

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

Goal 4.1: Conserve, protect, and appropriately manage the natural resources within the City of Inverness so as to ensure the highest environmental quality possible.

Air Quality

Objective 4.1.1: Continue to meet or exceed state and federal National Ambient Air Quality Standards established by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in cooperation with the EPA.

Policy 4.1.1.1: Inverness shall notify the Florida Department of Environmental Protection of any complaints or violations concerning air quality.

Policy 4.1.1.2: Regulate industrial land uses to promote clean industry to ensure, with the County's collaboration, that the "Attainment" level declared by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation on Citrus County will be maintained.

Policy 4.1.1.3: The City shall reduce the pollution potential from automobile emissions by: a) landscaping public areas and right-of-ways; b) enforcing the City Tree Protection Ordinance; c) improving traffic flow with proper time signals; and d) providing a sidewalk and bikeway system in the City to facilitate nonmotorized, vehicular movement with the least amount of adverse effect on the environment.

Surface Water

Objective 4.1.2: Maintain and restore surface water quality consistent with state surface water classifications and respective surface water quality standards. The city shall conserve, appropriately use and protect the water quality and quantity of current and projected water sources and water flow into estuarine waters and oceanic waters. This effort shall also be done to benefit wildlife habitat provided by surface waters.

Policy 4.1.2.1: The City shall not issue permits to new development/construction on water bodies until clearance has been granted by involved state agencies such as SWFWMD, FDEP, and Army Corp of Engineers, if required.

Policy 4.1.2.2: Inverness shall continue to enforce a comprehensive stormwater management ordinance requiring:

- a. preservation of natural vegetation adjacent to surface water bodies to provide filtration of stormwater runoff; and,
- b. construction of on-site stormwater management systems for new developments to ensure that post-development run-off does not exceed pre-development conditions.

During construction, approved silt screens and other erosion control devices shall be placed between the project site and the water body to prevent erosion and pollution of the water body.

Policy 4.1.2.3: The City shall require development activities to adequately treat stormwater runoff through adherence to state and federal permitting requirements.

Policy 4.1.2.4: The City shall promote the Lake Management Plan to promote public awareness of the environmental constraints of the lakes system throughout the City.

Policy 4.1.2.5: The City shall protect the natural functions of the 100 year floodplain, so that flood-carrying and flood storage capacities are maintained through proper site development review.

Policy 4.1.2.6: The City shall continue to enforce its Flood Damage Prevention ordinance to minimize the following:

- a. loss of recharge area by methods depicted in the updating of the existing zoning and development codes;
- b. alteration of the natural floodplain; and,
- c. filling, grading, and dredging.

Policy 4.1.2.7: Methods of conservation and protection of the City's wetlands from physical and hydrologic alterations will be provided in the Land Development Code.

Policy 4.1.2.8: The City shall coordinate the issuance of building permits in areas of probable wetlands with Florida FDEP, SWFWMD, and the Army Corps of Engineers so as to: a) be assisted in the determination whether the homeowner plans construction in the wetlands; b) improved compliance with the states' dredge and fill permitting process; c) encourage those agencies to make future follow-up inspections; and d) be in compliance with the preservation areas depicted in the Future Land Use Map.

Policy 4.1.2.9: The City shall notify responsible state and federal agencies of any violations.

Policy 4.1.2.10: The City shall continue to enforce a minimum setback of 50 feet from water bodies for all new development. The setback requirement shall be measured from the mean high water line.

Policy 4.1.2.11: The City shall prohibit the discharge of inadequately treated stormwater into waters of the state.

Policy 4.1.2.12: The City shall protect surface waters and water quality by restricting activities and land uses known to adversely affect the quality and quantity of identified water sources; including natural groundwater recharge areas, wellhead protection areas and surface waters used as a source of public water supply.

Groundwater

Objective 4.1.3: Institute proper actions to ensure that the quality and the quantity of City groundwater resources are properly protected and conserved.

