

A draft *Seminole County East Rural Land Study: Framework of Recommendations Guidebook* (Guidebook) is attached. This Guidebook identifies six strategies to promote rural character and environmental integrity that would supplement existing policies in the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan. The strategies include: (1) joint planning agreements, (2) Urban/Rural Boundary protection, (3) refined conservation strategies, (4) rural infrastructure, (5) rural cluster subdivisions, and (6) Rural Area non-residential design standards. Implementation of the Guidebook's recommendations and strategies will involve amendments to the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan. Staff anticipates such amendments will occur in the Spring 2006 Large Scale Amendment cycle.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests Board direction on implementation of the recommendations and strategies for the Rural Area.

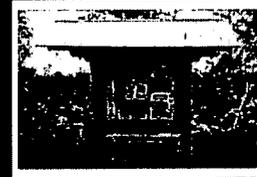
Attachment: *Seminole County East Rural Land Study: Framework of Recommendations Guidebook*

July 2005

DRAFT

Seminole County East Rural Land Study

Framework of Recommendations Guidebook



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INTRODUCTION

This guide serves as a checklist for additional tools that can help reinforce the County's protection strategies for the East Rural Area

The East Rural Area is a unique region of Seminole County, surrounded on three sides by prominent water bodies: the St. Johns River, Lake Jesup, and Lake Harney. The Econlockhatchee River (known as the "Big Econ") and the Little Econlockhatchee River (known as the "Little Econ"), and their tributaries, run through the southern portion of the area and flow into the St. Johns River.

Rich in history and natural resources, the East Rural Area was once home to Seminole Indians, strategic forts and rural economies such as the turpentine, cattle, and orange grove industries. Vision 2020 identifies a number of significant resources, including the Geneva Lens, the Econlockhatchee River System, and Lake Jesup. Past County and State efforts resulted in a network of trails, greenways, and natural lands that is over 19,000 acres, protecting and connecting over 20% of the Rural Area. The events of the past provide a unique character that may help to shape and protect the area in the future. The East Rural Area is still home to active agriculture, including cattle ranching, citrus farming, nurseries and even "pick your own strawberry" enterprises.

Past planning activities emphasized the importance of protecting the East Rural Area. The County commissioned the East Seminole County Rural Area Plan in 1991, looking at ways to preserve the rural character of the area. The Comprehensive Plan was amended based on the results of this study. The Urban/Rural Boundary was established to help manage growth. To help manage growth in the County, the Urban/Rural Boundary was established in 1991 as a result of the County's East Rural Area Plan. Rural future land use designations were created, along with policies and regulations applicable to the Rural Area. Policies implemented from the 1991 plan included rural design and development standards, rural roadway corridor character standards, rural clustering, preservation of conservation lands, and rural levels of service, resulting in a rural landscape of which much is under protection from the State or County. To date, these policies have been very effective in preserving the character of the Rural Area, but recent growth projections warrant a need to consider supplementing existing policies.

This guidebook to the Seminole County 2005 East Rural Area Plan summarizes the results of collaboration between the Seminole County Commission, County staff, and the citizens that live and own property within the study area. The study proposes methods and techniques that can further protect the character of the East Rural Area. The County desires a proactive that includes the following goals:

- A meaningful analysis of current conditions;
- An identification of issues or concerns affecting the continued preservation and protection of the East Rural Area;
- An evaluation of existing Comprehensive Plan policies and land development regulations; and
- Recommendations for tools and strategies that allows the continued preservation of the rural character and lifestyle of this area.

The highlight of this approach is the community participation process, which was designed as a series of interactive events for residents, landowners and stakeholders to fully engage in the planning process. These activities included a photo safari to help citizens create a meaningful definition of community character for their area; a visioning exercise that asked citizens to describe those community characteristics that help to preserve and reinforce the rural character of this area; and an "editing" exercise that provided participants with the draft issues, strategies and actions in a summary table and asked them to "mark-up" the draft with their recommended revisions, comments or suggestions.

These activities were conducted through community workshops and interviews with "stakeholders" chosen by the Board of County Commissioners. The effort and commitment of each individual and group of citizens that participated in this process made the final series of recommended strategies for the East Rural Area possible.

