



Rural and Agricultural Comprehensive Plan Policies

***Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting
May 5, 2020***

Purpose of Meeting

Follow up to previous Board discussions of draft policy changes to Rural and Agricultural Policies in the Comprehensive Plan.

Staff is seeking direction from the Board on draft policy changes and whether to advertise for public hearings.

Presentation Outline

1. Review of previous Board discussion and direction regarding draft policy changes
2. Overview of Rural and Agricultural Policies in Comprehensive Plan
3. Clustered Rural Subdivisions and Rural Subdivision Internal Road Paving Requirements

Previous Board Discussion and Draft Policy Revisions

- 12-04-2018** As part of Evaluation and Appraisal of the Comprehensive Plan, staff presented draft policy changes in support of local foods regarding community gardens and farms, and incentives for agriculture equivalent to conservation areas, in Clustered Rural Subdivision open space.
- BoCC directed staff to provide draft language that open space in Clustered Rural Subdivisions is conservation land, silviculture is not allowable, but limited food production could be an option; lower threshold for requiring clustering from 25 to 10 units.**
- 2-14-2019** Staff presented draft policy language in response.
- BoCC accepted modifications proposed by staff with changes to eliminate provision for existing homestead in open space; to require forest management plans only for existing silviculture to the point of acceptable fire risk; and to allow flexibility for internal road paving requirements in Rural Residential Subdivisions.**
- 3-28-2019** Staff presented draft policy language in response.
- BoCC discussed Clustered Rural Subdivision draft changes, identified issues, and deferred discussion of the item to a future meeting (not part of Evaluation and Appraisal-based amendment process).**

Issues Previously Discussed by Board

Clustered Rural Subdivisions

- Lower threshold for requiring clustering from 25 to 10 units
- Eliminate provision for homestead to remain in open space

- **Open Space**

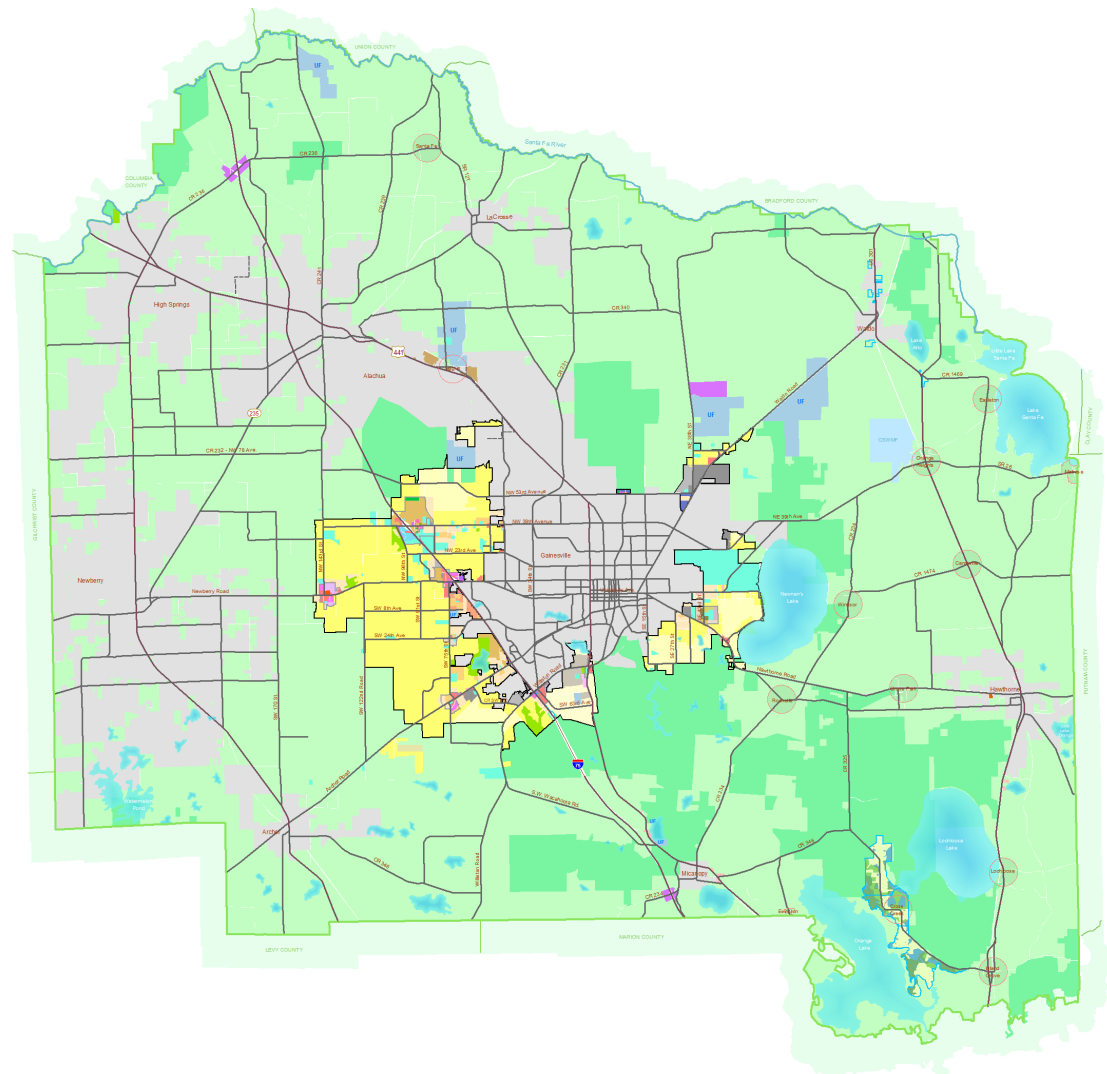
- **Allowable uses**
 - Agriculture – types and scale
- **Management plan requirements**
 - Agriculture Best Management Practices
 - Silviculture and protection of ecosystems
- **Ownership methods**

