

Data and Analysis
for
Evaluation &
Appraisal Update
to the
Comprehensive Plan



City of
ALACHUA

THE GOOD LIFE COMMUNITY

DATA AND ANALYSIS FOR EVALUATION & APPRAISAL UPDATE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

I. City Description

Geography

The City of Alachua is located in the northwest quadrant of Alachua County and is part of the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Gainesville. The incorporated jurisdiction of the City of Alachua is approximately 36.3 square miles. The City of Alachua borders the City of High Springs to the northwest and the City of Gainesville to the southeast, and is proximate to the City of Newberry to the southwest and the City of Lacrosse to the northeast.

Overview

Founded in 1905, the City of Alachua's humble beginnings was that of a farming community and railroad town. Area farmers hauled their produce by wagons to packing sheds, and from there to the railroad in Alachua for transport to hungry markets north, east, and west. As the town grew and the economy evolved, almost half of the town's workers were employed by the Copeland Sausage Company. In 1976 when Copeland Sausage closed, hundreds of people were out of work, and the local economy came to a grinding halt. The downtown Main Street area, the previous center of the bustling small town, all but closed its doors and rolled up the street.

Present day Alachua is a thriving community where residents have access to vital community services; modern healthcare facilities; emergency services; water, wastewater, electric, telecommunications services; affordable housing, and education. With its small-town charm and its prime location at the intersection of Interstate 75 and U.S. Highway 441, the City of Alachua has uniqueness like no other. Through economic development and job creation, residents now have a variety of employment choices locally. Investment in local housing rehabilitation has assisted in the availability of affordable housing for residents, in conjunction with rural rental housing for low income residents.

Alachua is the second largest city in Alachua County and has partnered with many agencies such as United State Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Department of Economic Opportunity, Department of Transportation, U.S. Housing & Urban Development, Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development as well as others to promote economic development and enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

Alachua has a rich past in providing a community where residents can raise a family without the hustle and bustle that comes with living in larger cities. Alachua has a diverse revenue stream with a \$49.5 million budget in Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Alachua is home to several major distribution centers that have broadened the tax base, provided tax revenue, utility revenue, thousands of jobs and furthered economic development in the area. Dollar General, Wal-Mart and Baugh Southeast (Sysco) have distribution centers in the southwest industrial park area of Alachua providing over 2,500 jobs to the area and accounting for an economic impact of over \$3.8 million dollars per year.

Since 2002, the City of Alachua has been aggressive in obtaining state and federal level grants to benefit residents and businesses in the community. Those funds have assisted in everything from the construction of new roads, to housing rehabilitation, to infrastructure expansion. In 2018, the City was awarded a \$6.75 million grant under the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund for the construction of the San Felasco Parkway and nearby utilities. This project was one of nine applications to be awarded a grant under the \$35 million dollar program, and connects Progress Park, which includes the University of Florida Sid Martin Biotechnology Institute, to a shovel-ready site of 280 acres.

Several major companies are based in Alachua including Sandvik and world renowned ship-building giant Marlowe-Hunter Marine. South of the center of town, Progress Park houses 30 companies and 1,500 employees within its 200 acres in addition to being the home of internationally recognized biotechnology firms specializing in world-leading research and discovery.

Main Street Alachua is a winding vision of classic small-town America with businesses ranging from restaurants, salons and specialty retail shops to newspaper offices, real estate firms, and professional services offices. In 1989, thanks to the City of Alachua Community Redevelopment Agency, Main Street was reengineered to promote economic growth and stability. Now, Main Street is the center of events in the City of Alachua and is home to over 25 businesses.

The City of Alachua has also made strides in ensuring educational opportunities for its citizens. Santa Fe College's Alachua campus opened in Summer 2009. The college offers classes specializing in biotechnology. Santa Fe High School, located on the northern side of the City offers a curriculum for students interested in the biotechnology field, helping to create a pipeline to the college and then the biotechnology firms at Progress Park.

There are four public schools in the City of Alachua, including Irby Elementary School, Alachua Elementary School, Mebane Middle School, and Santa Fe High School, in addition to several other private and charter schools throughout the City. The City continues to partner with the School Board of Alachua County to improve and further enhance the public school facilities located within its jurisdiction.

Shopping in the City of Alachua is convenient, with grocery stores, business plazas, and the assorted offerings of Main Street. In addition, the City of Alachua has been of interest to major retail outlets interested in locating along the U.S. Highway 441 corridor.

