

2012 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.

"The Council promotes regional strategies, partnerships and solutions."

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

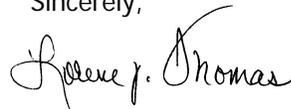
achieving excellence as they continue to pursue ways to improve our region.

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 procurement 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,



Lorene J. Thomas
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 2012 was 499,912, an increase of 47,551 persons over the 2002 population of 452,361 representing a 10.5 percent increase over the past ten years.



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.”

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 49.4 percent of the total population of the north central Florida region.



North Central Florida Counties and Municipalities

The Council

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.

**“The Council serves
as a forum for
coordination and review.”**

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
- Charles Chestnut IV
- * Thomas Collett
- Robert Hutchinson
- Lee Pinkoson
- * Vacant

Alachua

Robert Wilford

Archer

Frank Ogborn

Gainesville

Todd Chase
Thomas Hawkins
Yvonne Hinson-Rawls
Lauren Poe
Randy Wells

Hawthorne

Eleanor Randall

High Springs

Bob Barnas

Newberry

Jordan Marlowe

Waldo

Louie Davis

BRADFORD COUNTY

- Daniel Riddick
- * Vacant

Starke

Carolyn Spooner

COLUMBIA COUNTY

- Stephen Bailey
- Rusty DePratter
- * James Montgomery

Lake City

Stephen Witt

DIXIE COUNTY

- Jason Holifield
- * Lorene Thomas

GILCHRIST COUNTY

- Kenrick Thomas
- * Vacant

HAMILTON COUNTY

- Beth Burnam
- * Charles Williams

Jasper

LaBarfield Bryant

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

- Donnie Hamlin
- * Vacant

MADISON COUNTY

- Rick Davis
- * Mike Williams

City of Madison

Jim Catron

SUWANNEE COUNTY

- * Sandra Haas
- Wesley Wainwright

Live Oak

Garth Nobles, Jr.

TAYLOR COUNTY

- Patricia Patterson
- * Vacant

Perry

Don Cook

UNION COUNTY

- Karen Cossey
- * Vacant

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

* **Gubernatorial Appointee**

Lorene Thomas, Chair
Garth Nobles, Jr., Vice-Chair
Kenrick Thomas, Secretary-Treasurer



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

In 2012, the Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based amendments to the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan adopted by the Council in 2011 became effective. As part of the amendments, the Council integrated the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region as the Economic Development chapter of the regional plan. The National Association of Development Organizations recognized the Council for integrating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy into the regional plan resulting in a single economic development policy statement for the region by presenting the Council with an Innovation Award in October 2012.

"The Council is uniquely positioned to coordinate the development and implementation of strategies designed to address the problems and opportunities created by growth."

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 2012, the Council reviewed 93 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 \$14,432,882
- Local comprehensive plans and plan amendments
- 10-year site plans of major electric utilities
- Water quality basin action plans
- Environmental impact statements
- Mine reclamation plans



Council officials received, on behalf of the Council, an Innovation Award from the National Organization of Development Officials for integrating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy into the regional plan. Seated left to right Scott Koons, Executive Director, Lorene Thomas, Chair and standing left to right Carolyn Spooner, Executive Committee Member, Russell Cowley, President of the National Association of Development Organizations and Roy Ellis, former Chair.

The Council reviewed these projects to:

1. Avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts to regionally significant resources, regionally significant facilities or neighboring communities or counties;
2. Ensure coordination with local government plans; and
3. Avoid duplication or conflict with other local or area plans and programs.

Regional

Of the 93 review items in 2012, the Council reviewed 49 amendments to local government comprehensive plans. 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 11 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant applications, 23 U.S. Federal Transit Administration grant applications for either capital assistance or operating assistance, three U.S. Department of Agriculture grant/loan applications and seven 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

“The Council provided comments on applications for federal assistance, ensuring that federal grants were consistent with local plans and programs throughout the region.”



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

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

During 2012, 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 completed in 2012.

"The Council provided staff support to the Local Emergency Planning Committee for How-to-Comply seminars for facilities which use or store chemicals."

During 2012, 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, Bell and Starke. The Local Emergency Planning Committee conducted a full scale hazardous materials exercise in Gainesville. The North (Tallahassee) Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Force and Gainesville Fire Rescue filmed a training video using the exercise props.

Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team

The Council continued to provide staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. Members include Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Suwannee and Union Counties as well as the following cities: Gainesville, Lake City and Starke. An interlocal agreement provides the organizational structure for the Team.

