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***Conservation Element  
July 26, 2001 Workshop  
Proposed Changes***

***Draft Document: Changes to Conservation, Open Space and Groundwater Recharge Element (Proposed City of Gainesville 2000 – 2010 Comprehensive Plan) Suggested at 7/26/01 Workshop by Members of the Public. This draft document is for the purpose of showing what staff understood to have been the majority opinion of members of the general public (including residents of the City and of unincorporated Alachua County) that attended the workshop.***

**Policies**

- 1.1.1 At a minimum the following standards and guidelines shall be used:
- b. Wetlands: Developments containing wetlands must avoid loss of function or degradation of wetland habitat and/or wetland hydrology as the highest priority.
  - c. Lakes: Developments containing or adjacent to a lake (or lakes) must not adversely impact the condition of the lake or its associated wetland. Dredge and fill shall be prohibited. Development shall be prohibited within 50 feet of the landward extent of a lake.
  - f. Upland Areas: Developments within an area identified as Upland must submit an ecological inventory of the parcel. Based on the inventory, development may be restricted on the parcel.
- 1.1.2 The City shall use the environmentally significant properties inventory/ranking to identify viable populations of native plant and animal species, environmentally significant areas, and unique geological or historic features that shall be preserved, and show connectivity with other public lands and environmentally significant areas that shall be maintained. The inventory shall also be used to update the environmental management ordinance.
- 1.1.3 The City shall continue to have land development regulations that require new developments to dedicate land and easements, particularly for the creation of buffers along and around surface waters and natural reservations and to facilitate the development of greenways, wildlife corridors and other open spaces.

habitats; and prevent the spread of invasive vegetation. The adopted regulations shall be designed to maintain viable populations of these existing plant and animal species and allow development activities which are compatible with identified environmentally significant lands and resources. (See Environmentally Significant Land and Resources map series within the Future Land Use Map Series.)

2.4.11 The City's land development regulations shall protect environmentally significant lands and resources by:

- a. Controlling permissible uses through regulatory overlay districts;
- b. Providing opportunities for alternative and innovative site development;
- c. Providing setback and parking standards;
- d. ~~Provide mandatory mitigation to ensure no net loss of acreage and functions when wetlands are unavoidably lost;~~
- e. Allowing for or requiring the clustering of development away from environmentally significant resources; and
- f. Restricting on-site waste disposal systems.

2.4.12 At a minimum, conservation strategies for significant natural communities shall include:

- a. Preservation of native upland natural communities;

3.1.7 The City shall continue to implement the plan for the establishment and preservation of tree-lined streets. This plan gives priority to high-visibility Gateway Streets and important activity center road segments, as well as segments included on the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) Transportation Improvement Plan.

3.1.8 The City shall continue to have land development regulations that protect heritage and champion trees as an important community resource. The regulation at a minimum shall include:

- a. Variances from land development regulations to save and preserve trees;
- b. Financial penalties for the unlawful removal of trees; and
- c. Setback requirements to protect trees before, during and after construction.
- d. Protection of trees 8 inches in diameter (2 feet in circumference) measured at 4.5 feet above ground level.

Submitted by Phil Emvin

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10/15/01

## CITY COMMISSION STATEMENT CONSERVATION ELEMENT

**Mayor and Members:** I want to make only a few short points at this meeting. I apologize for running out of steam last week and hope my comments are not repetitious of others already made.

Recently, I completed an addition to Stoneridge Apartments. I am not quite sure what happened or why, but we were required to mitigate a 0.4 acre parcel of land that was considered a wetland. It took a stretch to make that judgment, but what could I say. I was astonished to learn that I had to mitigate this parcel of less than a half acre with seven acres or 16 times the size of the land in question by a payment of \$14,000. Although this didn't exactly thrill me, I felt better when I knew that the contribution would be used to enhance and enlarge a much higher quality wetland near Newnans Lake. My contribution included a sum for long time management of the wetland.

The story line here is that the decision made jointly by Michael Drummond representing the county and Barbara Hatchett representing the Water Management District was made to preserve a much better parcel of land. I hope you consider this factor when analyzing the decisions you make on this issue. I think this is pretty decent policy.

The **second comment** concerns the suggestion made by the Sierra Club to require up to a 300 foot boundary under certain conditions around a wetland. This would mean, for example, if there was a circular wetland of almost any quality with a diameter of about 50 feet, roughly the size of this auditorium, it could be subject to as much as an additional 300 feet setback, it would go from under 2,000sf to over 331,000sf. This is roughly the size of the County Administration building block and at least the full blocks to the north, south, east, and west of that building. If this were to be adopted, I would sure hope there are no wetlands on the properties you and the county plan to develop.

My **third comment** is the very large mitigation area you propose and its location, based on a 5 to 1 basis. Even worse is the proposed requirement that it be in the City limits. I would hope you would consider changing this wording so as to include any reasonable and rational area where the mitigation could actually do some good, say in purchasing or enhancing some of the properties in and around the creek system in Gainesville. Or, as an alternative, set a schedule of cash values, perhaps using this money to improve our drainage system to prevent all the oil, grit and other trash that runs off the streets directly into our creeks.

My **fourth and last comment** is the question why you are considering wetland rules at all. Why not use the standards set by the water management district? Aren't they the professionals? Aren't they doing their work in a manner to protect the water resources of the state? What benefit is there in having two standards to further add red tape to an already burdensome process? It seems your decision to make up another set of standards, seems a vote of no confidence in this agency.

Thank you for your courtesy, especially extending this meeting at my request.

10/15/01

