



Summary of Envision Alachua Phase II Process

(EASP – Data and Analysis – Task Force
Phase II Summary)

prepared for
Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

prepared by
MIG, Inc.

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in support of the Envision Alachua
process convened by Plum Creek



Summary of Envision Alachua Phase II Process

During Phase I of the Envision Alachua process, which was conducted between June 2011 and February 2012, Plum Creek formed a broad-based Community Task Force and worked with this group to develop the *Vision, Goals and Planning Principles for Plum Creek Lands in Alachua County*. Plum Creek also sponsored community workshops to invite additional public input. The results of Phase I were published in May 2012.

Plum Creek initiated Phase II of Envision Alachua to help develop a plan for how the vision and goals would be implemented consistent with the guiding principles. Phase II will determine the land uses that could occur on Plum Creek lands and result in a Long Term Master Plan. Plum Creek continued its commitment to having an open, inclusive and transparent process by re-engaging the Task Force and conducting additional community workshops.

To ensure that planning concepts and strategies explored through the Envision Alachua process would address current policies, guidelines and regulations, Plum Creek convened a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) composed of agency professionals with review and regulatory authority over large-scale land use planning in the county and the state. It includes individuals with specialized technical expertise in economics, conservation and community planning, as well as liaisons from the Task Force.

Envision Alachua Phase II included an iterative community engagement process, incorporating input from advisory groups into draft work products and refining concepts, plans and maps based on feedback. The sequence of input was as follows: Plum Creek consulted with the TAG to get input on regional and state planning activities and regulations that might influence the land uses and activities included in the Long Term Master Plan. These topics and concepts were then discussed with the Task Force to get their input and support. At multiple points in the process, Plum Creek shared the work done to date with the public and provided opportunities for feedback and input at community workshops hosted in East Gainesville and Hawthorne. All meetings were facilitated by Daniel Iacofano, CEO and Principal of MIG, Inc. Plum Creek also hosted tours of its properties for TAG members and key community leaders from East Gainesville to orient participants to the scale and nature of Plum Creek's holdings and silviculture practices, and show the current environmental and recreation qualities of the lands.

Phase II activities are summarized below.

Technical Advisory Group Meetings

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #1

Phase II of Envision Alachua kicked off on October 4, 2012 with the first TAG meeting. At this meeting, TAG members were oriented to the group's purpose and charge, and presented with an overview of Plum Creek's land holdings; the results of Envision Alachua Phase I; and a review of the Florida sector planning process. TAG members were asked to help identify relevant policies, opportunities and guidelines associated with Plum Creek's Alachua County lands, as well as issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Long Term Master Plan and Sector Plan.

Some of the key needs identified included: defining the conservation and development areas; addressing current land use policies; avoiding major environmental impacts; protecting wildlife; finding creative solutions for meeting water needs; coordinating transportation improvements throughout the region; addressing the regional planning process underway for North Central Florida; and creating a long-term vision while simultaneously identifying short- and medium-term opportunities.

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #2

At the second TAG meeting on December 18, 2012, members reviewed historical topographic maps which showed how the Gainesville area has developed since 1904, with increasing urban development focused in the western portion of the county. Plum Creek then introduced participants to the initial land use framework map which identified the primary land uses for Plum Creek lands, and responds to Envision Alachua policies and goals for jobs creation, conservation and quality of life.

Plum Creek then shared its process with the TAG for creating a conservation strategy. Presenters described the environmental analysis upon which it would be based and the environmental factors that would be taken into account. The strategy would emphasize and consider the relationship of Plum Creek conservation lands to North Florida's existing resources, green corridors such as the Ocala to Osceola (O2O) corridor and local conservation lands.

TAG members also discussed the land use framework, identified key issues and identified information needed to continue refining the framework.

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #3

At TAG Meeting #3, held on March 19, 2013, participants reviewed the key themes from the results of the community workshop held on February 7, 2013. A presentation was provided on the Economic Progress Initiative, a plan to implement the long-term vision for local and regional economic prosperity. It explained how, unlike traditional economic development, which focuses only on job numbers and wages, “economic progress” also considers the kind of jobs being created, who will get those jobs, and the impact on the community’s quality of life. Economic progress is at the core of Plum Creek’s strategy for the region. The urban land uses in the framework map are designed to provide land, infrastructure, and community amenities that will attract companies who bring the desired types of jobs.