During 2012, a hazardous materials technician class was conducted in Bell. A decontamination trailer was transferred to Dixie County. The Team continued using a training trailer which allowed local delivery of advanced hazardous materials training for the Team members.

Emergency Management

In 2012, Council staff added a Storm Surge Depth Atlas to the North Central Florida Regional Evacuation Study. The Atlas shows how deep the water could be in coastal areas for different categories of hurricanes. Council staff assisted with the Statewide Hurricane Exercise held at the State Emergency Operations Center and evaluated the Emergency Support Functions for Health, Energy and Communications.

Council staff participated in a statewide mass evacuation exercise and a statewide geomagnetic storm table top exercise. Council staff helped conduct emergency operations center exercises in Hendry and Sarasota Counties. Other assistance included assisting the Northeast Florida Regional Council with a terrorism exercise at Camp Blanding and a high-angle rescue exercise on top of a power plant in Palatka.

First Responder Training

In 2012, Council staff coordinated hazardous materials emergency response training classes. Council staff conducted 16 classes for the Local Emergency Planning Committee. A total of 203 emergency responders completed 2,760 hours of training. The Council distributed approximately 3,000 Emergency Response Guidebooks to assist emergency responders recognize hazardous materials spills and know how far to stay back from hazardous spills.

In 2012, 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. These plans encourage training and exercise collaboration to help local governments share expenses.



The North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee conducted a hazardous materials emergency response exercise in Gainesville.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

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.

“The Council provided assistance to counties in conducting annual site visits to hazardous waste generators.”

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. Council staff won a Bronze Medal during the 2012 Statewide Hazardous Waste Olympics which were held in Gainesville.

Interoperable Communications

Council staff assisted with a number of training and exercise interoperable communications events. Interoperable

communications enable responders from different agencies with different radios to talk to each other when responding to emergency situations.

Council staff served as a Site Controller for a multi-regional interoperable communications training exercise with fixed locations in Fort White, Lake City and Palatka. The exercise also included a slow speed car chase from Ocala north to the Georgia border. This was a joint exercise between the North (Tallahassee) and Northeast (Jacksonville) Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Forces. Council staff prepared the Controller and Evaluator Handbooks and the After Action Reports for the joint exercise.

Council staff organized a class on the Florida Interoperability Network held in Gainesville and assisted with classes in Jacksonville and Tampa. The Florida Interoperability Network is another tool that allows different response agencies to communicate during emergencies.

Energy Resiliency

Council staff participated in a statewide project to increase energy resiliency in Florida. The first of a series of statewide stakeholder regional workshops was held in Gainesville in August 2012. Stakeholder input was used to develop strategies for increasing energy resiliency.

The job creation and economic impacts of various strategies were modeled to help provide guidance on energy issues. Potential opportunities and threats relating to energy in north Florida were identified as well as strengths and weaknesses.



Regional Domestic Security Task Force members prepare to use special weapons and tactics during a terrorism exercise held at Camp Blanding in March 2012. Council staff assisted the Northeast Regional Council with planning and conducting the exercise.

Economic Development

The economic development program of the Council strives to promote 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.

“The Council updated the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy using the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Six Pillars of Florida’s Economic Future as the organizing framework.”

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 2012 by providing technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in order to promote the 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.

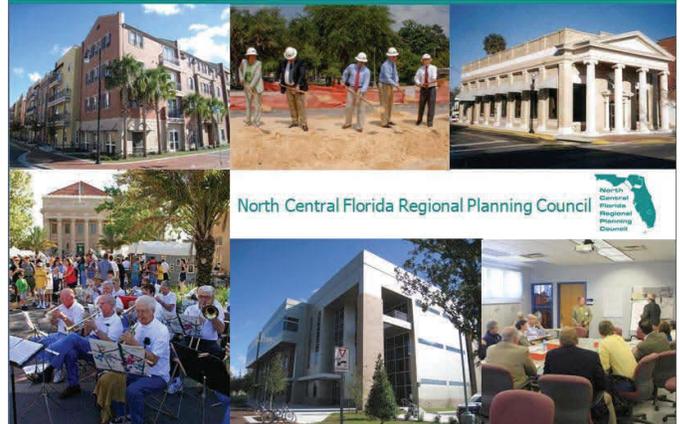
In 2012, the Council completed updating the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the 2013 to 2017 period. For the updated Strategy, the Council utilized the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Six Pillars of Florida’s Economic Future principles as the underlying Strategy framework. The Goals and Objectives of the updated Strategy were also coordinated with the State of Florida Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, developed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Council staff continued to support local economic development organizations throughout the region by providing technical assistance in the form of economic impact analysis for potential economic development projects. Utilizing Regional Economic Modeling, Inc. Policy Insite[®] software, Council staff provided estimated impacts to variables such as population, total employment, personal income and tax revenues, based on the industry, employment and incomes of the proposed project. These estimates are a valuable tool to local governments as they evaluate possible incentives to attract new and retain existing businesses in their communities.