Rural Residential Subdivisions

- **Internal road paving requirements**

FUTURE LAND USE MAP 2040 - ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Adopted Future Land Use Map 2040



LEGEND

- Urban Cluster Line
- Activity Centers
- Special Area Studies
- Rural Cluster
- Recreation
- Preservation
- Commercial
- Commercial Enclaves
- Tourist/Entertainment
- Institutional
- County Solid Waste Management Facility
- UF Campus Master Plan
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Estate Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Medium High Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Rural/Agriculture
- Rural Employment Center
- Rural Community Employment Center
- Rural Commercial - Agriculture
- Water Bodies
- Municipalities

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Notes: The Future Land Use categories shown on this map are defined in the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan and are to be implemented in conjunction with the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

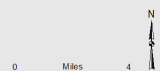
The Future Land Use designations for specific parcels should be confirmed with the Alachua County Department of Growth Management.

Also see Alachua County's Map Genius mapping application at:
<https://mapgenius.alachuacounty.us/>

Comprehensive Plan Adoption Date: November 12, 2019
Comprehensive Plan Effective Date: December 13, 2019

Map Updated through: December 13, 2019

Date of Map Production: December 13, 2019



Rural and Agricultural Objectives and Policies

Areas identified as Rural/Agricultural on Future Land Use Map are for:

- Agricultural activities and related uses
- Rural residential at max density of 1 dwelling unit/5 acres (with certain exceptions)
- Home-based businesses, rural event centers, heritage- and eco-tourism, resource-based recreation

Encourage continuation of productive agricultural uses through integrated strategies.

Protect important agricultural areas, based on factors such as existing agricultural uses, soils, land use patterns, and economics of the county's agricultural community.

