



Envision Alachua

Summary of Community Workshop #2

January 11, 2012

prepared by

MIG, Inc.

February 2012

in support of the Envision Alachua
process convened by Plum Creek



Background

Plum Creek hosted the second community workshop of the Envision Alachua planning process on January 11, 2012 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Approximately 50 community members attended. A buffet dinner was served an hour before the workshop, and child care was provided to make it more convenient for people to attend the meeting.

Envision Alachua is a community planning process to discuss future economic, environmental and community opportunities in Alachua County on lands owned by Plum Creek. Plum Creek is the largest private landowner in Alachua County, with 65,000 acres. Nearly 24,000 of these acres are permanently conserved. The company's holdings are located throughout northern and eastern Alachua County. Plum Creek is considering future uses for its lands that could be aligned with community needs. The Envision Alachua process will explore potential opportunities for lands in East County that are suitable for uses other than timber.

Plum Creek commenced the Envision Alachua planning process in June 2011 when it hosted the first meeting of the Envision Alachua Task Force. Since then, the Task Force has met five times, with meetings held on June 27, July 25, September 7, November 9 and December 14. Plum Creek has also hosted three educational forums as part of its Models of Innovation series. All Envision Alachua activities are open to the public. A complete schedule, meeting locations and other details can be found at www.envisionalachua.com.

The objectives for the second Community Workshop were to:

- Provide community members an opportunity to review an emerging development concept for Plum Creek lands in East Alachua County
- Present and solicit community feedback on land use and conservation concepts

This document summarizes the general discussion and comments made by the facilitator, presenters and community members during the January 11th workshop; it is not intended as a transcription of the meeting. Meeting materials, information about the process and a videotape of the meeting can be found at www.envisionalachua.com.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Rose Fagler, Community Relations for Plum Creek, opened the meeting, welcomed participants and thanked everyone for attending. Rose noted there were many activities going on in celebration of Martin Luther King week. She appreciated everyone's participation and reminded them that Plum Creek is seeking additional feedback on the Envision Alachua planning process.

Daniel Iacofano, Principal, MIG and Lead Facilitator for the Envision Alachua planning process, started the meeting and reviewed the agenda. He briefly reflected on the first community workshop held on October 5th.

II. Overview of the Envision Alachua Planning Process

To start the presentation, Rose Fagler provided a brief overview of Plum Creek and reminded participants of the scale and reach of Plum Creek land holdings in the County and throughout the country. Plum Creek is the largest private landowner in the nation with approximately 6.7 million acres in 19 States. The company's core business is timber, but it also manages some of its lands for conservation, recreation, natural resources and community development. The company owns 590,000 acres in 22 counties in Florida. Nearly 95,000 acres of those lands are permanently conserved.

With 65,000 acres located throughout northern and eastern Alachua County, nearly 24,000 of which are permanently conserved, Plum Creek is the largest private landowner in Alachua County. Plum Creek is a publicly traded Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) and its practices are certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

Following Rose's presentation on Plum Creek, Daniel introduced Albert White, consultant to Plum Creek. Albert provided a brief overview of the Envision Alachua process and the activities conducted to date. He described the Task Force and its membership and operating principles. He also highlighted an upcoming event that will be held on January 26th, the fourth educational forum in the Models of Innovation series, which will feature the work of University of Florida design students who will share their vision for Plum Creek lands. He noted that all activities are transparent, thoroughly documented and open to the public. Albert strongly encouraged all attendees to stay active in the planning process by attending events and meetings, checking the project website and contacting Plum Creek directly.

Following this overview, Daniel continued with additional information about the process, describing the opportunity presented by the circumstances of the land having one owner, Plum Creek, which makes it easier to advance planning discussions, and by the wealth of talent among participants and community partners such as University of Florida and Santa Fe College.

The process will need to overcome some challenges. There are some disparities between the east and west sides of the County, with more services, public transit, jobs and educational opportunities available to the west side of the County.

