities to meet the needs of existing development and to encourage infill development, and mixed-use redevelopment;
- in new areas which are part of a planned expansion of public services to encourage growth; and
- to extend individual services to meet the demands created by a specific development.

## **ECONOMIC ELEMENT**

### **GOAL 1**

ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF ALL CITIZENS OF ALACHUA COUNTY AND EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY THE COUNTY'S TAX BASE.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.1 - ECONOMIC DIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Diversify the County's economy. Achieve a diversified and sustainable economic base in Alachua County to minimize the vulnerability of the local economy and to provide economic opportunity for all segments of the population and attract and retain high-quality employers and employees within the workforce.

**Policy 1.1.1** Alachua County shall promote the recruitment and expansion of targeted industries that are either growing, high-skill, high wage areas of desired growth, or contribute to regional economic diversification. These targeted industries include, but are not limited to: logistics, and distribution; building component design and manufacturing; aviation services and products, bio-fuels and energy; healthcare services and projects business services; communication services; medical and pharmaceuticals, including biotech; technology driven manufacturing; electronics and other electrical equipment; regional or corporate headquarters; information technology; research and development; eco-tourism; multimedia productions.

**Policy 1.1.2** Alachua County shall promote economic development efforts that build on and complement existing commercial, industrial and agricultural assets in the local economic system.

**Policy 1.1.5** Alachua County shall expand its economic base by creating an environment which encourages entrepreneurship through strong partnerships with FloridaWorks, the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, the School Board of Alachua County and related organizations that provide education and training to the community.

**Policy 1.1.6** Consistent with Energy Element Objective 2.2 and Future Land Use Element Objectives 6.1 and 6.2, Alachua County shall encourage the location and development of energy conservation, alternative energy, reuse/recycling based industry and sustainable food production and processing businesses and industry clusters in order to achieve a higher level of sustainable economic development.

- (a) Alachua County shall promote a Recycling Market Development Zone (RMDZ)/Resource Recovery industrial park focused on sustainable production of goods or materials that may include recycled content or resources collected by the County curbside recycling program or otherwise removed from the County's waste stream.
- (b) Consistent with Future Land Use Element Policy 6.1.4, industries and business sectors that create a market for local agricultural products shall be encouraged to locate or expand existing local business in Alachua County.

- (c) Highlight local specialty foods and farmers markets as part of the County's tourism marketing efforts.

**Policy 1.1.9** Consistent with Energy Element Policy 3.1.4, Alachua County shall promote redevelopment and infill within the Urban Cluster. Recognizing that such redevelopment and infill is an efficient use of land, infrastructure, energy resources, and existing public services, redevelopment of existing sites and buildings shall be encouraged. The County will encourage redevelopment by establishing strategies, such as mixed-use and increased densities, in the goals, objectives, and policies of the Future Land Use Element.

**Policy 1.1.10** Recognizing constraints such as location, site access, existing utility infrastructure, or other conditions that may constrain redevelopment in compliance with generally applicable standards, the County shall establish criteria for sites where it would be appropriate to facilitate redevelopment of existing properties based on alternative standards.

## **OBJECTIVE 1.2 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Provide a comprehensive economic development strategy for Alachua County.

**Policy 1.2.1** Alachua County shall encourage the allocation of resources for the retention, expansion and development of local business and the recruitment of businesses and industries. Priority shall be given to the retention, expansion and development of local businesses.

**Policy 1.2.2** Alachua County shall coordinate its economic development activities with its municipalities and the appropriate federal, state, regional and local agencies including Florida Works, the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, the School Board of Alachua County and economic development organizations.

**Policy 1.2.3** Alachua County shall pursue an integrated approach to economic development that includes citizen input and addresses the needs of the County. The County shall support and coordinate the activities of the County's Economic Development Advisory Committee in the development and implementation and periodic update of the strategic plan for county-wide economic development.

