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# CITY OF GAINESVILLE

## 2000-2010 Comprehensive Plan

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Final  
Evaluation & Appraisal Report  
October 7, 2010

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CITY OF  
**GAINESVILLE**  
every path starts with passion  
FLORIDA

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

The following general acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout this report. Acronyms germane to specific plan elements or sections of the EAR are defined therein.

Ch. 163	Chapter 163, Florida Statutes
9J-5	Rule 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code
City	The City of Gainesville
County	Alachua County
DCA	Florida Department of Community Affairs
EAR	Evaluation and Appraisal Report
FAC	Florida Administrative Code
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FLUM	Future Land Use Map
FS	Florida Statutes
LDC	Land Development Code
LDRs	Land Development Regulations
LOS	Level of Service
NCFRPC	North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
SB360	Senate Bill 360
SRPP	(NCFRPC) Strategic Regional Policy Plan
TCEA	Transportation Concurrency Exception Area

## **Acknowledgements**

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City Departments (including but not limited to Public Works (including RTS and Solid Waste), Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, and Housing & Community Development)

Florida Department of Community Affairs

Gainesville Regional Utilities

Gainesville Regional Airport

Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency

Alachua County Growth Management Department

North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

St. Johns County Water Management District

School Board of Alachua County

University of Florida (Department of Urban & Regional Planning's Center for Building Better Communities, and Facilities Planning & Construction Division)

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## City of Gainesville Evaluation and Appraisal Report

### Chapter Four Assessment of Plan Elements

## Chapter Four Assessment of Plan Elements

### Introduction

In addition to the Major Issues analyses performed above, further changes are recommended for each element of the Comprehensive Plan, as detailed below.

Staff reviewed each objective and policy of each element, determined whether the policy had been achieved during the 2000-2010 planning period, and developed recommendations for what changes, if any, were needed. A summary of each element is shown below; the policy-by-policy analysis, presented in matrix form, may be found in Appendix B.

### Future Land Use Element

#### Key Findings

- The City of Gainesville has substantially met the goals, objectives, and policies of the Future Land Use Element.
- The City has continued to promote traditional urban form, including compact, mixed-use development and walkable neighborhoods. Mixed-use areas include limitations on uses that discourage pedestrian activity.
- The City has continued to promote transportation choice through the expansion of walkable mixed-use areas, bicycle facilities, and transit availability.
- In the Future Land Use Element, as well as throughout the Comprehensive Plan, the City continues to advocate alternatives to sprawl through such strategies as a range of mixed-use land use designations; concentration of development in activity centers; Transportation Concurrency Exception Area policies; and infill and redevelopment.

#### Successes

- Downtown Gainesville continues to thrive and evolve. Recent successes include the Depot Park, the rehabilitation of Bethel Station into a restaurant, the construction of a new County courthouse, The Palms residential condominiums, the Hampton Inn, an ongoing weekly farmer's market, and the new Rosa Parks transit center.
- The City has maintained its commitment to limiting the footprint of parking with the construction of a parking garage in downtown Gainesville. The structure features 'liner' retail fronting SW 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and provides 855 parking spaces.
- The City integrated several annexations into its Future Land Use Element during the planning period, including the area between SW Archer Road and SW Williston Road and SW 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Interstate 75. Much of this area has been rezoned with a new zoning category, BI (Business industrial district), that will provide for the development of certain office, business and industrial uses in a combined setting that will complement each other and reduce external trips for goods and services.

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### Chapter Four Assessment of the Future Land Use Element

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- There has been success with residential redevelopment in the University Heights area. New multiple-family residential units have provided housing for students in close proximity to the University of Florida. Further to the east towards downtown, additional multiple-family residential development has provided more housing for students and professionals. The reconfiguration of SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue provides an improved corridor offering multi-modal transportation options for residents to travel between the University and the downtown.
- The redevelopment of the Alachua General Hospital site for the Innovation Hub offers a variety of opportunities, with long-term implications for economic development, urban design, beautification of SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street, greenway, pedestrian and bikeway enhancements, stormwater management and water quality planning, and for private investment and development in adjacent areas. The first building site for the Hub has been approved through development plan review and the site is currently being deconstructed.
- The City finalized the purchase of the CSX rail property along 6<sup>th</sup> Street and began construction of a rail trail through central Gainesville. The new trail will extend from NW 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north to Depot Avenue to the south, connecting to the Depot Trail. This project includes the conversion of the intersection at SW 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue into a roundabout.
- The City continues to implement policies that protect natural resources and historic sites.
- The City continues to implement land use categories that protect single family neighborhoods, distribute growth, encourage economic vitality, and protect open space and the tree canopy.

#### ***Shortcomings***

- The Florida language used in the Future Land Use Element illustrates a vision, but does not translate well into policy. Revisions are needed throughout the Element to improve staff's ability to implement the vision.
- Terms such as 'neighborhood center' and 'neighborhood (activity) center' are used throughout the Element, but are not adequately defined or implemented in the LDC. Revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and LDC are being drafted to address this shortcoming, and are under consideration as the EAR is being prepared. Throughout the EAR these changes are referred to as the '2010 activity center update'.

