

## 9J-5.026 Optional Rural Land Stewardship Area (RLSA)

(1) **Purpose of the RLSA Program:** The RLSA program provides local governments with an optional planning process for rural areas. The paramount purpose of the program is to further the statutory principles of rural sustainability through innovative planning strategies and incentives. The program uses stewardship planning to encourage landowners to conserve agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands in return for appropriate development rights on a limited portion of their lands. The program is not an entitlement vehicle for preconceived development projects or for urban developments of such size that they overwhelm the rural or agricultural character of the area. Rather it is a program for evaluating eligible land through the RLSA process to determine what amount, type, and location of development is consistent with the principles of rural sustainability. Local governments or landowners who are seeking approval of a specific development project or large-scale urban developments should utilize the conventional comprehensive plan amendment, development of regional impact, or sector plan processes.

(2) **Purpose of the RLSA Rule:** The purpose of this section is to establish rules for designating a RLSA. It specifies the substantive compliance requirements for a RLSA plan amendment and explains how the Department will determine the compliance of a RLSA plan amendment as required by Chapter 163, part II, Florida Statutes. These rules are intended to give guidance to local governments and other interested parties in the preparation of a plan amendment designating a RLSA.

Authority: Fla. Stat. §§ 120.\_\_\_\_; 163.3177(11)(h).

(3) **Process By Which the Department May Authorize a County or Counties to Designate a RLSA:** Designation of a RLSA is a two-step process. First, a county, or counties

in the case of a multi-county RLSA, must formally notify the Department of the intent to designate a RLSA. Based on its evaluation of this notification, the Department may authorize a county or counties to proceed to adopt a comprehensive plan amendment(s) to establish a RLSA. Second, after the Department has authorized the county or counties to proceed, the county or counties must adopt a comprehensive plan amendment(s) subject to compliance review by the Department pursuant to Section 163.3184, Florida Statutes. Rule 9J-11, F.A.C., establishes the specific procedures and requirements for the local notification, the Department's authorization, and the adoption of a plan amendment designating a RLSA.

Authority: Fla. Stat. §§ 163.3177(11)d)1. and 4.

(4) **Threshold Eligibility Requirements:** To be eligible for consideration by a county and the Department for designation as a RLSA, a proposed RLSA must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- (a) A RLSA may encompass land in more than one county jurisdiction but shall not include land within municipal or established urban growth boundaries;
- (b) A RLSA must include a minimum of 10,000 contiguous, compact acres of privately owned land; and
- (c) A RLSA must consist of lands with a pre-existing future land use map designation of agricultural, rural, open, open-rural, or an essentially similar land use designation.

Authority; Fla. Stat. §§ 163.3177(11)(d)1., 3., and 4.

(5) **Mandatory Substantive Requirements:** A proposed RLSA plan amendment must satisfy the threshold eligibility requirements and the following substantive requirements:

- (a) The RLSA plan amendment shall comply with the requirements of Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes, including Chapter 9J-5, F.A.C., for all plan amendments. These requirements are not repeated in full in this section.
- (b) The RLSA plan amendment(s) shall also comply with the additional requirements established by section 163.3177(11), Florida Statutes, for the designation of a RLSA. This rule addresses RLSA-specific plan amendment requirements.
- (c) This rule provides two options for satisfying the substantive requirements for a RLSA plan amendment: the standard option and the special option. The standard option requirements apply to every RLSA except an RLSA of 50,000 or more acres for which the local government elects to apply the standards of the special option. Both options must further the statutory principles of rural sustainability as set forth in paragraph (6) below. The special option must also comply with the provisions of paragraph (7), and the standard option must also comply with the provisions of paragraphs (8), (9), and (10). The special option, which is intended to provide a local government with a simpler, more expeditious, and predictable process, requires less data and analysis to support it because the local government agrees in advance to standards that are deemed to further the principles of rural sustainability.
- (6) **Rural Sustainability**: Rural sustainability is the paramount goal of a RLSA.