Participants then reviewed the draft framework map and related potential land use program. The discussion focused on the draft Sector Plan maps for Emerging Land Use Areas A and B, identified by Task Force members during Phase I as best positioned for economic opportunity. TAG members concluded that the key question the Sector Plan application must answer is “Why Here?” to explain why this project is best suited for Plum Creek lands in East County. The group agreed and a related question – “Why Now?” - was added.

Technical Advisory Group Meeting #4

At the final TAG meeting on May 16, 2013, participants viewed a video documenting the Task Force’s strong and positive responses to the question, “Why Here? Why Now?” Plum Creek provided an update on the Envision Alachua Economic Progress Initiative and presented a detailed analysis of the available industrial land in Alachua County, a key factor in determining the need for re-zoning land to accommodate economic development. An analysis was presented comparing conventional development practices supported by current planning codes with a “reduced impact project” emphasizing sustainable design features and energy efficiency. Both designs covered 5,187 acres and included 8,500 residential units. The presentation showed how substantial reductions in construction and infrastructure costs, water and energy use, and greenhouse gases could be achieved and sustained over the long term through resource-efficient road, building and landscape design.

The TAG discussed the potential Long Term Master Plan land use program and patterns. Revised draft Sector Plan maps for Areas A and B were presented along with conceptual drawings of possible development patterns.

Envision Alachua Task Force

Task Force Meeting #1, Phase II

The first Task Force meeting of Phase II was held on November 15, 2012. Task Force members were oriented to the next phase of work and the Florida Sector Planning process, and asked to identify the “hot button issues” to help guide the planning team.

Task Force members suggested creating a new development model focused on job creation that retains flexibility to adapt to changing economic conditions over time. They suggest linking education to economic development and job creation. Community representatives encouraged Plum Creek to continue engaging the community. They also emphasized the importance of turning the vision and plan into action.

Task Force Meeting #2, Phase II

At the second Task Force meeting held on January 24, 2013, participants reviewed historic development patterns in the county, as well as current assets and opportunities, particularly in East County, that position the region to succeed in the new “Innovation Economy.” An overview of the land use framework map was presented along with the proposed strategy for conservation lands. Task Force members discussed the land use framework and viewed development prototypes demonstrating the kind of projects that might unite economic progress with conservation and a high quality of life. There was also a presentation introducing the Economic Progress Initiative.

Task Force Meeting #3, Phase II

The third Task Force meeting on April 4, 2013 provided an opportunity for members to review the results of the first community workshop and receive a detailed update on the Economic Progress Initiative. Plum Creek presented a revised preliminary draft map of the Long Term Master Plan. The potential land use program was presented, including the assumptions being made for each type of land use. There was a brief comparison of Envision Alachua to other sector plans in Florida, and case studies of agri-technology centers in other communities were shared. There was a presentation on potential zoning for the Master Plan, focused on the specific area plans for Areas A and B and how these might be part of the economic progress area defined in the land use program.

To close the meeting, Task Force members were asked to respond individually to the TAG’s question, “Why Here? Why Now?” Participants expressed their support for this project and Plum Creek’s commitment to seeing it through. Some participants recognized the opportunities that could

be realized for East County residents, while others made more personal comments, expressing how these plans could improve quality of life for their families and allow their children to find employment and remain in the area. Following are some of the comments made by Task Force members.

- It's time for Gainesville to catch the next wave and ride towards the direction of progress and opportunity. – Brad Pollitt
- There's a chance to really think the whole thing through differently, to make it more livable, more affordable and comfortable. –Ed Regan
- The opportunity to work on a large enough piece of land where the decisions truly make a difference for the community. The fact that we have that here is remarkable, and it is an opportunity that we cannot afford to lose. – Charles Lee
- This is a microcosm of how to answer the questions we need to answer. It's a great example not just to Florida, but to the county and the world if we can make some progress here. – Jack Payne
- Why? Because the need for East Alachua County – it's there. This type of project, or model, is very much in need....We can look forward to great progress. – Dr. Gladys Wright
- Why not now? I think we have a great opportunity to provide something for a lot of people for many, many years to come. – Justin Williams
- I believe that Plum Creek is providing us with an opportunity and we as a community have an obligation to stay competitive within the state and in the southeast. – Ken Cornell
- These are tremendous opportunities for folks with the GED all the way to the PhD. – Mike Dykes
- It's a great opportunity to take a greenfield site and really integrate the resources that are there and develop a really cool place that is sustainable, that makes sense from an environmental standpoint, and at the same time – economic progress. – Mike Dykes
- Why not now? We are ripe for the harvest. – Mike Dykes
- The market is really showing encouraging signs of recovery. It's far better to plan ahead and think these things through before we start turning dirt. I'm encouraged. – Rob Brinkman
- Why here? There are so many opportunities. There is enough of a base to have character, to have a great thing going. But it's also not so developed that we can't direct it as a community. – Vicki McGrath

