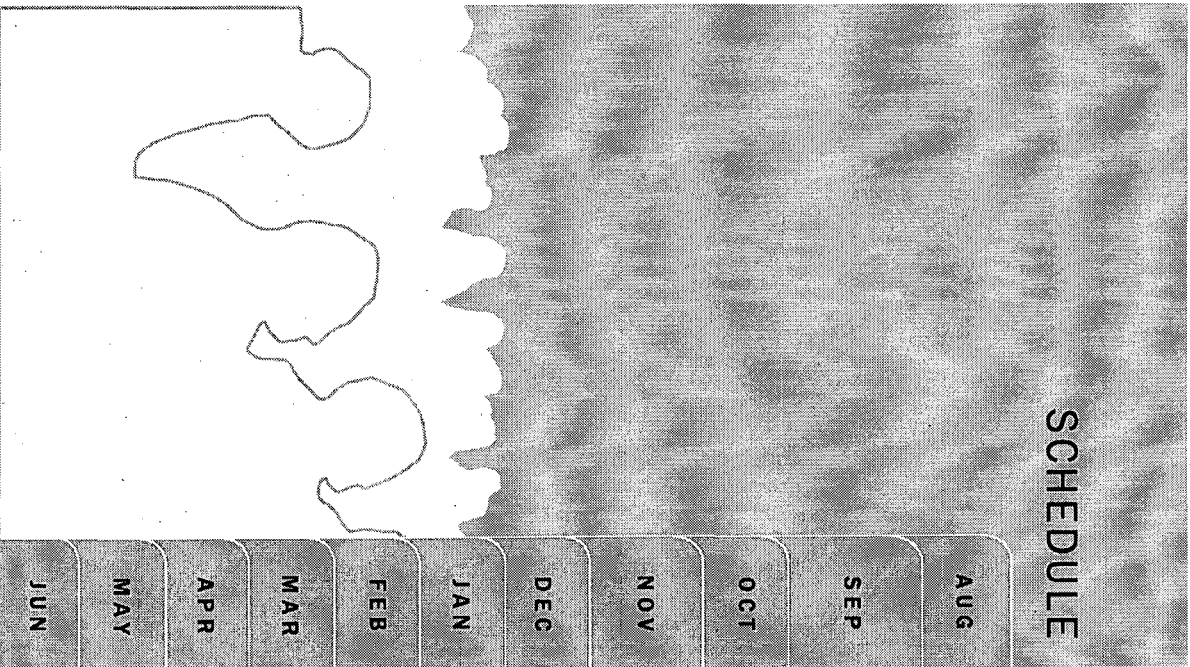# INTRODUCTION

The Countywide Visioning and Planning effort involved extensive public outreach aimed at identifying key issues related to growth and development and common themes or goals applicable to all communities. Input and public participation occurred through town hall meetings, a community survey, consensus workshops, Countywide Visioning and Planning Committee (CVPC) meetings, and the Planning Congress. From these efforts, common goals did emerge that provided the framework for developing the Countywide Vision and Conceptual Plan.

Building on previous efforts started in 2001, this process began in July of 2004 and concluded in June of 2005 with consensus from the Countywide Visioning and Planning Committee (CVPC) on the Countywide Vision and Conceptual Plan. Specific feedback and elements of the public process are highlighted throughout this document.

SCHEDULE

Month	Outreach Tasks
AUG	• Website Unveiling
	Project Kick-off Meeting and Bus Tour
SEP	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
	▣ Newsletter 1
	● Town Hall Meetings and Interviews
	● Website Update
OCT	● Town Hall Meetings and Interviews
	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
NOV	● Town Hall Meetings and Interviews
	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
	▣ Community Survey
DEC	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
JAN	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
FEB	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
MAR	● Consensus Workshop
	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
APR	● Planning Congress
	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
MAY	● Consensus Workshop
	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
JUN	• Visioning Committee/TAC Workshop
	▣ Newsletter 2

OUTREACH TASKS

character...
diversity...
preservation...
community

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2004, a series of town hall meetings were conducted in each of the nine municipalities, and in the unincorporated area of Gainesville. These interactive workshops involved open discussions and a mapping exercise to get participants to begin thinking about the long term vision for growth in their community. The following pages highlight the detailed comments from those discussions as well as the actual marked up maps. Collectively, these workshops help to create the overall framework plan illustrating the different visions for each community, which then informed the creation of the conceptual plan.

Participants included a cross section of elected officials, city and county staffs, and the general public. Some of the recurring themes that were heard countywide include:

- The distinct character of the towns and rural communities is part of what makes Alachua County unique and a desirable place to live. There is a need to manage growth so that these historic centers maintain their unique identity, but also create opportunities to revive them or sustain them economically for years to come.

- One should be able to tell when you pass from one community to the next. Measures such as establishing greenbelts and creating gateways to enhance this separation should be explored.

- There is a desire to have a more diverse job base in the county.

- There isn't enough discussion, dialogue or involvement from adjacent communities as to how the unincorporated areas of the County develop.

- There should be a public transportation system countywide to transport people back and forth between the smaller cities into Gainesville.

- There is an interest in diversifying the housing stock in many areas. Some places would like to see more multifamily housing, while others would like better quality mid-range and higher end types of residential development.