North Central Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2013-2017

September 2012



In 2012, the Council completed updating the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the 2013 to 2017 period.

Economic Development

Visit Natural North Florida (*The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*)

In many rural communities, tourism is often the primary source of economic development activity. Visit Natural North Florida (*The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*) markets the 10-county "Natural North Florida" region by promoting the development of nature-, culture- and heritage-based tourism. Visit Natural North Florida 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 staffing services for the Task Force. Council staff assists the Task Force in upgrading and maintaining the VisitNaturalNorthFlorida.com website, organizes and conducts regional press familiarization trips, coordinates consumer travel show participation, creates proactive publicity campaigns, and produces collateral materials to meet the goals of the regional marketing plan.



Sue Cocking, Miami Herald Outdoor and Fishing staff writer, and VISIT FLORIDA Fishing and Boating writer Terry Gibson, show off their Spotted Sea Trout.

In 2012, Visit Natural North Florida, with technical assistance from Council staff, successfully applied for and was awarded a Rural Regional Development Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. This grant provided funds for projects that build economic development capacity in the rural communities within the region, and helped Visit Natural North Florida implement the regional marketing plans of the organization, thus fostering additional economic development opportunities.

To capitalize on the \$7 billion spent annually in Florida on fishing-related activities, Visit Natural North Florida designed a public relations campaign centered on luring anglers to the region. The multi-year campaign consisted of a "Fish Natural

North Florida" website (www.fnnf.org), two fishing themed press familiarization tours and printed collateral materials designed to pique interest in the north Florida region as a fishing destination.

"The Council provided staff services to *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force* to promote the region for nature-, culture- and heritage-based tourism.

To educate the public about the numerous fishing and tourism-related opportunities that north Florida has to offer, Visit Natural North Florida hosted several fishing and outdoor writers on two press familiarization tours of the region. The theme of the two 2012 tours was, "Fish Natural North Florida," and highlighted the abundant salt and fresh water fishing opportunities across the region. During the course of the two familiarization tours, the writers fished along the Gulf Coast at Panacea, Steinhatchee, Horseshoe Beach and Yankeetown. On the freshwater side, the familiarization tour fished the upper Suwannee River near Mayo, the lower Suwannee River near Bell, as well as the Santa Fe River at High Springs. While fishing was the primary theme of the familiarization tour, the writers were also exposed to other amenities as they travelled throughout the region such as local restaurants, bed and breakfasts and state and county parks, providing a broad overview of the region.

These familiarization tours provide journalists with rich personal experiences about which to write, publish and post. The stories and articles published by the writers after these familiarization tours have proven to be a valuable tool in the promotion of north Florida as an alternative travel destination in the state, and 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.

Visit Natural North Florida also created a "Fish Natural North Florida" placemat which displays a map of the region and highlights the numerous fishing opportunities the region has to offer. The purpose of the placemat is to educate travelers about the numerous activities available in the region and to drive traffic to the "Fish Natural North Florida" website. Placemats were distributed to restaurants throughout the region that are located along major traffic corridors, as well as areas outside the region.

Local Government Assistance

During 2012, 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 2012, the Council continued to assist counties and cities throughout the region in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act.

“The Council assisted 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 storm water 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 well fields, 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 85 development-related applications. This assistance included the review and adoption of 24 comprehensive plan map and text amendments. The Council also assisted these local governments with 43 land development regulation map and text amendments, seven land development regulation special exceptions and special permits, 11 concurrency assessments for plats, variances, nonconforming use changes 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, storm water drainage and recreation facilities.

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



The Council provided assistance to Union 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 is part 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.

Local Government Assistance

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.

“The Council assisted counties and cities identify community development needs, file grant applications and administer projects.”

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 in neighborhoods and creating jobs for low- to moderate-income residents.

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



Council staff continued to provide Community Development Block Grant housing rehabilitation administrative assistance to Bradford County during 2012.



Community Development Block Grant funds were used by Bradford County to repair or replace low- to moderate-income owner-occupied homes during 2012.

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.

