

## **MELROSE SPECIAL AREA PLAN PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS SUMMARY**

Residents of the Melrose area contacted staff to request that the County initiate a Special Area Plan for the Melrose Rural Cluster in accordance with policies in the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan and Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). Chapter 402 Article 16 of the ULDC provides the process for special area plans. The first step in that process is a pre-application meeting with County staff. A pre-application meeting was held on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the process and to identify some of the possible topics for consideration as part of a special area plan. A follow-up meeting was held on January 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss these topics further. The topics identified by residents could form the basis for development of a Scope of Work to be considered by the County Commission for a special area plan.

If the Board of County Commissioners authorizes staff to move forward with preparation of a Scope of Work for a special area plan, then staff will develop the draft Scope in coordination with Melrose residents. The Scope of Work would then need to be considered at an advertised public hearing of the Board of County Commissioners.

The following residents attended the pre-application meetings:

### December 3, 2013

Marshall Bloom, Melrose Business and Community Association  
Joe Rush, Melrose Business and Community Association  
Jill McGuire, Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association  
Judy MacLaren, Historic Melrose, Inc.  
Laura Berkelman  
County Staff from the Growth Management, Environmental Protection and Public Works Departments

### January 17, 2014

Jill McGuire, Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association  
Jennifer Pritchett  
Laura Berkelman  
Judy MacLaren, Historic Melrose, Inc.  
Joyce King, Santa Fe Audubon  
Ruth Berkelman, Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association  
Joe Rush, Melrose Business and Community Association  
Mark Goldstein, Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association  
County Staff from the Growth Management Department

## **Melrose Special Area Plan**

### **Possible Topics for Consideration as Part of Scope of Work**

Melrose residents who attended the pre-application meetings identified the following topics for possible consideration as part of a Scope of Work for a Special Area Plan for the Melrose Rural Cluster:

#### **1. Community Vision**

Residents expressed a desire to articulate a community vision/identity for Melrose as part of a special area plan. A Melrose vision has been written and adopted by the Melrose Business and Community Association (MBCA), and was distributed at the January 17, 2014 pre-application meeting. Many of the topics below relate to the community vision.

#### **2. Protection of Lakes and Other Natural Resources**

Residents identified the lakes and related natural resources as assets for the Melrose community which should be protected.

#### **3. Promotion of Arts and Culture**

It was noted that there is an established arts, music, and creative culture in Melrose, which residents would like to preserve and promote.

#### **4. Walkability**

Residents noted that they would like to preserve and the enhance walkability in the community.

#### **5. Quad-County Coordination**

Residents expressed the importance of general coordination among the four Counties within which Melrose is located in order to effectively address issues of planning across jurisdictional boundaries.

*Staff Note: Melrose is located within four counties: Alachua, Bradford, Clay, and Putnam. Alachua County staff anticipates that there would be coordination with staff of the other counties throughout the special area planning process.*

#### **6. Eco-tourism**

The promotion of appropriate levels and types of eco-tourism was identified as a topic.

#### **7. Preserving “Small Town” Character**

The existing “small town” character was mentioned as a key feature of the community, and there is a desire to promote only those types of development consistent with the existing character.

## 8. Historic Resource Preservation

The preservation of historic resources and the national historic district designation were noted as being important assets for Melrose.

## 9. Traffic on State Road 26

There were concerns noted about the volume of traffic on State Road 26 through Melrose. Some meeting attendees noted opposition to any future 4-laning of SR 26 in Melrose.

*Staff Note: SR 26 is controlled by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Currently, there are no plans or funding to widen SR 26 to four lanes in Melrose as part of the FDOT 5-year work plan.*

## 10. Delineation of the Rural Cluster Boundary

The delineation of a precise boundary for the Melrose Rural Cluster was identified as a topic. There was some indication of concern about the minimum lot sizes for new development within the Rural Cluster boundary being too small (the adopted policy allows lot sizes as small as 1 acre on well and septic; or 1/2-acre on central water). It was noted that once the precise boundary is delineated in accordance with the current policies in the Comprehensive Plan, it would be possible for new subdivisions to be approved within the Rural Cluster boundary.

*Staff Note: The currently adopted Comprehensive Plan policies call for delineation of precise boundaries for Rural Clusters based on the adopted policy guidelines. If the Board of County Commissioners authorizes the special area plan process to move forward, staff anticipates that the delineation of a precise boundary for the Melrose Rural Cluster would be part of the scope of work for that process.*

## 11. Development Design Standards

Design guidelines for any new development were identified as a possible topic, particularly relating to building appearance, signage, and landscaping/buffering.

*Staff Comment: The County's Unified Land Development Code contains existing regulations relating to the design of new development, which are implemented at the time of a development plan application.*

## 12. Lighting

Lighting in the Melrose area was noted as a concern, including: excess lighting along Lake Santa Fe from private properties adjacent to the lake (e.g., lights on docks), light fixtures on private properties shining from one property to the next; and the type of street lights used along SR 26.

*Staff Note: The County has adopted regulations for outdoor lighting as part of the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC, Chapter 407, Article 14). The light fixtures along SR 26 are under the jurisdiction of FDOT. More information would be necessary to address this topic.*

### 13. Stormwater

Residents identified issues with stormwater runoff from Trout Street and Quail Street potentially affecting water quality in Lake Santa Fe/Melrose Bay.

*Staff Note: More information would be necessary to address this topic.*

### 14. Bike Paths

It was noted that bike paths are an important consideration for the Melrose community.

### 15. Law Enforcement

Some meeting attendees expressed a desire for increased law enforcement presence in the area. The existing Memorandum of Understanding relating to law enforcement between Alachua, Putnam, Bradford, and Clay counties (also known as “Four Corners Cops without Borders”) was mentioned as having a positive effect on the provision of law enforcement services.

### 16. Potable Water Quality

The quality of potable water provided by the Melrose Water Association was identified as an issue. Residents inquired about the possibility of the County adopting water quality standards for connection to the Melrose potable water system (i.e. a water quality standard would need to be met as prerequisite for connection to the potable water system).

*Staff Note: The Melrose Water Association is a privately owned and operated company with a treatment plant in Putnam County which provides potable water services within the Melrose area, including some areas within Alachua County. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection regulates public water systems in accordance with standards established by the State of Florida.*

### 17. Santa Fe County Park and Boat Ramp Maintenance

There were concerns expressed about a lack of maintenance and upkeep of some of the facilities at the Santa Fe County Park and Boat Ramp.

## 18. Joint Special Area Plan with Earleton

There was interest expressed by some meeting attendees in the possibility of developing a joint special area plan for Melrose and Earleton, or developing the two plans concurrently. These two Rural Clusters potentially have shared concerns about development along the lakefront of Lake Santa Fe.

*Staff Note: Staff recognizes that there are some concerns relating to Lake Santa Fe, but the distance between the two areas and differences in the two communities would make it difficult to develop one common plan for both Rural Clusters.*

## 19. Septic Systems

Proliferation of septic systems (both existing and potential new systems) was noted as a concern, given the proximity to Lake Santa Fe. The idea of larger minimum lot sizes for new development on septic tanks was mentioned as a possible consideration.

## 20. Public Transportation

There is some level of interest in public transportation to serve the Melrose area. The idea of limited transit service running to and from Gainesville a couple times per day was mentioned.

In addition to the topics for consideration as part of a special area plan, the following were mentioned as existing assets for the Melrose community:

- Walkability
- Wheelchair Accessibility
- Community Center
- Local Artists/Art Walk
- Historic Buildings
- Lakes