

Chapter 1
LAND USE ELEMENT

GOAL 1:	To manage land development in such a way that the health, safety, social, and economic well-being of the citizens of Gulf County is ensured.
OBJECTIVE 1.1:	The County will enforce Land Development Regulations in the form of a unified development code that requires land development to be compatible with topography, natural resources, soil conditions, and the availability of facilities and services.
POLICY 1.1.1:	The concurrent availability of facilities and services necessary to serve proposed developments at the adopted level of service standards will be confirmed prior to the issuance of development orders and permits in accordance with the Capital Improvements Element and Land Development Regulations and Subdivision Ordinance.
POLICY 1.1.2:	Soil and slope information from the USDA Soil Conservation Service shall be investigated for compatibility of proposed land use with existing soils and slopes before a construction permit is granted by the County.
POLICY 1.1.3:	The Gulf County Building Permit Office shall coordinate with area utility providers to ensure the availability of utility service concurrent with the impact of the proposed land use.
POLICY 1.1.4:	Gulf County shall require that the owner of any development project shall be responsible for the provision of adequate drainage and stormwater controls in compliance with all Federal Agencies and Florida Department of Environmental Protection governing the minimum standard for drainage and all stormwater management regulations.
POLICY 1.1.5:	During review of proposed site development plans, Gulf County shall require that continued maintenance of stormwater and drainage facilities be included as part of the proposed land development plan.

POLICY 1.1.6:	During review of proposed site development plans, Gulf County shall require that all development projects provide for safe and convenient on-site traffic flow and adequate off-street parking.
POLICY 1.1.7:	The Emergency Management Director will make recommendations as necessary to the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners to ensure consistency between the Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
POLICY 1.1.8:	Utilities needed to provide essential service to existing land use, to such future land uses as are authorized by other plan elements of Gulf County's Comprehensive Plan or to such future land uses as may be lawfully authorized by Gulf County shall be permitted in all of the land use classifications.
POLICY 1.1.9:	<p>To promote the protection of wetlands and surface water resources in all coastal, inland riverine and isolated wetlands, the following principles will apply. The County shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) encourage infill development; b) require the use of Best Management Practices for agriculture and sivalculture; c) require the use of vegetated buffer zones adjacent to wetlands and surface waters consistent with the following standards herein and as prescribed in Future Land Use Element 1.1.10 and 2.5. <p>All new development shall be clustered on the portion of the site not located in wetlands and shall maintain a buffer from wetlands and surface waters as prescribed herein and as prescribed in Future Land Use Element Policies 1.1.10 and 2.5.</p> <p>Where a transfer of density from the wetland areas to the upland portion of the parcel occurs, consistent with Policy 1.1.10, such transfer shall be at a one to one ratio, except as required in Future Land Use Element Policy 1.3.10.</p> <p>Existing Parcels and/or Lots of Record: It is recognized that there were existing Parcels of land and/or lots of records which existed prior to adoption of this Plan, which do not fit the proposed minimum lot size in certain land use areas. It is the intent of this plan that such Parcels of land and lots of record be recognized and building permits may be issued if all</p>

<p>POLICY 1.1.9: Continued</p>	<p>other regulations of this Plan are satisfied.</p> <p>Lots of record are defined as: Any land parcel within the County for which a single, individual legal description exists in the County records dated prior to the date of adoption of this Plan. Subdivision lots may be recorded or unrecorded platted or unplatted.</p> <p>Existing Parcels and/or Lots of Record: Where alteration of wetlands is necessary in order to allow use of property, mitigation measures will be consistent with best management techniques and with state, regional and federal laws pertaining to wetland alternations.</p> <p>Subsequent to plan adoption, the County shall not allow lots or parcels to be created without sufficient uplands.</p> <p>The wetlands to be protected shall be the wetland delineation established under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environmental Protection, Northwest Florida Water Management District, and/or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.</p>
<p>POLICY 1.1.10:</p>	<p>To promote the protection of wetlands and other surface water resources, specifically including the St. Joseph Bay Aquatic Preserve, the County shall require the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development within 50 feet of coastal waters and coastal wetlands (including saltmarsh areas) shall be prohibited. Structures will be restricted to minor accessory structures such as elevated walkways, etc. 2. Minimum septic tank setbacks from the mean high water line and wetland shall be those specified in Conservation Policy 1.3.8 3. Land development regulations shall contain innovated land development opportunities to cluster high density development in areas that have the least impact on wetlands, such as upland areas and existing developed areas (determinations shall be made on a site specific basis). 4. Residential land uses adjacent to wetland shall be of low density. 5. Minimum buffering requirements for land uses with potential for hazardous waste contamination shall be established in the County's land development regulations.

