



Growth Services

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

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. Make edits to our FY27 plans and budget-related items as requested by Administration.
 - b. Continue 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. Develop an updated MOU for FY27 based on proposed improvements.
 - c. Finalize the scope for the US 27 Area study, meet 1x1 with the Board and Administration, and obtain final Board approval for agreement with the consultant to move forward with 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.)
 - d. Since Esri provided a workaround for uploading 3-D data, staff is 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. Finalize and gain Board approval on changes to amenities, buffers, and tree preservation and incorporate those updates in Municode. The anticipated final public hearing with the Board is scheduled for May 18th at 2pm. 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.
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 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.
 - a. Continue to work with customers and staff to work out the bugs in the new EP&L system and establish a new normal.
 - b. Continue breaking down silos by facilitating communication between departments to help identify gaps in processes.



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- c. 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.)
 - d. Continue 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. In addition to the previously noted code changes (amenities, buffers, and trees), staff is working on code changes related to Special Event Permits, Mass Grading Plans, PUDs, and parking standards. All of which are expected to move through the LDRC and to the Board for decision by or before August.
 - b. 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 have worked on the planners understanding current DRI/VDRI.
 - c. 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.
 6. Promote infill within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores - Evaluate Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores as Planned Service Areas (PSA)
 - a. The Board decided that we as the County should not promote possible PSA locations in Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores.
 7. Review the Comprehensive Plan – Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)
 - a. Receive comments back from the State on our EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and move to a final public hearing to adopt the EAR-based amendments.
 - 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. Develop an RFQ to find a consultant to help the CRA develop a program and policies and procedures for a general TIF rebate program.
 - 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.



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FY26 – 2nd Quarter Goals (January - March):

Planning and Future Growth

1. Guide Future Growth and Housing- Prepare for Growth Demands/ Inform the Community.
 - a. Received comments back from the State on our Comprehensive Plan amendments that required us to make edits and redo the transmittal process. We are now waiting on the State to respond to our retransmitted amendments. We expect the State to reply by June with any additional comments.
 - b. Continued implementing the 5-year Operational Plan and executing the FY26 plans. We developed our FY27 plans and budget-related items.
 - 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. We received confirmation that Community Services expects to increase our CDBG funds next fiscal year (FY27) from \$200K to \$250K. The additional amount, if approved as part of the budget, will be used for additional abatements in the low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas.
 - d. We are finalizing the scope for the US 27 Area study and then meeting 1x1 with the Board and Administration before moving forward. (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.)
 - e. Continue building and developing areas in the ArcGIS URBAN 3-D modeling tool. Esri was able to provide a workaround for the issue that limited our ability to upload 3-D models from development.
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. Changes to amenities and definitions for trees received Board approval. But the remaining changes are expected to be finalized by the Board in May (5/18).
 - 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 retransmitted to the state.
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 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.



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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 work with customers and staff to work out the bugs in the new EP&L system and establish a new normal.
 - 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 Administration and 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. Completed LDC changes fly-in communities and private airports.
 - b. 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 have worked on the planners understanding current DRI/VDRI.
6. Promote infill within Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores - Evaluate Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores as Planned Service Areas (PSA)
 - a. The Board decided that we as the County should not promote possible PSA locations in Marion Oaks and Silver Springs Shores.
7. Review the Comprehensive Plan – Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)
 - a. As previously noted, we received comments back from the State on the initial submittal of the EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. The State comments (particularly the null-and-void comments related to SB180) required us to make edits and redo the transmittal process, which was completed. We anticipate the State to reply to our re-transmittal by June 15th.
 - 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. Staff worked with the applicant to develop the first TIF rebate agreement to facilitate the development of a new hotel in the CRA, which the Board approved.
 - 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 has worked with PR and Tourism to finalize a pamphlet highlighting the different grants and resources available to businesses looking to locate in the CRA area.