**Policy 1.2.9** Alachua County recognizes Research and Technology Parks as valuable economic assets to the community that are particularly appropriate in transit oriented developments and mixed-use activity centers. Development of such parks and other similar ventures through expansion, development and recruitment of appropriate businesses and industries shall be given high priority.

**Policy 1.2.10** Alachua County recognizes the business incubators such as the Gainesville Technology Enterprise Center (GTEC) as valuable economic assets to the community and shall encourage the development of additional incubators and similar ventures through expansion, development and recruitment of appropriate businesses and industries, where consistent with the Future Land Use Element. The County shall strive to retain in the community the businesses that

are established and grow from the incubators by assuring that an adequate amount of land properly designated for manufacturing and commerce activities related to the incubated enterprises is available.

**Policy 1.2.11** Alachua County recognizes the value of industries related to the development of energy conservation, alternative energy, reuse/recycling based products and sustainable food production and processing and encourages the location of these businesses and industry clusters consistent with Energy Element Objective 2.1. These industries shall be given high priority.

**Policy 1.2.18** A comprehensive annual "State of Alachua County's Economy" report shall be presented to the Board of County Commissioners. This document shall review the economic indicators of the local economy and the impact of economic development efforts on the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. This report shall be developed by the County in coordination with local economic development entities such as the Chamber of Commerce/CEO, with input from the appropriate County advisory committees such as the Economic Development Advisory Committee. This report shall include at a minimum:

- (a) A review of the annual economic development program for Alachua County as it relates to the objectives and policies set forth in this Economic Element.
- (b) Recommendations concerning identified infrastructure needs to support economic development efforts; this information shall be considered as part of the annual update of the Capital Improvement Program.
- (c) A report of existing business expansions and new business starts within the County.
- (d) A report on businesses attracted to the County through the recruitment efforts of Alachua County.
- (e) A report on vocational training opportunities, including identification of needed job skills reported by businesses during the recruitment or expansion process.
- (f) The number of new jobs created.
- (g) A report on the costs and benefits to the County, as well as the effectiveness, of any incentives provided by the County to support the retention or expansion of existing businesses or to develop or attract new business.
- (h) A report on the effectiveness of the economic development program in improving the economic well-being of the unemployed poor, including those not covered by general unemployment statistics.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.4 - EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Coordinate educational, vocational, and technical training opportunities with the needs of new and existing employers. In collaboration with other institutions, create an environment in which all residents may become as self-sufficient as possible, through educational and employment opportunities.

**Policy 1.4.1** Alachua County shall assist in the coordination of educational, professional, technical,

and vocational training of the labor force with the needs of businesses and industries. This assistance shall include, but not be limited to, disseminating information about the vocational and other programs available through Florida Works, Santa Fe College, the School Board of Alachua County, the Chamber of Commerce/CEO and the University of Florida to prospective businesses and industries and disseminating statistical data on population and employment relating to labor markets for use by potential employers and vocational programs.

**Policy 1.4.2** Alachua County shall foster collaboration among the workforce development organizations and the educational institutions, the employees and employers to ensure that the skills of the County's labor force closely match the demand for labor.

**Policy 1.4.3** Alachua County shall, as referenced in the County's Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Development, collaborate with local workforce development organizations and educational institutions to expand vocational skills training and provide entrepreneurial opportunities for students. This collaboration shall include goals to prepare students for post-secondary employment in such areas as special skills training, targeted industries training and vocational skills training and internships, in collaboration with Florida Works, Santa Fe College, the School Board, the University of Florida, the business community and other agencies.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.5 - EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND REDUCE POVERTY**

Provide sustainable economic opportunities for all segments of Alachua County. Particular emphasis shall be given to activities which increase economic opportunities for persons at or near the poverty level and to activities which redevelop economically distressed and under-utilized areas. Alachua County shall utilize the following indicators:

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

**Policy 1.5.1** Alachua County shall support existing businesses and encourage new business development in economically distressed areas of the County by coordinating with other economic development initiatives at the local, state, or regional level.

