

# Answers to Key Community Concerns

Envision Alachua is a community planning process to identify future economic, environmental and community opportunities in east Alachua County on lands owned by Plum Creek. Over the past three years, more than 2,000 area residents have participated in the process, sharing their ideas and helping develop strategies and policies for achieving shared goals. The collaborative effort produced the Envision Alachua Sector Plan (EASP) that was submitted to Alachua County at the end of 2013.

Community input continues to shape the development plans and Plum Creek is listening and willing to answer questions and address concerns. Since Envision Alachua began, the open and productive discussions about the future of this community have been characterized by transparency and a focus on facts. Going forward, community dialogue addressing the real challenges and seizing the real opportunities that lay ahead will strengthen the community's 50-year plan for eastern Alachua County.

## PLANNING WITH WETLANDS IN MIND

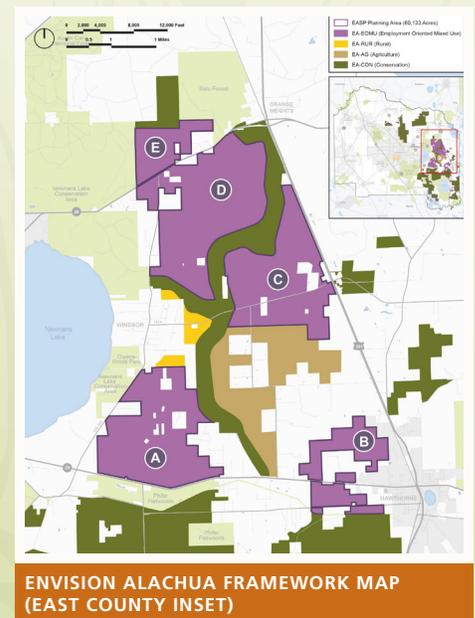
About 30% of the 60,133 acres owned by Plum Creek in Alachua County are wetlands. Of the 11,390 acres set-aside for Employment-Oriented Mixed-Use (EOMU, colored purple on the map below), only about 18% is wetlands, or 2,020 acres. The Envision Alachua Sector Plan calls for building around as many of these wetlands as possible by designating a minimum of 3,785 acres on the EOMU lands as open space and by compacting development to minimize impacts. This leaves a maximum of 7,605 acres available for proposed development over a 50-year period.

Of the 37,000 acres of the EASP planning area that is not already protected from development by conservation easement, about 12,000 acres are wetlands. Preliminary scenarios for development over a 50-year period show potential advantages of filling up to 250 acres of those wetlands. The purpose of filling some wetlands would be to accommodate a compact mixed-use jobs center in Area A, build railroad spurs to serve industrial/manufacturing sites in Areas B and C, and build internal roads needed to connect the proposed urban development. If any filling of wetlands is authorized in the future, state and federal rules require that the stormwater system provide sufficient flood storage to offset the flood storage capacity of the wetland (so that the flood protection provided by the wetland is replaced) and require that adequate environmental mitigation be provided to replace/offset the natural resource value that is lost by filling the wetlands.

## ACHIEVING PERMANENT LAND CONSERVATION

Current Rural Agriculture zoning on Plum Creek's lands allows for one residence with well and septic tank for every five acres, along with any type of agriculture. Several Rural Cluster communities adjacent to Plum Creek's lands already allow one residence on every one-acre tract. Envision Alachua provides permanent protection for more than 50,000 acres — at no cost to taxpayers — by compacting future growth into 7,605 acres best suited for development. The current Comprehensive Plan does not come close to Envision Alachua's ratio of 87% protected lands to 13% of lands for job centers.

As soon as the Envision Alachua Sector Plan application is approved, lands designated for conservation immediately lose all development rights as well as the right to conduct intensive agriculture activities. During future stages of approval, management plans and conservation easements are enacted and placed on the land and the landowner must adhere to the guidelines and restrictions. Two or more parties, including Alachua County, will hold the easements, which ensures that these lands stay in conservation in perpetuity.



ENVISION ALACHUA FRAMEWORK MAP (EAST COUNTY INSET)

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENFORCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND RESTRICTIONS

The Envision Alachua Sector Plan includes 114 policies that guide conservation and development on the 60,133 acres of the EASP. Many of these policies restrict the density, intensity and character of development as well as the required results. For example, one policy requires that a majority of the homes be located within walking distance of a non-retail job. The Plan incorporates accountability and enforcement measures throughout, with future approvals contingent on meeting or exceeding all requirements in the Plan. The requirements are tied to the land regardless of who owns the land; they are not limited to Plum Creek. All future land owners within the EASP will have to comply with all of the requirements of the Plan as approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

## INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS FOR TAXPAYERS

The cost of public facilities and infrastructure, including roads and schools, needed to serve development within the Envision Alachua Sector Plan (EASP) planning area will be funded at no cost to taxpayers outside of the EASP lands. This limitation is outlined in EA-Policy 10.5.5 of the proposed comprehensive plan amendment application for the EASP. A fiscal impact analysis included in the application estimates that the full build-out of the proposed development would result in a positive fiscal benefit to the County budget worth about \$82 million in 2014 dollars (net present value). This analysis also estimates a positive fiscal benefit to the School District of about \$6 million in 2014 dollars. The EASP will not cost the general taxpayers and the project will financially benefit the County's and School District's budgets. The costs associated with the EASP will be borne by future residents who chose to live and work there.

## IMPACTS ON EAST GAINESVILLE'S STRUGGLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Envision Alachua is designed to make use of existing resources first — for example, the School District's current K-12 schools — before investing in new ones. In fact, the plan specifies that existing schools will be the preferred option for serving the area. This is purposeful: with new jobs and new residents, the existing schools will see increased enrollment and the investment that comes with that. When the current schools are at capacity, new schools can be built within the developed area.

## EXISTING, UNUSED INDUSTRIAL LANDS

There is a deficit of industrial lands within Alachua County. Less than one-half percent (0.5%) of the County's approximately 658,000 acres has industrial entitlements, or 2,570 acres. As of August 2013, less than 900 acres of those were available for purchase, and only 360 acres are located within eastern Alachua County (i.e. within or near the City of Hawthorne).

The shortage of land suitable for advanced manufacturing and modern industrial uses that is well-served by transportation is a factor that limits the County's ability to attract new industry. Plum Creek's large tracts of land through Envision Alachua, and the economic development plan being funded by Plum Creek, create opportunities to attract, retain and locate businesses and industry that can grow and provide jobs and tax base for the community.



### PLUM CREEK OWNERSHIP

Plum Creek is among the largest publicly held timber Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT). As part of a land purchase in 2001, Plum Creek acquired all the timberlands previously owned by The Timber Company, a separate operating group of Georgia Pacific Corporation (GP). Prior to that acquisition, GP consisted of two companies, the manufacturing side of the business operating under the name Georgia Pacific and the timber land operating under the name The Timber Company. Plum Creek acquired only The Timber Company. Four years later in 2005, Koch Industries purchased the remaining manufacturing side of Georgia Pacific Corporation. Koch Industries does not own Plum Creek nor does Plum Creek own the Georgia Pacific manufacturing industry.