

Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

December 4, 2018

Agenda Item Summary

**Topic: Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Update –
Draft Policy Changes to the Future Land Use Element**

Item Description:

This item is part of a series of meetings with the County Commission to discuss draft changes to the goals, objectives, policies, and maps of the Comprehensive Plan based on the Evaluation and Appraisal issues, and the general strategies for updating the Plan, that have been discussed and approved by the County Commission over the past several months. This summary focuses on proposed changes to the Future Land Use Element. **Staff will provide a presentation, and is seeking input and direction from the County Commission on the draft policy changes, which will be considered at public hearings as part of the next step in the Comprehensive Plan update process.**

Prior to developing the draft policy changes, staff prepared a series of Issue Papers relating to various topic areas. The issue papers included a review of the issues that were identified through the issue scoping process, relevant data and analysis on the issues, and potential strategies for addressing the issues as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan. This information was presented to the County Commission and Planning Commission in the spring of 2018. Staff has incorporated the Planning Commission's recommendations and the County Commission's direction into the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan policy changes.

Background:

On March 13th, the County Commission approved a letter from the Chair notifying the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity of areas where changes to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan are needed to address statutory changes, as well as to address local issues, as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Notification letter followed a scoping process that lasted several months, seeking input from the public, County advisory boards (including the Planning Commission), community groups, and the Board of County Commissioners to identify local issues to be evaluated as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Subsequently, staff has worked to draft revisions to the Comprehensive Plan to address the statutory changes and local issues, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Planning Commission and direction provided by the Board of County Commissioners.

Staff has attached a summary of the proposed policy changes for the Future Land Use Element, as well as the Issues relating to the Future Land Use Element that were submitted to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and the BoCC motions providing direction to staff regarding strategies to address the Issues.

Future Land Use Element Overview of Draft Policy Changes

Activity Centers:

- The Board directed staff to revise Activity Center policies to facilitate mixed use interconnected development, and to encourage more residential uses within Activity Centers in order to achieve a greater mix of residential and non-residential uses. Existing Activity Center policies were updated in 2011 to allow for mixed use development within Activity Centers, in both residential and non-residential designated areas on the Future Land Use Map (Policy 2.1.4). In addition, most Activity Centers have areas within them that are designated on the Future Land Use Map for residential use. Also, existing policies provide that mixed use Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND) and Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) are allowable within Activity Centers, and proposed developments that exceed certain size thresholds are required to be developed as a mixed use TND or TOD.

In order to implement the existing policies that allow for mixed use development in Activity Centers, amendments to the land development regulations may be needed to better define mixed use development and to broaden the zoning districts where it would be permitted within Activity Centers. Amendments to the land development regulations are also needed to better facilitate smaller-scale, non-TND/TOD mixed use development in Activity Centers; the standards in the land development regulations would be similar to existing TOD and TND standards, but would need to be more appropriate for smaller parcels and smaller-scale developments.

- The requirement for completion of a market or employment study as part of the designation of new Activity Centers on the Future Land Use Map has been eliminated. Given the adopted policies that promote Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND) and Transit Oriented Developments (TOD) which effectively function as mixed use activity centers without being designated on the Future Land Use Map, it is unlikely that there would be a need for new Activity Centers to be designated on the Future Land Use Map.
- Existing policy language that calls for certain development standards for Activity Centers to be adopted in the land development regulations has been deleted because such development standards have been adopted.
- The proposed changes would streamline the adopted policies that apply within individual Activity Centers as provided in Objective 2.2 and Policies 2.2.2 to 2.2.10 (pages 6 to 48 of draft revisions document). The proposed changes would eliminate or clarify outdated policies for individual Activity Centers where those policies are now in conflict with, or have been replaced by, generally-applicable policies or development standards in the Comprehensive Plan and/or the land development regulations. Examples of such proposed changes include:
 - Eliminating unnecessary procedural requirements (such as Planned Development zoning).
 - Eliminating specific setback, buffering, and landscaping requirements that are redundant of, or in conflict with, more generally-applicable policies in the Plan, or are more appropriately addressed in the land development regulations.

- Removing outdated policies relating to transportation concurrency and transportation access standards because these issues are addressed in generally-applicable policies or regulations.
- Eliminating policies for Activity Centers, or parcels within Activity Centers, that have been annexed into the City of Gainesville.

Office, Industrial, and Commercial Policies:

- Office policies would be revised to allow additional compatible uses such as business incubators and research and development activities within areas designated for Office uses on the Future Land Use Map, and to clarify that Office uses are appropriate in mixed use developments including Activity Centers, TNDs and TODs.
- Industrial policies would be streamlined where appropriate to refer to performance standards in the ULDC.
- Policy 4.2.4, providing for a public planning process to evaluate alternatives to Industrial Future Land Use for the area southeast of the Gainesville Regional Airport would be deleted because this task has been completed.
- Light Industrial Objectives would be revised to include certain warehousing and transportation uses where performance standards can be met.
- Policy 4.3.1 would be revised to add advanced and computer assisted manufacturing as an allowed use in areas designated for Light Industrial or Office land use on the Future Land Use Map.
- Outdated terminology in the Commercial section (Objective 3.1 and subsequent policies) referring to different levels of “shopping centers” have been modified to instead refer to “commercial centers”. Commercial uses may include a combination of retail, personal services, professional services, and related uses. Most new stand-alone commercial uses are required to be located within Urban Activity Centers.

