

# ALACHUA 2.0 REPORT

2023







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# ALACHUA 2.0 COALITION

## About:

The Coalition is a volunteer committee established by the Alachua Chamber of Commerce, comprised of a cross-section of community members and technical professionals. The purpose of the Coalition is to serve as a community-driven exploratory effort formed to identify key strategies and opportunities to enhance Alachua's economic climate and strengthen its quality of life.

## Focus:

The Coalition explored opportunities to shape Alachua's future, focusing on its unique regional and local assets, while leveraging potential partnerships. The Coalition identified key natural features, transportation corridors, regional assets, partnerships, and existing programs, among other resources as a foundation to explore strategic opportunities to enhance Alachua's economic climate and

strengthen its quality of life. This explorative effort resulted in this report to the Alachua Chamber of Commerce, providing a roadmap for the community to realize the identified opportunities. The report is to be shared with both private organizations and public sector agencies as its recommendations involves extensive partnerships of both sectors.



## Report Development

### Discover

Perform extensive research and exploration of opportunities for community enhancement

### Assess

Inventory existing community assets, challenges and opportunities

### Recommend

Develop initiatives to leverage resources and partnerships to advance the community's economic climate and quality of life



Alachua was founded in 1905 and now boasts a population of 11,000 residents and more than 500 businesses



## COALITION MEMBERS

**Adam Boukari, Co-Chair**  
Entrepreneur and former local  
government administrator

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**Jovante Hayes**  
Entrepreneur and Chamber  
Board Member

**Merrie Shaw, Co-Chair**  
Former biotech business  
development administrator

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**Dave Kratzer**  
Senior Vice President,  
University of Florida

**Donnie Ellington**  
Civil Engineer

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**Joleen Cacciatore Miller**  
Executive Director  
of Gainesville Sports  
Commission

**Laurie Hall**  
Landscape Architect

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**Clay Sweger**  
Urban Planner



The Alachua 2.0 Coalition is comprised of an impressive cross-section of dedicated professionals who have contributed their time and talent to collaboratively develop the recommendations and findings in this report. Their contributions, individually and collectively, are immeasurable and will have a transformational impact on the community for generations.

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- 01 Create gateways to Alachua along major transportation corridors
- 02 Establish a plan to incentivize multifamily development opportunities along Main Street and the downtown core
- 03 Create the premier environment for entrepreneurs to thrive
- 04 Improve perception of and results in K-12 schools
- 05 Improve communication of community events and activities
- 06 Develop Mill Creek Sink as potential eco-tourism destination through aquifer education
- 07 Continue strong investments in parks and open spaces
- 08 Improve vehicle capacity on US Hwy 441 near the I-75 interchange
- 09 Enhance the US Hwy 441 corridor from the I-75/ Hwy 441 interchange east to SR 235
- 10 Explore opportunities for areas of Main Street to serve as a non-vehicular corridor at particular intervals
- 11 Enhance the US Hwy 441 pedestrian flyover near SR 235
- 12 Develop way finding signage throughout the community
- 13 Develop consistent weekly events to attract residents and visitors to the community
- 14 Create a multiuse path from Main Street to the Hal Brady Recreation Complex and Legacy Park
- 15 Review and implement rails to trails opportunities
- 16 Activate San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park to promote wellness and attract visitors
- 17 Create a master trail plan