(a) A RLSA plan amendment must demonstrate through data and analysis and the adoption of goals, objectives, and policies, and a RLSA conservation and development plan that it will further the following principles of rural sustainability:

1. Restoration and maintenance of the economic value of rural land;
2. Control of urban sprawl;
3. Identification and protection of ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources;
4. Promotion of rural economic activity;
5. Maintenance of the viability of Florida's agricultural economy; and
6. Protection of the character of rural areas of Florida.

(b) Furthering the principles of rural sustainability requires large-scale planning which controls the amount, type, and location of development. The larger the RLSA and the smaller the development footprint, the more likely that the RLSA will further the principles of rural sustainability. Therefore, a RLSA conservation and development plan shall manifest the following general landscape features which may vary based on local characteristics:

1. An expanse of contiguous land large enough to accommodate the development without changing the rural character of the area or adversely impacting the agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands to be conserved.

2. A minimal development footprint in order to protect the surrounding rural landscape and agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands.
  3. A limited number of development areas to preclude a pattern of scattered development and unnecessary fragmentation of the rural landscape.
  4. Development areas with compact shapes that avoid intrusions into the surrounding rural landscape in the form of radial, strip, ribbon, or finger patterns.
  5. Substantial greenbelts surrounding residential and mixed-use development areas to provide for a clear separation between any urban and rural uses.
  6. Development located only on land most suitable for development and away from lands most suitable for agriculture and natural resource conservation.
  7. Development areas connected with each other and the remainder of the RLSA using rural design and limited access rural road corridors.
  8. Agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands to be conserved are clearly identified, delineated, and protected from development and fragmentation.
- (c) The amount and type of development in a RLSA must also be designed to further the principles of rural sustainability. Therefore, development

should be of the amount and type that will support and sustain and not undermine the rural and agricultural economies. A RLSA conservation and development plan shall manifest the following general development characteristics:

1. The total amount of development, and particularly the amount of residential and non-agricultural development, must be limited as necessary to avoid impacts that will overwhelm or change the rural character of the RLSA and surrounding area or adversely affect agricultural activities. The total amount of development shall not exceed the amount calculated in accordance with paragraph 9(A)2.
2. Provision for non-residential, agricultural-related uses that will support, sustain, and have a functional relationship with the rural and agricultural economies, such as agricultural, marketing, or distribution centers, processing and manufacturing plants, and warehouses. These uses may be located in designated Development Areas, and in designated Agricultural Areas if sited on agricultural lands most suited for development and in a manner that does not adversely affect agricultural activities.
3. Rural villages/rural activity centers and new towns shall be designed to provide for a functional mix of land uses to maximize internal capture of trips and minimize the external impacts of the development. They shall also include land uses and development which provide employment opportunities for residents of the

RLSA and which are functionally related to and support the rural and agricultural economies of the area.

## **THE SPECIAL OPTION**

(7) **The Special Option for RLSA of 50,000 or More Contiguous Acres.** For a proposed RLSA of 50,000 or more contiguous and compact acres, a local government may elect to utilize the special option provided in this paragraph instead of the standard option set forth in paragraphs (8)-(10). A RLSA plan amendment of 50,000 or more contiguous acres shall be deemed to further the principles of rural sustainability if it satisfies the requirements for a RLSA conservation and development plan, data and analysis, and goals, objectives, and policies set forth in this paragraph, and the other requirements of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, and Rule 9J-5, Florida Administrative Code, for all plan amendments.

(a) **RLSA Conservation and Development Plan Standards.** The RLSA Conservation and Development Plan shall comply with the following standards:

1. The RLSA plan must be consistent with the general landscape and development characteristics set forth in paragraphs (6)(b) and (c).
2. The maximum amount of allowable residential and non-residential development in the RLSA shall not exceed the amount of development determined pursuant to paragraph 9(A)2.
3. Development Areas for residential, mixed use, or non-agricultural-related development collectively shall not exceed 10% of the entire RLSA.
4. In addition, non-residential agricultural-related uses, such as agricultural, marketing and distribution centers, warehouses, and processing and manufacturing facilities, may be allowed in designated Agricultural Areas

of the RLSA. The Plan should designate the sites in the Agricultural Areas which are most suitable for such uses.