#### ***Impact of Rule Changes on the Future Land Use Element***

There are changes to Chapter 163 and to the Strategic Regional Policy Plan that impact the Future Land Use Element.

#### **Chapter 163**

- (11)(e): Provides legislative findings regarding mixed-use, high-density urban infill and redevelopment projects; requires DCA to provide technical assistance to local governments.
- (11)(f): Provides legislative findings regarding a program for the transfer of development rights and urban infill and redevelopment; requires DCA to provide technical assistance to local governments.



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- 163.31771(3): Authorizes local governments to permit accessory dwelling units in areas zoned for single family residential use based upon certain findings.
- 163.31771(1), (2) and (4): Recognizes “extremely-low-income persons” as another income groups whose housing needs might be addressed by accessory dwelling units and defines such persons consistent with s.420.0004(8), F.S. Ch. 2006-69, LOF.
- 163.3177(6)(a):
  - The future land use plan must discourage urban sprawl. Ch. 2008-191, LOF.
  - The future land use plan must be based upon greenhouse gas reduction strategies. Ch. 2008-191, LOF.
- 163.3177(6)(d): The future land use map series must depict energy conservation. Ch. 2008-191, LOF.
- 163.3177(6)(a): Requires the future land use element to include by June 30, 2012, criteria that will be used to achieve compatibility of lands near public use airports.

#### **Strategic Regional Policy Plan**

- The City of Gainesville comprehensive plan is required to be in compliance with The North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan (NCF SRPP). It was adopted by the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council in 1996 and was last updated in 2003. Amendments to the NCF SRPP included updates to regional indicators and related data, and one updated policy is applicable to the City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan. Policy 4.2.9 states, “Ensure that local government comprehensive plans, DRIs, and requests for federal and state funds for development activities reviewed by the Council include adequate provisions for the protection of the Floridan aquifer, Areas of High Recharge Potential to the Floridan aquifer, the Ichetucknee Trace, as well as Stream-to-Sink Watersheds and Sinks which have been identified and mapped in the regional plan as Natural Resources of Regional Significance.”
- The updated Policy 4.2.9 has not been the basis for an objection by the Regional Planning Council to any Gainesville comprehensive plan amendments, but the Floridan Aquifer Recharge map in Future Land Use Environmentally Significant Land and Resources maps (within the Future Land Use Map Series) should be updated for consistency with updated maps from the Water Management Districts and/or Alachua County.

#### **Recommended Changes**

Please see the matrix in Appendix B for recommended changes to specific Objectives and Policies.


In general:

- The City is currently considering a series of changes to the Comprehensive Plan to address inconsistencies in the definition and implementation of activity centers. As part of the activity centers update, text changes are recommended to the following Objectives and Policies:
  - Objective 1.1; Policies 1.1.1 - 1.1.6

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### Chapter Four Assessment of the Future Land Use Element

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- Policy 1.2.5
  - New Objective 1.3 and associated policies
  - Objective 1.3 ; Policies 1.3.1 – 1.3.5
  - Goal 4; Policy 4.1.1 (Mixed-Use Low-Intensity, Mixed-Use Medium-Intensity, Mixed-Use High-Intensity, and Commercial land uses); Objective 4.3
- Staff recommends that policies throughout the Element be revised to convey the same essential message with clear, specific, and implementable language.
  - Staff recommends a new goal with objectives, and policies be developed to address the urban design vision for the City. This goal will serve as a replacement for the Urban Design Element, which is recommended for removal from the Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, the policies of the Urban Design Element should be integrated throughout the Future Land Use Element as appropriate. Please see the Urban Design Element chapter of the EAR for discussion of individual policies.
  - Policies 1.2.5, 1.2.7, and 1.2.9 are substantially the same and may be consolidated into a single policy.
  - Policy 1.2.10 calls for the front door of a multi-family development to be oriented to the street. Staff recommends a change that orients the front entrance to the street because this policy is unclear.
  - Distinguish the east and north edges of campus as prime locations for higher-density residential and/or mixed use development for faculty, staff and students. Refer to Innovation Square rather than the medical complex east of campus.
  - Policy 2.1.4 establishes the Urban Infill and Redevelopment Area, which is now superseded by the City-wide TCEA. This policy and the related map should be removed.
  - Objective 3.1 and its policies are identical to policies in the Conservation, Open Space & Groundwater Recharge Element. Staff recommends that the Future Land Use Element refer to conservation strategies in general terms, and reference the Conservation Element for detailed policies.
  - Within Policy 4.1.1, several land use categories set a maximum floor area allowable for commercial uses. Staff proposes a study that evaluates whether these maximums may limit potential for redevelopment and adaptive reuse. 
  - Policy 4.1.5 refers to both SW and NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street – these goals for SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street have largely been met by a special area plan, so staff recommends the policy only refer to NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - On the advice of the City’s Neighborhood Planner, Objective 5.1 and associated policies regarding the neighborhood planning program are being scaled back.