



Envision Alachua Phase II

Summary of East Gainesville Community Workshop #3 December 2, 2013

prepared by

MIG, Inc.

December 2013

in support of the Envision Alachua
process convened by Plum Creek



Background

This community workshop is one of two public workshops the County requires Plum Creek to host in advance of submitting its Sector Plan application to the County for a Long Term Master Plan (LTMP) for Plum Creek lands in Alachua County. Plum Creek conducted the required scoping meeting on September 23, 2013, and for two and a half years prior, has been working with the community to develop a vision for its lands in East County. The process yielded a document which presents the Vision, Goals and Guiding Principles that have been used to guide the development of the LTMP and related policies. Since Envision Alachua launched in June 2011, Plum Creek has hosted 11 meetings of the Envision Alachua Task Force, conducted 4 meetings of a technical Advisory Group (TAG), conducted six (6) community workshops, hosted four educational forums and provided tours of its lands. More than 1,500 people have participated in the Envision Alachua process.

This workshop, and an additional workshop being held on December 7 featuring the same format and materials, was held to help ensure that the public is informed about and aware of Plum Creek's Sector Plan application, and to provide an opportunity for participants to share their issues, questions and comments that will assist in the review process for the application. More than two thousand property owners located within 1,320 feet of Plum Creek's lands received notification about the pending application and an invitation to the meeting. To assist property owners, Plum Creek created an interactive land use map hosted on the project website at www.envisionalachua.com. The interactive map allows a person to enter their address on the map, see where they are in proximity to Plum Creek's lands, and learn the land use proposed in the LTMP for neighboring Plum Creek property.

To support proper notification of the public, in addition to mailing letters to property owners, Plum Creek placed ads in local newspapers (both print and on-line), sent e-mail notifications to more 1,500 people, used paid social media ads and publicized the meetings on its website.

This first of two workshops was held on Monday, December 2, 2013 at the MLK Community Center, 1028 NE 14th Street, Gainesville from 6:30 – 9:00 pm. Approximately 90 community members attended. The meeting sign-in sheets are attached as an appendix at the end of this document. 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.

This document summarizes the general discussion and comments made by the facilitator, presenters and community members during the December 2nd workshop; it is not intended as a transcription of the meeting. Meeting materials, information about the process and a videotape presentation of the meeting can be found at www.envisionalachua.com.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Todd Powell, Senior Director, Real Estate for Plum Creek, opened the meeting and provided a brief review of the activities leading up to the meeting. He described the

County's request that Plum Creek prepare an LTMP. There was discussion of the possibility that significant lands be dedicated to conservation. Current zoning allows agriculture and rural residential housing. Any other land uses would require a change to the County Comprehensive Plan. Plum Creek figured that there was a better way to determine what was important to the community, and that served as the impetus for the Envision Alachua community planning process.

Todd then introduced Daniel Iacofano, Principal and CEO of MIG Inc. and lead facilitator for the Envision Alachua process. Daniel reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives which were to:

- Provide an overview of the Envision Alachua Planning Process
- Present the draft Long Term Master Plan that will be submitted to the County
- Solicit input from the community on topics that will inform the County's review process for Plum Creek's application

He noted the upcoming second community workshop on Saturday, December 7 in Hawthorne. Plum Creek will continue the process with additional community engagement activities in the upcoming year.

II. Overview of the Envision Alachua Planning Process and Proposed Long Term Master Plan

Daniel opened the presentation by providing a brief description of Plum Creek. They are one of the largest private land owners in the country. Plum Creek is a publically traded Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT). Their primary business is timber with additional interests in land and real estate, manufacturing and natural resource management. Plum Creek's forestry practices conform to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) which requires third party audits to achieve and maintain certification.

