



2011 Annual Report

North Central Florida
Regional Planning Council



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LETTER TO OUR CITIZENS

During this past year, the Council continued to be a very successful public agency that provides valuable services in fulfilling our mission to improve the quality of life of the region's citizens by coordinating growth management, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments. The following pages summarize these accomplishments.

The Council, in partnership with economic development organizations and local governments, promotes regional strategies, partnerships and solutions to strengthen the economic competitiveness and quality of life of the 11 counties and 33 incorporated municipalities in the north central Florida region. The Council, whose members are local elected officials and gubernatorial appointees, administers a variety of state and federal programs for north central Florida including Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor and Union Counties.

Programs include development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Strategic Regional Policy Plan, technical assistance to local governments in development of comprehensive plans, land development regulations and grant management, and administration of developments of regional impact, local mitigation strategies, hazardous materials, homeland security and economic development programs. In addition, the Council staffs the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, the North Central Florida

Local Emergency Planning Committee, the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team and *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*.

Our successes in these activities have been realized through the dedicated work of the Council staff under the guidance provided by our members and by the leaders of our affiliated agencies, including the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*, the North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee and the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Team. All of these groups remain committed to achieving excellence as they continue to pursue ways to improve our region.

Of particular note are the extremely important and beneficial services the Council continued to provide to rural local governments in the areas of comprehensive planning, community development, grant pro-

urement and grant administration. By combining their limited financial resources, small rural jurisdictions have been able to have access to these services of the Council that they would have been unable to afford on an individual basis. Working together as partners, the Council, counties and cities have been able to improve the quality of life in rural north central Florida.

We hope that you find the discussion of our programs in this report to be informative. Also provided is a summary of our financial status and a brief look at the year ahead.

The Council members and staff are most appreciative of the support received from our member local governments and the citizens of the region. We look forward to working together with you in the future for the betterment of north central Florida.

Sincerely,



Roy Ellis
Chair



THE REGION

The north central Florida region includes 11 counties and 33 incorporated municipalities in the north central portion of Florida. Containing nearly 7,000 square miles of area, the region is characterized by its abundant natural resources, which include the world-famous Suwannee River, the marshes of the Gulf Coast, cypress swamps, upland forests and a large number of clear turquoise springs.

According to the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, the population of the region in the year 2011 was 491,877, an increase of 48,651 persons over the 2001 population of 443,226 representing a 11.0 percent increase for the past ten years.

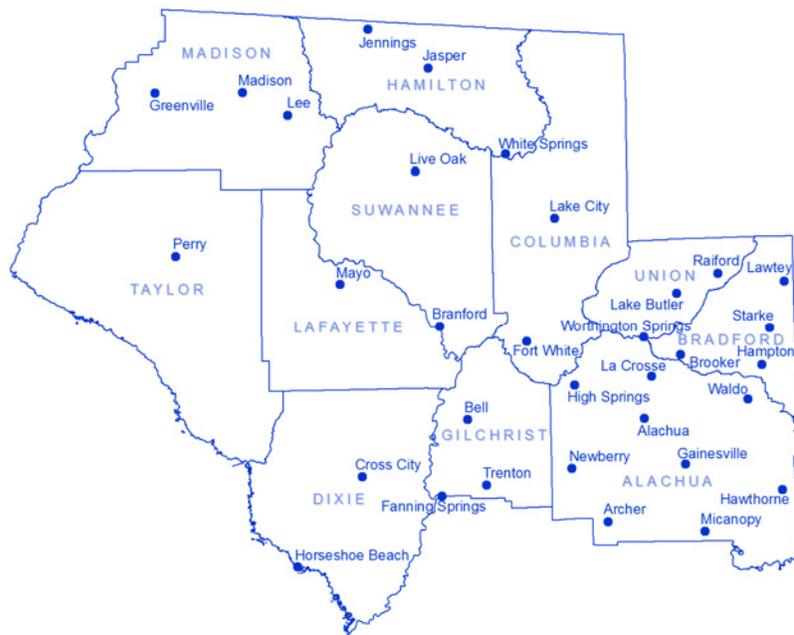
The economic base of the north central Florida region relies heavily on the government and services sectors, with the University of Florida in Gainesville accounting for a major portion of the government employment. The City of Gainesville is the regional retail center and, together with Alachua County, accounts for 50.3 percent of the total population of the north central Florida region.

Mission Statement: To improve the quality of life of the Region's citizens, by coordinating growth management, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments.



