

**Analysis of Major Issues Related to the  
Comprehensive Plan, Achievement of Goals and  
Identification of Actions to Address Major Issues**



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In a recent article, *The Planning Imperative*, Judith Umback states, "...planning is not about predicting the future. Planning is not about controlling the future. Planning is about handling what the future brings....The ultimate goal of any plan is to distinguish what needs to be handled from what does not and to identify the criteria for the selection."

The Evaluation and Appraisal process for the City's Comprehensive Plan, as required by Florida Statutes Chapter 163.3191, offers an opportunity to identify major issues affecting the community as they relate to the Plan. These major issues inform the City and its citizens of what the most important challenges are that must be handled in the update of the Plan to ensure a better future for the community. The key issues are listed below and analyzed for their potential social, economic and environmental impacts. After each issue there is a discussion of the actions needed to address the issue, including information about anticipated plan amendments.

Identification of these major issues came through the interactive process of presentation of element evaluations at public hearings and board meetings. While it is impossible to solve every problem, it is vital to deal with the most pressing issues and set priorities. Effective and innovative planning can help produce community solutions and smooth the path to the future. As Judith Umback points out in her article, "If the events of the future are well-handled, we succeed and contribute to a more pleasant outcome for ourselves and others. If future events are mishandled, the bumps and grinds of reacting can wear us out before our time."

### **The Major Issues**

The following thirteen issues have major ramifications for the community during the new planning period from 2000 to 2010. Many of these issues are the result of changes which have occurred since the adoption of the 1991 Plan. Each issue will be discussed in a separate section. Many of the issues are interrelated and have overlapping implications for the Plan. Where that is the case, cross references among the issues are made.

- Declining share of the overall Alachua County population
- Infill and redevelopment
- Density
- Urban Design
- Revisions to the Activity Center concept
- Failure of the mixed use categories to produce residential/non-residential mixes
- Providing more transportation choices
- Financing transportation infrastructure
- Transportation concurrency
- Neighborhood planning
- Enhancement of recreation facilities and programs

- Coordination with Santa Fe Community College and the University of Florida Campus Master Plan
- Intergovernmental coordination concerning the dispersal of affordable housing units

### **Declining share of Alachua County population**

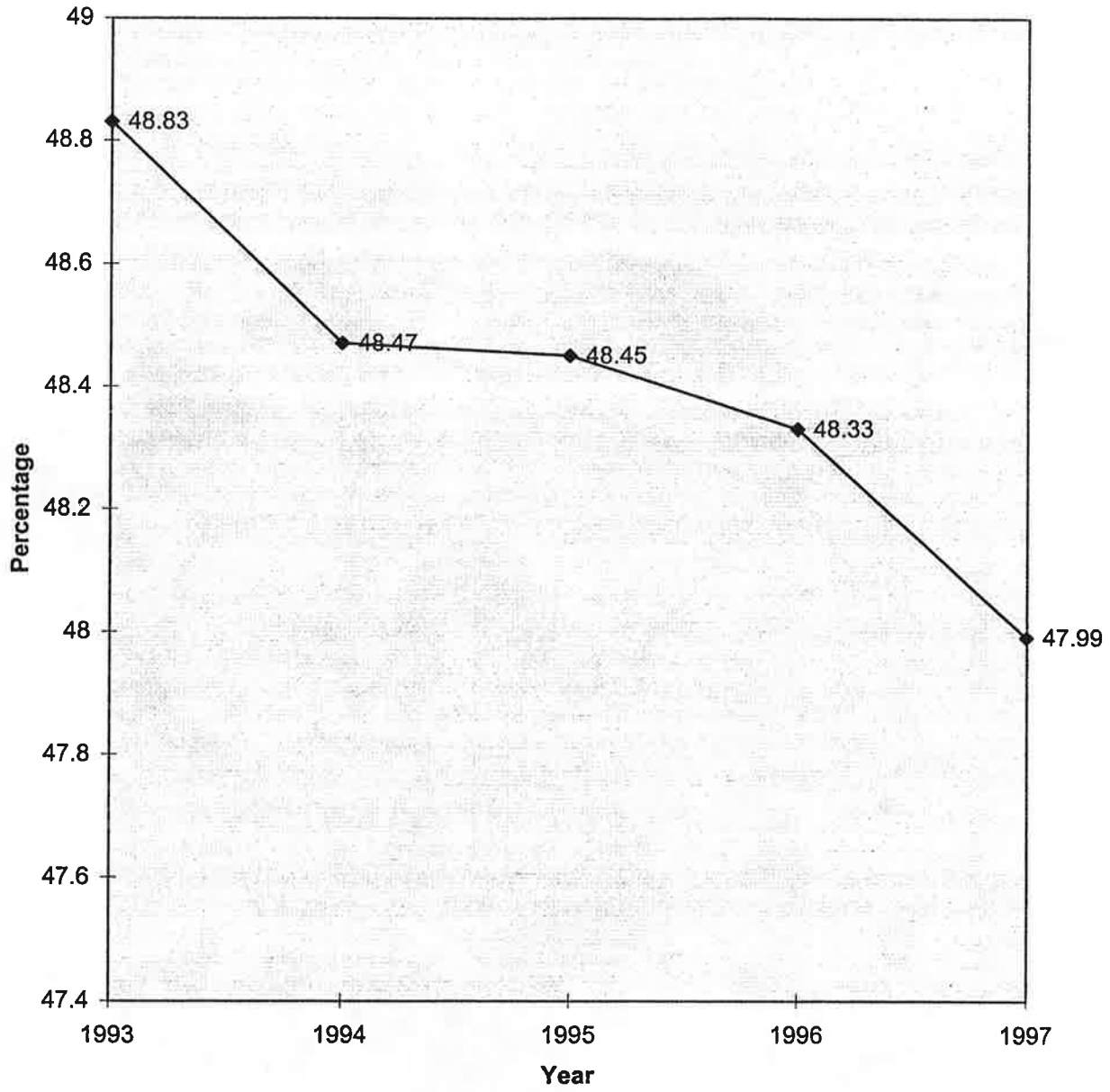
The City of Gainesville's share of Alachua County population has declined every year since the 1992 annexation. Chart 1 shows the City's percentage share of Alachua County population from 1993 to 1997. In 1997, the City's population represented 47.99 percent of the County population. In 1993 the figure was 48.83 percent. That represents a decline of about 1.75 percent over a four year period. This is despite the fact that in 1992 the City annexed 9.53 square miles of populated area (estimated annexed population in 1992 was 4,987) with some vacant land available for development and population growth.

