



# **Draft Comprehensive Plan Amendments:**

## **Equity and Environmental Justice Definitions and Policies**

June 6, 2023

Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting



# Background

- **August 2021: Equity Work Plan Phase 1 adopted by County Commission**
  - Equity Strategic Leadership Team (Cohort 1) identified Growth Management for departmental goal setting. That Team identified need for short term amendments to the County’s Comprehensive Plan to address the following:
    1. Clarify/update “social equity” and “environmental justice” definitions
    2. Update Future Land Use Element Objective 5.2 and Policy 5.2.1 to articulate a universal goal around protecting “neighborhood character” as it relates to institutional land uses
- **January 24, 2023:** Staff updated the Board on Growth Management equity work including comprehensive planning, best practices review, and community engagement.



# Comprehensive Planning Workplan Goals: Equity

## Short Term (underway, projected completion 2023)



Focused update of Comprehensive Plan definitions of 'Social Equity' and 'Environmental Justice' and policy regarding protecting "neighborhood character" (Per Equity Core Strategic Leadership Team Cohort I)

## Medium Term (begin late 2023)

Equity audit of County's Comprehensive Plan using Wayne State University Equity Evaluation Tool\* and other resources to identify areas in need of potential update

[\\* Plan Equity Evaluation Tool - Wayne State University \(qualtrics.com\)](https://qualtrics.com)

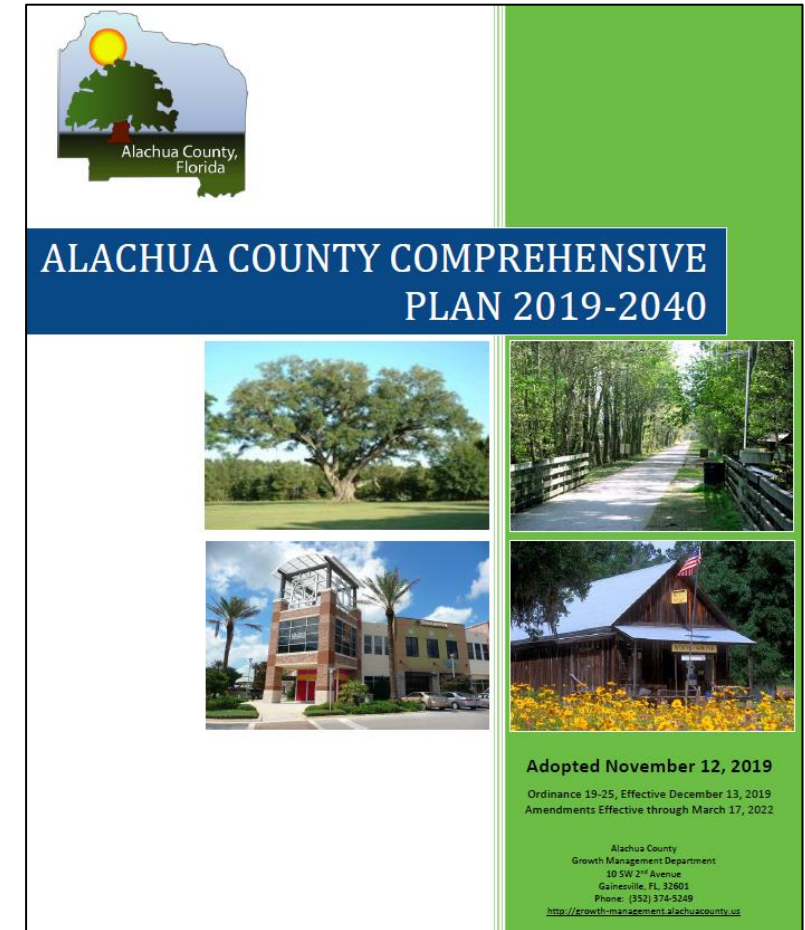
## Longer Term (2024-2025)

Full update of Comprehensive Plan to include greater focus on equity in terms of both policy and process



# Equity in Alachua County Comprehensive Plan (as adopted)

- Promoting sustainable development that provides for a *balance of economic opportunity, social equity, environmental justice, and protection of the natural environment* has been a foundational principle of the Plan since the early 2000s.
- Equity is currently addressed within goals, objectives, and policies within several Plan Elements, including:
  - Future Land Use
  - Economic
  - Capital Improvements
  - Housing
  - Community Health



# Draft Amendments to Comprehensive Plan

Primary focus areas for current amendments:

1. Updated definitions of “Equity” and “Environmental Justice”
2. Updated policies for consideration of equity, environmental justice and neighborhood character as part of the County’s decision-making process on industrial and institutional land uses



# Definition Updates: “Environmental Justice”

~~**Environmental Justice:** No group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the cumulative negative social or environmental consequences resulting from land use decisions.~~

**Environmental Justice** means that no group of people, including those from marginalized racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should disproportionately bear the negative social or environmental consequences resulting from land use decisions. Principles of environmental justice recognize historically that the largest proportion of environmental burdens come from industrial development, energy production facilities, disposal of waste, and transportation systems, and that these burdens often fall on the communities that are least able to withstand the impacts of them; poorer and marginalized communities. Environmental justice is a principle and practice that emerged historically from people of color organizing to protect their environments, community rights, lands, and health.