OBJECTIVE 1.2:	Gulf County shall promote the redevelopment and renewal of blighted areas within the County by continuing to seek funding for infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitation, and related programs.
POLICY 1.2.1:	Gulf County shall maintain an active code enforcement program to ensure the maintenance of existing structures.
POLICY 1.2.2:	Gulf County shall continue to promote the use of State and Federal programs to renew blighted areas.
OBJECTIVE 1.3:	Gulf County will reduce the extent of land uses that are incompatible with the Comprehensive Plan by implementing Land Development Regulations consistent with the following policies.
POLICY 1.3.1:	The Gulf County Land Development Regulations shall prohibit non-conforming land uses.
POLICY 1.3.2:	Development permits may be issued by the County only for those developments that are consistent with the density requirements of this Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Regulations.
POLICY 1.3.3:	Development permits for the construction of signs shall be issued by the County only for those signs in conformance with the Land Development Regulations and Gulf County Sign Ordinance.
POLICY 1.3.4:	The land use categories identified and depicted on the FLUM shall be implemented by land development regulations which are consistent with the densities and intensities established in this Plan.

<p>POLICY 1.3.5:</p>	<p>The following residential densities are adopted as part of the County’s Comprehensive Plan.</p> <p>Residential and Mixed Commercial/Residential Land Use Category (residential component). Lot coverage is equal to the total square feet of allowed impervious area.</p> <p>Low Density – 0-4 units per acre Medium Density – 5-7 units per acre High Density – 8-20 units per acre</p> <p>For non-residential uses located within the Mixed Commercial/Residential land use category, Low Density development is limited to .30 lot coverage area and three habitable floors and FAR of .7, and Medium/High Density development is limited to .50 lot coverage and three habitable floors with a FAR 1.0</p> <p>Agricultural</p> <p>Low Density – 1 unit per 40 acres (more than 1 mile from residential, industrial and/or mixed use areas and contains environmental sensitive resources)</p> <p>Medium Density – 1 unit per 15 acres (more than 1 mile from residential, industrial and/or mixed use areas)</p> <p>High Density – 1 unit per 2.5 acres (within 1 mile of established residential and/or mixed use areas)</p> <p>Development is limited to three habitable floors.</p>
<p>POLICY 1.3.6:</p>	<p>The following parameters will guide the location of agricultural densities in Gulf County:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) High density residential development will be permitted within one mile of any residential, mixed, or industrial land use category as identified on the Future Land Use Map. (2) Medium density will be allowed in any area except those areas set aside for low density development. (3) Land development regulations will require a jurisdictional determination meeting FDEP and USACOE requirements prior to development approvals in areas identified as wetlands on the

	<p>National Wetland Inventory Map. Where FDEP and USACOE jurisdiction is determined, development will be limited to low density.</p>
<p>POLICY 1.3.7:</p>	<p>The following land use intensity parameters will guide non-residential development in Gulf County:</p> <p>Mixed Commercial/Residential (commercial component)</p> <p>The intent of this category is to provide a range of general commercial, high intensity commercial, and professional service and office uses. General commercial and professional service and office uses can occur anywhere within these categories. High intensity commercial development, characterized by higher vehicle trip generations, outdoor storage, or increased nuisance potential, will be limited to those areas further than 500 feet from residential development as identified on a site specific basis.</p> <p>General and High Intensity Commercial development will be limited to .70 lot coverage and three (3) habitable floors, with a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0.</p> <p>Non-residential development will be limited to 25% of the total area within Mixed Commercial/Residential Land and Residential use may not exceed 95% of the total area.</p> <p>Industrial:</p> <p>This category is intended to provide for medium intensity industrial development such as manufacturing and processing of goods. Industrial facilities will be limited to .70 lot coverage and three (3) habitable floors.</p> <p>Recreational:</p> <p>Shoreline portions of recreation areas will be reserved for water-dependent recreational uses. Environmentally sensitive (conservation) areas and areas intended for open space will be reserved for passive or low intensity recreational development and impervious surfaces will be limited to facilities supporting or enhancing the designated activity and will not exceed .1 lot coverage per acre and .10 FAR. Moderate to high intensity recreational development will be allowed in all other recreational areas and will be limited to facilities supporting the designated activity with a .20 lot coverage and .20 FAR.</p>