Protect Rural and Agricultural areas consistent with:

- Retention of agriculture, open space, rural character
- Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas
- Efficient use of public facilities and services

Rural and Agricultural Objectives and Policies

- Require agricultural best management practices and encourage conservation-oriented practices
- Work with landowners for agricultural and conservation easements
- Support markets and programs that promote sale of local agricultural goods
 - Farmers markets, community gardens, agritourism, sustainable local food system
- Agricultural pursuits allowed in all land use classifications provided public health, safety and environmental protection assured

Rural and Agricultural Objectives and Policies

Residential Subdivisions in Rural/Agriculture Area

- Subdivisions over 6 lots require internal paved roads
- Cap of 150 new subdivision lots less than 8 acres per year except in clustered subdivisions
- Special Area Study required for subdivisions over 100 lots
 - To address public facilities such as transportation, fire, impacts on surrounding land uses, and environmental issues
- Subdivisions of 25 or more lots shall be clustered

Clustered Rural Subdivision Concept

“Residential cluster development is a form of land development in which principal buildings and structures are grouped together on a site, thus saving the remaining land area for common open space, conservation, agriculture, recreation, and public and semipublic uses.”



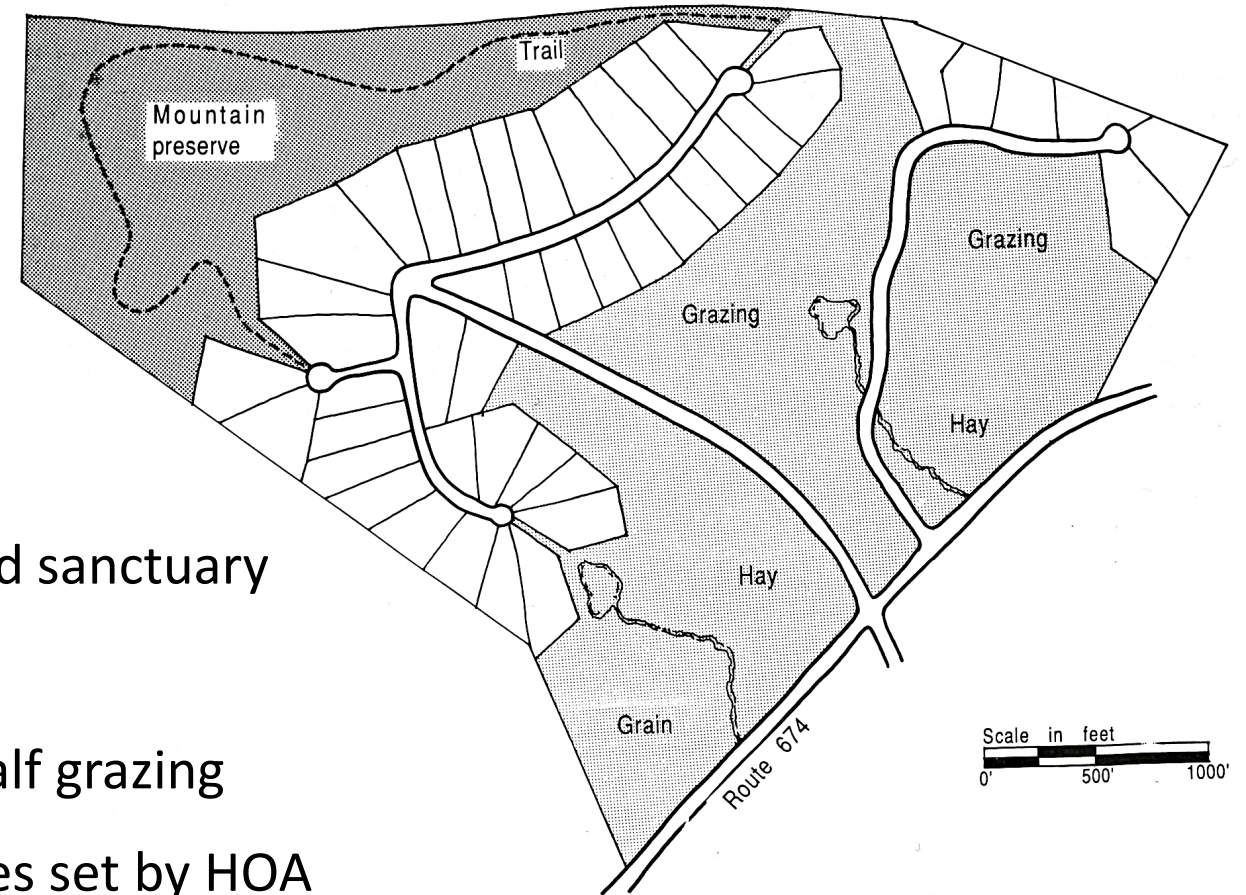
from Conservation Design For Subdivisions, R. Arendt

