

Rural Areas Plan – Proposed Comprehensive Plan Policies

GOAL X: PROTECTION OF RURAL AREAS

Implement and enforce policies and programs designed to preserve and reinforce the positive qualities of the rural lifestyle and protect rural communities and agricultural areas.

OBJECTIVE: PRESERVE RURAL LIFESTYLES IN THE LAKE COUNTY RURAL AREAS

To protect the existing rural character of the Lake County Rural Areas as defined in *Exhibit FLU: Rural Areas Boundaries* of the Future Land Use Map Series and thereby ensure the rural lifestyle is available to future residents.

Policy: Recognition of the Lake County Rural Areas

Lake County shall recognize through land use policies and land development regulations the Lake County Rural Areas 1 - 5 (as defined in Exhibit FLU: Rural Areas Boundaries) as areas with specific rural character whereby the existing rural development pattern represents the final form of development that deserves and requires special protection from the intrusion of urban uses, densities and intensities. These areas shall not be treated as “areas in transition” that have the potential for future urbanization. It shall be the policy of the County that rural areas require approaches to land use intensities and densities, rural roadway corridor protection, the provision of services and facilities, environmental protection and Land Development Regulations enforcement consistent with the rural character of such areas.

Policy: Protection of Existing Topography

Lake County shall limit topographic alterations within the Rural Areas and particularly along the Rural Areas Boundaries in order to maintain and protect the integrity of the natural rolling vistas and scenic viewsheds within the Rural Areas.

Policy: Prohibition of DRIs in the Lake County Rural Areas

In order to protect the Rural Areas and preserve the rural character and public values of the Rural Areas, Lake County shall prohibit the approval of new Developments of Regional Impact in the Lake County Rural Areas. Developments of Regional Impact are considered inherently inconsistent with

Policy: Non-Residential Design Standards

Lake County shall amend the Land Development Regulations by December 2006 to adopt design standards for nonresidential development in Rural Areas, for the purpose of maintaining the rural character in this area. Nonresidential development shall mean office uses, commercial uses, and any other use that is nonresidential in character as that term may be defined in the implementing ordinance.

Policy: Rural Lighting Standards

In order to preserve the rural character and public values of the Rural Areas, Lake County shall amend the Land Development Regulations by December 2007 to include rural lighting standards that address outdoor artificial illuminating devices and limit the emission of undesirable rays into the night sky, glare to on-coming traffic, intrusion of light onto adjacent properties, and light pollution in general, which may have a detrimental effect on the welfare and safety of the community and wildlife as well as the ambiance and rural character.

Policy: Rural Roadway System

Lake County shall recognize the importance of rural roads within the Rural Areas, to the extent that such roads are inside the boundary of the Rural Areas, for the purposes of protecting rural character and shall insure that these roadways sustain and maintain this character. Lake County shall define specific rural area roads by December 2006.

The collector and arterial roadway systems within the Lake County Rural Areas predominantly consist of two (2) lane facilities. Rural roads shall not be expected to require, nor are they planned to receive, capacity improvements over the 20-year planning period. The County shall discourage additional roadway expansions of these facilities beyond two lanes.

Policy: Provision of Potable Water & Sanitary Sewer

Consistent with the provision of services and facilities within the Lake County Rural Areas, Lake County shall:

- a. Continue to rely primarily upon individual wells as the method of providing potable water to the residents and other occupants within the Rural Areas;
- b. Continue to rely primarily upon individual septic tank systems as the method of disposal of wastewater within the Rural Areas;
- c. Require that new development within the Rural Areas shall not be designed nor constructed with central water and/or sewer systems. Public and private central systems may be permitted in the future if it is clearly and convincingly demonstrated by the proponents of the system expansion that a health problem exists in a built but un-served area for which there is no other feasible solution. In such cases, the service area expansion plans will be updated concurrent with an area wide administrative land use update.

Policy: Protection of Natural Resources

Lake County shall:

- a. Protect wetland and flood prone areas in the Lake County Rural Areas consistent with the provisions of the Future Land Use and Conservation Elements of this Plan.
- b. Protect groundwater systems in the Lake County Rural Areas by:
 1. Continuing to permit only rural residential development in the Lake County Rural Areas to minimize water consumption and maximize aquifer recharge due to small impervious surface areas;
 2. Relying on a system of small individual residential wells for the provision of potable water that disperse the potentially adverse effects of groundwater draw down associated with excessive pumping of the aquifer; and
 3. Relying on properly installed and periodically inspected septic tanks in conformance with applicable law on large lots that return water to the aquifer to be the primary system of wastewater disposal.

Policy: Facilities Improvements Consistent with the Rural Character

Improvements to public facilities shall be accomplished whenever possible in a manner so as to preserve or enhance the rural character of the Lake County Rural Areas. This criteria shall apply to level of service standards, location, design standards, materials, and any other items impacting the final result.

Policy: Annexation Agreements

Coordinate with the municipalities of Lake County in the development of 20-year annexation plans that define future annexation boundaries, future land uses, providers of and enhancements to public facilities/services and other infrastructure. The plans shall assess financial feasibility and the availability/capacity of service providers to serve the areas proposed for annexation and shall also address the following, where applicable:

a. Protection of Rural Areas

Recognition that Rural Areas of Lake County are areas with specific rural character rather than areas anticipated to be urbanized.

b. Planning principles and characteristics for the Rural Areas

Inclusion of specific planning principles and standards for development within the Rural Areas:

1. The Rural Areas include special scenic roadway design standards for Rural Scenic Roads to the extent that they are located in the Lake County Rural Areas.
2. Individual wells and septic tanks shall be accepted as the primary method of providing potable water and sanitary sewer to the residents and other occupants within the Rural Areas.
3. New developments within the Rural Areas shall not be designed nor constructed with central water and/or sewer systems.

c. Criteria and Standards for the Review of Amendments to the Rural Areas Boundary

d. Criteria and Standards for City areas on the boundary of Rural Areas

1. City areas on the boundary of Rural Areas shall be limited to residential uses.
2. Plan Amendments to increase the residential density on the boundary of Rural Areas shall be held to the same standards of ensuring compatibility with the Rural Areas as those amendments would be evaluated under the plan amendment review criteria of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan.

Policy: Intergovernmental Agreements with Sumter County

Coordinate, develop and maintain intergovernmental agreements that provide for the following: a) coordination of land use density and intensity and transportation facilities along the County boundary; b) the opportunity to review and comment upon all proposed Developments of Regional Impacts, Comprehensive Plan Amendments, Planned Unit Developments, Master Planned Unit Developments, preliminary plan/preliminary site plans and capital projects occurring within one mile of its mutual borders with adjacent counties, c) the sharing of planning, development and capital improvement data, d) the exchange of plans, studies, ordinances and land development regulations that would affect either party, and, e) the distribution of information concerning the level of service standards for public facilities/services.

Policy: Agricultural Primacy

Lake County shall encourage continuation of agricultural operations in the Rural Areas. Agricultural uses on lands that have an agricultural exemption from the Lake County Property Appraiser will be considered to have “primacy” in the area. Primacy means that conflicts between such agricultural lands and other non-agricultural uses, all other factors being equal, will be resolved in favor of the agricultural interests. so long as the agricultural operation utilizes best management practices (BMP's) designed to reduce conflicts to the extent it is possible to reduce such conflicts.

Policy: Agricultural Buffers

Lake County shall require adequate buffering and/or setbacks between agriculture and residential uses to protect such agricultural uses from adverse impacts associated with encroachment of residential areas or creation of nuisances by agricultural operations.