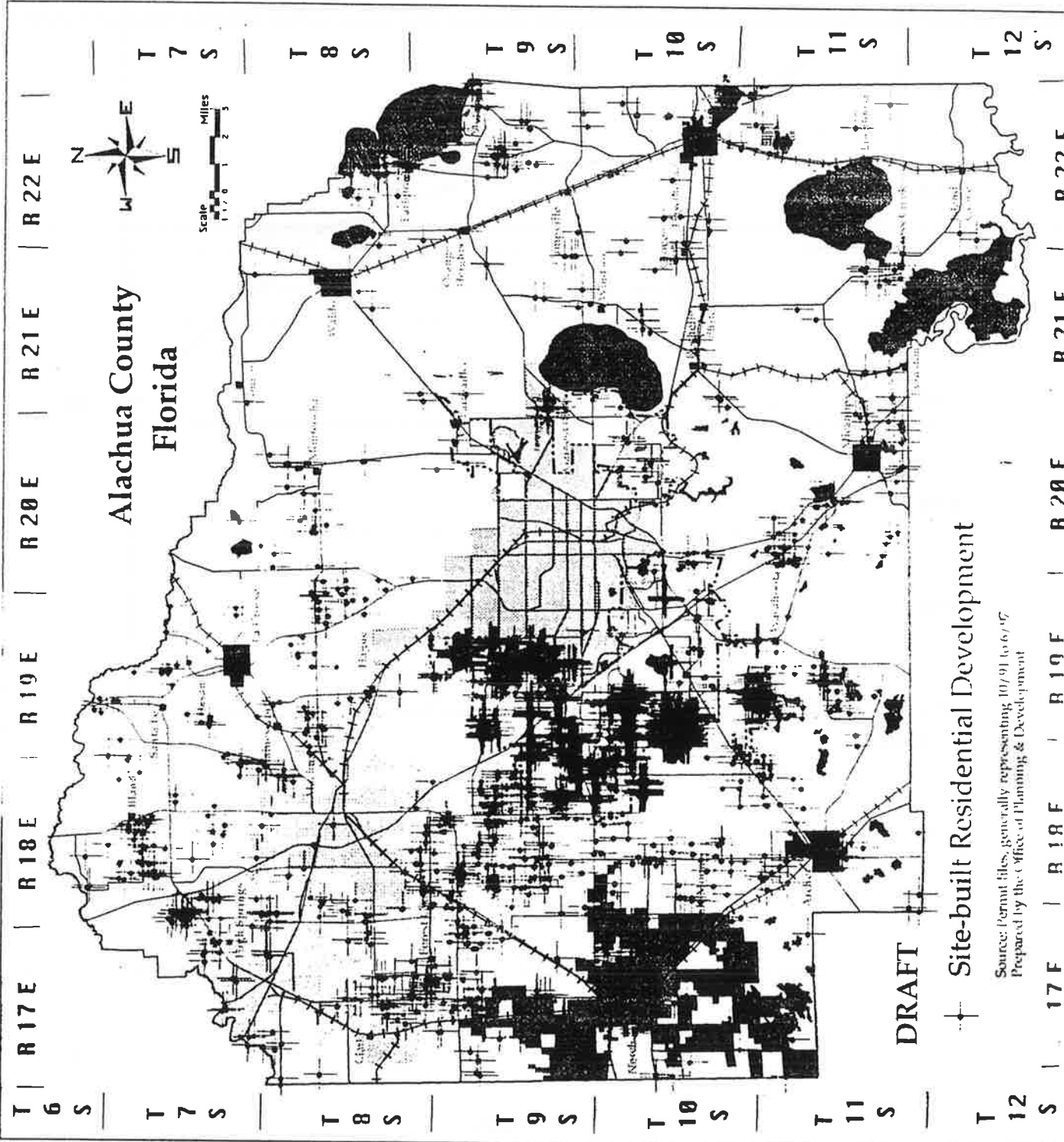
The City has experienced population growth over the planning period since adoption of the Comprehensive Plan (approximately a 17.4 percent increase since 1990). However, even given the current growth rate, based on the available data, if the trend continues it appears the City's population base will continue to decline when compared to the total County population. The latest information from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida provides some insight concerning this trend. From 1996 to 1997 the City's population grew by about 2.2 percent. The population in the unincorporated area of Alachua County grew by 4.1 percent in the same period (almost double the City's growth rate).

An examination of historical building permit data for new residential units also sheds light on this situation. In 1994, Alachua County issued .75 residential building permits in the unincorporated area for every one city building permit issued. In 1996, Alachua County issued 5 building permits for every one issued in city limits. The figure stabilized somewhat in 1997 with the ratio becoming 3.03 unincorporated area permits for every one city permit. However, the data in 1997 were heavily affected by a single multi-family development in city limits, Tivoli. Without that development, the ratio would have been 5.73 permits to one. The most recently available data for 1998 (January to March) indicate that the ratio is 5.24 unincorporated residential permits for every City building permit.

Map 1 (provided courtesy of Alachua County Planning) shows the location of the site built residential development from October 1991 through June 1997. A clear pattern emerges that the great majority of the unincorporated area development is occurring northwest and southwest of city limits. Map 2 locates the 1998 Parade of Homes sites for the community. A single subdivision, Capri, was in city limits. The remainder were in the southwestern and northwestern unincorporated area. This development pattern has large-scale implications for the City's transportation concurrency management (this is further discussed in the section labeled Transportation concurrency).

### City Share of Alachua County Population 1993 - 1997





Alachua County  
Florida

DRAFT

Site-built Residential Development

Source: Permit files, generally representing 10/91 to 6/97  
Prepared by the Office of Planning & Development

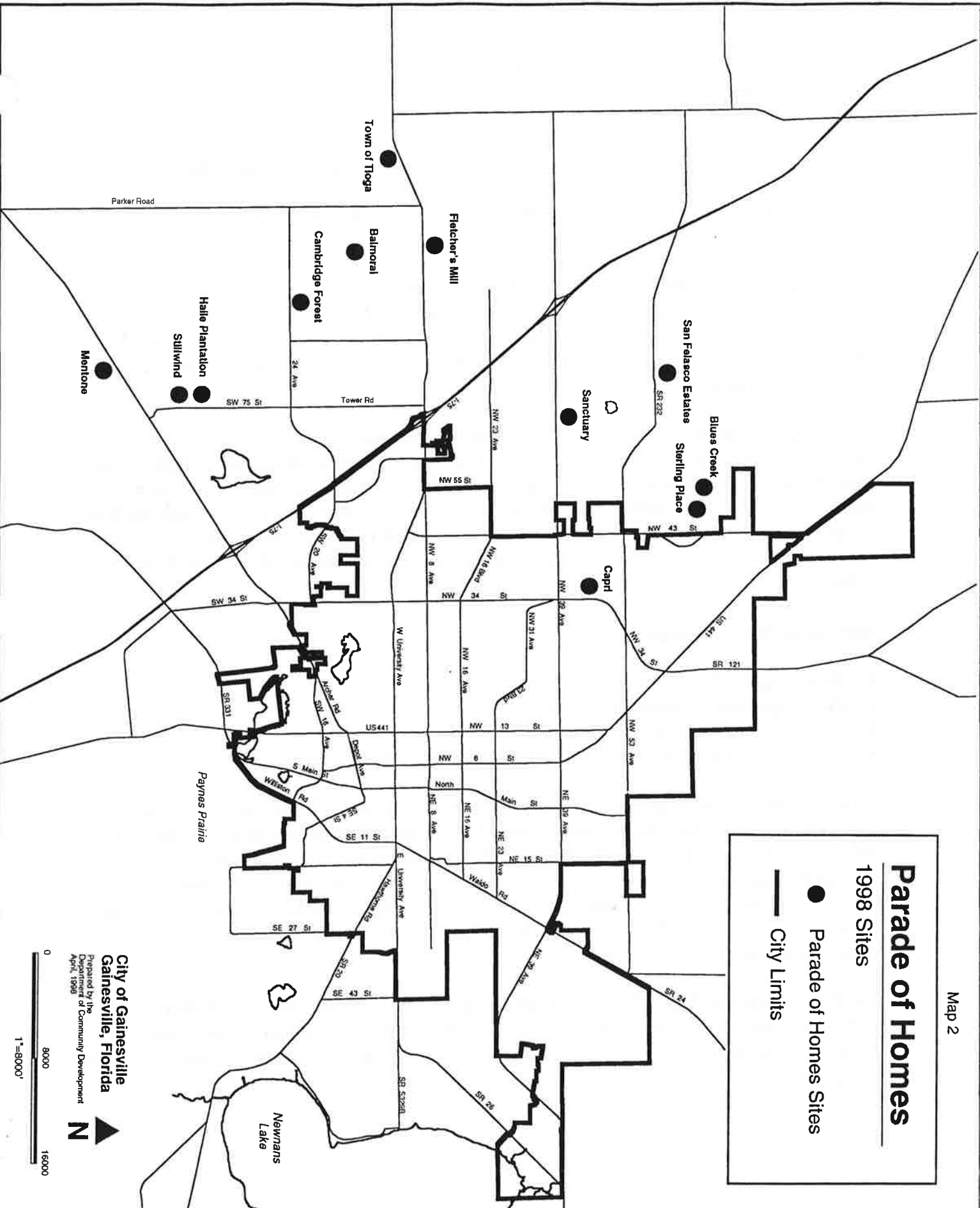
T 6 S | R 17 E | R 18 E | R 19 E | R 20 E | R 21 E | R 22 E | T 7 S | T 8 S | T 9 S | T 10 S | T 11 S | T 12 S