# PROJECT LIST





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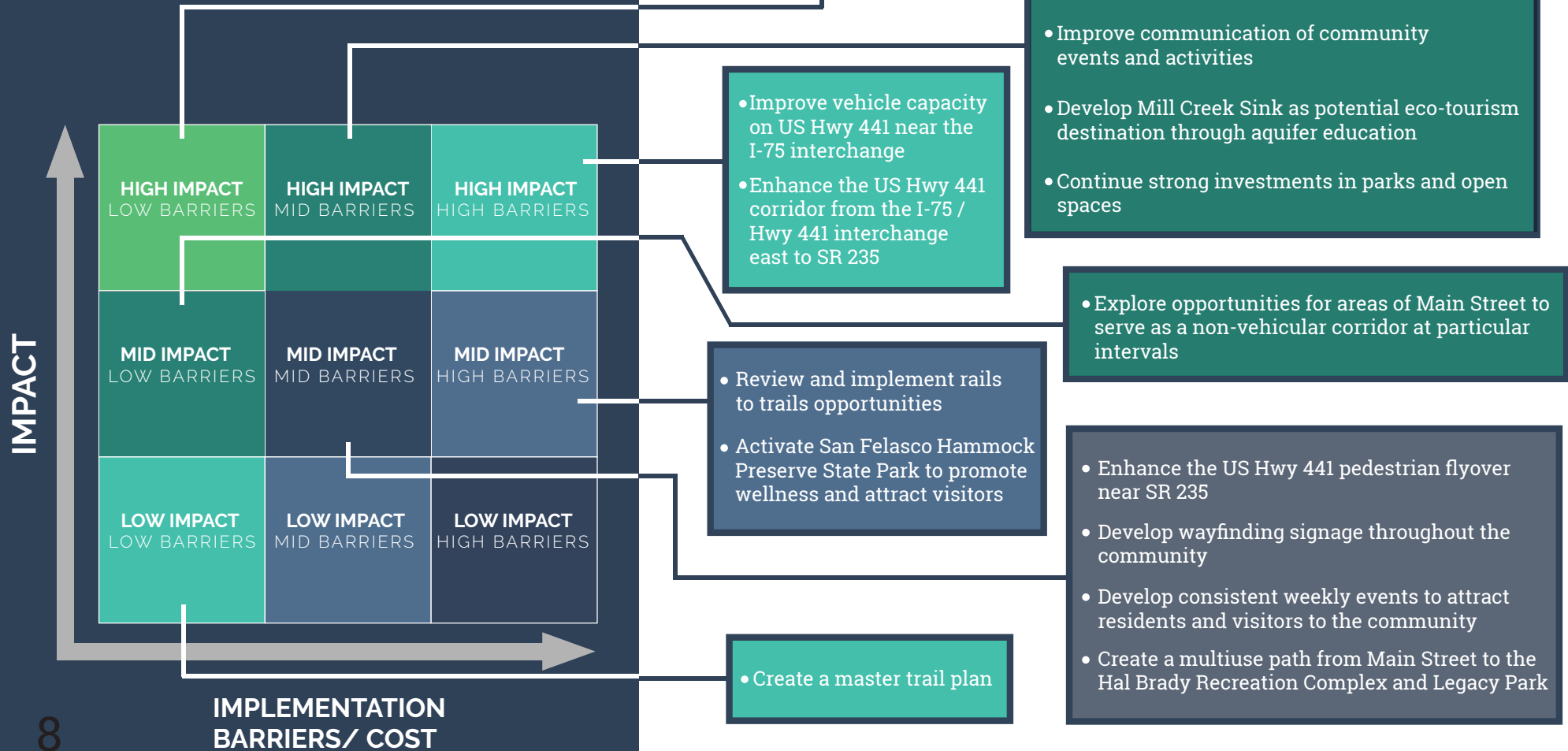
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The Good Life Community

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FLORIST



# PROJECT PRIORITIZATION MATRIX



# KEY CONCEPTS



## Project Prioritization Matrix

Graphical representation of prioritizing projects based on level of impacts and barriers.



## Objectives

The desired outcomes following successful implementation of projects.



## Partnerships

Organizations and entities that are key in accomplishing project activities.

## The "Sweet Spot"

The projects with the highest impact and lowest barriers represent the "Sweet Spot." These projects should be the focus of implementation activities. The projects that follow should correspond to those that are most impactful with fewer barriers as depicted in the matrix.

## Initiative Categories



Quality of Life



Tourism



Business Development



Marketing



Corridors



**HIGH IMPACT**  
LOW BARRIERS

## Create gateways to Alachua along major transportation corridors

### ACTION PLAN

- 01 Identify gateway locations and goals
- 02 Identify funding sources
- 03 Secure necessary land rights
- 04 Design gateways
- 05 Construct gateways



### Objective

Establish an attractive sense of place as residents and visitors enter Alachua



### Partners

City of Alachua, Florida Department of Transportation, Alachua County, Private land owners









HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS

## Establish a plan to incentivize multifamily development opportunities along Main Street and in the downtown core

### ACTION PLAN

- 01 Review downtown incentives in other jurisdictions, including density bonuses, fee reductions and permit relief
- 02 Inventory potential redevelopment sites in downtown for multifamily development
- 03 Review grant opportunities for State/Federal funds in downtowns, multifamily, etc.
- 04 City to request development partner via RFP with incentivized offer



### Objective

Increase residential density around Main Street to enhance foot traffic in the downtown core