Alachua has its own recreation facilities with courts and fields for many sports as well as parks and courts throughout the City. Alachua has its own community center, offering entertainment and resources for all ages. In 2016, the City completed Phase 1 of Legacy Park. Phase 1 of this facility includes a 42,000 square foot multipurpose center which can be used for a variety of recreational and cultural functions. Bicycle and horse trails can be found in Alachua as part of the San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park within the southern region of the City.

Those who are new and old to Alachua have ample choices in terms of housing within the City. The City of Alachua prides itself on a variety of housing options, from luxury estates on rolling hills to modest income homes just a short distance from downtown. There are several subdivisions within the City of Alachua that provide housing on open acreage while still providing a neighborhood feeling. Many residents enjoy living near downtown shopping and area parks, thus taking advantage of sidewalk neighborhoods and Victorian style homes. Alachua also has several apartment complexes within its limits, offering units to those who may choose to rent.

While much has been accomplished, in order for the City of Alachua to continue to thrive, the City will continue to work towards strengthening the community through job creation and small business development, investments in infrastructure and neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, preservation of the natural environment and providing for alternative modes of transportation.

II. General Assessment of Plan Data

Population, Demographic, and Economic Conditions

The estimated population for The City of Alachua in 2019 was 10,298. This is an increase of over 1,200 people from the 2010 US Census (9,059). Consistent with Chapter 163.3177(6)(a)4., and Florida Statutes, the City shall continue to designate an amount of land for future planned uses to provide for a balance of uses that fosters vibrant, viable communities and economic development opportunities and addresses outdated development patterns and shall accommodate at least the minimum amount of land necessary to accommodate the medium population projections as published by the Office of Demographic Research for at least a 10-year planning period.

As part of the ongoing efforts associated with the Strategic Initiative to Develop a Long-Range Plan for Alachua's Future, the Planning and Community Development Department has produced projections related to the City's projected population. These projections are based on accepted planning methodologies, but are not intended or guaranteed to represent precise future data. The projections should, however, give the City a general indication of demographic trends the City can expect to experience over the next 25 years. A single, accepted methodology for forecasting the population of a given area does not exist. Instead, multiple models using different methodologies are built that generally provide for a range of potential population totals in the future. Figure 1 below shows the results of the four models used for this analysis. A more detailed explanation of the methodologies is provided below.

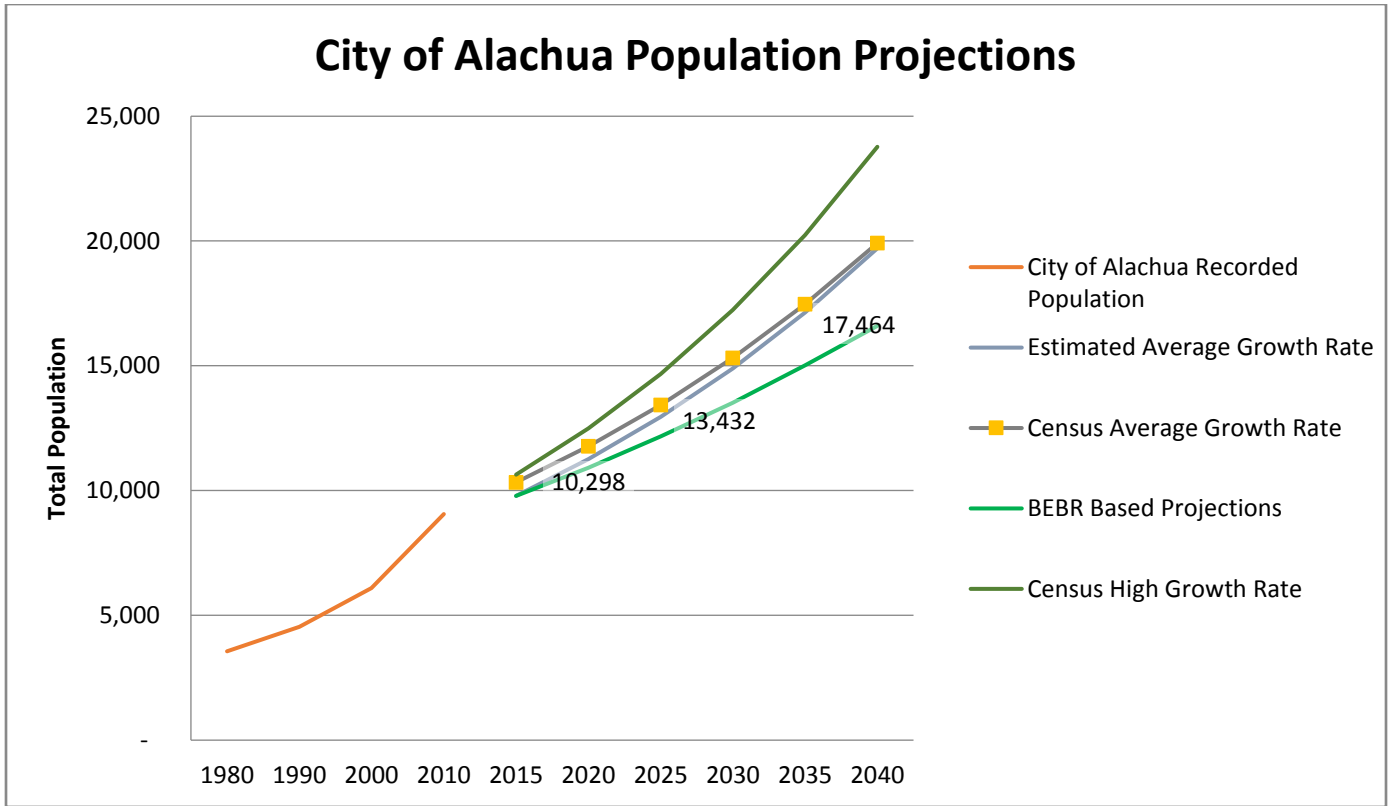
Summary of Population Projections Analysis