Daniel presented a map that showed how Plum Creek lands are about the same driving distance from downtown as other employment centers. His presentation also noted that the graduation rate for Alachua County students is 76%. This is below the statewide average. While the University of Florida is a research powerhouse, other institutions continue to compete successfully with UF. Other Florida communities, especially those in the Tampa to Orlando corridor, are also seeking to attract jobs, so we are essentially competing with other parts of the state. Daniel mentioned a speaker featured in the first Educational Forum, John Doggett, who talked about how US industries are competing with other countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Daniel briefly introduced the concept of “brain hub” cities. These are communities that boast a large concentration of highly-educated workers, especially scientists, engineers and business entrepreneurs holding bachelor’s degrees or higher; are home to at least one major research university; and serve as magnets for venture capital from local and national firms that identify and invest in university-related spin-off companies and business incubators. These areas serve as “job factories” which attract the talent and investment for a wide range of jobs.

Daniel then briefly introduced the work products developed to date. These products served as the basis for the small group discussions.

III. Group Discussions

Daniel directed the participants to break into five groups based on an assigned number on their nametag. Each group had 8-10 participants and a facilitator. After conducting self-introductions, the facilitators led each group through review and discussion of the following materials:

- Envision Alachua Vision Statement
- Envision Alachua Goals (11 total)
- Diagram of Emerging Concepts for Plum Creek Lands
- Map of Emerging Land Use Concept Areas in East Alachua County

Participants were asked to comment on the materials, highlight the ideas and concepts they supported, and also identify any gaps or revisions needed.

Participants were encouraged to share their ideas with the group. Comments were recorded on the materials and, as necessary, on flip chart paper. Participants were not required to come to consensus on their comments, but were requested to provide feedback in a manner that could inform the revisions needed for the documents. (A copy of the materials reviewed by the groups is attached for reference at the end of the document.) The feedback will be used to prepare the final draft Vision, Goals and Planning Principles document that will be submitted to the Task Force for their review and acceptance during the sixth Task Force meeting scheduled for February 15, 2012.

IV. Group Reports and Discussion

Following the discussion, each group was asked to select a reporter to share the highlights of the group’s discussion. The reporters shared the key points that would influence changes to the draft vision statement and goals, concept diagram and emerging concept maps. Group comments were recorded by Daniel Iacofano on a large wallgraphic. This section presents the general comments made by the group presenters and organizes the specific comments expressed verbally and in writing to reflect the suggested changes to each of the work products.

Vision Statement

The groups were generally supportive of the vision statement. While a few comments were made, it appeared that some of the suggestions could be more effectively addressed through edits to the goal statements. The statement will remain unchanged.

Emerging Concepts for Plum Creek Lands Diagram

Participants were supportive of the hierarchy of uses described. It was requested that the diagram be changed to add a line linking the supportive uses to the circles, similar to the other uses presented.

Goal Statements

Goal A Economic Development

It was suggested the statement be edited to “attract” rather than “encourage development that provides for a sustainable economic future for residents at all wage and skill levels.” It was also suggested that the goal or principles include an emphasis on creating opportunities for small business, as well.

Goal B Environmental Conservation

This goal was favorably received with minimal comment.

Goal C Transportation

The need for improved and more frequent transit service in East County was emphasized in several groups. It was also suggested the statement be reworded so that it emphasized all modes of travel.

Goal D Energy and Utilities

Participants suggested this goal include language that allows for a choice of utility providers to create competition and more affordable power options and options to secure power from renewable energy sources.

Goal E Water

One group suggested that Plum Creek demonstrate leadership on water conservation activities in its development activities.

Goal F Land Use

Several groups emphasized the need for new housing and services created through the Envision Alachua process to remain affordable to a range of incomes in the County.

Goal G Agriculture

Participants were supportive of agricultural activities and suggested that language be added to emphasize activities that support small farmers.

Goal H Social and Cultural Development

Participants called out the need to provide services for seniors. There were also concerns expressed about safety and the provision of law enforcement and related services.

Goal I Envision Alachua Planning Process

Participants commented on the need to continue maintaining a high level of transparency and information sharing.

Goal J Recreation

Participants commented on the need to make recreational opportunities accessible and affordable. The need to protect water quality to improve fishing opportunities was also noted.

Goal K Education

Education continues to be a very high priority for community members, and it was suggested the language be broadened to include all levels of education, not just post-high school.