North Central Florida Region

North Central Florida Counties and Municipalities



The Council is an association of 24 general purpose local governments. Membership includes all 11 counties and 13 of the municipalities in the region. One-third of the total representatives are appointed by the Governor, with the remainder appointed by member local governments. Two-thirds of the representatives must be local elected officials.

The Council meets monthly. At its May meeting, the Council adopts the annual work program and budget. Also at this meeting, the Council elects the officers for the organization: Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary/Treasurer from among its ranks.

Council members serve on several standing and ad hoc committees appointed by the Chair. The purpose of these various committees is to advise the Council on administrative and programmatic matters, including planning and development activities which come before the Council for review and comment. The Council serves as a forum for the coordination and review of federal/state/local government, and private sector planning and development programs and activities affecting the north central Florida region.

In addition to the regional planning and review activities, the Council provides a variety of services to benefit its local governments. These services include: community planning assistance, grant application and administration services, transportation planning assistance, hazardous waste monitoring, emergency response planning assistance, and economic development activities.

ALACHUA COUNTY

- Susan Baird
- Mike Byerly
- * Thomas Collett
- Paula DeLaney
- Lee Pinkoson
- * Vacant

Alachua

Ben Boukari, Jr.

Archer

Frank Ogborn

Gainesville

- Susan Bottcher
- Todd Chase
- Thomas Hawkins
- Scherwin Henry
- Randy Wells

Hawthorne

Eleanor Randall

High Springs

Byran Williams

Newberry

Jordan Marlowe

Waldo

Louie Davis

BRADFORD COUNTY

- * Vacant
- Daniel Riddick

Starke

Carolyn Spooner

COLUMBIA COUNTY

- Stephen Bailey
- Rusty DePratter
- * James Montgomery

Lake City

Stephen Witt

DIXIE COUNTY

- Jason Holifield
- * Lorene Thomas

GILCHRIST COUNTY

- * Vacant
- Kenrick Thomas

HAMILTON COUNTY

- Ronny Morgan
- * Charles Williams

Jasper

LaBarfield Bryant

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

- * Adeniyi Aderibigbe
- Donnie Hamlin

MADISON COUNTY

- Roy Ellis
- * Mike Williams

City of Madison

Myra Valentine

SUWANNEE COUNTY

- * Sandra Haas
- Wesley Wainwright

Live Oak

Garth Nobles, Jr.

TAYLOR COUNTY

- * Charles Maultsby
- Mark Wiggins

Perry

Alphonso Dowdell

UNION COUNTY

- James Tallman
- * Vacant

* Gubernatorial Appointee

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Kraig McLane, St. Johns River Water Management District
Vacant, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Vacant, Enterprise Florida, Inc.
Vacant, Florida Department of Transportation
Vacant, Suwannee River Water Management District

REGIONAL

Dealing with issues of growth provides opportunities for regional cooperation and planning.

Being an association of local governments with strong ties to state and federal agencies, the Council is uniquely positioned to coordinate the development and implementation of strategies designed to address the problems and opportunities created by growth.

Regional Planning

North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan

During 2011, the Council adopted Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based Amendments to the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan. The following paragraphs summarize the amendments by strategic regional subject area.

Affordable Housing

A new goal and several new policies were added to the Affordable Housing Strategic Regional Subject Area which address the mitigation of affordable housing impacts for Developments of Regional Impact. A new policy was added concerning mitigation strategies to address affordable housing needs for Developments of Regional Impact.

Economic Development

The Economic Development Strategic Regional Subject Area was replaced with strategies from the Council-adopted Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Emergency Preparedness

A new policy was added which encourages coordination among Valdosta, Georgia, Dothan, Alabama, Tallahassee,

Florida and north central Florida local governments to provide hazardous materials emergency responders to Madison County.

Natural Resources of Regional Significance

A new regional goal and associated policies were added encouraging the use of Natural Resources of Regional Significance in a sustainable manner, such as: encouraging the use of low impact development techniques within Natural Resources of Regional Significance; discouraging the transfer of water between water management districts until receiving jurisdiction has implemented all practicable water supply alternatives and conservation measures; encouraging cooperative efforts to develop local and regional water supplies within water management districts instead of transporting water across district boundaries; and encouraging the

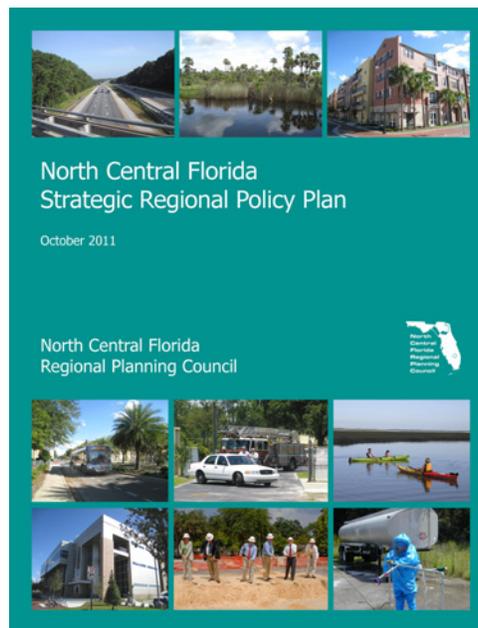
use of water sources nearest the area of use whenever possible.