This guidebook strives to provide a series of recommendations that are designed to maintain and protect the rural character of the East Rural Area while continuing to be sensitive to the needs of landowners that make the East Rural Area home.

- Joint Planning Agreements
- Urban/Rural Boundary Protection
- Refine the Rural Conservation Strategy
- Rural Infrastructure
- Promote Rural Cluster Subdivisions
- Develop Rural Area Non-Residential Design Standards

6 Strategies for Rural Character

Strategy #1:

Joint Planning Agreements 4

Strategy #2:

Urban/Rural Boundary Protection 6

Strategy #3:

Refine the Rural Conservation Strategy 8

Strategy #4:

Rural Infrastructure 10

Strategy #5:

Promote Rural Cluster Subdivisions 12

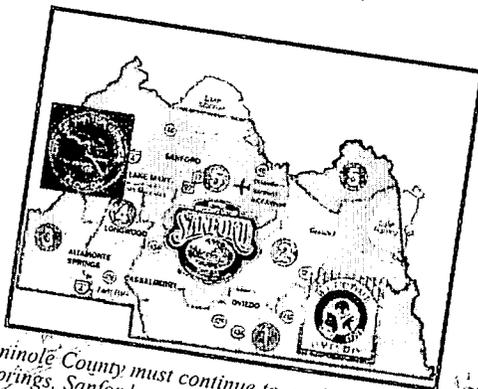
Strategy #6:

Develop Rural Area Non-Residential Design Standards 14

Joint Planning Agreements



Public Involvement with City/County staff will lay a foundation for creating successful JPAs.



Seminole County must continue to work with Winter Springs, Sanford, and Oviedo to create JPAs that are functional and specific.



Citizen involvement will continue to be crucial to Joint Planning Efforts.

What?

Revise Joint Planning Agreements with the City of Oviedo and the City of Sanford to further address the protection of the East Rural Area. Seek an agreement with the City of Winter Springs to address the protection and planning of this area.

Why?

Since the adoption of the Urban/Rural Boundary in 1991, the city of Oviedo annexed 270 acres within the East Rural Area and the City of Winter Springs annexed 72 acres within the East Rural Area. The current Oviedo Joint Planning Agreement addresses the protection of the East Rural Area generally, but does not provide specific standards or guidance for the review of development activities within the East Rural Area. Future annexation and the possible resulting urban development may dilute the rural character of this area, unless adequate transitions to protect the character of these rural neighborhoods are provided.

Where?

To address the properties within and adjacent to the county's adopted Urban/Rural Boundary.

How?

The County should pursue specific revisions during the current updates to the Joint Planning Agreements with the Cities of Oviedo and Sanford. The County should monitor and participate in the efforts of the City of Winter Springs as it pursues the "Winter Springs Rural Development Code Study", wherein it is preparing development alternatives for analysis.

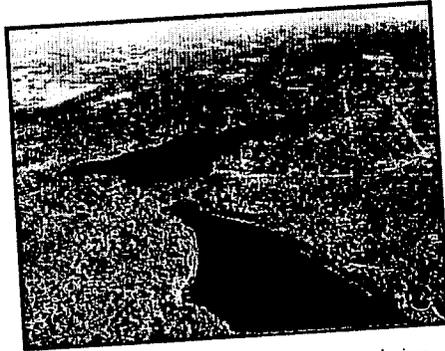
CHECKLIST

What needs to be part of the new/revised Joint Planning Agreements?

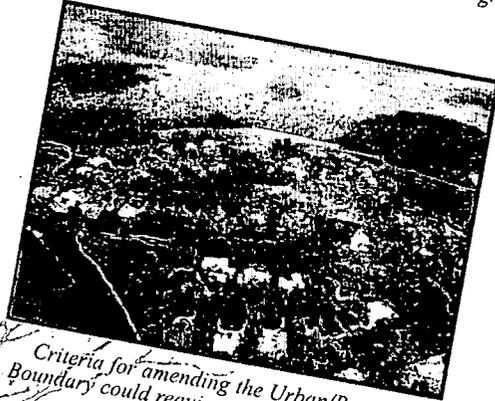
- Delineation of the Urban/Rural Boundary and Rural Boundary Map*
- Recognition of the East Rural Area and measures to protect the character of the area.
- Procedures to continue to apply specific East Rural Area policies of the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan following annexation of property by the cities.
- Specific language that incorporates continued application of Seminole County's rural roadway design standards following annexation.
- A set of criteria and standards for the review of plan amendments, rezonings, and development applications within the East Rural Area.
- Criteria for transitional areas that is consistent with the East Rural Area policies of the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan, including adoption of common roadway standards for roads that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

