



# Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Appraisal-Based Amendments

**Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing: May 5, 2026**

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Alachua County Growth Management Department

## Item Summary (Z26-000003)

- Proposed amendments to multiple Elements of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan based on the Evaluation & Appraisal of the Plan as required by s. 163.3191, F.S.
- **Requested BoCC Action:** Approve transmittal of proposed Evaluation & Appraisal-based Comprehensive Plan amendments for State review.
- Amendments will come back to BoCC for public hearing on final adoption after 60-day State review process.

## State Requirements – Evaluation & Appraisal

- Every 7 years, each local government must evaluate its comprehensive plan to determine if amendments are necessary to:
  - Reflect a minimum planning period of 10 years
  - Reflect any changes in state statutory requirements.
  - Update the Plan to reflect changes in local conditions.
- March 31, 2025: County notified the State that it had reviewed its Plan and that updates were necessary for consistency with state statutes.
- Amendments to the Plan must be transmitted for state review within 1 year.

## **Florida Senate Bill 180 (2025)**

- Prohibits local governments within federal disaster declaration areas for certain hurricanes from adopting amendments to the comprehensive plan or land development regulations that are “more restrictive or burdensome”.
- Prohibition applies from August 1, 2024 through October 1, 2027.
- Florida Department of Commerce implements this through review of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments.
- Local government proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments that are deemed to violate SB 180 may be declared “null and void ab initio”.

## Scoping and Update Process

- Review of changes to comprehensive planning statutes
- Internal review of Elements by County departments
- Board of County Commissioners public workshops
- County advisory committee updates and discussions
- Project web page and email list
- Public questionnaire
- Review of other recent County plans

**Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Update**

Alachua County is in the process of evaluating and updating its Comprehensive Plan for the next 25 years. The last major evaluation and update of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan was in 2019-2020.

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan is a document adopted by the Board of County Commissioners that articulates broad strategies and specific policies that guide future development and decision-making for the County. The Comprehensive Plan covers various subjects such as land use, natural resources protection, housing, transportation, public economic development, community health, historic preservation, capital investment, and energy. It is designed to enhance the overall quality of life for all residents of Alachua County.

Florida Statutes Section 163.331 requires that:

At least once every 7 years, each local government shall evaluate its comprehensive plan to determine if plan amendments are necessary to reflect a minimum planning period of at least 20 years as provided in s. 163.337(5) or to reflect changes in state requirements in this part and the last update of the comprehensive plan, and notify the state level planning agency as to its determination.

Florida Statutes also requires local governments to comprehensively evaluate and update comprehensive plans to reflect changes in local conditions. This might include changes in demographic trends, land development activity, service delivery plans, community needs and priorities. The update will also take into account other recent planning efforts by the County such as the Parks Master Plan, Fire Master Plan, Climate Action Plan, Electric and Hydrogen Plan, and Forward Focus: Eastern Alachua County.

[Click here](#) to view the currently adopted Alachua County Comprehensive Plan.

**PROJECT PHASES**

- Scoping of Local Issues  
March 2022 - November 2022
- Issue Collaborative and Analysis  
May 2022 - Summer 2022
- Prepare & Draft Amendments to Plan  
September 2022 - January 2023
- Public Hearings on Transmittal of Amendments for State Review  
January 2023 - March 2023
- State Agency Review  
April 2023 - May 2023
- Public Hearing on Adoption of Plan Amendments  
June 2023 - July 2023

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- Comprehensive Plan Summary
- Presentation Comprehensive Plan Update Overview

**Comprehensive Planning Process**

**COPEN**

**Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Evaluation & Update Questionnaire**

Closes: October 31, 2025 at 7:59 PM

See open questions: [Share your thoughts about Alachua County's Comprehensive Plan.](#)

