



LAND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Land Development Division

Benjamin J. Ziskal, AICP, CECd, Director

February 15, 2024

University Planning Program
Department Director

Re: Planning Student Summer Internship Program in Polk County, Florida

Dear Professor:

Polk County may have the ideal internship for one of your students in the Office of Planning and Development Land Development Division. This internship not only offers hands-on experience in development review but also opportunities in policy writing and community outreach. Attached is a flyer for you to circulate amongst your students.

Polk County has had a significant rate of development growth in both the unincorporated areas and most of our 17 municipalities over the last several years. We were the fastest growing county in Florida in both 2021 and 2022. The County is unique regarding land use planning. It has a Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and Land Development Code that works directly from it without an intermediary zoning ordinance. Some call it "planning without zoning." In the next two years, the County will be drafting a new Comprehensive Plan for the next 30 years. The summer interns will participate in many of the initial activities this year and future interns will participate in following years. We see this as a great opportunity for a future planner to get real world experience in a location where things are happening and hope you agree.

The Land Development Division also has an opening for a full-time planning position for a Planner I through Senior (DOQ). Please let any of your students who have or are soon graduating know to connect to <https://www.polk-county.net/about/careers/> to apply directly. I am available to discuss the planning intern position, full-time planner opportunities, and Polk County planning in general at (863) 534-6470 or email me at erikpeterson@polk-county.net.

Sincerely,

Erik E. Peterson, AICP
Planning Administrator

Planning Internship Opportunity



POLK COUNTY

Florida's Crossroads of Opportunity

The Polk County Land Development Division has an excellent opportunity for Urban & Regional Planning Students to gain real world knowledge in the Local Government Land Use Planning operations of Florida's fastest growing county. This internship not only offers hands-on experience in development review but also opportunities in policy writing and community outreach.

This ±3-month internship involves three phases of career development in the Planning Field:

- 1) **Tutorial Phase** - the intern will learn details of development site planning, comprehensive planning, and policy analysis through an initial two weeks of training followed by weekly training sessions.
- 2) **Research Phase** - The intern will be given a project that involves research and data analysis. A report style product will be completed by the intern.
- 3) **Performance Phase** - The intern will draft a staff report and present a case review in a public hearing before the Land Use Hearing Officer.

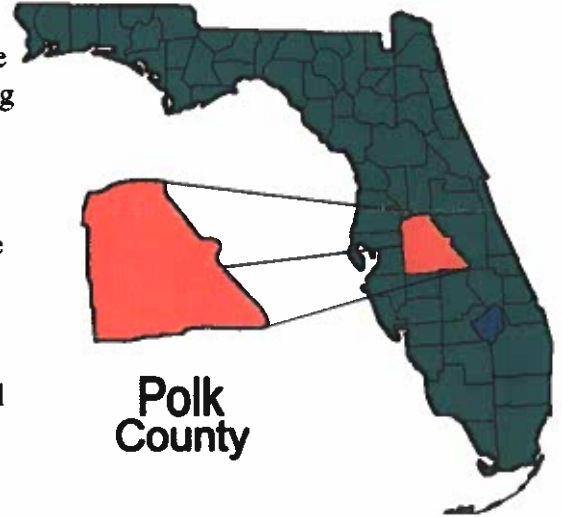
Other potential benefits: There are 17 municipalities and two state of Florida district offices with whom interns will interact and network during their time in the county for future employment opportunities. The county also has planning opportunities in the Housing & Neighborhood Development, Parks & Recreation, Solid Waste, Transportation Planning, and Roads & Drainage Divisions.

At the end of the internship, the intern comes away with work products credited to themselves and professional references to include in future resumes, vitae, and accomplishments.

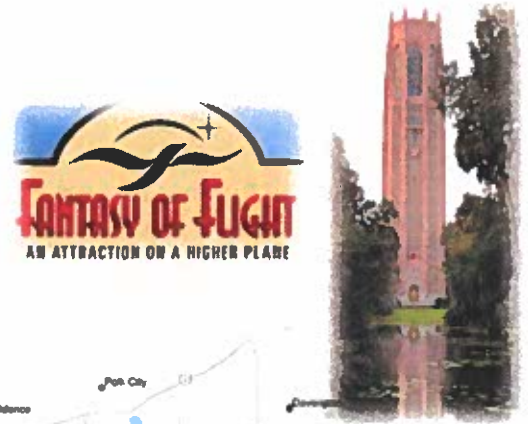
To apply for the internship go to:

<https://www.polk-county.net/about/careers/>

For more information on Polk County or the Office of Planning and Development Land Development Division contact Erik Peterson at erikpeterson@polk-county.net



**Polk County is located between
the Orlando and Tampa
Metropolitan Areas**



Planning Career Opportunity



Land Development Division Planner I, II, III, or Senior (DOQ)

Minimum Qualifications:

- Planner I -** Bachelor's Degree*
- Planner II -** Master's Degree* and ½ year of experience or Bachelor's Degree* and 1 year of planning experience
- Planner III -** Master's Degree* and 2 years of planning experience or Bachelor's Degree* and 3 years of planning experience
- Senior Planner -** Master's Degree* and 4 years of planning experience or Bachelor's Degree* and 5 years of planning experience

Duties:

- Planner I -** Assists with research, planning projects, and independent studies relating to land use, economic base, zoning ordinances/revisions, population, transportation systems, community facilities and housing. Prepares and/or assists with planning presentations in a graphic and/or written form.
- Planner II -** Performs independently a varied scope of planning work preparing research, data and reports related to countywide development studies and projects. Prepares and reviews a variety of reports, maps, and charts related to county planning activities. Conducts field surveys to secure any necessary planning data such as land use, population density, traffic, housing conditions, economic conditions, community facilities inventory, and availability of community services. Prepares planning presentations in a graphic and/or written form.
- Planner III -** Responsible for planning work identifying, interpreting, and analyzing land use plans, projects, programs. Prepares technical research, studies and recommendations related to land use controls, regulations and the County Comprehensive Plan. Develops and implements methods estimating land use data, population density, traffic and housing conditions, economic conditions, community facilities and availability of community services. Gathers data and identifies population growth areas correlating related information and preparing a written/graphic analysis of present and/or projected land use and/or development trends.
- Senior Planner -** Performs and coordinates planning activities and serves as a task team supervisor of assigned project areas. Performs professional technical planning work in all County planning program areas. Plans, develops, and conducts special studies relative to land use and occupancy; to streets, road, and arterial locations and usage; water and sewer facilities; transportation services; recreational and cultural needs of the County. Analyzes and evaluates pertinent data. Prepares comprehensive reports and projections from databases. Reviews and obtains proper interpretation where necessary of the laws, rules, and regulations affecting planning functions. Prepares and/or supervises the preparation and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan elements, and any proposed ordinances. Correlates planning and statistical data for various plans, projects, and programs.

** Degree with major coursework in Urban Planning or related field including Urban Studies, Geography, Environmental Studies/Science, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, GIS, Public Administration, Political Science.*