



LOOKING FORWARD TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



*Where Nature, Culture and
Innovation Meet*

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Introduction

It is my pleasure to deliver this “Looking Forward” report. This report is built around the challenges and opportunities articulated by the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). It is a compilation of BoCC directions, retreat conversations, initiatives of County Departments, and observations of the organization over my initial five months on the job.

When applying for the job, I was struck by the background document that accompanied the position advertisement, which stated five challenges for the new manager:

1. There is never enough money to do everything that needs to be done;
2. There is a need to balance the desires of the conservationists with those of the business community;
3. The County’s infrastructure needs work;
4. Some fence mending needs to be done between the City of Gainesville and the County; and
5. Because of the upcoming generational shift, staff and succession planning is critical and presents an opportunity for me to build my own team.

My thoughts and meditations on the above items have certainly influenced this report.

Many of the items in this report are directly aligned with a Comprehensive Plan policy. Comprehensive Plan policies will be cited when individual items are brought back to the Board. The implementation of many of the recommended initiatives in this report will require BoCC direction through policy changes.

I look forward to bringing the BoCC progress reports and new opportunities throughout this year’s budget process and policy deliberations.

Mission

It is the mission of Alachua County government to provide responsive, quality service to our citizens and to assure the sustainability of our County and its communities by balancing the concerns for economy, environment and social well being within all of our programs.



Report Structure

The report opens with a quick summary of the four items that were discussed at your December 2014 Board Retreat. These are items that originated on “my watch”.

It then moves on to two important broad principles: “Sustainable Stewardship” and “Advocating Alachua County”. Sustainable Stewardship speaks to our foundational focus on sustainability in everything we do. Advocating Alachua County is a program that will help us better define ourselves to the community, as well as provide information on both the “what” and the “why” of everything we do. These broad principals will be the focus of a branding effort.

Finally, I will focus on the 5 Strategic Issue Areas that were the product of your March 2014 Strategic Planning Workshop:

1. Natural Resources (Environmental Protection);
2. Infrastructure/Capital Improvements;
3. Economic Opportunities/Human Capital (Collaborative Caring);
4. Public Safety; and
5. Governance

December 2014 Retreat Issues

At the December 2014 retreat, the BoCC agenda contained four major items of importance:

1. Land and Water Conservation (Amendment 1)
2. Transportation
3. The Digital Divide
4. The Administrative Services Director

We have made significant progress on these items. Our land conservation lobbying efforts include both in-house and contract lobbyists working on the Board’s desires (Appendix A Current Funding Formulas). This report recommends many constructive funding initiatives to address our pressing transportation challenges. The Eastside Wi-Fi agreements with the City of Gainesville are being finalized. The new Director of Administrative Services began her duties on March 30, 2015.

Vision

Alachua County government is a value-driven organization dedicated to responsive, respectful and courteous customer service. Alachua County is viewed as an innovative and progressive leader in the provision of effective and efficient County services, recognizing the needs of its diverse community.

The County provides an environment that encourages mutual respect, open communication and sharing of ideas in the decision making process. This process includes partnerships with public and private organizations, neighborhoods and employees of Alachua County.

Alachua County government works with the community to effectively plan for growth, with the goal being to balance environmental, social and community development needs.



Sustainable Stewardship

“We are now going through a sustainability revolution that will rival the agricultural and industrial revolutions in the way it will transform society. Innovation and creativity will be needed to develop radical, new products and processes that are less damaging to the environment and generate new businesses and jobs.” - Department of Trade & Industry, London, May 1999

Sustainable Stewardship has been an important and evolving value of Alachua County government since 1999, with the formation of the Alachua County Sustainability Project’s Ad Hoc Committee. It continued with the Energy Conservation Strategies Commission in 2008. In 2015, the Board directed the Manager to create a Sustainability Council to review and implement Energy, Water, and Waste Initiatives.

At our core, we are a sustainable organization. Our commitment to sustainability is found both in our policies and in how we provide services.

Sustainability Council/Quarterly Updates

On February 24, 2015, the Board approved the formation of the Alachua County Sustainability Council. The council is made up of representatives from each county department. The BoCC will receive the council’s first quarterly update in July 2015. At this meeting, departments will be on hand to provide background and clarification on all assigned tasks. The update will provide an overview of all previous actions assigned, results obtained, and goals for the next quarter’s update.

The first quarterly report will include a baseline report of energy, water, and waste initiatives (Appendix B, Sustainability Council meeting minutes).

Key Sustainability Initiatives

- **The Resource Recovery Park (RRP)**
Located next to the Leveda Brown Environmental Park and Transfer Station, the vision of the RRP is to recover materials from the solid waste stream for use and reuse to meet the State’s and our Comprehensive Plan’s 75% recycling goal. Private sector remanufacturers are being recruited to this Eastside location. At build out, the park will support approximately 300 green-collar manufacturing jobs.

Values

Integrity: We adhere to standards of ethical conduct.

