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July 2, 2026

The Honorable Bill Proctor, District 1
The Honorable Christian Caban, District 2
The Honorable Rick Minor, District 3
The Honorable Brian Welch, District 4
The Honorable David O'Keefe, District 5
The Honorable Nick Maddox, At-Large
The Honorable Carolyn Cummings, At-Large

RE: Proposed Annexation of Phipps Property on North Meridian Road

Dear Commissioners:

As County Commission staff moves forward with preparing the July 7 agenda item on the proposed Phipps annexation, we appreciate the County's support for the December 2026 denial of the proposed expansion of the Urban Services Area (USA) for the Phipps and other properties as part of the update to the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan. 1000 Friends of Florida's concerns focused on the dearth of data and analysis regarding the need for, and impacts of, the expansion, which would set the stage for significant development in an area designated "Rural" on the adopted Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

As you are aware, the City of Tallahassee is now moving forward with annexing 1,741 acres of the Phipps property instead of following the joint USA expansion process. The annexation and subsequent development of this property will forever change the natural, historic, and scenic character of rural northern Leon County. Most residents would likely agree that major new development in this pristine, historic, environmentally vulnerable area is not their vision for the future.

On July 14, as part of the annexation process, the Leon County Commission will have the formal opportunity to register concerns with the City about the proposal. We urge you, as elected County leaders, to use your platform to raise those concerns. We have shared a few of ours in the hope that they will be considered for incorporation into your July 7 agenda item.

Planning and Development

- **The City of Tallahassee has the legal right to deny this annexation.** While the fact that this is a voluntary annexation is bandied about, as you know, this will be a legislative decision, as established under Florida case law.
- **The only reason to propose annexation is to significantly increase the development rights on the property.** The City maintains that such an expansion will have minimal impact, as the land will remain designated “Rural.” But as we all know, the only reason to propose annexation is to pave the way for a significant increase in the property's development rights, from the currently allowed 170 housing units to thousands more under Lake Protection or possibly a PUD.
- **The parcel up for annexation HAS NOT BEEN TARGETED FOR DEVELOPMENT since the passage of the 1992 comprehensive plan.** At the June 10, 2026, City Commission meeting, Assistant City Manager Wayne Tedder misspoke, as he confirmed in an article in the [Tallahassee Democrat](#). The City voted 3-2 on this issue following Mr. Tedder’s statement: *“The properties have been included inside the urban service area boundary since 1992, from the introduction of the Comprehensive Plan. So yes it’s been an area that has been contemplated to be urbanized over time.”* That comment confused some onlookers given that the Phipps land in fact is not included [in the current USA boundary](#). Tedder told the Democrat in a text that he was referring to a portion of Phipps land that was included in the USA years ago.”

In fact, this parcel is not formally designated for future development in the Comprehensive Plan or other community planning documents. This parcel is:

- **Not in the Urban Services Area.** Only 10% of the Phipps property was included in the USA in 1992. It is not necessary to double down on poor past decisions.
- **Not in the City’s annexation plan or annexation map.** We understand the remaining land is not included in the city’s annexation plan or annexation map, which constitutes the community’s plan for future growth, as identified in the comprehensive plan.
- **Not designated “Rural Community” in the Comprehensive Plan.** The parcel is not designated as a “Rural Community” as defined in Policy 2.2.11 [L]: “The Rural Community Future Land Use Designation is intended to distinguish long-established unincorporated communities located outside of the urban service area. These communities have existing concentrations of residential land use at densities typically less than those desirable within an

urban area (gross densities are typically less than 2 dwelling units per acre and the most intensely developed portions rarely exhibit net densities above 4 dwelling units per acre). and is designated for more intensive development.” Designated rural communities include Capitola, Chaires, Fort Braden, Miccosukee, and Chaires.

- **Not “Urban Fringe.”** The comprehensive plan used to have an “urban fringe” category, as the area intended for future development when the USA reached capacity. It appears this is now the “Rural Residential” category, which allows 1 unit per 3 acres. This land was not in the earlier “Urban Fringe” or current “Rural Residential” areas.
- **There has been no demonstrated need for major development in this area.** Undertaking a detailed needs analysis is a hallmark of sound planning. 1000 Friends has been raising concerns about the lack of such a study since public engagement for the comp plan update first commenced in spring 2025. Planning staff has shared that our community needs 23,000 more housing units by 2050. Currently, [21,610 new residential units](#) are in one phase of development or another, meaning this proposed development comes close to meeting needs by 2050. See the 2024 [Indian River County Needs Analysis](#) for a thorough study on the demonstration of need.
- **If there is no demonstrated need, this constitutes premature conversion of rural land, contrary to numerous provisions in the comprehensive plan.** The attachment to this document highlights some of the many provisions addressing the requirement to avoid premature conversion in the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan.
- **If the City had pursued USA expansion instead of annexation, more detailed analysis would be required** under Comprehensive Plan policy 2.4.2 (LM):
“...expansions to the Urban Services Area...shall be based on analysis of population projections and growth trends and an analysis of developable vacant land currently within the Urban Services Area.”
- **The annexation is inconsistent with numerous provisions in the 2050 Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan, just adopted jointly in December 2025.** As but one example, the second sentence of the Vision Statement states: *“The comprehensive plan seeks to balance the management of growth with environmental protection **but gives precedence to environmental protection**”* [emphasis added]. A more detailed analysis is included in the attachment to this letter.
- **This annexation would set the damaging planning precedent for the development of major landholdings to the north and south of the property,** further compounding the loss of northern Leon County’s distinctive rural character.