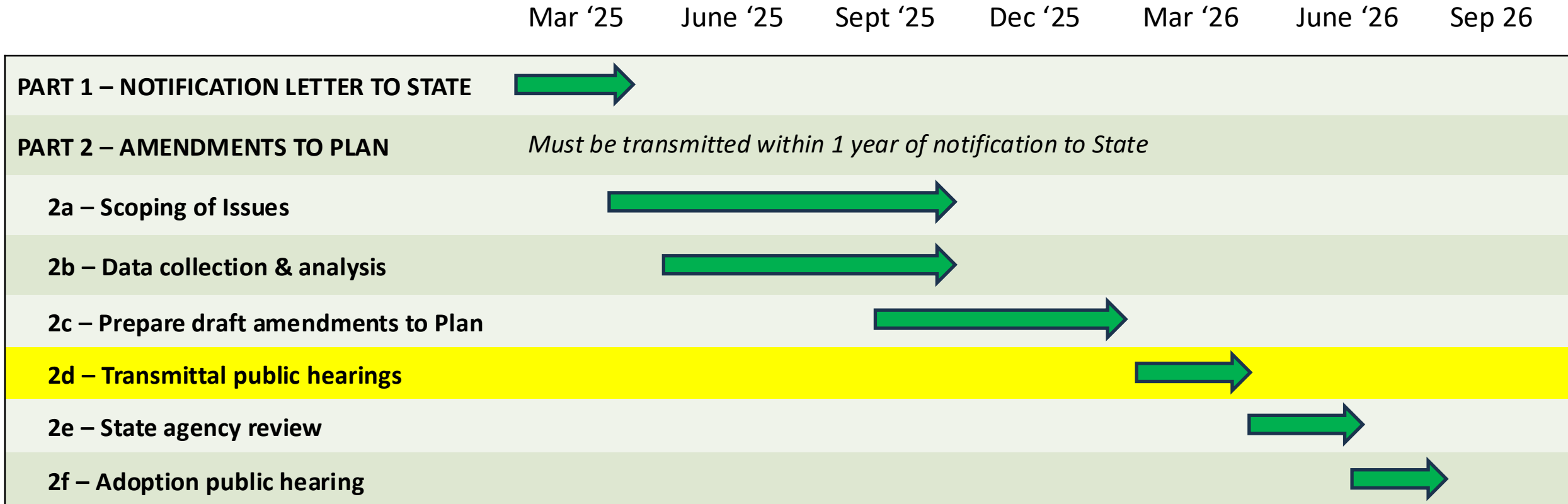
[Participate Now](#) | Approximately 100 Responses

**Stay Informed**

Get notified on upcoming engagements and the latest project related news.

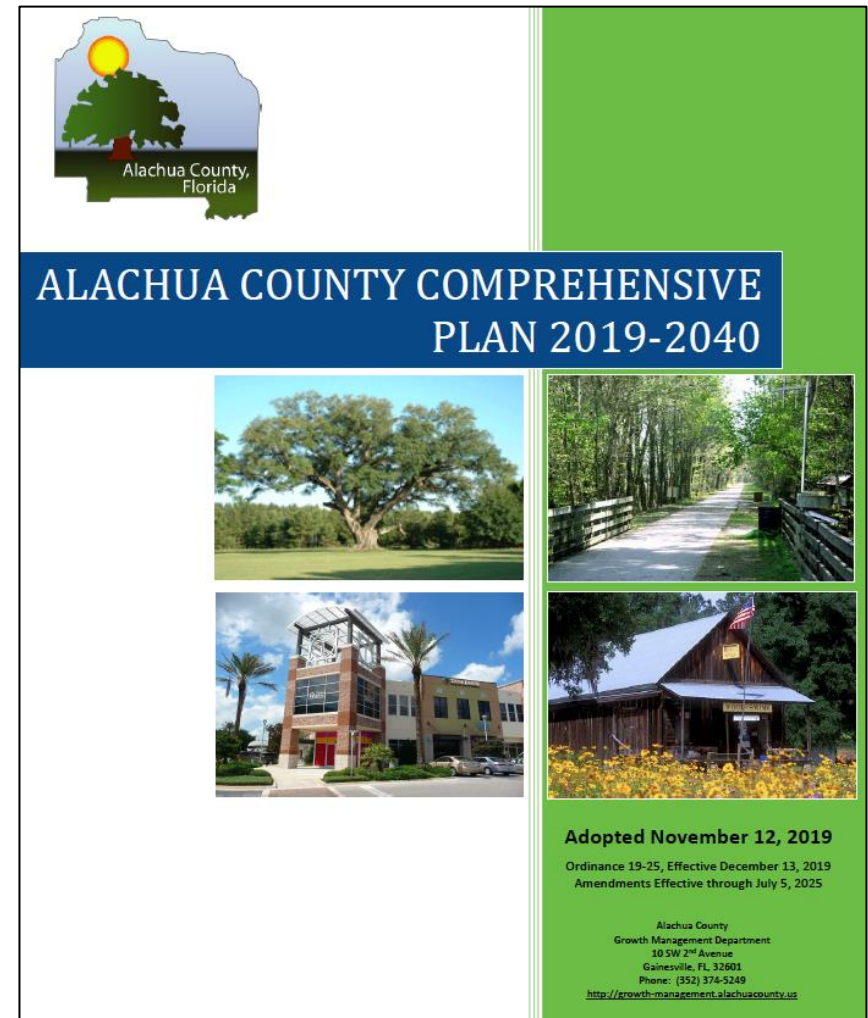
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## Timeline



## Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments

- Amendments include:
  - Updates required for statutory compliance
  - Local issues and technical updates
- Amendments are proposed to the following Elements:
  - Future Land Use
  - Transportation Mobility
  - Housing
  - Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer
  - Solid Waste
  - Stormwater
  - Conservation & Open Space
  - Recreation
  - Intergovernmental Coordination
  - Capital Improvements
  - Economic Element
  - Community Health
  - Energy



## Proposed Amendments Required for Statutory Compliance

- 1. EV Charging Stations** (SB 1084, 2024; Sec. 366.94, F.S.): Regulation is preempted to State; Policies 1.6.5.14 FLUE and 1.4.1 TME have been revised or removed.
- 2. Workforce Housing** (Sec. 163.3177(6)(f)): Workforce housing policy references and definition have been added in Housing Element .
- 3. Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Capital Projects** (HB 1379, 2023; Sec. 163.3177(3)(a), F.S.): New Table 4 added in Capital Improvements Element.
- 4. Enhanced Nutrient Reducing (ENR) Septic Requirements** (HB 1379, 2023; Sec. 373.811, F.S.): New Policy 2.1.3.2, PWSS\* added to reflect State requirements for use of ENR septic systems in certain instances within BMAP areas

## Proposed Amendments Required for Statutory Compliance

5. **Home-Based Businesses** - Local regulation of home-based businesses is now limited by statute; Policy 1.1.8 of Economic Element is revised to reflect current statute (HB 403, 2021; Sec. 559.955, F.S.).
6. **Farmworker Housing** – SB 700 (2025) limits local regulation of housing for agricultural workers on land classified as agriculture and operated as a bona fide farm to only the specific criteria listed in the statute; Policies 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of Housing Element are revised to reflect this requirement (Sec. 163.3162(5), F.S.).
7. **Tobacco Retail Licensing Program** – Preempted to State; Policy 1.6.6 of Community Health Element is deleted (SB 1080, 2021; Sec. 569.315, F.S.).

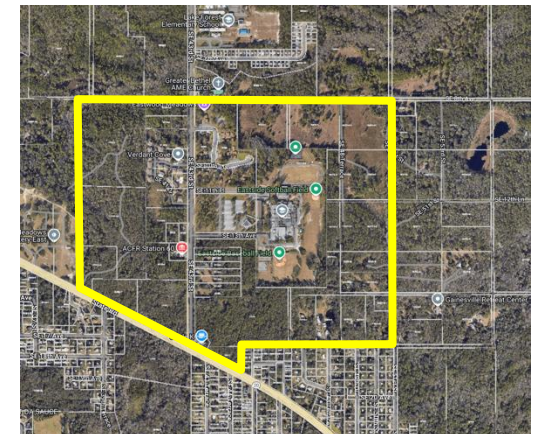
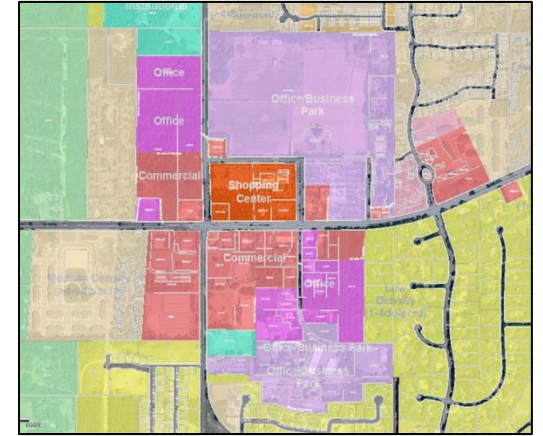
## Future Land Use Element Amendments

- **Blending of Residential Density** – Allow for blending of density across the development sites that have multiple land use categories or zoning districts (Policy 1.3.5).
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)** – Remove requirement for homestead exemption and permanent residency in Urban Cluster (Policy 1.3.6).
- **Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) (Policies 1.6.1 – 1.6.8)**
  - Flexibility on 15-acre minimum lot size
  - Reduced detail on percentages of residential/non-residential mix
  - LDRs to provide process for phasing
  - LDRs to provide standards for auto-oriented uses and drive-thru lanes.



## Future Land Use Element Amendments

- **Activity Centers Policies and Maps (Policies 2.1.1 – 2.1.11):**
  - Apply TND design standards to development within Activity Centers and remove conflicting Activity Center design standards.
  - Delete individual Future Land Use maps for Activity Centers.
- **Eastside Activity Center (Policy 2.2.8):**
  - Reduce detail to provide land use flexibility in short term.
  - Follow-up process is anticipated to consider changes to Future Land Use Map designations to align with standard land use categories and remove unnecessary barriers to development.