Regional Transportation

A map of the regional road network was added to the regional plan. Additionally, policies were added which encourage the use of Transportation Planning Best Practices within urban areas as an alternative to traditional transportation concurrency.

Foley Master Development of Regional Impact

Also during 2011, Council staff conducted a sufficiency review of the Foley Master Development of Regional Impact. The project is a residential, retail commercial and service, hospital/medical, office, hotels and educational facilities multi-phased development consisting of ten planning areas and 82,797 acres of agriculture-transfer areas located in Taylor County.



In 2011, the Council amended the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan based upon the Evaluation and Appraisal Report for the Plan.

Review Activities

One of the ways the Council implements the regional plan is through its review responsibilities. The Governor has designated the Council as the area-wide clearinghouse for all federally-funded projects that affect the region, and other review activities undertaken as a result of state legislation. In 2011, the Council reviewed 107 projects submitted by private development interests, private not-for-profit corporations, units of local government, as well as state and federal agencies. Reviews included the following types.

- Applications for federal assistance totaling \$41,302,769
- Local comprehensive plans and plan amendments
- 10-year site plans of major electric utilities
- Environmental impact statements
- Local government comprehensive plan evaluation and appraisal reports
- U.S. National Forest land and resource management plans and amendments

The Council reviewed these projects to:

1. Avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts that may be created by an activity in neighboring communities or counties;
2. Ensure coordination and consistency with local gov-

ernment and strategic regional policy plans; and

3. Avoid duplication or conflict with other local or area plans and programs.

Of the 107 review items in 2011, the Council reviewed 35 amendments to local government comprehensive plans as well as 12 local government comprehensive plan evaluation and appraisal reports. The Council forwarded its findings on local government comprehensive plans to local governments under the expedited review process and to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for their consideration in determining the consistency of local government comprehensive plans with the State Comprehensive Plan and the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan under the coordinated review process.

The Council also reviewed 30 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant applications, 19 U.S. Federal Transit Administration grant applications for either capital assistance or operating assistance, five U.S. Department of Agriculture grant/loan applications and six other review items. The Council provides comments on applications for federal assistance to the Florida State Clearinghouse, which is housed in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The Florida State Clearinghouse administers the intergovernmental coordination and review process of certain state and federal activities within the State of Florida which involve federal financial assistance and/or direct federal activity.



The Suwannee River is recognized as a Natural Resource of Regional Significance in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

During 2011, the Council continued working on ongoing public safety and regulatory compliance activities and also started several new projects.

Local Emergency Planning Committee

The North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee continued its mission of increasing chemical safety in our communities. The Council has provided staff support to the Committee since 1989.

The Committee's tools included planning, training, reviewing, exercising, offering How-to-Comply assistance and educating the public. An updated emergency response plan for the north central Florida region was updated in 2011.

During 2011, the Local Emergency Planning Committee conducted a series of How-to-Comply seminars for facilities which use or store chemicals. These seminars were held in Gainesville, Lake City and Starke and included using the new Florida Hazardous Materials Information System. This online reporting system is intended to make it easier for facilities to report their chemicals and easier for emergency responders to have access to this information during an emergency.

Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team

The Council continued to provide staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. The Team is comprised of seven counties and three municipalities which have joined together to

form the organization through an interlocal agreement.

During 2011, a hazardous materials technician class was conducted in Live Oak. A decontamination trailer was deployed in Gilchrist County. The Team continued using a training trailer which allowed local delivery of advanced hazardous materials training.

In 2011, Lafayette County completed the process of joining the Team. Other Team members include Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Suwannee and Union Counties as well as the following cities: Gainesville, Lake City and Starke.

Emergency Management

In 2011, Council staff assisted with training and exercises based on the results of the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study. Training included hosting a session at the 2011 Governor's Hurricane Conference. Council staff

also served as an evaluator at the Statewide Hurricane Exercise. The scenario involved a threat which required the relocation of the State Emergency Operations Center from Tallahassee to Camp Blanding in Clay County.