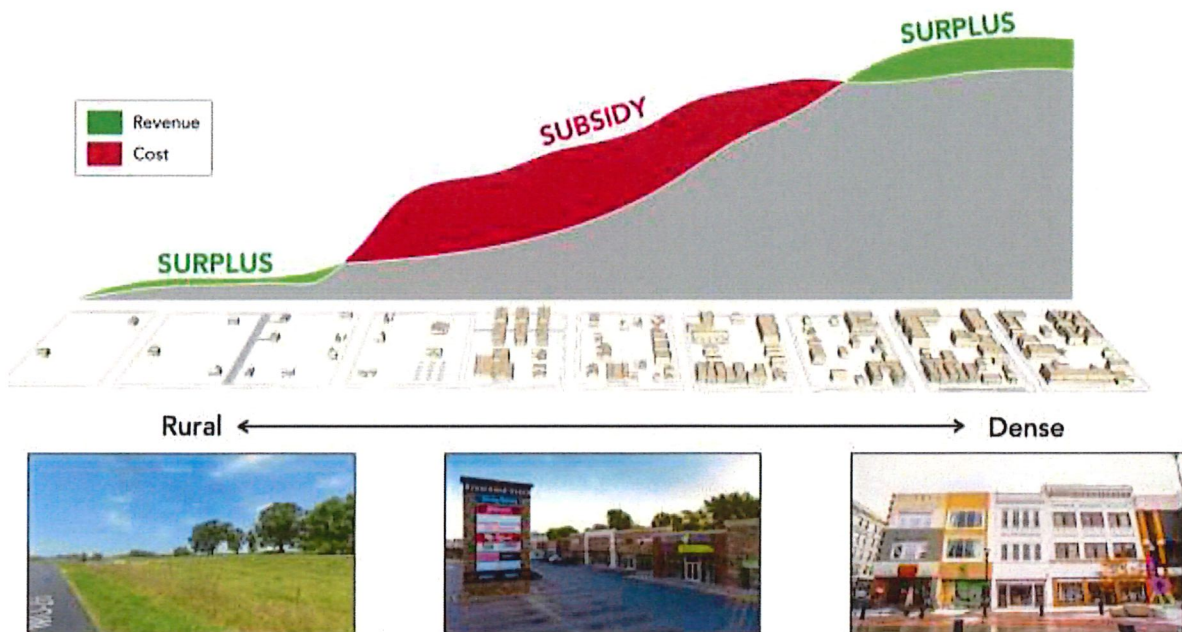
Traffic Impacts

- **Primary access to any new development would be provided by the scenic two-lane Meridian Road.** Extending from downtown Tallahassee to the Georgia state line, this road was established in 1824 as part of Florida's Prime Meridian, on which virtually all land surveying in the state is based. With its overhanging canopy of live oaks and distinctive red clay banks that reach eight feet in some places, it is among the finest canopy roads in Leon County. Due to its historic significance and natural beauty, Meridian Road was designated as a [Tallahassee-Leon County Canopy Road](#) in 1972, with local protection measures. In 2013, it was listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](#), one of the few roads in the nation to receive such a designation.
- **Meridian Road is already at "Level D" due to heavy congestion, and major new development would likely necessitate widening this significant community resource.** For many, the greatest worry about a new development of major acreage along Meridian Road is the flood of new cars that will take to the road, adding to the already congested traffic at rush hour. Traffic counts along Meridian Road indicate that the segment from Ox Bottom to Bannerman has capacity for only 40 more cars. Additional residential units and commercial development in this area will add more cars to the road and cause this segment of Meridian Road to operate far over capacity, likely necessitating widening or creation of a very costly parallel road system, forever destroying this road's historic, scenic character. It will also likely necessitate additional improvements to linking road systems, including Bannerman Road and Orchard Pond Parkway.
- **One of the key issues leading to the creation of Blueprint was the numerous proposals to widen Meridian Road to the Georgia border in the 1990s.** As a result of major controversy over where and how this community would grow and develop, the Environmental and Economic Consensus Committee, made up of leaders from the business and environmental sectors, devoted a year to reaching compromise solutions. This resulted in the creation of a holistic list of Blueprint projects, for which voters overwhelmingly approved a penny sales tax first in 2000. Ultimately, the group agreed that widening Meridian Road would result in continued urban sprawl. A similar holistic, cooperative effort between development and environmental interests to shape future growth and development patterns would foster less contentious planning in this community in the future.
- **The Orchard Pond Parkway, financed by Jeff Phipps, was not intended to open land for development.** As quoted in the [Tallahassee Democrat](#) in 2015, "*When Phipps announced the project in 2011, skeptics wondered if it was a ploy to aid*