# Parade of Homes

1998 Sites

● Parade of Homes Sites

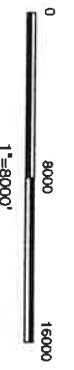
— City Limits



**City of Gainesville  
Gainesville, Florida**

Prepared by the  
Department of Community Development  
April, 1998

**N**



A January 1998 report, "Healthy City, Healthy Region: An Assessment and Recommendations on Regional Planning and Housing Policy for the City of Gainesville and Alachua County," by David Rusk (Planning consultant and author of *Cities Without Suburbs*) discusses sprawl development patterns based on an examination of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County Comprehensive Plans. The report states, "The adopted plans seem to envision the continuation of the past pattern of low-density, sprawling development...Over a twenty year period, low-density development increased the per capita consumption of land by 16 percent to about one-third of an acre per resident by 1990."

A joint meeting about the Rusk report was held with the Gainesville City Commission and Alachua County Commission on May 21, 1998. Continued discussions about urban growth boundary issues are anticipated during the Comprehensive Plan update period. A coordinated effort between the two local governments is required to deal with urban sprawl, urban service areas, and greenbelt/open space issues.

The emerging pattern of declining share of population has consequences for the preeminence of the City as a central place in Alachua County. The sprawl pattern of development further away from the center also has quality of life implications for city residents, especially as concerns traffic congestion. New activity center/commercial areas built to support the unincorporated area population can lead to abandonment of existing retail centers. This in turn could leave the City with vacant commercial buildings to fill and loss of property tax dollars as the sites decline in value.

#### Actions to address the issue

- Increasing residential densities in selected areas
- Encourage redevelopment and infill
- Annexation of contiguous, urbanized areas
- Coordination with Alachua County on urban growth boundary issues

As part of the population projection update, the City Plan Board and City Commission agreed to a scenario which would involve turning around the declining share of population by the year 2005 to hold constant to a fixed 46.59 percent share of future Alachua County population through the year 2010. This will have to be reflected in the Future Land Use Element and other elements and means that significant efforts at residential infill, redevelopment, and increasing density must be made. (This is related to the Infill and Redevelopment issue and Density issue which are discussed in sections below.)

The Future Land Use Map will be examined for opportunities for increased residential densities and appropriate amendments to the map will be made. Targeted areas will include areas proximate to activity centers, areas with mass transit service, and areas with low levels of owner occupancy.



Amendments to the Transportation Mobility Element concerning transportation concurrency must be made to accommodate redevelopment and higher residential densities. The current policy 1.8.5.b. should be expanded outside of the Transportation Concurrency Management Area (TCMA) (note, the TCMA is further discussed under Transportation concurrency) as an incentive for higher density infill and redevelopment.

The City has ongoing efforts to annex urbanized areas. This is a partial solution to the declining share of Alachua County population. Objective 1.2 and Policy 1.2.3 in the Intergovernmental Coordination Element should be amended to state the City's intent to annex areas within the Urban Reserve Area that are urban in character. Annexed areas must be brought under the City's Comprehensive Plan consistent with Objective 2.6 and Policies 2.6.1 and 2.6.2 of the Future Land Use Element and Policies 1.4.5 and 1.4.6 of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element.

Discussions between the City of Gainesville and Alachua County about urban growth boundary issues should continue during the Comprehensive Plan update period. A policy should be added under Objective 1.4 of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element which discusses coordination on the Alachua County Urban Service Area. David Rusk's report recommended that phasing plans should be adopted that "slow the constant outward extension of new development in the Urban Services Areas."

### **Infill and Redevelopment**

The 1991-2001 Plan Future Land Use Data and Analysis Report recognized that the City of Gainesville was characterized by existing low density and intensity development with few large parcels of vacant land. That condition largely remains true at the current time despite significant redevelopment efforts since the Plan's adoption. Increased efforts at infill and redevelopment are required during the 2000-2010 planning period and should be shown as specific policies in the Plan update. Distinctive areas identified for redevelopment include:

- the University Avenue corridor from the downtown area to the University of Florida
- the East side of Gainesville
- existing activity centers
- the College Park/University Heights Redevelopment area
- the 5th Avenue/Pleasant Street Redevelopment area
- the Enterprise Zone area
- selected low density residential areas which can be designated for higher densities in accordance with Future Land Use and Transportation Mobility Element policies.

Infill of vacant parcels between developed areas is highly desirable also. Another concern is intensifying non-residential development to make better use of the land. Low intensity uses promote urban sprawl and a strip pattern.

Redevelopment and infill efforts have been hampered, to some extent, by transportation concurrency requirements (Transportation concurrency issues are discussed in a separate

section). The City must approach redevelopment and infill from the perspective of an overall vision including transportation and land use planning. Key components in redevelopment/infill are infrastructure improvements and urban design principles (Urban Design is discussed as a separate issue).

#### Actions to address the issue

- Increasing residential densities in selected areas
- Transportation concurrency amendments to allow infill and redevelopment
- Amendments to the mixed use land use categories
- Urban design standards
- Identification of redevelopment areas on the Future Land Use Map and added policies concerning redevelopment/infill in the Future Land Use Element
- Focus Community Development Block Grant, Home Improvement Partnerships Program (HOME), and State Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP) rehabilitation funds into targeted areas for more concentrated redevelopment

The necessary actions concerning increased residential densities and transportation concurrency were discussed under the previous issue. In addition, amendments to the Future Land Use Element must be made concerning the mixed use land use categories to determine whether there are any incentives which can be provided to encourage more true mixed use projects combining residential and non-residential uses. Actions concerning Urban Design will be discussed later in this document under that section.

Redevelopment areas should be mapped and new policies must be added under Objective 2.4 which concerns redevelopment and infill. The new policies should stress the City's keen interest in redevelopment and infill to reduce urban sprawl. The City has also determined that the Special Area Plan approach is not the most fruitful means of dealing with redevelopment. Amendments to Policy 2.4.1 should reflect this fact. In addition, references to a Special Area Plan should be deleted from Policies 2.4.10 and 2.4.11.

In terms of the City's expenditure of CDBG, HOME, and SHIP funds, a more targeted approach should be taken. Rehabilitation funds should be concentrated in one or two neighborhoods annually in order to create immediate and noticeable results. Presently, these moneys are spent in approximately seven "target" neighborhoods which are throughout Gainesville, east of NW 13th Street. Policies should be added to the Housing Element and Future Land Use Element which provide a focus for redevelopment/rehabilitation efforts.

#### **Density**

Increased residential density can help limit urban sprawl, make mass transit more viable, and assist the City in maintaining a constant share of the projected Alachua County population. The 1991-2001 Plan created several land use categories with higher residential densities (including the Residential High, Mixed Use Residential, Mixed Use Medium, and Mixed Use High

designations). The implementation of minimum density requirements and designation of additional land area for redevelopment or infill at higher densities is necessary for achieving the City's stated objective of reversing the trend of declining share of population.

