

The Friends of Yalaha



January 12, 2006

Bill Gearing  
Community Enhancement Coordinator  
Department of Community Services  
PO Box 7800  
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via: email

Hi Bill:

Attached to the email including this letter is our document titled "Yalaha's Historic Village Designation: A Planning Profile."

In this document we have tried to identify and discuss the various elements we feel are necessary to include in the County's Comprehensive Plan concerning "Historic Village" designation. That said, we understand this is the beginning of a long, probably not-so-easy process.

As we discussed on the telephone, there is an attachment that is not yet included here that should be made part of this "official submission" -- it's a map that indicates recommended land-use and zoning designations for the area within the Yalaha Historic Village. I'll get that to you at earliest convenience.

Additionally, once you've digested this with your staff, we'd like to sit down with you and Shannon at your convenience (next week?) to go over in detail some of the ideas and provisions included in our document -- we consider this to be of utmost importance to the welfare of our community and want there to be no misunderstandings or misinterpreted notions.

I will likely be out of town this weekend, can be reached on my cell at 917.855.6870. I will be checking email at [mshwinwood@yahoo.com](mailto:mshwinwood@yahoo.com).

Thanks Bill and happy reading.

Regards,  
Mark Winwood

cc: Debbie Herold

# Yalaha's "Historic Village" Designation: A Planning Profile

## SUMMARY

This document is designed to communicate to Lake County's Department of Growth Planning, Land Planning Agency and other relevant government departments and groups Yalaha's ideas and proposed actions toward its designation as an "Historic Village" (the "Yalaha Historic Village" or YHV) under the Lake County Comprehensive Plan, thereby preserving its rural content and character. It has been drafted and submitted by the *Friends of Yalaha*.

Yalaha, mostly rural, is not just an area absent urban development that awaits urbanization, but a residential/rural area with residents and property owners that have specific needs and functions that are different than those of their urban counterparts.

We believe that Yalaha, is aptly suited for designation as an Historic Village, as its existing historic/rural development pattern represents the final form of development that deserves and requires special protection from the intrusion of urban uses, densities and intensities. Yalaha is not, and must not be treated as an "area in transition" that has the potential for potential future urbanization.

The *Friends of Yalaha* (FoY) is a grass-roots organization, formed and incorporated during the fourth quarter of 2005, that represents and articulates the desires of the community concerning growth and development. The FoY organization is rapidly growing and currently has a membership of more than 150 Yalaha households. We have to date conducted five public meetings with the Yalaha community, all held with due public notice. The comments and questions posed at the meetings have provided the basis for the recommendations included herein.

It is our overall desire that Yalaha – an area unincorporated within Lake County -- be duly recognized as a long-term rural Historic Village in the County's new Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and that it, as well as any proposed growth, be planned and regulated as such. We believe it is necessary for the County to implement and enforce policies and programs to preserve and reinforce the positive qualities of Yalaha's rural lifestyle, while protecting the County's agricultural and rural areas surrounding the Yalaha Historic Village.

Therefore, we request that Lake County recognize through land use policies and land development regulations that Yalaha is an area with a specific rural/historic character that requires approaches to land use intensities and densities, rural roadway corridor protection, the provision of services and facilities, environmental protection and land development code enforcement that is consistent with the existing character of this uniquely historic area.

We believe the results of our discussions and the effects of our recommendations will preserve the functional and aesthetic character of one of Lake County's most special historic areas: Yalaha.

### **ELEMENTS OF THE YALAHA HISTORIC VILLAGE.**

The preparation of this assessment of "Historic Village" began with the evaluation of the extent to which there is community consensus about the fundamental elements of community character that support and reinforce rural/historic character. This consensus is overwhelming within the Yalaha community. These fundamental elements, the discussion and consideration of which are necessary for all proposed development projects, are discussed below.

#### **Scenic Views**

Historic Community: the existence today of historic neighborhoods, buildings, cemeteries, etc. create an opportunity to preserve and enhance an element of historic village character that is unique to Yalaha. Preservation of historic buildings and sites in turn helps to preserve the area's identity and character for future residents. Upon receiving Historic Village designation, we will encourage Lake County to promote and conduct local and countywide historic and cultural programs to be hosted within Yalaha's borders.