development of the surrounding property or other Phipps properties. But Phipps, scion of one of Tallahassee's old money families, has insisted from the start that he is building the road to save the land... **Phipps insists he has no intention of developing the remainder of the property.** That's why he's adding the scenic conservation strips and wants to sell the remainder to the state. Besides, any development would require access points that would slow traffic and ruin the value of the 5-mile throughway... 'If I put suburbs in here, I would lose the revenue (of drivers using the toll road),' Phipps said. 'The future revenue is a huge incentive to keep this open and wild.'" However, in discussions with city staff in 2025, the intent is to use Orchard Pond Parkway as the primary access to the development, which will likely require multiple access points.

Fiscal Responsibility

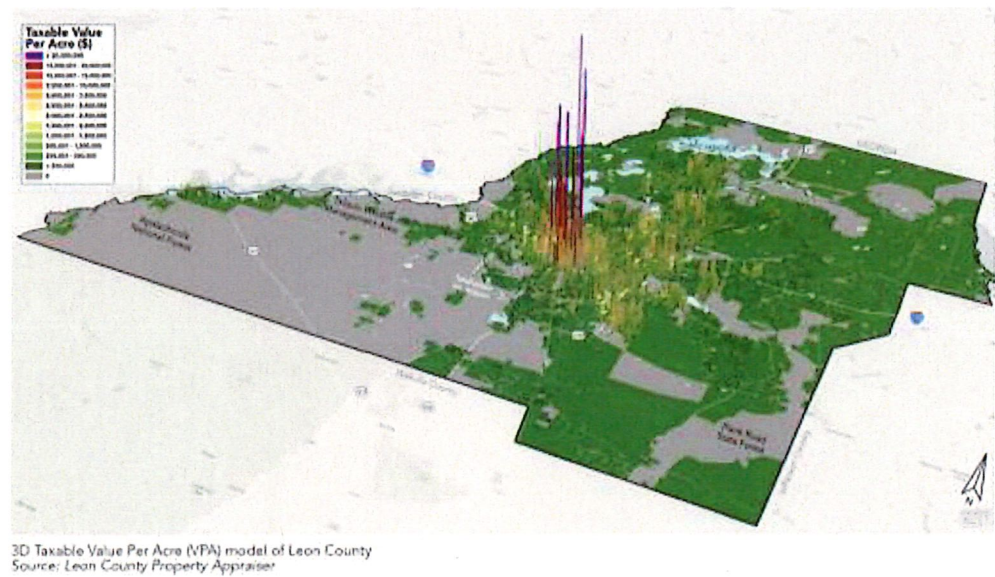
- **From a local government perspective, more intense urban development and rural areas subsidize suburban development.** The nation's leading geoaccounting firm, Urban3, has prepared several studies for 1000 Friends, based on compiling data from communities across Florida and the nation. From the fiscal responsibility perspective, it behooves local governments to focus development in urbanized areas and keep rural lands rural.



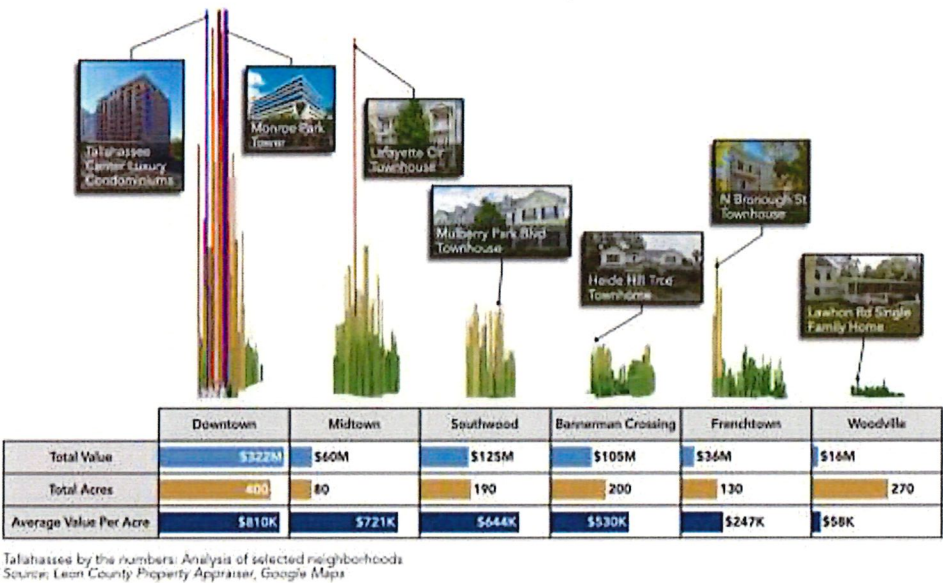
Source: [The Economics of Development in Florida](#), Urban3, 2024.