### Partners

City of Alachua, Downtown property owners, Private developers



# Create the premiere environment for entrepreneurs to thrive

HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS



## Objective

Establish Alachua as a destination for businesses and entrepreneurs to locate

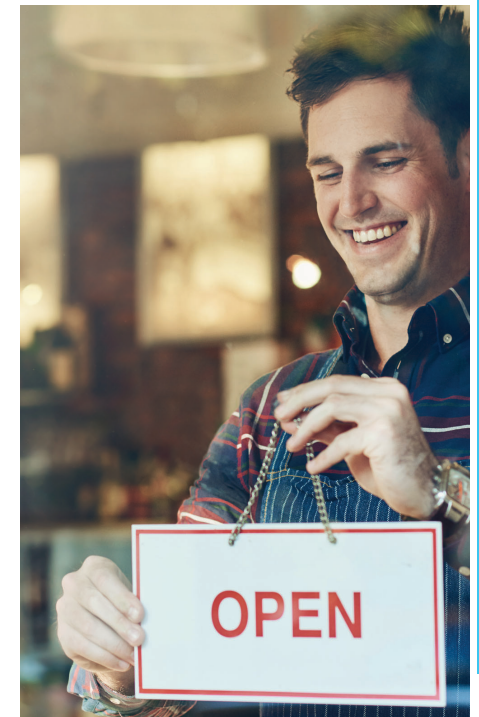


## Partners

City of Alachua, Alachua Chamber, University of Florida, Santa Fe College, Small Business Administration, Enterprise Florida, Businesses

## ACTION PLAN

- 01 Review all local regulations and potential incentives that may impact business development
- 02 Research heavily-invested entrepreneurship communities for model regulations
- 03 Improve local regulations and incentives from findings
- 04 Review opportunities for public-private partnerships that can advance entrepreneurship
- 05 Pursue public-private partnerships and grant opportunities to fund entrepreneurship assistance
- 06 Develop a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs that coordinates resources across all levels of government and private entities







HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS

# Improve perception of and results in K-12 schools

## ACTION PLAN

- 01 Coordinate with the School Board, City of Alachua and other partner organizations on challenges and needs
- 02 Develop comprehensive solutions approach to school improvement
- 03 Develop communications plan to improve perception
- 04 Implement comprehensive solutions and communications plan



### Objective

Improve school performance to serve existing students and attract families to Alachua



### Partners

School Board of Alachua County, City of Alachua, University of Florida, Santa Fe College, Alachua Chamber



# Improve communication of community events and activities

HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS

## ACTION PLAN

- Hold stakeholders meeting of all major community impact organizations to identify communication opportunities 01
- Engage a communications consulting firm to advise of opportunities and solutions 02
- Review technology solutions to coalesce community activities 03
- Identify funding sources 04
- Implement solution and update regularly 05



### Objective

Share happenings of the Community in a comprehensive and coordinated approach



### Partners

City of Alachua, Community impact organizations



## Develop Mill Creek sink as potential eco-tourism destination through aquifer education

### ACTION PLAN

- 01 Identify opportunities for Mill Creek Sink area
- 02 Coordinate with FDOT, FDEP and adjoining land owners on opportunities
- 03 Secure land rights that may be necessary for opportunities
- 04 Identify funding sources
- 05 Implement improvements



HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS



### Objective

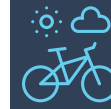
Attract tourists to Alachua through eco-tourism



### Partners

City of Alachua, Florida  
Department of Environmental Protection, Suwannee River Water Management District, University of Florida, Private land owners