Viewshed: The viewshed from the roadway provides a visual reinforcement of the rural/historic character of the area. In Yalaha that viewshed includes rolling hills, forested lands, pasture, agricultural (groves etc), water views (Lake Harris) and rural residential housing. Therefore, we request that as a condition of Historic Village designation, Lake County shall limit topographic and architectural alterations in order to maintain and protect the integrity of the natural rolling vistas and scenic viewsheds within the YHV and environs.

Lighting: In order to preserve the rural/historic character of the Yalaha Historic Village, lighting standards shall be created and placed into effect in the earliest reasonable timeframe. These standards shall address outdoor artificial illuminating devices and limit the emission of undesirable light into the night sky, glare to on-coming traffic, intrusion of light onto adjacent properties, and light pollution in general which might have a detrimental effect on the welfare and safety of the community, as well as on the character of the area.

Fencing: Certain types of fencing (i.e., chain-link, wrought iron, etc) can detract from the rural/historic character of an area, even if there are open viewsheds behind the fencing.

### **Open Space Protection**

Agriculture: There is a long history of vibrant agricultural lands and production associated with Lake County, and Yalaha holds a noteworthy place in the County's agricultural richness due to its historic and prodigious citrus, fern and tree farming efforts. And unlike some other Lake County communities, many of Yalaha's agricultural-based entities continue to exist in substantial amounts today. The YHV will be an area in which -- with the support of the Lake County government -- viable, productive agricultural operations will be encouraged. The presence of continuing local agricultural uses is an integral and fundamental component of Yalaha's lifestyle, especially in these days of heightened demand for locally produced fruits and vegetables, particularly organic. (As a small-scale local indicator of this demand, notice the rapid growth of the Leesburg's Farmers Market on Saturday mornings.)

Parks: There are currently no county parks in the Yalaha area, and we believe the establishment of a well-planned park or recreation/monument area, dedicated in part to the area's history, would, besides potentially preserving significant environmental systems, be of great benefit to the community at large. There are some Yalaha sites/buildings that might be designated for this use.

### **Transportation and Infrastructure**

Drainage: Drainage facilities create a complicated set of competing issues – there are already serious drainage issues in some Yalaha neighborhoods, and it is suspected that drainage “systems” will not be adequate to accommodate any amount of growth in local residential populations. While these drainage issues need to be addressed, whatever level of service provided by “infrastructure” in Yalaha is determined adequate to correct existing drainage problems, modifications to this level of service should not be “overdone” to the point that it allows for urban development of any nature..

Rural roads: Rural roadways function as a fundamental physical element of rural/historic community character. They can reinforce the character of a rural/historic community by providing scenic views. Good roadway “context” design considers the relationship between land uses and all aspects of roadway design (road building, repaving, widening, etc), including design speed, travel lane width, access management, the need for pedestrian and bicycle-related facilities, and landscaping. (*Note: there is substantial resident-based bicycling and walking along Yalaha roads. Children gather at roadside, without shelters, waiting for school bus pickup. Yalaha Historic Village residents need safe pathways to travel, by bicycle, foot or horseback, from one neighborhood to the next and to the commercial establishments.*)

Lake County shall work with the YHV to create the “Yalaha Historic Village Scenic Roadway” standards in order to protect the rural nature of the area. These standards shall regulate land development along Yalaha’s roads by, at a minimum, establishing standards for:

- a. preservation of canopy trees;
- b. planting of new canopy trees;
- c. landscaping requirements;
- d. clearing setbacks and restrictions;
- e. location of parking;
- f. location and screening of equipment storage;
- g. location and screening of dumpsters;
- h. walls, fences, entrance features and similar structures;
- i. location and design of retention ponds;
- j. location and design of signage;
- k. location and design of streetlights;
- l. easements, deed restrictions and other instruments required to perpetually preserve the currently undeveloped portion of the roadway corridor.

