

FIRST COAST VISION

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Why Vision?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines vision, in part, as

- Unusual competence in discernment or perception, intelligent foresight
- The manner in which one sees or conceives of something

The First Coast/Northeast Florida, like all of Florida, is at a crossroads. It can grow as it has been growing, and address the consequences of growth after the fact. Congested roads, urban sprawl, infrastructure needs and environmental concerns are all issues that will need to be addressed if this path is taken. Alternatively, it can develop a vision for the region that will consider current trends, consider alternative scenarios for future growth and choose the path that the region's growth will take. This kind of intelligent foresight will allow us to conceive of our own future and give us the steps we may take to make it happen, rather than let the future happen to us.

Why a Regional Vision Now?

There is state-wide dialogue on the vision issue, as evidenced by the work of the 1000 Friends of Florida and the Century Commission and the studies on the subject that they have commissioned. Their work, as well as many other such efforts, indicates that growth trends may result in a future condition that would not be what we would have chosen, if we had a choice. The costs of the “without a vision” trend are becoming recognized as we realize that the growth patterns associated with the trend cost money that our local governments do not have and may not prove attractive to businesses and residents considering a move, especially when they have the choice of moving to regions that have taken the step of identifying where they expect to be in the future. If you were given the choice of moving to a region that values its assets and can articulate how it intends to capitalize on and protect them, would that not be more attractive than moving to a region that fails to recognize its assets or plan for its future?

We are undertaking practices that indicate that we want to make a choice, at least in some areas. There are green and low-impact building practices being discussed and implemented throughout the state and in Northeast Florida. The need for potable water has resulted in intra-regional discussions between Northeast and Central Florida. FDOT is studying transportation corridors that transverse regions. There are several local visioning efforts currently underway, as well as regional visioning efforts in various parts of the state.

Regional leaders in Northeast Florida have recognized that visioning was needed in the region. The Northeast Florida Regional Council created the not-for-profit Regional Community Institute of Northeast Florida, Inc. (RCI) for the purpose of determining the current state of the region and establishing a vision for growth and development in the 7 county region for the next 50 years. They began efforts with the assumption that the region would grow by 1.6 million people (more than double the 2005 population) and at least 650,000 jobs. They used data from a May 2007 study done by a partnership of 1000 Friends of Florida, the University of Florida, the University of Central Florida and the University of Pennsylvania called “An Alternative Future, Florida in the 21st Century 2020 2040 2060 to establish the “without a vision” trend. While Northeast Florida visioning efforts make clear that the assumptions used in “An Alternative Future” and those used to estimate population growth in First Coast Vision are simply estimates and should not be used to make infrastructure decisions, they are helpful in visualizing what our region might look like if our population doubles. The images from “An Alternative Future” speak for themselves in Chapter 3 and 4. The 2060 trend image highlights three of the components of visioning that cross local government boundaries and are intrinsically regional: conservation, land

use and transportation. These issues are not best left to either local or state planning. Our region is worth the effort to choose its own future.

What are other regions in Florida doing?

Click here for links that will take you to examples of regional visioning efforts throughout the state of Florida:

Central Florida/Orlando Area: <http://www.myregion.org>
Emerald Coast: <http://consensus.fsu.edu/emeraldcoast/index.html>
South Florida: <http://www.visionbroward.org>
Tampa Bay: <http://www.myonebay.com>

We are Not Alone, and Visioning Works

Ever since the world became connected and mobile enough that people and businesses no longer decide to move to a town or city, but to a region, regional visioning has become more prevalent. In fact, regions that began visioning years ago, often precipitated by a perception of risk of loss of competitiveness or quality of life, are starting to see the benefits of their intelligent foresight. You only need look to regions such as Central Texas or the Research Triangle in North Carolina, or States like Utah, to see that choosing the future can focus a region on economic growth and quality of life. Jim Sellen, Principal-in-Charge at VHB Miller Sellen and a planner that was heavily involved in the regional visioning efforts several years ago in the Central Florida region told a First Coast Vision Town Hall meeting audience that visions can become self-fulfilling prophecies. If they make the connection to economic development and excite the larger community into sharing the vision, citizens will own the vision and make it happen. Many parts of the United States have visions or are developing them. Click here for links that will take you to web pages of visioning efforts throughout the United States:

Utah: <http://www.envisionutah.org>
Nebraska: <http://www.visioning2026.com>
Pennsylvania: <http://www.upperdelaware.com/visioning/index.cfm>
Maryland: <http://www.baltometro.org/content/view/94/176>
Texas: <http://www.envisioncentraltexas.org>

What is the role of Regional Councils?

Regional Councils or Regional Planning Councils already exist as a platform for visioning, and they have statutory roles including the requirement of adopting Strategic Regional Policy Plans (SRPPs), which is a natural implementation mechanism for visioning. The Northeast Florida Regional Council created the RCI.

Are there other benefits to visioning?

The act of visioning has its value not only in the production of a Vision, but in the support of the Vision by those who participated in its creation. People who participate may feel energized to continue to participate in civic issues, and they may feel invested in the implementation of the Vision. The act of visioning has, in addition, the potential that the word implies. It implies that citizens, decision-makers and stakeholders at all levels have the ability to imagine for themselves

what kind of world they want to live in, that those imaginings result in something tangible, and that the Vision can result in decision making in the future based on consensus guiding principles determined as part of a visioning process. Multiple opportunities have been made available for participation in visioning, and we estimate that 3,500 people in Northeast Florida have participated in visioning as of 2011.

What a Vision is and What it is not

A vision is an opportunity to stand back and think about how a region could be in the future. It is an opportunity to think about how we want to live, and how we want our children to live. It includes measures, to help us assess our progress at achieving our vision. It does not have to be constrained by today's funding or regulatory realities, because it is a vision. Those who believe in visioning believe we have the power to change those things that could keep our region from becoming what we want it to be.

A vision is not a document that requires that we change, it can only inspire it. It provides a vision for how our region might function in the future, and we hope there will be much consensus in the region around the need to change and the principles that should guide this change. If we have found the right vision for our future for the next 50 years, it will become the self-fulfilling prophesy that Mr. Sellen describes. We must commit to the vision and be open minded at the same time. It will require us to measure our success and when our results indicate a change in direction is needed, we must have the courage and intelligent foresight to adapt.

Should you participate?

In deciding if you want to be part of the First Coast Vision movement, ask yourself about the present and decide for yourself if the status quo is sufficient. If the status quo is not sufficient and you believe we can do better, then help us chart the course to a better future for the First Coast.

First Coast Vision: How did we get here?

The Regional Community Institute

The Regional Community Institute (RCI) is made up of members of the Regional Council and over 100 leaders who have graduated since 2005 from the Regional Leadership Academy. One of the first steps RCI took was to partner with the Regional Council, the Urban Land Institute, the St. Johns Water Management District, the North Florida Transportation Organization, the Cornerstone Regional Development Partnership, the St. Johns River Alliance, and the University of North Florida to coordinate regional visioning.

Reality Check First Coast and Region First 2060

Regional visioning efforts kicked off with Reality Check First Coast (www.RealityCheckFirstCoast.com) in May, 2009. 300 leaders came together at that exercise and rejected the status quo. They created six Guiding Principles, recommended to guide how we develop and grow for the next 50 years, and four Growth Patterns, that could describe the way that we grow. Since then, the Lego® brick and yarn visioning exercise has been repeated in each of the seven counties of the region (County Checks), as well as in two youth-only forums (Generation Check and Generation Check 2011).

Region First 2060, the partnership that put on Reality Check First Coast, is committed to implementing the Guiding Principles, and sponsored a “ Sustainable First Coast Workshop” in May 2010 and co-sponsored the St. Johns River Summit in September 2010. Events are also scheduled in 2011 as ways to further explore how to implement the Guiding Principles in the First Coast.

First Coast Vision: Getting Started

RCI has as its mission the creation of First Coast Vision, a vision for growth and development in the seven County region for the next 50 years. Using data from Reality Check First Coast and other sources, Regional Community Institute committees worked during 2010 on recommending what to measure and the goals and objectives for a vision for 2060.