Policy 4.1.3.1: The City shall continue to implement the high recharge and future well/wellfield location plan in accordance with the future requirements of the regional water supply plan.

Policy 4.1.3.2: The City, in cooperation with FDEP and SWFWMD, shall continue to monitor groundwater quality and levels.

Policy 4.1.3.3: The City shall continue to coordinate with Citrus County to provide adequate sewer facilities in the lake areas in order to eliminate septic tank usage in this critical area.

Policy 4.1.3.4: The City shall cooperate with Citrus County to provide protection for all public water supply wells by restricting activities and land uses detrimental to those areas.

Policy 4.1.3.5: The City shall permit development only if it does not adversely impact the City's natural resources and is in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations.

Policy 4.1.3.6: The City shall require all new developments within statutory proximity to sewer lines to connect to City sewer services.

Policy 4.1.3.7: The City shall continue to regulate land use and development in flood hazard areas by requiring conformance with the provisions of the Inverness floodplain regulations as well as the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program.

Policy 4.1.3.8: The City shall require all new development activity within wellhead protection areas, as determined in the City's 1995 Wellhead Protection Areas Study, to have appropriate stormwater treatment facilities as permitted by SWFWMD.

Policy 4.1.3.9: The city shall protect groundwater and water quality by restricting activities and land uses known to adversely affect the quality and quantity of identified water sources; including natural groundwater recharge areas, wellhead protection areas and groundwater used as a source of public water supply.

Water Conservation

Objective 4.1.4: The City shall continue to implement procedures to promote conservation of potable water to reduce the per capita water usage.

Policy 4.1.4.1: The City shall continue to cooperate with the Southwest Florida Water Management District in the implementation of water conservation programs for both emergency and annual needs.

Policy 4.1.4.2: The city shall require future developments be permitted based on the availability of water resource capacity. These capacities shall be in accordance with the Regional Water Supply Plan.

Flora and Fauna

Objective 4.1.5: Conserve, use appropriately and protect minerals soils and native vegetation by minimizing impacts on existing relic hardwood communities and the habitat of endangered and threatened species.

Policy 4.1.5.1: The City shall maintain a comprehensive inventory of ecological communities which shall include species populations, habitat conditions, occurrences, and disturbances, and shall consider acquisition through conservation programs of the most vulnerable communities.

Policy 4.1.5.2: The City shall continue to enforce the Tree Preservation Ordinance and Landscape Buffer Ordinance. Both ordinances shall encourage the use of native plants as a means of enhancing habitat for wildlife.

Policy 4.1.5.3: The City shall assist in the application of and compliance with all state and federal regulations which pertain to endangered and rare species.

Policy 4.1.5.4: The City shall establish a program to make private landowners aware of good management techniques to protect endangered and rare species' most desirable habitats.

Policy 4.1.5.5: The City shall assist Florida conservation agencies in developing an education program to promote conservation and the preservation of endangered and rare species.

Policy 4.1.5.6: The City shall continue to require provisions in the Land Development Regulations which protect ecological communities. These provisions shall be based on:

- a. discouraging developments in sensitive areas of ecological communities in the City; and,
- b. requiring buffering between sensitive ecological sectors and other land uses.

Policy 4.1.5.7: The City shall support and assist the County and SWFWMD to protect the wetlands and cypress swamp communities along the eastern border of the City by controlling water levels and enforcement of respective floodplain ordinances.

Policy 4.1.5.8: The City shall review jointly with Citrus County all land development applications to conserve, appropriately use, or protect unique vegetative communities located adjacent to the city limits. The city shall conduct reviews to protect native vegetation communities from destruction by development activities.

Policy 4.1.5.9: The city shall encourage cooperation with adjacent local governments to conserve, appropriately use, or protect unique vegetative communities located within more than one local jurisdiction.

Natural Reservation

Objective 4.1.6: Minimize adverse effects of adjacent developments on managed conservation areas.