Goals to Be Added

The discussions also revealed that several topics had not been fully addressed and some new goals would need to be added. These include:

Health Care

Several groups identified the importance of increasing the availability of health care services in East County. The closure of Alachua General Hospital and the limited availability of health care services in East County made this a prominent discussion topic in several groups. A new goal will be added to address this concern.

Governance

One group noted that different governance models could influence the success of the proposed development. It was suggested that Plum Creek explore different models of governance (for example, annexation to nearby cities) to facilitate implementation of the vision and goals.

Community Planning

Several groups discussed the role of partnerships with agencies and organizations and how they would be essential to achieve the vision. Agencies and organizations will need to demonstrate a shared commitment to the Envision Alachua process for the desired community benefits to be achieved.

Emerging Land Use Concept Areas

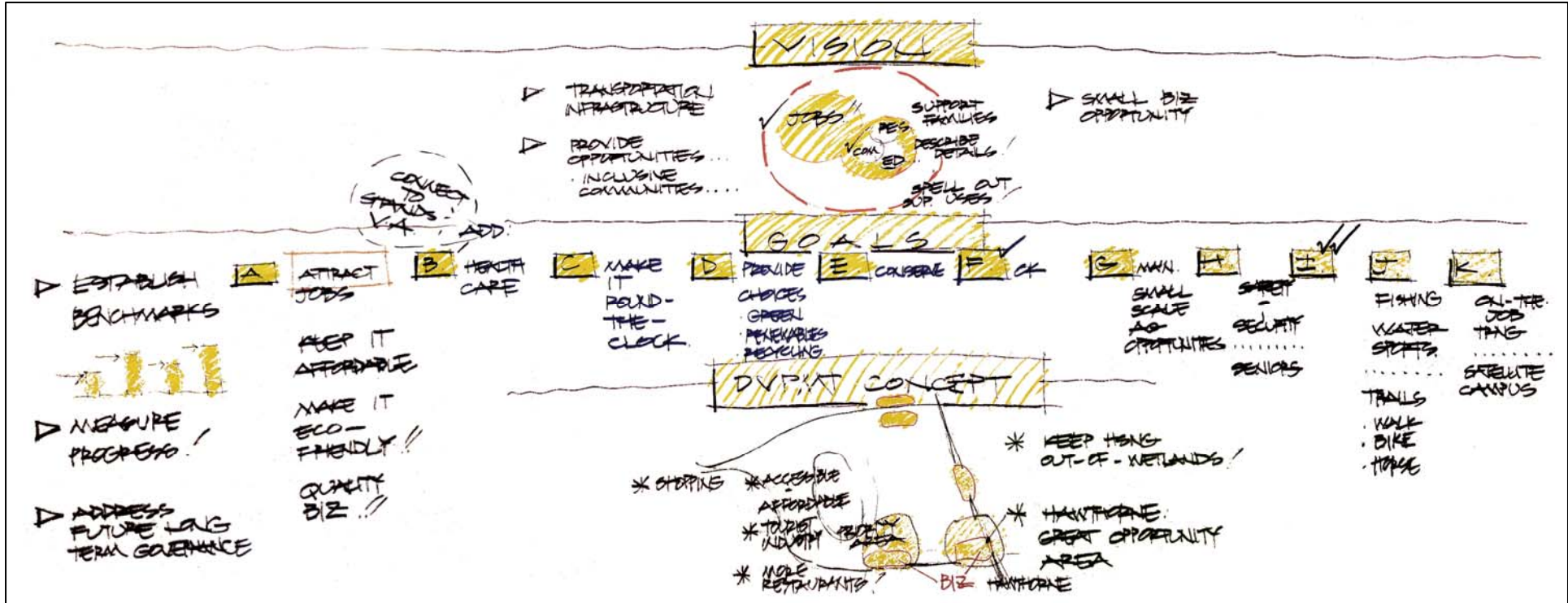
Groups were generally receptive to the five focus areas and suggested that Plum Creek prioritize some areas over others. Specifically, lands near Hawthorne, Area B, could connect to Hawthorne's existing industrial infrastructure and community facilities. Area A was highlighted by one group since it was the area closest to East Gainesville.