Based on the projections completed, it is reasonable to assume that the City of Alachua will, by 2035:

- Grow by approximately 7,100 people;
- Become a more diverse city, both racially and ethnically; and,
- Become a city with a significantly larger older population

Data and analysis for each of these claims will be presented and supported below.

Figure 1. Population Projections for the City of Alachua



Generally, there are no long-term population or demographic projections for a jurisdiction the size of the City of Alachua. There are, however, long term demographic projections for Alachua County. Using these projections, and estimating what share of those population projections the City of Alachua will have, a projected population for the City of Alachua can be determined. This is generally referred to as the shift-share method. There are several ways that the share of the total County population can be estimated. One approach is to assume that the City’s population will continue to comprise x % of the County’s population. Another approach is to assume that the City’s share of the County’s population will continue to grow at historical average rates or mathematically extrapolated rates. The models used to calculate the City’s population projections through 2035 include: estimated average growth rate; census average growth rate; BEBR based projections; and census high growth rate.

Estimated Average Projection

Under this methodology, it is assumed that the County’s population would continue to grow at the average rate derived from the County population estimates from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, 1980-2015. This is a 1.45% annual population growth rate. It is also assumed that the City’s share of the County’s population would grow at a rate derived from the County and City

population estimates from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, 1980-2015. This is a 1.35% annual population share growth rate. That is the City's share of the County population increases at a rate of 1.35% of the previous population share each year. Under this model, the City of Alachua's population would be approximately 5.02% of the County's projected population in 2035.

Census Average Projection

Under this methodology, it is assumed that both the City and the County's population would continue to grow at the growth rate derived from an average of the last four censuses (1980-2010). The County's census average growth rate is 1.48% annually, and the City's census average growth rate is 2.59% annually. Under this model, the City of Alachua's population would be approximately 4.34% of the County's projected population in 2035.

BEBR Based Projection

Under this methodology, it is assumed that the City's share of the County's population would grow at a rate derived from the County and City population estimates from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, 1980-2015. This is a 1.35% annual population share growth rate. Using the projected populations for the County from the University of Florida- Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), the projected share of the County population is applied to these projections to derive the projected City population. Under this model, the City of Alachua's population would be approximately 4.69% of the County's projected population in 2035.

Census High Projection

Under this methodology, the City's growth rates were based on the annual growth rate derived from the 2000 and 2010 Census populations. This is a 3.17% annual population growth rate. It is assumed that the County population growth rate would be the average from the past four censuses (1980-2010). This is a 1.48% annual population growth rate. Under this model, the City of Alachua's population would be approximately 5.17% of the County's projected population in 2035.