“Rural/Historic Scenic Road” and “Rural/Historic Residential Roads”

For the purposes of this policy, the term “Rural/Historic Scenic Road” means County Road 48 (from the Yalaha boundary at BellaVista Boulevard westward to the intersection of Number Two Road) to the extent that it is located in the Yalaha Historic Village.

The Yalaha Historic Village recognizes the importance of “Rural/Historic Residential Roads” within the district for the purposes of maintaining rural/historic character and shall insure that these roadways sustain and maintain this character. For the purpose of this policy, these roads include, but are not limited to Number Two Road, Bloomfield Avenue, Yalaha Avenue, and Lakeshore Drive. Rural Residential Roads may be paved or unpaved.

Both Rural/Historic Scenic Roads and Rural/Historic Residential Roads currently handle substantial bicycle and pedestrian use as well as cars and trucks (and motorcycles on the weekends). They solely consist of one- or two-lane roads and shall not be expected to require capacity improvements over the life of the currently contemplated Comprehensive Plan. To this end, the County shall discourage additional roadway expansions of these facilities beyond two lanes.

Additionally, the county shall, in planning future traffic patterns and uses, discourage additional regular traffic into the YHV, or any traffic through the YHV area.

If in the future the reconstruction and or replacement of the SR 19 bridge over Lake Harris becomes necessary, in recognition of the special character of the YHV, the County shall discourage any proposed and/or planned road construction and/or diverting of traffic through Yalaha and/or its sensitive lakeside wetlands, either along CR 48 or any other current or proposed roadways.

## **Residential Development**

Mix of Uses: The Yalaha area contains an eclectic mix of residential uses. There are traditional farmhouses, agriculture mixed with large lot estate housing, conventional single-family homes and even a limited number of townhomes in one of the communities (Waterwood). There is also a substantial free mix of agri-elements such as livestock and equestrian uses with residential uses. (It was just recently that two young ladies rode their horses – via the “back way” -- to the Yalaha Country Bakery and tied the horses up outside while they went in to buy their goods.)

This mix of agriculture and residential and community-based commercial use is a vital element of the historic/rural fabric of the YHV and its preservation is essential to the area’s character.

Rezoning Requests: We recommend that the Lake County Comprehensive Plan include specific review criteria for the protection of those areas designated “Historic Villages” – one of which is to be Yalaha. These standards shall be based on the following:

1. Specific review criteria for rezoning actions to address compatibility with adjacent historic/rural neighborhoods. These methods should specifically include a method for (1) determining the compatibility between residential zoning classifications where compatibility is measured based upon the harmonious and appropriate transitioning of residential land uses relative to density, intensity, lot sizes and setbacks.
2. Methods of protecting historic/rural neighborhoods from the sensory intrusions of adjacent non-residential uses that may affect the long-term viability of those neighborhoods. Sensory intrusions include unwanted light, noise, physical access, odor and other sources of disruptions. These criteria shall include provisions that:
  - a. prevent uses that generate obnoxious sensory intrusion from being developed or expanded in certain areas;
  - b. eliminate or substantially reduce the sensory intrusions of proposed development;
  - c. intercept or prevent the sensory intrusion from affecting the adjacent neighborhood.
3. A requirement for a development plan submitted with the rezoning request which includes:
  - a. a narrative describing how the proposed development will maintain and/or protect the existing rural/historic surroundings;
  - b. an inventory of adjacent built and/or proposed development which illustrates the “transitioning qualities” of applicant’s development;

- c. transportation information describing the existing roadway network, the current conditions of the adjacent and feeder road(s), and projected additional traffic (commercial and non-commercial) stress levels;
  - d. the impact on local affected schools of additional students, and the capacity of those schools to properly integrate the increased student load;
  - e. a graphic illustration of the existing development conditions in proximity to the proposed site.
4. One neighborhood meeting with the residents within at least a 2.5 mile radius of the proposed development. Open to all YHV residents but specifically designed for those residents in close proximity, this meeting shall be conducted prior to the relevant Planning and Zoning Commission hearing, for citizen input on the proposed petition.

