

COUNTYWIDE VISIONING AND PLANNING

Alachua County

Alachua • Archer • Gainesville • Hawthorne • High Springs • LaCrosse • Micanopy • Newberry • Waldo

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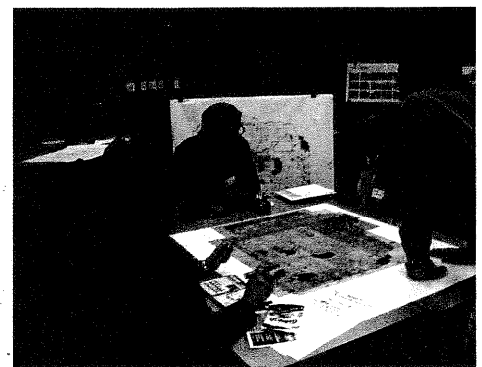
CVPC ENDORSES COUNTYWIDE VISION AND CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The countywide vision and conceptual plan represents the culmination of efforts over the last four years to jointly plan for growth in Alachua County's unincorporated areas. The plan captures the common goals articulated by each municipality to protect environmentally sensitive areas, preserve the unique identity of each community, direct future growth into existing urbanized areas, prevent inefficient, sprawling development between one community and the next, and preserve the rural character of the County. It also articulates specific recommendations for the character of development or preserve lands in the unincorporated areas.

The Countywide Visioning and Planning Committee (CVPC) was established by interlocal agreement to undertake this visioning process. The CVPC includes members from each of the nine municipalities and the County. In the fall of 2004, a series of town hall meetings were held to find out from the public how they felt about growth and development in their communities and beyond. Additionally, a community survey was distributed to solicit input from people about their major concerns and issues related to growth, development and quality of life.

This public input was combined with a study of existing conditions, population growth projections and a buildout capacity analysis to begin mapping the conceptual plan. CVPC members and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members helped to refine the plan through a series of workshops. In the spring of 2005 the first consensus workshop and a planning congress was held to further refine the plan and discuss issues. The final plan was presented in May of 2005 at a second consensus workshop. On June 29th, the CVPC formally endorsed the plan and submitted it to the Board of County Commissioners and each municipality for consideration and action.

Turning the vision and conceptual plan into reality requires action on behalf of the County, its municipalities and the public. The CVPC has outlined a series of action steps to move the vision forward and create implementation tools and techniques. The visioning process will continue with active leadership and participation on behalf of the County and each municipality to craft more detailed small area plans for the urban and extraterritorial reserve areas.



COUNTYWIDE VISIONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

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COMMUNITY SURVEY

Alachua County residents completed a total of 185 surveys with the largest response from Gainesville (103 surveys), Micanopy (30) and Newberry (23). Sixty-one percent of respondents live in incorporated areas of the County.

In Gainesville:

- Residents claimed that community character is generated by the University of Florida and natural resources.
- Threats to quality of life include economic (low wages and a lack of jobs) and development-related (too much growth, a loss of open space, and transportation problems).
- Residents support compact development patterns with improvements to the transportation system and the preservation or creation of more open space and recreational areas.
- Residents are pleased with most public services but identified a need for more parks and better transportation.
- Many respondents in nearby unincorporated areas would like to be annexed into the city of Gainesville.

Elsewhere in Alachua County:

- Community character is often defined by the small town feel, people, history, and natural resources.
- Communities feel most threatened by economic problems, the lack of investment in public services, and the loss of young people to other communities.
- Residents would like to see redevelopment and some new suburban and mixed-use growth.
- There is a desire to create more locally-owned small businesses.
- Residents would like to have more restaurant, entertainment, and shopping in their communities and would like to protect rural and agricultural lands.
- Residents outside of Gainesville have mixed feelings about most public services and rate drainage and transportation poorly.
- Most residents living in the unincorporated areas would prefer not to be annexed into a city.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

