



October 9, 2020

**ATN RESPONSE TO STAFF WELAUNEE MASTER PLAN CHANGES:**

**POLICY DIRECTION NEEDED**

The development of the 4,800 acre Welaunee property will affect the entire community – including intown neighborhoods– fiscally, socio-economically, and environmentally. For this reason, the Alliance of Tallahassee Neighborhoods (ATN) expressed concerns about the original proposed Welaunee master plan.

Unfortunately, following numerous actions to gather public input, many of the concerns and ideas suggested by ATN and the public have not been incorporated into the revised master plan. The most general inadequacy of the master plan is that too many development decisions are postponed until individual PUDs are being developed. This approach is not the vision expressed by citizens. A clear example of the necessary holistic planning is Keep It Rural’s proposed park system.

As city and county commissioners, you need to set a clear policy direction for staff for a comprehensive Welaunee Arch master plan that specifically addresses the issues presented below.

**Issue: Welaunee should be predominantly self-supporting, rather than predominantly dependent on public funding for additional infrastructure.**

**Why this matters:** BluePrint sales tax will build the roads making this private development possible. BluePrint will spend \$47 million on Welaunee roads by 2025 and about \$40 million of public money on an interstate interchange. Once public infrastructure (roads, sewer, stormwater ponds, etc.) is put in place, it becomes the City’s obligation to maintain it. The price of poorly designed projects and projects that don’t consider long-term maintenance costs significantly increases the tax burden for everyone.

**What needs to change in the proposed master plan?**

1. Require, prior to any development, a City-approved community facilities/infrastructure plan for the Arch that addresses, at a minimum, projected long term maintenance costs and standards for the construction of low-maintenance infrastructure.
2. Provide an Arch-wide stormwater facilities plan that protects water quality, is integrated throughout the Arch, and prevents off-site flooding.
3. Require the dedication of land for community facilities to support the new population, including but not limited to stormwater, roads, schools, parks, libraries, and public safety facilities.

**Issue: Welaunee should provide housing for diverse socio-economic groups.**

**Why this matters:** Economic segregation has existed for decades in the community. Socio-economic conditions in the Southern Strategy area have not improved relative to the rest of the County. An economically integrated community in Welaunee will provide lower income residents with high quality schools, parks, and other facilities.

**What needs to change in the proposed master plan?**

1. Require that Welaunee provide housing for very low, low, and moderate-income households. A minimum of 25 percent of residential units should be one of these categories.
2. Require these units to be integrated throughout all residential areas.

**Issue: Respect the character of Tallahassee by retaining mature, healthy forest and topography.**

**Why this matters:** Clear cutting is permitted by City ordinance. The tree ordinance does not protect any tree from removal, it merely requires mitigation. The flattening of significant slopes is destroying the character of Tallahassee as a city of rolling hills. Development needs to maintain the character of Tallahassee.

**What needs to change in the proposed master plan?**

1. Require that 30%-40% of land area designated for open space be mapped and contain management standards.
2. Create a Habitat Park and establish wider buffers for greenways and canopy roads.
3. Incorporate the Keep It Rural (KIR)-proposed park system.
4. Include policies and land development standards that direct how site plans and subdivisions will incorporate existing topographic features into their designs.

Sincerely,

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