Council staff also helped plan and implement a statewide video teleconference table top strike team exercise for the Florida Department of Health. Facilitators were recruited from other regional planning councils in order to simultaneously conduct table top exercises at seven locations across the state and the Florida Department of Health headquarters in Tallahassee. The Florida Department of Health received a Davis Productivity Award for innovation and cost savings for the statewide strike team exercise.

In 2011, Council staff assisted with the updates on Multi-year Training and Exercise Plans for the North (Tallahassee) and Northeast (Jacksonville) Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.



Staff from regional planning councils from across the state often work together as a team on emergency preparedness projects. The evaluation team pictured above is from the 2011 Statewide Hurricane Exercise conducted at Camp Blanding.

First Responder Training

In 2011, Council staff coordinated hazardous materials emergency response training classes. Council staff conducted 22 classes for the Local Emergency Planning Committee. A total of 266 emergency responders completed 5,388 hours of training. This is an increase of 18 percent in the number of training hours from the previous year. Council staff taught classes on "Using Electronic Data for Identifying and Responding to Chemicals Transported in Your County."

Council staff taught a Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program class in Rockledge in March 2011. The planning and methodology for this exercise is required for all emergency management exercises conducted in Florida. Council staff assisted in September 2011 with teaching Hurricane Evacuation and Re-entry at the Broward County Emergency Operations Center.

Hazardous Waste

All counties in Florida are required by law to conduct annual site visits to verify the hazardous waste management practices of 20 percent of the businesses and government agencies in a county.

The Council continued to provide compliance assistance during the required verification visits. A goal of the assistance continued to be helping facilities properly manage waste in a cost efficient manner.

In coordination with Hazardous Materials Awareness Week, a series of "How to Stay Out of Trouble with Used Oil Storage and Hazardous Waste Management" seminars were conducted.

Interoperable Communications

The Council assisted with a number of training and exercise interoperable communications events. This enables responders from different agencies with different radios to talk to each other when responding to emergency situations.

Council staff served as the Chief Controller for "Operation Omega," a two-day regional interoperable communications training exercise held at Camp Blanding in November 2011. Council staff prepared the exercise plan, helped recruit evaluators from other regional planning councils and prepared the After Action Report. Council staff also served as the Controller for the North Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Force exercise held in Steinhatchee in April 2011.

The Council organized classes on the Florida Interoperability Network, Mutual Aid Radio Communications, and Emergency Deployable Interoperable Communications System/Emergency Deployable Wide Area Remote Data System. Council staff also assisted with the inaugural Florida Interoperability Summit Workshop held in August 2011 and the Florida Interoperable Network Conference conducted in September 2011.

In November 2011, staff helped write two exercise plans and a combined Controller and Evaluator Handbook for the Communicating Across Regions and States Operation, which is being planned for 2012. This is a joint exercise between the North (Tallahassee) and Northeast (Jacksonville) Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.



During Operation Omega Interoperable Communications exercise, a communication patch was tested from a helicopter, through a Florida National Guard Regional Emergency Response Network vehicle working with the Alachua County Fire Rescue Mutual Aid Radio Cache to a specials weapons and tactics unit rescuing a hostage captured from an Urban Search and Rescue Team.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic development program of the Council strives to promote sustainable, long-term economic prosperity in the region by conducting comprehensive economic development planning, assisting local governments and economic development organizations with implementation activities and by promoting tourism opportunities of the region as a means of economic development.

Economic Development Planning

In 1978, the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration designated the north central Florida region as an Economic Development District. Since then, the Council has served as the primary regional economic development planning organization for the north central Florida region. The Council continued to maintain a high level of involvement in 2011 by providing technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in order to promote sustainable economic growth of the region.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Council staff continued to promote initiatives that support the five regional priorities identified in the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the Economic Development District, which was approved by the U.S. Economic Development Administration in 2007. Those five priorities are: support the two Rural Economic Development Initiative Catalyst Sites in the North Central Florida Rural Area of Critical Economic

Concern; promote regional tourism through *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*; create strategies to increase the labor force in the Healthcare and Life Science industries; seek opportunities to improve the Multimodal Infrastructure of the region; and expand and support regional business incubators and research parks.

In 2011, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee proposed an amendment to the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Long Range Priorities. This amendment was designed to recognize the importance of sustainable, quality groundwater availability to the region, both from an economic development as well as a quality of life perspective. The amendment to the Long Range Priorities of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy promotes sustainable water resource management by encouraging use of the water

resources of the region in a sustainable manner, maintaining adequate supplies of high-quality groundwater, and strengthening regional control of area surface and groundwater systems.

