

Strategic Plan Town of Loxahatchee Groves

Draft 1.0
May 17, 2008

Vision for the Future of the Community

Loxahatchee Groves has protected its natural environment and rural character in the midst of an urbanizing region. It continues to be a rural residential and agricultural community that has great respect for lifestyle choices balanced with community needs. This is reflected in a cost effective, minimal government structure that strives to protect the environment and quality of life.

Positioning Loxahatchee Groves to achieve the Vision

Loxahatchee Groves is a unique community in the South Florida region. The core vision for its future is preservation of those features that make it a distinctive place to live, work, and play. How can the essence of the Groves be preserved as the surrounding areas change and as residents change?

For distinctive communities that do not want to be like the surrounding areas, what can it mean to suggest that the vision is to “preserve” the community? There are three possible overlapping definitions.

1. Definition 1: “Preserve” means keeping it just as it is. Preservation in this sense is best exemplified by Williamsburg or other historical sites where the goal is to maintain the physical structures and life at a period in history. In this case to ~~keep something~~ “preserve” we have to intentionally disallow substantive change.
2. Definition 2: “Preserve” means keeping certain distinctive community assets as the community changes. This approach is shown by communities that have historic districts, waterfronts, or other ~~community~~ features that the community seeks to keep ~~structurally or in terms of use~~. Preserve in this sense also means keeping social features of a community such as community events that draw the community together or exhibit a special heritage or maintaining the

Comment [M1]: Colonial Williamsburg or other historical sites where the goal is to maintain the physical structures at a period in history best exemplify preservation in this sense.

sense of personalness and friendliness that are equated to a “small town” character.

3. Definition 3: “Preserve” means maintaining quality of experience. These often include safety, recreation, education, economic opportunity and, social interchange. Preserve in this case requires continuous change and improvement because quality is a changing standard. In this case, in order to keep something we have to change.

All three definitions are applicable to Loxahatchee Groves. To preserve it in the future the basic land uses and density must be preserved as it is today as stated in definition one. To keep and improve the quality of experience, new features such as trails or nature preserves may need to be added so change will be required as stated in definition three. Finally as stated in definition two, some changes in past practice may be needed. such as This will include stronger environmental protection measures in order to maintain the natural setting everyone values.

The residents of Loxahatchee Groves clearly want to preserve the Groves as a rural residential community in a beautiful natural setting. Such a community offers its residents the freedom and privacy to pursue their business and personal interests while still having ready access to the economic and recreational opportunities of the greater region. By positioning itself as a rural oasis, the Groves is able to have the best of both worlds – a small town rural lifestyle with ready access to urban and regional amenities when desired.

Values

The Town will seekseeks to practice these values in its policy decisions and operational practices.

- Limited government
Town government will be limited in terms of costs to the taxpayer, regulation limited to ensure environmental protection and protection of individual rights and limited in terms of services.
- Cooperation and respect for each other

By working together and seeking to avoid ~~ing~~ undue intrusion into each other's lives, we ~~will help~~ aim to keep the distinctive nature of the Groves and ~~help~~ keep government limited.

- Respect for history

~~U~~By ~~understanding~~ the history of the Groves and the features ~~which have~~ that have drawn residents to the community, ~~we~~ will help ~~maintain~~ continue its distinctive character into the future.

- Respect for nature.

By understanding the native ecosystem and how our actions can either protect or degrade it, we can work together to maintain and enhance this distinctive community.

- Citizen involvement and volunteerism

If the citizens are to keep government limited, protect the distinctive character of the community and maintain the lifestyle that attracted them to the Groves ~~initially~~, they must continue to be involved in the life of the community and volunteer ~~for to do~~ the work ~~which that~~ will keep and ~~make a better~~ enhance the community.

Goals

This plan seeks to achieve the following goals.

- Preserve historical features and rural nature

It is the intent of this plan that the rural residential nature of the Groves be preserved into the future by retaining ag/res zoning, current homestead lot sizes and the other features of the community ~~which that~~ make it distinctive from the suburban development pattern common to South Florida.

- Protect individual freedoms

Historically Loxahatchee Groves has attracted persons desiring to pursue their interests and lifestyle without impinging on others while being given the ~~privacy benefit~~ to pursue their interests. It is the intent of this plan to protect this tradition by balancing individual rights with respect for the rights of others ~~with with~~ minimal governmental intervention.

