



155 F Road Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
FROM: Francine Ramaglia, Town Manager
VIA: Jeffrey Kurtz, Project Manager
SUBJECT: Discussion of Draft Rural Vista Guidelines reviewed by last ULDC committee

Background:

The original *Rural Vista Guidelines* were developed in 2010 by the Rural Vista Committee, under the auspices of the Loxahatchee Groves Landowners Association. These guidelines have served as the informal basis for evaluating non-residential development and commercial architectural character within the Town. Their focus was on preserving the Town's rural identity through design elements such as native tree canopy preservation, residential-scale buildings, appropriate signage and materials, and rural-style landscaping.

In 2023–2024, the Rural Vista Committee reconvened to modernize the guidelines for consistency with the Town's Unified Land Development Code (ULDC), adopted Comprehensive Plan, and vision for limited, rural-compatible commercial and civic development. The updated draft includes new enforceable standards and clearer definitions, aligned with feedback from past development reviews and Council direction.

Summary of Key Changes and Enhancements:

- Clarifies applicability to *non-residential and non-agricultural development*, including civic and institutional uses.
- Integrates *design standards* for building mass, scale, façade treatment, material use, porches, and roof forms to reinforce rural character.
- Requires *native vegetation buffers* (35' or 50' minimum) and prohibits exposed flat roofs and corporate/franchise styling.
- Establishes *architectural compatibility standards* for accessory buildings and outparcel structures.
- Strengthens *non-vehicular pathway* and outdoor gathering requirements, particularly for larger projects.
- Adds clear prohibitions on mirrored windows, bold corporate colors, and unshielded lighting.



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- Supports murals reflecting local history and provides detailed landscape and parking integration guidelines.

Unresolved Items and Loose Ends from Committee Discussions:

1. **Color Palette Reference** – The Committee discussed updating the color palette but deferred finalization. Staff recommends reaffirming use of the 2010 Pantone-based chart until a new exhibit is adopted.
2. **Outdoor Gathering Place Requirements** – The Committee recommended requiring such spaces for projects larger than 10 acres, but some members asked whether smaller projects should also be encouraged to include informal seating areas. Council direction is requested.
3. **Murals and Artistic Expression** – Several members supported incorporating murals reflective of Town history or landscape. Staff has included this permissively but requests guidance on approval criteria or review process.
4. **Applicability to Remodels and Outparcels** – There was discussion about whether remodels of existing buildings and pad site developments (outparcels) should conform fully to these standards. The draft applies these standards to all exterior remodels and any structure visible from public rights-of-way.

Staff Recommendation:

Discuss and decide direction to staff as to whether finalized draft should also be reviewed by newly seated ULDC or proceed directly to Council for continued discussion and adoption.