*Voter approved 2004 Home Rule/Charter Amendment

Urban/Rural Boundary Protection



Urban/Rural Boundaries protect existing green infrastructure



Criteria for amending the Urban/Rural Boundary could require a conservation subdivision



Additional policy provides for transitions between the Urban/Rural

What?

Amend the Future Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan to provide: 1) guidance with regard to when amendments to the Urban/Rural Boundary are required; 2) more specific review criteria for requests to amend the Urban/Rural Boundary, and 3) further description of what constitutes appropriate transitions between urban/suburban areas and the East Rural Area.

Why?

Extending urban and/or suburban development patterns into rural communities detracts from the character of these communities by introducing both functional and design elements that are more urban than rural in character.

Where?

"Edge" properties adjacent to the Urban/Rural Boundary.

How?

Based upon direction from the Board of County Commissioners, County staff should prepare administrative Future Land Use map amendments for the transitional properties agreed upon in the agreements with the cities.

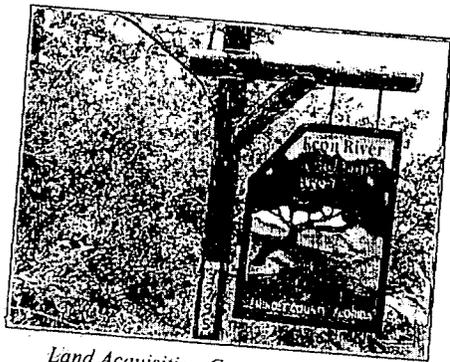
CHECKLIST

What are the techniques to ensure protection of the Urban/Rural Boundary?

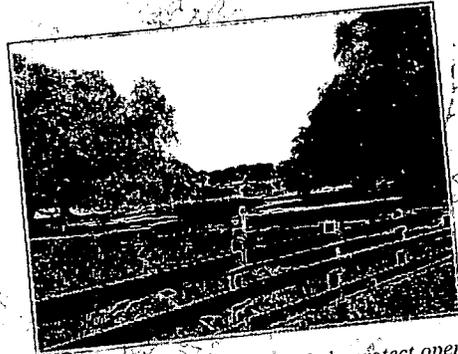
- Add a policy to the Future Land Use Element that requires amendment to the Urban/Rural Boundary for map amendment requests for higher densities. New policy could include creation of additional criteria for amending the boundary, such as requiring a conservation subdivision for increases in density.
- Revise the County's "Standards for the Review of Plan Amendments" to require that amendments to the Urban/Rural boundary demonstrate compatibility between uses as well as provide a method for creating a final transition between the Urban and Rural Area.
- Apply the Seminole County Fiscal Impact Analysis Model to all requested plan amendments within the East Rural Area.
- Add a policy to the Future Land Use Element that establishes standards for creating and maintaining "Transition Areas" between the East Rural Area and the adjacent Cities and the County Urban Service Area.



Protect natural areas and wetlands promote rural character in the County



Land Acquisition Continues to be an effective Conservation Strategy



Clustering development can help protect open space

What?

Add policies to the existing Conservation Element of the Seminole County Comprehensive Plan targeted specifically at the Rural East Area.

Why?

The East Rural Area is rich in natural, historic, and rural/agricultural resources.

Where?

Within the East Rural Area.

How?

The County should continue to implement its conservation strategy, which includes land acquisition, protection of special areas (i.e., Econ Protection, Urban/Rural Boundaries and Future Land Use Designations (Conservation, Rural-1, 3, 5)). These measures, outlined in the existing Conservation Element and the Future Land Use Element provide a comprehensive approach to protection of the area's resources. Additional policies could be created that define the approach to conservation of the East Rural area, with emphasis on continuation of the existing comprehensive approach.