The Importance of Public Input

Getting the input of as many residents of the region as possible is important to RCI and to creating a First Coast Vision that we all can believe in. The committee draft goals and objectives were released for public input in late January 2011, and First Coast Vision Town Hall meetings were held in each of the seven counties in the region in February and March of 2011 to gather public input on the future in general, the goals and objectives and to poll the public on their preferred growth pattern.

The Image

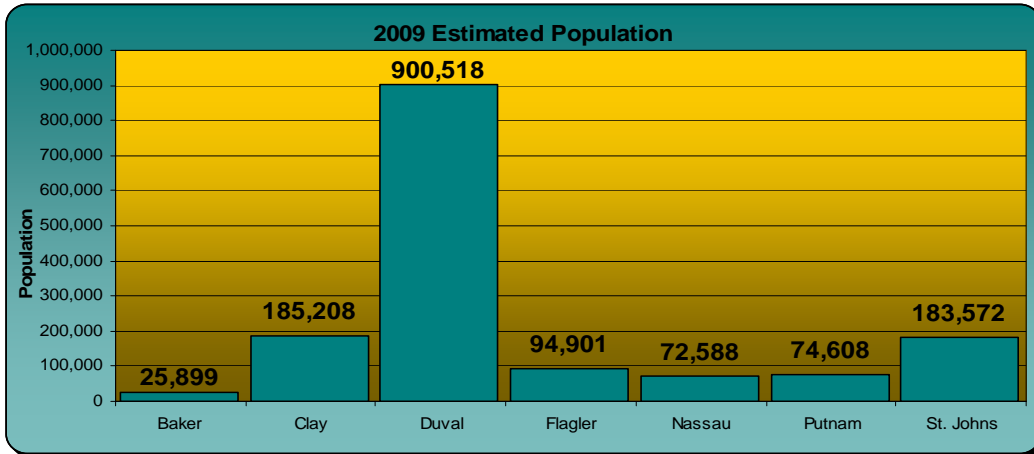
RCI sponsored a design competition to create an image to illustrate First Coast Vision. The image was informed by the preferred growth pattern, the goals and objectives of First Coast Vision, and the results of public input.

First Coast Vision: The Results

First Coast Vision describes an ideal region in 2060, and includes our current thinking on how to achieve the vision. It indicates how we will measure success. It makes recommendations on how to keep working on choosing our future, as time passes and we realize that what seemed ideal in 2011 may not still seem ideal in 10 or 20 years. Most importantly, it will not require that we change, but it will set out the benefits of change and inspire us to change. Change will be up to individuals, local governments, and ultimately, the region. The RCI will present First Coast Vision to the the Northeast Florida Regional Council when it is completed, so they may consider it as they update the Strategic Regional Policy Plan, the plan for the region that guides the Council.

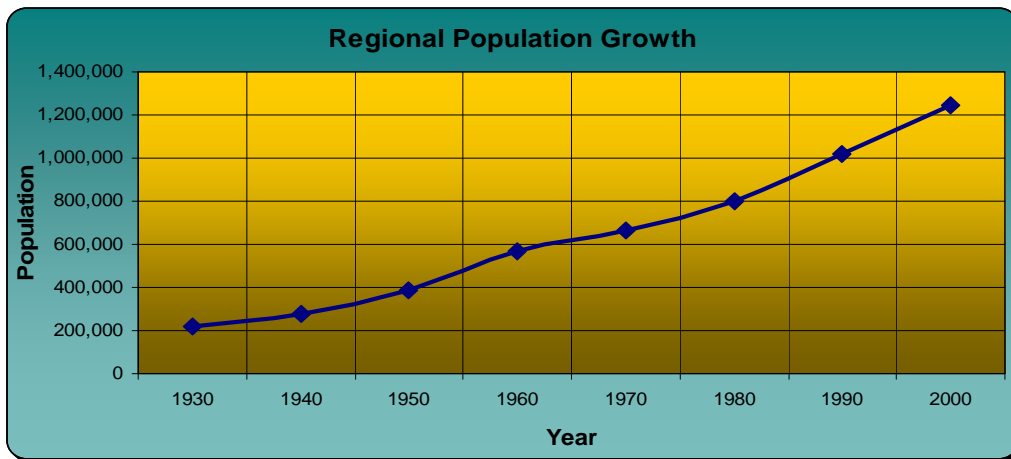
Where are we now?

The graph below represents the estimated population by county for the year 2009. The total Regional population estimate is 1,537,294. Population estimates are released annually by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida.



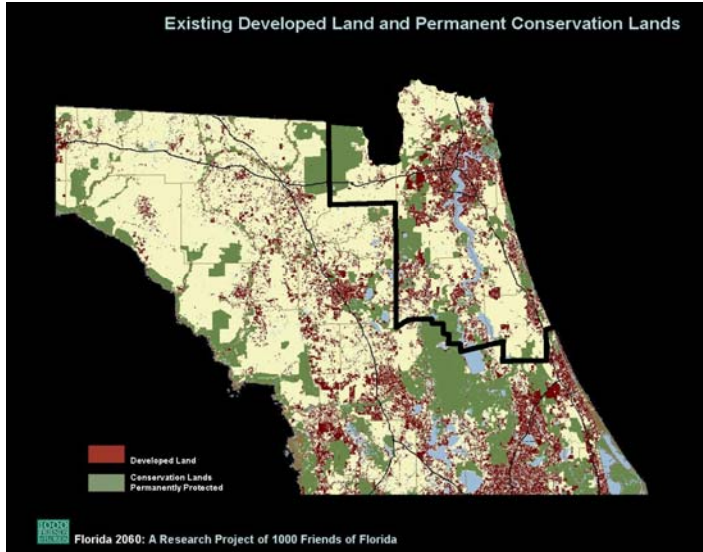
Source: Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) 2009 www.bebr.ufl.edu

The line graph below illustrates steady Regional population growth since 1930. In 2002, Regional population exceeded 1.2 million people, and it exceeded 1.4 million by 2006.

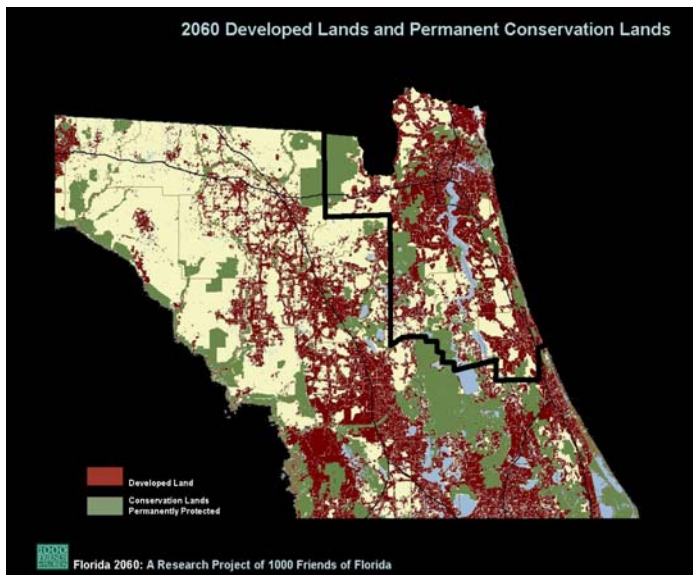


Source: US Census Bureau www.census.gov

What does this look like?



Without a vision, where we are going?

