



Envision Alachua Task Force Draft Vision, Goals and Planning Principles

REVISED Based on the Task Force discussion
during Meeting #3 on September 7, 2011

prepared by

MIG, Inc.

October 2011

in support of the Envision Alachua
process convened by Plum Creek



Introduction

This document updates the Initial Vision, Goals and Guiding principles document to reflect the feedback provided during the second and third meetings of the Envision Alachua Task Force, held on July 25, 2011 and September 7, 2011. Participants received substantial information about regional economic and demographic conditions, environmental and physical conditions, and social and cultural conditions that have influenced the development of the County. The document was developed based on verbal comments expressed during the Task Force meeting and written comments provided on comment cards or by e-mail.

This draft text is provided as a basis for discussion at Task Force Meeting #4. Task Force members will continue to be provided information about Plum Creek lands and other related topics throughout the process. This text will continue to be revised and updated based on Task Force member feedback throughout the planning process.

Definitions for key terms include:

Vision statement – a description of a preferred future

Goals - desired end state, condition or outcome expressed

Planning Principles- key concepts or ideas to guide future planning and implementation

Initial 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.

Draft Goals and Planning Principles

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

- A1. Ensure that jobs are created that enable East County residents to live and work in East County.
- A2. Create and stimulate economic development opportunities that are sustainable and that create well-paying, long-lasting jobs.
- A3. Encourage manufacturing and industrial uses (for example, those related to solar energy) that provide blue collar jobs.
- A4. Encourage economic activities that help the community grow, leading to a better distribution of basic services in East County.
- A5. Identify a potential draw or anchor that would attract development and new residents to East County (e.g. retail development, manufacturing companies, University of Florida, etc.).
- A6. Provide economic activities and related employment opportunities so that graduates from the University of Florida, Santa Fe College and other educational institutions can put their knowledge, skills and abilities to use in the region.
- A7. Explore potential markets for new products and industries that respond to regional and global needs (e.g. biomass, furniture, goat meat, phosphates, etc.).
- A8. Create job opportunities that support the natural environment rather than displacing it.
- A9. Link this visioning process to economic development activities in Gainesville, such as Innovation Gainesville, in order to complement rather than compete with these initiatives.
- A10. Create a plan that anticipates and leverages the resources available to support economic development; for example, consider working with agencies to restructure enterprise zones.
- A11. Identify development sites with the potential to attract Fortune 500 or 1000 companies to the area.
- A12. Identify gaps in economic activities, including manufacturing, so the full range of employment opportunities are available.

- A12. Include agriculture, conservation and natural resources as building blocks for a successful economy.
- A13. Encourage sustainable economic development that is based on renewable energy.
- A13. Ensure that employment and job training centers are conveniently located and served by transit.

B. Environmental Conservation

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

- B1. Develop an ecologically-based plan that is built-around the objective of connecting people to nature.
- B2. Support local and state conservation activities that enhance wildlife connectivity.
- B3. Be strategic in retaining lands that maximize conservation and recreation lands.
- B4. Protect habitat for sensitive species, wetlands and wildlife corridors.
- B5. Use cluster development techniques and buffers to separate conservation and residential areas.
- B6. Help complete the "emerald necklace" around Gainesville.
- B7. Demonstrate the compatibility of conservation with economic development.
- B8. Use a science-based approach for defining sensitive areas, habitat, water resources and other related factors.
- B9. Use conservation easements to protect significant portions of any proposed project area.
- B10. Ensure long-term watershed protection.

C. Transportation

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

- C1. Understand how future transportation trends (such as increased telecommuting) affect the assumptions used for long-term transportation planning.
- C2. Increase availability of public transit.
- C3. Use transportation plans to create economic development corridors.

- C4. Complete the bike trail between Gainesville Hawthorne Trail and Waldo Road Trail.
- C5. Build on policies expressed in the County's transportation plan and Bus Rapid Transit Plan.
- C6. Ensure that transit services connect area residents, especially those in East Gainesville, to employment centers.

D. Energy and Utilities

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

- D1. Work closely with utility providers to harness capabilities and develop partnerships with cities to meet the utility needs of outlying communities.
- D2. Consider constructing needed utility infrastructure in advance to reduce developer risks and stimulate implementation of proposed economic development.