**Policy 1.5.2** The County shall make information available to the community on potential incentives such as reduced impact and/or mobility fees, streamlined permitting requirements for redevelopment within the Urban Cluster, and financial incentives available at the state and federal level for redevelopment of brownfield sites.

**Policy 1.5.3** The County shall pursue funding opportunities, including grants and other funding sources, for the extension of essential infrastructure to encourage development or redevelopment in specific economically distressed areas.

**Policy 1.5.4** Businesses and industries that meet the demands of the existing labor force by providing employment opportunities and equitable salaries shall be given a high priority in recruitment efforts and in provision of support for expansion of existing local business.

**Policy 1.5.5** Businesses and industries that are willing to participate in the training of skilled and unskilled workers through the local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and/or other similar programs, shall be given a high priority in recruitment efforts and strongly encouraged to locate in Alachua County, and in provision of support for expansion of existing business.

**Policy 1.5.6** Alachua County shall support and encourage the development of public/private partnerships which assist small and minority businesses that may otherwise not have access to adequate start-up capital.

**Policy 1.5.7** Alachua County shall support Welfare Transition Program employment/training projects in the County.

**Policy 1.5.8** Alachua County shall collaborate with local businesses and organizations, including builders, developers, contractors and labor unions, to create or support programs that enhance apprenticeship opportunities for vocational trades.

**Policy 1.5.9** Alachua County shall support the development of micro-enterprises and small businesses by coordinating with other economic development initiatives.

**Policy 1.5.10** Alachua County shall strive to compensate its employees with a combination of wages and benefits needed to cover the costs of life's basics, including shelter, food, clothing, utilities, transportation, child care and health care and is based on economic conditions of North Central Florida.

**Policy 1.5.11** Alachua County shall promote affordable, diverse housing choices throughout the community to enhance the viability of the workforce.

## **OBJECTIVE 1.6 - LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

Create livable communities that are attractive to diverse populations and new economic development opportunities.

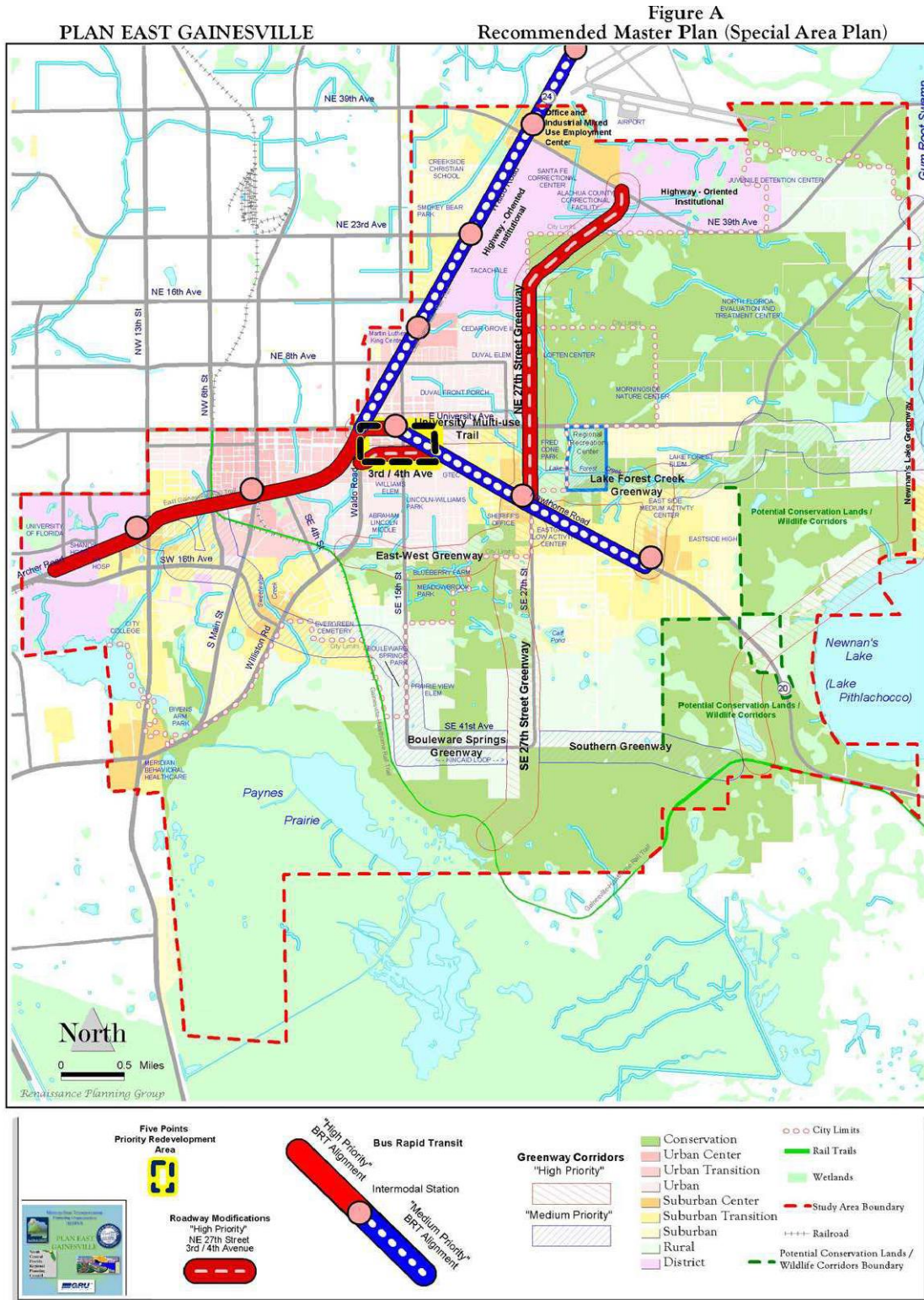
**Policy 1.6.2** The County shall promote reduced work to home commuting distances through encouragement of Traditional Neighborhood and Transit Oriented Developments and compact, mixed-use Activity Centers.

