

COUNTYWIDE VISIONING AND PLANNING

Alachua Archer Gainesville Hawthorne High Springs Micanopy Newberry Waldo

ALACHUA COUNTY

NEXT STEPS

The interlocal agreement that funded the Countywide Visioning and Planning Process sunsets on June 30, 2005. On behalf of the CVPC, the conceptual plan, guiding principles and actions strategies were submitted to each municipality and the Board of County Commissioners for consideration and future action. Each community involved will determine next steps to developing their own small area plans for the urban and extraterritorial reserve areas. Continued planning within these areas is likely to occur under new joint planning area or interlocal agreements with active stakeholder and public input.



CVPC CONTACT INFORMATION

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Countywide Visioning and Planning Committee

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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.

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COUNTYWIDE VISIONING AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

CITY OF ALACHUA	CITY OF HAWTHORNE	CITY OF NEWBERRY
Jean Calderwood	Eddie Lee Martin	Debbie Boyd
Gib Coeper	Betty Surrency	CITY OF WALDO
CITY OF ARCHER	CITY OF HIGH SPRINGS	Kim Worley
Roberta Hodges	Jim Gabriel	Rodney Estes
CITY OF GAINESVILLE	James Drumm	ALACHUA COUNTY
Craig Lowe	TOWN OF MICANOPY	Rodney J. Long
Warren Nielsen	Fay Baird	Cynthia Moore Chestnut
TOWN OF LACROSSE	Steve Elder	
Dianne Dubberly		

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:

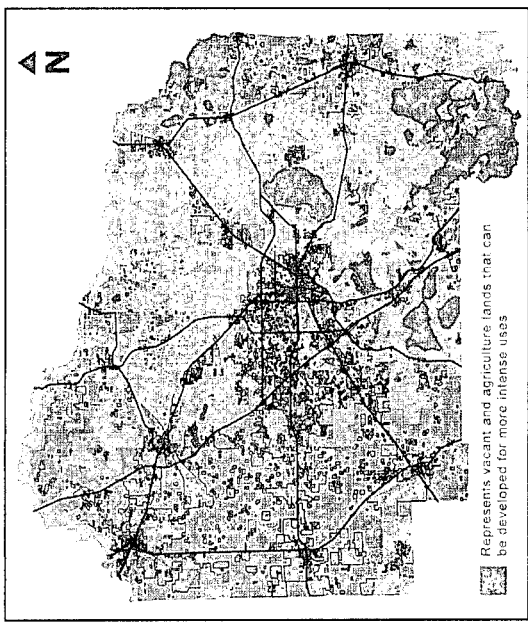
- Community character is often defined by the small town feel, people, history, and natural resources.
- Communities feel most threatened by economic problems, the lack of investment in public services, and the loss of young people to other communities.
- Residents would like to see redevelopment and 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

VACANT LANDS

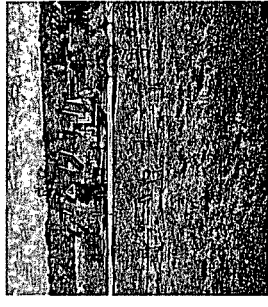


as shown in the map below, and applying a buildout factor to those parcels based on the type of uses allowed, densities and intensities. These numbers do not consider redevelopment, assume any changes in the existing comprehensive plans, account for infrastructure requirements, or align with population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

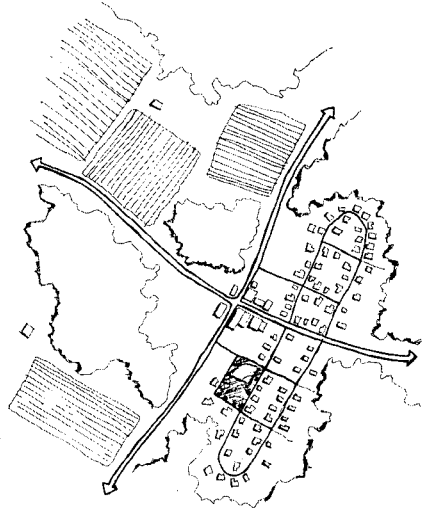
The Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEER) at the University of Florida publishes low, medium and high population forecasts for Florida cities and counties. Alachua County's medium rate of population growth is forecasted at approximately 1.15% annually, which means that it would reach buildout 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.