5. For each 50,000 acres of land in the RLSA, there shall not be more than four Development Areas, and only one of them may be a new town.
6. The ecosystem, habitats, and natural resources areas in the RLSA must be designated as Conservation Areas in which development is prohibited. Conservation Areas in which agricultural uses are permitted should be clearly distinguished from Conservation Areas in which no agricultural uses are allowed.
7. All lands in the RLSA, except for designated Development Areas and designated Conservation Areas, shall be designated as Agricultural Areas. Development shall be prohibited in designated Agricultural Areas, except for non-residential, agricultural-related uses as provided in paragraph (7)(a)4.
8. Service boundaries must be established for each Development Area which provide for a clear separation between it and other land uses in the RLSA through limitations on the extension of services.
9. The RLSA plan amendment shall include a RLSA Conservation and Development Plan map drawn to scale which depicts the designated Development, Conservation, and Agricultural Areas, the potential sites for non-residential, agricultural-related uses in Agricultural Areas, the greenbelts around the Development Areas, any buffers and setbacks to protect conservation areas, existing and planned rural road corridors, and

urban service areas for the Development Areas. The map must be consistent with and supported by data and analysis and goals, objectives, and policies.

(b) **Goals, Objectives, and Policies.** The RLSA plan amendment shall contain one or more goal statements which establish the long-term ends of the amendment to further the principles of rural sustainability. For each goal, the RLSA plan amendment shall contain objectives and implementing policies which address how the principles of rural sustainability will be achieved in the RLSA, including the following:

1. The conservation and protection of agricultural lands and ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources in the RLSA.
2. The control of urban sprawl within and without the RLSA.
3. The planning horizon for the RLSA and the maximum amount of residential and non-residential development permitted in the RLSA.
4. The design of development, including the following:
  - a. adoption of the RLSA Conservation and Development Plan map as an amendment to the future land use map.
  - b. rural villages and rural activity centers shall meet the definition of 9J-5.003(112).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Rural village” or “rural activity center” means a small, compact node of development within a rural area containing development, uses and activities which are supportive of and have a functional relationship with the social, economic and institutional needs of the surrounding rural areas.

- c. development areas exceeding 1,000 acres shall meet the definition of new towns in 9J-003(80), F.A.C.,<sup>2</sup> and no new town shall exceed 5,000 acres in size.
  - d. the innovative planning and development strategies to be used in designated Development Areas, including a functional mix of land uses in rural villages or new towns to maximize internal capture of trips and to minimize external transportation impacts and timing and phasing requirements necessary to achieve a functional mix.
  - e. a visioning process to provide public participation in the design of any new town or rural village.
  - f. the adoption of a master development plan for any new town.
5. Adequate available workforce housing, including low, very-low and moderate income housing, for the development anticipated in the RLSA, including housing for persons working in agriculture and other rural industries.
  6. Provision for businesses and industries which support and sustain the rural and agricultural economy.
  7. Compatibility standards and techniques, including greenbelts, buffers, setbacks, and density/intensity gradations to ensure a clear separation

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<sup>2</sup> “New town” means a new urban activity center and community designated on the future land use map and located within a rural area or at the rural-urban fringe, clearly functionally distinct or geographically separated from existing urban areas and other new towns. A new town shall be of sufficient size, population and land use composition to support a variety of economic and social activities consistent with an urban area designation. New towns shall include basic economic activities; all major land use categories, with the possible exception of agricultural and industrial; and a centrally provided full range of public facilities and services. A new town shall be based on a master development plan, and shall be bordered by land use designations which provide a clear distinction between the new town and surrounding land uses.

between urban and rural uses and to provide adequate protection of designated Conservation and Agricultural areas.