## Future Land Use Element Amendments

- **Commercial Land Uses (Obj. 3.2 – 3.8):** Revise and update descriptions of Regional Commercial, Community Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, and Neighborhood Convenience.
- **Tourist/Entertainment Land Use (Obj. 3.10 - Policy 3.10.4):**
  - Clarify intent of land use category
  - Add detail about potential locations for the T/E land use category
    - Adjacent to major tourist destinations
    - Adjacent to publicly-accessible natural, historic, or cultural resource-based parks such that the public entrance is within ¼ mile of site
    - Site access standards

## Future Land Use Element Amendments

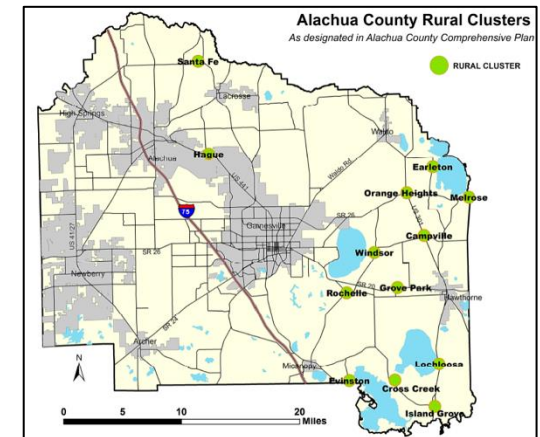
- **Urban Agriculture:**

- Policy 6.1.5.1 – Expands areas where farmers markets may be permitted.
- Policy 6.1.5.3 - Revised to refer to recently updated regulations regarding the keeping of poultry in residential areas.
- New Policy 6.1.5.5 calls for County to encourage small-scale agriculture in residential areas within the Urban Cluster for both personal consumption and local direct-to-consumer sale.



- **Rural Cluster Policies:**

- Policy 6.4.1 - Clarifies currently adopted criteria for determining boundaries for Rural Cluster land use designation shall be applied on a case-by-case basis.
- Policy 6.4.6 – Current policy - which prohibits any subdivision of land within a Rural Cluster until such time as the precise boundary for the Rural Cluster has been delineated on the future land use map - is proposed for deletion.

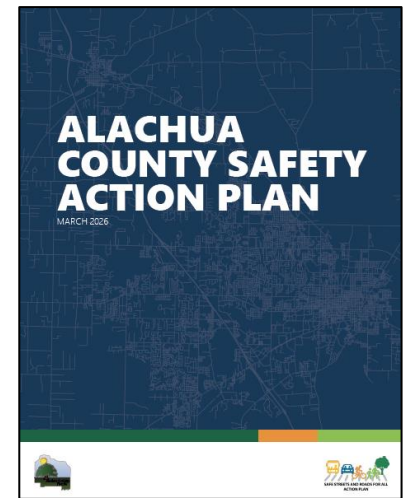


## Future Land Use Element Amendments

- **Special Area Plans (Policies 7.1.28 and 7.1.29):**
  - Clarifies purpose of special area plans; that they must be consistent with the Comp Plan as a whole; and areas where they may be appropriate.
  - New language about how community organizations may request initiation of a Special Area Plan and how those requests will be considered.
- **Buffering Requirements:** Proposed to be deleted as this is addressed in the LDRs.
- **Parking Requirements (Policy 7.1.37):** Calls for strategies to minimize the area dedicated to off-street surface parking to be considered in the LDRs.
- **County Growth Management Area (Policy 7.1.38):** New policy to acknowledge the GMA and related provisions in Section 1.5 of the Alachua County Charter.

## Proposed Amendments – Transportation Mobility Element

- **Mobility Fee:** Various updates in Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and subsequent policies to reflect 2024 updates to County Mobility Fee ordinance.
- **Bicycle-Pedestrian Master Plan and Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A):** New policies added to recognize these plans.
- **Transit Policies (Objective 2.1):**
  - New language expressing County’s commitment to working with community partners to ensure specialized transit services are provided for the transportation disadvantaged
  - Policy language added about exploring and promoting innovative solutions and partnerships to address transit needs within rural areas.
- **Transportation Map Series:** Updates to several maps to reflect current conditions. Maps that are no longer necessary have been deleted.



## Housing Element Amendments

- **Inclusionary Housing:** References added to reflect inclusionary housing requirements and incentives adopted by the County in 2025.
- **Manufactured Housing (Policies 1.1.11-1.1.15):** Existing policies consolidated
- **Accessory Dwelling Units (Policy 1.1.15):** Language added to encourage ADUs as a source of affordable housing.