In 2011, the Council completed a disaster resiliency study in order to prepare the region to rebound economically from future natural disasters and to aid in a more rapid recovery effort. The study was funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and identifies concentrations of housing, businesses, and critical infrastructures that may be located in hurricane/flooding prone areas. The study also provides an economic analysis of the effects of a catastrophic regional event by modeling the results of a category five hurricane striking the region. The study is a tool that regional decision makers can utilize for advance planning, allowing for better post disaster outcomes.



The Santa Fe College Perry Center for Emerging Technologies in Alachua is a U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration funded project and is a component of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The Original Florida Tourism Task Force

In many rural communities, tourism is often the primary source of economic development activity. *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force* markets the ten-county "Natural North Florida" region by promoting the development of nature, culture and heritage based tourism. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from each of the participating counties, appointed by their respective county commissions, to support and direct the regional tourism development effort.

Since 1993, the Council has provided the staffing services for the Task Force. Council staff assists the Task Force in upgrading and maintaining the Visit-NaturalNorthFlorida.com website, organizes regional press familiarization trips, coordinates consumer travel show participation, creates proactive publicity campaigns, and produces collateral materials to meet the goals of the Task Force marketing plan.

In 2011, the Task Force, with technical assistance from Council staff, successfully applied for and was awarded a Rural Regional Development Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (formerly the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development). This grant provided funds to help implement the Task Force's marketing plans in order to build capacity in the rural communities within the region, thus fostering additional economic development opportunities.

During the year, the Task Force hosted outdoor and travel writers on two themed press familiarization tours in the region to

educate the writers about the numerous tourism related amenities that the region has to offer. The theme for the two tours was, "Farm to Table," and highlighted locally grown produce and local restaurants and markets that provide local produce to the public. During the course of the two tours, the writers were taken to various farms from across the region that offer everything from, "You-Pick" fruits and vegetables to certified organic produce.

While each tour follows a specific theme, along the way the writers are also exposed to other local attractions as well, providing a broad image of the region. These tours provide journalists with personal experiences for writing, publishing or posting. The stories and articles published by the writers after these familiarization tours have proven to be a valuable tool in the promotion of Natural North Florida as an alternative travel destination in

the state. The impact of these tours has far reaching effect as the participating journalists continue to publish articles about Natural North Florida for months after the tours have concluded in magazines, newspapers and internet blogs.

The Task Force also created a retro-styled placemat similar to those used by diners and restaurants in the 1960s. The placemat displayed a map of the region and colorful icons that featured various activities for visitors to enjoy while in the area. The purpose of the placemat was to educate travelers about the numerous activities available in the region and to drive traffic to the Natural North Florida website. Fifty thousand placemats were distributed to restaurants throughout the region that were located along major traffic corridors as well as areas outside the region.



Travel writers and members of *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force* harvest fruits and vegetables from Tuten's U-Pick Farms in Madison County as part of the, "Farm to Table," press familiarization tour and local foods promotion.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

During 2011, the Council offered technical assistance to local governments which do not have available staff or expertise for certain activities. These activities ranged from comprehensive planning to community development.

Comprehensive Planning

In response to the requirements of Florida growth management legislation, the Council continued to place a significant emphasis on comprehensive planning assistance for local governments. During 2011, the Council continued to assist counties and cities throughout the region in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act.

The Act requires counties and cities to prepare, adopt, update and implement a comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development in their communities. The comprehensive plan must address future land use, transportation, housing, public facilities, including potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and stormwater drainage, conservation of natural resources, recreation and open space, intergovernmental coordination and capital improvements. In addition, the comprehensive plan may include optional elements such as public school facilities, economic development, and public buildings and facilities.

The comprehensive plan must be implemented through the adoption of land development regulations governing the subdivision of land, use of land, protection of potable wellfields, regulations subject to flooding, protection of environmentally sensitive lands, signage, public facility concurrency and onsite

traffic flow and parking. The Act also requires local governments to evaluate their comprehensive plan every seven years to determine whether it complies with all statutory and administrative rule requirements. Such evaluations may result in recommended amendments to the comprehensive plan.

The Council provided ongoing comprehensive planning assistance to local governments to assist with interpretations of comprehensive plans and land development regulations, preparation of comprehensive plan and land development regulation amendments, and concurrency assessments of plats and site and development plans.

In particular, the Council assisted eight counties and eight municipalities process 97 development-related applications. This assistance included the review and adoption of 32 comprehensive plan map and text amendments. The Council also assisted

these local governments with 39 land development regulation map and text amendments, 19 land development regulation special exceptions and special permits, seven concurrency assessments for plats, variances, nonconforming use changes, development orders and site and development plans.