## Definition Updates: “Equity”

~~**Social Equity:** Principle of fairness, with attention to provision of opportunity to those portions of the community that are less well off; as applied to Comprehensive Plan, related issues include the provision of affordable housing, economic opportunity, and choice of living environments for all members of the community without regard to sex, race, age, religion, ethnicity, national origin, etc.~~

Equity means redressing injustices that were previously incurred, fully incorporating all segments of the community in the decision-making and planning processes and establishing measures to prevent future inequities from occurring. Such efforts include expanding opportunity and promoting equal access to public services, providing equal service quality, ensuring procedural fairness, and striving for equal opportunity in such areas as education, health, and employment.

In the context of sustainability, equity refers to how burdens and benefits of different policy actions are distributed in a community. The more evenly they are distributed, the more equitable the community is, and this is reflected in economic, ecological, and social outcomes. Equity in sustainability includes putting forth efforts toward rectifying previous environmental injustices, avoiding environmental injustices going forward, and providing equal access to participate in sustainability activities and shape their development.



## Policy Updates: Industrial Land Uses

**Policy 4.2.1.** Industrial land uses shall not be located adjacent to residential or agricultural areas without adequate buffering or integrating design and business practices to eliminate or minimize adverse impacts. Land use decisions concerning location of industrial uses shall take into consideration environmental justice, equity, and community, historical, and neighborhood character; this shall include consideration of the residents of the community, their relationship to the land, and the characteristics of the land itself. In considering community, historical, and neighborhood character, particular consideration shall be given to recognizing, protecting and preserving the resilience, collective desires, and resources of historically burdened communities. Historically burdened communities are those where the residents, often from racially or ethnically marginalized communities, face inequities and have disproportionate burdens associated with land use.

*Language above would also be added to Policy 4.4.1 regarding “Heavy Industrial” land uses*





## Policy Updates: Institutional Land Uses

The following land uses are considered institutional and governmental under the Comprehensive Plan:

- Public and Private Educational Facilities, Day Care Centers, and Nursery Schools
- Community Services such as civic and government facilities, fire and emergency services, law enforcement, health facilities, community service organizations, and correctional facilities
- Public Utility, Communications or Infrastructure Services (e.g. utility transmission and distribution facilities and landfills)
- Religious Facilities
- Cemeteries



## Policy Updates: Institutional Land Uses

**Policy 5.2.2** Institutional facilities shall be designed and located for integration into the surrounding community. Land use and zoning decisions concerning ~~location~~ of institutional uses shall take into consideration environmental justice, equity, and community, historical, and neighborhood character; this shall include consideration of the residents of the community, their relationship to the land, and the characteristics of the land itself. In considering community, historical, and neighborhood character, particular consideration shall be given to recognizing, protecting and preserving the resilience, collective desires, and resources of historically burdened communities. Historically burdened communities are those where the residents, often from racially or ethnically marginalized communities, face inequities and have disproportionate burdens associated with land use.



# Policy Updates: Implementation

**Policy 7.1.2** Proposed changes in the zoning map shall consider:

- (a) ...
- (b) ...
- (c) the relationship of the proposed development to existing development in the vicinity and considerations relating to environmental justice, equity, and redevelopment opportunities.
- (d) ...



## Policy Updates: Implementation

**Policy 7.1.17** The land development regulations shall provide for evaluation of certain uses through processes by which special exceptions, special use permits, and temporary use permits may be granted. These certain uses include uses with intensities or characteristics that may create an adverse impact on surrounding neighborhoods or institutions which are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the size, extent and character of that use is compatible with the surrounding uses. The regulations to implement this policy shall identify the general category of uses that will be subject to this process and the specific factors which will be utilized to evaluate whether or not a special exception, special use permit or temporary use permit should be granted; these factors shall include, but are not limited to, consideration of environmental justice, equity, and community, historical, and neighborhood character.



## Next Steps

- **Community Engagement**
  - Share draft amendments with the public, including with community leaders and civic groups
  - Public workshop(s), in-person and virtual formats
- **Public Hearing Process for Comprehensive Plan Amendment per FL Statutes**
  1. Local Planning Agency Hearing (Planning Commission)
  2. BoCC First Hearing on Transmittal for State Review
  3. State Agency Review Period
  4. BoCC Second Hearing on Final Adoption



# Board Discussion and Questions