- Encourage citizenship and personal accountability

This plan recognizes that the distinctive nature of Loxahatchee Groves can only be maintained through the efforts of its citizens ~~who hold~~

~~and promote the values which have created the community as it is today.~~ Involving citizens in all phases of the Town's work will be a characteristic of the Town's government.

- Preserve and enhance natural environment
The Groves has been able to maintain a tree canopy and other natural ecosystems that have been lost in other communities. It is the intent of this plan to promote the preservation, restoration and conservation of this ecosystem.
- Deflect and minimize pass through traffic
This plan recognizes that the coherence ~~of the community~~ and the ability of residents to enjoy life ~~in the community~~ will be harmed if the community becomes over-run by traffic simply passing through ~~the community~~. Therefore an intent of this plan is to minimize pass through traffic by supporting-encouraging the development of transportation corridors on the periphery-peripheries of the Groves ~~and other communities~~ so that no community is harmed by disruptive traffic.
- Practice cost effective, minimal government
It is the intent of this plan that Town government remains minimal, operating in a cost effective manner so ~~as~~ to prevent excessive growth in property taxes ~~while securing resources from other sources available to the Town.~~
- Provide greater outdoor recreational opportunities
This plan recognizes that many residents value the outdoors and want to be able to move about the community as equestrians, cyclists or hikers. Therefore this plan will seek to provide residents with greater opportunities to engage in outdoor recreation and enjoy linked greenways.-

Strategies (Shelley Eichner would like to change the word commercial to non-residential)

To achieve the above goals, the Town will use the following strategies.

- Traffic control and diversion.

To maintain community coherence and enable residents to move safely about the community, the Town will utilize a variety of traffic control and diversion actions such as lower speed limits, greater traffic enforcement, **creation of easier access points**, and diversion of cut-through traffic.

Comment [M2]: What does "creation of easier access points" mean? Need to discuss. Shelly didn't understand it either.

- Environmental protection and preservation

To protect the natural ecosystem of the community, the Town will engage in a variety of incentive and protection actions as well as creative public-private partnerships to permanently protect the ecosystem.

- Concentrate commercial **S. of CC south of Collecting Canal** with **a** buffer
Recognizing the value of property along S.R 80 for commercial uses, the Town plans to concentrate and limit commercial properties **to lands** south of **Coll**necting Canal in ways that will be consistent with the character of the Groves. Some of the actions that will comprise this strategy include:

- Ensuring there is a buffer between the Commercial and Residential areas of the Town
- Providing rural architectural guidelines
- **Encourage Encourage, when feasible where appropriate a northward orientation of new commercial enterprises**
- Limiting commercial development to two stories

Comment [M3]: Encourage, where appropriate, new commercial enterprises along Tangerine Drive between C Road and D Road.

- Lifestyle protection

A prime goal and strategy of this plan is to protect the distinctive lifestyle **which that** drew residents to the Groves. Among the key actions the Town will take to fulfill this strategy include:

- Keep the community low density by maintain**ing** traditional **5--**acre home sites North of **Coll**necting Canal.
- **Control undue noise through education and ~~where req~~when required ~~ired~~, enforcement**
- **Minimize photic pollution through education and ~~when~~, where required enforcement.**

Comment [M4]: When possible (Right to Farm)

Comment [M5]: Control undue noise through education and use code enforcement where required.

Comment [M6]: When possible (Right to Farm)

Comment [M7]: Minimize photic pollution through education and use code enforcement where required.

- Communication, regional cooperation and leadership

Recognizing that for the Town to be able to achieve the goals of this plan it must engage in ongoing communication and cooperative work not only with its residents but with others who **can influence the** success of the plan. This includes groups such as:

- Media

Comment [M8]: The Town recognizes that achieving the goals of this Plan will require communicating and working cooperatively with its residents and other stakeholders who

- Other governments, especially in the Central Western Communities
- Civic associations
- Cost Effective, minimal Government

It is the intent of this plan to achieve these goals through a minimal government ~~that is~~ operated in a highly cost effective manner. The core ~~strategies-policies~~ to fulfill this strategy are low taxes, reliance on fees for additional services, ~~and the use of~~ contracted services and use of county agencies instead of building ~~its own~~ Town work force. Another key element of this strategy is ~~to maintain and~~ fostering a cooperative working relationship with the Water Control District.