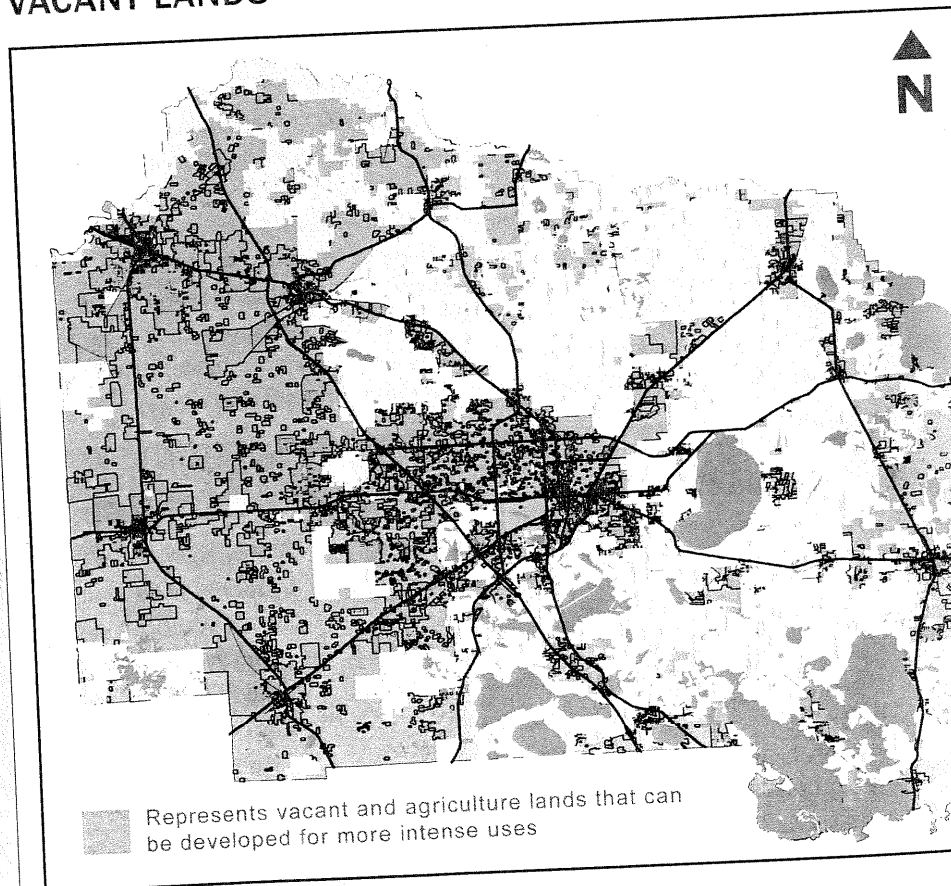
The visioning process included a review of growth potential throughout the county given currently adopted land use plans. The results indicated a capacity for an additional **359,267** people and **168,879** dwelling units countywide. Of this total, approximately 41 percent of that population growth could occur within the existing municipalities, with the remaining occurring in the unincorporated, areas of the County. Given Alachua County's 2004 existing population estimates of 236,174 people, this would put the county's buildout population at approximately **595,434** indicating a total increase of approximately 62%. Given the amount of capacity within the incorporated areas, this exercise helped to build support through the visioning process for the need to direct future growth into the existing urbanized areas, rather than sprawling from one community to the next.

These estimates were created by looking at vacant lands and agricultural lands that were zoned for more intense uses

as shown in the map below, and applying a buildout factor to those parcels based on the type of uses allowed, densities and intensities. These numbers do not consider redevelopment, assume changes in the existing comprehensive plans, account for infrastructure requirements, or align with population forecasts or market conditions. Rather, they illustrate simply the capacity for growth given the current comprehensive plans.

The Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida publishes low, medium and high population forecasts for Florida cities and counties. Alachua County's medium rate of population growth is forecasted at approximately 1.15% annually, which means that it would reach buildout of approximately 600,000 people in about 80 years. The countywide vision attempts to put forward a new framework for considering where and how future development for this population can occur.