A heavy reliance on low density development patterns has led to congested roads, dependence on single-occupant vehicles, isolated neighborhoods, lack of quality public space, and urban sprawl. This in turn leads to demands for wider roads and other public facilities. It is essential that residential densities be varied throughout the city. Infill sites offer an opportunity to introduce differing housing types, additional residential units, new housing choices, or Traditional Neighborhood Design patterns in areas that now are exclusively very low density. It is also essential that incentives be enacted to achieve the designated multi-family densities in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.

In January 1998, the City received a final report from planning consultant David Rusk (see report citation discussed in the Declining share of Alachua County population issue section). The report extensively discussed the low density pattern of development in the urbanized area.

The following findings were made in the report concerning density issues. "Such low-density development creates high automobile dependence....Low-density development also frustrates the city's goal of sustaining a viable retail district in the central business district and other neighborhood-oriented commercial areas. The physical environment of Downtown Gainesville is attractive, but downtown lacks a critical mass of customers--a void that cannot be filled solely by daytime office workers." The report continues, "The presence of 40,000 students at the University of Florida offers another opportunity that may be lost. The mile-long corridor between Downtown and the university campus is an opportunity to create a higher-density, mixed-use neighborhood of vitality and diversity, focusing on the retail-entertainment needs of the student population. Instead, I understand that much of the growth in the student population in recent decades has been accommodated in garden apartment complexes on the outskirts of the city itself. High density is not the enemy of high quality of urban life."

There have been problems associated with the minimum density requirements in the Residential Medium and Residential High, ~~Mixed Use Residential, Mixed Use Low, and Mixed Use Medium~~ land use categories (see Policy 2.1.1). The minimum density requirements failed to take into account development problems associated with environmental constraints, substandard lots, and existing developed sites where demolition is not contemplated. There has been concern that minimum density requirements are too high for property owners of individual lots to achieve (many of these lots are less than one-half acre in size and do not meet the minimum lot size requirements for the associated zoning district). In order to deal with these concerns, amendments to the Comprehensive Plan will be proposed which reduce the minimum density requirements in the Residential Medium and Residential High land use categories to eight units per acre and provide an exemption from minimum density requirements for parcels of .5 of an acre in size or smaller. Currently, the minimum density required in the Residential Medium category is ten units per acre. In the Residential High category, the minimum density is currently 21 units per acre. Eight units per acre is noted by experts as the minimum necessary to support

transit. Design standards are needed to ensure the compatibility of the higher densities with surrounding properties.

Another problem which was noted in the EAR public hearings is that the Residential High land use category, as adopted in the 1991-2001 Plan, did not include single family dwelling units as an allowable use. In previous editions of the Comprehensive Plan, single family had been an allowable use. This has created a non-conformity for 130 single family dwellings in the Residential High (RH) land use category. The non-conforming status results in a hardship for these units, especially as related to financial institutions who are reluctant to refinance non-conforming uses. Thus, single family use should be added back to the RH land use category.

#### Actions to address the issue

- Continuation of the minimum density requirements in the Future Land Use residential categories with modifications to the Residential Medium and High categories to reduce minimum density to eight units per acre. Add single family as an allowable use in the Residential High land use category
- Add provisions for variances or exemptions to the minimum density requirements for small lots or lots with environmental/physical constraints. Lots less than or equal to .5 of an acre in size shall be exempted from the minimum density requirements in the Residential Medium and High categories
- Increasing residential densities in selected areas
- Transportation concurrency amendments to allow for infill/redevelopment and increased densities
- Urban design standards
- Explore accessory units as an allowable residential use with appropriate restrictions in areas which wish to have them

The City's minimum density requirements for most of the residential land use categories have been successful in increasing densities, especially in areas designated for medium and high density. This policy should be continued. Amendments should be made to the Residential Medium and High land use categories to reduce the minimum required density to eight units per acre and provide for an exemption from minimum density requirements for parcels of .5 of an acre in size or smaller. ~~However,~~ a policy should be added to the Future Land Use Element which provides some flexibility on minimum density requirements for hardships associated with small or substandard lots, environmental constraints, historic properties, or properties where demolition is not contemplated but infill is desirable. This policy should be directed to amendments in the Land Development Code for the implementing zoning categories and developing a variance/exemption process with specific criteria for exceptions.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City must identify selected areas, throughout the community, where residential densities should be increased. These areas will be mapped on the new Future Land Use map. Specific areas to be examined are those in proximity to activity centers, those with mass transit service, and those with low levels of owner occupancy. The Plan

should also be amended to protect those specific areas where residential densities should not be increased.

The necessary Transportation concurrency actions were discussed under the first issue concerning Declining share of Alachua County population and are further discussed under Transportation concurrency.

Urban Design (discussed below as a separate issue) is fundamental to increasing density in a harmonious fashion with existing residential development and encouraging vibrant, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods.

Accessory units, in neighborhoods which desire them, are one means of achieving higher densities. Accessory units as an allowable residential use with appropriate restrictions should be explored. Residential areas which wish to add accessory uses should be accommodated in the Future Land Use Element with Amendments to the Single Family land use category description would be required if this is implemented.

### **Urban Design**

As redevelopment has occurred within the community, the City has recognized that what often results is buildings and patterns which are less than desirable for creating a livable community. Infill and redevelopment should be combined with attention to design in order to reduce the negative effects. (This topic is related to Redevelopment and Infill and Density which are covered as separate issues). An Urban Design Element should be developed and adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. This element would require urban design to be an intentional formative force for our urban environment, as opposed to it being merely the cumulative result of a host of non-design directives in the development process. This element would provide needed design guidance for further development, infill development, and redevelopment of the City, including its public infrastructure.

#### Actions to address the issue

- Addition of an Urban Design Element to the Comprehensive Plan
- Amend the Future Land Use Element to encourage Traditional Neighborhood Development in several of the land use categories

When the City updates the Comprehensive Plan, an Urban Design Element should be added. The Urban Design Element should be amply illustrated in order to demonstrate desired placement of buildings, appealing streetscapes and urban corridors, pedestrian-friendly street frontages, lively public spaces, vertical mixing of uses, etc. The element could serve to: preserve and promote a sense of place; establish and protect a pedestrian ambiance while not ignoring the needs of the motorist; increase transit viability through density, traffic calming, accessibility and pedestrian amenities; and preserve and promote a favorable environment for business and economic development.

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) should be added to the Future Land Use Element within Policy 2.1.1. This recognizes a new concept in land use planning and community development which the City wishes to encourage. The City must determine which land use categories are appropriate for TND and then add references within those categories.

### **Revisions to the Activity Center concept**

The activity center concept has been a part of Gainesville's comprehensive planning focus since 1970. The intent was to concentrate higher intensity development at compact locations to service the retail/employment needs of the surrounding population and consciously discourage strip-type development. The 1991-2001 Plan modified the previous commercial implementation of the activity center concept through the use of mixed use land use categories where residential and non-residential uses would be integrated. The mixed use districts were intended to encourage a more intense development pattern and introduce an urban village or traditional neighborhood design component to the existing suburban pattern. This has not occurred but remains a goal for the upcoming planning period (the failure of the mixed use districts to produce true residential/non-residential mixes is discussed as a related, separate issue below). The existing activity centers have the potential to become vibrant, neighborhood centers that link separate suburban-style subdivisions and promote neighborhood identity (see Map 3).

Two problems have become obvious since Plan adoption. First, several activity centers have experienced serious decline as newer commercial/retail centers were built in the city and unincorporated area, especially in the western portion of the county. Vacancies, lack of re-investment, and, in some cases, abandonment in these centers have contributed to blight and loss of property tax revenues. Significant improvement has occurred at some activity centers, while there are others that could greatly benefit from rehabilitation. Transportation concurrency problems have, in some cases, hampered the redevelopment efforts (see the section on the Transportation concurrency issue for more information about this topic).