## Housing Element Amendments

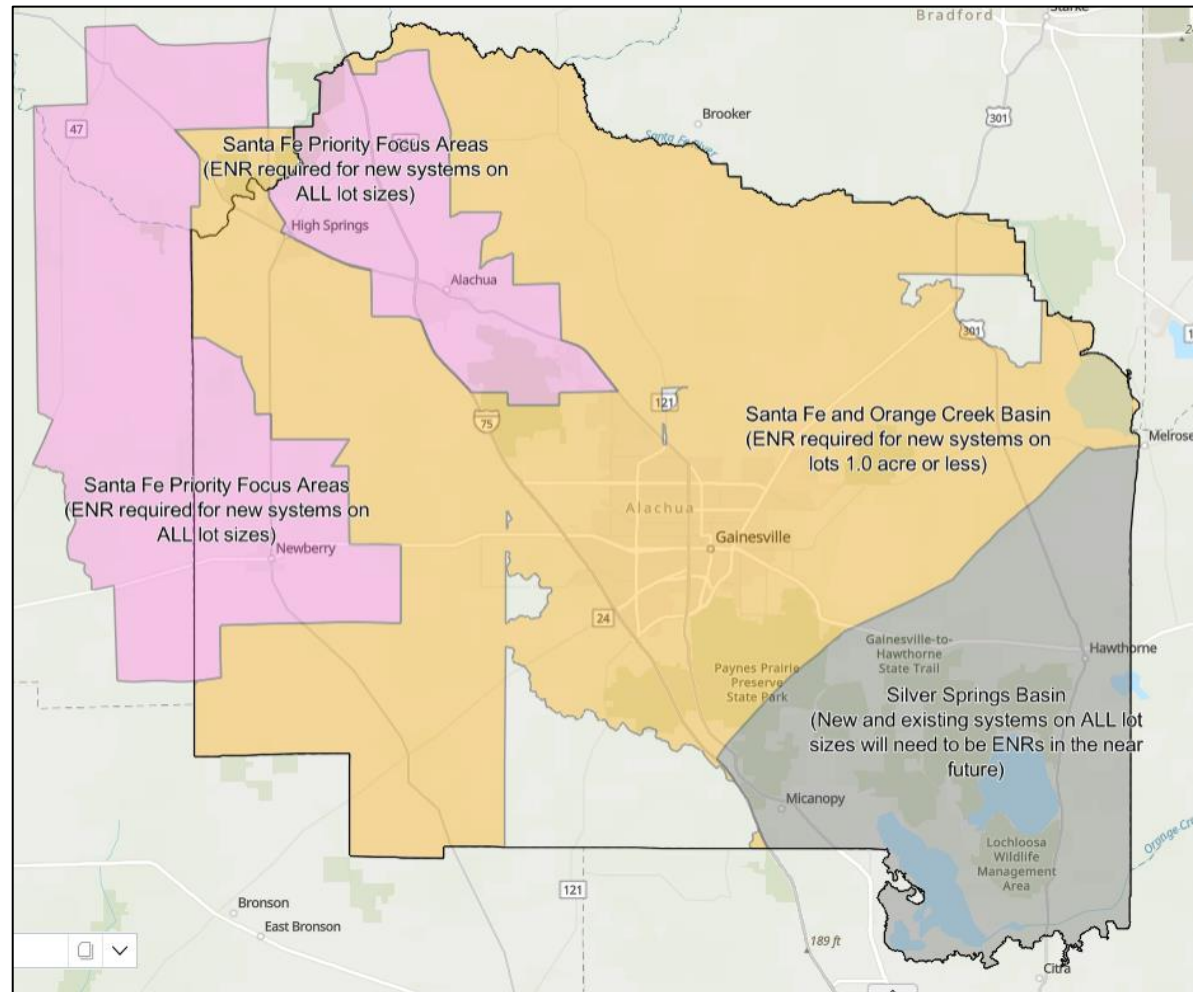
- **Affordable Housing Trust Fund & Infrastructure Surtax (Policies 1.4.12 and 1.4.13):** References added to these County funding sources for affordable housing.
- **Motel Conversions (Policy 2.3.11):** New policy calling for County to seek opportunities for acquisition and adaptive reuse of motels for permanent supportive housing.
- **Special Needs Housing (Obj. 3.1):** Language added to promote aging-in-place and housing intervention programs for high-need populations.



## Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer Element Amendments

- **Groundwater and Surface Water Protection:** Added as part of Element Goal.
- **Enhanced Nutrient Reducing (ENR) Septic Systems (Policy 2.1.3.2):**
  - Adds new requirement for use of ENR systems under certain circumstances pursuant to statutory requirements of House Bill 1379 and adopted BMAPs.
  - Adds use of ENR systems as a potential remedy for instances when there is evidence of septic system failure (Policy 2.1.7).
- **Composting (Policy 6.1.2):** Added as one potential option for disposal of biosolids from wastewater treatment facilities.
- **Definitions:** Updates definition of Public Water Supply System consistent with Statute; minor clarification to existing definition of Package Treatment Plant.

## BMAP Areas and Enhanced Nutrient Reducing (ENR) Septic Requirements



## Solid Waste Element Amendments

- **Goal:** Adds language prioritizing reduction of waste generation.
- **Circular Economy (Objective 1.5, Policies 1.4.2, 1.5.7, 1.5.12):** Adds “circular economy” definition and concepts into multiple policies
- **Eco Loop Industrial Park (Objective 1.4 and Policy 1.4.2):** Adds general references to the County’s Eco Loop project in.
- **Solid Waste Management Facilities and Compatibility (Policy 1.2.6):** Revises policy to speak more directly to compatibility with surrounding residential and agricultural areas, and need for design strategies to minimize adverse impacts of such facilities.
- **State-Mandated 2020 Recycling Goals (Policy 1.5.2):** Deletes policies on State’s 75% recycling goal for the year 2020 and interim year goals.



## Stormwater Management Element Amendments

- **Stormwater Design Standards (Policy 5.1.8):** Minor revisions to clarify that stormwater facilities in developments must be designed in accordance with all stormwater management standards, landscaping standards, and any supplemental stormwater standards identified in the LDRs.
- **Definitions Deleted:** Deletes definitions of “one-stop permitting” and “stormwater utility” as those terms are not used in the Plan.

## Conservation and Open Space Element Amendments

- **Countywide Natural Resource Protection Standards (Policy 1.1.2):** New policy referring to standards adopted in the County's Code of Ordinances.
- **Preservation Areas List (Policy 3.2.2):** Deletes listing of areas that are designated as "Preservation". Existing definition of what qualifies as a Preservation area would apply.
- **Enhanced Nutrient Reducing (ENR) Septic (Policies 3.6.5, 3.6.11, 4.6.11, and 4.6.15):** Proposed policy language calls for County to consider amendments to its land development regulations and other ordinances to potentially require the use of ENR systems in certain environmentally sensitive areas.

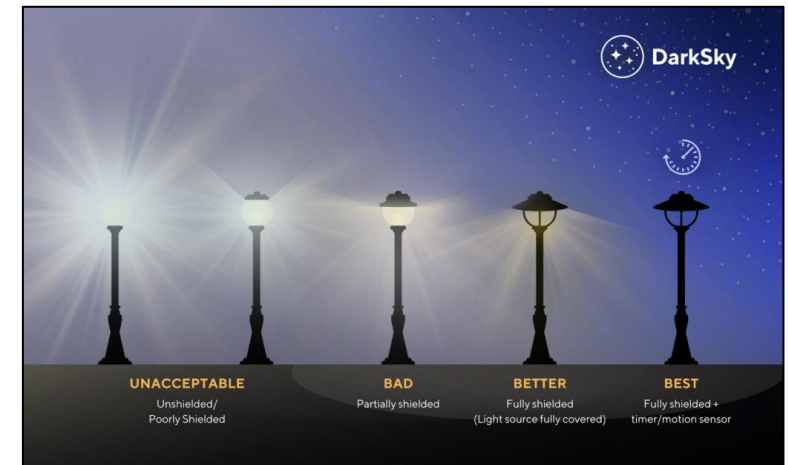


## Conservation and Open Space Element Amendments

- **Water Conservation Strategies, Policy 4.5.21:**
  - Language added in (a) which calls for County to identify strategies to reduce overall footprint of new development, minimize site disturbance and maximize the protection of existing vegetation.
  - Language added in (f) which calls for County to proactively review HOA documents during development review for language that potentially conflicts with County water conservation policies and to partner with HOAs to provide educational materials and programs.
- **Administrative Review for Minor Wetland Impacts (Policy 4.7.7):** Allow for administrative review and approval for proposed wetland impacts of ¼ acre or less for a single-family home.