- People would like to preserve the natural and historic resources throughout the county. Many also see the potential of strengthening the tourism-based economy that is draws people to the County for the enjoyment of these unique environmental assets.
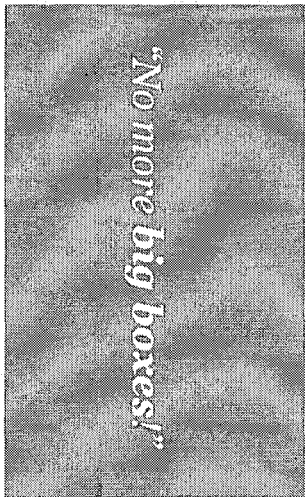
"There should be incentives for redevelopment and infill projects."

- The city should develop the industrial land on the east side of town to encourage more development in this area.

- There should be incentives for redevelopment and infill projects.

- Gainesville should draw additional research facilities beyond the campus of the University of Florida. The University needs to do a better of job of spreading its back office and support functions into cheap land in East Gainesville to stimulate development and provide jobs. The university's commitment is way under its potential to benefit spin-off and area businesses.

- Gainesville should purchase open land and keep it from filling up with unsuitable development. Land conservation is critical, but we can only buy land at the appraised value, which limits the ability to acquire land.

- East-west transportation infrastructure is inadequate, although north-south isn't much better. It is getting increasingly difficult to get to retail and job centers near the university and the interstate.

- There is a difference between urban and suburban. Gainesville should be urban. There should be a plan for urban-style development in the city. Density isn't a dirty word – it is critical to stimulate the urban core.

- There is a disconnect between urban reserve development and service provision. The city is paying for facilities and services (mainly roads, but other infrastructure as well) for growth occurring outside its municipal boundaries in the county. Those people benefit from Gainesville services and consider themselves a part of Gainesville.

- Do city taxes fund unincorporated area services and amenities? More of services are drawn into the urban reserve area, away from the city center.

- There should be more support for the elderly countywide – "Communities for a Lifetime." Thirteen percent of the city's population is 60+, and that will increase in the future. Gainesville should be more supportive of elderly accessibility and daily needs.

- There needs to be public transportation connections to other municipalities, especially for the elderly.

- Transportation determines how we grow. There needs to be a flexible and adaptable transportation system that supports the community into the future.

- Gainesville's three largest industries are tax-exempt, which limits the revenue coming in to the city. It's a financial drain on the city. Therefore, annexation is necessary to capture the revenue from development that impacts city facilities and services. We are unlike other communities.

- There should be more connection between Gainesville institutions and all levels of community. The University provides a lot of support but that relationship could be strengthened and extended.

- Gainesville needs housing diversity and affordable housing in the west. Not all affordable housing should be in the east. We are re-segregating the school system. Diversity of population is needed, with more affordable housing to the west.

- How do we avoid consuming all the land and resources? There should be consideration of urban growth boundaries, land preservation, our transportation system, and higher density development (if it's designed right).

- Urban areas should be redeveloped and infill encouraged. There should only be limited and compact development in greenfield areas.

- Somehow people need to become bettered educated and encourage people to develop and live appropriately with the community goals. Leaders, activists and others fail to sell the vision. There should be more done to bring citizens together to support and follow the ideals and set the pattern. Don't just follow trends. Designate what we want to achieve.

- There should be more focal points between municipalities, not just strip development.

- Plan East Gainesville needs to be implemented. Eastside needs housing and jobs. The Walmart is a good start.

"No more big boxes!"

- Where and how will growth occur? People are concerned about too much growth occurring in the same places. How can the growth be better distributed countywide?

- Unplanned growth could have negative impacts on open space and the road network. The county is at a critical point as a community. Either we make some bold decisions and act proactively to manage growth or we will become like Hillsborough County.

- Growth in Florida is moving inland. Alachua County is going to grow whether we like it or not.

- There needs to be better access in and around the University. The University should work more closely with city and county planning.

- People need to consider regional growth as they think about our future. Specifically, what is happening in adjacent counties and what are the traffic impacts going to be? There should be some way to deal with regional through traffic.

- Open space should be preserved; keep it in its natural state and preserve the habitat. There should be a network of open space and preservation areas countywide.

- The character and personality of the existing communities around the county should be preserved. They are what make this area a great place to live.

- Historic buildings need to be maintained and preserved. They contribute to the unique character of our area.

- There is a need for mid-range jobs such as light manufacturing. There are too many retail and low wage jobs.

- No more big boxes!

- Development should be kept out of the drainage basins.

- The edges of communities need to be preserved so that there is a break from one town to the next.

- Not all cities are created equal. There may be a role for the county in providing adequate services countywide. Are there certain services that financial make sense to be provided countywide by the County government and others that are best left to the municipalities?

- The existing character and quality of life is what is important here. Let's preserve the best things and agree on the principles for preservation.

- The County can't build enough road space for all the traffic but that's okay. There needs to be more consideration of other options to address traffic.

- The vitality of unincorporated villages and distinct municipalities needs to be supported and respected.

- Beware of the triple bypass in the West. This could kill the downtowns. There should be more regional land use strategies implemented to shift development patterns and ultimately shift the traffic impacts.

- Alachua County should be a destination, not just a place that people pass through.