



AUBURNDALE 2050

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



D

Conservation

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Adopted April 20, 2026

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

Goal, Objectives, and Policies City of Auburndale Comprehensive Plan

Goal D. Provide a quality environment which is compatible with the development of the City, as well as to enhance, conserve, and appropriately manage the City's natural resources for existing and future residents.

Objective D-1. The City shall meet or exceed the minimum air quality levels established by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

Policy D-1.1. To track progress, the City may compare base line air quality information from 2025 and maintenance of standards throughout the planning period.

Policy D-1.2. The City, in cooperation with FDEP, will continue to ensure that air quality within the City's jurisdiction will meet the following standards, as adopted by the Florida Air and Water Pollution Control Act

Table D-1.2: Air Quality Standards

<i>Ozone</i>	<i>Less than 125 parts per million</i>
<i>Carbon Monoxide</i>	<i>Less than 35 parts per million (hourly rate)</i>
<i>Lead</i>	<i>Less than 1.5 micrograms per cubic meters</i>
<i>Oxides of nitrogen</i>	<i>Less than 100 micrograms per cubic meter</i>
<i>Sulfur Dioxide</i>	<i>Less than 1,300 micrograms per cubic meter (3 hour average)</i>
	<i>Less than 260 micrograms per cubic meter (24 hour average)</i>
	<i>Less than 60 micrograms per cubic meter (annual average)</i>
<i>Particulates</i>	<i>Less than 150 micrograms per cubic meter (24 hour average)</i>
	<i>Less than 50 micrograms per cubic meter (annual average)</i>

Policy D-1.3. The City shall obtain ambient air quality information from agencies that maintain air quality monitoring stations in Polk County and neighboring municipalities and establish conditions for the base year of 2025. Annually thereafter, comparisons to the base year shall be reported to the elected officials and actions recommended when air quality is found to be degraded from the baseline conditions.

Objective D-2. The City will take specific steps to protect and enhance the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater sources within its jurisdiction.

Policy D-2.1. To track progress, the City may collect and compare base line groundwater quality information throughout the planning period; implementation of local water conservation programs; and reduction of adjusted gross per capita consumption of water from 160 gallons per capita day (gpcd) to a goal of 150 gpcd.

Policy D-2.2. The City will continuously monitor the quality of groundwater at its potable water wells as a normal practice of treating and distributing the municipal water supply.

Policy D-2.3. The City shall adopt and strive with all means available, including the development of a set of conservation incentives to meet the conservation standards established by the South West Water Management District (SWFWMD) and its Southern Water Use Caution Area for a 150 gallons per day per capita for water consumption..

Policy D-2.4. The City will continue the following water conservation measures and practices to achieve the conservation standards set forth in Policy 2.2 above:

a. The City shall require the use of low volume plumbing fixtures for all new construction, to be enforced as part of the City's building code and other appropriate permitting regulations.

b. The City shall encourage the use of Florida Friendly landscaping techniques for all new development.

c. The City shall improve the efficiency of operational methods to enhance water conservation, such as, pressure balancing, wastewater

reuse, storm water retention for irrigation, and coordination of inter-system connections through interlocal agreements.

d. The City shall continue to conduct an annual audit of the municipal water system to determine areas that may be in need of repair and may be contributing to increased water consumption through leaking pipes, and prioritize maintenance accordingly.

e. The City shall evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of using inverted water rates to increase consumer water conservation and achieve its overall water conservation goals.

f. The City shall focus on the following additional conservation strategies:

- 1. Require native vegetation;*
- 2. Incorporate advances in water conservation practices in building and land development codes;*
- 3. Continue use of concurrency management system to ensure water supply is in place prior to issuance of a building permit;*
- 4. Require use of reclaimed water where available;*
- 5. Maintain regulations that allow the City to enforce SWFWMD's lawn and landscape irrigation rules;*
- 6. Calibrate delivery meters annually and plan master meters semiannually;*
- 7. Require metering of service connections;*
- 8. Provide an educational outreach program that consists of the following or similar methods: messages with utility bills, periodic advertisements to homeowner association newsletters, public tours of water facilities, and information on the City's website; and*
- 9. Equip City-operated irrigation systems with rain sensors and/or soil moisture monitoring devices.*