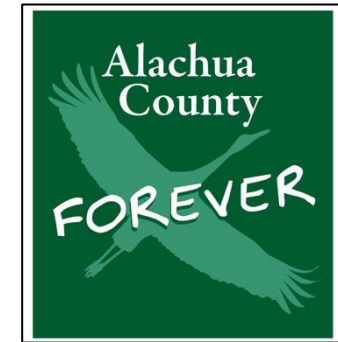
## Conservation and Open Space Element Amendments

- **“Dark Sky” Policy (5.3.7):** County to consider “Dark Sky” lighting standards in the land development regulations.
  - Minimize impacts of outdoor lighting and protect the quality of the night sky.
  - Principles advocated by organizations such as Dark Sky International and Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.



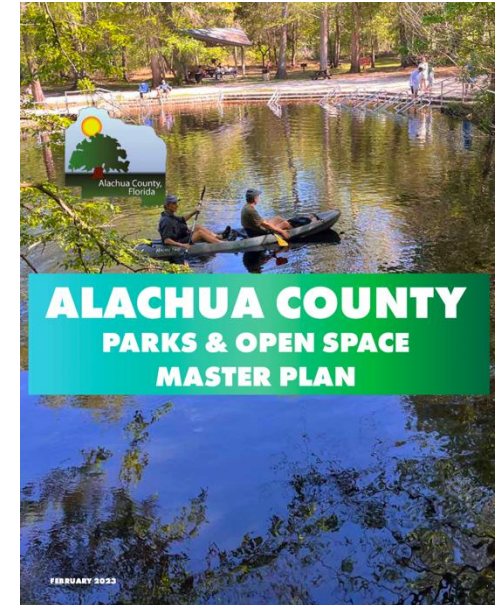
## Conservation and Open Space Element Amendments

- **Land Conservation Program (Obj. 6.1 – 6.6):**
  - Add reference to recently-created agricultural lands acquisition strategy.
  - Add reference to Wild Spaces-Public Places surtax funding source.
  - Identify community cat management as a focus in management of County-owned preservation lands.
  - Updates to agency names, program names, and statutory references.



## Recreation Element Amendments

- **Parks and Open Space Master Plan**
  - Adds references as the guiding vision for the County's park system.
  - Unserved areas identified as a priority for new or expanded parks.
  - Recreation site classification updates in Table 1.
- **Charging Stations for Phones/E-bikes at County Parks:** Consider inclusion at parks where feasible and practical (1.3.1).
- **Volunteer Groups for Park Maintenance** – Explore options for ongoing maintenance, including agreements with local volunteer organizations (1.5.5).
- **Promotion of Eco-Tourism:** Use resource-based parks to promote eco-tourism (1.4.11).
- **Community Engagement:** Revised to call for community engagement where new or expanded parks are proposed.



## Intergovernmental Coordination Element Amendments

- **Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements (ISBA):** New Policy 1.1.3 added which calls for County to pursue ISBAs with municipalities to address annexation issues.
- **Various Technical Updates:**
  - Revising agency names
  - Deleting references to agencies or committees that no longer exist
  - Revising or deleting outdated policies
  - Revising policies where needed to reflect current coordination mechanisms

## Capital Improvements Element Amendments

- Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Capital Projects:** New Table 4 which shows water quality capital projects that are associated with BMAPs and attributable to Alachua County.
- House Bill 1379 (2023) amended Sec. 163.3177(3)(a), F.S. to require that the Capital Improvements Element include projects necessary to achieve the pollutant load reductions as established in a BMAP established pursuant to Sec. 403.067(7), F.S.

Project Description	BMAP Crediting Area	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2026-2030 Total	Funding Source
<a href="#">Lochloosa Slough Restoration Project</a>	<a href="#">Lochloosa Lake</a>	\$59,000	\$150,000	\$400,000			\$609,000	Stormwater Assessment
<a href="#">Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades</a>	<a href="#">Lake Wauberg</a>	\$13,225	\$160,000				\$173,225	Stormwater Assessment/FDEP Funding
<a href="#">West Hawthorne Branch Treatment Wetland</a>	<a href="#">Lochloosa Lake</a>	\$60,000	\$400,000		\$1,000,000		\$1,460,000	Stormwater Assessment/FDEP Funding
<a href="#">Newnans Lake System Hydrologic Restoration Project</a>	<a href="#">Newnans Lake</a>		12,000,000	\$1,100,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$13,700,000	Stormwater Assessment/FDEP Funding

## Economic Element Amendments

- **Full rewrite and reorganization in progress:** Will be brought forward as separate amendment to Comp Plan. Focused revisions are included in current package.
- **Home-Based Businesses:** Policy 1.1.8 revised for consistency with State statutes.
- **Forward Focus:** New Policy 1.5.12 added to recognize ongoing needs assessment and economic development effort for eastern Alachua County.
- **Circular Economy and Eco Loop:** New Policies 1.3.4 and 1.3.4.1 refer to promoting businesses that contribute to the circular economy in general and as part of the Eco Loop industrial park (similar policies in Solid Waste Element).
- **Urban Agriculture:** Adds promotion of urban agriculture to Objective 1.9 and a new Policy 1.9.6.
- **Targeted Industries:** Updates to “targeted industries” list in Policy 1.1.1.