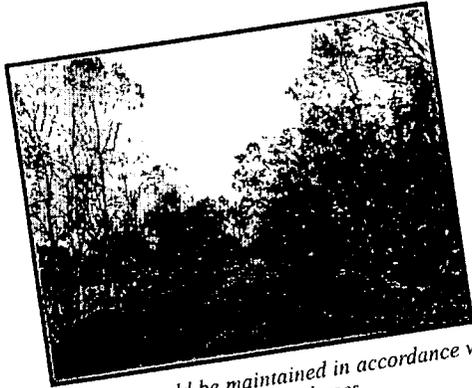
CHECKLIST

What needs to be part of the Rural Conservation Strategy?

- Continue to implement the wetlands management strategy:
 - Focus on protection of wetland systems in the East Rural Area and minimization of impacts.
 - Promote Rural Cluster Subdivisions.
- Add to the County's Conservation Approach:
 - Develop a data-based target protection area map consistent with existing policy.
 - Promote continued Natural Lands Program acquisitions focusing on the areas of target protection (which is consistent with the existing Natural Lands Evaluation Criteria).

- Continue pursuit of inter-governmental coordination involving land protection and acquisition, building on existing partnerships with state agencies and municipalities.
- Implement standards that
 - Direct incompatible land uses away from environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Protect the groundwater resources of the area, including water supply.

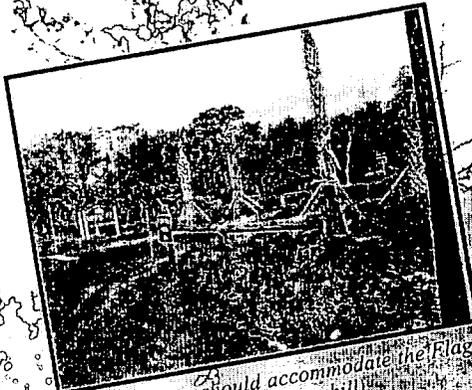
Rural Infrastructure



Roadways should be maintained in accordance with adjacent rural uses



Roadway drainage should be natural in appearance in the Rural Area



Rural roadways should accommodate the Flagler Trail (ex. Snowhill)

What?

Rural infrastructure design, construction, and maintenance should complement the rural land uses.

Why?

Land use and the infrastructure are integrally related, and inappropriate design and/or maintenance of facilities like roadways and drainage structures can negatively affect the existing land uses.

Where?

The East Rural Area.

How?

The County Planning and Development Department should coordinate with the County's Public Works Department and FDOT during their Preliminary Design and Engineering study for CR 419 and for any future improvements to public facilities within the East Rural Area.

CHECKLIST

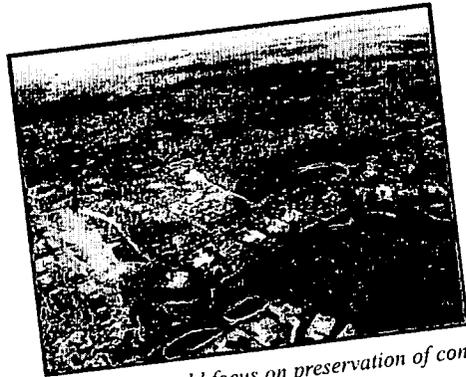
What needs to be part of the County's plans and programs for infrastructure that enhances the East Rural Area?

- Roadway cross-sections should support the rural character of the area by reinforcing rural details including provisions to accommodate the Flagler Trail.
- Revise Policy FLU 11.9 Rural Roadway System Level of Service Standards to reflect the County's current policy and to permit CR 419 to be expanded east/south of the Chuluota By-pass and the widening for SR 46 as a hurricane evacuation route.