Second, the City's lack of design standards has led to some undesirable development in new or redeveloped activity centers (Urban Design is discussed as a separate issue). In particular, stock plans of franchise businesses often ignore Gainesville's unique character and development pattern. There is strong community consensus that there is a need to integrate New Urbanism and traditional neighborhood design principles into the activity centers as redevelopment occurs. This integration can lead to more viable, sustainable neighborhoods and multi-neighborhood activity centers. It is hoped that this can also encourage more mixing of residential/non-residential uses, if well implemented.

#### Actions to address the issue

- Redevelopment of existing activity centers
- Addition of an Urban Design Element to the Comprehensive Plan
- Increased residential densities around activity centers

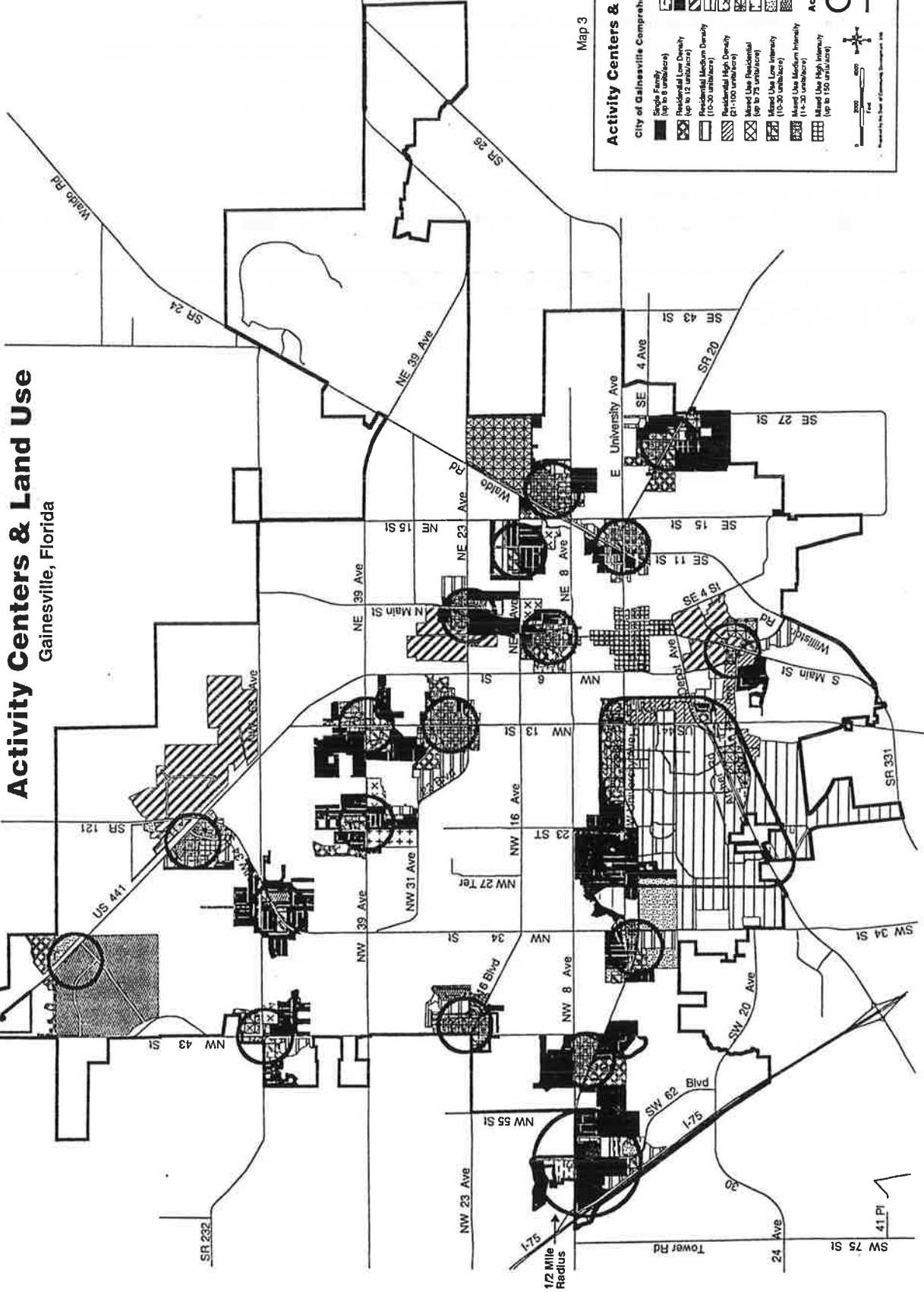
The Plan update should stress redevelopment of activity centers (see related issue concerning Infill/Redevelopment) with designs that maximize pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit transportation choices (see related issue concerning Transportation choices). Multi-story development must be encouraged to better utilize available land. Infill at existing activity centers is needed to bring retail/commercial uses closer to the street. Amendments which stress redevelopment of activity centers should be added under Objective 2.4 in the Future Land Use Element.

Redevelopment of activity centers is also contingent upon transportation concurrency. Amendments concerning transportation concurrency are addressed under that issue.

The addition of the Urban Design Element was discussed in the previous section. Increased residential density was also discussed in the earlier section on that topic.

# Activity Centers & Land Use

## Gainesville, Florida



Map 3

### Activity Centers & Land Use

City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan

	Single Family (up to 8 units/ac)		Office
	Residential Low Density (up to 12 units/ac)		Commercial
	Residential Medium Density (10-20 units/ac)		Industrial
	Residential High Density (20-30 units/ac)		Education
	Medium Density Intensity (up to 70 units/ac)		Recreation
	High Intensity (up to 150 units/ac)		Public Facilities
			Agriculture
			Conservation
			Planned Use District

### Activity Centers

Activity Center  
(Numbered circles, 1-50)

City Limits

0 200 400 800 Feet

Prepared by the Office of Planning, Gainesville, FL



## **Failure of the Mixed Use Categories to produce residential/non-residential mixes**

Several future land use categories which allowed a mix of residential and non-residential uses were adopted in the 1991-2001 Plan. As stated in the Future Land Use Data and Analysis Report, the Mixed Use Low, Mixed Use Medium, Mixed Use High and Mixed Use Residential categories were developed to implement a multi-center system. This system would allow the development/growth of activity centers without destroying neighborhood character, guide growth to environmentally suitable areas, provide differing housing types of varying densities, and reduce auto dependency by encouraging a mixture of residential, office and commercial uses. The Residential High category also allowed, to a much lesser extent, a mix of residential and secondary non-residential uses.

These categories have had extremely limited success in providing a mix of residential and non-residential uses. To date, only two developments (Magnolia Park and Union Street Station) have been approved which either vertically and/or horizontally mixed residential and non-residential uses on land designated for mixed use. Neither development is built at this time. (It should be noted that the Union Street development is located on land which was designated mixed use in the 1980 Comprehensive Plan and the same residential/non-residential mix would have been allowed under the previous category). Local market forces have contributed to problems with the mixed use districts since there have been few requests for developments which would implement these categories.

One of the major reasons for failure was that these categories were placed, in most cases, on existing, built commercial properties such as shopping centers or strip commercial areas. There was no interest in adding residential units to these existing commercial sites during the period since Plan adoption. Even as redevelopment has occurred at several activity centers during the planning period, the market forces have not been favorable for a true mix of housing and commercial uses. In addition, the Mixed Use Low category was placed on many small parcels (several less than .5 acre in size), meaning that agglomeration of multiple parcels would be necessary to provide enough land area for a mix of uses. Again, market forces have not produced that result to date.