This is also reflected in the 2025 Urban3 study, [*Economics of Community Design: Tallahassee-Leon County*](#), commissioned by Tallahassee and Leon County and prepared to inform the comprehensive plan updates. This shows actual property tax revenue generated per acre in our community. As can be seen, concentrated higher-density urban development generates far more property tax per acre.

Taxable Value Per Acre in Tallahassee-Leon County



Average Value Per Acre in Tallahassee-Leon County



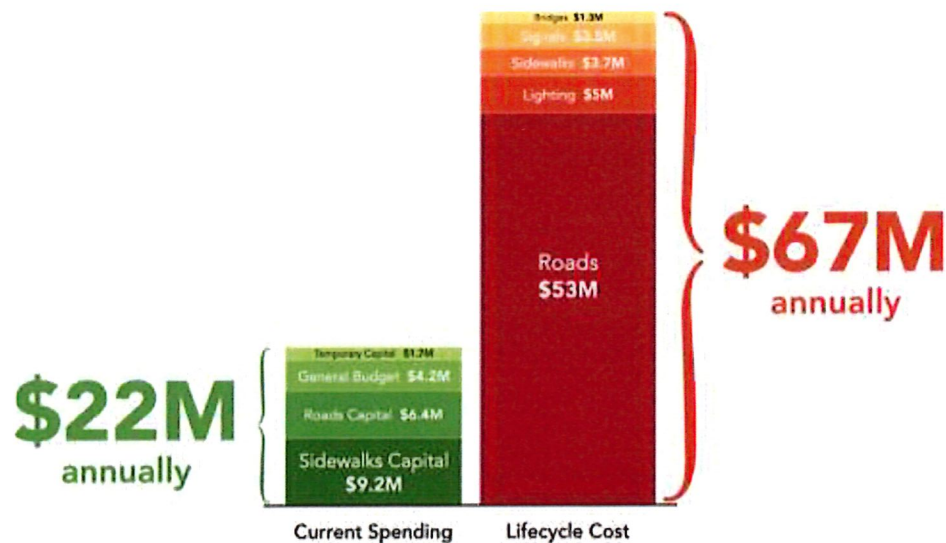
Sources: [*Economics of Community Design: Tallahassee-Leon County*](#), Urban3, 2025

- **Significant taxpayer dollars would be needed to support infrastructure improvements – particularly roads – to accommodate major development.**

While the widely shared mantra is that developers pay for infrastructure for new development, the reality is that developers often cover only internal improvements, while the community bears most of the costs of infrastructure improvements outside the development. As a local example, initial road improvements to support Welaunee and other major developments have been borne by taxpayers through Blueprint, but the cost of these projects has skyrocketed over the last few years, leaving little to no funding for additional projects.

- **Many government analyses address the upfront cost for new or expanded infrastructure, but do not take into account long-term “lifecycle” costs.**

According to Urban3’s Tallahassee-Leon County study, *“In Tallahassee the entire capital spending plan for everything from parks to buildings to roads and pipes averages just over \$183 million a year for the next 5 years. The portion of this set aside for roads is just over \$17 million a year or 9% of the total capital projects. The general fund budget also brings around \$4.2 million a year to maintaining roads and keeping traffic flowing. The resulting funding is charted in green and compared to expected annual costs, shown in red. By applying Florida-specific costs and repair schedules to the 706 miles of City of Tallahassee roads, an annual level of spending to keep up with costs is estimated at around \$66 million a year. Even as actual revenues and costs are sure to vary from estimates, this indicates a significant gap between the funding available and spending needed to keep roadways in good working order.”*