VACANT LANDS



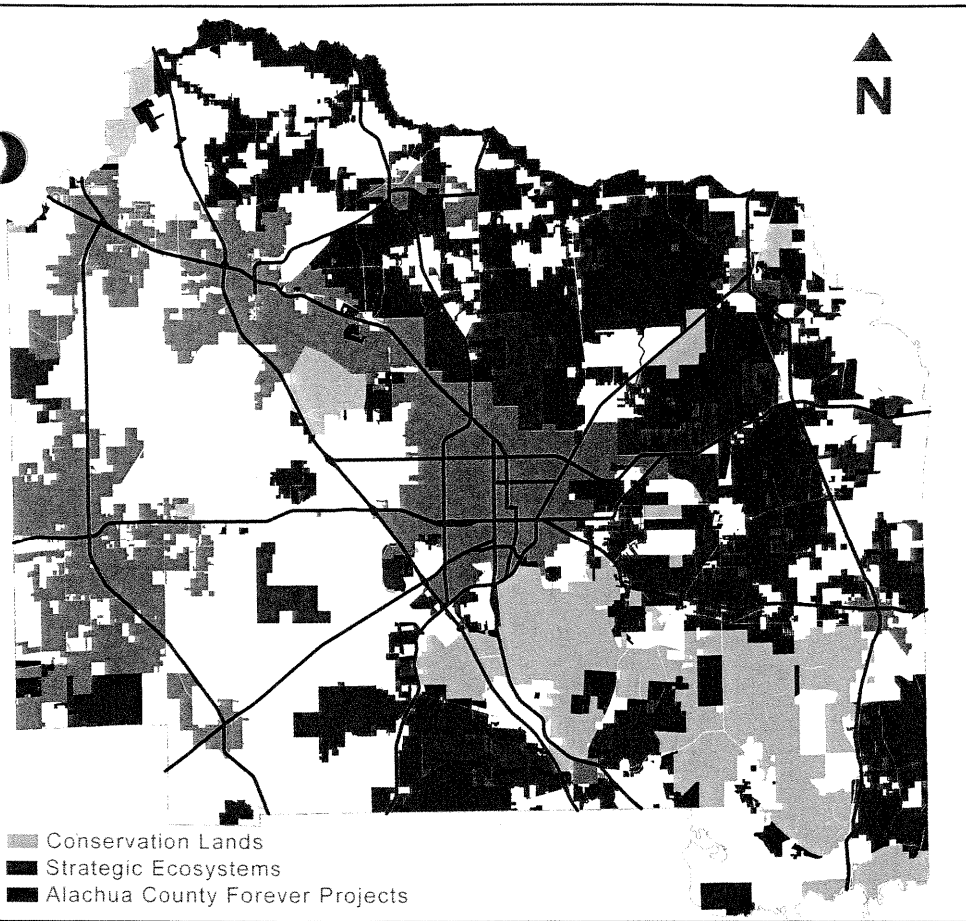
ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

The protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas is one of the common themes that emerged from the visioning process. Mapping identified environmentally significant areas was a key step in providing the framework for the conceptual plan. The map to the left depicts three categories of environmentally sensitive lands:

Conservation Lands: These are lands that are currently designated either as parks or conservation areas.

Strategic Ecosystems: In April, 2003, the County identified lands with unique or special natural resources and designated them as strategic ecosystems for inclusion in the County's Comprehensive Plan. As of the Summer 2005, the county is developing new Land Development Regulations (LDRs) to implement Comprehensive Plan policies related to these areas.

Alachua County Forever Projects: Properties identified as environmentally sensitive that have been or are designated for future purchase by the County through the Alachua County Forever Program.



MUNICIPAL RESERVE AREAS

The Boundary Adjustment Act (BAA) is unique to Alachua County. It allows each community to identify a future reserve area beyond their municipal boundaries for future annexation. The intent of the BAA is to make the process of annexation more predictable. There are two designations for the reserve areas:

Urban Reserve Areas: Lands likely to become developed and served by urban services within the next 10 years, and/or serve as greenbelts.

Extraterritorial Reserve Areas: Lands that can be brought into the urban reserve areas in the future once the adjacent urban reserve areas are annexed.

Under the BAA, each community is required to update their urban and extraterritorial reserve areas every five years. This update process formally began in May of 2005. The visioning activities leading up to this point provided a forum for communities to discuss potential boundary changes in the context of the overall countywide vision. As a result, the communities of Hawthorne and LaCrosse identified new boundaries as depicted on the map. While there are other proposed boundary changes, this map represents conceptual plans as discussed at town hall meetings and with the CVPC in early 2005. The final boundaries for each municipality will be set by the end of 2005 upon review and action by the Board of County Commissioners.