- Policy D-2.5. The City will restrict uses in the wellhead protection zone; wellheads and wellhead protection areas (cones of influence) shall be mapped on the Future Land Use Map.*
- Policy D-2.6. The City will meet at least annually with the SWFWMD, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council, the City of Lake Alfred, the City of Lakeland, the Town of Polk City, and Polk County to develop measures or programs to protect and conserve water sources. Decisions to be reached shall include: coordination of land development regulations to ensure consistent and adequate protection; coordination of planning and development activities through reciprocal notification of proposed activities; coordination of planning areas; and agreement on utility service areas.*
- Policy D-2.7. The City will participate with the SWFWMD during periods of drought, declared water shortages, or water shortage emergencies by adherence to the District's Water Shortage Plan, and to the guidelines outlined by the District.*
- Policy D-2.8. The City shall develop a local water shortage plan in coordination with Polk County for response to emergency water supply interruptions. Provisions for cooperative agreements with neighboring jurisdictions, back-up water supplies and storage facilities, and organized procedures for emergency response shall be included in the plan.*
- Policy D-2.9. Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan*
- The City shall assess projected water needs and sources for at least a ten (10) year period by creating and maintaining a Water Supply Facilities Work Plan (WSFWP). The WSFWP shall maximize the efficient use of groundwater and, where possible and financially feasible, substitute alternative water sources for the use of groundwater.*
- Policy D-2.10. The City shall demonstrate full consideration of the most current SWFWMD's Regional Water Supply Plan when proposing and/or amending the ten-year Water Supply Facilities Work Plan.*

Objective D-3. The City shall protect, conserve, and guide the appropriate use of native vegetative communities and mineral and soil resources within its jurisdiction.

Policy D-3.1. To measure progress, the City may track acres of land with native vegetative communities annexed, identified and protected during the planning period.

Policy D-3.2. The City shall include on Future Land Use Element Natural Resource Conditions Map Series any native vegetative communities that are identified; and shall classify them as "environmentally sensitive lands". Development shall be restricted and minimum setback criteria established and enforced.

Policy D-3.3. The City shall include on the Future Land Use Element Natural Resource Conditions Map Series soils as mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and shall promote the continuation of agricultural activities on lands that have a Polk County Greenbelt Exemption. Development shall be restricted to accessory agricultural use structures and one single family residence per five acres where an Agriculture land use is applied.

Policy D-3.4. When reviewing new development and redevelopment proposals, the City will refer to the guidelines of the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to determine soil capability, suitability, and limitations.

Policy D-3.5. The City, in coordination with Polk County, FDEP, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to conserve, appropriately use, and protect unique vegetative communities located jointly within the City and the county.

Objective D-4. The City will conserve, appropriately use and protect wildlife habitat within its jurisdiction, especially lake habitat within the City limits.

Policy D-4.1. To track progress the City may track acres of wildlife habitat annexed, identified and protected during the planning period; comparison of quality of City lakes in 2025 and annually throughout the planning period.

Policy D-4.2. The City has designated the lakes within its jurisdiction as water resource amenities and wildlife habitat areas and declares them to be “environmentally sensitive lands”. Lakes shall be included on the Future Land Use Element Natural Resource Conditions Map Series.

Policy D-4.3. The City will protect the lakes by restricting development activities, enforcing minimum setback requirements from the lakes, and restricting access to structures such as boat ramps, boardwalks, and other water dependent activities.

Policy D-4.4. The City will utilize the services of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to identify and avoid adverse impacts on wildlife habitats by new development and redevelopment during the development review process.

Policy D-4.5. The City shall continue to enforce its land development regulations to provide for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat within the City boundaries.

Policy D-4.6. The City shall protect identified species of wildlife and their habitats from activities that would adversely affect their survival, or the survival of any endangered or threatened wildlife or species of special concern which may occur within the City. These protective measures may include, but are not limited to:

a. Requiring a developer to either restore disturbed wetlands to their original status or create new wetlands to mitigate the loss;

b. Requiring clustering of dwelling units away from sensitive ecological communities;

c. Discouraging the fragmentation of large vegetative community associations;

d. Requiring buffering of sensitive ecological areas; and

e. Providing for conservation easements.