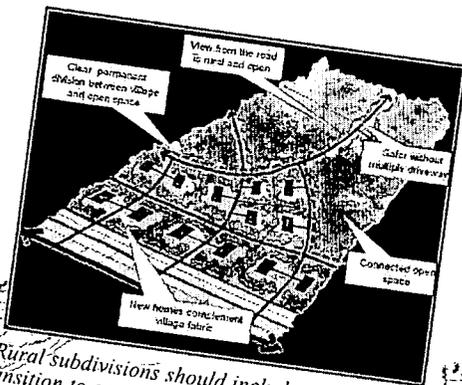
Also, revise Exhibit TRA 24 to reflect the future roadway lanes in 2020 (specifically for CR 419).

- Require stormwater treatment systems to be natural in appearance, including design of roadway drainage systems that contribute to the rural viewshed.

Promote Rural Cluster Subdivisions



Clustering should focus on preservation of connected natural areas.



Rural subdivisions should include provisions for transition to open space and adjacent development.



Protection of the rural landscape is maintained by adequate buffering.

What?

Improvements to the County's Rural Cluster Subdivision Standards

Why?

An alternative to acquisition of development rights, clustering is an optimal means of preserving rural character while maintaining development rights.

Where?

Within the East Rural Area.

How?

The existing rural subdivision and standards for clustering should be updated to include specific requirements for the creation of Rural Cluster Subdivisions. The focus should center on two primary areas-incentives for clustering, and preservation of open space. Incentives could include density bonuses that accompany percentage increases in open space preservation. Open space should be sited to maximize connectivity, preservation of natural resources or unique natural features, or cultural/archeological features, taking into consideration the existing network of natural lands, greenways, and blueways.

CHECKLIST

What needs to be part of the Rural Cluster Subdivision Standards?

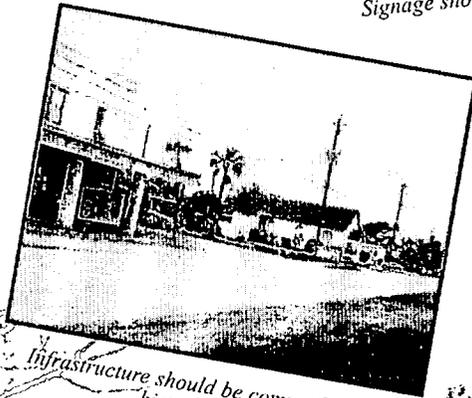
- Encourage rural developers to build clusters:
 - Minimization of disturbance to woodlands, wetlands, and other natural features-lowers permitting costs.
 - Minimization of the amount of road length required-less expense on infrastructure.
 - Lots arranged in a contiguous pattern and clustered to preserve unique natural features/systems, and existing agricultural areas-added marketability in an evolving "green" market.

- Development of Open Space Standards that adhere to a planned strategy:
 - Configuration of open space shall supplement existing natural systems, under public ownership (or targeted for acquisition).
 - External connectedness to the network of existing and planned green infrastructure achieved by site design and orientation.
 - A minimum of 50% of the gross acreage of the parcel designated Rural Cluster Subdivision Open Space and protected by conservation easement.

Develop Rural Area Non-Residential Design Standards



Signage should complement and enhance rural character



Infrastructure should be compatible with historic design



Preservation of historic businesses helps secure a rural future

What?

Develop Non-Residential Design Standards for protection of the rural character of the East Rural Area.

Why?

Non-residential design standards for the East Rural Area will enhance rural character and support the unique characteristics of the study area.

Where?

Specified non-residential uses within the East Rural Area.

How?

Create flexible non-residential design standards to maintain the rural quality of the area. Emphasis on the preservation of the historic character of Geneva plus the promotion of a "dark skies" approach should be included.

CHECKLIST

What needs to be part of the Rural Area Non-Residential Design Standards?

- Develop non-residential design standards targeted at:
 - Site design and general building design to protect the rural character of the area
 - Flexible standards should present options that give applicants choices, instead of rigid requirements.
- Promote continued Historic Preservation efforts focused on the East Rural Area:
 - Promote continued Historic Preservation efforts focused on the East Rural Area.
- Continue working with the residents of Geneva to support their goals of improved infrastructure in the Geneva Core.
- Apply existing Wekiva lighting standards to the East Area:
 - Provides for a more rural agricultural character.
 - Is more rural in implementation than the Countywide Lighting Ordinance.

Notes

Notes