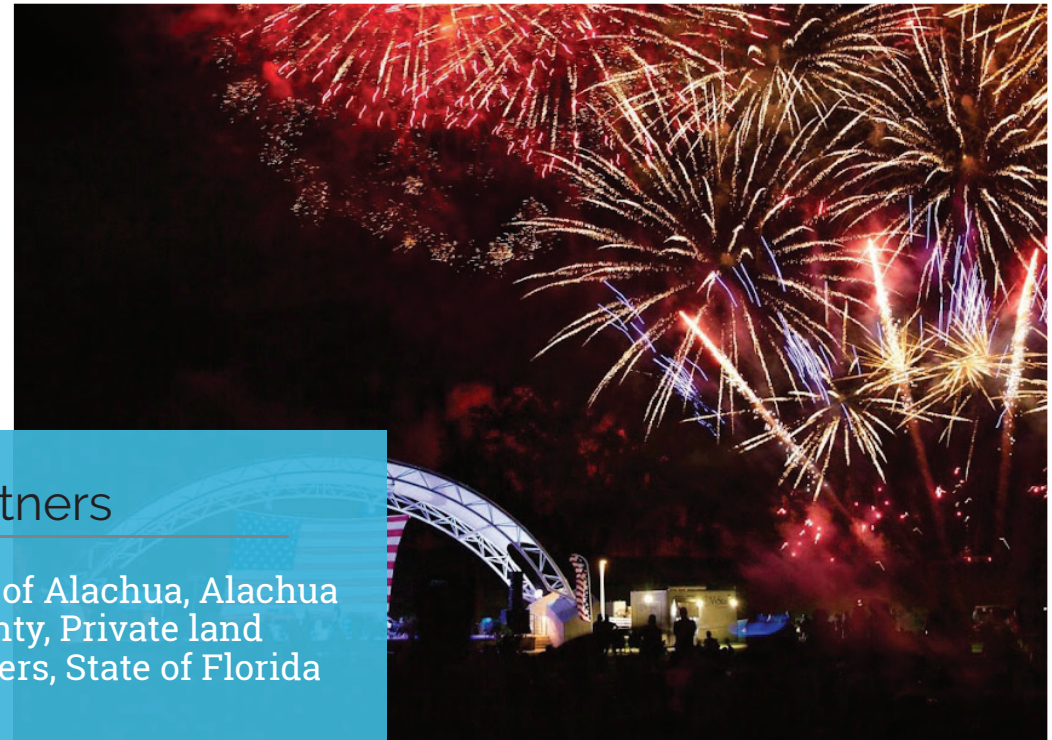


## ACTION PLAN

- 01 Inventory existing parks and open spaces
- 02 Identify opportunities for investments
- 03 Develop parks and open spaces implementation and phasing plan
- 04 Identify funding sources
- 05 Construct parks and open spaces

# Continue strong investments in parks and open spaces

HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS



## Objective

Enhance the quality of life of residents of Alachua



## Partners

City of Alachua, Alachua County, Private land owners, State of Florida



HIGH IMPACT  
HIGH BARRIERS

## Improve vehicle capacity on US Hwy 441 near the I-75 interchange

### ACTION PLAN

- 01 Consult the City of Alachua LRTP
- 02 Update future trips and capacity models with City of Alachua and FDOT for need demonstration
- 03 Engage with FDOT on design of capacity improvements
- 04 Solicit grant/partner opportunities for design costs
- 05 Lobby Florida Legislature and FDOT for funding improvements
- 06 Construct capacity improvements



### Objective

Relieve traffic congestion at peak travel times and promote development of Alachua's primary gateway



### Partners

City of Alachua, Florida  
Department of Transportation,  
Private developers



## Enhance the US Hwy 441 corridor from the I-75/ Hwy 441 interchange east to SR 235

HIGH IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS



### Objective

Create an aesthetically appealing transportation corridor to welcome residents and visitors



### Partners

City of Alachua, Florida  
Department of Transportation,  
Private land owners

### ACTION PLAN

- 01 Inventory corridor enhancement opportunities, including landscaping, hardscaping, utility undergrounding, and curbing
- 02 Develop a plan for phased corridor enhancement
- 03 Coordinate applicable efforts with US Hwy 441 capacity improvements
- 04 Coordinate with FDOT and receive authorization/permits for any right of way improvements
- 05 Identify funding sources
- 06 Construct enhancements







MID IMPACT  
LOW BARRIERS

# Explore opportunities for areas of Main Street to serve as a non-vehicular corridor at particular intervals



## ACTION PLAN

- 01 Research similar non-vehicular downtown areas
- 02 Meet with local property owners on Main Street to receive input
- 03 Develop plan and approach for implementing opportunities
- 04 If feasible and desired, design non-vehicular space improvements
- 05 Identify funding sources
- 06 Construct improvements



### Objective

Revive Main Street as a vibrant and walkable destination



### Partners

City of Alachua, Main Street businesses



# Enhance the US Hwy 441 pedestrian flyover near SR 235

MID IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS

## ACTION PLAN

- Partner with University of Florida College of Design, Construction and Planning to develop design inspiration for flyover 01
- Select preferred inspiration and buildout design concept 02
- Coordinate with FDOT on necessary improvement requirements and permits 03
- Develop construction documents 04
- Identify funding sources 05
- Construct enhancements 06