Task Force Meeting #4, Phase II

At the fourth meeting on June 25, 2013, participants received a process update and initial strategies for the Economic Progress Initiative. A

presentation reviewing the available industrial land in Alachua County demonstrated how Plum Creek's lands are uniquely positioned for economic opportunity. The current version of the draft framework map and potential conservation strategy was presented, along with refinements of the draft Detailed Specific Area Plans and sketches showing how proposed development patterns in Areas A and B might look.

Many of the comments received were supportive and complimentary of the process and the opportunities it could provide for the region. There were also requests that Plum Creek plan for buffers to protect the character of rural communities, and provide more education to help the public understand that Plum Creek is planning more than a housing development. Some participants also expressed the need to elevate discussions about agriculture since many were surprised by its role and impact in the local and statewide economy.

Task Force Meeting #5, Phase II

The fifth and final Task Force meeting of Phase II is scheduled for October 30, 2013. The agenda is still under development at this time.

Community Workshops

Plum Creek hosted four community workshops during Phase II. Weekday workshops were held from 6:30 to 9:00 pm, and the workshop held on Saturday, December 7 took place from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm, with refreshments provided an hour before, as well as child care so that families could participate.

East Gainesville Community Workshop #1, Phase II

The first workshop of Phase II was held at the MLK Community Center in Gainesville on February 7, 2013. Approximately 110 people attended. The program featured an update on the Envision Alachua planning process and Plum Creek, an overview of the potential benefits of Envision Alachua, and an orientation to potential opportunities for diverse new job prospects in the five "Emerging Land Use Concept Areas" in East Alachua County. Working in small groups, participants were asked to discuss the following questions as they relate to opportunities for economic development, conservation and community activities on Plum Creek lands in Alachua County:

- What are the potential opportunities?
- What can we do to prepare for these opportunities (as individuals and as a community)?

Community workshop participants also viewed a presentation introducing the Envision Alachua Economic Progress initiative.

Hawthorne Community Workshop #2, Phase II

The second community workshop of Phase II was held on June 26, 2013 at Chester Shell Elementary School in Hawthorne. The workshop was scheduled in response to a request from Hawthorne's City Manager, who sought to have the process more accessible to local residents given the proximity of Plum Creek's lands to Hawthorne and neighboring communities. More than 120 people attended, many of whom were new to the process, so the program was fairly similar to the first community workshop. A brief overview was given of the process to date, and Task Force members from the area spoke briefly to encourage the community members to contribute their input. Participants broke into smaller working groups to discuss the existing strengths and assets of Hawthorne and its surroundings, along with potential issues and opportunities and what individuals and the community can do to prepare.

After the discussion, the presenter conducted a brief, entertaining exercise to clarify how community connections help make the difference between traditional "economic growth" and economic progress as supported by the Economic Progress Initiative.

Neighborhood Workshops

The final two community workshops of Phase II served as the Neighborhood Workshops required by Article 5 of the Alachua County Unified Land Development Code as part of the Sector Plan application process. The two workshops shared the same agenda, presentations and format, with one workshop held in East Gainesville and the other in Hawthorne in order to accommodate Plum Creek's many neighbors.

East Gainesville Community Workshop #3, Phase II

The third community workshop of Phase II was held on December 2, 2013 at the MLK Community Center in Gainesville. Approximately _____ people attended. Some attendees were new to the process, so a brief overview was given of the process to date, followed by an overview of the final Long Term Master Plan application for Plum Creek's lands in Alachua County.

Hawthorne Community Workshop #4, Phase II

The fourth community workshop of Phase II was held at the Chester Shell Elementary School in Hawthorne on December 7, 2013. Approximately _____ people attended.