Strategic Focus Areas: Operating Principles and Actions

~~To~~ In order to implement the above goals and strategies, the Town will engage in specific actions and will adhere to stated principles as delineated below. Actions are tangible steps the Town will take. Operating principles are guidelines for future actions of the town but do not represent a specific action but instead provide a framework for ~~actions~~ such actions.

Comment [M9]: Operating principles are guidelines for future decisions of the Town and provide a framework for action. To implement the above goals and strategies, the Town will engage in specific actions and will adhere to stated principles as delineated below.

Strategic Focus Area: Land Uses, Codes and Code Enforcement

Principles

1. The Town's basic approach to code enforcement will be driven by complaints and not ~~an active~~ actively seeking ~~of~~ code violations. (High priority)
2. The first step of response to a code violation will be educational.

Actions

- ~~3-1.~~ 1. The Town ~~will update~~ updates the AG/RES category to eliminate inappropriate ~~and intrusive~~ businesses. (high priority)
- ~~4-2.~~ 2. The ~~town will develop~~ Town develops comprehensive codes to protect the native ecosystems (high priority)
- ~~5-3.~~ 3. The ~~town will establish~~ Town establishes codes or regulations to prevent clear cutting of native canopy trees.

- 6.4. The ~~town will develop~~ Town creates additional codes or regulations as needed to protect water quality.
- 7.5. The ~~town will develop~~ Town develops a long-term code enforcement plan to address point pollution sources of groundwater contamination and inappropriate land uses.
- 8.6. The ~~Town will develop~~ Town modifies ERM ~~modified~~ forms and procedures.
- 9.7. The ~~town will develop codes~~ Town improves codes to reduce or prevent photic pollution.
- 10.8. The ~~T~~ town will develop codes to control impacts from cell towers.
- 11.9. The ~~town will develop~~ Town creates codes regarding low impact home businesses.
- 12.10. The Town ~~will develop~~ establishes codes to restrict large-scale assemblies ~~which that~~ create traffic impacts.
- 13.11. The Town ~~will develop~~ creates a land use category to allow a senior living center(s) south of Collecting Canal.
- 14.12. The Town ~~will develop~~ develops land uses and codes ~~which that~~ define and limit industrial agriculture.

Comment [M10]: What can the town really do?

Comment [M11]: The Town will develops codes to control the proliferation of cell towers

Strategic Focus Area: Roadways

Actions

1. The Town ~~will actively support~~ supports the development of traffic corridors such as SR-80; Seminole ~~Pl~~ att, Northlake and Roebuck that would divert traffic from ~~the~~ Okeechobee Boulevard. (high priority)
2. The Town ~~will develop~~ formulates a master transportation plan that would offer some form of traffic control on Okeechobee Boulevard.
3. The Town ~~will seek~~ seeks a lower speed limit and arrange for a limited amount of additional enforcement on Okeechobee ~~Road~~ Boulevard.
4. The Town, in collaboration with the Water Control District, will develop a master plan for Alphabet road improvements that would analyze impacts of paving ~~and~~ ogem stabilization certain roads before all roads are completed.
5. The ~~town will examine~~ Town explores any feasible traffic calming mechanisms on the dirt alphabet roads.
6. The town will lower the speed limits on alphabet roads to 25 mph.

Comment [M12]: Request to delete this section

Comment [M13]: Request to delete this section

Comment [M14]: Shelley: The Town will study the feasibility of reducing the speed limits on the alphabet roads.

7. The Town will arrange for ~~a limited amount of~~ additional enforcement on the alphabet roads.
8. The Town will request the WCD delay further paving/stabilization until the comprehensive plan is adopted.
9. The Town ~~will examine~~ investigates ~~any~~ other mechanisms to limit cut-through traffic.
- 9-10. The Town works with Palm Beach County to remove the extension of Okeechobee Boulevard to "Twenty-Mile Bend" on SR80 from the TIM.

Comment [M15]: Request to delete this section

Strategic Focus Area: Development ~~s~~South of Collecting Canal

Principles

1. The Town will ensure there is a buffer between the commercial/institutional uses and Collecting Canal. (high priority).
2. The Town should seek to minimize traffic impacts on interior roads that are created by commercial development (high priority).
3. Commercial uses will be restricted to between C and ~~E~~ the eastern boundary of the Town except for any already approved uses.
4. Commercial and institutional uses on SR 80 should have connectivity between the uses.
5. The Town should seek to require that the orientation of new commercial and institutional have their entrances face uses North.
6. The Town will encourage establishment of riding trails in buffer area South of Collecting Canal and along the west bank of the lettered roads.
7. ~~The Town will encourage development of area east of F road be consistent with other areas South of Connecting Canal~~

Comment [M16]: Shelley: DELETE THIS!

