

Evaluation & Appraisal-Based Update of Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Summary of Proposed Changes from the Amendments Transmitted for State Agency Review

FDEO Amendment Number: Alachua County 19-01ER

The following is a listing and explanation of proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan amendments from the version that was transmitted for state agency review.

Formatting key:

Text additions that were included in transmitted amendments are underlined.

Text deletions that were included in transmitted amendments are ~~struck through~~.

Adopted Comprehensive Plan language that is unchanged is shown in plain text.

Text additions since transmittal are **bold double underlined**.

Text deletions since transmittal are ~~**bold double struck through**~~.

1. REVISED OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES REGARDING HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS

Economic Element:

Policy 1.5.3 The County shall pursue funding opportunities, including grants and other funding sources, for the extension of essential infrastructure **including high-speed internet accessibility** to encourage development or redevelopment in specific economically distressed areas identified in the “Understanding Racial Inequity In Alachua County” Report (2018).

OBJECTIVE 1.6 - LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Create livable communities that are attractive to diverse populations and new economic development opportunities, **and promote greater economic prosperity, innovation, quality of life, and public safety**.

Policy 1.6.1 It is a goal of Alachua County for high-speed internet access to be available throughout the County as a means to encourage economic development, enhance education and healthcare access, facilitate inclusion and engagement of citizens, promote planning and resilience, and enhance public safety and emergency response.

The insertion of new Policy 1.6.1 will require renumbering of existing policies 1.6.1 through 1.6.3.

Explanation: Based on direction by the County Commission at its September 10, 2019 meeting, additional policy and objective language has been added to the Economic Element regarding high speed internet access. Policy 1.5.3 is amended to identify high-speed internet as “essential infrastructure” for which the County shall pursue funding opportunities as a way to encourage development or redevelopment in economically distressed areas. Objective 1.6 (Livable Communities) is expanded to provide a basis for inserting the new Policy 1.6.1, which articulates the County’s goal for high speed internet access to be available throughout Alachua County as a means to encourage economic development, enhance education and healthcare access, facilitate citizen engagement, promote planning and resilience, and enhance public safety and emergency response.

2. UPDATED POLICY ON COUNTY'S RENEWABLE ENERGY GOALS

Energy Element:

OBJECTIVE 5.2 Increase the use of renewable energy in County government.

Policy 5.2.1 ~~Alachua County shall purchase or produce renewable energy for at least 10% of total County government (cumulative) consumption by 2015, and 20% by 2020. The County's goal by 2030 is that 100% of energy purchased or produced for County facilities be from solar photovoltaic sources, with an interim target of 50% by 2025.~~

Explanation: At the June 25, 2019 transmittal public hearing, the County Commission gave direction to staff to come back with proposed language revisions for Policy 5.2.1 of the Energy Element that would provide for updated short term and specific goals for renewable energy purchase or production by County government, with implementation plans. In response to this direction, staff has recommended the revised language for Policy 5.2.1 of the Energy Element as shown above. The language provides that the County's goal by 2030 is that 100% of energy purchased or produced for County facilities be from solar photovoltaic sources, with an interim target of 50% by 2025.

3. CLARIFICATION OF POLICY ON ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH IMPACTS AS PART OF ANALYSIS OF PLANNING POLICIES

Community Health Element:

Policy 1.5.1.3 Alachua County will work with ~~County~~ Health Department and other health agencies and non-profit health organizations to ~~assess determine community design~~ impacts on public health as part of analysis of planning policies that affect things such as community design, mobility, aging in place and health equity. When feasible proposals and programs will be reviewed with a Health Impact Assessment. Develop criteria in ULDC for conducting health impact assessments as part of review of development plan applications where appropriate in order to understand and address public health implications of significant projects.

Definitions:

~~Health Impact Assessment: A process that helps evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project, or policy before it is built or implemented. HIA brings potential positive and negative public health impacts and considerations to the decision-making process for plans, projects, and policies that fall outside traditional public health arenas, such as transportation and land use. An HIA steps provides practical recommendations to increase positive health effects and minimize negative health effects:~~

~~Screening (identifying plan, project, or policy decisions for which an HIA would be useful).~~

~~Scoping (planning the HIA and identifying what health risks and benefits to consider).~~

~~Assessment (identifying affected populations and quantifying health impacts of the decision).~~

~~Recommendations (suggesting practical actions to promote positive health effects and minimize negative health effects).~~

~~Reporting (presenting results to decision makers, affected communities, and other stakeholders).~~

~~Monitoring and evaluation (determining the HIA's impact on the decision and health status).~~

Explanation: Policy 1.5.1.3 has been changed from the transmittal draft to refer more generally to assessing impacts on community health as part of analysis of planning policies that affect things such as community design, mobility, aging in place and health equity. The proposed definition of “Health Impact Assessment” has also been deleted. There are various health planning and analysis tools that have been identified by experts in the field which may be used for such assessments involving different amounts of time and cost. These range from summaries of health and equity impacts of a policy based on literature review and available data to provide evidence-based recommendations for decision makers (“Health Notes”) to systematic evaluations of health and equity impacts of a proposed policy or project using a combination of data and evidence-based quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques. Staff will utilize these tools to inform policy decisions as appropriate.