He explained the genesis of Envision Alachua, which came about in response to a request from the County that Plum Creek prepare a master plan for the 65,000 acres its owns in Alachua County. Of these lands, 24,000 acres are in permanent agriculture as conservation and 41,000 acres are zoned agriculture for timber production. The current zoning also allows rural residential at one unit/five acres. Other land uses would require Plum Creek to request a change to the Comprehensive Plan. Plum Creek convened Envision Alachua to consider future uses for these lands that could be aligned with community needs.

The process identified several planning challenges. Some of these include responding to the disparity between West Gainesville and East Gainesville with respect to: income, jobs for all residents, access to quality education and availability of goods and services. Alachua County also faces growing competition from other regions of Florida and other areas of the country. Funds are lacking to complete the "Emerald Necklace" conservation vision.

Daniel then described how Plum Creek lands in East Alachua County offer a unique opportunity. The lands are in single ownership with Plum Creek. The County has a history of innovative planning and land conservation and is home to the University of Florida, one of the nation's top research universities, and Santa Fe College, one of the nation's top community colleges. The County has unique environmental resources which should be protected. Envision Alachua can play a role in responding to these opportunities.

Daniel briefly reviewed the activities conducted through Envision Alachua. Phase I was conducted June 2011 through February 2012 and included:

- Community Task Force (6 meetings)
- Community Workshops (2 workshops)
- Website (on-going)
- Educational Forums (4 events)
- Tours of Plum Creek Lands

Phase I resulted in the Vision Document entitled *Vision, Goals and Planning Principles for Plum Creek Lands in Alachua County*. Daniel reviewed a concept diagram that showed the current land uses allowed and described how the Task Force asked questions about the environment, jobs, and how opportunities could come to East Gainesville, Hawthorne and the communities in between.

Through the work of the Envision Alachua Task Force and input received through additional community workshops, the community described a vision that presented substantial environmental conservation while concentrating the footprint that accommodates economic development and education and community uses.

Daniel then provided a review of Phase II of the Envision Alachua process, which was conducted from September 2012 through December 2013 and included:

- Technical Advisory Group (4 meetings)
- Community Task Force (5 meetings)
- Community Workshops (4 workshops)
- Website (on-going)
- Educational Forums (1 event)
- Economic Progress Initiative
- East County Educators Committee
- Hawthorne Committee

The results of Phase II included:

- Long Term Master Plan document
- Detailed Specific Area Plans begun

Daniel then presented the Long Term Master Plan Framework Map and briefly reviewed the uses that would be allowed within the required four land use categories: employment oriented mixed use, rural, agriculture and conservation.

Daniel described the land uses in the Sector Plan process and how the community vision developed through the Envision Alachua process is reflected in the LTMP. The plan has three main elements and focuses on:

- **Economic Opportunity:** The Long Term Master Plan proposes 14 million square feet of space for office, research and development, agriculture, advanced manufacturing and related activities and targets 30,000 new jobs.
- **Environmental Conservation:** The Long Term Master Plan proposes 23,000+ acres of additional land for conservation purposes, allowing present uses of agriculture and silviculture while preventing future development in perpetuity.
- **Education and Community:** The Long Term Master Plan proposes partnerships with the University of Florida and Santa Fe College for job creation and workforce development. It also accommodates community development including no more than 10,500 housing units, schools, parks, recreation and open space, and related commercial activities.

This was followed by a video presentation that summarized the two and a half year planning process to date.

Following the video, Daniel returned to the subject of the LTMP, emphasizing how the LTMP correlated with the Vision and Goals for Envision Alachua. The overall balance of land use is 87% conservation, agriculture and open space and 13% employment oriented mixed use.

Daniel provided a brief description of how the LTMP accomplishes the Goals described in the Vision document, which was the end product of Envision Alachua Phase I.

