

**TO:** Mayor and Council Members  
**FROM:** Jim Fleischmann, Town Planning Consultant  
**RE:** Rural Vista Guidelines Workshop  
**DATE:** June 18, 2024

## **AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

-----

### **Background**

Prior to the Town's incorporation in 2006, the Loxahatchee Groves Rural Vista Committee developed the attached "Guidelines for Loxahatchee Groves' Non-Residential Projects," (Guidelines) to provide design guidance intended to protect and enhance the area's agricultural/rural identity.

The guidelines include general architectural standards addressing building exteriors (e.g., roofs, windows, porches) and site design elements (e.g., signage, lighting, parking, landscaping) as well as photographs of both desirable and undesirable examples of development. The Guidelines were never formally adopted; however, there is direction for their use in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). The current Comprehensive Plan direction is included in the Future Land Use Element:

#### **1.3 Objective:**

*The Town shall strive to encourage a rural community design and look.*

##### **1.3.1 Policy:**

The Town shall adopt an ordinance for non-residential development that reflects and updates the Rural Vista Guidelines by January 2010.

The Guidelines are also referenced in the following ULDC Sections:

#### **Section 05-045 Compliance Required:**

Subsection (A): No development order or permit shall be issued that is not in conformity with the provisions of the ULDC, the adopted Comprehensive Plan and the Rural Vista Guidelines as adopted by the Town Council. As well as applicable ordinances and regulations. (NOTE; THE RURAL VISTA GUIDELINES HAVE NOT BEEN ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL).

#### **Section 41-030 Objectives and Standards (NOTE: FOR PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS ONLY):**

Subsection (A) *PUD Design Standards* (2) Compatibility and consistency with the following Town planning documents, or their successors: Master Roadway, Equestrian and Greenway Plan (MREG), SR-80/Southern Boulevard Conceptual Access Management Plan, and Guidelines for Loxahatchee Groves Non-Residential Projects ("Rural Vista Guidelines").

Section 95-115: *Construction of Parking Areas:*

Subsection (A) *Subgrade, Base and Surface Materials* (1) A minimum of six-inch shellrock or limestone base with at least a three-inch layer of open graded emulsified mix (OGEM) or a surface material of equivalent durability as detailed in the Rural Vista Guidelines, as adopted; or (2) A base and surface material of equivalent durability; as certified by an engineer.

**Recent Activity**

The proposed EAR-Based Comprehensive Plan Amendments includes the proposed revision of Future Land Use Element Policy 1.3.1 as follows:

1.3.1 Policy:

The Town shall adopt ~~an ordinance~~ architectural guidelines for non-residential development that reflects and updates the Rural Vista Guidelines, ~~by January 2010.~~

The following list of specific architectural and landscape guidelines was prepared during the proposed Okeechobee Boulevard Overlay process. However, they were not adopted.

1. The business shall not alter the identity of the OR-5 Overlay in a way that detracts from its rural character.
2. The business shall contribute to a diverse and appropriate blend of businesses in the OR-5 Overlay.
3. The business will be compatible with existing surrounding uses.
6. The business meets all of the following fixed criteria:
  - a. The size of the business shall not exceed 1,500 square feet of gross floor area.
  - b. The first floor street frontage of the business shall not exceed 35 feet in width.
  - c. Corporate advertising shall not be used which is visible from the exterior of the premises.
  - d. Exterior facade colors shall comply with the requirements of the Rural Vista Guidelines as amended.
  - e. Signage shall be designed to be in harmony with architectural features and elements of the building as approved by the Town.
  - f. Signage colors shall be muted to minimize visual intrusion as approved by the Town.
  - g. No drive thru windows shall be used.
7. Larger than normal (e.g. 40 feet in front and 100 feet in the rear) "greenbelt" buffers/setbacks should be required in the Overlay.

8. Require only native trees (e.g. oaks and pines) to be used as landscape material in future development projects along Okeechobee Boulevard.
9. The RETAG Advisory Committee recommended a prototype monument sign for use on Okeechobee Boulevard.

**Staff Recommendation**

The Council should implement proposed revisions to Future Land Element Policy 1.3.1 and consider incorporating recommended architectural and landscaping guidelines generated by the committee structure in the Overlay review process.