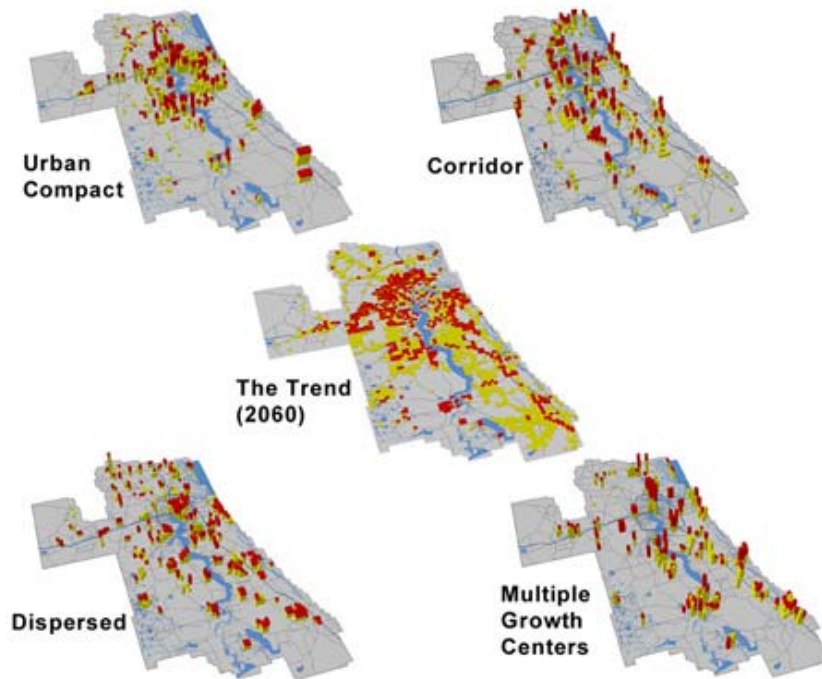


The Trend

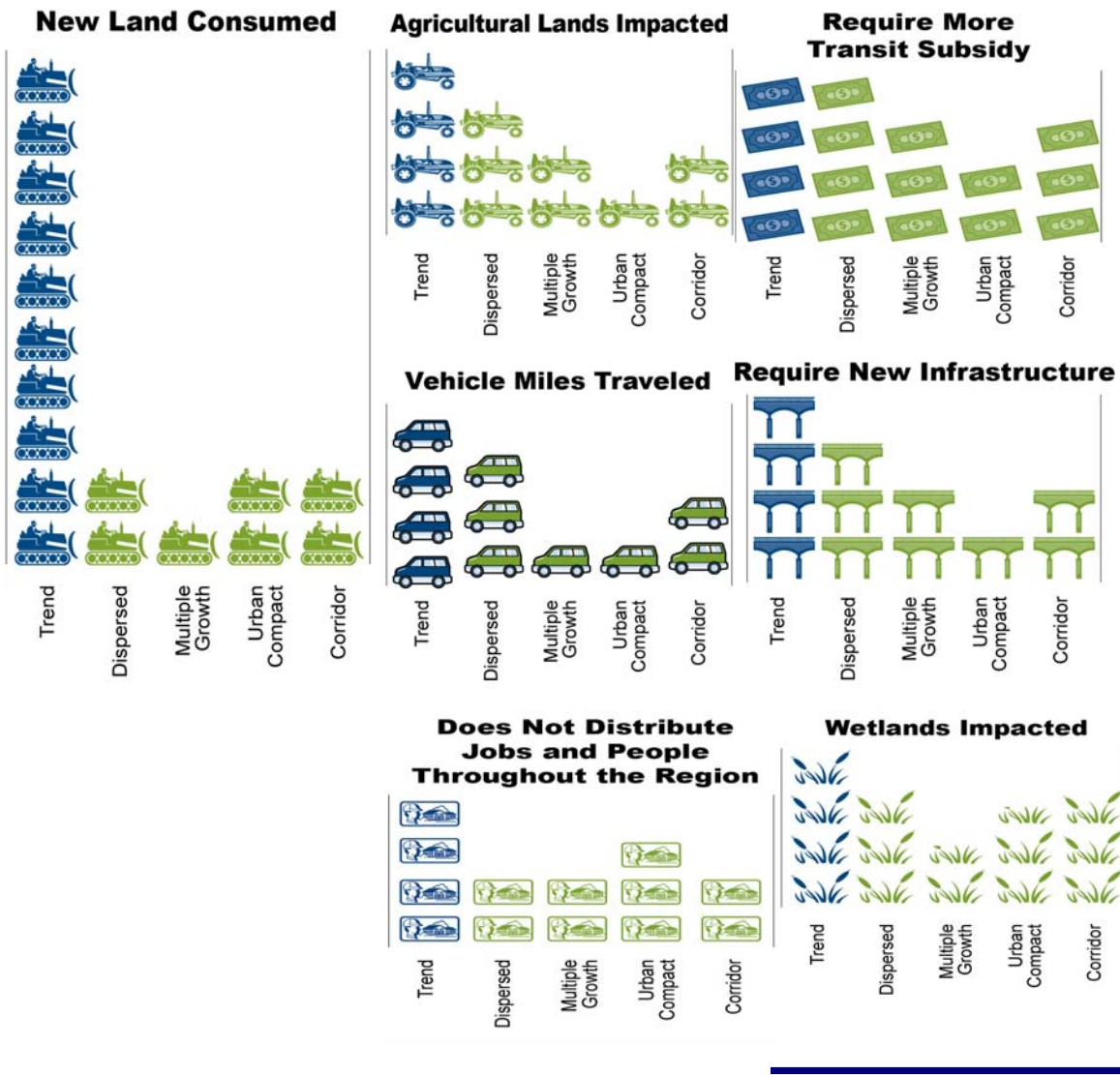
This growth pattern will use over 1,200 square miles of currently undeveloped land. By contrast, each of the growth patterns created at Reality Check First Coast use less than 250 square miles of undeveloped land. If the growth that comes to the First Coast is compact, it will cost less for government to provide services, and make it easier people and goods to get into, out of and around the region.

Alternative Growth Patterns

Reality Check First Coast visions fell into four categories, and the four patterns shown below, along with the trend, have been repeated in each of the many visioning exercises conducted since Reality Check.



The following indicators were developed to contrast the trend and the growth patterns created at Reality Check First Coast.



Where do we want to be?

First Coast Vision Statements

In deciding that our region needed to choose its future rather than let the future happen to us, we noted that each action we, or future generations, might take, impacts a set of systems in the region that cannot truly be separated, as they are all interrelated. We began with six committees in the traditional planning areas of: Affordable Housing, Economic Development, Emergency Preparedness, Health and Human Services, Natural Resources and Transportation. The vision goals, objectives and measures recommended by the committees overlapped greatly, showing us that these traditional categories do not do justice to a vision for the First Coast.

As a result, First Coast Vision makes statements related to the three areas we have stressed in creating a vision for growth and development for the next 50 years:

1. People
2. Economic Vitality
3. Resources for the Long Term

Our economic system cannot be vital without natural resources and infrastructure, and none of that matters without the viability of the ultimate resource: the people who live and work in the region. We state our goals as aspirations; they reflect where we intend to be in 2060. Goals ending with an asterisk will require an implementation plan.

Goals and Objectives

Section: THE GOALS FOR PEOPLE

Statement A. Our communities are planned for people.

Goal A1: Northeast Florida has high quality housing stock that is designed to create lasting communities. Factors which have brought us to this reality include:

- Homes are constructed with high-quality materials that are durable and low-maintenance.
- Homes are designed in accordance with “*green*” principles focusing on water and energy conservation and reduction in waste, which in turn reduces maintenance costs and makes housing more affordable in the long term.

Goal A2: Communities are designed to be walkable and to contain a mix of uses, so that residents have mobility options within their neighborhoods and can easily choose safe and healthy ways to get around.

Goal A3: Northeast Florida’s housing stock serves all of its diverse residents.

- Communities are designed to allow residents to age in place and be active throughout the lifespan.
- Development regulations ensure that multi-generational housing options are available.

Goal A4: Northeast Florida contains a range of housing options for its residents.

- The region recognizes that home-ownership is not a viable option for all of its residents, whether for lifestyle or economic reasons, and includes a mix of rental housing and owner-occupied housing.
- The region also recognizes that detached single-family homes are not best for all of its residents, and ensures that a mix of single-family and multi-family options is available through local regulatory processes.

Goal A5: The region ensures that very low income persons have quality housing while avoiding concentrations of poverty. Except in the case of senior and special needs housing, Northeast Florida will move away from public housing based on housing in publically–owned structures to a regional voucher program for citizens that require assistance based on income.

