



Growth Services

FY26 – 1st Quarter Goals (Oct.- Dec.):

Planning and Future Growth

1. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Prepare for Growth Demands/ Inform the Community.
 - a. Held two transmittal hearings for the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments—one with the P&Z commission on November 10th and one with the BCC on December 17th — and then transmitted the final amendments to the state December 23rd.
 - b. Continued implementing the 5-year Operational Plan and executing the FY26 plans. We started FY27 plans and budget-related items.
 - c. Continue executing and evaluating 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.
 - d. Held the kickoff meeting for the NW US 27 Area study (the NW US 27 corridor 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).
 - e. Continue building and developing areas in the ArcGIS URBAN 3-D modeling tool.
2. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Develop Architectural Standards in Strategic Areas.
 - a. Collaborated with Parks, Kimley-Horn (K-H), Administration, and the Chair to finalize proposed changes to Amenities, Buffers, and tree preservation. These proposed changes are ready for the next available LDCR workshop before progressing to the public hearing process.
 - b. Developed a policy and initial criteria to facilitate the development of 3-5-acre equestrian estates (aka mini-farms) inside the urban growth boundary (UGB). The policy was included in the Comprehensive Plan amendments transmitted to the state on December 23rd.
3. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Strengthen the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA).
 - a. Continued working with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECRPC) and Stetson University on their state (DEP) grant-funded project that will help identify natural resource priorities and provide additional rural land protection strategies as part of an overall vulnerability assessment. The project is to be completed by June 2026.
 - b. Edited 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.



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- a. Changed over to the new EP&L system and have established a new normal with the system as we continue to work out the bugs.
- b. Continued breaking down silos by facilitating communication between departments to help identify gaps in processes. For example, we have worked with the different departments (e.g., Legal, OCE, Utilities, etc.) to evaluate and edit PUD and SUP conditions before they go to the public hearings during the DRC meetings.
- c. Improve customer service: Working with the University of Florida and our IT team to finalize and start training a Chatbot on our website that will facilitate 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.) We have met with IT to evaluate possible alternatives to the UF-developed chatbot. But currently, the UF option appears to be the most efficient and cost-effective alternative to fit our current conditions.
- d. Working with the 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. Continued implementing a succession plan and knowledge transfer of our most senior planner as he moves toward retirement. For example, we have worked on the planners understanding current DRI/VDRI
- b. Completed LDC changes for solar facilities and sign-code.
- c. Moved LDC changes for fly-in communities/private airports (FIC-PA) to the LDRC workshop process. These FIC-OA changes are in their fourth (4th) LDRC workshop. We expect them to move to the public hearing phase after this workshop.

6. Promote infill within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores - Evaluate Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores as Planned Service Areas (PSA)

- a. Refined the proposed PSA methodology and example locations in Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores. This was presented to the Board as part of the follow-up items during the transmittal hearing.

7. Review the Comprehensive Plan – Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)

- a. Finished the two transmittal hearings (as previously noted) and transmitted the EAR-based amendments to the state on December 23rd.
- b. Identified LDC updates based on the EAR-based amendments to the Comp Plan.

8. Develop and implement the Silver Springs Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Master Plan Update

- a. Worked with the Board and Admin to develop an agreement to bring a consultant on board to help evaluate a request for TIF rebate and a general TIF rebate program. The agreement is not yet finalized.
- 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. This



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team is working with PR, Tourism, and the CEP to finalize and distribute a pamphlet highlighting the different grants and resources available to businesses looking to locate in the CRA area.

FY26 – 2nd Quarter Goals (Jan. - March):

