

Alachua County Commission Guiding Vision - FY 09-10



ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA

ALACHUA EXCELS

1. The County will, in accordance with our Comprehensive Plan, attempt to slow sprawl in the County's rural areas and western Gainesville while encouraging higher density infill within Alachua County municipalities. Vital to this effort is the joint planning and promotion with the City of Gainesville of east Gainesville redevelopment, in accordance with the Plan East Gainesville Report. The County should work with environmental stewards on policies that promote economic development in East Gainesville while balancing existing environmental concerns and will provide flexibility to the extent possible.
2. The County promotes home ownership and supports working collectively with housing providers including builders, lenders, not-for-profit agencies, government agencies, realtors, and other stakeholders to provide affordable workforce housing to the citizens of Alachua County. Concepts of traditional neighborhood design and compact development will be encouraged and implemented within the urban area and coordinated through the MTPO, as part of the Livable Communities Reinvestment Plan and our Comprehensive Plan.
3. The County will promote orderly annexation and will transition from providing direct urban services by encouraging and promoting service delivery by municipalities. Annexations into municipalities will not be opposed or discouraged by Alachua County, providing the Boundary Adjustment Act criteria are followed, the annexing jurisdiction shows evidence that it is including low income and minority areas within its annexation planning and specific transition plans including service delivery and fiscal impacts are adopted prior to the annexation referendums.
4. The Countywide Visioning Process will continue to develop intergovernmental coordination, allowing implementation of local municipal planning and visioning that could be formally incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Plan and the plans for each municipality.
5. Environmental lands and wildlife habitat will be protected by purchases through the Alachua County Forever program and by the monitoring and regulation of development in sensitive environmental areas. The County will continue to facilitate and acquire new park lands and open space in cooperation with our municipalities for the enjoyment of our citizens. Further, the County acknowledges its role in protecting the health of our citizens by ensuring clean air and an adequate supply of water.
6. Future transportation improvements within urban areas will be pedestrian friendly and provide for affordable and efficient multi-modal transportation systems. Rural roadway expansions will be oriented towards public safety improvements and the inter-connectivity of collector road systems. The County will address the expansion of certain collector roads and efficient transportation systems. The County will not encourage widening of rural roadways or the paving of dirt streets within the proposed rural reserve areas outside the Urban Cluster. Where dirt streets are paved within the urban cluster, assessment policies should mandate that local residents will bear a proportionate share of the cost. A fiscal policy and annual funding shall be established as is financially feasible to match dirt street assessments agreed to by citizens. The County shall establish a pavement management plan and develop adequate funding.

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7. A separate MSTU will be maintained for a portion of the Sheriff patrol services in the unincorporated areas. The County will continue to work with the Sheriff to determine a base level of service countywide. Municipalities should contract with the Sheriff if they wish patrol services beyond the base level, as they have the option of establishing municipal police departments.
8. A two-tier level of service and taxation methodology will be developed to recognize urban and rural levels of service. Rural services in unincorporated areas outside of the Urban Cluster should be at a lower level of service than those provided in urban areas which will permit rural area residents to maintain and expect a rural lifestyle and service levels.
9. The County promotes strong cities that serve as cultural centers which provide seamless service delivery systems. The County desires to transition from providing direct urban service delivery by encouraging and facilitating municipalities to provide municipal services. Emergency Services, with the exception of Emergency Management functions assigned to county governments by State law, and recreational programming should be services provided by municipalities as urban services. The County should facilitate the transition of these services on an equitable basis for all County residents. In situations where the County funds urban programs, the County will discourage fee structures and policies that differentiate between municipal and unincorporated residents.
10. Sustainable economic development will be encouraged through a written economic development plan focusing on strengthening existing small businesses, growing diversified industries locally, implementing an aggressive poverty reduction plan, introducing economic empowerment strategies, improving public infrastructure as our principle economic incentive and assuring we can attract new industries and businesses thereby creating increased job opportunities. These economic development strategies will be evaluated utilizing a comprehensive matrix detailing how each contributes to our quality of life. The County will develop a strategy to continue development and redevelopment of the fairgrounds and industrial park.
11. Alachua County suffers from a significant level of poverty. Therefore, the County Commission desires to facilitate, foster and enter into partnerships with other agencies to alleviate the long term structural and multi-generational causes of poverty. The County will prioritize approaches and programs for poverty reduction and supports working collaboratively and developing partnerships to reduce poverty and homelessness within Alachua County. The County Commission recognizes that government alone cannot meet this challenge and that the root causes of poverty, and not just the symptoms, must be addressed within the community. Viable educational and entrepreneurial programs designed to assist non-college bound youths are needed in Alachua County to break this cycle of poverty.
12. The County recognizes the fundamental role of county government regarding the provision of health and human services. The citizens of Alachua County are best served through a preventative approach to the root causes of criminal justice and public health problems. The County focuses on prevention and alternatives to incarceration. The County supports working collaboratively and developing partnerships to improve public safety and reduce recidivism rates.



ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA

ALACHUA EXCELS

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13. Increased access to affordable health care is a goal of the County. The County encourages and supports innovative programs that contribute to the improved overall health of the community. The County will support improved health for the adult working uninsured through provision of direct healthcare, disease management and education under the CHOICES healthcare program.
14. The County supports the provision of social services to those in need in the community through direct provision of services by the County and partnerships with non-profit agencies. The County will develop a social services master plan that will take a comprehensive look at the types of service provided and methods of delivery; determine areas of duplication as well as evaluate unmet needs; and recommend methods for providing the services in a more efficient and effective manner. Within the provision of social services, the County should address senior service needs.
15. Homelessness is a community-wide problem. The County will work towards implementing recommendations to reduce homelessness provided through the Homelessness Summit. Partnerships with municipalities and community organizations are vital to finding and implementing possible solutions to this problem. County staff will work with an ad hoc committee created by the City of Gainesville to address immediate issues regarding homeless services within the City of Gainesville.
16. The County will monitor and safeguard the monetary and financial assets of the County and explore available revenue generating activities and seek to diversify revenue sources to reduce over-reliance on property taxes; assessing the burden of taxation for services across the appropriate users of services and the general public .
17. The County will encourage a workforce that is dedicated to a focus on customer service, paid appropriately within the market for similar job classifications, and appropriately trained and equipped to ensure high quality service delivery as is within fiscal constraints and budgetary planning.
18. The County will work to reduce its contribution to global climate change through policies which promote energy conservation and use of alternative energy sources in County operations and in the community. Similar efforts will be undertaken to utilize and promote water conservation and reuse in county operations and in the community. Regional water supplies will be protected and enhanced for local future use.