V. Summary and Next Steps

Daniel closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation, and encouraged everyone to continue their involvement in the process by doing the following:

- Attend the January 26 Educational Forum
- Attend the February 15 Task Force Meeting
- Visit the website (www.envisionalachua.com) for more information and calendar of activities
- Encourage family, friends and colleagues to get involved in the Envision Alachua planning process!

A meeting wallgraphic and written comments provided by members of the public are attached at the end of this document.



Envision Alachua
 Community Workshop #2 – January 11, 2012

Draft Vision Statement for Plum Creek Lands in Alachua County

Plum Creek lands in Alachua County will:

- Provide economic development opportunities that support and grow the innovation economy, provide job opportunities and services for all economic levels, and ensure a robust and sustainable economy;
- Support the development of communities that have a balanced and compatible mix of land uses and environmentally sustainable development practices while conserving lands to protect ecosystems, wildlife corridors and working landscapes; and
- Stimulate community engagement and participation in planning for a future that provides a high quality of life for all current and future residents on and around Plum Creek lands in Alachua County.

A community discussion on the future of East County convened by Plum Creek

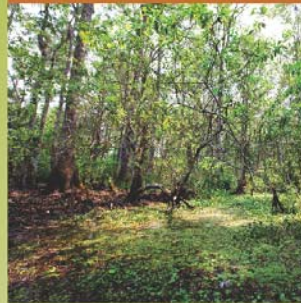
Draft Goals for Plum Creek Lands in Alachua County

GOAL A Economic Development



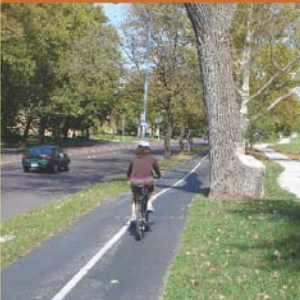
Encourage development that provides for a sustainable economic future for residents at all wage and skill levels while being compatible with community goals for land conservation and natural resource protection

GOAL B Environmental Conservation



Protect and retain lands for conservation, habitat protection and wildlife connectivity

GOAL C Transportation



Create communities that are walkable, provide for multiple modes of transportation, and build on policies expressed in city and county transportation plans

GOAL D Energy and Utilities



Work closely with utility providers to develop partnerships for planning and delivering required infrastructure

GOAL E Water



Address long-term needs for water supply, water quality and water conservation

A community discussion on the future of East County convened by Plum Creek

Draft Goals for Plum Creek Lands in Alachua County

GOAL F Land Use



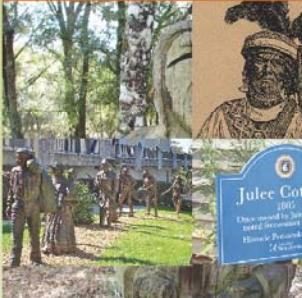
Create family-friendly, transit-supported, mixed-use communities that meet the needs of all residents

GOAL G Agriculture



Maintain agriculture and silviculture as viable and sustainable economic activities

GOAL H Social and Cultural Development



Provide a high quality of life for all residents on and near Plum Creek lands

GOAL I Envision Alachua Planning Process



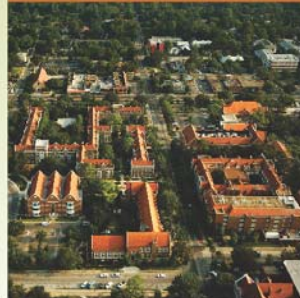
Ensure that the Envision Alachua process remains open, transparent, inclusive and representative of all community members

GOAL J Recreation



Maximize recreational opportunities including existing activities such as hunting, birding, wildlife viewing, etc. on Plum Creek lands