Policy 4.1.6.1: The City shall encourage its management program in cooperation with the Florida Wildlife Commission for the Lake Tsala Apopka Fish Management Area and the Withlacoochee State Forest Wildlife Management Area.

Policy 4.1.6.2: The City shall consult with the Florida Department of Agriculture, Florida Forest Service on the use of best management practices (BMP) for proposed developments and activities adjacent to the Withlacoochee State Forest and Whispering Pines Park, prior to issuance of development authorization.

Policy 4.1.6.3: The City shall consider entering into agreements with Citrus County or applicable state agencies to establish best management practices for the protection of environmentally sensitive lands.

Policy 4.1.6.4: The City shall coordinate with Citrus County or applicable state agencies to conserve, appropriately use, or protect unique vegetative communities located within more than one jurisdiction.

Policy 4.1.6.5: The City shall encourage conservation and encourage appropriate use and protection of areas suitable for extraction of minerals.

Policy 4.1.6.6: The City shall restrict activities known to adversely affect the survival of endangered and threatened wildlife.

Policy 4.1.6.7: The City shall encourage conservation and protection of natural functions of existing soils, fisheries, wildlife habitats, rivers, bays, lakes, floodplains, harbors, wetlands including estuarine marshes, freshwater beaches and shores and marine habitats.

Policy 4.1.6.8: The City shall encourage protection of existing natural reservations identified in the recreation and open space element.

Soil Erosion

Objective 4.1.7: Minimize the rate of soil erosion caused by land development.

Policy 4.1.7.1: The City shall consider topography, hydrological conditions, and vegetative cover during the site plan review process of proposed development.

Policy 4.1.7.2: The City shall continue to enforce the Tree Preservation Ordinance and Landscape Buffer Ordinance to assist in the control of soil erosion.

Hazardous Waste

Objective 4.1.8: Require proper, management and disposal of all produced or used hazardous waste material.

Policy 4.1.8.1: The City shall remain informed on the latest hazardous waste information and policies pertaining to the local region and encourage public awareness on current issues. The City shall continue to provide employee training in order to properly inspect and identify wastes before wastes are conveyed to the landfill.

Policy 4.1.8.2: The City shall participate in the statewide study of radon pollution and shall adopt the necessary protection ordinance as delineated by the statewide study.

Policy 4.1.8.3: The City, jointly with Citrus County, shall implement an environmental review process to ensure proper management and disposal of hazardous materials.

Policy 4.1.8.4: The city shall manage hazardous wastes to protect natural resources.

Wetlands

Objective 4.1.9: Use the local planning process to protect identified wetlands on Map 7-1 from physical and hydrologic alteration. Conserve, appropriately use and protect fisheries, wildlife, wildlife habitat and marine habitat as identified by the maps.

Policy 4.1.9.1: The classification of wetlands, in the City of Inverness shall be as follows:

- a. Category I wetlands shall include wetlands having hydrological connection to natural surface water bodies, any wetland within a lake littoral zone, any isolated wetland 40 acres or larger, or wetlands containing Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas as identified by FWC;
- b. Category II wetlands shall include formerly isolated wetlands which have been connected to other surface water drainage and are greater than or equal to five acres, or are less than 40 acres and do not qualify as Category I;
- c. Category III wetlands shall include isolated wetlands less than five acres that do not qualify as Category I or II wetlands.

Policy 4.1.9.2: The City shall coordinate with the Army Corp of Engineers, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District to identify and regulate wetland areas under the respective agency's jurisdiction.

Policy 4.1.9.3: The City shall require identification of Category I, II, and III wetlands prior to staff review of Future Land Use Map amendment or development site plan proposals.

Policy 4.1.9.4: The City shall require a minimum 50 foot buffer between Category I and II wetlands and new development in order to protect water quality, preserve natural wetland functions, and preserve wildlife habitat. The buffer, as measured landward from the approved jurisdictional line, shall be maintained in a natural vegetative state and be free of exotic and nuisance species as defined by the Florida Pest Council.