## Energy Element Amendments

- **Energy-Related Goals:** Revisions to existing policies on goals for community-wide greenhouse gas reduction, water conservation, non-automobile mode share, and vehicle miles traveled per capita. Revisions focus on need to develop reliable baseline data for tracking metrics going forward.
- **PACE Program:** References to PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program deleted from Policy 6.1.2 and Definitions section.
- **State-Mandated Solid Waste Recycling Goals:** Deletes Policies 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 about the State's 75% recycling goal for the year 2020 and interim year goals.
- **Circular Economy:** New Policy 7.1.1 proposed, which calls for County to pursue circular economy strategies such as waste prevention, source reduction, reuse, recycling, purchase of goods made from recycled materials, composting and pollution prevention through County's solid waste operations and public education.

## Community Health Element Amendments

- **Social Determinants of Health:** Added in Element Goal and Objective 1.1; new Policy 1.1.9 calls for the County to support programs and work with partner agencies that seek to address and improve social determinants of health for vulnerable populations.
- **Food Systems and Healthy Food Access:** Element Goal revised to include promoting access to fresh and healthy food; Policy 1.2.3 revised to include County Jail as a partner agency for County healthy foods efforts; Policy 1.3.1.6 revised to include support for food system infrastructure development and expansion.
- **Gun Violence as Public Health Crisis:** New Policy 1.1.10 recognizes that the County has declared gun violence as a public health crisis.
- **Aging-in-Place:** New Policy 1.2.5 calls for the County to explore potential ways, through grant programs and other sources, to assist residents in making needed safety upgrades to their homes to help promote aging-in-place.
- **Alachua County Central Receiving Facility:** New Policy 1.7.4 added, recognizing this facility which provides support for individuals experiencing mental health and substance abuse crisis.

## Planning Commission Recommendation

Public Hearing Dates: February 25 and March 11, 2026

Part 1: Recommend transmittal of the Evaluation & Appraisal-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as presented with the following additions or changes:

- a. Add General Strategy in Future Land Use Element which articulates the idea of promoting 'growth where growth is' (i.e., in Urban Cluster). *Language added in General Strategy #1, Future Land Use Element.*
- b. Add a policy calling for County to pursue Interlocal Service Boundary Agreements (ISBA) with municipalities to address annexation issues. *New Policy 1.1.3 added to Intergovernmental Coordination Element.*
- c. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): Remove requirement for homestead exemption and permanent residency in the rural areas. *Change not included - need BoCC direction.*

## Planning Commission Recommendation

Public Hearing Dates: February 25 and March 11, 2026

### **Part 2: Additional discussion on the following topics at future meetings:**

- a. Discourage or disincentivize gated subdivisions in the Urban Cluster.
- b. Eliminate minimum and maximum requirements for parking within new development
- c. Facilitate more mixed-use development by providing greater flexibility in land use categories. This includes the ideas of creating mixed-use land use categories, allowing single use residential within commercial land use categories, and allowing single use commercial within residential land use categories.
- d. Increase allowable residential densities for development within the Urban Cluster. This includes re-evaluating and possibly increasing the standard density ranges for residential land use categories and the allowable density for TNDs and TODs.

## Planning Commission Recommendation

Public Hearing Dates: February 25 and March 11, 2026

### **Part 2 (continued): Additional discussion on the following topics at future meetings:**

- e. Consider expedited development review for affordable housing developments.
- f. Consider requirements for clustering of development to reduce impervious surfaces and increase green spaces
- g. Urban Tree Canopy – Re-evaluate tree protection standards relative to tree removal and replacement requirements. Also, the County should measure and track tree canopy trends within the Urban Cluster
- h. County Tree Planting Program - Prioritize tree planting along streets and around pedestrian pathways and transit stops and increasing overall tree canopy.

## Other Items for Follow-Up

*Not included in the current amendment package*

- Incorporate Climate Action Plan into Comprehensive Plan
- Economic Element full rewrite and reorganization
- Additional updates to Community Health Element
- Data Centers (Code updates)
- “Missing middle” affordable housing strategies
- Idylwild-Serenola and Cross Creek environmental resources maps

# Questions

## More information:

<https://alachuacounty.civilspace.io/en/projects/comprehensive-plan-evaluation-and-update>

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