The region will create a regional housing assistance mechanism to implement the transition. *

Goal A6: *Significant developments* in the region present an opportunity to address many of the housing goals of First Coast Vision by design. As *significant developments* have the potential to impact the region, and regional requirements have the potential to impact the economics of development, the region will create an advisory committee of stakeholders that includes housing advocates, planners, landowners and developers by 2012 to establish housing review methodology by 2013 for impact assessment, minimum standards and review criteria. *

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. *Land Development Codes* are based on best practices and contain minimum standards that are proven to be cost effective. Codes are frequently evaluated and updated.
- b. Education on and incentives for sustainable construction methods and new technical advances is ongoing.
- c. Financing mechanisms that recognize the benefits of retrofit of homes and neighborhoods to save money, water, energy are available in Northeast Florida.
- d. Northeast Florida communities offer incentives to achieve mixed uses and incentives to encourage investment in existing communities.
- e. All building codes in the region require *universal design* by 2015.
- f. Encourage the creation of housing and supportive infrastructure for all of our citizens, including our aging population and those with special needs, and require linkage between the location of these facilities, access to mobility options and community building that ensures that these facilities are part of the community and not isolated from it.
- g. Encourage mechanisms to incentivize the construction of affordable housing, including allowing for flexibility to accommodate lifestyle choices that include smaller or more communal living.
- h. Create the regional mechanism to ensure that very low income persons have quality housing while avoiding concentrations of poverty by 2015. Phase out publically owned and publically subsidized multi-family complexes by 2060, using the cost savings and revenues of eliminating that program to expand a voucher program that allows residents more options to choose housing near their jobs or where they want to live.
- i. Create a methodology for NE Florida to assess how *significant developments* in the region should be asked to implement affordable housing goals.

Statement B: People are safe in Northeast Florida.

Goal B1: Northeast Florida is a safe region whose citizens feel safe in their neighborhoods. This perception of safety translates into vibrant communities with residents who interact with each other and spend time outdoors engaged in a variety of recreational pursuits.

Goal B2: Northeast Florida has housing stock that is safe and free from environmental hazards that can be detrimental to health.

- Goal B3: Northeast Florida has a safe transportation network that gives pedestrians and bicyclists equal priority with motor vehicles. Roadways are designed to minimize conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles or pedestrians, therefore resulting in safe travels regardless of transportation mode.
- Goal B4: The region is prepared to respond to and recover from the impacts of all hazards. The region defines “all hazards” as the complete list of hazards as identified in all Local Mitigation Strategies in the region.
- Goal B5: The region decreases risk to hospital patients, special needs and vulnerable populations due to emergencies.
- Goal B6: The region coordinates plans between all levels of government to ensure adequate and timely shelter capacity within the region for those residing in the hurricane evacuation areas.
- Goal B7: The region plans for and supports domestic security initiatives in the Northeast Florida region.
- Goal B8: The population of the region is educated about their vulnerability and their best options in the event of an emergency, and communication methods are efficient and effective.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Local governments are encouraged to work together to support each other and their residents by signing statewide *mutual aid agreements*, participating in regional and statewide disaster exercises, coordinating on updates to hurricane evacuation studies, and considering the impact and compatibility of plans on adjacent areas.
- b. All *comprehensive emergency management plans (CEMP)* and all annexes in the region are updated every 5 years and reviewed after any disaster.
- c. Define various categories of special needs populations to include residents outside the traditional definition, including residents of the region that do not have access to a private vehicle in the event of an emergency, and those without the resources to adequately prepare for an emergency, and include these populations as vulnerable on the maps and in planning for emergencies.
- d. Encourage the annual registration of special needs populations as defined by local governments, and assist with education of the general public on procedures and options for them in case of emergencies.
- e. Through partnerships, encourage additional shelters able to accommodate pets.
- f. Public buildings should be constructed as public shelters whenever feasible. Developer contributions to public buildings should take into account this cost, unless the local government determines a building is not suitable as a shelter.
- g. Shelter capacity, as both a local and regional asset, should be considered at an annual 7 county meeting. For the purposes of determining the impacts of comprehensive plan changes or *significant development* on the shelter

system, mitigation shall be required whenever there is an overall deficit of shelter spaces in the region.

- h. Support the *Regional Domestic Security Task Force* and its objectives to increase safety, coordinate response and allow for seamless communication in the region.
- i. Create, update frequently and implement a marketing strategy that will ensure that the population of the region is educated about emergency preparedness, is reached in ways that are most effective, and takes full advantage of partnerships that can help.
- j. Encourage residents and businesses to have a disaster plan.
- k. Officials prepare plans for populations, including special needs populations, and educate these populations on the facts, the plans, and their best options in the event of emergencies.
- l. To facilitate orderly and compliant evacuation, mechanisms are maintained that allow for a well-informed and well-prepared public. Mechanisms include a constantly evolving set of information tools that stays current with the prevailing communication mediums.
- m. Promote design that maximizes public safety.

Statement C: All of the people in Northeast Florida have access to jobs and can build wealth as the region prospers.

Goal C1: Northeast Florida has a robust economy that serves the needs of its residents with jobs that pay well and provide a full range of benefits. This economic well-being translates into a population with positive emotional and physical outcomes that result in increased productivity.

Goal C2: Northeast Florida leaders recognize that transportation efficiency and costs are an important element in housing affordability. A regional transit system provides affordable transportation options for the region's residents, while an emphasis on mixed-use communities with a balance of housing and job-generating land uses reduces the need for long commutes and provides for neighborhood supporting services.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Ensure that all residents have access to employment. Support job creation so that jobs are available for all that want to work, are in locations that are accessible to all, and that the economy encourages wealth-building for all of our residents.
- b. Train and retain a workforce of medical and allied health professionals, including medical technology.
- c. Support programs that provide residents of the region access to health insurance or other medical coverage that is high quality and affordable.
- d. See also the objectives under the Economic Vitality section.

Statement D: Our region is healthy, because our people have a healthy lifestyle and have access to quality health services.

Goal D1: Northeast Florida ranks as one of the nation's healthiest regions.

- Healthy habits are part of the region's culture, beginning at birth.

- Well designed communities promote active lifestyles and have reduced the number of “*food deserts*” in the region.
- Public-private partnerships have resulted in a regional network of community gardens and farmers’ markets that provide healthy food and jobs, while also preserving agricultural lands.
- As a result of this culture of health, Northeast Florida boasts low obesity rates and reductions in poor health outcomes associated with obesity.

Goal D2: Physical activity is a key component for reduction of chronic disease and poor health outcomes.

- Reduced commute times and automobile dependence provides additional opportunities for residents to engage in physical activity.
- Northeast Florida has reduced automobile dependence through community design that encourages walking and bicycles as transportation modes.
- Mixed-use communities that integrate residential and employment-generating land uses reduce the need to travel great distances for work.
- The Region also has a true multi-modal transportation network that further reduces commute times.

Goal D3: Northeast Florida residents have good access to quality health care and health-supportive services, including mental health services, regardless of location or socioeconomic status.

- A regional multi-modal transportation network ensures physical access to services, while a robust network of social services ensures meaningful access.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Reduce tobacco and illegal drug use in the region.
- b. Increasing the diversity and affordability of food options, including fresh and healthy food from groceries, restaurants and farmers markets.
- c. Healthy school lunches and physical activity getting to or at school. Reduce the population of students who are considered obese.
- d. Promote physical activity as a way to maintain and improve health.
- e. Increase proportion of residents that engage in regular physical activity.
- f. Increase the average *Walk Scores* of communities in the region.
- g. Ensure that the region’s residents have access to a healthy lifestyle.
- h. Encourage new development projects within the region to provide areas for community gardens.
- i. Encourage urban agriculture where appropriate.
- j. Encourage School Districts to allow for public access to recreational facilities.
- k. Encourage school districts within the region to promote healthy lifestyles and behavior. Increase the amount of health studies.
- l. The residents of the region have good access to quality health care, including mental health care.

- m. Encourage health care providers to educate patients on the importance of physical outside recreation activity. Health care providers have list of parks, recreational areas and open space areas to share with patients.
- n. Reduce toxic exposure indoors, including lead exposure and asthma in the region.