Rural Residential / Agricultural

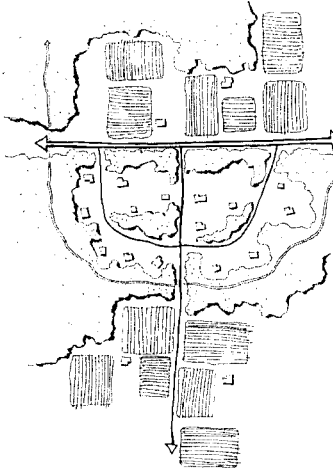
- Promotes use of land for active agricultural activities or limited residential development
- Encourages residential development that is designed to preserve more open space/agricultural land
- Incorporates concepts such as clustering and buffers to protect rural viewsheds and preserve rural character
- Open spaces can also serve as active greenbelts or provide opportunities for recreation



rural hamlet

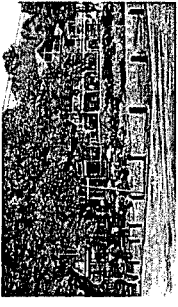


rural residential / agriculture



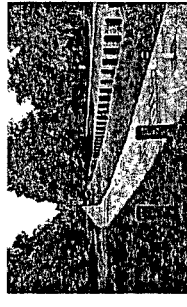
Rural Hamlet

- A traditional small town settlement containing limited commercial and civic uses with some surrounding residential
- The focal point for a rural community, often occurring at a crossroads
- Rural cluster development is designed to enhance the unique sense of place and character reflective of the community history



Environmentally Sensitive / Preserve Lands

- Lands that have been identified as environmentally sensitive
- Many are either designated as parks, conservation areas or strategic ecosystems
- Can be in either private or public ownership
- Very limited or no development in these areas
- Passive recreational activities can occur here
- Can provide buffers and greenbelts between urbanized areas



DEVELOPMENT TYPES

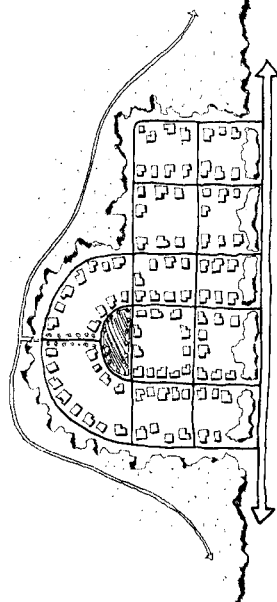
Five land development types were assigned to the urban and extraterritorial reserve areas for the conceptual land use plan to generalize the vision for the future land use. These development types reflect the desire for protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive, agricultural, and rural lands with strategic development to most efficiently meet the needs of future growth. In order to maintain the emphasis on the existing town centers and downtowns, the preference is for development of some low density residential, mixed-use activity centers and rural hamlets to create concentrations of growth to provide complimentary uses to the existing town centers and downtowns.

The five development types are described in more detail below:

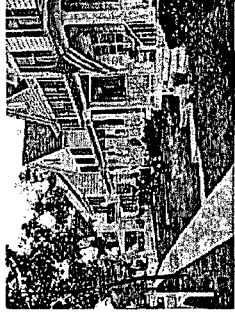
Low Density Development

- Low density residential neighborhoods with small blocks and multiple access points for auto, pedestrian and bicyclists

low density development

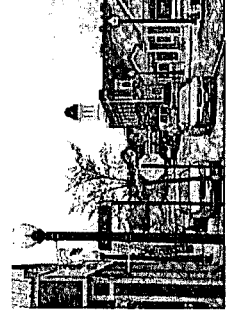


- Designed to provide multiple routes to access the neighborhood
- Can support limited neighborhood commercial
- Could be sited within walking distance of schools, libraries, recreational facilities or other civic centers
- Provision of urban services within these areas
- Can accommodate lower density uses such as agriculture and open space as appropriate

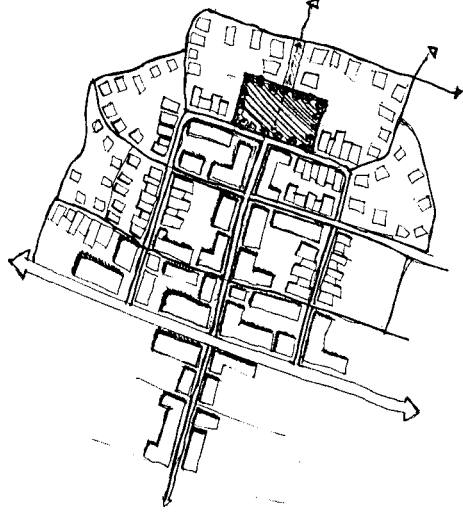


Activity Centers

- Provides for the concentration of a mixture of higher intensity and density land uses designed to be compact, walkable and accessible by a multi-modal transportation system
- Can range in size from neighborhood scale to regional scale
- Likely focused on either retail or employment uses with supporting residential, institutional or office