Street Design and Public Realm:

- New Policy 7.1.32 would provide direction for the design of developments in the Urban Cluster, by establishing priority in County-owned rights-of-way to the primary transportation purposes of providing roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The proposed policy assures that County-owned rights-of-way provide for the safety and comfort of the intended users of the transportation facilities by allocating sufficient space to provide for the required transportation amenities, separation, and landscaping, and making utility locations subordinate to the transportation functions.

Housing for Aging Adults:

- Proposed changes to Policy 5.4.5.3 would clarify terminology related to Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes, providing that both of these uses are allowable within the same group of Future Land Use designations. Current policy provides that ALFs are considered residential uses and Nursing Homes are considered Institutional uses, and this distinction is based on definitions in Florida Statutes. Because of this distinction, the two uses are not allowable within the same set of future land use designations. In terms of their land use characteristics, however, ALFs and Nursing Homes are similar. The proposed policy changes clarify that both ALFs and Nursing Homes would be allowable within the same set of future land use categories; the changes also expand those areas to include Medium Density Residential.
- The proposed changes provide that the land development regulations will include zoning and development standards which address site size, scale, intensity, parking, buffering, access, and other impacts associated with ALFs and Nursing Homes.
- Proposed changes to Policy 5.4.5.3 would also clarify that certain health facilities such as outpatient medical clinics and emergency facilities are allowable uses in Transit-Oriented Developments and Traditional Neighborhood Developments, in addition to other areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.

Urban Service Area Elimination:

- The Urban Service Area (USA) shown on the Future Land Use Map, and related policies in Objective 8.6 are proposed to be eliminated. The Urban Service Area is a subset of the Urban Cluster. The primary purpose of the USA and its related policies was to exempt development in the most built-up areas of the Urban Cluster from the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review process and state-mandated transportation concurrency. With the elimination of the requirements for DRI review and state-mandated transportation concurrency in Florida Statutes, the Urban Service Area is no longer needed. The proposed amendments would delete most of the policies relating to the Urban Service Area, and relocate other USA policies to other sections of the Comprehensive Plan.
- The currently adopted policy that requires new development in the Urban Service Area to utilize certain Traditional Neighborhood Development design elements for Site and Building Design, Transportation Network and Parking is proposed to be made applicable to the entire Urban Cluster (see Policy 7.1.33).
- Existing thresholds that specify when larger scale developments are required to be developed as a mixed use Traditional Neighborhood Development or Transit Oriented Development would be retained and consolidated into Policy 7.1.34 and 7.1.35.

Rural Clustered Subdivisions:

- Proposed changes would add that one of the purposes of Rural Clustered Subdivision design is to provide opportunities for agriculture such as community gardens or farms. The proposed changes would also clarify that farms are a permitted use within areas that are required to be set aside as open space within Rural Clustered subdivisions.

Obsolete Statutory References:

- Proposed changes would eliminate or revise citations obsolete to Florida Statutes, Rules, or other laws. Examples include references to Rule 9J-5 Florida Administrative Code (repealed), and references to the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act (repealed).

Issues for Evaluation & Update of Comprehensive Plan

Included in notification letter approved by BoCC on March 13, 2018 and submitted to Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Changes Needed to Address State Statutory Requirements:

1. Update objectives, policies, and maps regarding intergovernmental coordination on annexation in light of the repeal of the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act (Chapter 2015-199, Laws of Florida, repealing the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act).

4. Revise policies for changes in statutory and rule citations (for example, 9J-5 Florida Administrative Code, repealed).

Local Issues:

1. Land Use and Development Standards

- a. Capacity of the Urban Cluster, including the availability of adequate areas for housing types traditionally in the Alachua County and North Florida market; the potential for higher density residential uses; and consideration of surrounding rural counties and incorporated cities within Alachua County and their ability to attract and foster bedroom communities that rely on Alachua County's major employment industries.
- b. Streamline Activity Center policies to more effectively facilitate their development and redevelopment as compact, mixed use, and interconnected centers.
- c. Facilitate emerging technology-based manufacturing, research and development and employment uses within areas designated for office, industrial, and Activity Centers.
- d. Consolidate and simplify zoning categories and development regulations to promote greater integration of land uses and compact, walkable mixed use urban development in the Urban Cluster, taking into account open space, landscaping and utility requirements.
- e. Minimize urban sprawl, reduce flood and stormwater impacts, and preserve rural values and way of life; also consider minimum homestead lot size requirements and their effect on agricultural operations; role of agriculture as part of rural landscape.
- f. Potential impacts on population from sea level rise and preparation for long-term impacts of climate change in the region.

BoCC Direction on General Strategies for Comprehensive Plan Update

Land Use and Development Standards

MOTIONS RELATING TO FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT:

1. Update and clarify policies regarding housing to serve aging adults, including ALF's, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers.
2. Revise Activity Center policies to facilitate mixed use interconnected development and redevelopment per FLUE Objective 2.1. Eliminate outdated provisions within detailed Activity Center Plan policies in conflict with generally-applicable Activity Center policies or Unified Land Development Code requirements
 - a. Provide for more integration of residential uses in Activity Centers....consider moving Activity Centers in the direction of TOD/TND design
 - b. For Activity Centers adjacent to or near City of Gainesville, should move toward a unified land use code.
3. Provide opportunities for small scale/home-based commercial uses in residential areas.
4. Revise policies as needed to facilitate light industrial and office uses within Activity Centers and/or mixed use developments through standard development plan approval processes.
5. Review and revise policies relating to promotion of urban form in the Urban Cluster to establish policy framework for reconciling potential conflicts in site planning between needs relating to utilities, open space, and landscaping in the land development regulations. Add emphasis on pedestrian-oriented design, recognizing that there are additional costs to that.