Honesty: We are truthful, fair and open with our fellow employees and the people we serve.

Respect: We are responsive, compassionate and courteous in all our interactions.

Diversity: We embrace the value and power of diversity in our community.

Innovation: We are committed to the consideration and implementation of new ideas.

Accountability: We are accountable for our behavior and the quality of work performed individually and in teams.

Communication: We encourage open communication and the sharing of ideas to enhance the decision-making process.



- **Land Conservation/Ecologic Corridors**

Land conservation and ecologic corridors help to protect habitat and our green infrastructure in the near term. They are also a long-term investment in the fight against climate change. Ecologic corridors that strategically connect these resources are critically important.

- **Solar Initiatives**

We are actively developing systems to reduce the soft costs of solar while expediting the approval of permits for solar energy systems countywide. As with irrigation and sod reduction, we continue to lead by example with solar. In May 2015, we will bring to the Board the top ten locations for photovoltaic systems with recommendations on the top two or three locations to begin installation over the next budget year. These initial projects, most likely a rooftop project and a parking lot project, will be funded with one-time revenues from the recommended sale of the Public Defender's building.

- **Existing Materials Recovery Facility Management (Formerly SP Recycling)**

At its December 2nd Special Meeting, the Board directed staff to assume the operation of a recycled materials recovery facility on a temporary basis. The County will operate the facility through the end of 2016, at which time it must decide whether to continue operating the facility or attempt to hire a private entity to assume the operation.

- **Conservation and Efficiency Improvements for County Buildings**

We will continue to bring forward capital projects with energy reduction and water conservation measures for the Board's consideration. Where applicable, we will continue to supplement these efforts with grants, utility rebates, and the Utility Savings Reinvestment Program funds.

We are moving forward with irrigation and sod reduction plans for County Government properties. Perennial edible landscapes and low to no irrigation landscapes will transform appropriate civic spaces into places of sustainability and utility (Appendix C, Grounds Maintenance and Irrigation Report).



Advocating Alachua County

“Authentic brands don’t emerge from marketing cubicles or advertising agencies. They emanate from everything the company does.” — Howard Schultz

Alachua County does an impressive job communicating with our citizens through a variety of mediums, however, nationally there is negative stigma associated with “government”. Alachua County is not immune to this stigma. Therefore we will make a concerted effort to “reinvest in who we are” by focusing on telling our stories, transparency, our image, public perceptions, and accessibility. This will be accomplished by developing departmental business plans, rebranding ourselves, monitoring the impacts of proposed state/federal bills on our citizens, reinvesting in communications, and emphasizing our community and customer service ethics.

Developing Departmental Business Plans

In order for Alachua County employees and citizens to better understand who we are, each Department will be tasked to craft a business plan. These plans will allow Departments to take a holistic view of their operation. Key components of the Departmental Business Plans will include:

- Identifying quantifiable goals;
- Benchmarking against other county governments, as well as the department itself, by utilizing historical data;
- Developing flow charts for existing processes to eliminate redundancy and identify efficiencies;
- Forecasting budgets; and
- Ensuring the services provided are in line with priorities established by the County Commission and/or County Manager, or as mandated by state and/or federal law.

The final business plans will provide the County Commission and County Manager with a method to assign priorities and objectively evaluate budget requests, individual and departmental performance, and various programs in a transparent, accountable manner with the intent of improving the quality of services offered to Alachua County’s citizens. These plans will also be used as the foundation for future strategic plans, performance plans, and master plans.



Current Logo



Current Seal



Current Vehicle Logo



Former Logo



Former Logo

Rebranding Alachua County

Alachua County is a progressive, caring, and diverse community. Our logo, or brand, should reflect that.

Marketing methods, as well as the tastes and attitudes of Alachua County's citizens, have changed since the County's current logo was introduced approximately 25 years ago. Brands change and evolve over time, as is evidenced by Alachua County's own logos.

The new logo should reflect that Alachua County is progressive and forward thinking, communicating the importance and value of Alachua County to the citizens we serve. It should be developed with input from our staff and citizen stakeholders. It should be easy and inexpensive to reproduce on printed materials, vehicles, buildings, and for other County authorized uses.

In-house Communications staff may be utilized to finalize the logo in lieu of hiring an outside firm, depending on their current workload and the desired urgency of the Commission to proceed. This team of professional in-house staff has already coined a tag line which can easily be incorporated with the new logo (used on the County's Annual Report for three consecutive years): *Where Nature, Culture and Innovation Meet.*

Advocating through the Legislative Process

Each year, the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners identifies legislative priorities at the state and federal level, which affect Alachua County's citizens either positively or negatively. In 2015, legislative issues include: (Appendix D, Alachua County's 2015 State Legislative Agenda)

1. The Empowerment Center Human Services Campus
2. The Resource Recovery Park
3. The Orange Creek Basin Study
4. Florida Water and Land Conservation (Amendment 1)
5. Juvenile Detention Cost Share
6. County Medicaid Costs/Acceptance of Federal Dollars for Medicaid Expansion
7. State Tax Reform/Main Street Fairness Act
8. Mental Health: Funding for Persons with Behavioral Health Issues or Disabilities
9. Support of Solar Energy
10. The Enterprise Zone Incentive Program



Reinvesting in Communications

The Alachua County Communications Office provides a unified and consistent message through a variety of media outlets including streaming video, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Channel 12, Flickr, media advisories, the *Community Update* newsletter, Take 5, and Alachua County Talks.