GOAL K Education

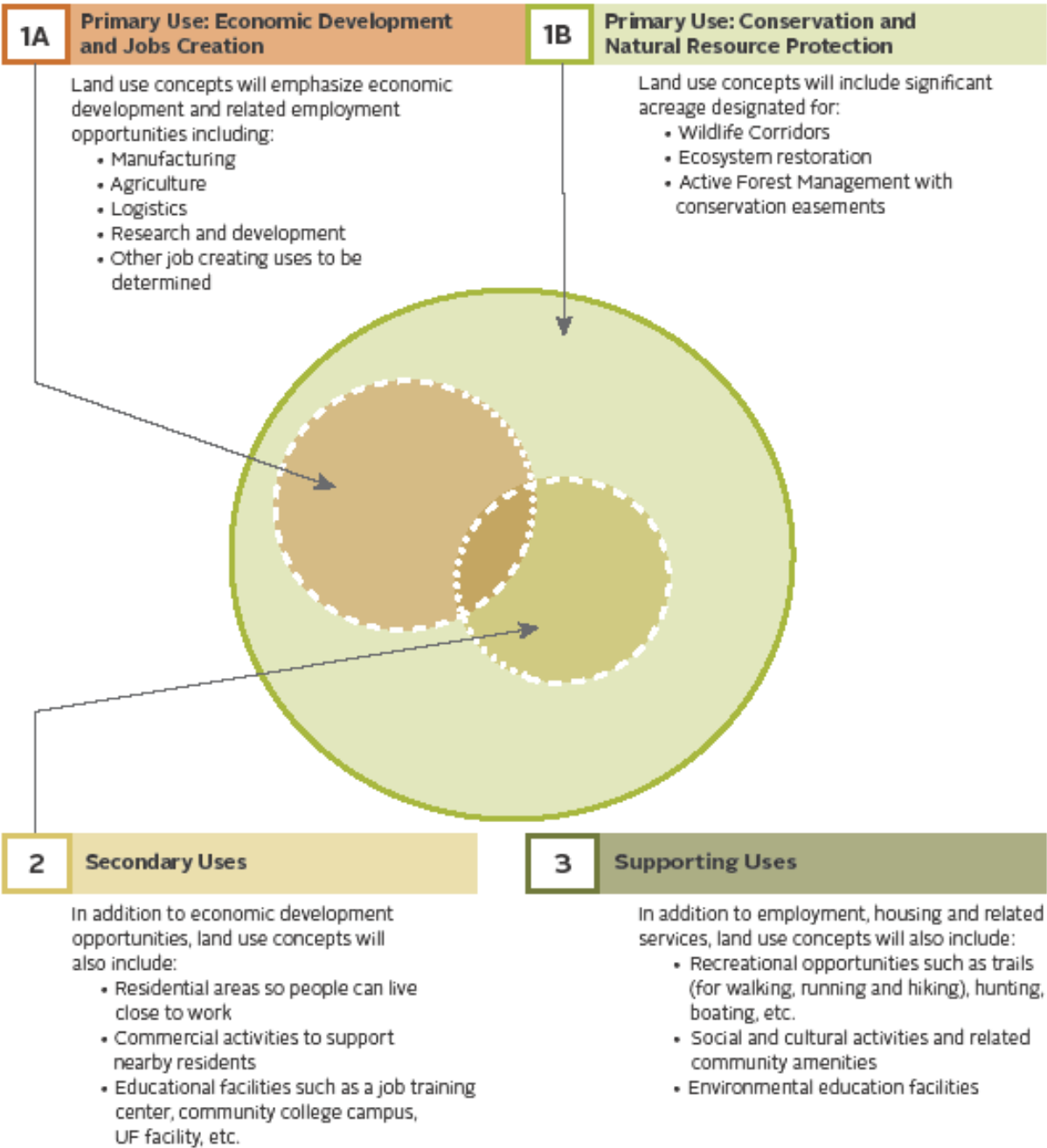


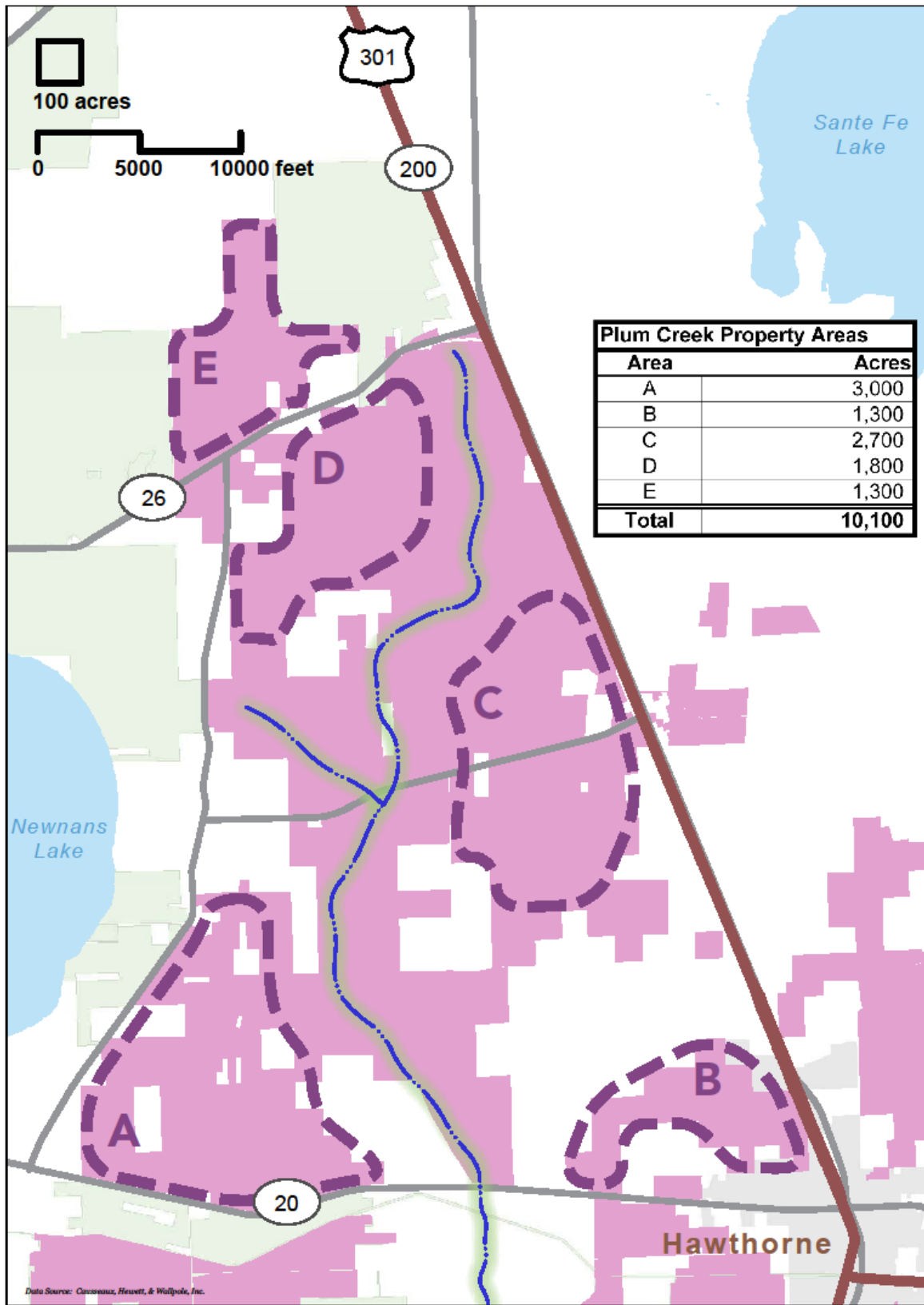
Use potential development on Plum Creek lands as a springboard for strengthening educational programs and facilities in East County

A community discussion on the future of East County convened by Plum Creek

Emerging Concepts for Plum Creek Lands

The proposed land use concepts for Plum Creek lands will emphasize the following:







Community Workshop #2 Comment Card

We want to hear your thoughts on the vision and concepts that have been presented in tonight's workshop. Tell us your ideas.

A. Vision Statement and Emerging Land Use Concepts

Excellent, concise, clear, and comprehensive -
I am impressed! 😊

B. Goal Statements

* I think that it is critical to continue the Planning Process (Goal 1) and transparency associated with it until we achieve the goals.

* We now need benchmarks that are measurable to ensure that we reach the goals — Create/Implement Strategic Plan

* We need to make sure we communicate this work to governmental / policy makers in a manner that will lead to comprehensive land use changes, policy changes, funding, etc.

www.envisionalachua.com