The Council assisted counties and municipalities in preparing concurrency assessments to evaluate the impacts of development on the level of service for roads, water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, stormwater drainage, and recreation facilities.

The Council assisted two municipalities prepare Evaluation and Appraisal Reports of their local government comprehensive plans pursuant to the Community Planning Act. These reports evaluated the success of the plans and included recommendations for amendments to update the comprehensive plans.



The Council provided assistance to Columbia County and other local governments throughout the north central Florida region with comprehensive planning and land development regulation.

Community Development Block Grants

Since 1976, the Council has assisted local governments with applications and administration for the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program. The Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program is a federal program, which came out of the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and is administered by the State of Florida. Eligible local governments apply to the State for funding through a competitive process.

The purpose of the Community Development Block Grant program is to help reduce and reverse community decline and restore community vitality. This is done by addressing the housing stock, improving infrastructure and assisting private businesses with infrastructure needs so they can be job creators.

Though the program ultimately benefits the local governments by providing grants for infrastructure, the beneficiaries of this program are primarily residents whose incomes are within the low- to moderate-income range for their community. The Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program has several different categories which assist local governments with improving infrastructure and creating jobs for low- to moderate-income residents and neighborhoods.

The categories are Housing, Neighborhood Revitalization, Commercial Revitalization and Economic Development. Housing is a direct benefit program, in which funds are used to rehabilitate or replace homes of low- to moderate-income families. This

helps the individual family, but also helps the community by improving the local housing stock. Neighborhood Revitalization, both a direct benefit program and community-wide benefit, in which funds are used to rehabilitate or provide new infrastructure to primarily low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, such as paving roads, replacing or providing new water or sanitary sewer lines and providing connections to the lines or constructing community facilities.

Commercial Revitalization is used to improve the public right-of-way through improving sidewalks, lighting and building facades of downtown areas or commercial revitalization areas, making areas more attractive and safer, thereby making it more likely that private businesses will locate in the revitalized area and hire local residents. Economic Development funds are used to provide necessary infrastructure

for a private business to locate or remain open within the boundaries of a local government. Private businesses that directly benefit from economic development funds agree to hire a certain number of low- to moderate-income residents.

In 2011, Council staff assisted the following communities with applications for Housing, Commercial Revitalization and Neighborhood Revitalization grant funds: City of Lake City - \$750,000, City of Madison - \$700,000 and Town of Mayo - \$650,000. The Council continued to provide administrative assistance for two projects for Lake City, and projects in Bradford County, City of Live Oak, City of Madison and City of Perry and initiated administration assistance on a new project in Bradford County. Council staff also assisted communities with preliminary work for potential economic development projects as well.



Community Development Block Grant funds were used by Columbia County to rehabilitate or replace low- and moderate-income substandard housing.

TRANSPORTATION

Through an interlocal agreement entered into by the Florida Department of Transportation, Alachua County and the City of Gainesville, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area was formed to conduct continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning activities in the Gainesville metropolitan area. This planning program is required in order for the area to receive federal funds for transportation projects.

The Council serves as staff for the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, providing technical and administrative assistance in developing transportation plans and programs. Another major transportation planning activity is the Transportation Disadvantaged Program. This program is required in order for counties to receive state funds for transportation services for low-income individuals, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities and children-at-risk.

Metropolitan Transportation Planning

In 2011, a number of transportation planning activities were conducted, which included the following.

Regional Transit System Bus Fleet Maintenance and Operations Facility

In 2011, the Regional Transit System, owned and operated by the City of Gainesville, set a new ridership record with over 10.0 million passengers. The previous record was set during 2010 with

9.4 million passengers. The Regional Transit System needs a larger and more up-to-date facility to house and maintain its growing fleet.

During 2011, the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the City of Gainesville a \$9.0 million grant to partially fund the building of its new bus maintenance and operations facility. The current facility, built in the 1970s, is inadequate. The facility was designed to accommodate 80 buses, with enough maintenance bays for work on eight buses at a time. However, the current fleet totals 114 buses.

In addition, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area adopted long range transportation plan calls for the implementation of a bus rapid transit system in the Gainesville metropolitan area. The new above described bus maintenance and operations facility will allow the bus system to expand to handle the additional bus rapid

transit system vehicles.

The \$9.0 million grant, coupled with more than \$14 million of federal money already awarded for the project, will allow the City of Gainesville to move forward with designing and building the facility. The building is being designed to obtain the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design's Silver Certification. Construction is set to begin in mid-2012.