The office utilizes dated audio-visual equipment that is nearing the end of its useful life cycle. This equipment represents several hundreds of thousands of dollars invested by the BoCC. In an effort to assure uninterrupted live video streaming of Commission meetings, Alachua County Talks, and other Channel 12 programming, a dedicated funding source for replacement equipment must be identified. Communications is currently working on replacement and upgrade strategies for addressing this issue.

Communications will continue its emphasis on expanding our social media reach. The goal is to increase Facebook likes from the current 28,000 to 35,000 in the next year.

Website evolution

Another opportunity to engage citizens is by simplifying the search engines on the Alachua County website by including an “I Want to Know” function. This search engine would index keywords or frequently searched words for relevance. Another addition to the County website is an “I want to do Business in Alachua County” function directing citizens to appropriate Growth Management and Economic Development information. Finally, an “Ask/Advise the County Manager” page which would allow citizens to inquire or suggest items of interest directly to the County Manager for response and/or implementation is also proposed. Other than in-house staff time, no additional cost is anticipated for this recommendation.

Organizational Culture: Community and Customer Service Ethics

An organization’s mission, vision, and values create and define the personality of the organization. That personality can be a positive reflection of day-to-day business ideals of the organization, or it can be a negative reflection created by not inhabiting the stated ideals. Poor community service is not the result of stated values. All organizations have positive values. Poor customer service is the failure of the organization to instill those values in the day-to-day operations of the organization. The challenge faced by most organizations is not the development of the Mission, Vision, and Values, but how the organization



effectively implements these ideals, how they are taught, and how they can be seen in everything the organization does.

Alachua County's mission, vision, and values are posted in our conference rooms, halls, and offices. Our mission is to provide responsive, quality service to our citizens. It is to assure the sustainability for our County by balancing economic, environmental, and social concerns. Our vision and values embody integrity, honesty, respect, innovation, accountability, and communication.

How do we, as a value driven organization, high performance organization, make these statements a part of our daily work? The answer is in what we establish as our organizational culture.

We not only serve the citizens that make up Alachua County, we also serve visitors and residents of other communities that enter our community daily. All rely on our services and resources. Consistent with our mission, vision, and values, we are committed to providing those services at the highest-level possible and continuously improving how we provide those services. Our organizational culture will be the basis for our daily work, the basis for our interactions with the public, and the basis for our interactions with each other.

To reach this goal Alachua County staff will:

- **Be Solution Oriented (“Yes” or “Yes, if...”)**
Listen to the problems, concerns, and issues of those we serve, then seek and offer solutions. Have a positive approach to all discussions. If “Yes” is not the answer, look for the “Yes, if...” answer. A phrase that starts “No, because...” installs divisiveness, contradiction, disagreement, and ultimately leads to a downward spiraling conversation that typically has a poor ending. “Yes, if...” holds a solution, provides a future and a positive outlook. It offers options. It is a beginning.
- **Be Proactive (*Reach out personally*)**
Work with a commitment to meet or exceed expectations. Reach out to others personally and seek the relationship. Build an open and honest relationship, which provides the foundation for effective teamwork. Choose to speak to someone before emailing or sending a letter. Look for ways to reach out and address issues before they happen.
- **Be Innovative (*Think “What if...”*)**
When faced with challenges and problems, search for ways that work for all. Look for ways to grow an idea. Introduce opportunity by adding to the thought. Be open to something different. Remember everything started as a new, crazy idea.



- **Work With A Sense Of Urgency**

Working with a sense of urgency is starting when we say we will start and finishing when we say we will finish. The key to any service is commitment to the delivery of that service and meeting the expectations of those receiving the service. Timeframes are always part of the commitment. A sense of urgency is not necessarily working fast or delivering something fast. It understands that our actions are interrelated to the commitments and expectations of others. It is understanding that what we do, how we do it, and when we do it, impacts the commitments of those that we serve. Working with a sense of urgency also includes answering phones by the third ring, returning phone calls and emails within 24 hours, all while providing accurate and timely information to the public.