<p>POLICY 1.3.7: Continued</p>	<p>Conservation:</p> <p>The conservation land use category is intended to accommodate low intensity development that is compatible with natural resources such as recreational facilities and low intensity public uses and will be limited to .1 lot coverage.</p> <p>Public:</p> <p>This category is intended to accommodate low to medium intensity public facilities such as public service, schools and utilities. Public facilities are limited to .60 lot coverage and three (3) habitable floors.</p> <p>Agricultural:</p> <p>The intent of this category is to provide a rural environment for agricultural, silvicultural and mining uses and other uses that are compatible with agricultural activities and the overall rural character of the area. The permitted uses are residential, at the densities specified in Policy 1.3.5, preservation, outdoor recreational, and public service/utility. Industrial uses which are ancillary to agriculture, silvicultural or mining operations, or which would be incompatible with urban residential uses are allowed. Intensity standards for the permitted residential use will be the same as stated in Policies 1.3.5 & 1.3.6.</p>
<p>POLICY 1.3.8:</p>	<p>Conventional septic tank systems shall be prohibited within 150 feet from coastal waters and wetlands (including saltmarsh areas) within the Bayside area depicted on the Future Land Use Map, and shall be prohibited within 75 feet of coastal waters and wetlands (including saltmarsh areas) within the Gulfside area depicted on the revised Future Land Use Map.</p> <p>Lots or parcels of record which existed prior to January 14, 1992, which cannot be developed without placement of the septic tank within the 150 setback , may be exempted from the 150 foot setback requirement, but the septic tank shall be placed as far landward as possible.</p> <p>In addition FAR and lot coverage requirements of this Plan, Gulf County will enforce the land development regulations which include the use of vegetative buffer zones between incompatible land uses. These requirements are included in Appendix V-1 Section 5.2, in the Gulf County Land Development Regulations.</p>

POLICY 1.3.9:	Gulf County shall continue to regulate subdivision development in accordance with the adopted subdivision ordinance.
POLICY 1.3.10:	<p>Gulf County will enforce the following density requirements per the Stipulated Settlement Agreement adopted February 26, 1992</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A maximum density of 2 dwelling units per acre will be allowed within the Bayside coastal area depicted on the revised Future Land Use Map. 2. A maximum density of 3 dwelling units per acre will be allowed within the Gulfside coastal area depicted on the revised Future Land Use Map. 3. A maximum density of 2 dwelling units per acre will be allowed within the Indian Lagoon coastal area depicted on the revised Future Land Use Map 4. Where a transfer of density from wetlands to upland portions of a site occurs within the Bayside, Gulfside, or Indian Lagoon coastal areas as depicted on the revised Future Land Use Map, such transfer shall be at a density of 1 unit per five acres of wetlands.
POLICY 1.3.11:	Lots and parcels of record which existed prior to January 14, 1992, which are non-conforming with respect to the Bayside, Gulfside, or Indian Lagoon coastal densities, can be developed for one single family residential dwelling unit.
POLICY 1.3.12:	<p>To help lessen a critical health care shortage by expediting permitting, a hospital that provides 24/7 emergency care may be allowed in Agricultural land use till 2008 provided the following is met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project must be within a water and sewer service area, 2. Must be within one mile of a municipal boundary or established residential or mixed commercial/residential land use, 3. Must be on a collector or arterial right of way, 4. Exempt from the current 10,000 square foot LDR building size, 5. Must meet all other Gulf County development requirements.
POLICY 1.3.13	A portion of Section 26, Township 5 South, Range 11 West, Gulf County, Florida was designated a Special Planned Development Project (SPDP) as part of the 2007 Stipulated Settlement Agreement that consists of 145 acres located on Wetappo Creek. It is identified as SPDP #1 on