Whyte 1964; Unterman and Small 1977; Arendt 1996; Sanders 1980
in “*Smart Codes: Model Land-Development Regulations*”
American Planning Association, 2009

Example of Clustered Rural Subdivision with Agriculture from *Rural By Design* (Arendt)

Farmcolony - Stanardsville, VA

- Gross density: 1 du/6 ac
- 48 lots on 289 acres (1.5-2.5 ac lots)
- 65% open space, owned by HOA
 - 70 acres woodland, forest preserve, bird sanctuary
 - 120 acre farm with farm manager
 - Meat, eggs, fruit, vegetables, cow/calf grazing
 - Foods available to all owners at prices set by HOA



Some Examples Of Agricultural Uses in Open Space in Clustered Subdivisions Based on Literature and Internet Research

1. Crops, orchards, vineyards, groves

- a. For use of residents
- b. Limited scale commercial for distribution to local markets
- c. Larger scale, subject to performance standards

2. Livestock and Pasture

- a. Horses owned by and for use of residents
- b. Livestock grazing (cattle, goats, sheep, etc)
- c. Hay production

Considerations

- Density and intensity standards for crops and animals (e.g., per IFAS)
- Standards to prevent adverse impacts to conservation resources
- Innovative techniques such as hydroponics encouraged

Clustered Rural Subdivision Comprehensive Plan Policies (FLUE Policy 6.2.9)

Draft changes shown in blue italics

- Preferred design for new rural residential subdivisions to protect characteristics and features of rural areas through the following goals:
 - Protect natural and historic resources
 - Support continued agricultural activities by preserving viable soils & effective land masses
 - ***DRAFT CHANGE: add "Provide opportunities for agriculture areas such as community gardens or farms."***
 - Minimize land use conflicts
 - Provide recreational and habitat corridors through linked open space networks
 - Achieve flexibility, efficiency, and cost reduction in the provision of services and infrastructure
 - Reduce natural hazard risks to life and property

Clustered Rural Subdivision Comprehensive Plan Policies

Draft changes shown in blue italics

- Required for 25 or more lots

DRAFT CHANGE: New rural residential developments of 10 or more lots shall be clustered

- Incentives for Rural Residential Subdivisions to be clustered

- 2 additional units
- 1 additional unit per every 10 acres of conservation area set aside as open space

DRAFT CHANGE: “. . . every 10 acres of conservation area or agriculture area such as community gardens or farms set aside as open space”

- 1 additional unit for every 20 acres non-conservation area as open space

- Minimum 50% open space in accordance with design principles

- Protect natural, historic, paleontological resources and agricultural areas
- Open space is first component in design process; conservation areas receive top priority
- Agricultural uses encouraged
- Single contiguous area, logical boundaries, eliminate and minimize fragmentation
- Linked open space networks
- Permanent protection required