Natural Resources & Environmental Protection

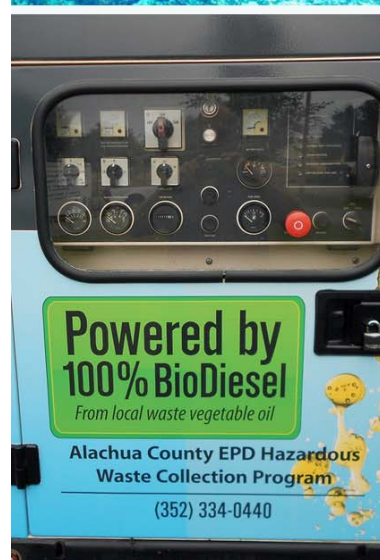
"He who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, the waters, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Alachua County is known statewide, nationally, and internationally for its unique natural environment. Our environmental distinctiveness has been recognized for centuries, dating back to before the American Revolution. The County Commission has acknowledged the value of our natural resources and has adopted policies to protect the environment for future generations.

With stewardship comes the need to consider the economic needs of the community. Environment and job creation must work hand-in-hand to create a truly sustainable community. By focusing on both of these, Alachua County will continue to lead in protecting the environment while encouraging a vibrant economy.

To reach this goal staff will:

- Evaluate the establishment of an impact appropriate Cleanwater/Stormwater Utility, which will not only adequately fund the maintenance of stormwater infrastructure, but provide a funding source for matching state and federal grants for environmentally significant and beneficial projects. The appropriate assessment will recognize the significant stormwater



impact of the urban and suburban land use forms and the minimal impact of agricultural lands.

- Expand the service nature of Environmental Protection staffing efforts by providing policy and consultative guidance to various governments at the State, regional, and local level.
- Evaluate opportunities to leverage local dollars (and in-kind services) for matching land and water conservation dollars from agencies such as the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Water Management Districts.
- Adopt a landscape irrigation code to improve efficiency of ground landscape irrigation systems with the goal of reducing discretionary water use.

Economic Opportunities, Human Capital (Collaborative Caring)

"I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life its deepest significance." — Pablo Casals

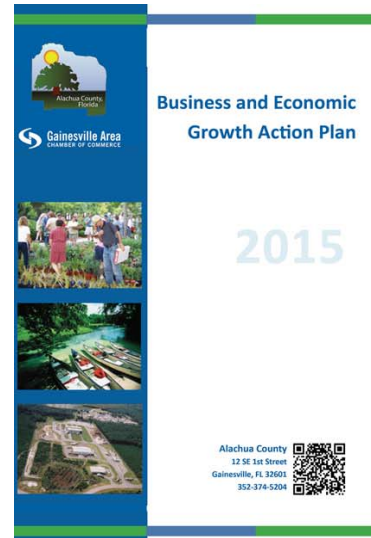
Economic Opportunities

Alachua County holds a passion for our environment as well as a tremendous potential for economic development. Our goal should be to recognize both community attributes and to be the state and national leader in finding the sustainable balance. Environmental protection and economic development do not need to be mutually exclusive. Proponents of both groups have a desire to protect our quality of life.

Efforts to support economic development include:

The Business and Economic Growth Action Plan

Alachua County Government and the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce authored the Business and Economic Growth Action Plan (Appendix E). The Action Plan is meant to complement other economic development efforts currently taking place within the County by encouraging collaboration with partners, leveraging and strengthening assets, ensuring availability of information, and continuing to improve efficiencies in the development review process. It is important that this



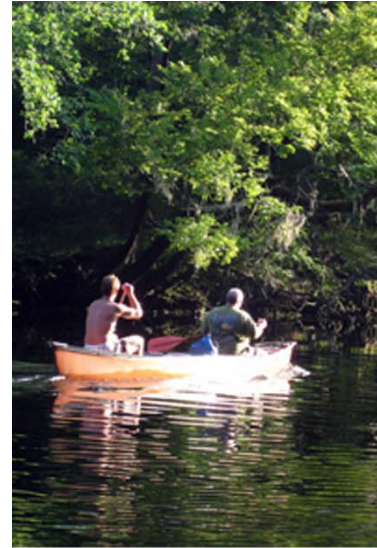
dynamic action plan be shared with various interest groups throughout the County.

Action Plan elements for the development review process include:

- **Predictability**
A development review process that is predictable, adds value, and ensures open communication can be an effective economic development tool.
- **Efficiencies and Friendliness**
While the Board of County Commissioners sets the guiding policies for development, and ultimately adopts the specific codes by which development is reviewed, staff's goal should be to make that process as efficient and customer friendly as possible. Areas to look for efficiencies include electronic plan reviews, comments, and approvals, as well as the elimination of unnecessary steps.
- **Date Commitments**
Every step of a development review results in a financial consideration for the developer. The dates of the review should be commitments by both parties.
- **Provide Open Communication**
Staff will seek to understand the project proposed. Comments are important for documenting the process, but should not replace a good faith effort to understand the proposals. A project's progress through the development review process should be transparent.