8. The existing or planned rural road system and the rural design principles to be used in connecting the Development Areas.
  9. Establishment of service areas as necessitated by the type and size of the future Development Area to provide a cost-efficient delivery of public facilities and services; and permanently limit the extension of urban level services to the surrounding rural areas.
  10. The recording of a stewardship easement or restrictive covenant running with the land in perpetuity on all designated Conservation and Agricultural Areas in favor of the County, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The easement or restrictive covenant must be recorded prior to or at the time the landowner obtains approval to commence development on any designated Development Area. The easement or covenant shall permanently prohibit all development in Conservation and Agricultural Areas, except for permitted non-residential, agricultural-related uses in Agricultural Areas.
  11. The maintenance of conservation areas.
- (c) **Data and Analysis**. The RLSA plan amendment shall be supported by data and analysis which address the following:

1. The suitability for development of land in the RLSA, including designated Development Areas and potential sites for non-residential development in Agricultural Areas.
2. Identification and evaluation of existing agricultural lands and ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources. If the entire RLSA consists of these lands, the data and analysis should identify those lands having the least agricultural potential and/or environmental value.
3. The amount of allowable development in the RLSA in accordance with paragraph 9(A)2.
4. The location and extent of greenbelts, buffers, or setbacks needed to ensure a separation of any urban and rural uses and to protect environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands.
5. The control of urban sprawl within and without the RLSA.
6. The amount of workforce housing, including low, very-low, and moderate income housing, needed for the development permitted in the RLSA and for persons working in agriculture and other rural industries in the RLSA.
7. The rural design standards and rural road corridor network that will be needed to serve the RLSA conservation and development plan.
8. Service areas for the Designated Development Areas.

## **THE STANDARD OPTION**

(8) **The Standard Option: Data and Analysis Requirements--Existing Conditions.** The data and analysis requirements that apply to all plan amendments also apply to RLSA amendments. This section does not repeat those requirements, but some

requirements are cross-referenced for ease of use. This section establishes RLSA-specific data and analysis requirements for the RLSA standard option that are in addition to the requirements for all amendments. The data and analysis must cover existing local conditions within the RLSA, the county, and the areas surrounding the RLSA irrespective of county boundaries, and existing conditions maps shall be revised or created as necessary. The data and analysis shall address the following:

(a) **Agriculture:**

1. Identify current and historical agricultural land uses, activities, and economic conditions in the RLSA and surrounding area, including an existing conditions map of current agricultural areas within and surrounding the RLSA. Explain how these agricultural areas provide functional open space.
2. Analyze the probable or projected future agricultural uses and activities in the area and the amount of land required to accommodate them.
3. Analyze the importance of existing and projected agricultural uses and activities in the area to the viability of Florida's agricultural economy.
4. Analyze the suitability of the land for existing and future agricultural activities. The analyses may address emerging issues and trends such as climate change, bio-fuels, and carbon sequestration and should consider the threats to agriculture from development and spatial fragmentation.

5. Inventory and evaluate existing and available local, state, and federal agricultural programs to determine how the RLSA may impact or be impacted by these programs.

(b) **Rural Character and Economy:**

1. Identify and explain the existing locally specific rural character of the RLSA and surrounding area by analyzing its characteristics, including land use, development patterns, and economic, social, cultural, historic, scenic, landscape, recreational, and environmental elements. The data and analysis shall include:
  - a. Analysis of existing land use and development characteristics, including types of uses, distribution, pattern, amount, intensity, and density, and infrastructure.
  - b. Analysis of rural character, including values given to open space, visual amenities, natural features, working landscapes, and the defining features of existing rural settlements and communities and the rural lifestyle of the area.
2. Describe and analyze the existing rural and/or agricultural economy, including the following:
  - a. The economic base of the area including the types of existing industries, employment, extent of unemployment, and local workforce characteristics.
  - b. Growth and/or decline of existing rural industries.

- c. Examination of opportunities for enhancing rural economies, including potential new industries, ecotourism, and new agricultural ventures.
  3. Inventory and analysis of local, state, and federal programs addressing rural economic issues such as the Rural Economic Development Initiative, including how the RLSA may impact or be impacted by these programs.
- (c) **Ecosystems, Habitats, and Natural Resources:**
  1. Inventory and identify natural resources as required under 9J-5.006 and 9J-5.013, F.A.C., including ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources existing within and proximate to the RLSA. The inventory should include Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas, lands on the Florida Greenways and Trails System, lands that are highly ranked under the Florida Natural Areas Inventory habitat conservation priorities and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission's Integrated Wildlife Habitat Ranking System, important water recharge areas and water supply sources, and spring protection areas. The analysis should describe how these areas provide functional open space.
  2. Analyze geographic connections between natural resource areas, such as wildlife corridors, and explain whether the areas within the RLSA are connected to or are a part of regional ecosystems.