Goal A: A Strong Jobs Focus

The LTMP reflects how a strong jobs focus will be achieved. The plan will direct economic development to the corridor between East Gainesville and Hawthorne, an area identified as the Economic Progress Corridor. The LTMP:

- Provides employment opportunities in advanced manufacturing, research and development, commercial activities and services
- Builds on local and regional assets:
 - University of Florida, Santa Fe College
 - Rail connections and highway infrastructure
- Attracts employers with quality jobs (from GED to PhD) due to conservation and quality of life features
- Provides jobs and opportunities for thousands of local residents previously bypassed by economic progress

- Targets economic opportunities, **not housing in the form of conventional single family subdivisions**
- Increases overall tax base of the area

Goal B: Agriculture and Silviculture

The LTMP maintains a strong emphasis on forestry and agriculture. The LTMP:

- Continues the legacy of SFI-certified silviculture in the County
- Sets aside large, viable acreage for efficient operations, thereby reinforcing the long term viability of the State's second largest industry
- Creates major partnership opportunity with the UF Institute for Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS)

Goal C: Large Scale Conservation

The LTMP achieves substantial large-scale conservation. The LTMP:

- Sets aside extensive conservation areas in perpetuity
 - Provides links to regional and State-wide green corridors
- Helps complete the Emerald Necklace
- Expands regional wildlife corridors, habitat linkages
- Includes wide buffer to protect Lochloosa Creek
- Doubles the amount of land the County has protected through Alachua County Forever at **no added expense to taxpayers**

Goal D: Water Resource Management

The LTMP includes policies that will shape a new water ethic for the area. The LTMP:

- Provides state of the art water conservation, treatment and delivery technology
- Includes large water storage facilities for water harvesting and capture
- Incorporates water reuse into delivery systems
- Requires highly efficient building and landscape design
- Prohibits use of potable water for residential irrigation purposes

Goals E, F, J, M: Efficient Utilities, Quality Community Services and Facilities

The LTMP addresses the needs for energy and infrastructure and explores new ways for them to be funded. The LTMP:

- Utilizes infrastructure that is already in place and already paid for by taxpayers
- Requires buildings and facilities to use state-of-the-art energy conservation measures
- Evaluates service options including City of Hawthorne, GRU, Clay Electric, Alachua County and private operations to achieve most efficient and quality services

- Provides expanded funding options

Goals G, K: Preservation of Rural Character and Culture

The LTMP emphasizes protecting the rural character of the area. The LTMP:

- Establishes buffers to protect rural character of historic communities – the “rural clusters”

Goal H: A Comprehensive Transportation Solution

The LTMP addresses all modes of transportation. The LTMP:

- Utilizes existing road infrastructure
- Supports:
 - Automobiles
 - High performing transit
 - Bicycle
 - Pedestrian
- Incorporates transit-friendly development patterns
- Makes strong connections to job centers

Goal I: A Tightly Integrated Mixed Use Development Pattern

The LTMP:

- Uses a connected compact development footprint that accommodates substantial economic development
- Prevents sprawl while achieving efficiencies in resource consumption – land, water, energy, fuel
- Sets a 50 year plan horizon and includes 15.5 million square feet of job-generating land uses:
 - 6 million square feet for research & development/offices
 - 8 million square feet for advanced manufacturing
 - 1.5 million square feet for commercial activities and services for employees and residents

Goal L: Wide Range of Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

A wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities will be provided. The LTMP:

- Designates 30-35% of the employment oriented mixed use area for parks, open space and trails
- Includes extensive network of pedestrian and bicycling trails
- Allows varying levels of access for new and continuing recreation uses to conservation lands (unless prohibited by environmental constraints)

Goal N: Continued Tradition of Civic Engagement

The LTMP policies emphasize maintaining a strong role for the community in the planning process. The LTMP:

- Builds on a strong tradition of community participation and local leadership to sustain community participation over the long-term
- Establishes a high threshold for:
 - Transparency
 - Inclusiveness
 - Information sharing
- Creates opportunities for collaboration between Hawthorne, East County and Alachua County communities as a whole

Goal O: Results Measurement

The LTMP includes a series of metrics that will help ensure the plan is being implemented consistent with the Vision. The LTMP:

- Establishes criteria for implementation and performance through the Detailed Specific Area Plan (DSAP) process
- Ensures that growth is directed along the corridor between East Gainesville and Hawthorne
- Helps the County and community keep the Vision on track
- Requires re-evaluation every five years

III. Review of the Proposed Long Term Master Plan and Identification of Key Issues to Address in the Plan Application Review Process: Small Group Discussions

Following the presentation, Daniel directed the participants to go to one of the eight breakout tables. Each table had a facilitator and about 8-10 participants. The facilitator led the group through a discussion of each of the three main components: Economic Development, Environmental Conservation, and Education and Community. During the breakout session, participants were asked to share their issues and concerns, ask questions, and identify information needs that would help them to better understand the Long Term Master Plan. Participants were encouraged to comment verbally and in writing using the comment card. The facilitators helped to manage the discussion and answer some of the questions. For those requiring more information than was available at the meeting, the facilitator noted their questions. All comments made in the meeting that were recorded on the flipchart notes and provided through the comment cards will be transcribed by Plum Creek, with additional answers provided via the website. For participants seeking follow-up for their comments and questions, Plum Creek committed to following up with these participants sometime after the meeting via e-mail or by telephone. About 45-50 minutes was allotted to the small group discussions.

IV. Group Reports and Follow-up Discussion

Each group facilitator provided a short report, highlighting 2-3 key points discussed by their group. Eight groups reported out and the comments are grouped by topic. The highlights of the questions and comments were as follows:

Economic Development

- Participants asked: how do we make sure there are opportunities for current East Gainesville residents such as: recreation, jobs, services, stores and restaurants?
- Participants also asked: while this is a long-term plan, there are existing needs that must be addressed soon. How can we make something happen quickly?
- There were a few comments about taxes. Some participants wanted to know if Plum Creek is seeking tax incentives. They also inquired how these lands would be taxed and if this effort might impact and increase the taxes of surrounding land owners.
- Participants wanted to know: what is the draw for jobs and how do we identify the industries coming to the area? How do we channel the economic development so we attract what we want and direct it to where it should go?
- It was noted that 30% of Putnam County residents commute to Alachua County on a daily basis for work. Participants asked: what's being done to involve Putnam County?

Environmental Conservation

- Many participants wanted more information about how the water requirements would be addressed. Several groups also expressed concerns about where the water will come from for this project and how it will be managed full cycle. How do we achieve net zero loss in water and still protect water quality? Participants also wanted to know how wastewater will be managed.
- Concerns were expressed about the need to protect wildlife corridors.
- Some participants sought clarification of Plum Creek's definition of conservation and better understanding of the uses allowed within these areas. Many wanted to know more about the role that forestry plays in conservation.
- Participants asked: are there opportunities for easements and to help buffer adjacent properties?

Education and Community

- Participants asked if neighboring property owners would be required to tie in to any new sewer infrastructure installed by Plum Creek.
- There were questions and comments about transportation, with participants wanting to know how public transportation be provided, its connectivity to the existing system and how it will be paid for.

- There were questions about utilities and if a new utility company would be needed to serve these lands.
- Some participants wanted to know how police and related safety services will be addressed. It was also suggested that parks and recreation amenities be accessible to neighboring communities and that they operate outside of the traditional 9-5 schedule so there would be evening recreation opportunities available.
- Some participants emphasized the need for Santa Fe College to continue to be involved and active in identifying and creating workforce development, job training activities and helping prepare our youth for life beyond high school so they can serve as our local employment base.
- There were also comments expressed about what to do to engage Generation Y so their views are heard and they are active in the process.
- It was suggested that Plum Creek foster and develop an internship program, and there were questions about any of the colleges having a presence on site.
- It was suggested that Plum Creek do a case study of the educational system in a community that tried this same economic development approach - i.e., Austin, Texas. How did they respond?
- It was requested that Plum Creek conduct a thorough analysis of archeological, historical and cultural resources.