Other Economic Growth Action Plan items include:

- Support the expansion of the economic development incentives toolbox to include non-financial (i.e. rapid permitting, business information services, and technical assistance); direct (i.e. aim to reduce non-tax operating costs; tax incentives reduce firms' tax liabilities through credits and exemptions) and tax-based (i.e. credit, abatement, or exemptions) options (Appendix F, Economic Development Memo).
- Explore the use of Foreign Trade Zones.



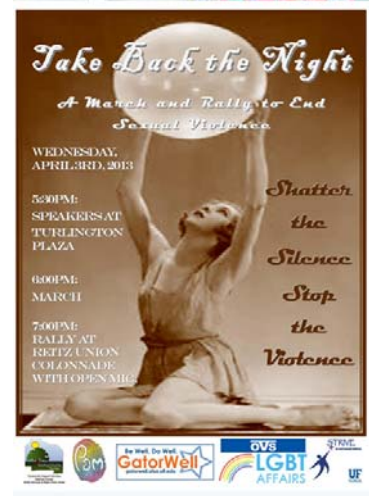
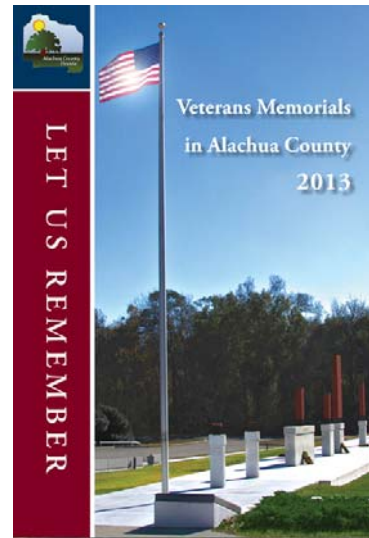
- Explore the feasibility of attracting EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program allocation to Alachua County by working with a designated EB-5 center in the State of Florida.
- Explore the feasibility of starting an Industrial Development Authority (IDA) to promote the attraction of light manufacturing to the area, specifically for East Gainesville.
- Seek Legislative support in 2016 for an Enterprise Zone designation in unincorporated Alachua County (if the Florida Legislature extends the Enterprise Zone program sunset after the year 2015.)
- Establish a task force in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to implement the Board approved Business and Economic Growth Action Plan.
- Implement the Business and Economic Growth Action Plan Report recommendations - includes many different projects and is included as attachment (See Appendix F, Economic Development Memo).
- Partner with the Chamber and the private sector, cities, University of Florida, Santa Fe College, and the School Board on business development missions. In short, Alachua County should be at the table for all substantive initiatives.

Human Capital (Collaborative Caring)

Mental Health

Alachua County provides leadership in mental health through a number of programs and ongoing initiatives including:

- **Crisis Services**
The Alachua County Crisis Center and the Rape Crisis and Victim's Advocate programs are among the nation's oldest and most respected centers for handling these life-saving services. Increasing the number of county employees and the general public who are trained in mental health first aid (an 8-hour course) or Crisis Intervention Training (40 hours for law enforcement and first responders) will be a priority.
- **Partnerships**
Alachua County is a member of the Mental Health Coalition, a group of providers who are seeking to coordinate services and advocate for increased resources. Among the projects of the



coalition, in coordination with the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), is an effort to diagram our current mental health network with its more than one hundred providers and programs. Understanding the complexity of our system is the first step to making it more efficient and closing the gaps in treatment.

- **Mental Illness and Homelessness**

More than half of those who are homeless in our community are mentally ill or have chronic substance abuse issues. The County's cooperation with the City of Gainesville and numerous non-profit partners will continue as the Grace Marketplace turns into a true empowerment center with full wrap-around services.

Court Services

- **Diversion Courts**

The County has four specialty courts: Mental Health Court, Drug Court, Veterans Court, and Teen Court where people who qualify are given a lesser sentence for complying with a rigorous program of treatment. The effect is substantially lower rates of recidivism and greater integration with the community.

- **Criminal Justice, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program (CJMHSAG)**

The CJMHSAG Program is a broad-based collaboration between the County and its Court Services Department, Meridian Behavioral Health Care, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, Office of the Jail, Court Administration of the 8th Judicial Circuit, Gainesville Police Department, GPD/BOLD Program, and the Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless of North Central Florida.

In April 2014, the County received a three year CJMHSAG grant of \$1.2 million (\$400,000 each year) from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to support services which improve access to treatment and case management services for adults who have a mental illness, substance abuse, or a combination of such issues and are involved in the criminal justice system. The purpose of the grant is to reduce and eliminate costly incarceration and/or state hospitalization of individuals with mental illness and/or substance



use disorders through more cost-effective treatment and case management. The County matches these funds from the General Fund. (This is the County's third 3-year grant from DCF.)

Community Support Services

The Department of Community Support Services (CSS) has been tasked by the Board to target the following services for funding allocations: poverty reduction, homeless prevention and intervention, suicide and crisis intervention/prevention, rape and crime victim advocacy/counseling, veteran services, senior services, and healthcare for low-income individuals to include medical, dental, behavioral health, vision care, and pharmaceutical assistance.