3. Analyze the potential threats to natural resources, including urbanization, economic, biological, and spatial fragmentation.
4. Inventory of local, state, and federal programs and special land use designations such as publicly owned and conservation lands that may impact or be impacted by the RLSA amendment.

(d) **Potential Development and Urban Sprawl**

1. Analyze the suitability of the land within the RLSA for potential development receiving areas.
2. Analyze landscape and/or development conditions of the RLSA and surrounding rural lands such as the overall pattern of rural land uses and land covers, parcel size and ownership patterns, recent historical trends regarding subdivision of land and transition to residential uses, roadways, and infrastructure that may interact with RLSA development and rural sustainability.
3. Analyze how the RLSA is likely to affect the future development pattern in other rural and agricultural lands in the surrounding area, irrespective of County boundaries.

- (e) **Land Values Analysis for Stewardship Credit System.** In evaluating open space and agricultural lands and ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources, conduct a land use values analysis for use in assigning stewardship credits and for determining the most suitable locations for future Development Areas. The analysis shall include and consider the following:

1. All forms of rural resource values including agricultural; environmental, ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and water resources; recreational; tourism, scenic; cultural; and other general amenity values.
2. Geographic linkages and corridors; and appropriate buffer systems to mitigate incompatibilities.
3. All existing protection measures, including land use restrictions and regulatory programs, in view of the fact that highly protected lands require less incentives via stewardship credits to protect the rural resources.
4. Land development and other conversion threats whereby important rural resources under threat require more incentives via stewardship credits and less important resources require lesser incentives and may be more suitable for designation as receiving areas.
5. Statewide standardized evaluation criteria such as provided in geographic information systems by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Water Management Districts and available agricultural data from DOACS and USDA.

(9) **The Standard Option: RLSA Conservation and Development Plan.**

The standard option RLSA plan amendment shall contain a RLSA Conservation and Development Plan that satisfies the standards specified below, is consistent with adopted

goals, policies, and objectives, and is based on and supported by data and analysis that demonstrates that the plan will further the principles of rural sustainability.

- (a) **Conservation and Development Plan Standards.** The RLSA plan amendment shall include a RLSA Conservation and Development Plan consisting of both textual provisions and a map. The plan shall satisfy the following standards:

1. **Development and Design Standards**

- a. The RLSA plan must be consistent with the general landscape and development characteristics set forth in paragraphs (6)(b) and (c).
- b. The maximum amount of allowable residential and non-residential development in the RLSA shall not exceed the amount of development determined pursuant to paragraph 9(C)2.
- c. All residential and mixed use development in the RLSA shall be located in designated receiving areas in receiving eligible zones.
- d. Sending areas shall be designated only in designated Agricultural and Conservation Areas.
- e. Non-residential, agricultural-related uses, such as agricultural centers, marketing and distribution centers, warehouses, and processing and manufacturing facilities, may be allowed in designated Agricultural Areas which retain their agricultural uses after all of their stewardship credits have been transferred to a sending area.

- f. Any development exceeding 1,000 acres shall meet the definition of “new town” in 9J-003(80), F.A.C., and no new town shall exceed 5,000 acres in size.
- g. Any rural village or rural activity center shall meet the definition set forth in 9J-003(80), F.A.C., and shall not exceed 1,000 acres in size.
- h. The ecosystem, habitats, and natural resources areas in the RLSA must be designated as Conservation Areas in which development is prohibited. Conservation Areas in which specified agricultural uses are permitted shall be clearly distinguished from Conservation Areas in which no agricultural uses are allowed.
- i. All lands in the RLSA, except for designated receiving areas (Development Areas) and designated Conservation Areas, shall be designated as Agricultural Areas. Development shall be prohibited in designated Agricultural Areas, except for non-residential, agricultural-related uses as provided in paragraph (9)(A)1.(f).
- j. Service boundaries must be established for each receiving area which provide for a clear separation between it and other land uses in the RLSA through limitations on the extension of services.
- k. The RLSA plan amendment shall include a RLSA Conservation and Development Plan map which depicts the receiving eligible zones, Conservation and Agricultural Areas, potential sites for non-residential, agricultural related uses in Agricultural Areas, the

greenbelts around the Development Areas, any buffers and setbacks needed to protect Conservation and Agricultural Areas, existing and planned rural road corridors, and urban service areas for the Development Areas. The map must be consistent with and supported by data and analysis and goals, objectives, and policies submitted or adopted in accordance with this paragraph.