Objective D-5. The City of Auburndale will take actions to eliminate the improper handling, and disposal of hazardous wastes in order to protect natural resources within its jurisdiction, throughout the planning period.

Policy D-5.1. To track progress, the City may document participation in hazardous waste recycling and disposal programs.

Policy D-5.2. The City shall continue to participate in a program to require the periodic, environmentally safe disposal of household, commercial, and industrial hazardous wastes. The program may include, but not be limited to, the following measures:

a. Actively participate in the activities of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to develop emergency response plans to handle accidents involving hazardous waste;

b. Promote the recycling of hazardous wastes by publicizing lists of approved recyclers; and

c. Participate in the County's Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Events to collect hazardous wastes in the City.

Policy D-5.3. The City shall participate in programs that emphasize education, monitoring, inspections, and proper disposal of small quantities of hazardous waste and hazardous medical waste.

Objective D-6. The City will protect and conserve wetlands and the natural function of wetlands, and shall direct incompatible uses away from wetlands.

Policy D-6.1. To measure progress the City may track acres of land designated as flood plain, wetlands, or sensitive lands and protected from development or development impacts during the planning period.

Policy D-6.2. The City will ensure that new and proposed development complies with all applicable wetland regulations of FDEP and SWFWMD . Site review will not proceed until all applicable permits are obtained from either or both agencies.

Policy D-6.3. The City will utilize the technical expertise and assistance of SWFWMD when reviewing new developments and redevelopment projects adjoining the 100-year floodplain of the City's lakes; or when reviewing development of any other identified wetland.

Policy D-6.4. The wetlands and 100-year floodplains of the City's lakes are designated as "environmentally sensitive lands" and shall be included on the Future Land Use Element Natural Resource Conditions Map

Series. Their hydrologic functions and habitat characteristics shall be protected through the enforcement of land development regulations, including zoning, site plan review, buffer zones, minimum setback requirements, regulation and prohibition of certain uses, and stormwater treatment regulations.

Policy D-6.5. The City will enforce its land development regulations to eliminate expansion of nonconforming uses and ultimately eliminate nonconforming uses that threaten wetlands and the function of wetlands.

Policy D-6.6. The City shall encourage, and as appropriate require, the use of Best Management Practices for wetlands based on the most current available publications. All activities within a Future Land Use of Conservation and Wetlands shall comply with applicable Best Management Practices s established by the appropriate state agencies.

Objective D-7. The City shall reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting, conserving, and enhancing the ecological resources of the City, maintaining their quality and contribution to the quality of life and economic well-being of the City of Auburndale and its residents.

Policy D-7.1. The City shall incorporate greenhouse gas reduction strategies and energy conservation into the Land Development Regulations to facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy D-7.2. The City shall restrict low impact development and other permitted uses within a future or currently existing Conservation Area to the following:

a. Impervious surfaces shall be limited to structures required for the care and maintenance of the Conservation Areas or public safety;

b. Development shall be limited to passive recreation facilities such as boardwalk or conservation related facilities such as monitoring facilities, educational trails or a park ranger/ caretaker residence. A residence for a park ranger or caretaker is permissible at one dwelling unit per twenty acres.

c. Environmentally non-damaging access points and trails;

d. Conservation and resource-based, non-motorized recreational uses which include:

- 1. Non-motorized boating which does not require a paved boat ramp for access;*
- 2. Environmentally non-damaging access points and trails;*
- 3. Hiking, bicycling, nature observation, and fishing/hunting where permitted, and*
- 4. Overnight primitive tent camping where permitted.*

e. The developer of land adjacent to areas designated with the Conservation and Wetlands land use designation shall bear the burden of proof in determining that proposed development will not adversely impact conservation resources.

Policy D-7.3.

Where feasible, conservation areas, parks, and other components of the City's open-space system shall be linked by bike paths, jogging trails, and/or pedestrian pathways to reduce traffic impacts and greenhouse gas emissions.