The CSS staff has identified the following issues to address during the upcoming year:

- **Homelessness**
We will continue involvement in assuring the success of the Grace Marketplace Empowerment Center. Staff activities will include the continuing partnership with the City of Gainesville, managing the inter-local agreement, staffing the Oversight Advisory Board and its sub-committees, assisting with the development of program planning and evaluation, and engaging in collaborative relationships with numerous community partners. We will also work with the City of Gainesville to engage in a community-wide process to review and reset the City of Gainesville/Alachua County 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.
- **CHOICES**
We will finalize all CHOICES financial liabilities, staff the CHOICES Advisory Board as they develop procurement recommendations to the BOCC for the CHOICES Trust Fund, and sunset the CHOICES Advisory Board (Appendix G, Florida Department of Health Memo).
- **Medical Examiner**
On April 22, 2014, the Medical Examiner presented to the BOCC regarding the construction of a new facility which will increase the County's portion of their annual budget by \$90,000.



Infrastructure/Capital Improvements

“Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.” — Publilius Syrus

Maintaining our transportation infrastructure

Alachua County has a responsibility to maintain the transportation infrastructure. In addition, a properly maintained roadway system has a positive influence on community welfare. Well-maintained roadways are essential to public safety. A high quality roadway network is a positive for economic development and attracting new businesses to the community. Properly maintaining our roads is a key element of our County's sustainable future. Currently, Alachua County funds transportation infrastructure maintenance through Gas Taxes and a small annual contribution from the General Fund.

Our transportation infrastructure includes pavement and stormwater systems. Alachua County is responsible for more than 670 centerline miles of paved roadways. Of the 670 centerline miles, only 22% are in a condition where either no repair or minor repair is needed. A full 68% are rated as unacceptable, showing signs of aging and pavement failure due to inadequate long-term maintenance. The annual goal should be to resurface 5% to 7% of the roadway network. The goal equates to resurfacing 35 to 50 centerline miles per year. Looking forward, I am recommending that we start this approach with Tower Road and County Road 236.

Despite current road conditions and the demonstrated need, 60% of the community voted not to fund roadway improvements with dedicated sales tax funding.

Strategies for effective utilization of existing revenues and advocating alternate funding sources

- **Consider a different approach**
Current standards require that many existing County roadways be reconstructed. Current reconstruction costs average \$750,000 per mile of two-lane road, while a “resurfacing only” effort could reduce the cost to \$300,000 per mile or less. This resurfacing only effort would require the consideration of new policies. For arterial and collector roadways, the standards would be based on a



location specific design to achieve certain minimums and pavement life. For residential streets, the County would use “Citizens Standards”, where standards are tailored to the needs of the neighborhood and funding available for each project. (Appendix H, Citizen Standards Document)

- **Municipal Services Benefit Unit (MSBU)**

Revenue for services done in a MSBU area are non-ad valorem assessments that are equitably assessed on each property within the benefit unit. MSBUs are an effective and fair method for the resurfacing of existing subdivision streets, which make up 16% of the County’s pavement management backlog, because the citizens directly benefitting from the work shoulder the expense. The process includes:

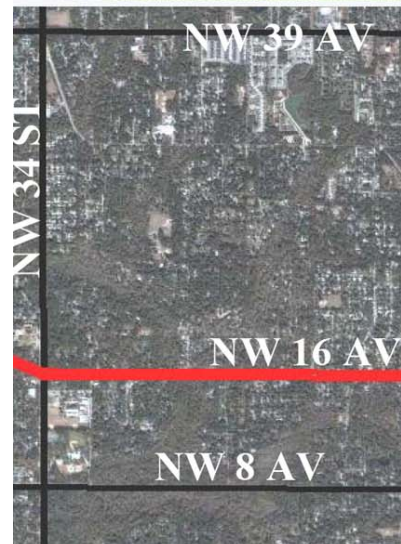
- Performing periodic pavement condition evaluations.
- Based on pavement condition if a subdivision’s streets need resurfacing, poll the affected property owners utilizing the existing County policy for Special Assessment Districts. Based on the results of the poll, either resurface the subdivision streets using Citizen Standards and institute the MSBU, or return in five years with another poll.

The BoCC also has the ability to require that new developments adopt MSBUs to fund future maintenance of the public infrastructure, namely pavement, right-of-way maintenance, streetlights, and sidewalks.

MSBUs are also an effective mechanism for addressing unpaved roads. MSBUs are less effective for resurfacing collectors and arterials, as there is not a clear concentration of citizens with a singular vested interest in those assets.

- **Increasing the MSTU for Road Capital Maintenance**

The Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) is an appropriate funding source for countywide pavement management projects. The current millage for the Unincorporated MSTU is 0.5038, which has a FY15 projected revenue of \$2,280,600. Due to the state’s restrictions on how much the millage can be increased, the maximum amount allowed (by supermajority) is an additional 0.0659 mill, which would generate \$342,630 annually. Although this amount does not go far when paying for road resurfacing, it would be one more piece of the larger funding puzzle.