### **Future Land Use Element Definitions**

**Jobs-Housing Balance:** Provision of employment choices in reasonable proximity to adequate and affordable housing to ensure efficiency of the transportation system, by bringing jobs and workers in a given context area into numerical balance, usually at somewhere between 1.3 and 1.7 jobs per household.



**Figure 1  
PLAN EAST GAINESVILLE MASTER PLAN MAP**



**APPENDIX A.**  
**SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM**

**Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County**

Prepared by the University of Florida  
Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR)

(January 2018)

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## Foreword

For many years, racial disparities have made an impact on the lives of people in Alachua County, Florida. Many advocacy groups have been working diligently on improving conditions for minorities in order to reduce these disparities. A wealth of data exists exemplifying specific areas that may be helpful to these organizations. The following report provides a baseline of racial disparity data in the county, showing the differences between Whites and four minority groups: Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Other. With this baseline, future data has the potential to show changes and trends, illuminating the effects of programs attempting to address the myriad of issues that contribute to these disparities.

We hope that the information contained in this report will be informative to residents of Alachua County and useful to the programs trying to make an impact. We look forward to the possibility of building on this report in the future with updated data on the indicators included as well as other indicators that may further shed light on racial inequities.

We would like to thank the organizations who commissioned this report for giving us the opportunity to perform this work: Alachua County, Alachua County Public Schools, City of Gainesville, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Santa Fe College, UF Health, and University of Florida. We would also like to thank the many people who contributed to the effort necessary to complete the report. Cynthia Clark moderated the focus group, and Mark House conducted the one-on-one interviews with community members and experts and compiled the information from both formats. UF Bureau of Economic and Business Research students and staff including Mark Girson, Hui Hui Guo, Art Sams, Anthony Chen, Nelsa Vazquez, and others collected data, performed quality control, and managed the project.

We would also like to thank the community members and experts who participated in the focus group and one-on-one interviews, whose involvement made possible the qualitative component of this undertaking.