2. **Development Allocation Standards.** Because the RLSA reflects ultimate buildout which may occur beyond the long-term planning period of the Comprehensive Plan, the amount of allowable development in the RLSA plan amendment must be based on population projections for the RLSA for the short and long-term planning periods and for ultimate buildout. The population projections shall be based on professionally acceptable methods for projecting growth in rural geographic areas like the RLSA. The methodology must take into account the requirement to achieve the statutory principles of rural sustainability, including the protection of the rural character, the population projections and the existing allocations of development for the County as a whole, and the anticipated effect of the proposed RLSA and its receiving areas.
3. **Stewardship Credit System Standards.** The RLSA plan amendment shall require adoption of a stewardship credit system that complies with the following criteria:
  - a. Each credit shall represent a defined number of residential units per acre or a defined amount of non-residential square footage per acre.

- b. The maximum number of credits for the entire RLSA shall be established and shall equal the maximum amount of development allowed in the RLSA.
- c. Credits shall be assigned to each acre of land based on the land values analysis required by paragraph (8)E. Generally, where there are presently or potentially productive agricultural lands, the highest values shall be assigned equally to those areas and to the most environmentally valuable lands. In assigning credits to environmental lands, the highest credits shall be assigned to those lands which are most valuable and most threatened by development, and the lowest credits shall be assigned to environmental lands which are not developable or are not threatened by development.
- d. Credits for a sending area shall be assigned at the time the sending area is designated.
- e. All credits must be transferred from a sending area before credits can be transferred from another sending area.
- f. Credits must be transferred first from the sending areas adjacent to the receiving area in order to create a greenbelt around the receiving areas.
- g. At the time credits are transferred, a stewardship easement or restrictive covenant must be recorded in the public records of the county on the sending land to prohibit permanently development

on and to provide for conservation of environmentally sensitive lands and to permanently limit land uses on agricultural lands to specified agricultural activities, including non-residential, agricultural-related development. The easement or restrictive covenant shall be in favor of the county, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services.

- h. Upon transfer of credits, the underlying land uses are extinguished except for permitted agricultural-related uses in Agricultural and Conservation Areas.
- i. After the landowner elects to utilize the RLSA by transferring credits from the first sending area to the first receiving area, the right to use the underlying land uses in the RLSA is waived.

(b) **Goals, Objectives, and Policies.** The RLSA plan amendment shall contain one or more goal statements which establish the long-term ends of the amendment to further the principles of rural sustainability. For each goal, the RLSA plan amendment shall contain objectives and policies which address how the principles of rural sustainability will be achieved in the RLSA, including the following:

- 1. The conservation and protection of agricultural lands and ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources in the RLSA.
- 2. The control of urban sprawl within and without the RLSA.

3. The planning horizon for the RLSA and the maximum amount of residential and non-residential development permitted in the RLSA.
4. The stewardship credit system.
5. The process for designation of eligible receiving zones and receiving areas and sending areas.
6. The design of development, including the following:
  - a. adoption of the RLSA Conservation and Development Plan map as a policy in the Future Land Use Element.
  - b. rural villages and rural activity centers shall meet the definition of 9J-5.003(112).<sup>3</sup>
  - c. development areas exceeding 1,000 acres shall meet the definition of new towns in 9J-003(80), F.A.C.<sup>4</sup>
  - d. the innovative planning and development strategies to be used in designated receiving areas, including a functional mix of land uses in rural villages, rural activity centers, and new towns to maximize internal capture of trips and to minimize external transportation impacts and timing and

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<sup>3</sup> “Rural village” or “rural activity center” means a small, compact node of development within a rural area containing development, uses and activities which are supportive of and have a functional relationship with the social, economic and institutional needs of the surrounding rural areas.