Section: THE GOALS FOR ECONOMIC VITALITY

Statement A: Our education system is world class and works for all of our residents.

Goal A1: Northeast Florida maintains a first-tier education system with a curriculum that is oriented towards both current and future industry needs and lifelong learning.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Northeast Florida makes education a first priority, politically and fiscally.
- b. College bound students in Northeast Florida are the best prepared college-bound students in the Country.
- c. For those students choosing an alternative path to college, the Northeast Florida education system includes nationally recognized trade curriculums.

Statement B: We develop to maximize our infrastructure in planned and connected centers.

Goal B1: Northeast Florida capitalizes on its deep water ports, airports and rail / roadway connections to the nation through the continued improvement and expansion of infrastructure, including centralized systems for water, sewer, fiber optics (high speed internet), electric and natural gas distribution.

Goal B2: A *Regional Atlas* is a series of images, lists and maps that identifies environmentally sensitive lands, built and planned major roadways, commercial and industrial lands, military bases, residential lands, and other land uses. Local governments use the *Regional Atlas* as a guide to coordinate planning efforts, prioritize public expenditures and facilitate economic development. *

Goal B3: Job centers are dispersed throughout the Region, ensuring that each person has an opportunity for employment within proximity to where they live. Through its *multi-modal transportation framework*, the region recognizes and encourages the link between transportation, access to employment, and economic development.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Northeast Florida makes development of regional employment centers and infrastructure a first priority, politically and fiscally.

- b. The region maintains a world-class system of *shovel ready*, full-service, and *entitled* regional employment centers.
- c. Northeast Florida is a *sustainable* region with an interconnected transit system, and alternative energy and water supplies.

Statement C: We support business.

Goal C1: Northeast Florida is one of the most conducive regions in the country for small business and entrepreneurial development, and provides the services and facilities necessary for their success. Through ready access to small business development and to start-up capital, entrepreneurs have a means to realize their ideas.

Goal C2: The health care sector has grown as a key component of Northeast Florida’s economic base. In addition to hospitals, clinics, doctor’s offices and other health sector facilities that serve Northeast Florida residents, the Region has attracted and retained nationally recognized research hospitals and medical technology industries as a result of its first-tier colleges and universities and positive business climate.

Goal C3: Government regulations and public policy are conducive to and supportive of a vibrant, diverse and competitive business environment.

Goal C4: Northeast Florida is home to many large businesses, and is one of the most attractive regions for Fortune 500 company headquarters.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Within the region, there is access to capital to support small business development, as well as to support business expansions.
- b. Small business success is further supported through a system of target-sector business incubators and economic gardening.
- c. We recruit and grow primary industries.
- d. Support the existing base of medical and related industry, and look for opportunities to increase these sectors and expand existing businesses and services.
- e. Maintain a *dashboard of data* for the region by county that allows for county comparison and county uniqueness.
- f. Maintain a robust research and development sector.

Statement D: We think, plan and act outside our borders.

Goal D1: Partnerships that extend beyond our region make the region competitive on both a national and international level.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Extra-jurisdictional economic development initiatives are achieved through partnerships that extend beyond our region.

Section: THE GOALS FOR RESOURCES FOR THE LONG TERM

Statement A: We link land use with resources and mobility.

- Goal A1: Government leaders are consistent in their policy to guide public and private land use toward a regional land use pattern that has created a healthy job to housing ratio in mixed use growth centers, has enhanced the efficiency of our transportation system, and maintained air quality.
- The region enjoys a healthy lifestyle with connections to regional recreation facilities, parks and green space, opportunities to access a high-quality education, housing in proximity to major employment centers, access to affordable housing and communities that are safe, walkable and pedestrian friendly.
- Goal A2: The region has an efficient regional transportation network and incorporates coordination of land uses and transportation efforts to support the higher density areas of the region which are oriented towards transit.
- Land use and transportation policies incentivize development types that allow for mobility choices.
 - Transit is affordable and provides service that is safe, reliable and convenient to all people at all stages of life.
 - The First Coast has one of the highest per capita transit ridership numbers in the State of Florida and has steadily reduced car and fossil fuel dependency.
 - Because of the placement of the mixture of jobs and people, commute times are some of the lowest in the State.
- Goal A3: Physical activity is a key component for reduction of chronic disease and poor health outcomes.
- Parks are located within a walkable distance of most of our residents, and we consider this goal as we locate new parks and new residential development.
 - Reduced commute times and automobile dependence provides additional opportunities for residents to engage in physical activity.
 - Northeast Florida has reduced automobile dependence through community design that encourages walking and bicycles as transportation modes.
 - Mixed-use communities that integrate residential and employment-generating land uses reduce the need to travel great distances for work.
 - The Region also has a true multi-modal transportation network that further reduces commute times.
- Objectives: How we will get there
- a. Identify areas appropriate for mixed-use development.
 - b. Communicate the benefits of density and mixed use development, including demonstration of property value increase. Emphasize balance between

- individual and common spaces and the transition of densities, so that residents of the region see the benefits, regardless of the lifestyle choices they make.
- c. Incentivize dense and mixed use development.
 - d. Educate the region on smart growth principles.
 - e. Incentivize private landowners to maintain wise forestry practices and maintain ecosystem services on their lands.
 - f. Maintain diversity of land use in the region.
 - g. Conservation of natural resources through public land acquisition to preserve ecosystem services.
 - h. Reduce impervious surfaces in the region.
 - i. Encourage infill and redevelopment.
 - j. Encourage use of low impact development practices.
 - k. Local governments coordinate utility siting with local land use planning to maximize efficiencies in resource distribution.
 - l. Encourage balance between land use and parking policies.
 - m. Commit to a *multi-modal transportation framework* for the region. Review it frequently to take advantage of changes in technology and practice but maintain the commitment until the framework is completed.
 - n. The *multi-modal transportation framework* is considered with transportation priorities, natural resource priorities and neighborhood context.
 - o. Encourage incentives for responsible development and smarter transportation planning, and learn from other neighborhoods and regions.
 - p. Sensitivity to communities in road and mobility infrastructure design.
 - q. Provide our residents with the option of living in communities that integrate walking and biking into daily life, and ensure that communities are planned for people first, not cars.
 - r. Give our residents great places to walk to safely. Encourage developers and local governments to promote mixed use communities that provide alternative forms of transportation, such as sidewalks, bike paths and transit stops in locations with highest density.
 - s. Use park design and community design to ensure that recreation areas are accessible to all residents, and provide mobility and programmatic options so that all of our residents can get to recreation areas without the use of a personal vehicle.
 - t. Promote physical activity as a way to maintain and improve health. Increase the proportion of trips of less than a mile that are accomplished by walking, and the proportion of trips of less than 5 miles that are accomplished by biking,
 - u. There is a wide range of housing options that provide choices to all of our residents and promote demographic and economic diversity as one way to ensure that our communities are viable and interesting places for the long term. Housing incorporates *universal design*, and is suitable and affordable to all income levels, to seniors and the disabled. There is sufficient housing stock to provide choices for all households, from single person to extended families with children.
 - v. Provide reliable transit options.
 - w. Designate areas for *transit oriented development (TOD)* and offer cost effective incentives within them for development that is affordable, dense, and/or green.
 - x. Provide regional transportation options.

Statement B: We conserve water.

Goal B1: The region maximizes water conservation by domestic, agricultural, industrial, and commercial users. Residents of the region understand water conservation issues through education programs.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Reduce gross and residential per capita residential water consumption.
- b. Reduce agricultural runoff by increasing % of farms that have implemented both water table and nutrient *Best Management Practices* (BMPs).
- c. Achieve 100% compliance with *NPDES* permits.
- d. Eliminate use of potable water for lawn irrigation by 2060.
- e. Maximize use of reclaimed water.
- f. Diversify sources of water.
- g. Educate the region on water consumption and conservation.
- h. Protect recharge areas.

Statement C: We protect water quality.

Goal C1: Northeast Florida maintains good surface water and drinking water quality.