E. Water

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

- E1. Develop communities that optimize water conservation and achieve a 50% or greater reduction in water usage.
- E2. Identify and protect water recharge areas.
- E3. Apply Florida-friendly guidelines for landscaping.
- E4. Adopt innovative ways to meet water resource and conservation needs.
- E5. Capture, treat and reuse stormwater to the maximum extent feasible.
- E6. Employ Low Impact Development (LID) practices to manage stormwater.

F. Land Use

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

- F1. Use planning and development approaches that help the area develop in a new way to avoid repeating mistakes of the past that have yielded sprawl and traffic congestion.
- F2. Work collaboratively with the County to build on results of previous successful planning processes.

- F3. Be consistent with current land use planning policies, including those that emphasize higher densities, mixed use and transit-oriented development.
- F4. Support activities that will encourage the movement of families with children to East County to help boost enrollment in East County schools.
- F5. Support activities that encourage tourism and agriculture, two important drivers of the local economy.
- F6. Consider preparing “development templates” that provide direction on ecologically appropriate areas for development and conservation, regardless of which type of economic development occurs.
- F7. Conduct meaningful and strategic conversions of lands for development.
- F8. Connect physical and virtual infrastructure on Plum Creek lands to East Gainesville and neighboring communities.
- F9. Continue use of state-of-the-art fire management practices on Plum Creek lands.

G. Agriculture

Maintain agriculture and silviculture as viable and sustainable economic activities

- G1. Protect and enhance existing agriculture and silviculture in the County.
- G2. Preserve agricultural areas to ensure the availability and affordability of locally grown food.
- G3. Consider activities that support urban agriculture and agricultural related eco-tourism.
- G4. Support and strengthen working landscapes on lands adjacent to Plum Creek.
- G5. Develop local uses for wood products and technologies produced in Alachua County.
- G6. Develop partnerships with the Alachua County School Board and agricultural associations to develop agricultural related job opportunities.

H. Social and Cultural Development

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

- H1. Address the historic and social constraints that have limited access to opportunities for many residents in the community.
- H2. Involve faith-based leaders and related organizations to ensure broad community participation and representation.
- H3. Ensure Envision Alachua process fully acknowledges the influence of all communities on the history and ongoing and sustained land use development patterns of the area.
- H4. Increase arts and cultural opportunities for the community.
- H5. Include community amenities that are family friendly, contributing to high quality of life for all residents.

I. Envision Alachua Planning Process

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

- I1. Consider a long-term view for this process (50+ years).
- I2. Ensure that Envision Alachua has tangible, short-term results (over 1-3 years) to help build momentum and community support for projects that are scalable and sustainable over time.
- I3. Ensure that the planning process remains open and inclusive of all community members.
- I4. Address short and long-term planning horizons – 1-3, 3-5, 10+ year planning horizons so that foundational activities can be implemented.
- I5. Create a new economic, environmental and social engine for the region
- I6. Develop partnerships with area institutions, educational providers and organizations to develop and implement the vision; consider potential partners such as the water district and Plan East Gainesville, among others.
- I7. Develop a buy-in and broad base of community support for vision and process.
- I8. Ensure process results in activities that are scalable and economically sustainable.
- I9. Explore availability of federal funds to support regional economic and community development processes.

- I10. Align the plan with the Six Pillars for Florida's Future planning framework developed by the Florida Chamber Foundation so it can inform state-wide planning processes and qualify Alachua County as a "six pillars community."
- I11. Create a statewide model for future ecologically-planned communities.
- I12. Plan for growth that is sustainable and ecologically friendly.
- I13. Build community pride through public involvement in the community development process.
- I14. Ensure broad-based participation from the community to ensure that all residents are represented in the ongoing planning process.
- I15. Engage residents from nearby communities that may be affected by development proposals on Plum Creek lands.

J. Recreation

- J1. Maximize recreational opportunities including existing activities such as hunting, birding, wildlife viewing, etc. on Plum Creek lands.
- J2. Acknowledge impacts of potential changes to Plum Creek lands to current and long-time recreation users.
- J3. Provide and encourage recreational activities that support the local economy.
- J4. Provide activities that use the outdoors as a learning and play environment.

K. Education

- K1. Use potential development on Plum Creek lands as a springboard for strengthening educational programs and facilities in East County.
- K2. Consider creating a Santa Fe College satellite campus and related job training facility.
- K3. Develop job training programs especially addressing high school drop-outs.