<sup>4</sup> “New town” means a new urban activity center and community designated on the future land use map and located within a rural area or at the rural-urban fringe, clearly functionally distinct or geographically separated from existing urban areas and other new towns. A new town shall be of sufficient size, population and land use composition to support a variety of economic and social activities consistent with an urban area designation. New towns shall include basic economic activities; all major land use categories, with the possible exception of agricultural and industrial; and a centrally provided full range of public facilities and services. A new town shall be based on a master development plan, and shall be bordered by land use designations which provide a clear distinction between the new town and surrounding land uses.

- phasing requirements necessary to achieve a functional mix.
- e. a visioning process to provide public participation in the design of any new town or rural village.
  - f. the adoption of a master development plan for any new town.
7. Adequate available workforce housing, including low, very-low and moderate income housing, for the development anticipated in the RLSA, including housing for persons working in agriculture and other rural industries.
  8. Provision for businesses and industries which support and sustain the rural and agricultural economy.
  9. Compatibility standards and techniques, including greenbelts, buffers, setbacks, and density/intensity gradations to ensure a clear separation between urban and rural uses and to provide adequate protection of designated Conservation and Agricultural areas.
  10. The maintenance of designated Conservation Areas.
  11. The existing or planned rural road system and the rural design principles to be used in connecting the Development Areas.
  12. Establishment of service areas as necessitated by the type and size of the future Development Area to provide a cost-efficient delivery of public facilities and services; and permanently limit the extension of urban level services to the surrounding rural areas.

(c) **Data and Analysis.** The RLSA plan amendment, including the RLSA Conservation and Development Plan, shall be based on and supported by data and analysis which address the following:

1. How the Plan will further the principles of rural sustainability.
2. The maximum amount of allowable development in the RLSA.
3. The stewardship credit system and how it will allow achievement of the RLSA Conservation and Development Plan.
4. The suitability for development of land in the RLSA, including designated receiving areas and potential sites for non-residential development in Agricultural Areas.
5. Identification and evaluation of existing agricultural lands or environmentally sensitive lands. If the entire RLSA consists of these lands, the data and analysis should identify those lands having the least agricultural potential and/or environmental value.
6. The amount of allowable development in the RLSA.
7. The location and extent of greenbelts, buffers, or setbacks needed to ensure a separation of any urban and rural uses and to protect environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands.
8. The control of urban sprawl within and without the RLSA.
9. The amount of workforce housing, including low, very-low, and moderate income housing, needed for the development permitted in the RLSA and for persons working in agriculture and other rural industries in the RLSA.

10. The rural design standards and rural road corridor network that will be needed to serve the RLSA conservation and development plan.

11. Service areas for designated receiving areas.

(10) **Indicators of Rural Sustainability.** In evaluating whether a RLSA standard option plan amendment will further the principles of rural sustainability, the Department shall consider, along with the other requirements of Chapter 9J-5, F.A.C., and Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes, the extent to which the plan amendment evidences the following indicators:

- (a) The RLSA exhibits the general landscape characteristics listed in paragraph 9.026(5)(b), and the general development characteristics in paragraph 9.026(5)(g), F.A.C.
- (b) Agricultural lands within the RLSA will be conserved.
- (c) Significant ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources will be conserved.
- (d) Agricultural and ecosystems, habitats, and natural resources within and surrounding the RLSA will be maintained intact and unfragmented.
- (e) Provision for new or expanded commercial or industrial enterprises that will support, sustain, and be compatible with agriculture and promote the rural and agricultural economy.
- (f) The RLSA plan for development will protect and be compatible with the rural character of the area.
- (g) New towns and rural villages contain a functional mix of uses that minimizes vehicle miles traveled and maximize the cost-efficient provision of services.

- (h) Receiving areas have service area boundaries which provide for a separation between receiving areas and other parts of the RLSA through extension of services outside the receiving area.
- (i) Provision for adequate workforce housing, including low, very low, and moderate income housing.
- (j) Utilization of rural design principles and limited access rural road corridors.
- (k) Effectively controls and prevents urban sprawl within the RLSA and surrounding areas.
- (l) The amount of development does not exceed the demonstrated need based on professionally acceptable population projections as provided in paragraph (9)(A)2.