- All water bodies meet water quality standards.
- The integrity of eco-systems is considered as valuable to the region as economic growth, and best practices, technologies and tools to balance these priorities are used by all communities in the region.
- Innovations in stormwater treatment and overall reductions in stormwater runoff have resulted in improved quality for all of the region's waterways.
- Water conservation measures, including the elimination of potable water as an irrigation source and "Florida Friendly" landscaping requirements, have reduced demand on the Floridan aquifer and reduced nutrient pollution in waterways.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Reduce discharge of nutrients and pollutants into surface and groundwater.
- b. Eliminate failing septic tanks.
- c. Expand and improve data collection and evaluation for water quality, including better coordination among agencies.
- d. Promote protection of functioning wetlands. Promote maintenance of riparian and wetland buffers. Purchase land and wetlands for water conservation purposes.
- e. Reduce discharge of nutrients and pollutants into surface and groundwater.

Statement D: We identify and protect *green infrastructure*.

Goal D1: The Regional *Green Infrastructure* is an interconnected system of natural and built infrastructure undeveloped lands and incorporates natural resource areas, recreational lands, and working lands. The region has

largely preserved the Regional *Green Infrastructure* identified in First Coast Vision and has been consistent with the spirit of *green infrastructure* by incorporating commercially viable forest land, cropland, natural resources, recreational facilities, parks and green spaces. *

Goal D2: Northeast Florida has an extensive, connected system of publicly accessible natural lands that includes greenways and trails and other recreational opportunities that promote physical activity. Exercise is routine in the region, and its impact is felt in the trend towards improving health of our residents, including reducing rates of chronic diseases.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Analyze and refine *Critical Land and Waters Identification Project (CLIP)* data for the region. Define and develop a *greenprint* for the region, so that the region can consider what to preserve before it identifies priorities for development. Conduct an economic analysis of *green infrastructure* in the region, and evaluate significant projects planned for the region as to their impacts, including economic, on regional *green infrastructure*.

Statement E: We protect air quality.

Goal E1: Northeast Florida maintains good air quality by keeping carbon emissions low as a result of improvements to the transportation network and more efficient energy use by consumers of energy.

- A regional transit system, transit-oriented development and more compact development patterns, including redevelopment along transit corridors, have resulted in reduced vehicle miles traveled and reduced the regional carbon footprint.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Reduce vehicle miles travelled in the region.
- b. Increase use of public transit.
- c. Increase energy efficiency.
- d. Encourage carbon sequestration.
- e. Develop a regional carbon emissions database.
- f. Maintain air quality standards.
- g. Reduce the negative impact that air quality has on the health of our residents

Statement F: We build for resiliency and identify and protect vulnerable parts of the region.

Goal F1: The built environment in the region is as resilient as possible, and we analyze and implement protection for vulnerable areas using regional *vulnerability maps*. *

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Develop and maintain a *vulnerability map or maps*, including projections for changes over time. The maps, once completed, would show vulnerable lands,

populations, and structures. *Vulnerability maps* are regularly updated. Impacts to vulnerability caused by changes in circumstances are considered using projections in time increments appropriate to Northeast Florida.

- b. Assess the ability of existing structures in the region to withstand emergencies, including wind events, flooding, and fire, and address deficiencies by creating building codes that increase disaster survivability in new construction and renovation. Create programs to assist owners of structures that were built to less rigorous standards to update for safety. Limit new construction, rebuilding and renovation in the most vulnerable areas as identified by the *vulnerability maps*. Allow no critical facilities where the use or the user creates unacceptable risk such as solid waste facilities, nursing homes, or hospitals in vulnerable areas or CHHA.
- c. Development is directed away from the areas anticipated to be most vulnerable to hazards. Growth within vulnerable areas occurs concurrently with mitigation for those impacts. NEFRC works with local governments on mitigation strategies to the extent they plan to add or move residential units in the *Coastal High Hazard Area*, through *significant developments* or changes to Comprehensive Plans to ensure the mitigation addresses potential impacts and results in no increase in risk or clearance time.

Statement G: We will determine the impact of climate change on Northeast Florida, and if we are vulnerable, we will plan, mitigate and adapt.

- Goal G1: We will determine the impact of climate change on Northeast Florida. We will determine which of our assets (people and built environment) are vulnerable, establish a plan so that we know what actions to take to address the impacts of climate change, if any, and mitigate the impacts whenever we can. If we identify impacts, we will take climate change adaptation into account in all planning, design, and infrastructure investment decisions made in the region. *
- Goal G2: The region has reached a balance by mitigating for the effects of climate change on sea level rise that have been observed as well as planning for adaptation to future effects.
- This has been achieved by utilizing efficient and climate-friendly fuels and technologies including alternative energy sources for power generation, industry and transportation.
 - The region has used its forest resources to create clean sources of energy, and is planning on using more carbon-free sources in the future.
 - It has also achieved balance by creating a synergy between the region's need for food, and preserving agriculture sufficient to allow the region to supply many of its needs locally.
 - The region maintains ecosystem services to preserve clean air, water, and habitat for wildlife populations, and to provide flood control.
- Goal G3: This region maintains viable, orderly, and resilient communities as possible under the conditions generated by climate change.
- Goal G4: Northeast Florida does its full part to maintain a *familiar climate*.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Using the steps outlined in the implementation plan, or other appropriate steps, conduct a study of the region's vulnerability to climate change. Among the considerations are sea level rise, water supply, conditions for ocean life, and changes in vegetation.
- b. Include in set of *vulnerability maps* high water levels in appropriate increments to show projected rises in sea level, if identified.
- c. Based on worst case, best case, and median scenarios for 2050 and 2100 (or other appropriate increments), account for changes in the physical, economic, and social conditions in the region, if any, and recommend adaptation actions likely to maintain the viability, security, and resilience of the communities in the region, where possible. Update adaptation action plan as needed.
- d. Conduct a detailed inventory of greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Develop a regional carbon emissions database.
- e. Devise a program of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the area. Reduce per capita consumption of fossil fuel-based energy, including industry and utilities, and diversify energy sources.
- f. Evaluate significant projects planned for the region as to their impact on carbon emissions.
- g. Maintain forest cover.
- h. Maintain tree canopy.
- i. Preserve natural areas that act as "*carbon sinks*" that help maintain the region's air quality. These areas also are important to water quality, wildlife and quality of life.
- j. The region's residents are educated on the links between their homes, the services, forests, wildlife and habitats that they value, and the planning and practices that enhance sustainability and adaptation to climate change. Development is encouraged in areas outside critical *green infrastructure* and those unlikely to be impacted by sea level rise.
- k. Bury utilities underground.
- l. Maintain or increase ecosystem services.
- m. Educate the region on sustainability.

Statement H: We are prepared for all hazards.

Goal H1: The region is prepared to deal with hazardous materials incidents.

Goal H2: We ensure that evacuation routes are identified and clearly designated and are at the capacity and quality needed to safely carry the expected number of evacuating vehicles within acceptable clearance times, and that we plan for safe re-entry.

Goal H3: The region completes emergency-related, post-disaster redevelopment and economic recovery as quickly as possible while mitigating future risk.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Support the preparation and implementation of hazardous materials programs, including the *Local Emergency Planning Committee*, that are protective of public safety, public health and the environment.
- b. Support public education and outreach initiatives that promote hazardous materials awareness, such as Hazardous Materials Awareness Week.
- c. Evacuation and re-entry plans are clearly defined and the public are well-educated on this topic, including who should evacuate based on evacuation zones and vulnerability.
- d. Evacuation plans in the region are considered in a regional context to ensure they are feasible and coordinated and to identify any recommendations that could make them work better together.
- e. The region's population is prepared for long term survival after a disaster, including health, hygiene and the security of people and property.
- f. NEFRC staff should support the activities of emergency management in the region or outside during and after a disaster.
- g. The *vulnerability map* should be consulted when reviewing plans for redevelopment, to ensure that buildings that are reconstructed are located in suitable areas and built to safe standards.

Statement I: We provide mobility choices to our residents and businesses.