Interstate 75 at State Road 26 Interchange Safety Modifications

Safety at the Interstate 75 interchange with State Road 26 (Newberry Road) is being improved with a reconstruction project to widen the northbound exit ramp. Currently, about 9,000 vehicles exit Interstate 75 each day at this location. This traffic then merges with approximately 50,000 other vehicles already traveling on State Road 26 (Newberry Road).



The Regional Transit System provides unlimited access to all of its fixed route bus service to University of Florida faculty, students and staff through a prepaid transportation fee system.

The completed project will provide two left-turn lanes for traffic going west on State Road 26 (Newberry Road) and two right-turn lanes for traffic going east on State Road 26 (Newberry Road). This project will provide additional storage space for vehicles leaving Interstate 75. Construction is scheduled to be completed in Summer 2012.

Transportation Disadvantaged

The Florida Transportation Disadvantaged Program provides access to employment, health care, education and other life-sustaining activities for residents in the region who are elderly, disabled and/or low-income. In 2011, the Transportation Disadvantaged Program coordinated over 728,000 trips in the north central Florida region. Approximately 54 percent of these trips were provided for medical purposes. These trips were provided through Community Transportation Coordinators designated by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

There are five Community Transportation Coordinators operating in the north central Florida region. The Community Transportation Coordinators are responsible for the arrangement and/or delivery of transportation services for disadvantaged individuals.

Local coordinating boards are appointed in each county to oversee the provision of these services at the local level. The local coordinating boards are advisory bodies to the Community Transportation Coordinators. Membership of the local Coordinating Boards includes a local elected official, citizens and State agency representatives. Members of the

local coordinating boards also represent elderly, disabled and low-income residents.

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged designates an Official Planning Agency in each county. The designated Official Planning Agencies are responsible for Transportation Disadvantaged Program planning. The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area is the designated Official Planning Agency for Alachua County. The Council is the designated Official Planning Agency for Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison and Suwannee Counties.

The Council was nominated to receive the 2011 Planning Agency of the Year Award. This award recognizes a planning agency that went beyond the scope of their work to implement coordinated transportation. MV Transportation, Inc., the Community Transportation Coordinator

for Alachua County, received the 2011 Safety Award. MV Transportation, Inc. was also nominated to receive the 2011 Urban Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year Award. A & A Transport, the Community Transportation Coordinator for Union County, was nominated to receive the 2011 Rural Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year Award. The Urban and Rural Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year Awards recognize coordinators who have performed in an outstanding manner for the community and the transportation disadvantaged population.

Every five years, a community transportation coordinator is designated for each county by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. In 2011, the Council issued requests for proposals for the Dixie and Gilchrist County Community Transportation Coordinator designations.



Community transportation coordinators provide public transportation services to residents in the region who are unable to transport themselves.

COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to the planning and other technical studies prepared under contract with local governments throughout the region, the Council prepared the following materials in the year 2011.

Regional

- Evaluation Reports on Local Comprehensive Plan Amendments and other Council review items

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

- Local Emergency Planning Committee Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan Update
- Hazards Analysis Updates for Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette and Taylor Counties
- Hazardous Waste Management Summary Reports for Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee and Union Counties
- Exercise Evaluation Plan and After Action Report for the Florida National Guard Interoperable Communications Exercise "Operation Omega" Communications Exercise "Operation Communicating Across Regions and States"

Transportation

- Fiscal Years 2012-2016 Transportation Improvement Program

- Fiscal Years 2013-2017 Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area List of Priority Projects
- Annual Report for Regional Transit System Ridership
- Annual Multimodal Level of Service Report for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area
- Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinated Transportation Development Plans

General

- North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Annual Report
- North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Overall Program Design

The Council also provided general planning assistance and referral services to the public along with the following maps and information resources.

- Existing and Future Land Use Maps
- Census Information



In 2011, the Council prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, transportation and general program activities.

In 2012, the Council will continue programs started in 2011 or earlier, and initiate new projects and activities, as follows.

Regional

The Council will review federal grant and loan applications for consistency with area-wide plans.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

Emergency Management

The Council will assist with tabletop and full-scale exercises both to be conducted in north central Florida and assist other regional planning councils with exercises as requested. The Council will teach classes on the Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program. The Multi-year Training and Exercise plans will be updated.

Hazardous Materials

The Local Emergency Planning Committee will continue to promote increasing public safety from chemical releases through planning, training, reviewing, exercising, offering How-to-Comply assistance and educating the public. Hazards analyses will be updated for facilities that handle extremely hazardous substances. The Regional Emergency Response Plan will be updated. The Council will continue to provide staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. Council staff will help plan and conduct a full-scale hazardous materials exercise for the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

Hazardous Waste

The Council will continue to provide compliance assistance to facilities that generate hazardous waste while inspecting small quantity generators each year. The Council will notify businesses when a hazardous waste collection event is scheduled for their county.