Summary

The City of Alachua can anticipate having a population between 15,316 and 20,243 by the year 2035, based on the models used. Table 1-1 shows the predicated population of the City in five year intervals for each model. In no model is the City's population anticipated to decrease between any five year interval.

Table 1-1
Population Projections for the City of Alachua

Year	City of Alachua Recorded Population	Estimated Average Growth Rate	Census Average Growth Rate	BEBR Based Projection	Census High Growth Rate
1980	3,561				
1990	4,547				
2000	6,098				
2010	9,053				
2019				10,298	
2025		12,950	13,432	12,175	14,675
2030		14,895	15,316	13,523	17,236
2035		17,133	17,464	15,016	20,243

Because of its basis on reliable data (Censuses 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010), and its relation to a linear trend line of this data, the use of the Census Average Growth Rate projection for planning purposes is recommended. Under this projection, the City’s population will grow to 13,432 in 2025, to 15,316 in 2030, and to 17,464 in 2035. This would mean a population increase of 7,166 people over the next 15 years.

Table 1-2 below identifies the projected population of the City of Alachua and Alachua County for years 2025, 2030, and 2035.

Table 1-2
Population Projections, City of Alachua & Alachua County

Year	<u>2010</u>	<u>2019 (Est.)</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>2035</u>
City of Alachua Population	9,059*	10,298**	13,432	15,316	17,464
Alachua County Population	247,336*	267,306**	296,900^	314,500^	330,700^

Sources:

* US Census Bureau, 2010

** University of Florida, Bureau of Economic & Business Research

^ University of Florida, Bureau of Economic & Business Research; Projections of Florida Population by County, 2020 – 2045, with Estimates for 2018

Table 1-3 summarizes demographic, economic, and housing characteristics in City. In the City of Alachua, persons under 18 years of age comprise 28% of the total population, while median age is 39.5 years. A notable characteristic of the City is the higher proportion of single-family dwelling units. More than 75 percent of the housing in the City is comprised of single-family units, as opposed to less than 50 percent for the County.

The City averages 2.65 persons per household as opposed to 2.54 for the County. The median per capita household income for the City is \$59,819 in 2018 dollars. For the County, the median per capita household income is \$49,078 in 2018 dollars.

The City of Alachua's population is comprised almost entirely of year-round residents. A very negligible percentage of the population is represented by seasonal residents who live in the City during winter months but claim another place as their permanent residence.

Table 1-3
Demographic, Economic, and Housing Characteristics

Statistics	City of Alachua	Alachua County
Population	10,298 [†]	267,306 [†]
Male	46.3%*	48.3%*
Female	53.7%*	51.7%*
Aged by Category		
Under 18	%*28.0%^	18.0%^
+ 65	13.3%^	14.0%^
Median Age	39.5*	30.1*
Education		
Bachelor's degree or higher	37.4%*	42.5%*
Number of students enrolled in school (K – 12)	2,332 ^{††}	26,375 ^{††}
Income		
Per Capita Income	\$33,911 ^{**}	\$27,896 ^{**}
Median Family Income	\$59,816 ^{**}	\$49,078 ^{**}
Percent of population living below the poverty level	18.0%*	19.8%*
Housing Units, total		
Single-family units	3,061*	59,162*
Mobile Homes	231*	9,703*
Multiply-family units, including duplex	478*	42,131*
Persons per household	2.65*	2.54*

Sources:

† University of Florida, Bureau of Economic & Business Research

†† School Board of Alachua County, 2019 Annual Report, School Concurrency

* US Census Bureau, 2010

** US Census Bureau, 2010 in 2018 dollars

^ US Census Bureau, 2014 – 2018 estimates

^^ US Census Bureau, 2018 estimate

Existing Land Use and Development Characteristics

Table 1-4 summarizes the current land use as generalized from GIS data published by the Alachua County Property Appraiser. The land use classifications utilized by the Department of Revenue identify specific uses were used to identify the existing land use.

Agricultural land continues to serve as the dominant feature within the City, accounting for approximately 51 percent of existing land use. There is currently vacant residential, commercial and industrial land within the City, however, based upon historical development trends and as evidenced within the past ten (10) years, additional land may be required through the planning horizon to account for future growth. Vacant residential areas are primarily located in the City’s center and the southern part of the City.