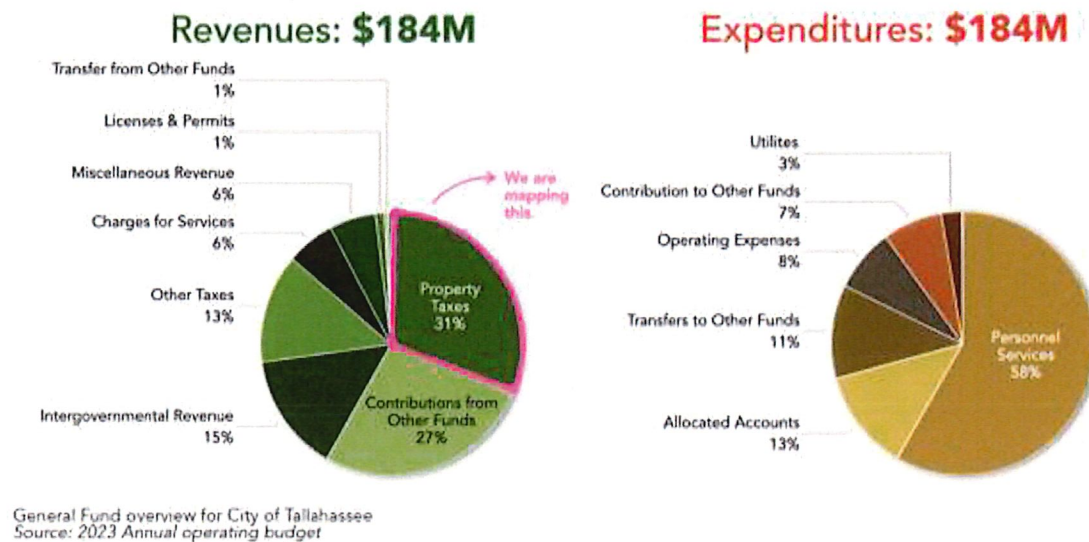
Source: Tallahassee GIS & 2023 Budget, ACFR, & Capital Plans, informing Urban3 Estimates

Sources: [Economics of Community Design: Tallahassee-Leon County](#), Urban3, 2025

- **New development in rural Leon County would continue to siphon taxpayer dollars away from much-needed improvements within the USA.** One example is provided by Tharpe Street, within Blueprint’s Northwest Connector Plan, which was approved in 2014. According to the [Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency](#), in 2023, 82% of a critical segment of the Tharpe Street corridor lacks sidewalks, and access to StarMetro transit stops is difficult, creating an unsafe environment. About 39% of residents in close proximity are below the poverty level, 11% are disabled, and the vast majority are renters. While sidewalks have still not been installed along Tharpe Street, Blueprint plans are moving forward for sidewalks in more prosperous neighborhoods adjoining Bannerman Road.
- **It is folly for local government to consider taking on a significant financial burden with Florida’s proposed Property Tax Reform proposal on the ballot this November.** The 2025 Urban3 study mentioned above shows that 56% of Leon County’s revenue comes from property taxes, with 46% of expenditures going to public safety. For the City, 31% of revenue comes from property taxes, with 58% of its expenditures on public services. If the Property Tax Reform passes, it will significantly reduce local government revenue. According to a recent article in the [Tallahassee Democrat](#), Leon County would stand to lose a possible \$71 million in revenue. Once constitutional offices such as the Leon County Sheriff’s Office were funded, the county would be left with only \$3.5 million for all other county services.

Local governments across the state will be scrambling to secure funding for basic services, including roads, public safety, sewer systems, trash collection, and more. Credit agencies have already warned that this “reform” could reduce bond ratings for local governments, making borrowing to build roads, sewers, and other infrastructure more expensive. While local governments often tout new development to fill their coffers, this revenue primarily comes from property taxes and does not cover the development's true costs to the community. With the issue on the ballot, now is definitely not the time to add another significant financial burden.

City of Tallahassee Property Tax Revenue



Source: *Economics of Community Design: Tallahassee-Leon County*, Urban3, 2025

Significant Environmental and Historic Resources

- The Lake Jackson system is a major environmental resource of statewide significance.** The Lake Jackson system, comprising Lake Jackson, Carr Lake, and Mallard Pond, is one of the state's most distinctive and ecologically valuable surface water systems. The Lake Jackson system is the **only** freshwater lake in Florida to be designated as an [Aquatic Preserve](#), and is also a designated Outstanding Florida Water. The 4,000-acre Lake Jackson has been recognized for years as a prime location for trophy largemouth bass fishing, with four of Tallahassee's top ten [eBird](#) sites for birdwatching nearby. Due to the environmental significance of the Lake Jackson system, protection measures have been in place since 1970. Long a center of civilization, the south shore is home to the [Lake Jackson Indian Mounds Archeological State Park](#), established in 1966. This land is where people of the Fort Walton culture built and occupied sites between 1000 and 1500 A.D.
- No matter how carefully designed, major development in the Lake Jackson watershed will have significant impacts on water quality.** Most of the current development is concentrated on the south side of the lake, with a mix of residential and commercial uses. This has significantly contributed to the degraded water quality in the aquatic preserve. This is balanced only by the health and quality of water at the northern end of the lake system, which would be opened for development if the amendments were adopted. The Florida Department of

Environmental Protection's (DEP) [Lake Jackson Aquatic Preserve Management Plan](#) specifically states that water quality along the north end of the lake is considered good, but "*...if development increases at the same density seen in the south end of the Lake Jackson watershed, water quality is likely to be negatively impacted.*" As part of the 2025 Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan update, [DEP sent a letter to both the City and County](#) (starting on Page 3), outlining concerns about the impacts of increased development on Lake Jackson's water quality and habitat.