activity center



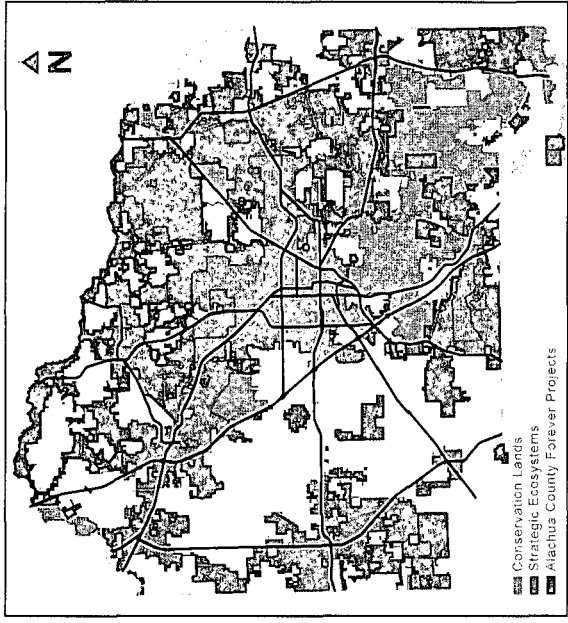
ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS

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 as 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.



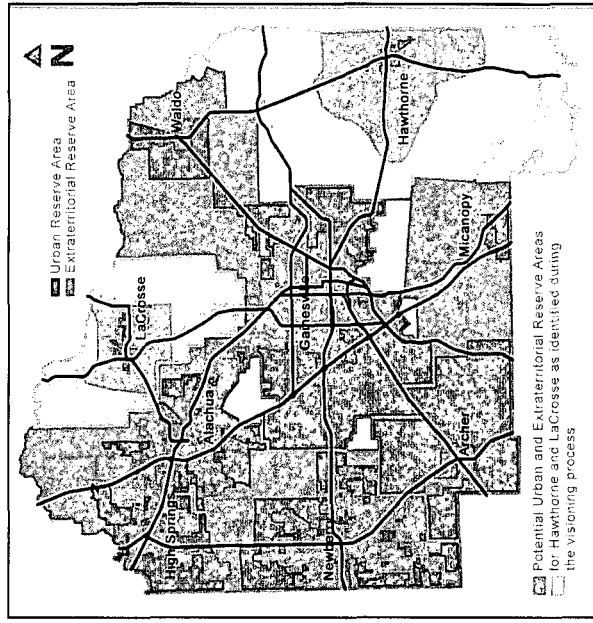
MUNICIPAL RESERVE AREAS

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 CYPC 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.