	<p>the FLUM and is subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development on the site shall be limited to 72 dwelling units b) All development shall be clustered on the upland portion of the site A conservation easement will be granted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for all wetlands on the site not identified as Conservation on the Future Land Use Map. c) In the absence of central sewer services, only performance-based septic systems that can produce a treatment standard of 10 milligrams per liter of nitrogen shall be installed.
<p>POLICY 1.3.14</p>	<p>A portion of Section 15, Township 7 South, Range 10 West, Gulf County, Florida, was designated a Special Planned Development Project (SPDP) as part of the 2007 Stipulated Settlement Agreement that consists of 43.33 acres on Hwy 71 between White City and Port St. Joe. It is identified as SPDP #2 on the FLUM and is subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development on the site shall be limited to 72 dwelling units b) In the absence of central sewer services, only performance-based septic systems that can produce a treatment standard of 10 milligrams per liter of nitrogen shall be installed.
<p>OBJECTIVE 1.4:</p>	<p>Gulf County shall protect and restore natural and historic resources by implementing Policies 1.4.1 through 1.4.10 and continuing to enforce existing regulations</p>
<p>POLICY 1.4.1:</p>	<p>Gulf County will enforce land development regulations which will address the protection of potable water well fields consistent with the following standards:</p> <p>The County shall protect waterwells and waterwell cones of influence by creating well head protection areas and well head zones of exclusion. Zones of exclusion shall consist of all land within a two hundred (200) foot radius of the wellhead wherein no development shall be permitted. Well head protection areas shall extend for a radius of three hundred (300) feet from the well head. Within these areas, the following will be prohibited: 1) landfills; 2) facilities for the bulk storage, handling, or processing of material on the Florida Substance List; 3) Activities that require the storage, use production, or transportation of restricted substances, agricultural chemicals, petroleum products, hazardous toxic waste, medical waste, and like; 4) feedlots or other commercial animal facilities; 5) wastewater treatment plants, percolation ponds, and similar facilities; 6) excavation of waterways or drainage facilities which intersect the water table. All development adjacent to well heads shall be consistent with provisions of Chapter 48-3.504, F.A.C., regarding the regulation of wells.</p>

POLICY 1.4.2:	Gulf County will continue to coordinate with the Northwest Florida Water Management District to implement a site specific, comprehensive protection program for aquifer recharge areas, including wetlands protection, stormwater management and open space and buffering requirements.
POLICY 1.4.3:	Gulf County will require the review of development proposals by the appropriate environmental protection agencies.
POLICY 1.4.4:	Gulf County will regulate development in areas subject to seasonal and periodic flooding and provide for drainage and stormwater management through the implementation of the Conservation and Land Use Policies in this Plan.
POLICY 1.4.5:	Gulf County's Land Development Regulations shall provide for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas as identified in Policy 1.4.6 consistent with the protection standards in Future Land Use Policies 1.1.9, 1.1.10, and 1.4.1, and Coastal Management Policies 1.1.1-1.1.11,.
POLICY 1.4.6:	Gulf County shall use the best available data for natural resources, including but not limited to sources from the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and site specific surveys to identify potential habitat for endangered and threatened species and species of special concern. All wetlands and uplands identified as having potential habitat for endangered species, threatened species or species of special concern shall be considered environmentally sensitive areas.
POLICY 1.4.7:	All development applications and comprehensive plan amendments containing environmentally sensitive areas shall include as data and analysis documentation that the applicant is working with the respective jurisdictional agency to develop a habitat management plan and meet permit requirements. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be assigned a Preservation or Conservation designation as part of the development order or comprehensive plan amendment. Prior to the County issuing any development order, the applicant shall submit documentation from the respective jurisdictional agency(s) that identifies the development permit requirements, including any management plan.

