

OVERVIEW OF THE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT (BAA)

The Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act (BAA) is a Special Act adopted by the State relating to annexation in Alachua County. It became law on July 7, 1990 and went into effect when the consolidation charter referendum on the ballot in November 1990 failed to pass. The Act provides for the designation of “reserve areas” and adoption of statements of services for those reserve areas, and procedures relating to annexation.

Purposes of the Boundary Adjustment Act

The purposes of the BAA are to ensure sound urban development and the efficient provision of urban services; to promote cooperation between municipalities and Alachua County; assure procedures that protect all parties affected; and encourage development that efficiently utilizes services and prevents urban sprawl.

Reserve Areas and Statements of Services

The Act provides for designation of reserve areas by the County in coordination with municipalities that choose¹ to participate in establishment of those areas. These are areas reserved for annexation by the municipality. Reserve areas are supposed to be “urban in character” or likely to become so, areas where growth should be directed to promote efficient delivery of urban services, and are to encourage more concentrated urban development; they are not supposed to contain areas which could be provided with urban services more efficiently by the County or other municipality or contain areas which cannot reasonably be foreseen to be provided with the urban services provided by the municipality at the level of services provided by the County. Reserve areas are required to be adopted as part of the local comprehensive plan.

For each reserve area, the County and municipality adopt a statement of services addressing things such as what and how services are provided within the reserve area before and after annexation. The Act requires each statement of services to also address things such as whether the County’s or municipality’s comprehensive plan and land development regulations apply prior to annexation within the reserve area.

Reserve Areas and Statements of Services are required to be updated every five years; the most recent update was completed in October 2011.

Annexations under the Boundary Adjustment Act

The BAA establishes procedures and requirements for “voluntary annexations”, i.e. by petition from a property owner, or by referendum. Areas to be annexed must be part of the annexing municipality’s reserve area, must be contiguous to the municipality, reasonably compact and not create an enclave. Part or all of areas proposed for annexation by referendum must be “developed for urban purposes” in accordance with standards established in the BAA. Urban services reports addressing plans for providing services to the area proposed for annexation and the effect on municipal services and taxes must be prepared and adopted by the municipality and provided to property owners and the County prior to the annexation.

¹Reserve areas were established for all nine municipalities in Alachua County, with the update of reserve areas completed in March 2006.