Comment [M17]: The Town should orient new commercial and institutional uses along the north and south sides of Tangerine Drive.

Comment [M18]: The Town prefers responsible, low impact development of the area east of F Road, that is consistent with other areas south of Collecting Canal.

Actions

- 8-1. The Town will seek to create a special taxing district for commercial and institutional uses southS- of Collecting Canal.
- 9-2. The Town will design transitional zoning moving from greater to lesser residential density from Southern Boulevard to Collecting Canal.
- +0-3. The Town will endorse a substantial equestrian facility along the Southern- Blvd Corridor.
- +1-4. The Town will seek the extension of Tangerine from 162nd Street to E StRoad.

Comment [M19]: Shelley: investigate the establishment of

Comment [M20]: Don't we want to think about not connecting to Royal Ascot.

Strategic Focus Area: Community design and look

Actions

- 1. The Town will establish commercial architectural standards that promote a traditional rural look as in Rural Vista. (high priority)
- 2. The town will require substantive landscaping in commercial/institutional areas appropriate to the locale. (high priority)
- 2-3. The Town will establish-set up a commercial architectural/community appearance review board to review-evaluate all commercial/institutional development
- 3-4. The town will support development of a volunteer clean-up effortThe Town supports development of a volunteer clean-up effort.
- 4-5. The town will requireTown requires substantive landscaping in commercial/institutional areas appropriate to the locale. (high priority)
- 5-6. The Town will allowallows commercial two story uses when appropriate.

Comment [M21]: Rural Vista standards establish the Town's commercial architectural guidelines.

Comment [M22]: Shelley: Does the Town really want to start creating advisory boards?

Strategic Focus Area: Protecting the natural environment

Actions

1. The Town ~~will develop~~develops a land use category to recognize land dedicated to conservation and provide a tax valuation appropriate to that use. (high priority)
2. The Town ~~will encourage~~encourages the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and sound buffering mechanisms (high priority)
- ~~2-3.~~
- 3-4. The Town ~~will support~~supports private sector development of a land trust
- 4-5. The Town will conduct an environmental survey of potential point pollution sources.
- 5-6. The Town ~~will create~~creates mechanisms to assist property owners in environmental pollution education, prevention and, if needed, clean up
- 6-7. The Town ~~will develop~~cultivates a tree planting/reforestation program
- 7-8. The Town will examine s the feasibility of tree planting ~~programs~~ along canals
- 8-9. Change current policy to require on-site wetlands mitigation

Comment [M23]: Shelley??

Comment [M24]: Shelley: When, where, and under what circumstance

Comment [M25]: The Town encourages sound buffering mechanisms to promote and enhance the rural natural environment (high priority)

Strategic Focus Areas: Developing community amenities

Actions

1. The Town ~~will develop~~produces a plan for greenways.(high priority)
2. The Town ~~will support~~supports development of a public and private equestrian facility.

Strategic Focus Area: Governmental functions

Principles

1. Continue contracted government to maintain low taxes and limited role of government (high priority)
2. Proposed additional services ~~be are~~ provided on a fee basis

Comment [M26]: Manage the cost of government in order to maintain low taxes and limit the role of government (high priority)

Actions

- ~~3-1.~~ The Town will invite the WCD to a joint meeting to explore and clarify roles and responsibilities and to develop decision tree for planning (high priority)
- ~~4-2.~~ Based upon the discussion of the prior action, the Town and WCD should jointly fund and conduct an independent study of the cost benefits, practices of other jurisdictions and issues of three options; dissolution, dependent district or independent district
- ~~5-3.~~ If the above study shows significant benefits to changing the status of the WCD, the Town will conduct a straw poll of residents.
- ~~6-4.~~ The Town will ~~research to~~ determine if a fee can be placed on heavy trucks for use of roadways.
- ~~7-5.~~ The Town ~~will workworks~~ with County to provide water and sewer to commercial and institutional areas.
- ~~8-6.~~ The Town ~~will develop-develops~~ stormwater ~~storm water~~ management strategy

Comment [M27]: Request to DELETE this

Comment [M28]: Request to DELETE this

Comment [M29]: Request to DELETE this