**Table 1-4
Existing Land Use**

Land Use	Acreage	Percentage of Land Area
Agriculture	11,262.71	51.15
Commercial	320.45	1.45
Conservation	3,272.54	14.86
Industrial	1,251.04	5.68
Institutional	521.01	2.67
Recreation	299.54	1.36
Residential (Moderate Density)	3,533.55	16.05
Residential (Medium Density)	38.48	0.17
Residential (High Density)	16.21	0.07
Common / Open Areas	130.22	0.59
Vacant	1,367.01	6.21
Total	22,018.10	100.00

Source: Alachua County Property Appraiser, City of Alachua

Map 1-1, Existing Land Use Map

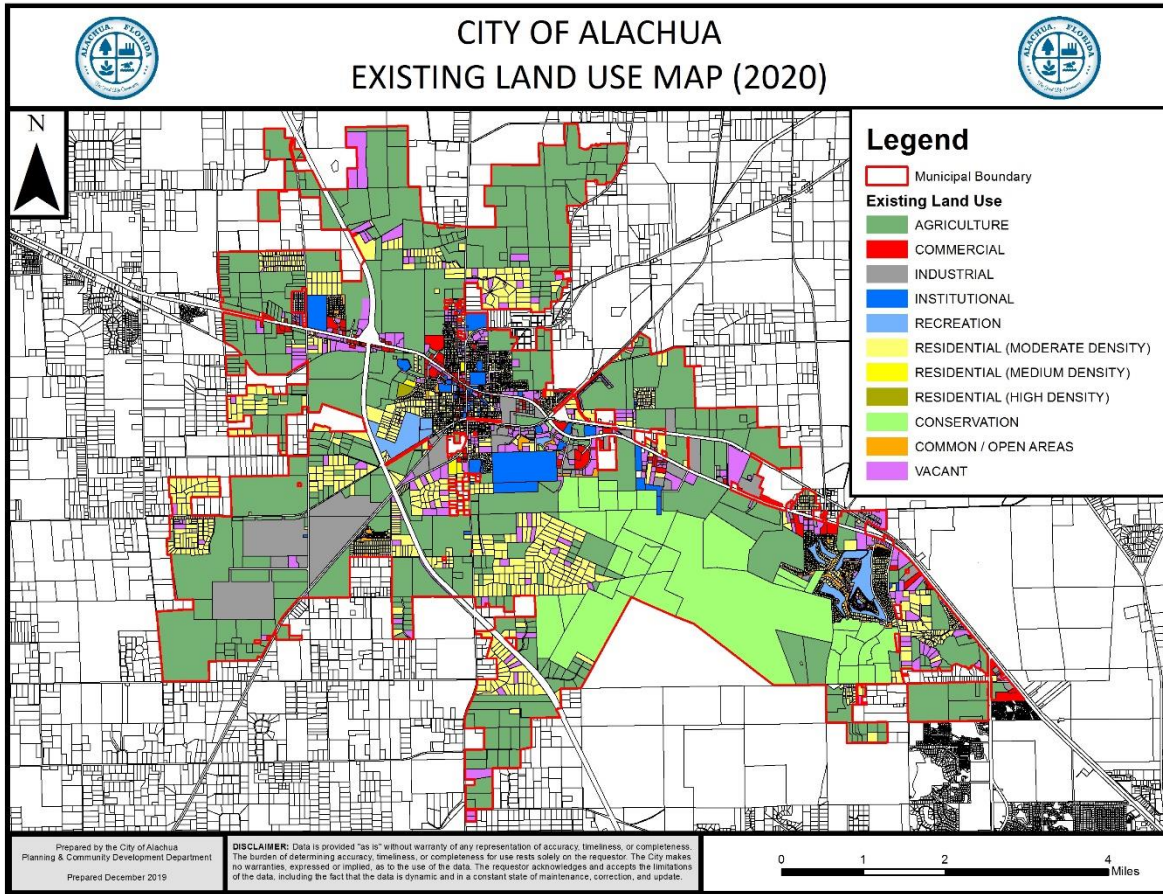


Table 1-5 identifies FLUM Designation amendments in the City of Alachua since the last major update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2013. These land use changes also include amending the Future Land Use Designations from a County designation to a City designation for those properties identified in Table 1-6. The total change in FLUM Designations consisted of 1,871.96 acres.

