



Tallahassee is a tale of two cities: one reasonably prosperous and one consistently impoverished. It is through this historical lens, along with statutory consistency requirements, that ATN has evaluated certain proposed amendments to the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan.

First, ATN implores you to postpone consideration of the Welaunee Arch amendments scheduled to be heard on May 26th. Only a meeting that welcomes all— in a safe environment— will suffice. ATN strongly believes that citizen participation in city and county development processes is vital to a successful future. ATN advocates for early and on-going resident, elected official, and staff engagement through open and transparent governmental processes, with relevant data presented to representative audiences through culturally, educationally, and technologically-appropriate means.

Second, we oppose the Welaunee Arch amendments at this time. Instead, ATN favors expediting the rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan to provide the necessary data, analysis, and comprehensive policy options for addressing community-responsive future development.

As detailed in the attached ATN Position Paper, the Welaunee amendments represent a huge step in the wrong direction. Their high public infrastructure costs, automobile-dependency, and costly housing continue the status quo clustering of moderate and high income residents in the northeast. Using the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department's own projections, there is sufficient land available in the existing Urban Services Area to accommodate population growth at a broad range of housing costs over the Comprehensive Plan's time horizon. As ATN's analysis demonstrates, at the same time the City and County Commissions are considering opening up over 4,770 acres in the northeast, there are neighborhoods inside the Urban Services Area without adequate public transit, affordable housing, sidewalks, and central water and/or sewer. Public infrastructure and private development drive improvements in jobs, schools, food availability, neighborhoods, public health, and individual well-being. In other words, exactly the type of smart growth we need in underserved sections of Tallahassee.

As one studies our community history, it is apparent that there is more work to be done and is time to act on the inequities and injustices that fostered our economic segregation. These actions must be championed by the conscience-bearers of our community. ATN takes it as our responsibility and looks to our elected officials and the public at large to stand up and be these conscience-bearers.

A good first action step would be to postpone action on the Welaunee Comprehensive Plan amendments until the public can physically attend the meeting. A virtual meeting lacks the public participation and governmental transparency that should be integral to a meeting of this consequence. While there is some consideration of including virtual public comment, this would pose discriminatory barriers to those

without access to technology and reliable internet connections. Again, only a meeting that welcomes all— in a safe environment— will suffice. If the City and County choose to ignore the importance of public participation, we ask that you oppose the Welaunee Arch amendments at this time and expedite the rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan to provide the necessary data, analysis, and comprehensive policy options for addressing community-responsive future development.

Thank you for your consideration and ATN looks forward to discussing the above and attached Position Paper with you.

Thank you,
Carrie Litherland
850.591.0007
Chair
Alliance of Tallahassee Neighborhoods