### Actions to address the issue

- Re-examination of the mixed use land use categories
- Redevelopment

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City must examine the mixed use categories and lands so designated to determine whether they should be maintained with modifications or new designations should be created. Some small parcels designated as mixed use should be re-designated under single-use categories.

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) and New Urbanism are relatively recent trends which may influence mixed use development in the community. The City has created a TND ordinance

as part of the Land Development Code. Traditional Neighborhood Design concepts should be integrated into the updated Future Land Use Element (under Policy 2.1.1) and the newly proposed Urban Design Element (see separate Urban Design issue discussion) should be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

Redevelopment of areas currently designated mixed use (includes most activity centers) must be encouraged through policy additions under Objective 2.4 in the Future Land Use Element.

### **Providing more transportation choices**

Increasing the number of viable transportation mode choices is an important strategy for dealing with roadway congestion and concurrency management problems (see the separate Transportation concurrency issue section). The adopted 2020 Long Range Transportation Cost-Feasible Plan, developed during the 2020 Gainesville Urban Area Transportation Study, is based on increased dependence on mass transit, pedestrianism and bicycling to meet the community's mobility needs over the next 25 years. The achievement of viable choices is highly related to the quality of the alternatives to the single occupant vehicle. Better pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit facilities are needed citywide. Because transportation funds are severely limited (see related issue concerning Financing transportation infrastructure), alternative transportation choices are even more critical now than when the original Plan was adopted.

Expansion of mass transit service is an especially pressing requirement for really providing meaningful options. The frequency of mass transit service has been too low to attract those persons who have the choice to use auto transportation. Transit service must be enhanced in those areas having the most potential to attract maximum ridership and to alleviate single-occupant vehicle trips on congested corridors.

Related mass transit facilities such as shelters and stops often fail to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. In some cases, bus shelters are sized too small to accommodate all users. This is especially true for shelters serving large student population areas and in close proximity to the university. Most bus stops do not have an associated shelter which means that mass transit users are particularly disadvantaged during inclement or hot weather. Some of the stops are uncomfortable to use because they are not at grade or do not have a concrete pad or bench at them.

Sidewalks and sidewalk connections are also important in creating viable choice. Many areas in the community are inadequately served by sidewalks. Pedestrian traffic is encouraged by attractive streetscapes, narrower and gridded streets, lower traffic speeds, and increased density (see related issues concerning Density and Urban Design).

The updated Plan should create policies and priorities for the location of new pedestrian, bicycle and mass transit facilities. This is essential as a basic design feature throughout the community.

Support of multi-modalism was a key focus of the Transportation Mobility Element adopted in 1994. The 2000-2010 Plan should continue and intensify that concentration by creating policies

for the identification and funding of needed mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Transportation and land use planning must be integrated with multi-modal improvements and design requirements (see related issues about Urban Design and Financing transportation infrastructure).

#### Actions to address the issue

- Evaluate existing bus stops and shelters for needed corrective actions
- Increase connectivity between and among developments
- Inventory sidewalks on local streets in targeted pedestrian-oriented areas
- Add policies concerning mass transit headways for the most productive routes
- Urban Design

While the inventory of bus stops and shelters was completed as required by Policies 1.7.3 and 1.7.4 of the Transportation Mobility Element, the evaluation of existing bus stops to identify the need for shelters, bicycle parking, route information, benches and waste receptacles as stated in Policy 1.7.3 was not accomplished due to staffing limitations. The evaluation should be an important component of the Comprehensive Plan update and policies should be added which indicate needed corrective actions and set priorities for those actions once the evaluation is completed.

Connectivity between residential subdivisions and from residential areas to activity centers is essential for pedestrian and bicycle modes. The lack of connections renders these modes highly inefficient and therefore precludes their usefulness. Policies should be added to the Transportation Mobility Element which ensure that new subdivisions and new development are designed to increase connectivity. Additional policies should require new development to be designed to include modified grid street patterns, street connections between neighborhoods, trail and sidewalk systems connecting neighborhoods to schools, parks and commercial areas.

The inventory of sidewalks which was called for in Policy 1.3.6 of the Transportation Mobility Element has been partially accomplished. Needs along collector and arterial roads were surveyed in 1996. Further inventories of local streets in designated pedestrian-oriented areas are necessary and should be reflected as a new policy in the Transportation Mobility Element.

New policies concerning mass transit headways for productive routes should also be added to the Transportation Mobility Element. The policies must be consistent with activity centers and student-oriented medium and high density housing areas as designated in the Future Land Use Element.

Urban Design actions were discussed under that issue.

## **Financing transportation infrastructure**

Federal and State dollars for transportation improvements between 1995 and 2020 are projected to be insufficient to fund the list of needed roadway and multi-modal improvements for the metropolitan area. Funding levels are at about half the amount anticipated for the Long Range Plan in 1991 when the Comprehensive Plan was adopted. Approximately one-third of the identified urbanized area projects are expected to receive funding over the 25-year planning period. Of the road construction projects that are earmarked for funding, only four are located within city limits. The needs plan adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) is conservative and only represents maintaining the existing adopted levels of service and accepts that congested facilities will only be improved by shifts to alternate modes such as transit, bicycling, or walking. (See related issues concerning Transportation concurrency and Providing more transportation choices.)

The moneys available for transit operating assistance were also reduced substantially since Plan adoption. From 1995 to 1997 the federal share of funds for mass transit was reduced from 1.1 million to 350,000 dollars. Currently there are very limited dedicated local funding sources for transportation improvements. For example, there are no road impact fees being assessed in the city or county. Only one cent of an available five cents is currently being collected on local option gas taxes (the City's portion of this money is being used to support mass transit service).

There is considerable community interest in the reconfiguration of University Avenue in the downtown/UF area. Redesign of the corridor from North South Drive to the Matheson Museum was established as a policy in the current Transportation Mobility Element (1.4.3) and has not been achieved. The project would involve reduction of vehicle lanes from four to two, addition of on-street parking, widening of sidewalks, enhancement of pedestrian crossings and turn lanes, and sharing of traffic flow with other designated corridors. Related to this reconfiguration is the implementation of a Special Area Plan with urban design features to enhance the corridor (see related issue concerning Urban Design).

### Actions to address the issue

- Identification of local funding sources
- Use of funds from the UF Campus Master Plan agreement
- The mass transit system should continue to seek funding opportunities for demonstration projects
- Implementation of the University Avenue reconfiguration

Local funding is needed to meet identified needs. The Alachua County Transportation Funding Advisory Committee has recently completed (June 1998) a report addressing potential funding sources. It is vital that the City carefully prioritize its transportation goals and identify additional local funding to accomplish these goals as part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

The Campus Master Plan agreement includes a source of funds for transportation improvements, including funding of mass transit for students. Policies should be added to the Transportation Mobility Element which discuss the use of funds and priorities for transportation improvements based on available moneys.

The Regional Transit System has been successful in obtaining special funding opportunities and demonstration projects. This ongoing effort should be recognized as an added policy to the Transportation Mobility Element.

Policy 1.4.3 in the Transportation Mobility Element should be revised to reflect the ongoing interest in reconfiguring University Avenue. Recent input from citizen groups has indicated that the reconfiguration should possibly extend as far east as Waldo Road. Funding sources for the road reconfiguration and the pedestrian amenities must be identified to accomplish this project.

### **Transportation concurrency**

Transportation concurrency has been and will continue to be a major issue requiring resolution for the City of Gainesville. Of key import is the fact that the City's adopted Transportation Concurrency Management Area (TCMA) no longer meets the statutory requirements of Rule 9J-5. The TCMA has been the most effective and reasonable tool in solving transportation issues for the community. Rule 9J-5 offers no other transportation concurrency solution tailored to the needs and size of a community like Gainesville. Thus, the Plan update will require new, innovative ways of dealing with traffic level of service problems. One of the most frustrating and illogical consequences of transportation concurrency is that it has actively promoted urban sprawl and discouraged redevelopment/infill. This has been Gainesville's experience, despite creative efforts to address concurrency on particularly congested roadways.