4. CLARIFICATION OF POLICIES ON OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

Conservation and Open Space Element:

Policy 5.2.3~~2~~ ~~When land development involves a parcel that contains conservation areas, the County’s open space requirements shall be fulfilled first with conservation areas, then with other allowable types of open space. Open space requirements are is not intended to diminish other conservation requirements in this Element. The open space requirement in Policy 5.2.1 shall be fulfilled first with any of the conservation areas listed in Policy 3.1.1 followed by any significant habitat, if such exist on the site. All Conservation Areas or significant habitat within Open Space shall be maintained and remain undeveloped in perpetuity using a legal instrument that runs with the land and sets forth conditions and restrictions on use. The ULDC shall provide alternative options for protection of conservation resources based on quality, size, connectivity, and any other specified criteria. The boundaries of all Open Space shall be clearly delineated on plans, including recorded plats, and marked in the field to distinguish Open Space from developed areas.~~

Explanation: In Policy 5.2.2, “significant habitat” has been listed along with other conservation areas having priority for protection as part of the open space requirements for new development. “Significant plant and wildlife habitat” is a protected natural resource under the adopted Comprehensive Plan language in COSE Objective 4.9 and subsequent policies (“Biodiversity”). One of the overarching goals for the update of the Open Space policies is to not reduce any of the existing protection requirements for conservation areas and natural resources in the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The proposed addition of “significant habitat” in Policy 5.2.2 is intended to ensure that the Open Space policy is consistent with the currently adopted protection requirements for significant habitat under Objective 4.9. This additional language also helps clarify that significant habitat would be recognized and qualify as Open Space, and would have higher priority over what is considered ‘non-conservation open space’ in the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.

5. UPDATED TIME FRAME FOR RECREATION 5-YEAR SCHEDULE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Explanation: The 5-year schedule of capital improvements for recreation projects in the Capital Improvements Element Table 3 has been updated to add fiscal year 2023-2024 and remove fiscal year 2018-2019 (which ended September 30, 2019). This change has been made to reflect the time period that is covered under the County’s fiscal year 19-20 budget document, 5-year Capital Improvements Program, adopted in September 2019.

6. UPDATED TERMINOLOGY TO REFLECT CURRENT FEDERAL AND STATE HOUSING FUNDING PROGRAMS, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN HOUSING SERVICES

Housing Element:

- Policy 1.4.9 Provide funding for ~~transitional~~ **permanent** housing and rental assistance programs for very low and extremely low-income households. This would include assistance with rent deposits as well as the establishment of a rental deposit surety bond program.
- Policy 3.1.6 Alachua County shall continue to provide **SHIP (State Housing Initiative Partnership) program funding and assistance through the Division of Social Services to eligible households** ~~funding and assistance through the SHIP (State Housing Initiative Partnership) program to homeless shelters or transitional housing providers.~~
- Policy 3.1.7 Participate in ~~a~~ **the North Central Florida Alliance for the Homeless and Hungry** Continuum of Care that organizes and delivers emergency **shelter, rapid rehousing** ~~transitional~~ and permanent **supportive** housing ~~and services~~ to meet the needs of homeless persons as they move toward self-sufficiency.
- Policy 3.1.8 Coordinate with the City of Gainesville, ~~United Way of North Central Florida,~~ **and the North Central Florida Alliance for the Homeless and Hungry** ~~and other agencies~~ to provide permanent supportive housing services for people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Policy 3.1.9 Utilize the best practice of ~~rapid rehousing~~ **Housing First** which ~~immediately~~ **rapidly** places people first experiencing homelessness into housing and provides supportive services to help them maintain housing.

Community Health Element:

- Policy 1.1.5 Promote coordination among providers of ~~transitional~~ housing and transportation assistance with health care service providers to address special health needs of the homeless and the transportation disadvantaged upon release from hospital.
- Policy 1.1.6 The Future Land Use Element shall include provisions in land use categories for mixed uses to allow co-location for senior housing, ~~transitional housing,~~ nursing homes, assisted living facilities and group homes for special needs population in proximity to health services.

Explanation: References to “transitional” housing are deleted based on the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development’s programmatic/policy shift to focus on permanent housing for homeless persons. The North Central Florida Alliance for the Homeless and Hungry Continuum of Care is the official name of the consortium of agencies/organizations that provide services to address homelessness. (United Way of North Central Florida is the lead agency for the consortium.) The Continuum of Care provides funding for emergency shelter, rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.