Goal I1: The region has created and implemented an efficient *Multi-modal Transportation Framework* to move people and goods, and supported over time the infrastructure investments needed to make it work. The plan maintains an environment that includes mobility options to move goods and people to support business and industry. The region includes centers of population and jobs that are well-connected limit commute times for most residents and provide opportunities for all residents of the region to work if they choose. *

Goal I2: The regional transportation network supports the wide range of lifestyle choices available to First Coast residents.

- Dense, transit-oriented communities are spread throughout the region in locations that are supported by residents.
- A mixture of interesting residents live in these centers, which offer a diversity of jobs, schools, homes, civic, cultural and faith-based uses, recreation, services and amenities.
- Their densities allow for the most choices available to residents of the region in what to do close to home and how to travel.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. The region offers housing choices within proximity of job centers.
- b. Transportation modes for people are interconnected and provide access to job centers.
- c. Employers in the region are satisfied with their ability to be competitive in attracting and maintaining business and workforce.

- d. Intermodal connections are frequent and efficient and allow for the easy movement of freight and people between modes.
- e. Our goal is a transportation system that is efficient and cost effective. As transportation plans are made, assess, using frequently reviewed methodologies, the true costs of transportation in general and transit in particular, to determine cost effectiveness to the taxpayer, to the rider and to the economic development of the region.
- f. Make transit a viable choice for workers in the region.
- g. Review the number of bicycle and pedestrian traffic accidents and improve transportation network where necessary in areas with highest rate of accidents.
- h. Increase the proportion of residents that use cycling as a safe and viable mode of transportation.

Statement J: We fund mobility and maintain capacity.

Goal J1: The local governments and stakeholders of the region coordinate funding efforts to maximize efficiencies that allow for mobility choices for residents of the region. This includes collaboration on maintenance and operation of a regional transportation system that serves the suburban and urban parts of the region, with ways to connect for rural residents. Transportation funding in the region is reliable, equitable, efficient and affordable.

Goal J2: The region has a safe, efficient, well funded and well maintained regional road network that meets the requirements of population and economic growth and meets the challenges of transition away from fossil fuels to alternative energy. The road network is designed and maintained to be complementary to the regional transit network, and to all modes of transport and travel, including safe walking and biking.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Transportation costs are reasonable to users in the region.
- b. Reliable revenue sources in place for transportation improvements and maintenance.
- c. The transportation sector takes full advantage of public/private partnerships.
- d. Make existing roadways more efficient.

Statement K: We provide medical and general mobility to all our residents, including the transportation disadvantaged.

Goal K1: The region provides affordable mobility options other than the private car for all of our residents that do not own a car.

Goal K2: Northeast Florida residents have good access to quality health care and health-supportive services, including mental health services, regardless of location or socioeconomic status. A regional multi-modal transportation network ensures physical access to services, while a robust network of social services ensures meaningful access.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. Provide the most reliable, comprehensive and cost-effective service possible to the transportation disadvantaged. Use partnerships to realize regional efficiencies, provide access to all necessary services, and allow for trips that encourage social interaction among all of our citizens.
- b. Encourage the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization (NFTPO), Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), other regional/State transportation agencies and local governments to consider medical access in all transportation planning decisions.

Statement L: We embrace technology.

Goal L1: If technology can help us to improve quality of life in the region, we embrace it.

- Peak hour and peak period transportation deficiencies may be alleviated through technology.
- Transportation planning decisions are always made in the context of changing technology and the regional multi-modal framework is flexible to benefit from the opportunities provided by technology.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are included in the framework.
- The regional framework is cost effective and has reduced congestion levels along roadways that can no longer accommodate additional lanes because of various constraints.
- The region maintains travel times and the implementation of the incident management systems have minimized impacts on business operation and worker commute times.

Objectives: How we will get there

- a. We are receptive to technology that improves the transportation system or can otherwise benefit quality of life in the region.

First Coast Vision Definitions

Best Management Practices: State of the art practices, often shared by entities trying to achieve similar goals.

Carbon sinks: Anything that absorbs more carbon than it releases.

Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA): The Coastal High Hazard Area is Storm Surge Area 1 as defined in Florida Statutes. Limitations apply in this area to ensure that residents and vulnerable populations are protected.

Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans: These are the master operations documents and framework through which emergencies and disasters are handled by the State of Florida and its counties.

Critical Land and Waters Identification Project (CLIP): is a database that combines many databases into one, in order to allow for a regional or state level review of the environmental value of the lands and waters of Florida.

Dashboard of Data: An electronic format available on the internet that allows data to be accessed from several sources and used in multiple ways.

Entitled: A site that is governmentally approved for its proposed use except for building permits.

Familiar Climate: The climate that we have come to expect in Northeast Florida, based on prior years.

Food Deserts: Areas that lack access to affordable fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat milk, and other foods that make up the full range of a healthy diet.

Green: Environmentally friendly.

Green Infrastructure: The assets of the region that support natural ecosystems. This includes natural areas, areas that perform dual functions (flood plains that are farmed and used for recreation, for example) and the built environment that is designed to support ecosystems (pervious parking lots and sidewalks, rain gardens, or constructed wetlands, for example).

Greenprint: The map identifying regional green infrastructure.

Land Development Codes: Local regulations related to the development of land.

Local Emergency Planning Committee: These committees bring together related agencies in Florida regions to address safety issues related to hazardous materials.

Incident Management Systems: Generally, the operational framework used to respond to emergencies by agencies.

Intelligent Transportation Systems: Systems that add data and communications technology to transportation infrastructure and vehicles to improve the efficiency or safety of transportation.

Multi-modal Transportation Framework: A framework for transportation improvements and investments that considers all modes of transport and the connections between them. The framework will take into account all planning efforts in the region, transportation priorities, natural resource priorities and neighborhood context. It is designed to be an implementation mechanism to achieve a sustainable region, frequently reviewed but not abandoned until its goals are met.

Mutual Aid Agreements: Agreements signed by jurisdictions that agree on when and how they will support each other in the event of an emergency.

NPDES: The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System regulates point sources that discharge pollutants into US waters.

Regional Atlas: A series of images, lists and maps that identifies environmentally sensitive lands, built and planned major roadways, commercial and industrial lands, military bases, residential lands, and other land uses. It includes at a minimum, the Greenprint, the multi-modal transportation framework, and the vulnerability maps.

Regional Domestic Security Task Forces: Teams of local representatives who prepare for, prevent and respond to terrorist events.

Shovel-ready: A site that is governmentally approved for its proposed use, including building permits.

Significant Development: Development that reaches the threshold of Developments of Regional Impact, as they were defined by Section 380 of the Florida Statutes in 2010.

Sustainable: Consisting of a balance of the goals for economic vitality, resources for the long term, and the people who live and work in the region.

Transit Oriented Development: Mixed use areas designed to maximize access to public transportation and encourage ridership.

Universal Design: Design that produces building, products and environments that are accessible to both the able-bodied and the physically-challenged.

Vulnerability Maps: Maps that indicate the physical characteristics of the land, the physical, socio-economic and language characteristics of the people and the characteristics of buildings and the built environment that make parts of the region vulnerable to emergencies and disasters.

Walk Scores: Assessment from the website walkscore.com of the walkability of an address or neighborhood.

Public Input

RCI conducted a Town Hall meeting in each of the seven counties in the region to poll the public on possible growth patterns, to get comment on the draft goals and objectives and to assemble public input on where they thought the region should be in 50 years.

About 1,300 people participated in the Grow Smart survey and Town Hall meetings in each of the seven counties in the region conducted in 2008 and 2009 to gather input into the perception of issues facing the region during planning for Reality Check First Coast. More than 200 participated in meetings related to regional issues to be addressed in Reality Check First Coast. More than 500 people were involved in planning for or participated in Reality Check First Coast. Another 350 attended meetings related to the Guiding Principles after Reality Check. Finally, since Reality Check, polling has been conducted to determine which growth pattern best reflects the vision First Coast residents have for the region in 2060. Ultimately, 1,514 were polled, most after discussions related to how we or our children or grandchildren might live if we grew in each of the five patterns. Approximately 41% of those polled preferred the Multiple Growth Centers pattern, followed by 24% who preferred the Urban Compact pattern, 23% who preferred the Corridor pattern, 9% who preferred the Dispersed pattern and 3% who preferred the Trend.