POLICY 1.4.8:	Gulf County shall provide for open space areas within the County. These shall include rights-of-way along traffic corridors, undeveloped flood-prone areas, and non-use areas in public parks.
POLICY 1.4.9:	The County shall preserve vegetated non-use areas within public parks as open space.
POLICY 1.4.10:	Gulf County will continue to cooperate with the Florida Division of Historical Resources, in the identification of historic and archaeological resources in the County.
POLICY 1.4.10:	Gulf County shall continue to implement through the Land Development Regulations standards and guidelines for the preservation or adaptive reuse of historic resources, consistent with Housing Policies 1.6.1 and 1.6.2. During the development review process, if any historically significant housing, or historic resources are identified, the County shall forward the development plan with the identified historically significant resource to the Department of State and request the Department to assist the County to develop a resource management protection plan, to be included in the development approval.
OBJECTIVE 1.5:	Gulf County will utilize existing infrastructure to their maximum extent to minimize urban sprawl.
POLICY 1.5.1:	In order to discourage urban sprawl, the County will encourage development to occur in areas with existing infrastructure and capacity through appropriate land use designations on the future land use map.
OBJECTIVE 1.6:	Gulf County will ensure the availability of suitable land for utility facilities necessary to support proposed development through implementation of Policies 1.6.1 through 1.6.2.
POLICY 1.6.1:	During proposed site development review, require project development plans to specify the location of all required utility facilities.

POLICY 1.6.2:	Gulf County shall continue to pursue resources to purchase land required for County utility needs as identified in the Infrastructure Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
OBJECTIVE 1.7:	Gulf County’s Land Development Regulations shall continue to allow for use of innovative land development techniques, such as planned unit developments and mixed land use categories.
POLICY 1.7.1:	Gulf County will continue to provide for planned development projects and mixed use developments which are consistent with the Gulf County Comprehensive Plan.
POLICY 1.7.2:	The Planning Board shall review changes in land use practice on a continuing basis.
POLICY 1.7.3:	Gulf County shall promote the furtherance of proposed spaceport activities on Cape San Blas by allowing related land use activities to occur.
POLICY 1.7.4:	<p>The geographic area described by the WindMark Beach DRI Development Order and identified in Gulf County Ordinance No. 04-06, shall be subject to not only the provisions described in Future Land Use Element Policies 1.3.5 and 1.3.7, but also the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Residential land uses shall be limited to a maximum of 1,745 dwelling units, retail uses shall be limited to a maximum of 89,000 square feet, office uses shall be limited to a maximum of 22,000 square feet and motel/hotel uses shall be limited to a maximum of 50 rooms. The development amount will be in accordance with the equivalency matrix as described in the WindMark Beach Development Order. <li>2. Development located within the Coastal High Hazard Area, as defined in Policy 2.1.1 of the Coastal Management Element as the evacuation zone for a Category 1 hurricane and further established in the Update to the Apalachee Regional Hurricane Evacuation Study Technical report (2004) shall be limited to 190 residential dwelling units.

<p>POLICY 1.7.4: Continued</p>	<p>3. Development located within the 140-acre “Recreation” land use category shall be limited to recreation uses for the general public and WindMark Beach, including a maximum of 6 boat docks for temporary mooring, dune walkover structures and boardwalks.</p> <p>4. In order to better integrate commercial and residential uses, high intensity commercial uses may be located within a distance greater than 75 feet of residential development as identified on a site specific basis.</p> <p>5. Through the distribution of development, Gulf County will conserve and protect wetlands within the WindMark Beach DRI. Wetland impacts will be avoided whenever practicable, and where unavoidable, impacts will be minimized. Wetlands along the shore and wetlands associated with on-site streams will receive the highest protection.</p> <p>Buffers will be utilized to protect wetlands and on-site streams. Wetland buffers will be naturally vegetated uplands which will be located an average of 50 feet from the jurisdictional line with no development occurring within 25 feet of wetlands, except for minimal encroachment associated with the spine road west of realigned US 98.</p> <p>A buffer of a minimum width of 50 feet from the jurisdictional line shall be maintained along the three on-site streams. Minor encroachments in buffers will be allowed for roads, utilities, golf course flyways, boardwalks and other recreational crossings, but the number of such encroachments will be minimized by collocation of such facilities where feasible.</p>
<p><u>OBJECTIVE 1.8</u></p>	<p><u>Gulf County recognizes the importance of the water supply resources identified in the Region V Regional Water Supply Plan and the Chapter 4: Goal 2 “Ten Year Water Supply Work Plan” and will work towards meeting the identified goals.</u></p>
<p><u>POLICY 1.8.1</u></p>	<p><u>All land uses supporting development within the Region V Area of Special Concern will be required to use an existing water supplier unless the NFWFMD determines connecting to an existing service is not feasible and will issue well permits and/or consumption permits.</u></p>