Finally, we appreciate the work of the University of Florida Program for Resource Efficient Communities research team led by Hal Knowles and Lynn Jarrett, who collected, analyzed and reported on more in depth housing and transportation disparity issues in a separate volume.

**Hector H. Sandoval**

Project Director

Understanding Racial Inequity in Alachua County

## **V. Factors and Forces Behind Racial Disparities in Alachua County**

Racial inequality is a problem in Alachua County as well as in the country as a whole; however, beyond the general conditions that create racial disparities in the United States, Alachua County has a number of specific issues that foster these disparities.

A series of personal interviews with experts who have direct insight into racial disparities in Alachua County were conducted to understand the forces and factors behind the disparities in the county. This section relies solely on these experts' opinions and summarizes them. From these interviews, six important interconnected issues emerged. First, the geography of the county prohibits the development in areas that are traditionally occupied by minorities, which creates isolated and under-resourced areas. Second, the reduced provision of services affects minorities more. Third, there are important issues related to the education system. Fourth, for many generations, minority populations have been unable to accumulate wealth. Fifth, in addition to an important mismatch existing in the labor market, college students are crowding out the job opportunities that would otherwise exist for the local minorities. Finally, there are important issues arising from the interaction of minorities with the justice system.

First, the east side of Gainesville, as it is separated by Main Street, is home to a large percent of minorities. Additionally, some areas of the southwest side of Gainesville and along Tower Road are predominately populated by minorities. In these areas, low education minorities are purchasing homes for lower prices. In contrast, places like Haile Plantation are predominately occupied by educated Whites such as faculty and professionals who have a significantly higher income. This higher income allows them to purchase properties of greater value, which in turn creates a higher tax base for that area. This generates important disparities between regions in Gainesville.

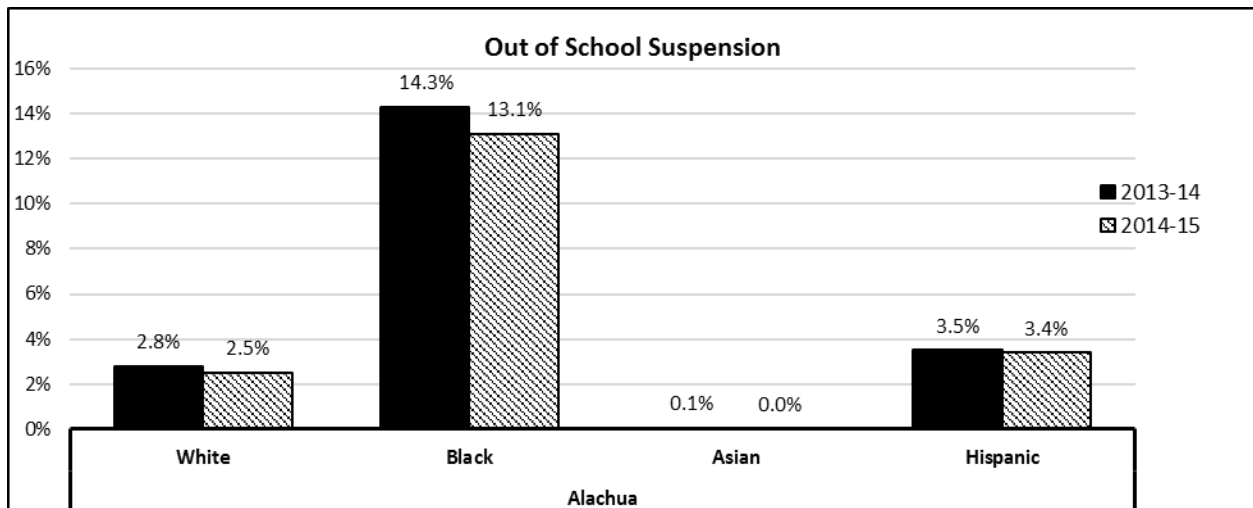
The ability of an area to attract development is critical to bringing in necessary jobs, schools and other services. However, economic development is generally focused on the West side of Gainesville, where minorities are not present because there is very little on the East side to attract developers who are looking for customers with disposable incomes. Moreover, the geography of the East side presents particular difficulties that are absent in the west side. The east side is lower and tends to have more sensitive wetlands, making development difficult in general. In some cases, federal laws that protect these sensitive areas push developers away from the east side into areas that are around the University and primarily on the West side of town, both of which are predominately occupied by Whites.