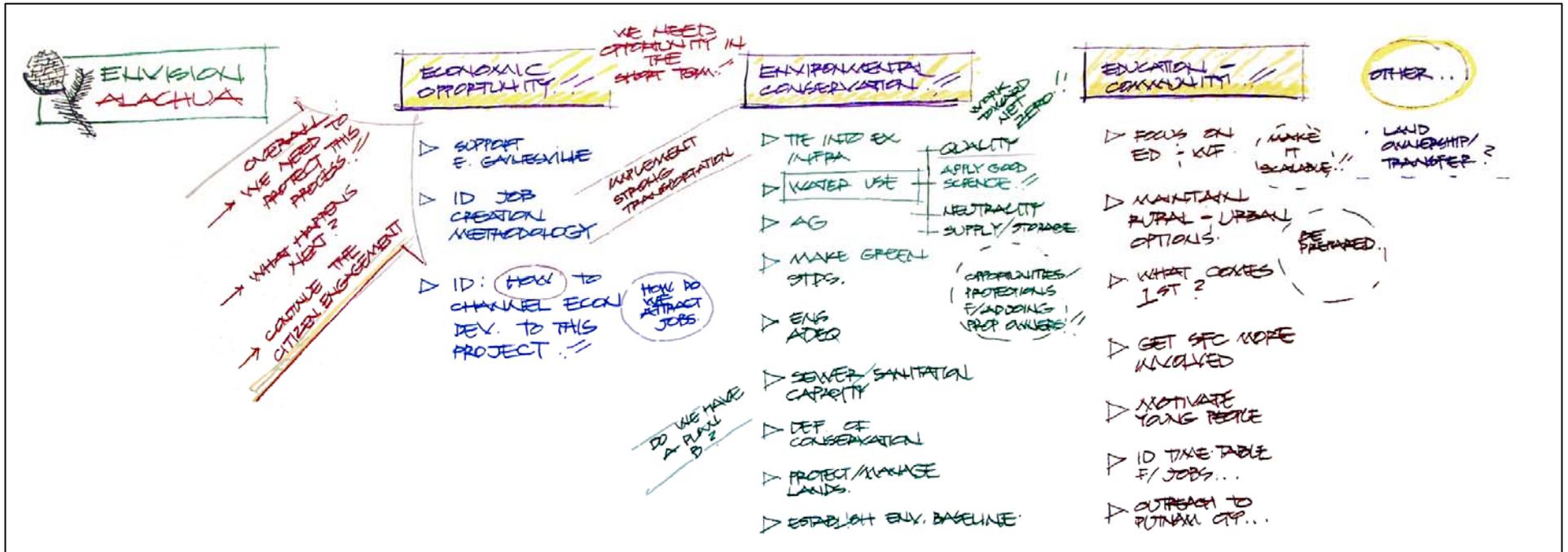
Other Topics

- Participants want to know how this process stays real. What is in place to ensure the Vision is implemented as described in the plan?
- There were questions about the next steps in making the plan a reality. How does it actually work? Does Plum Creek sell the land to a developer? Additional comments focused on the order and phasing of the project - what comes first, the jobs and stores or houses? How will ownership of the land be transferred for the various uses?
- There were comments about continued public involvement. How will the promises be maintained and how does the citizen involvement that was started through this process continue? How is it ensured that these comments make it into the public record?
- It was asked, does Plum Creek have a Plan B if this is not successful?

A full transcription of the flipchart notes taken during the small groups and written comments provided at the meeting is included at the end of this document.

V. Summary and Next Steps in the Envision Alachua Planning Process

Daniel concluded by inviting everyone to the meeting on Saturday, and encouraged participants to remind their friends and colleagues. Daniel also reminded participants to submit their comment cards and go to the website to sign up to receive automatic e-mail updates so they could stay informed. He also invited participants to stay and speak with Plum Creek representatives if they had any questions. The meeting was adjourned at about 8:35 pm.



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