<u>POLICY 1.8.2</u>	<u>All developments required to connect to an existing water supplier will have to present documentation from the respective water supplier that the water service provider has the capacity to serve the proposed development as referenced in Ch. 4: 2.1.9.</u>
<u>POLICY 1.8.3</u>	<u>All required infrastructure must be completed and online before a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) can be issued for any structure.</u>
OBJECTIVE 1.9:	Gulf County will work with developers, the school board and others to insure that school siting will meet land use requirements as defined in the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations (LDR).
POLICY 1.9.1:	Gulf County will work with the education board to insure that all education facilities are compatible with land use categories consistent with Policy 1.3.7.
POLICY 1.9.2:	Gulf County will through the planning and permitting process keep development and school siting compatible in the unincorporated areas of the county.
POLICY 1.9.3:	Gulf County will through the planning and permitting process work with the cities, the school board and developers to direct recreation facilities, parks, libraries, museums and related institution development so that facilities are maximized and a collocation of services is achieved.
POLICY 1.9.4:	Gulf County will not permit school siting in flood zone or velocity hazard areas to meet hazard mitigation and shelter management criteria.
POLICY 1.9.5:	Gulf County will allow school siting in the following categories: Public Residential Mixed Commercial/Residential Agricultural – only as it pertains to Policy 1.9.6.

POLICY 1.9.6:	Gulf County will allow school sitting in agricultural land use category only if it is within areas with the infrastructure in place to support development and urban sprawl policies will not be applicable. The infrastructure is defined as having water, sewer, utilities and roads with LOS to support development. To avoid school location as a factor that encourages urban households to move to rural areas, the intent of this plan is to keep schools as close to urban residential areas as practical. The goal is to keep future schools within walking and/or bicycle distance of the primary residential areas to be served.
POLICY 1.9.7:	Gulf County will work with the school board to insure that school sitting will not adversely impact adjacent property and establish buffer zones as necessary.
POLICY 1.9.8:	Gulf County will work with school boards to insure that impacts on wetlands and other environmental concerns such as drainage are minimized.
POLICY 1.9.9:	Gulf County will encourage that school sitting is located where the infrastructure is in place to support school sitting.
GOAL 2:	Ensure that the character and location of land uses in Gulf County minimize the threat to the natural environment or public health, safety, and welfare, and maximize the protection of the Bayside, Gulfside, Indian Lagoon and inland areas as depicted on the Future Land Use Map, while respecting individual property rights.
OBJECTIVE 2.1:	Future development activities shall be reviewed to assure that soil conditions, topography, drainage, and natural conditions are suitable for development and the Bayside, Gulfside, Indian Lagoon and inland areas are protected from harmful impacts.
POLICY 2.1:	The Comprehensive Plan map series will be reviewed to insure that the proposed uses, in the various categories, do not conflict with the prevailing natural conditions including Policies 2.2 through 2.5.