Progress with infill and redevelopment in certain areas has been hindered because of the traffic level of service standard (LOS) issues. Specific examples include the temporary cessation of development approvals on two road segments: NW 13th Street from University Avenue to NW 29th Road and NW 34th Street from NW 39th Avenue to US 441. During the time when development permits could not be issued on NW 13th Street, the City was threatened with the loss of a major retailer because they could not expand on site. The redevelopment of the vacated Pic 'N Save/Wometco Theater site was also blocked during this same time period. Fortunately, these two road segments now have alternative LOS standards set for them as a result of comprehensive plan amendments to the Transportation Mobility Element. Redevelopment and infill are proceeding well with expansions to the Sam's Wholesale Club development and the introduction of Muvico Theaters to the Pic 'N Save site. This contributes favorably to the City's tax base and goals for infill/redevelopment (see separate section on that issue).

Unfortunately, not all transportation concurrency issues have been resolved and more difficulties are anticipated with the eventual disappearance of the TCMA. Map 4 illustrates existing and potential problem areas. Two road segments--SW 13th Street from Archer Road to University Avenue and SW 20th Avenue from SW 62nd Boulevard to SW 34th Street--are rated at LOS F which has stopped most forms of development on these segments. The TCMA exemptions

found in Policy 1.8.5 of the current Transportation Mobility Element have offered the only development potential for the SW 13th Street segment.

Several of the roads shown in Map 4 (see orange coding) are nearing capacity. These include Newberry Road from I-75 to 34th Street and all segments of NW 34th Street. The previously mentioned segment of NW 13th Street must also be dealt with during the upcoming planning period because of the temporary nature of the specially adopted LOS standard for that roadway.

There are plans for creating a one-way pair improvement for W. University Avenue and SW 2nd Avenue to resolve congestion in that area. It is not currently known when that improvement will be finalized meaning that concurrency problems may occur on these segments. Given the proximity to the University campus, it is highly undesirable to impede redevelopment efforts along these segments.






Roads shown in pink on Map 4 have the potential for concurrency problems. Three of these segments can be negatively impacted for concurrency by two proposed Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). The Springhills DRI, proposed outside of city limits near I-75 on NW 39th Avenue, will impact NW 39th Avenue and NW 43rd Street. These external trips could cause the maximum service volumes to be exceeded, thus requiring the City to deny future development proposals within city limits. The Greenways of Gainesville DRI, also known as the Gainesville North Activity Center, has potential impacts on the NW 43rd Street and NW 13th Street (US 441) corridors. The City has also reviewed a preliminary proposal for an office building on Archer Road which would largely take up the remaining capacity for that segment and impact SW 16th Avenue.

Developments associated with the University of Florida/Shands Hospital/VA Hospital could also possibly impact Archer Road and SW 16th Avenue. Development at UF is regulated by the Campus Master Plan (see related issue discussion concerning the UF Campus Master Plan). The impacts of University development are subject to a pending agreement between the City and the Board of Regents. The mitigation efforts undertaken as part of that agreement are expected to address the long-term reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. The agreement, however, does not preclude the roadway maximum service volumes being exceeded as a result of campus/medical development. If that does occur, private property in proximity to the campus may be severely limited in its development potential.

The City Plan Board and City Commission have made the decision that redevelopment and infill are higher goals for this community than lower service volumes on roadways. The City has reaffirmed its commitment to address long-term needs by promoting transportation choice. Therefore, the transportation concurrency issue must be resolved during the Comprehensive Plan update to ensure that the City's core remains active and viable.

# ROAD SEGMENTS WITH CONCURRENCY PROBLEMS

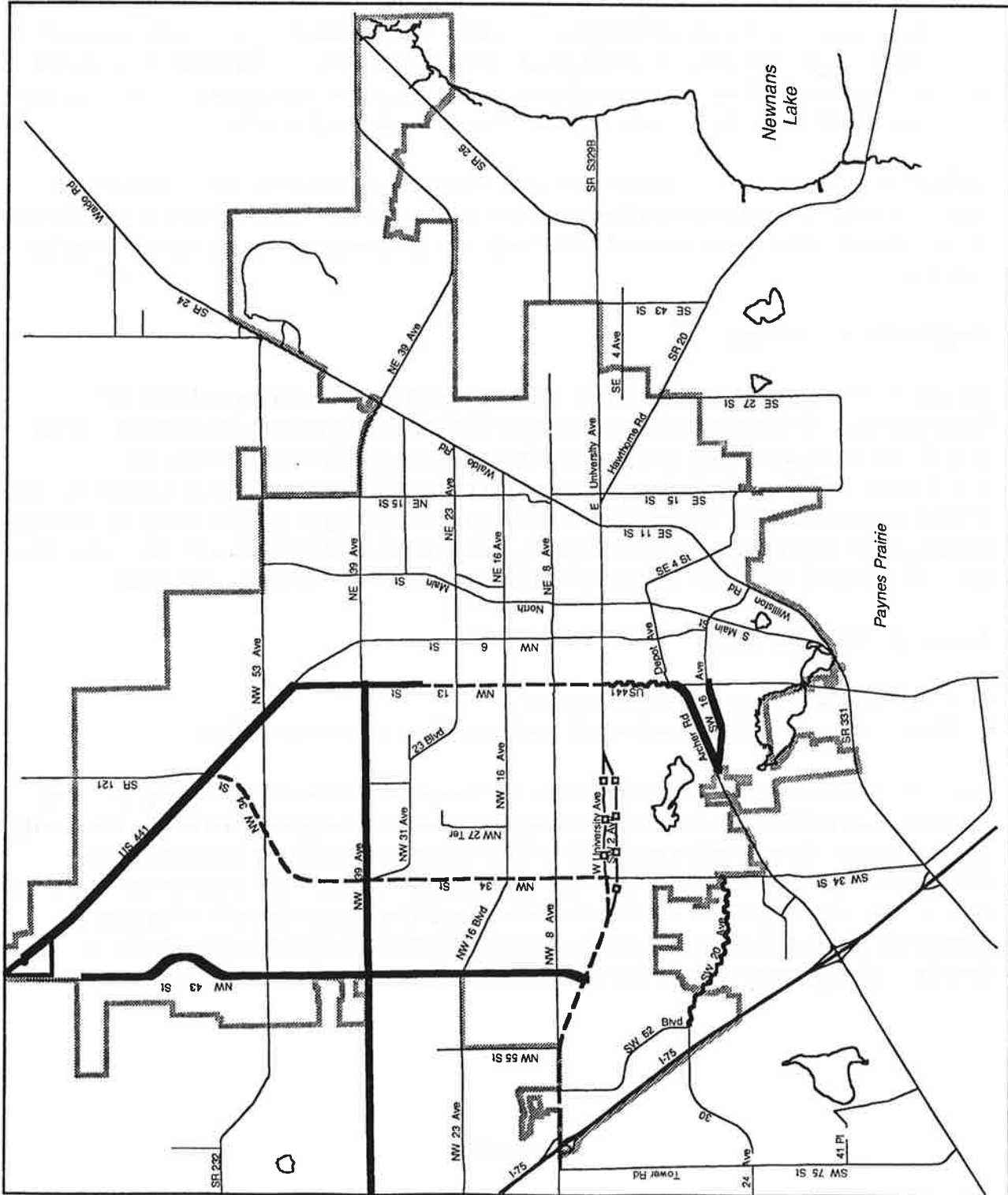
## Legend

-  Roads with No Capacity
-  Roads Nearing Capacity
-  One-Way Pair Improvements
-  Roads with Potential Capacity Problems
-  Gainesville City Limits

Note: Road capacity information reflects 1998 data. City limit lines updated to yr 2000.