A second set of Town Hall meetings in February and March of 2011 provided an opportunity for residents to tell us what they think about the region and its future, and to allow them to give specific comments on the draft goals and objectives. This resulted in a healthy review of the scope we had set up for First Coast Vision, to see if, given our work and input to date, we wanted to continue to address those issues we had first identified as being related to a vision for growth and development in the region for the next 50 years, or whether changes were warranted. Ultimately, we stuck with the original scope of the vision, to avoid creating expectations in areas that the RCI has little or no ability to influence. That said, however, the public comment is fascinating and all are encouraged to review it at the First Coast Vision Library at www.FirstCoastVision.com. In addition, it resulted in two major areas of change. Language was added and refined in covering agriculture, the St. Johns River, and working waterfront. In response to public comment, a section was added to address the critically important issue of how to take First Coast Vision from a document to a movement that will shape growth and development in the region for the next 50 years.

What the people said

Not everyone in Northeast Florida supports a vision, but we were gratified by the fact that residents came to Town Hall meetings and were willing to talk to us about it. While approaches to the future differed in public comment, they supported the theme that has been identified since Reality Check First Coast: a rejection of the status quo and recognition that our region and its

assets, especially its people, are worthy of dialogue that will help us to grow in a way that will help us realize our goals. Choice is the other theme that surfaced. Providing a choice of jobs, of recreation, of transportation and generally of how we live is a theme that recurs across all polling and input from meetings. Finally, there was hope expressed by those who support visioning that First Coast Vision will become a movement, and not be “another plan on the shelf”.

First Coast Consortium Input

What does the Vision look like?

Insert Image

How do we get there?

Short term

We will measure our progress. Look to the First Coast Library for baseline measures, and annual updates. Over the next XX years, we will create the following, by creating RCI committees or working with partners on current initiatives to develop them:

- Regional Housing Assistance Mechanism to transition to an all voucher system
- Housing review methodology for significant developments
- Regional Atlas
- Regional Green Infrastructure Plan
- Vulnerability Maps
- Determine climate change impact, and, if indicated, mitigation and adaptation plans
- Multi-modal transportation framework for the region

Long term

RCI will dedicate itself to turning First Coast Vision into a movement.

The First Coast Vision Library

The following documents have been created as we worked on First Coast Vision. All are available at www.FirstCoastVision.com.

- Results of Grow Smart Survey
- Reality Check First Coast Report

- Committee Draft of Goals and Objectives
- Public Comment from February and March 2011
- Detailed Implementation Plans
- Baseline Measures of the State of the Region

Who Are We?

The Regional Community Institute of Northeast Florida, Inc.

As in most diverse communities, the Northeast Florida Region faces challenges including growth, preserving valuable eco-systems, improving economic viability, and maintaining the quality of life that is the reason we live in Northeast Florida. Northeast Florida is at a critical juncture. Years of rapid change and recent economic challenges across the spectrum of communities has heightened awareness that growth related issues are interconnected and that they can best be addressed on the regional level.

The Regional Community Institute of Northeast Florida, Inc. (RCI) was created in 2004 as the non-profit organization associated with the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC). The RCI is a broad group of stakeholders representing the seven counties in Northeast Florida. The counties are connected not only by shared boundaries, but by the common need to create new, and strengthen existing, resources for citizens who live and work in the region. As a non-profit organization, the RCI has the flexibility to partner with, and accept donations from, all of the diverse stakeholders inside and outside the Region. The NEFRC provides administration and staffing to the RCI. Graduates of the NEFRC's Regional Leadership Academy are all members of the RCI. The RCI was created do the following:

Facilitate a First Coast Vision: With the benefit of regional leaders, including those nourished by their experience at the Regional Leadership Academy, the RCI is creating First Coast Vision. Reality Check First Coast, a regional visioning exercise, kicked off First Coast Vision in May of 2009. The Reality Check exercise resulted in the identification of growth patterns that are alternatives to the trend, and guiding principles that are valued by the regional leaders that participated, including a large and representative group of elected officials, business people and non-governmental agency managers. To get additional input, the Reality Check visioning exercise was repeated in each County as County Checks, and with young people exclusively, as Generation Check and Generation Check 2011. Staff conducted public education on the choices we have as a Region as far as growth patterns, and Committees of the RCI drafted goals and objectives for First Coast Vision. Public input on the draft has helped refine the goals and objectives into First Coast Vision. Ultimately, the RCI will present First Coast Vision to NEFRC and, it is anticipated, recommend that it be used as the basis for the update to the regional plan that guides NEFRC policy, the Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

Assess the State of the Region: The RCI has considered the performance measures that are appropriate to a fair assessment of the state of the Region. The RCI will determine what goals we should have as a Region in each of the measured data areas, and the benchmarks we should achieve in order to reach our goals. It is anticipated that the RCI will, once a baseline has been established, issue an annual report on progress, to get the word out on our performance, to galvanize support for the things we need in order to continue to thrive, and to encourage us to do better in the future.

RCI Board Members: INSERT PHOTO As of March, 2011, the following regional leaders serve on the RCI Board:

- Mr. Bob Rhodes, Foley & Lardner. LLP, *Chair*
- Mr. Michael Boyle, *Vice Chair*
- Ms. Linda Myers, CPA, Partner, Myers Resources, LLC, *Secretary/Treasurer*
- Ms. Carol Brady, Executive Director, NE Florida Healthy Start Coalition, Inc.
- Ms. Robin K. Burchfield, President, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce
- Hon. Doug Conkey, Clay County Board of County Commissioners
- Ms. Shannon Eller, Government Affairs Coordinator, JTA
- Dr. Dawn Emerick, Executive Director, Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida, Inc.
- Hon. Art Graham, Florida Public Service Commission
- Mr. Wilfredo J. Gonzalez, District Director, US Small Business Administration
- Ms. Kellie Jo Kilberg, IOM, CCE, President/CEO, Clay County Chamber of Commerce
- Hon. Chip Laibl, Commissioner, Putnam County Board of County Commissioners
- Hon. Jon Netts, Mayor, City of Palm Coast
- Hon. Bob Page, Mayor, City of Green Cove Springs
- Ms. Mary Alice Phelan, Director/Community Relations, St. Vincent's HealthCare
- Ms. Sherrie Raulerson, Superintendent, Baker County School District
- Mr. David Reed, Conservation Coordinator, JEA
- Mr. Harold Rutledge, President/CEO, The Rutledge Group
- Dr. Quinton White, Executive Director, Marine Science Research Institute, Jacksonville University

First Coast Vision Sponsors

First Coast Vision Volunteers

We wish to thank the Northeast Florida Regional Council, for their unfailing support throughout the visioning process.



Northeast Florida Regional Council Board members pictured top row, left to right: Mr. Geoff Sample (SJRWMD), Mr. Greg Strong (FDEP), Hon. Ken Bryan (St. Johns County Commission Chair), Hon. Bill Bishop (Jacksonville City Council), Hon. Jay Morris (St. Johns County Commission), Hon. Adam Giddens (Baker County Commission), Hon. Dick Brown (Jacksonville City Council), Hon. Kenny Eubanks (Putnam County Commission)

Middle row, left to right: Mr. Jim Green (FDOT), Hon. Jimmy Anderson (Baker County Commission), Hon. Bob Page (Mayor, Green Cove Springs), Mr. Hugh Fish (Baker County), Hon. Jon Netts (Mayor, Palm Coast), Hon. Wendell Davis, (Clay County Commission), Mr. Daryl Register (Baker County), Hon. Paul Parsons (City of Atlantic Beach Commission), Hon. Milissa Holland (Flagler County Commission), Mr. Bob Spaeth (Nassau County), Mr. Bob Sgroi (Flagler County)

Bottom row, left to right: Mrs. Karen Stern (St. Johns County), Hon. Catherine Robinson (Mayor, City of Bunnell), Hon. Nancy Harris (Putnam County Commission), Hon. Chereese Stewart (Clay County Commission), Hon. Shirley Graham (Mayor, Town of Callahan)