- **Shifting MSTU expenditures**

In previous discussions, the Board has discussed moving RTS expenditures (\$809,000) from the Gas Tax to MSTU. I recommend that we revisit this. Any Gas Tax revenue freed up by the move would be applied to road resurfacing.

- **Cleanwater/Stormwater assessments or fees**

A Cleanwater/Stormwater fee can be used to pay for services provided by Alachua County related to stormwater, including pollution, flood prevention, and management.

Every time it rains, water pollutants are carried from yards, buildings, parking lots, and streets into local springs, lakes, creeks, rivers, and our groundwater source of drinking water. Rainfall can also cause flooding of residential and commercial areas and roadways.

Historically, Alachua County has funded stormwater management services from the Gas Tax and property taxes. A Clean Water assessment fee would provide a more equitable and accurate cost allocation method to pay for these services. State law exempts bona fide agricultural properties from being assessed a Clean Water stormwater fee.

Since Alachua County has no method for charging all unincorporated residents a monthly fee, the more appropriate collection method is to use the property tax bill through an annual assessment (MSBU) similar to the County's Solid Waste Assessment. Currently, stormwater maintenance (quality and quantity) is limited to County roads and paid for by Gas Taxes, MSTU, and General Fund. I recommend offsetting current expenditures to the maximum extent possible with a Cleanwater/Stormwater MSBU and using the freed up revenue for road resurfacing. A \$35 annual Cleanwater/Stormwater fee would generate approximately \$1.1 million annually.



Capital Improvement Project recommendations:

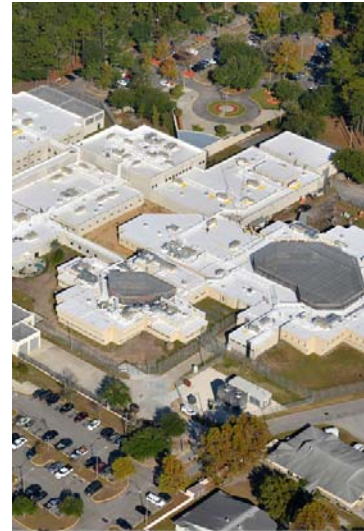
- Leverage state and federal funding opportunities for improving transportation infrastructure.
- Reactivate the County’s formal Capital Improvement Process to include road priorities (including pavement management program funding) and trail connectivity.
- Implement infrastructure updates and maintenance (to include security) for all County-owned buildings.
- Provide Wi-Fi to the east side community centers within Gainesville (Appendix I Gainesville Eastside Public Wi-Fi Project).
- Research the partnering opportunities with the Florida LambdaRail fiber network for future Internet expansion capabilities (Appendix J, LambdaRail document).
- Implement renewable energy by installing solar on roofs of two County buildings.
- Update the Building Management System to enhance the efficiency of our HVAC systems countywide.
- Update the Downtown Space Needs Master Plan, including a potential City/County Co-Location of Development Review Services to the Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) building.

Public Safety

*“Among the notable things about fire is that it also requires oxygen to burn - exactly like its enemy, life. Thereby are life and flames so often compared.” **Otto Weininger***

Fire Assessment or Fees

An assessment on improved property can be used to cover the cost of fire services. These fees can be assessed for services that provide a direct benefit to the property (services cannot be human service-related like emergency medical services). These assessments can be calculated using a variety of philosophies and can be tiered based on units of square footage, hazard class as indicated within the occupancy use, or simple assessment rate for improved parcels. The fire assessments charged in three of the municipalities within Alachua County (City of Gainesville, City of Newberry and City of High Springs), each use one of these strategies in calculating their respective fire assessments. The use of a fire assessment must provide a direct benefit to the parcel being assessed and can include the costs associated with personnel, annual operating, and capital costs for the provision on fire protection services. When calculating the total



budget eligible for a fire assessment the expenditures for provision of medical services must be removed. All or any part of the expenses for fire protection can be charged using a fire assessment. In addition, there must be some alternative funding source for the cost to provide services to any parcels that are exempt from an assessment (e.g.; government-owned properties and any properties owned by not-for-profit agencies), that the BoCC chooses to exempt.

Fire Rescue funding through the MSTU is achieved through ad valorem and other revenue sources collected in the unincorporated areas of the County. As a result, fire protection services compete with other County-offered services. In an effort to provide timely and effective fire services, the Commission is being requested to support a \$25 per parcel assessment, generating an estimated \$992,425 in dedicated funding, as shown in the chart below. This funding equals approximately 0.21 mills of the Fire MSTU and will be used either for ad valorem property tax relief or dedicate to critical equipment acquisition.