### Objective

Enhance the flyover to serve as a gateway to Alachua's downtown core



### Partners

City of Alachua, Florida  
Department of Transportation,  
University of Florida





# Develop wayfinding signage throughout the community



## ACTION PLAN

- Retain consultant to perform wayfinding signage inventory 01
- Develop opportunities for signage to collocate with unique features 02
- Identify funding sources 03
- Design and install signage and features 04



MID IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS



### Objective

Direct residents and visitors to key districts, amenities and destinations



### Partners

City of Alachua, Alachua County, Florida Department of Transportation



## ACTION PLAN

- 01 Develop calendar of current events in the area
- 02 Research how other communities implement weekly events successfully
- 03 Coordinate with partner organizations in the community to identify opportunities for collaboration
- 04 Develop marketing strategy
- 05 Identify funding sources
- 06 Implement weekly events

# Develop consistent weekly events to attract residents and visitors to the community

MID IMPACT  
MID BARRIERS



## Objective

Attract residents and visitors to Alachua with a regular schedule of events



## Partners

City of Alachua, Alachua Chamber, Partner organizations



## Create a multiuse path from Main Street to the Hal Brady Recreation Complex and Legacy Park

### ACTION PLAN

- 01 Develop routing options for multiuse path
- 02 Identify right of way and land rights for selected route
- 03 Secure necessary land rights
- 04 Identify funding sources
- 05 Design multiuse path
- 06 Construct multiuse path



### Objective

Improve connectivity between Main Street and City parks



### Partners

City of Alachua, Alachua County, CSX, Private land owners





# Review and implement rails to trails opportunities

MID IMPACT  
HIGH BARRIERS



## Objective

Connect residents and visitors to Alachua and neighboring communities



## Partners

City of Alachua, CSX, Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation, Alachua County

## ACTION PLAN

- 01 Research rails to trails efforts of other communities
- 02 Consult the Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation
- 03 Coordinate with CSX railway on rail line availability
- 04 Identify section of rail line that would be beneficial for connectivity
- 05 Identify funding sources
- 06 Implement rails to trails improvements



MID IMPACT  
HIGH BARRIERS

# Activate San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park to promote wellness and attract visitors



## Objective

Leverage the State Park as an asset to attract visitors to Alachua



## Partners

City of Alachua, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Alachua County, Private land owners

## ACTION PLAN

01 Coordinate with Florida DEP on opportunities for park activations

02 Partner with non-profit users of the State Park to assist in identifying park activation opportunities

03 Review and enhance signage and access opportunities

04 Seek opportunities for land rights in properties that adjoin the State Park for new activation locations and access

05 Lobby Florida Legislature and FDEP for funding of activations

06 Implement activations



## Create a master trail plan

LOW IMPACT  
LOW BARRIERS

### ACTION PLAN

- Engage a consultant to perform master trail plan development 01
- Inventory utility corridors as opportunities for connectivity 02
- Identify funding sources 03
- Implement master trail plan improvements as the community develops 04



### Objective

Establish a roadmap for future trails throughout Alachua



### Partners

City of Alachua, Alachua County, Utility companies







## Conclusions and Recommendations

Any plan is only as valuable as the extent it is implemented. The same is true for this Report. The initiatives defined and described herein require significant commitments of resources and time. The City of Alachua and the Alachua Chamber of Commerce have enjoyed a decades-long partnership to improve the lives of the community through economic partnership, stewardship and vision. The Alachua 2.0 Coalition has built upon this formidable

foundation to offer guidance to ensure Alachua continues to enjoy economic prosperity and a thriving quality of life.

The Alachua 2.0 Coalition recognizes that the City of Alachua has implemented a Strategic Plan, with annual updates. The Strategic Plan has been vital in advancing the community's vision and has been lauded due to its transformative results. The Alachua 2.0 Coalition Report is designed to foster exploration and

guidance to work hand-in-hand with the City of Alachua's Strategic Plan and vision. It is recommended the City of Alachua and the Alachua Chamber of Commerce work together to review the results of this Report and determine leadership roles in various initiatives. Both organizations have demonstrated a common commitment to better the community and it is with that mutual interest that this Report can be effective.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Report presentation to the Alachua Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
2. Report presentation to the Alachua City Commission and Administration
3. Chamber leadership and City leadership review Report and identify opportunities for implementation
4. Regular progress monitoring of initiative efforts



## OFFICERS

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President Elect: Adam Boukari

Secretary: Elliot Welker

Treasurer: Neil Burk

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# Chamber Leadership





## CONTACT US

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