Conservation Subdivisions: We are recommending that included within the Yalaha Historic Village development standards the County consider the creation of “Conservation Subdivisions.” For all properties (or accumulated contiguous parcels) that are 50 acres or greater within the Yalaha Historic Village, or those properties less than 50 acres that are requesting increased density, land must be developed as a “Conservation Subdivision.”

Conservation Subdivisions design shall be based on the following guidelines:

1. A minimum of 50% of the gross acreage of the parcel shall be designated as “Conservation Subdivision Open Space” (CSOS) exclusive of individual lots.
2. CSOS shall be preserved in perpetuity through the use of an Open Space or Conservation easement.
3. CSOS shall address, through an “Open Space Management Plan” opportunities for restoring native habitats.
4. A plan for the use and maintenance of the Open Space shall be submitted, as part of the approval process and compliance with said plan shall become a condition of the development order for the rezoning, where applicable, a condition of the subdivision approval and a condition of the perpetual open space or conservation easement.
5. The location of residential lots shall be arranged in a context sensitive manner such that they form a contiguous pattern and shall be clustered in such a way as to preserve the function, purpose and integrity of the on-site natural resources and environmental systems to the maximum extent practicable; to minimize disturbance to woodlands, wetlands and other natural features, to protect and preserve the rural/historic appearance of land when viewed from public roads and from abutting properties.

6. The maximum density of a Conservation Subdivision shall be no more than the maximum density allowed by the land use designation of the land on the County's Comprehensive Land Use Map in which the Conservation Subdivision is located.
7. Architectural and design standards in keeping with the area's rural/historic nature will be adhered to.

Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer: Consistent with the provision of services currently within the Yalaha unincorporated area, the YHV will:

1. Continue to rely upon individual wells as the method of providing potable water to the residents and other occupants within the Yalaha Historic Village boundaries;
2. Continue to rely upon individual septic tank systems as the method of disposal of wastewater within the Yalaha Historic Village boundaries (where sewage treatment systems are currently in use they shall be allowed to be so);
3. Require that any new development within YHV boundaries 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:
  - a. the development form is a Conservation Subdivision;
  - b. it is clearly and convincingly demonstrated by the proponents of the system expansion that a potential or actual health problem exists in a built but un-served area for which there is no other feasible solution.
  - c. To most fully protect the Yalaha Historic Village environment, and the prodigious fresh water springs that flow beneath its ground, any and all installed septic tank system in any new residential developments must use state-of-the-art self-treating systems, or the equivalent.

Community Entrances: Entrances to residential communities should complement Yalaha's rural/historic character by utilizing a scale and appearance that doesn't detract from the rural scenery.

Residential Streets: Residential streets within Yalaha exhibit qualities that reflect the slower pace of the community. Streets are often one or two lanes wide and may be paved or unpaved. They are often lined with native trees that provide shade to the roadway.

Architectural Standards: Reasonable standards that maintain the look-and-feel of Yalaha's rural/historic nature will be developed and adhered to in all proposed residential development.

## **Commercial Development**

General: Yalaha Historic Village commercial development should be limited to general commercial uses in the form of some historic commercial zoning that is sized only to serve a localized neighborhood market. In addition, an arts/cultural/educational/health center would be supported by the community.

Signage: While it is recognized the special role that signage plays in community character, neither neon signs nor roadside billboards will be allowed within Yalaha Historic Village environs.

Architectural Standards: Reasonable standards that maintain the look-and-feel of Yalaha's rural/historic nature will be developed and adhered to in all proposed commercial development.

## **REQUESTS FOR RESIDENTIAL REZONING AND LAND USE AMENDMENTS**

Requests for amendments to the Yalaha Historic Village land use designation for any future land use that permits more than one dwelling unit per developable residential acre (except in areas zoned for two dwellings per acre, and then that standard shall apply to this provision) or any other land use designation that requires the installation of central water and sewer services shall be held to the following standard of review and may be considered only if all of the following standards are affirmatively met:

### **A. Demonstration of Need**

An applicant shall demonstrate that additional lands are required to accommodate the population, housing or employment needs of the county projected over the horizon of the Comprehensive Plan. This analysis shall be performed consistent with professional standards. These standards shall be evaluated by means of the preparation of needs analysis statements, economic impact statements, environmental impact statements and land use compatibility analyses.