Policy 4.1.9.5 : The City shall not permit development in a Category I or II wetlands or wetland buffers except as follows:

- a. clearing and/or construction of walking trails;
- b. construction of timber boardwalks/catwalks for direct access to water bodies; construction of wildlife management shelters, footbridges, observation decks and similar structures not requiring a dredging and/or filling for their replacement.

- c. Clearing and/or construction of electric utility infrastructure as needed to provide public service (excluding roadways) that does not impair the long term viability of the wetland system;

Dredging and filling is permissible within Category I and Category II wetlands as necessary for these activities if:

- d. no other reasonable alternative exists and avoidance cannot be achieved;
- e. such activity is consistent with other policies of the Comprehensive Plan;
- f. such activity complies with the requirements of all federal, state, and regional agencies claiming jurisdiction over wetland alteration;
- g. appropriate justification for alterations is provided to the City;
- h. adequate mitigation of any adverse hydrological and physical alterations is provided. The basis for mitigation shall be categorized by type of wetland area. Mitigation shall be required to replace the habitat and functions performed by the wetland areas destroyed. Reasonable assurance shall be provided for type for type mitigation at the ratios set forth by agency regulations:
- i. no more than one percent of any Category I wetland is impacted (may be increased in cases of overriding public benefit); and,
- j. no more than 15 percent of any Category II wetland is impacted (may be increased in cases of overriding public benefit).

Overriding public benefit are those actions required by local, state, or federal government necessary for the promotion of public safety, health, or general welfare such as storm water management activities, or the provision of water and waste water facilities, but not including roadways.

Policy 4.1.9.6: Removal, encroachment, or alteration for Class III wetlands may be allowed with the extent of such activities being determined on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with applicable regulatory agencies and in the interest of public benefit.

Policy 4.1.9.7: When encroachment, alteration, or removal of Class III wetlands is permitted, habitat compensation or mitigation as a condition of development approval shall be required. The basis for mitigation shall be categorized by type of wetland area. Mitigation shall be required to replace the habitat and functions performed by the wetland areas destroyed. Reasonable assurance shall be provided for type-for-type mitigation at the ratios set by agency regulations.

Policy 4.1.9.8: Only Suburban Low Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Open Space and Recreation, or Conservation Future Land Use Map shall be designated adjacent to Category I Wetlands.

Where more intense land use designations have already been show adjacent to Category I and II wetlands on the Future Land Use Map and have been relied upon for development or zoning decisions, the designation may remain. However, any development parcel containing wetlands must demonstrate

that no significant adverse impact to the wetland will result from activities to be conducted on the site, and that adequate mitigation/compensation will be provided to protect wetland function and ensure type for type replacement.

It shall be noted, however, that mitigation shall be the final option when no reasonable alternative exists and avoidance and minimization of impact cannot be achieved.

Onsite one for one transfer of development (density or intensity of use) out of and away from wetlands and wetland buffers to uplands shall be required in all land uses other than Suburban Low Density Residential, Low Density Residential, Open Space and Recreation, or Conservation.

Category I and II wetlands encompassed by Future Land Use Map Amendments shall be designated as Preservation/Wetlands on the FLUM.

Policy 4.1.9.9: The City shall require all wetland encroachments to be mitigated according to all applicable state and federal permit requirements and mitigation compliance to be monitored by FDEP, SWFWMD, and ACOE or other regulatory authority.

Policy 4.1.9.10: In combination with other goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, the City shall protect and conserve wetlands by redirecting incompatible uses away from wetlands.

Policy 4.1.9.11: The City shall designate environmentally sensitive land to include wetlands, sinkholes, hydric soil types and flood-prone areas for protection measures based on jurisdictional wetlands determinations and /or such protection designations adopted by an appropriate jurisdictional authority to further the goals and objectives of the conservation element.