Hurricane Evacuation

The Council will update the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study by adding a Depth Analysis Study to depict how deep flooding would be along the coast for various categories of hurricanes. Council staff will help evaluate the Statewide Hurricane Exercise.

Economic Development

Council staff will continue to provide assistance to local governments and development authorities in securing grant funds to accommodate industrial and business growth. Council staff will also prepare economic impact analyses identifying the multiplier effect on employment, income and ad valorem revenue of economic development projects.

Economic Development Planning

The Council will complete a five-year update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

The Original Florida Tourism Task Force

The Council will continue to staff *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force* in the implementation of its tourism marketing plan.

Local Government Assistance

Community Development

Community Development Block Grant applications will be prepared for local governments. Other community development assistance, including administrative services, will be provided as requested.

Local Planning Assistance

The Council will continue assisting counties and cities in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act.

Transportation

Fiscal Years 2013 to 2017 Transportation Improvement Program

Working in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, Council staff will assist the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area with updating the five-year funding program of transportation projects for the Gainesville metropolitan area.

Level of Service Study

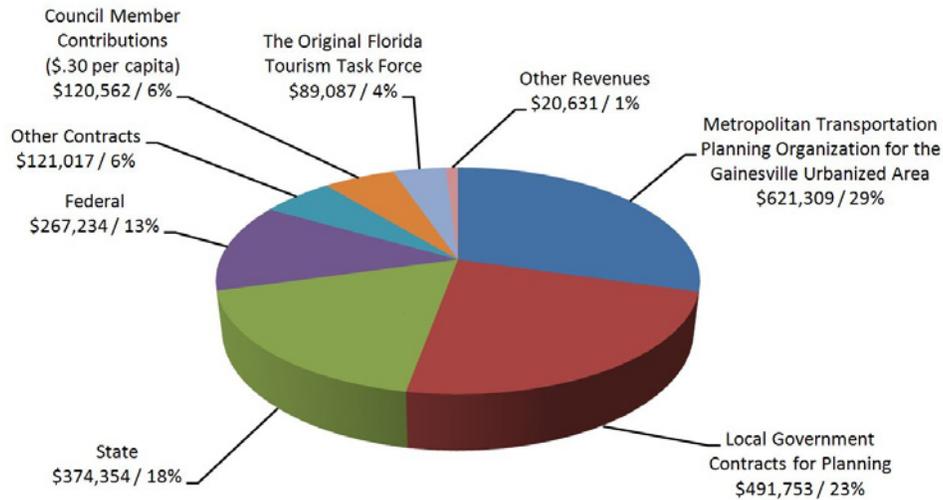
Council staff will update level of service information concerning the amount of traffic congestion on arterial and collector roads in the Gainesville metropolitan area.

Transportation Disadvantaged

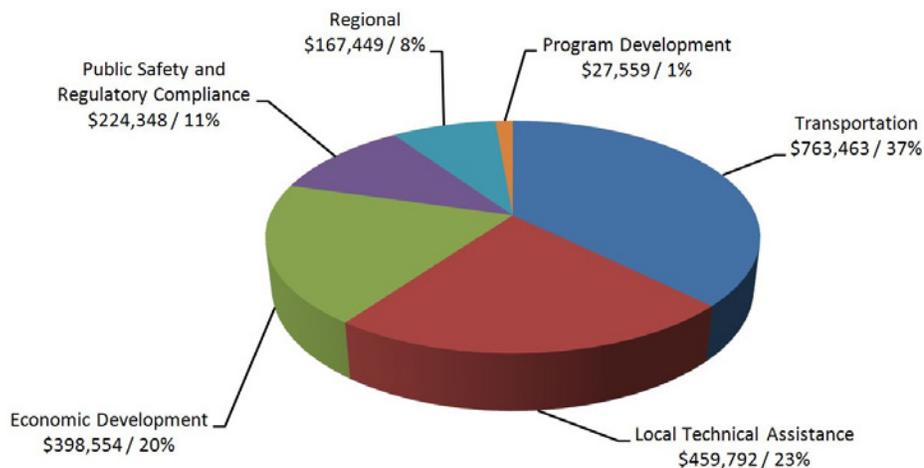
The Council will continue to provide staff support to the local coordinating boards and technical support to the Community Transportation Coordinators in 2012.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2010-11 Revenues \$2,105,947



2010-11 Expenditures \$2,041,165



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