### **B. Compatibility**

An applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed amendment shall create and/or provide an appropriate transition of land uses adjacent to existing rural/historical residential development within the Yalaha Historic Village.

### **C. Consistency with Goals**

An applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed amendment is consistent with all applicable goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **D. Transportation**

Each application for a land use designation amendment will be required to demonstrate that roadway transportation standards are met or will be met concurrent with the impacts of development for either (1) at least the life-term of the County's Comprehensive Plan, or (2) the short-term (or 5-years, whichever is more). Specifically,

the applicant must disclose the fiscal implications of the existing deficiencies and future needs.

Specifically, the analysis shall identify the following:

Short-range and long-term roadway improvements (scope, timing and cost) necessary to accommodate the proposed future land use amendment.

Roadway improvements necessary to ensure compatibility with the currently adopted Lake County Comprehensive Plan.

### **JOINT PLANNING/ANNEXATION AGREEMENTS**

Lake County will join with the Yalaha Historic Village to actively support its efforts to coordinate with the municipalities of Leesburg and Howey-in-the-Hills Joint Planning Agreements (JPAs) for the development of annexation plans (to run contiguous with the County's Comprehensive Plan) that define future annexation boundaries, future land uses, and include language that areas within the Yalaha Historic Village will not be annexed voluntarily or involuntarily. (In spite of these restrictions, we reaffirm the ability of individual property owners to petition for amendment to the JPA and for annexation.)

### **THE "YALAHA HISTORIC VILLAGE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE"**

We understand that a document of this nature only touches upon areas that will require great discussion and detailed planning. To this end, we propose and recommended that the "Yalaha Historic Village Planning Advisory Committee" (PAC) be established by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to aid in the further study and implementation of the recommendations presented in this document, and to further correspond and communicate with the County's Department of Growth Planning and other departments.

This Committee will work with the Lake County Local Planning Agency (LPA) to make policy recommendations for provisions to be included and/or modified within the Lake County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations (CPLDR).

This Committee may, in conjunction with the LPA, make recommendations to the BCC for changes to the CPLDR relating to implementation of the requirements relating to the county's Historic Village land use designation.

This Committee may also make recommendations to the BCC on actions proposed or taken by an adjacent jurisdiction as covered by a Joint Planning Area Agreement within that jurisdiction.

This Committee may also make recommendations to the BCC on any other issues involving the Yalaha Historic Village or adjacent areas.

The PAC membership will consist of an odd number (five or seven is suggested) of a list of potential members to be recommended to the BCC by the community. The members must be residents of Lake County living within the Yalaha Historic Village boundaries.

Meetings will be open to the public and will be held at regular intervals, not less than quarterly per annum.

The Committee shall have the authority to elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary from its membership to serve the needs of the committee. Officer terms will be for one year.

A quorum for conducting business will be a majority of the members.

An atmosphere of “open dialog” will exist between the PAC and its contacts within County government. Lake County government commissions, departments and agencies will communicate to the PAC on a regular basis notice of all federal, state and local filings, rulings and/or other relevant news and information concerning the YHV.

The residents of Yalaha thank the Lake County government for providing us with this opportunity to articulate our views of what “Historic Village” designation under the County’s Comprehensive Plan should mean for this community. As a community group, we believe we have touched upon many of the issues necessary to create the “Yalaha Historic Village” that has been envisioned by ourselves as well as the County’s Department of Growth Planning and Local Planning Agency. We are also aware that there are a myriad of issues to be discussed, details to be dealt with and decisions to be made.

We look forward to cooperative future dialog toward determining these important issues and standards, integrating the experiences and insights of the County staff and officials we’ll be working with, and working together to make the Yalaha Historic Village a shining example of the best Lake County has to offer.

Submitted Thursday, January 12, 2006 for the residents of Yalaha, by

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