POLICY 2.2:	SOIL CONDITIONS – The County will use the USDA Conservation Service Soil Map for Gulf County to ensure that developers have accounted for the various soil conditions that exist in the County.
POLICY 2.3:	TOPOGRAPHY - Areas of excessive topographical relief shall be classified for low density development.
POLICY 2.4:	DRAINAGE - Natural drainage features will be protected and preserved to ensure the continuation of their natural function.
POLICY 2.5:	<p>WETLANDS - Wetlands and the natural function of wetlands shall be protected and conserved. No development will be allowed within a minimum of 30 feet, average 50 feet of high quality wetlands and development within low quality wetlands shall be governed by the respective agency with jurisdiction, except as allowed pursuant to Policies 1.1.9 and 1.1.10 of this element.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wetlands in Gulf County, are defined as all areas determined to be jurisdictional by Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), US Army Corps of Engineers or the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWMD), and are classified as either low or high quality. Low quality wetlands are further defined as jurisdictional wetlands; a.) planted in pine or otherwise disturbed by silviculture activities; or b.) disturbed by ditches, man made canals and borrow pits; or c.) containing existing timber roads, utility rights-of-way, and existing trails; and that do not contain existing habitat for listed wildlife and plant life. As of adoption of Ordinance 2006-04 on April 11, 2006 the planting of pines or creation of new timber roads or utility right of ways within wetlands shall not result in a wetland previously classified as high quality being re-classified as low quality. Upon implementation of the Environmental Resource Permitting authority for wetland permitting to the NFWMD, low quality wetlands shall be subject to all regulatory requirements as prescribed by that permitting program. High quality wetlands are all other jurisdictional areas. 2. High quality wetlands shall be buffered by a minimum 30 feet, average of 50 feet vegetated perimeter, as described further in number 3 below. 3. Wetland buffers for high quality wetlands are naturally vegetated uplands or low-quality wetlands located immediately adjacent to the high quality wetlands jurisdictional line. Development within high

<p>POLICY 2.5: Continued</p>	<p>quality wetlands and their buffer, described in number 2 above, shall be prohibited, except for the following activities if permitted by the respective regulatory agency with wetland jurisdiction; minor road crossings, minor encroachments for utilities and their maintenance; passive recreational trails and paths; structures that provide water access such as docks, piers and public boat ramps; and wetland maintenance and restoration activities.</p> <p>4. Allowable impacts to low quality wetlands shall be determined through the wetland permitting process by the regulatory agencies with jurisdiction.</p> <p>7. The development and disturbance of wetlands consisting of nesting areas of endangered species, threatened species, and species of special concern, including the nesting area of sea turtles, is prohibited and any such proposed development containing wetlands consisting of such nesting areas is subject to the buffering, setback or other development requirements imposed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Northwest Florida Water management District and/or United States Fish & Wildlife Commission or other agency with Jurisdiction of such species. Consistent with Future Land Use Policies 1.4.6 and 1.4.7 these areas shall be considered environmentally sensitive and shall abide by the requirements in the Future Land Use Element Policies 1.1.9 and 1.1.10.</p>
<p>POLICY 2.6:</p>	<p>With the intense review afforded for a Development of Regional Impact ("DRI") as defined in Section 380.0651(3)(i), Florida Statutes, and Rule 28-24-032(2), Florida Administrative Code, variances from Future Land Use Policies 1.1.9, 1.1.10, 1.4.6, and 2.5 may be In the event that the Florida Legislature dispenses with the category of developments called DRI's, but retains the requirement that equivalent or similar large-scale developments undergo review process, then this Policy shall apply to those equivalent or similar developments.</p>
<p>POLICY 2.7:</p>	<p>In determining whether the impact of development is lessened or mitigated, the environmental assessment will make findings of fact of the extent to which the ecological functions of wetlands, including water conservation and flood control, ground water recharge and discharge, water quality improvement, shoreline and soil stabilization, fish, wildlife and plant habitat, recreation, education, aesthetics and other values will be protected. To meet this standard the development proposal or application shall contain substantial environmental mitigations, which may include but not be limited to:</p>

**POLICY 2.7:
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- (a) Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program;
- (b) Xeric Landscaping to maintain native plants, wildlife habitat, and minimize stormwater runoff and the need for irrigation and pesticide, fertilizer and herbicide applications;
- (c) Stormwater treatment over and above the state minimum and that exceeds County regulations;
- (d) Conservation easements, wherein wetland and wetland buffers are deeded to an independent entity, such as the Department of Environmental Protection, Northwest Florida Water Management District or a not-for-profit group or land trust for the perpetual monitoring and maintenance of protected areas;
- (e) At a minimum the Audubon International Signature Silver Certification level or its equivalent for golf courses to improve wildlife habitat and maintain water quality;
- (f) Reduction in the intensity of development from the existing land use;
- (g) Restoration of on-site wetlands, including re-establishment or improvement of hydroperiod;
- (h) Monitoring to ensure water quality leaving the site is maintained or enhanced;
- (i) Centralized advanced domestic wastewater treatment and water supply provided for the development;
- (j) Preservation of other upland areas, which are used as habitat of wetland-dependent species.