



Growth Services

FY26 – 4th Quarter Goals (July – Sept.):

Planning and Future Growth

1. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Prepare for Growth Demands/ Inform the Community.
 - a. Continue implementing the 5-year Operational Plan and executing the FY26 plans.
 - b. Move forward the US 27 Area study master plan, completing the initial survey and prep work for a design charrette tentatively scheduled for first week of October, and follow up with a Board workshop at the end of October. The goal is to get as much of the design elements near completion before November. The full master plan should be done within eight months, then we'd meet with Administration, and obtained final Board approval to move forward with the next phase of the plan. (The US 27 area study is between NW 60th Avenue and NW 70th/80th Avenue, from ½ mile north of W. Hwy 40 to the northern alignment of the new NW 49th Street Extension.)
 - c. Continue improving the FY26 plan between Code Enforcement and Community Services to use CDBG funds for a code enforcement officer (CEO) assigned to focus on community compliance and outreach for the low-to-moderate income (LMI) housing identified census tracts and the abatement of blighted properties. We are looking to increase efforts in the blue zones for FY27 with an additional \$50K in funds from CDBG.
2. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Develop Architectural Standards in Strategic Areas.
 - a. While the changes to buffers and tree preservation were approved, the Board also directed staff to connect with the development community to make further edits to those items to avoid possible SB180 challenge(s). Thus, staff have completed 2 LDRC workshops in two weeks with the goal of bringing the revised and updated changes back to the Board on August 26th.
 - b. The US 27 Study Area Master Plan will develop community driven architectural standards for the area transitioning from the City of Ocala towards the Farmland Preservation Area.
3. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Strengthen the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA).
 - a. Editing the proposed webpage for the TDR program, providing information and resources to facilitate understanding of how the program works and increase the ease of utilization.
4. Improved Permitting Process Review - Evaluate the Existing Processes/Evaluate the Current Review Processes/Create How-to-Guides for the Public and Staff.
 - a. In addition to the previously noted code changes, staff is working on code changes related to Special Event Permits, Mass Grading Plans, PUDs, parking standards, and many other items. We are scheduling time with the Chair to prioritize an updated list since many have been completed and others added.
 - b. Work with customers and staff to fix the bugs in the new EP&L system and establish better processes for staff and customers moving forward. IT's EP&L team has shifted focus to planning so we can get some of the bugs worked out.



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- c. Continue breaking down silos by facilitating communication between departments to help identify gaps in processes.
 - d. Improve customer service: Working with the University of Florida and our IT team to kick off our Chatbot project. The chatbot will use generative-AI tools to answer customer questions and reduce customer phone calls. (The Chatbot will use generative AI to help answer customer questions, so the machine learning model needs training/learning before it is released for public use.)
- 5. Improve Permitting Process Review - Compare Staffing Levels to Similar Communities
 - a. Since our most senior planner decided to extend his retirement date, staff has continued the knowledge transfer of our most senior planner. Staff should complete the DRI/VDRI documentation by August and then move to documenting the history of some of the more major developments and overlay zones in the County.
 - b. Transition an experienced code officer who will focus on enforcing conditions in approved PUDs & SUPs. This assumes we will be able to hire and train a new code officer to backfill for this code officer's area.
- 6. Review the Comprehensive Plan – Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)
 - a. Complete the final public hearing to adopt the EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The final public hearing is set for August 4th.
 - b. Begin drafting language for LDC updates related to the EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.
- 7. Develop and implement the Silver Springs Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Master Plan Update
 - a. Piggybacking off a OCE continuing services agreement, the CRA team has evaluated and identified a consultant to design and develop pedestrian crossings, median updates, and other CRA objectives identified in the approved master plan.
 - b. develop a program and policies and procedures for a general TIF rebate program.
 - c. Continued working with a core CRA team to execute the implementation of the CRA master plan and maintain the positive momentum for redevelopment in the CRA.
 - d. Complete preparation of CRA pamphlet and website updates to coincide with new annual budget adoption.

FY26 – 3rd Quarter Accomplishments (April - June):

Planning and Future Growth

- 1. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Prepare for Growth Demands/ Inform the Community.
 - a. Finalized the scope for the US 27 Area study, met with Administration, and obtained final Board approval to move forward with the plan. (The US 27 area study is between NW 60th



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Avenue and NW 70th/80th Avenue, from ½ mile north of W. Hwy 40 to the northern alignment of the new NW 49th Street Extension.)

- b. Continued implementing the 5-year Operational Plan and executing the FY26 plans. Made edits to our FY27 plans and budget-related items as requested by Administration.
 - c. Continued executing and improving the FY26 plan between Code Enforcement and Community Services to use CDBG funds for a code enforcement officer (CEO) assigned to focus on community compliance and outreach for the low-to-moderate income (LMI) housing identified census tracts and the abatement of blighted properties.
 2. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Develop Architectural Standards in Strategic Areas.
 - a. Finalized and received Board approval on changes to amenities, buffers, and tree preservation. It should be noted that these changes have been a collaborative effort with the Chair, Parks, Kimley-Horn (K-H), Administration, and Growth Services over several months. (The Board has asked for these changes to go back to LDRC for more input from the development community.)
 3. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Strengthen the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA).
 - a. Continued working with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC) and Stetson University on their state (DEP) grant-funded project that have identified natural resource priorities and provide additional rural land protection strategies as part of an overall vulnerability assessment. The project is to be completed by August 2026.
 - b. Drafted LDC language to incentivize affordable housing use lot widths in R-1 and TDR density bonuses. These proposed changes align with AHAC's priorities for the next year and are in collaboration with Community Services and Administration.
 4. Improved Permitting Process Review - Evaluate the Existing Processes/Evaluate the Current Review Processes/Create How-to-Guides for the Public and Staff.
 - a. Continued to work with customers and staff to work out the bugs in the new EP&L system and establish a new normal. IT's EP&L team has shifted focus to planning so we can get some of the bugs worked out.
 - b. Continued working with Legal and the LDRC chair to improve the efficiency and timeliness of moving proposed LDC edits through the LDRC workshops.
 5. Improve Permitting Process Review - Compare Staffing Levels to Similar Communities
 - a. Since our most senior planner decided to extend his retirement date, staff has continued the knowledge transfer of our most senior planner. For example, we are finalizing documentation for future reference on existing DRI/VDRI.
 - b. Transition an experienced code officer who will focus on enforcing conditions in approved PUDs & SUPs. We will hire and train a new code officer to backfill for this code officer's area.
 - c. Worked with HR and Administration to propose pay scale changes for our zoning tech matrix and our code enforcement officer matrix for the FY27 budget. The proposed



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changes are based on analysis of the job descriptions for each job classification with the pay and benefits for similar job classifications for neighboring counties and municipalities.

6. Review the Comprehensive Plan – Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)
 - a. Received comments back from the State on the resubmittal of our EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The letter had no objections. Thus, we moved to a final public hearing to adopt the EAR-based amendments, which was continued to August 4th.
 - b. Identified LDC updates based on the EAR-based amendments to the Comp Plan.
7. Develop and implement the Silver Springs Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Master Plan Update
 - a. Piggybacking off a OCE continuing services agreement, the CRA team has evaluated and identified a consultant to design and develop pedestrian crossings, median updates, and other CRA objectives identified in the approved master plan.
 - b. Continued working with a core CRA team to execute the implementation of the CRA master plan and maintain the positive momentum for redevelopment in the CRA.