Table 1-5
Land Use Changes from Large and Small Scale Amendments

From	To	Acreeage	Total
Agriculture (A)	Industrial (IND)	45.54	
	Medium Density Residential (MED)	5.0	
	Moderate Density Residential (MOD)	21.64	
	Public (PUBLIC)	187.45	
			259.63
Commercial (COMM)	Corporate Park (CP)	10.0	
	High Density Residential (HIGH)	19.09	
	Public (PUBLIC)	0.32	
			29.41
Industrial (IND)	Commercial (COMM)	11.72	
	Corporate Park (CP)	45.42	
	Public (PUBLIC)	10.93	
			68.07
Medium Density Residential	Corporate Park (CP)	27.88	
	High Density Residential (HIGH)	27.88	
	Moderate Density Residential (MOD)	35.82	
	Public (PUBLIC)	9.67	
			101.25

From	To	Acreage	Total
Moderate Density Residential (MOD)	Conservation (CONS)	376.58	
	Recreation (REC)	106.29	
			482.87
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Rural/Agriculture (R/AG)	Agriculture (A)	558.25	
	Community Commercial (CC)	76.44	
	Industrial (IND)	6.94	
	Moderate Density Residential (MOD)	162.46	
			804.09
<hr/>			
Rural Employment Center (R-EC)	Community Commercial (CC)	1.0	
	Commercial (COMM)	18.02	
	Corporate Park (CP)	26.98	
	Industrial (IND)	80.65	126.64
<hr/>			
Total			1,871.96

Source: City of Alachua

Several annexations have occurred since the plan's amendment in 2013. Table 1-6 identifies annexations of land into the incorporated jurisdiction of the City of Alachua since 2013. The total changes in The City of Alachua's area amounted to 622.5 acres.

**Table 1-6
Annexations from 2013-2019**

Ordinance Number	Acreage
16-08	10.00
18-04	0.95
18-09	9.28
18-10	182.40
18-11	5.91
18-12	0.36
18-13	1.20
18-14	63.24
18-15	148.24
18-16	11.20
18-17	353.72
Total	622.50

Source: City of Alachua.

Table 1-7 provides a compilation of the FLUM Designations as set forth in the Future Land Use Element, the acreage of each FLUM Designation which exists within the City, and the percentage of total area of the City for each FLUM Designation.

The Agriculture FLUM Designation continues to serve as the dominant designation within the City, accounting for approximately 46 percent of the FLUM Designations. The City is not completely built-out. New and continuous redevelopment of developed land is and will continue to be encouraged by the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.

Table 1-7
Future Land Use Map Categories, 2020

Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Designation	Acreage	Percentage
Agriculture (A)	10,219.8	46.54
Central Business District (CBD)	27.67	0.13
Community Commercial (CC)	168.49	0.77
Commercial (COMM)	1,040.65	4.7
Conservation (CONS)	2,719.59	12.39
Corporate Park (CP)	387.42	1.76
High Density Residential (HIGH)	86.72	0.39
Industrial (IND)	2,450.12	11.16
Medium Density Residential (MED)	789.10	3.59
Moderate Density Residential (MOD)	2,875.25	13.09
Public (PUBLIC)	389.5	1.77
Rural Employment Center (R-EC) (County Designation)	0	0.0
Rural/Agricultural (R/AG) (County Designation)	490.51	2.23
Rural Cluster (RC) (County Designation)	8.99	0.01
Recreation (REC)	391.59	1.78
Total	21,958.68	100.00

Table 1-8 identifies vacant potentially developable land within the City. Data obtained from the Alachua County Property Appraiser was utilized to determine the location of vacant lands based upon standard property use codes contained within the reference data. After vacant land was identified, the City identified the land within this data set with an urban Future Land Use Map Designation (Central Business District, Community Commercial, Commercial, Corporate Park, Industrial, Moderate Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, or High Density Residential) which are greater than or equal to 10 acres in size. Map 1-2 identifies the location of vacant potentially developable land.

Table 1-8
**Identification and Analysis of the Extent of Vacant and Potentially
 Developable Land**

Future Land Use Map Designation	Acreage	Percentage of Overall City Land Area
Community Commercial	81.87	0.37
Commercial	487.64	2.21
Corporate Park	340.64	1.55
Industrial	753.56	3.42
Moderate Density Residential	1,537.65	6.98
Medium Density Residential	71.91	0.33
High Density Residential	56.88	0.26

Map 1-2, Vacant Urban Land with an Urban FLUM Designation