**City of Gainesville  
Gainesville, Florida**

Prepared by the  
Department of Community Development  
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#### Actions to address the issue

- Develop a Chapter 163 Agreement with the Department of Community Affairs concerning concurrency
- Redevelopment/infill

As part of the Comprehensive Plan update, the City must develop an alternative strategy for dealing with transportation concurrency. As indicated earlier in this section, the Transportation Concurrency Management Area, as currently adopted in the Plan, does not meet the new Rule 9J-5 criteria. The City anticipates developing a Chapter 163 agreement with the Department of Community Affairs which will deal with transportation concurrency. The strategies associated with this agreement will include required mitigation measures in some areas and exemptions in other areas based on the multi-modal aspects of the particular road corridor.

Infill and redevelopment are closely tied to concurrency because redevelopment and infill at higher densities can promote mass transit usage which can, in turn, reduce roadway congestion or provide an alternative means of travel. Infill/redevelopment actions were discussed in that issue section above.

#### **Neighborhood Planning**

The desire for neighborhood planning has been expressed by both citizens and City Commissioners. Recognizing the need for more finely detailed planning, the 2000-2010 Plan should provide policies which promote opportunities for planning within and among neighborhoods. This will help to create a sense of place within the community. One of the real difficulties associated with neighborhood planning is establishing geographic areas which extend beyond the boundaries of individual residential subdivisions so that linkages can be made. The needs of individual areas must be carefully balanced with the overall community goals.

#### Actions to address the issue

- Develop a neighborhood planning strategy
- Identification of neighborhoods which need more detailed planning efforts

One of the newer aspects of the Comprehensive Plan update will be a focus on neighborhood planning. This will involve developing strategies to categorize neighborhood areas. There will also be efforts to identify which neighborhoods have particular needs for detailed planning, including aspects such as infrastructure improvements and neighborhood connectivity to activity centers. There will be policies added to the Future Land Use Element to reflect this new orientation. Neighborhoods which need to be protected from increased density should be identified and appropriate Comprehensive Plan amendments must be made to accomplish this.



of a minimum size (a minimum of 20 units was indicated as possibly appropriate). This is based on an ordinance developed in Montgomery County, Maryland known as the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) Ordinance. Under that ordinance, Montgomery County requires that a minimum of 15 percent of new housing units be affordable to buyers or renters in the lowest third of household income. The county housing authority also has a legal first right to purchase one-third of the affordable units or five percent of all new housing built. This ordinance has resulted in a dispersal of low-income households.

Actions to address the issue

- Coordinate with Alachua County to develop a “fair share” ordinance for dispersal of affordable housing units

The City’s Intergovernmental Coordination Element should be amended to add an objective and related policies concerning working with Alachua County on an ordinance similar to the Montgomery County, Maryland MPDU Ordinance. An intergovernmental strategy is essential to making the dispersal of affordable housing units a viable solution. New policies should be added to both the Intergovernmental Coordination Element (under Objective 1.4) and the Housing Element (under Objective 1.2) to reflect the new intergovernmental, urban areawide focus.



## **Enhancement of recreation facilities and programs**

The 1991-2001 Recreation Data and Analysis Report identified that limited funding for recreation over a 15-year period was a problem. Relative to other communities, Gainesville has had low spending levels for recreation facilities/programs. That situation continues to persist. Gainesville was ranked 11th out of 15 similar-sized cities in Florida on recreation and parks spending based on a 1997 study conducted by Florida State University and the State Department of Environmental Protection. Another problem related to recreation facilities is the underdevelopment of existing recreation holdings.

A recreation initiative for a local option sales tax ~~is slated to be~~ was rejected by voters on the September 1, 1998 ballot. The proposal ~~is~~ was for a one-cent tax for a period of eight years to fund recreation facilities and associated maintenance costs. ~~The sales tax may offer a resolution to the City's recreation deficits. The Recreation Element will be modified to reflect the election results.~~

### Actions to address the issue

- ~~Develop policies based on the outcome of the Recreation Initiative vote~~ Alternative proposals to improve recreational facilities within the City are being investigated and discussed

The City will amend the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the Recreation Element, based on ~~the outcome of the September 1, 1998 vote on the Recreation Initiative for an optional local sales tax~~ alternative recreation funding proposals.

## **Coordination with Santa Fe Community College and the University of Florida Campus Master Plan**

Pursuant to Florida Statutes 235.01, the Legislature authorized state and local officials to cooperate in establishing and maintaining educational plants that will meet the public education needs throughout the State. Over the last few years, the downtown branch campus of Santa Fe Community College has grown tremendously. The campus is part of a redevelopment area which includes the Pleasant Street Historic District. Due to the growth potential of the downtown campus, it will be very important for Santa Fe Community College to coordinate with the City's Comprehensive Plan and urban design standards to assure that site plans for the college will be compatible with the neighborhood (see related Urban Design and Neighborhood Planning issues). The location of the campus on the NW 6th Street corridor between the downtown and the University of Florida also makes this facility a key player in the efforts to integrate those two end points into one dynamic core which includes Santa Fe. A consultant study and Special Area Plan concerning the area will provide input as to needed areas of cooperation.

Since the 1991-2001 Plan adoption, the University of Florida has adopted a Campus Master Plan consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan (per State requirements). The future of this effort depends heavily on the strict adherence to that plan and the financial commitment by the University to pay for its impacts on the levels of service of the local community. The University is an integral part of the City, providing educational, economic and cultural opportunities. However, the State Legislature recognized that while the University has many positive benefits, the University may also have an adverse impact on the public facilities, services and natural resources of the host community. The University has an extremely large impact on the transportation network in the city. Therefore, it is important that the coordination of transportation planning outside the scope of the Campus Master Plan requirements be addressed through ongoing intergovernmental coordination efforts and negotiations.

#### Actions to address the issue

- Amend the Intergovernmental Coordination Element to add opportunities for Santa Fe Community College to become involved in the local planning process
- Amend the Comprehensive Plan to reflect adoption of the UF Campus Master Plan

As required under the latest version of Chapter 163, the City should amend the Intergovernmental Coordination Element to provide opportunities for Santa Fe Community College to become involved in the local planning process. This can be accomplished by formal representation, membership on technical advisory committees or other appropriate means. In addition, as part of the Intergovernmental Coordination Element, the City will encourage Santa Fe Community College to develop a master plan for the expansion of the downtown facility.

Many of the elements of the existing Comprehensive Plan need to be amended to reflect the fact that the University of Florida (UF) adopted a Campus Master Plan as required by the State. The Potable Water/Wastewater, Capital Improvements Element, and Intergovernmental Coordination Elements should be amended to reflect the fact that UF now sets level of service standards within its own plan. Policies concerning coordination concerning transportation planning should be added to both the Transportation Mobility Element and the Intergovernmental Coordination Element.

#### **Intergovernmental coordination concerning the dispersal of affordable housing units**

A key finding of the Rusk report (see earlier citation in the Declining share of Alachua County population issue section) was the "growing segregation by income class as a result of countywide housing development patterns." While there are affordable housing opportunities within the City of Gainesville, one problem is that they tend to be concentrated and not dispersed throughout the community. The Rusk report goes on to say, "It is essential that Gainesville promote greater income diversity in the housing supply both within the city and throughout the county."

In order to promote a broader dispersal of affordable housing units, the Rusk report recommends a strategy requiring a "fair share" of low- and moderate-income housing in all new developments