Number of Improved Parcels by Jurisdiction		
Municipality	Count	\$25.00/Improved Parcel
Alachua	3,815	n/a
Archer	490	\$12,250
Gainesville	38,829	n/a
Hawthorne	660	\$16,500
High Springs	2,454	n/a
LaCrosse	147	n/a
Micanopy	336	n/a
Newberry	2,229	n/a
Unidentified	1,042	n/a
Unincorporated	38,117	\$952,925
Waldo	430	\$10,750
Total	88,549	\$992,425

Other Fire Rescue Issues:

- Recruiting, with an emphasis on diversity
- Fire resources at Fire Station 19
- ISO score improvements
- Additional transport rescues



Governance

"Information is the currency of democracy." — Thomas Jefferson

Alachua County's citizens expect their local government representatives to be both transparent and efficient. The following internal recommendations are being proposed to achieve that goal.

All Departments

- Review all Commission, Administration, Budget, and Human Resources policies by Department Directors and stakeholders (within 6 months).
- Complete a comprehensive fee review for incorporation into the FY16 budget.
- Review continuing contracts with other governmental agencies that are not in Alachua County's best interest or are not the most effective use of County tax dollars (ongoing).

County Manager's Office

- Launch an issues tracking software program (30 days).
- Recommend semi-annual board strategic planning retreats.
- Collaborate with the County Attorney to streamline and improve work processes related to legal necessities in the areas of Worker's Compensation, infrastructure contracts, Equal Opportunity Compliance, and Inter-local agreements (within 6 months).
- Reorganize to better serve citizens while providing support for County-offered programs and staff (on-going).
- Advisory Committee consolidation: for example, staff is currently evaluating duties of the Board of Adjustment by seeking opportunities to re-assign the limited number of application types currently reviewed by the BOA to other Boards or administrative permit processes (review within 6 months).



- Improve parking access for employees that work downtown to increase productivity during the workday (90 days).
- Continue to support our Functional Groups:
 - The Community Planning Group
 - The Community Support Group
 - The Support Services Group
 - The Financial Planning Group
 - And a new functional group made up of Tourism, Economic Development, and Parks.

Encourage this kind of cross-departmental cooperation to solve macro-issues such as improving County services, road funding, water protection, and fairground operations.



Equal Opportunity

- Timeline/funding for ADA Audit of County facilities and infrastructure (update the 1993 ADA Transition Plan).

Facilities

- Review of the Construction Manager at Risk contracting process to improve cost containment, quality of facilities, and infrastructure projects (Appendix L, Space Needs Study).



Human Resources

- Establish an Employee Incentive Program for innovation.
- Adopt a new policy to only hire non-tobacco users (within 90 days).
- Provide relevant training for staff and implement succession planning (on-going).
- Conduct a review of the Hiring/Classification processes with stakeholder input (Within 9 months).
- Conduct a Classification/Compensation Study (in progress).



- Direct Human Resources to investigate cost and achievability of implementing e-learning programs and practices to existing instructor-led (classroom) employee training programs, to achieve a more blended learning format. For learners, a blended learning approach means that they can access training resources outside, or in addition to, scheduled face-to-face training sessions (Appendix M, e-learning document) (report written in 6 months).
- Revise the performance appraisal system to be based upon successful accomplishment of individual and departmental work and/or business plans (by start of FY16).

Information and Telecommunications Services

- Implement New World system, a modern financial system (12 months).
- Identify legacy software, such as e-Agenda and GovMax that should be updated or considered for replacement in order to stay up-to-date with technology and data analysis (12 months).

Office of Management and Budget

- Review of all internal service funds (computer replacement, fleet replacement, telephone service, Gas Tax fleet replacement) and enterprise funds to identify accumulation of funds. Although it is a best practice to plan for future capital needs, all interests should compete annually for appropriations (60 days).
- Advocate for an additional \$15 surcharge (from \$15 to \$30 total) for tickets. If implemented on October 1, 2015, the increase is expected to generate \$1 million during the fiscal year for court operations (Appendix K, Court Services Ticket Analysis).
- Identify budget process improvements to align with the new financial software package to improve transparency, accountability, and efficiency (90 days).



Conclusion

Based on my early observations, the changes I am recommending are more evolutionary than revolutionary. We have an excellent organization in Alachua County that well serves the needs of our citizens, however, some of the changes outlined in this “Looking Forward” report will make a great County even better.

As mentioned earlier, this is an evolving document which leads neatly into the broader budget discussion that is now upon us. This “Looking Forward” report has been a beneficial exercise in that it brings clarity and focus to our day-to-day operations and is a process that should be repeated annually. This annual review will afford you an early opportunity to provide guidance to your Manager and staff on your goals and priorities for the coming fiscal year. Because of the many benefits afforded by this endeavor, I would recommend this exercise be replicated every April so the Board will get an early “first look” at the Manager’s intended budget presentation.

It remains my pleasure and honor to serve you, County staff, and the citizens of Alachua County, and I look forward to your feedback, questions, and comments.





*Where Nature, Culture and
Innovation Meet*