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 and continue developing proposals for the FY27 budget items.
 - b. Finalize edits and updates to the planning reports incorporating elements of the strategic plan (Empowering Marion II) and working with legal, administration, and the Board to for approval of the edits to the reports. This includes making changes in the LDC to the PUD section.
 - c. Continue evaluating and refining the 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. We are working on continuing this plan for a third consecutive year as part of the FY27 budget.
 - d. Work with the consultant to finalize the scope of work and begin working on the NW US 27 Area study (the NW US 27 corridor 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).
 - e. Finish building and developing areas in the ArcGIS URBAN 3-D modeling tool and provide an initial showcase/example of how this tool can help provide better insights to facilitate more informed decisions.
2. Guide Future Growth and Housing - Develop Architectural Standards in Strategic Areas.
 - a. Collaborate with Parks and Kimley-Horn (K-H) to move the proposed changes to Amenities, Buffers, and tree preservation through the LDCR workshops and complete the public hearing process.
 - b. Identify and write LDC changes that facilitate the development of new Equestrian Estates policy (aka 3-5 acre mini farms inside UGB), assuming the policy gets adopted.
3. Guide Future Growth and Housing - Strengthen the Farmland Preservation Area (FPA).
 - a. Continue working with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECRPC) and Stetson University on their state (DEP) grant-funded project that will aims to identify natural resource priorities and provide additional rural land protection strategies as part of an overall vulnerability assessment. The project is to be completed by June 2026. We plan to hold the first of two stakeholder workshops scheduled for February 4th at 10am in our Main Training Room. (The second workshop is planned for April 2nd at 10am.)
 - b. Go live with the webpage for the TDR program, providing information and resources to facilitate understanding of how the program works and increase the ease of utilization.



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4. Improved Permitting Process Review- Evaluate the Existing Processes/Evaluate the Current Review Processes/Create How-to-Guides for the Public and Staff.
 - a. Continue to train staff and work through the bugs in the new EP&L system to continue to establish a new normal for using this software.
 - b. Continue to break down silos by facilitating communication between departments to help identify gaps in processes. For example, continue working with the different departments (e.g., Building, OCE, etc.) to evaluate and expedite our review processes in the new EP&L software system.
 - c. Identify a code enforcement officer (CEO) to focus on following up on SUP & PUD conditions approved by the BOCC at regular intervals (6-months, 1-year, and 2-years). The CEO will also provide input on proposed conditions during the approval process to ensure conditions are enforceable.
 - d. Improve customer service: Work with the University of Florida and our IT team to finalize and start training a Chatbot on our website that will facilitate 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.)
 - e. Complete the FAQs for the department processes and coordinate with PR for posting on our website.
 - f. Work with the 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. Continue implementing a succession plan and knowledge transfer of our most senior planner as he moves toward retirement.
 - b. Finish the workshops and public hearings for the LDC changes for fly-in communities/private airports (FIC-PA). Then, move amenities, buffers, tree preservation, roadside vendors, and special event permit (SEP) regulations through the LDRC workshop and public hearing processes in this next quarter.
6. Promote infill within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores-Evaluate Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores as Planned Service Areas (PSA)
 - a. Identify and write LDC changes that align with the proposed PSA methodology and the example locations in Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores.
7. Review the Comprehensive Plan – Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)
 - a. Receive feedback from the state on our EAR-based amendments to the Comp Plan and respond accordingly. Schedule a final adoption hearing for March.
 - b. Develop a plan and timeline for updating the LDC based on the proposed EAR-based amendments to the Comp Plan.
8. Develop and implement the Silver Springs Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Master Plan Update



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- a. Coordinate with Procurement and FDOT to develop project proposals for the design of safety and median improvements for Silver Springs Boulevard, including pedestrian crossings, median improvements, median “art work” and potential for “road diet.”
- b. Prepare for likely Utilities Grant Application from the new Silver Springs Hotel (south of the existing Holiday Inn & Suites) as that project is currently undergoing Major Site Plan review.
- c. Continue 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. This team will work with PR, Tourism, and the CEP to finalize and distribute a pamphlet highlighting the different grants and resources available to businesses looking to locate in the CRA area. The team also plans to talk with the City about their CRA and how they got their Mainstreet program started, bringing this information to the Board for their feedback.
- d. Distribute electronic survey and initiate to gauge public sentiment on using CRA funds for public lands improvements (such as County and State). Such as the noted monument signs, and other area improvements – expect to be approximately 30-day duration. Then continue to spend some of the surplus budgeted in the FY25 CRA budget that reflects the CIP (capital improvement plan). Use outcome to develop potential options for CRA and/or State Park and for potential County facilities.
- e. Work with the consultant along with Procurement and Community Services to edit the RFQ for developing catalyst site number one (1) and reissue the RFQ, since the initial RFQ did not receive any applications.