



**CITY OF WAUCHULA
2026 EAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS
OVERVIEW PRESENTATION**

March 2, 2026

TO: City of Wauchula, City Commission

FROM: Central Florida Regional Planning Council

SUBJECT: Overview of 2026 EAR Comprehensive Plan Amendments

AGENDA & HEARING DATES:

March 2, 2026, 6:00 PM	City Commission Update Presentation
March 16, 2026, 5:30 PM	Planning and Zoning Board Update Presentation
April 20, 2026, 5:30 PM:	Planning and Zoning Board Hearing
May 11, 2026, 6:00 PM:	City Commission Meeting, Transmittal Hearing
TBD:	City Commission Meeting, Adoption Hearing (2 nd reading)

BACKGROUND:

The City's Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for managing the growth and development of the city. At least once every 7 years, each local government must evaluate its comprehensive plan to determine if plan amendments are necessary to reflect changes in State Statutes and submit an Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) letter and signed affidavit notifying Florida Commerce as to its determination.

The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan (Plan) are based on a review of changes in Florida Statutes since the last time the Plan was updated and a review of the Comprehensive Plan against existing conditions, requirements of the Land Development Code, and input from the community.

Senate Bill 180

Adopted in 2025, Senate Bill 180 imposes mandates on state and local governments while limiting how they can regulate after storms. Cities and Counties May Not . . .

- propose or adopt more restrictive or burdensome amendments to its comprehensive plan or land development regulations.
- propose or adopt more restrictive or burdensome procedures concerning review, approval, or issuance of a site plan, development permit, or development order, to the extent that those terms are defined by s. 163.3164, Florida Statutes, before October 1, 2027.

Reorganization

The Comprehensive Plan Elements were reorganized in the order as addressed in Florida Statutes.

Proposed Amendments

THROUGHOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Include reference to 10-year short term and 20-year long term planning horizons.
- All references to FAC 9J-5 will be removed as the rule has been appealed.
- All references to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) or Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) will be updated to Florida Commerce consistent with the agency's current name.
- Scrivener's errors such as misspelled words will be corrected.
- All references to Florida Statutes, FAC, or other agency requirements will be verified and updated as necessary.
- All items related to requirements in the Land Development Regulations will be updated based on whether the requirements have been addressed in the Land Development Regulations. The provisions will be reviewed for potential amendments or flagged for follow-up to the Land Development Regulations.

Description of Elements from Florida Statutes

FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT

The Future Land Use Element designates proposed future general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land for residential uses, commercial uses, industry, agriculture, recreation, conservation, education, public facilities, and other categories of the public and private uses of land. The approximate acreage and the general range of density or intensity of use shall be provided for the gross land area included in each existing land use category. The element shall establish the long-term end toward which land use programs and activities are ultimately directed (Florida Statutes 163.3177(6)(a)).

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

A transportation element addressing mobility issues in relationship to the size and character of the local government. The purpose of the transportation element shall be to plan for a multimodal transportation system that places emphasis on public transportation systems, where feasible. The element shall provide for a safe, convenient multimodal transportation system, coordinated

with the future land use map or map series and designed to support all elements of the comprehensive plan (Florida Statute 163.3177(6)(b)).

INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENT

The general sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, and natural groundwater aquifer recharge element is correlated to principles and guidelines for future land use, indicating ways to provide for future potable water, drainage, sanitary sewer, solid waste, and aquifer recharge protection requirements for the area. The element may be a detailed engineering plan including a topographic map depicting areas of prime groundwater recharge (Florida Statute 163.3177(6)(c)).

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

A conservation element for the conservation, use, and protection of natural resources in the area, including air, water, water recharge areas, wetlands, waterwells, estuarine marshes, soils, beaches, shores, flood plains, rivers, bays, lakes, harbors, forests, fisheries and wildlife, marine habitat, minerals, and other natural and environmental resources, including factors that affect energy conservation. (Florida Statutes 163.3177(6)(d)).

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

A Recreation and Open Space Element indicates a comprehensive system of public and private sites for recreation, including, but not limited to, natural reservations, parks and playgrounds, parkways, beaches and public access to beaches, open spaces, waterways, and other recreational facilities (Florida Statutes 163.3177(6)(e)).

HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element works to plan for housing for future residents, eliminate substandard housing, and the provision of adequate housing sites for workforce housing, mobile homes, low-income housing, etc (Florida Statutes 163.3177(f)).

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION ELEMENT

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element shows relationships and states principles and guidelines to be used in coordinating the adopted comprehensive plan with the plans of school boards, regional water supply authorities, and other units of local government providing services but not having regulatory authority over the use of land, with the comprehensive plans of adjacent municipalities, the county, adjacent counties, or the region, with the state comprehensive plan and with the applicable regional water supply plan. This element demonstrates consideration of the particular effects of the local plan, when adopted, upon the development of adjacent municipalities, the county, adjacent counties, or the region, or upon the state comprehensive plan, as the case may require (Florida Statutes 163.3177(6)(h)).

PROPERTY RIGHTS ELEMENT

The Property Rights Element recognizes that governmental entities respect judicially acknowledged and constitutionally protected private property rights, (Florida Statutes 163.3177(6)(f)).

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ELEMENT

The purpose of this element is to provide guidance for the allocation of funding of needed public services for the municipality's current and projected population, which includes: potable water, sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage, solid waste, parks and recreation, and transportation. It is

accompanied by the annual updated Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements, which implements the goals, objectives and policies of the element and the Comprehensive Plan (Florida Statute 163.3177(3)(a)).

PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACILITIES ELEMENT

The Public Schools Facility Element is an element established to address issues related to Hardee County Public School System. This Element is not required by Florida Statutes 163.3177.