- **Lake Jackson's water drains into the Floridan Aquifer and Wakulla Springs.** The impacts on water quality are not localized. They will affect the Floridan Aquifer – the primary source of our drinking water – and the iconic Wakulla Springs, a major resource already significantly impacted by development in Tallahassee.
- **Impacts on the historic African American Carr Cemetery.** Located near the intersection of Meridian Road and Orchard Pond Parkway, the 2.7-acre Carr Cemetery was once part of a 2,000-acre mid-19th-century cotton plantation. Carr Cemetery is believed to be the final resting place of some of the enslaved workers (totaling 77 in 1860) and their descendants. Protecting this resource from the impacts of development has been a community priority for several years.

IN CONCLUSION

It is time to analyze the need for, and the significant community impacts of, the annexation and the future development it is designed to foster.

Attached is a list of highlighted provisions in the just-adopted joint Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan that clearly show the stated intent, adopted by our commissioners on behalf of the citizens of Tallahassee and Leon County – to keep rural lands rural, prevent premature conversion of rural lands, and protect significant resources such as Meridian Road and Lake Jackson. We urge you to direct staff to review and report back on these many inconsistencies.

As we know, the City is under no obligation to approve this annexation. We understand that the County has limited authority over this issue, but we urge you to formally raise these and other concerns in the July 7 agenda item, which will be considered on July 14.

We also ask that you, as the elected stewards of rural Leon County, do everything in your power to protect this beautiful corner of our community.

With sincere thanks for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vivian Young". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vivian" and last name "Young" clearly legible.

Vivian Young, FAICP
Special Projects Director Emeritus

cc: Vince Long, Leon County Administrator
Scott Brockmeier, Leon County Director of Development Support and
Environmental Management
Michael Alfano, Director of City and County Planning

ATTACHMENT

Below are some of the numerous vision, goal, objective, and policy provisions that specifically call for protecting Leon County's rural character from premature conversion to development. This updated plan was just adopted jointly by the City of Tallahassee and Leon County in December 2025. We urge the county to undertake a robust analysis of the proposed annexation's consistency with other provisions of the just-adopted Comprehensive Plan.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

We are fortunate to have retained the natural beauty that inspired the sitting [sic] of Florida's state capital. The community relies upon the comprehensive plan to protect the natural resources and scenic beauty while encouraging the responsible, healthy growth of Tallahassee and Leon County. The comprehensive plan seeks to balance the management of growth with environmental protection **but gives precedence to environmental protection** (emphasis added). Evolving land use patterns within the County have exhibited sprawl characteristics. Sprawl is, perhaps, the most inefficient pattern of land use. Costs associated with the provision of both capital and social infrastructure are higher than more compact patterns. This must be taken into consideration when local government is faced with limited fiscal resources and increasing demand for services. Sprawl encourages degradation of the County's natural resources by prematurely committing vast areas to the impact of urbanization. Phased, orderly growth mitigates this situation by comprehensively addressing development impacts to our natural systems.

LAND USE AND MOBILITY ELEMENT

Goal 1: A Healthy Environment

The community will maintain a healthy environment with drinkable water, breathable air, unpolluted lakes, rivers, and soils, renewable energy sources, conservation areas that protect valuable or irreplaceable natural resources, and open spaces available and accessible to all residents and visitors to our community. To achieve this goal, our community will: • Identify natural resources that contribute to a healthy environment and human well-being. Prioritize the preservation of natural areas (including conservation areas, environmentally sensitive features, and water resources) when making land use and transportation decisions.

Objective 1.2 [LM]– Preservation of Natural Areas (City of Tallahassee/Leon County) (EFF. 1/23/26) Preserve important natural areas, including conservation areas, environmentally sensitive features, and water resources through a combination of identification, analysis, designation of resources on the Future Land Use Map, policies in the Conservation

Element, land development regulations, and acquisition. Prioritize the protection of these areas when making decisions regarding land use, transportation, and infrastructure location and expansion.

Policy 1.2.6 [LM]- Conservation Element (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) Should conflicts arise between implementation of policies in the Land Use and Mobility Element and the Conservation Element on matters of natural resources, the Conservation Element policies shall take precedent.