A second issue is that these pockets of minorities are generally under-resourced in a number of ways. Due to low state and federal funding, for example, teacher pay throughout the county is low, there is low investment in pre-kindergarten programs, and available resources are limited for supplemental programs such as mental health services. This low level of overall funding often affects minority/disadvantaged students disproportionately because they typically have a greater need for such programs.

Additionally, the county budget is restricted. It's not possible to provide adequate social services because the funding to support them is not available. Because Florida is a low-tax state, counties must fund social services themselves. With a large portion of Alachua County off the tax rolls because of the University of Florida and other public institutions, decreased taxes result in decreases services.

Third, in addition to the low investment in education, there are two other factors related to the education system in Alachua County. First, schools pull their student base from the surrounding areas. In neighborhoods that are primarily inhabited by minorities, the result is a student body that is almost entirely composed of minorities. Nationwide, busing students to different neighborhoods was

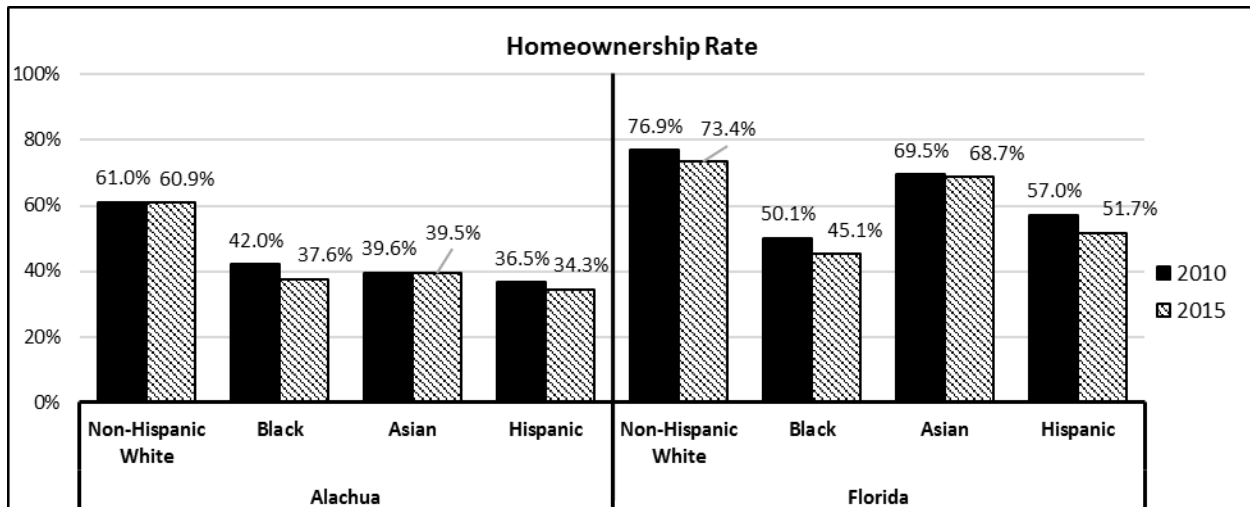
an attempt to integrate different races and create an environment of acceptance between races. Alachua County created magnet schools in minority neighborhoods, thereby attracting higher performing students to these schools; however, when high-performing students are mixed into a group of average or below average minority students, minority's perceptions might be unintentionally reinforced as these minorities perform at lower levels than the students bused in. Minorities who see these high performers may then become discouraged if they mistakenly attribute these differences to race. A second issue is out-of-school suspensions. When a student is removed from school, they quickly fall behind in their classwork, and may also develop a resentment towards the school system. Both of these factors make the student more likely to be disruptive a second time. When they are suspended they are also more likely to be at home alone, which can create a difficult situation for the child. If a student is suspended and must stay at home without any supervision, they are much more likely to create problems that get reported to the police.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Florida Department of Education.