CONCEPTUAL PLAN

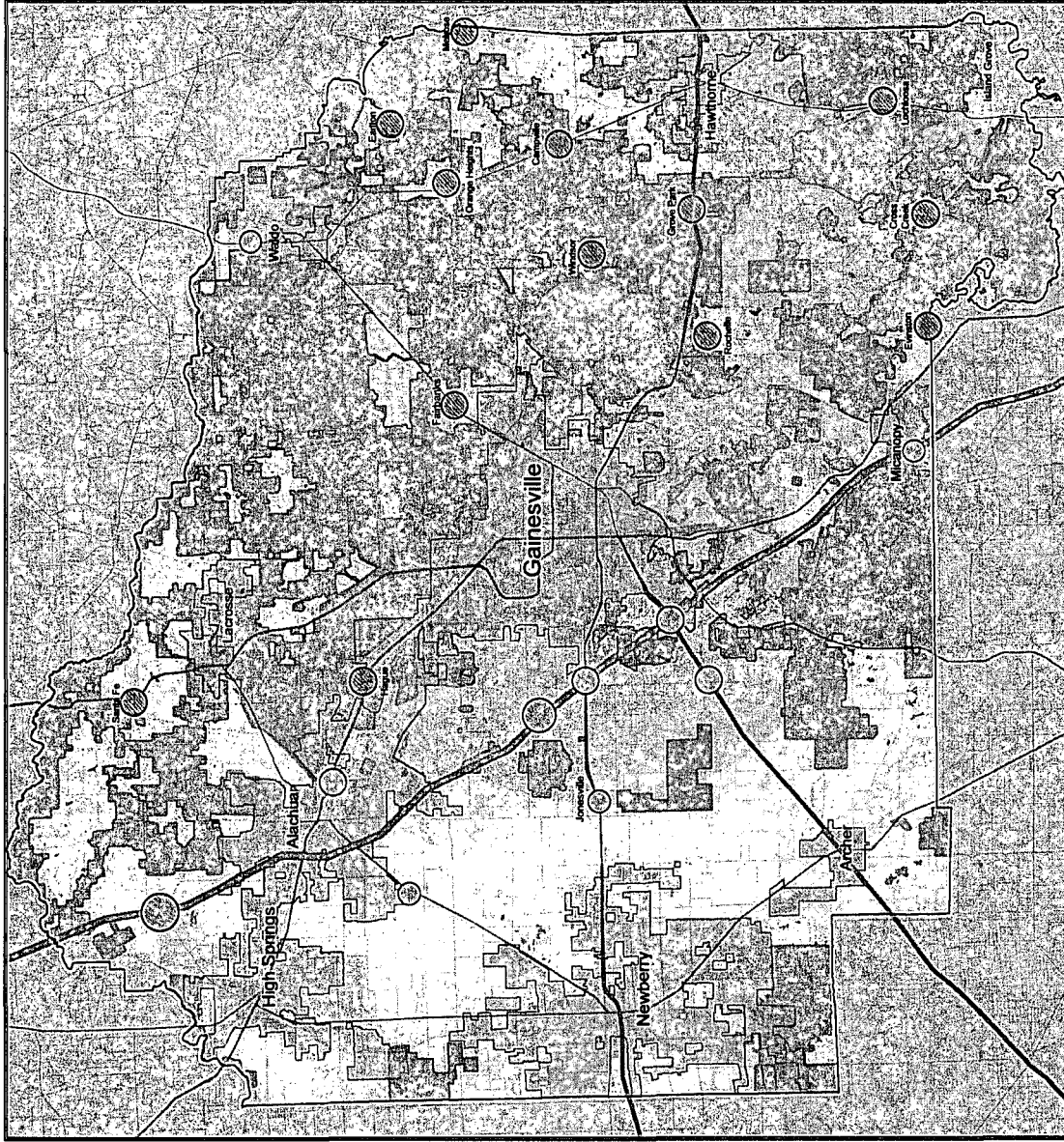
The conceptual plan demonstrates the location, function and character of future development based on the individual visions for the municipal reserve areas of each municipality. The plan reflects a strong emphasis on maintaining the natural and rural character of Alachua County. Low density residential development is envisioned in strategic locations with strong connections to existing and future town centers, activity centers, and rural hamlets where more intense non-residential development will occur.

Guiding Principles

- Concentrate future growth within existing municipal boundaries
- Create greenbelts/open spaces as buffers between communities
- Preserve the unique character of existing downtowns and town centers
- Focus future annexations primarily on enclaves
- Promote fiscally efficient growth and land use patterns
- Protect private property rights
- Ensure equal participation by municipalities, residents and the county in planning for the unincorporated areas
- Facilitate relationship building and communication between communities

LEGEND

- preserve areas
- rural/agricultural lands
- hamlets/rural clusters
- low density development
- activity centers
- municipal boundaries



Action Strategies

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Enter into new interlocal agreements to transition the CVPC into a planning council/commission to advance the countywide vision
- Create a multi-jurisdictional task force to amend the Boundary Adjustment Act
- Pursue legislation to allow for easier annexation of enclaves
- Adopt a new model template for transition of service agreements that distinguishes between rural and urban services

Comprehensive Planning

- Enter into joint planning area agreements for the unincorporated areas to:
- Evaluate county and municipal comprehensive plans within the context of the countywide vision
- Integrate the countywide vision into county and municipal comprehensive plans
- Develop special area plans within each community's Reserve Area and Extraterritorial Reserve Area—based on the countywide vision
- Create an incentive program to encourage private landowners to keep their lands in active agricultural use or as undeveloped preserve areas
- Create a Springs Protection overlay district in the northwest quadrant of the county

Direct Growth Toward Existing Centers

- Seek funds to provide technical planning assistance to all communities to implement these action strategies
- Seek funds to assist small towns in funding needed infrastructure improvements to build capacity and spur downtown revitalization
- Develop a countywide economic development strategy to identify opportunities for growth in each municipality consistent with each individual community's economic goals