Goal 2 [LM] (Eff. 1/23/26) – Distinct Urban and Rural Areas:

Our community will provide residents with diverse options for where they live or visit by maintaining a distinction between rural, sub-urban, and urban areas. By maintaining a distinction between these areas, our community will: • Provide a variety of lifestyle and housing choices while reducing sprawl. • Foster economic development in urban areas and identified activity centers. • Promote efficient development patterns. • Support revitalization and redevelopment efforts within the Urban Services Area. • Reduce infrastructure costs. • Protect agricultural and forest management uses. • Preserve and create natural resource-based activities, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services, and scenic vistas and pastoral landscapes.

Objective 2.2 – Efficient Growth (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): To support the projected population growth, infrastructure shall be provided economically and efficiently while protecting surrounding forestry uses and agricultural lands from unwarranted and premature conversion to urban land uses. Growth and development shall be directed toward areas with existing or planned infrastructure in a manner that maintains distinct natural, rural, sub-urban, and urban areas.

Policy 2.2.5 [LM]- Densities and Intensities (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) Residential densities and non-residential intensities are established in the Future Land Use Categories and reflected on the Future Land Use Map, and are supported by available capital infrastructure. New growth shall be directed to areas within the Urban Services Area. Residential density and/or non-residential intensity of development allowed for individual site shall be determined by the infrastructure capacity to serve each proposed development, adopted levels of service, and/or the ability to implement conditions of approval or mitigation of potential impacts for the proposed development.

Policy 2.2.8 [LM]- Adaptive Reuse, Infill Development, and Redevelopment (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) The City of Tallahassee and Leon County shall incentivize brownfield reclamation, building reuse, and the adaptive reuse of existing structures through land development regulations. These measures will support efficient

growth, preserve historic buildings, protect natural resources, maintain affordable housing, and prevent the premature conversion of rural and agricultural land into suburban and urban development. Incentives may include density and intensity bonuses of up to 25%, modified development review thresholds, prioritized permitting, and fee waivers to encourage redevelopment and sustainable land use as specified in the land development code.

Objective 2.3 [LM]– Public Infrastructure (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) Provide public infrastructure, public facilities, and public services that are necessary for public health, safety, and well-being efficiently, effectively, and equitably.

Objective 2.4 [LM]– Preservation of Rural Areas (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) Protect and create agricultural and silvicultural uses, natural resource-based activities, ecosystems, scenic vistas, and pastoral landscapes by preserving rural areas of the community and preventing the premature conversion of rural lands into low density, single-use districts.

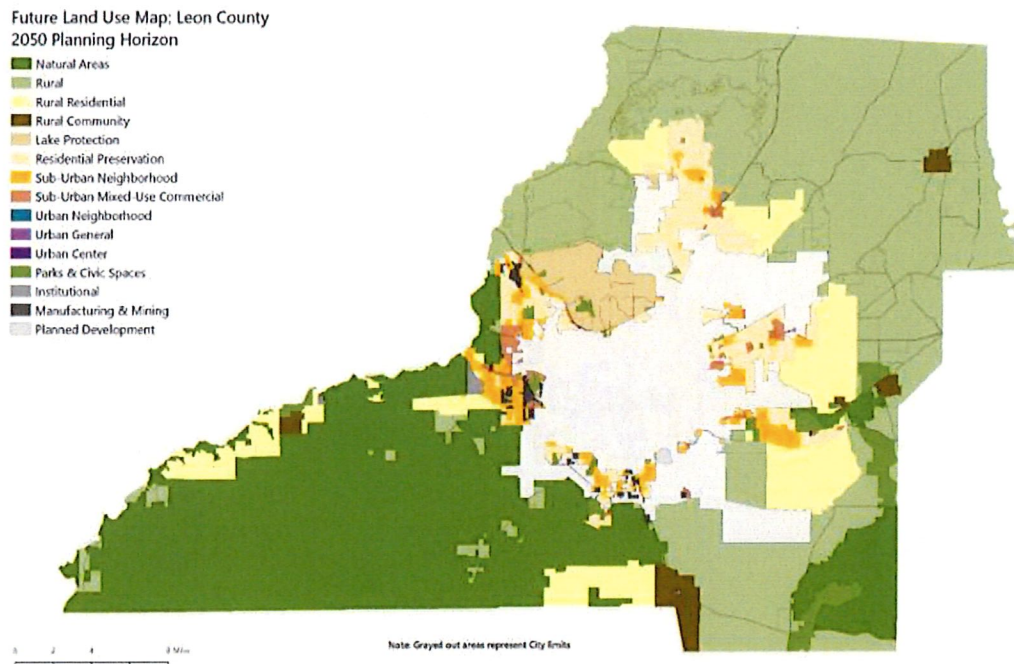
Policy 2.4.2 [LM]– Criteria for Urban Service Area Expansion (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) To avoid premature conversions of rural areas to higher density and intensity uses, expansions to the Urban Services Area shall be contiguous with the Urban Service Area boundary, shall demonstrate the availability of or ability to provide central water and sewer service, and shall be based on an analysis of population projections and growth trends and an analysis of developable vacant land currently within the Urban Services Area.