Fourth, though minority populations have lived in this area for generations; they haven't been able to accumulate wealth to pass on to future generations. Wealth and income are very different issues. Wealth includes assets that a person can draw upon in a time of need. Owning a home or property of any sort allows a person to have collateral for a loan if an emergency were to happen. The homes on the east side of Gainesville, where a large portion of minorities live, are worth far less than those in other areas of the city. This reduces the resources available to minority families in a time of emergency. As mentioned previously, the lack of wealth also drives development away from the area because businesses want customers who are able to afford their products and who can make purchases on a regular basis. This lack of wealth also reduces the tax base that can be used for schools and other basic needs.

<sup>1</sup> Alachua County Public Schools has implemented policies and programs that have reduced out-of-school suspensions among all students, most significantly among African-American students.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

A fifth issue in Alachua County is related to the labor market. A mismatch exists between the skills acquired and the skills needed. On the supply side, there is a disproportionately higher percentage of minorities with lower educational levels and skills. This disproportionality is most pronounced among African Americans.<sup>2</sup> On the demand side, approximately two-thirds of the jobs require postsecondary vocational training, an associate's or higher college degree.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the highest paying occupations represent one-third of the jobs in the county and are in occupations such as legal; health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other healthcare technical; management, business, and financial; and computer, engineering, and science and most of these jobs require a fairly high degree of education.<sup>4</sup> And while jobs exist for both higher and lower skill workers, the labor market shows a higher unemployment rate for lower skill workers in the county.<sup>5</sup> One possible contributing factor to this disparity is that some of the lower skill jobs in the area could employ residents without a higher level of education, but they are sometimes filled with college students who have some advantages over lower skill minority applicants in the eyes of employers. College

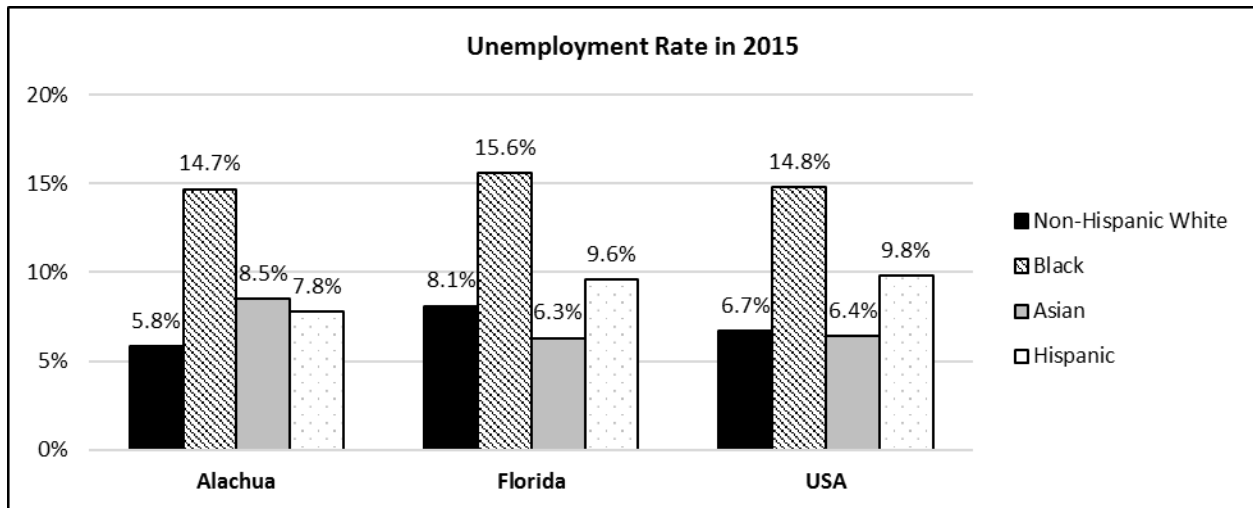
2 According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, around 46.2 percent of non-Hispanic Whites have a bachelor's degree or higher and only 5.2 percent have less than high school diploma in Alachua County. In contrast, 16.3 percent of African Americans have a bachelor's degree and 15.4 percent have less than a high school diploma. Around 39.7 percent of Hispanics have a bachelor's degree or higher and only 9.5 percent have less than a high school diploma.