Clustered Rural Subdivision Comprehensive Plan Policies

Open Space Allowed Uses

Draft changes shown in blue italics

- Natural resource conservation
- Use of residents
 - Common open space
 - Resource-based recreation
 - Community gardens
- Agricultural uses
 - Non-intensive agriculture
DRAFT CHANGE: “Agricultural uses such as larger scale food production, livestock, and equestrian-related uses may be permitted subject to performance standards required in management plans in 6.2.12(e)(3).”
 - Silviculture
DRAFT CHANGE: “Intensive silviculture uses . . . that include practices adverse to the natural resource values and functions of a natural forest system shall not be allowed . . . Only natural forest management in accordance with open space management plan consistent with 6.2.12(e)(3) may be considered.”
- Stormwater, common water and septic systems
- Continuation of existing homestead in open space, not counted toward total units allowed
DRAFT CHANGE: Eliminate provision for continuation of existing homestead in open space

Clustered Rural Subdivision Comprehensive Plan Policies

Draft changes shown in blue italics

Open Space Management Plans

- Required for all open space
- Include objectives, procedures, and responsibilities for management
- Wildfire mitigation
- ***DRAFT CHANGES included additional requirements in management plans:***
 - *“Identify how any agriculture and silviculture operations shall avoid impacts to conservation resources according to standards in the land development regulations”*
 - *“Any silviculture operations are required to be managed to a point where they can be made an acceptable fire risk and must transition to natural forest management”*
 - *“Recommended practices for any agricultural activities in the open space from sources such as UF-IFAS (e.g., for things such as animal stocking and crop planting rates) shall be considered to the extent they are consistent with Comprehensive plan policies including natural resource protection.”*

Clustered Rural Subdivisions

Draft changes shown in blue italics

Open Space Management Plans

DRAFT CHANGES: New Definition

“Natural Forest Management

Forestry operations designed to preserve, enhance and restore the natural resource values of a forest with objectives that include, but are not limited to, improving the health and diversity of forested communities, restoring or maintaining the natural community structure and species composition, and establishing a natural community specific fire interval.”

Clustered Rural Subdivision Comprehensive Plan Policies

Draft changes shown in blue italics

Ownership Entities

- Original landowner

DRAFT CHANGE: add “with provision for transition of ultimate ownership to one of the entities below”

- Homeowners association
- Established Land Trust
- Non-profit conservation organization

DRAFT CHANGE: “non-profit conservation or agricultural organization”

- County or public agency

Rural Residential Subdivisions Comprehensive Plan Policies

Internal Road Paving Requirements

Previous Board Direction

Provide language that would allow some discretion/flexibility as to the requirement for paved internal road access for rural developments.

Considerations Regarding Unpaved Roads in Subdivisions

- Less costly to construct but more costly to maintain long term
- County is sometimes asked to repair or take over maintenance of existing private unpaved roads due to poor condition and/or public safety concerns
- Cannot be accepted by County, therefore, must be private
- Public safety and emergency vehicle access
- Air quality issues with dust/debris

Rural Residential Subdivisions Comprehensive Plan Policies

Draft changes shown in blue italics

Internal Road Paving Requirements

- Rural residential subdivisions, including clustered rural subdivisions, of more than 6 lots shall be designed to provide paved, interconnected, internal roads dedicated to a responsible entity.

DRAFT CHANGE: Modify the requirement from "more than 6 lots" to "more than 9 lots" and add "public safety, emergency vehicle access" to list of standards (Policy 6.2.6 and 6.2.6.1)

[Note: This would correspond to Board's previous direction to lower threshold for requiring clustering of rural residential subdivisions from 25 lots to 10 lots.]

Summary of Key Policy Changes Previously Provided to Board

Clustered Rural Subdivisions

- Lower threshold for requiring clustering from 25 to 10 units
- Eliminate provision for homestead to remain in open space

- **Open Space**

- **Allowable uses**
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Rural Residential Subdivisions

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Board Discussion & Direction

Provide direction to staff on draft changes to the Rural and Agricultural Policies of the Comprehensive Plan and authorize advertisements of public hearings by the Local Planning Agency and the County Commission.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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