Objective 2.8 [LM]– Community Context (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) Identify natural, rural, sub-urban, and urban context areas based on distinguishing characteristics of the different locations across the community. The distinguishing characteristics used to identify the context areas will include existing development patterns, future development patterns based on land use and zoning, natural features, access to infrastructure, adjacent roadway classifications and proximity to employment centers, universities and schools, transit lines, trails and multi-modal facilities. The context areas shall be used as the basis for planning and design of land uses, transportation facilities, public facilities, and infrastructure in the City of Tallahassee and Leon County.

Policy 2.8.2 [LM]– Context Area Densities, Intensities and Mix of Uses (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) The Future Land Use Map and Zoning Atlas shall include uses, densities, and intensities consistent with concentrating development within the Urban Services Area. Land uses and zoning within the Urban Context Areas shall have

higher allowable densities and intensities than the Sub-Urban Context Areas, which shall have higher allowable densities and intensities than the Rural Context Areas. To ensure a mixture of uses in mixed-use land use categories, a minimum of 5% open space (which may include landscaping and stormwater facilities subject to land development regulations) is required and residential or non-residential land uses may develop from a range of 5% up to 95%. Public Schools are an allowable use in all future land use 16 Tallahassee-Leon County 2050 Comprehensive Plan (as of 2025 Amendment 25-01ESR and 25-02ESR, eff. 01/23/2026) I. Land Use and Mobility categories within the Urban Services Area with the exception of the Natural Areas land use. This provision is intended to provide sufficient lands proximate to residential areas to allow existing and future school siting considerations.

Map 4: Future Land Use Map: Leon County



Tallahassee-Leon County 2050 Comprehensive Plan (as of 2025 Amendment 25-01ESR and 25-02ESR, eff. 01/23/2026)

LAND USE AND MOBILITY

Future Land Use Categories (FLUCS)

Policy 2.8.4 [LM]– Rural Future Land Use Category (City of Tallahassee/Leon County): (EFF. 1/23/26) The intent of the Rural land use category is to maintain and promote agriculture, silviculture, and natural resource-based activities, to preserve natural systems and

ecosystem functions, and to protect the scenic vistas and pastoral development patterns that typify Leon County's rural areas. Typical land uses within this category shall include agriculture, silviculture, and natural resource-based activities. Due to the very low intensity development pattern that is intended for the category, urban services are not planned or programmed for the area. The Rural land use category shall allow single family residential uses at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 10 acres. Non-residential uses functionally related to and directly in support of agriculture, the growth and cultivation of trees, and other natural resource-based activities, including ecotourism activities, may be permitted at a maximum intensity of 2,000 square feet per acre. The location of such uses shall be limited to the intersection of major collector and arterial or the intersection of two arterial designated roadways with development standards provided in land development code regulations for these nodes, except for non-residential uses supporting ecotourism activities, which shall be allowed near the waterbodies and natural features that are the focus of the ecotourism activity. Community services, light infrastructure, and recreational uses may be permitted provided they are compatible with the natural and rural surroundings. Facilities associated with these uses may be permitted at a maximum intensity of 5,000 square feet per acre, with the primary structure not to exceed 7,500 square feet. Active recreational uses not functionally related to or supportive of agriculture, silviculture, or natural resource-based ecotourism activities are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, golf course, drag strips, and racetracks. To ensure that such uses are developed in a manner that is compatible with the rural nature of the area, additional design standards and limitations shall be included in the land development code. The following special conditions shall apply to the Rural Land Use category: 1. Development proposals within the Rural Land Use category shall be evaluated for compatibility with adjacent agricultural and silvicultural uses and shall consider the land management activities associated with such uses, including prescribed fires which result in smoke. Development that is incompatible with agricultural uses, or has the potential to fragment, encroach upon, or displace such uses, shall not be permitted. 2. Property within the Rural Land Use category shall not be converted to a more intense land use category unless the subject site adjoins the Urban Services Area or a designated Rural Community. 3. Non-residential development shall be subject to design standards that preserve the scenic and rural character of this category and protect existing rural residential development from offsite impacts of non-residential development. Design standards shall include, but not be limited to, signage, lighting, parking, landscape buffers, and building materials. 4. Existing uses and structures listed on the local or national historic register as of July 6, 2015, shall be considered conforming. 5. Because urban services are not planned or programmed for areas within the Rural land use category, the Rural land use category shall not be applied to properties within the Urban Services Area.