3 According to the estimates of employment by occupation in 2015 from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, around 30.1 percent of jobs require a minimum educational level of postsecondary vocational training to enter the occupation, 37.3 percent require at least an associate's degree, and 30.2 percent require a high school diploma or less.

4 Occupational categories are according to the U.S. Standard Occupational Classification System. According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, the estimated median earnings in the past 12 months (in 2015 dollars) for legal occupations was \$62,778, for health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other healthcare technical occupations was \$63,222, for management, business, and financial occupations was \$49,841, and for computer, engineering, and science occupations was \$46,363. These occupations account for 30.9 percent of the total employment in the county. Required educational level data on jobs and occupations are from Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

5 According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, around 16.9 percent of those with less than a high school diploma were unemployed in Alachua County, while only 8 percent of those with a high school diploma, 7.5 percent of those with some college or an associate's degree, and 2.9 percent of those with a bachelor's degree or more were unemployed.

students can be highly flexible with their schedule and usually have an advanced knowledge of technology that may reduce training costs.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates.

Finally, employment for anyone convicted of a crime is more difficult because having a criminal record is a strike against them for most employers. African-American men are disproportionately affected because there is a larger percentage of African-American men incarcerated around the country, including in Alachua County. Moreover, the county has a “war on drugs.” Although drug use is fairly equally split among races,<sup>6</sup> African-Americans are more likely to be caught with low levels of narcotics or other drugs. One reason is because they are more likely to use drugs in public spaces. Moreover, African-Americans are also more likely to be caught because police patrol minority neighborhoods more. Given the limited resources to control crime, law enforcement uses statistical tools to identify areas of high crime and patrol those areas more often. An area that is patrolled more often is more likely to result in more arrests.

<sup>6</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2015, the use of illicit drugs among people aged 12 and over was 10.2 percent for Whites, 12.5 percent for African American, 9.2 percent for Hispanic, and 4 percent for Asians, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus16.pdf#050>

## **VII. General Conclusions**

As portrayed by the quantitative data, greater disparities appear in terms of economic well-being, education, and involvement in the justice system. From our qualitative analysis, the insights and opinions from the experts were very valuable in highlighting the factors and forces behind the disparities in Alachua County. Furthermore, the minority group residents of the county also complemented our understanding of such forces and factors.

Racial inequity is a massive tangle of issues that are deeply connected and all potential solutions are constrained by the available resources. An important lesson from this project is that all these factors and forces are interconnected and cannot be pulled apart. While an improvement in one area might be possible, it can be negated by other connecting factors that may have resources drawn away from them in an effort to improve that one area. Nonetheless, there are two areas that are worth attention.

First, both the experts and minorities widely recognize that providing a high quality educational experience for them will have a significant impact. A successfully educated resident will have a higher lifetime income, more and better employment opportunities, and is less likely to become involved with the criminal justice system. Additional education beyond a high school diploma is recognized as beneficial, but a high school diploma is perceived to be the baseline. Moreover, going to college is not necessary to get a good job, but getting good skills training is essential.

Second, finding employment is often seen as a challenging task by minority residents. More jobs are needed that pay a living wage; more employers are needed who are willing to hire minorities, even those with a criminal record. Jobs are essential to lift people out of poverty, improve educational outcomes, and reduce crime.