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 2012, Council staff assisted the following communities with applications for Housing, Commercial Revitalization and Neighborhood Revitalization grant funds: City of Lake City - \$750,000, Town of Mayo - \$650,000 and Union County - \$700,000. Council staff continued to provide administrative assistance for two projects in Lake City, two projects in Bradford County, and projects in the City of Madison and the City of Perry. Administration assistance on a new project in Suwannee County was initiated by Council staff. Council staff also assisted communities with preliminary work for potential economic development projects as well.

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 in 1979 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 provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area to assist in developing transportation plans and programs.”

The Council provided staff services to 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 2012, a number of transportation planning activities were conducted, which included the following.

City of Gainesville - Traffic Management System

In 2012, the City of Gainesville continued installing a Traffic Management System throughout Alachua County that coordinates and monitors traffic signals. The System is the top project in the Year 2035 Long Range Transportation, the *Livable Community Reinvestment Plan*, adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area. The System is used to make adjustments to traffic signals that allow traffic to flow more smoothly. Another benefit of the System is that it also helps to clear



Traffic monitoring cameras collect traffic information as part of the Traffic Management System and send it to the City of Gainesville Traffic Management Center.

traffic congestion away from traffic signals during emergencies for law enforcement, fire and rescue vehicles. Of the 230 traffic signals countywide, 214 or 93 percent have been connected to the System.

Installed as part of the new System are the latest traffic control signal equipment, traffic monitoring cameras and a priority system for emergency vehicles. Using this equipment, traffic information is collected and sent to the Traffic Management Center located at the City of Gainesville Public Works Department. Some of the benefits of the System include reductions in the amount of fuel used by motorists, shorter travel times and reduced air emissions from idling vehicles.

City of Gainesville - SW 20th Avenue “Smart Bus” Bay

In 2012, Alachua County completed work on a “Smart Bus” bay on Southwest 20th Avenue east of Southwest 38th Terrace. Southwest 20th Avenue is a two-lane road located



A “Smart Bus” bay located on Southwest 20th Avenue in Gainesville enables buses to load and unload riders without impeding through traffic.

Transportation

immediately west of the University of Florida that experiences significant automobile congestion. This road is also a major transit route that carries more than 7,000 bus riders a day.

A "Smart Bus" Bay combines a signalized mid-block pedestrian crossing with a transit super stop. This project is the first of its kind ever constructed in the Gainesville metropolitan area. It improves safety for pedestrians and gives priority to buses along SW 20th Avenue.

The signalized mid-block pedestrian crossing is connected to the City of Gainesville Traffic Management System. This System detects when a bus is waiting for a gap in the automobile traffic to safely merge into traffic lanes on SW 20th Avenue. When a bus is detected, the pedestrian signal stops vehicle traffic and allows the bus to enter SW 20th Avenue.

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 2012, the Transportation Disadvantaged Program coordinated over 791,000 trips in the north central Florida region. Approximately, 57 percent of these trips were provided for medical purposes.



Community transportation coordinators in the north central Florida region are responsible for the coordination and provision of public transportation services for persons who are unable to transport themselves because of age, disability or income status.

The Alachua County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board received the 2012 Outstanding Coordinating Board of the Year Award from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. This award recognizes a local Coordinating Board that has demonstrated their dedication and support of the local Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

"The Council provided staff support to Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Boards to coordinate trips for access to employment, health care, education and other life-sustaining activities for residents in the region."

The Council was nominated to receive the 2012 Planning Agency of the Year Award. This award recognizes a planning agency that went beyond the scope of their work to implement coordinated transportation.



Alachua County Commissioner Paula DeLaney, Chair of the Alachua County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board received, on behalf of the Board, the 2012 Outstanding Board of the Year Award from David Darm, Chair of the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

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 2012.

Regional

- Strategic Regional Policy Plan
- 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
- After Action Report for a Florida National Guard Exercise Terrorism Exercise
- Exercise Plans, Controller and Evaluator Handbook and After Action Reports for joint exercise conducted by the North (Tallahassee) and Northeast (Jacksonville) Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Forces.

Economic Development

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2013-2017

Transportation

- Fiscal Years 2013-2017 Transportation Improvement Program
- Fiscal Years 2014-2018 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

“The Council prepared several reports and documents during the past year.”

General

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

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
- Zoning Maps
- Census Information



In 2012, the Council prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, transportation and general program activities.



Upcoming Activities

In 2013, the Council will continue programs started in 2012 or earlier, and initiate new regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, local government assistance and transportation 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 the north central Florida region and assist other regional planning councils with exercises as requested. The Council will schedule and teach classes on improving emergency preparedness. 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.

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 hazardous waste collection events and compliance assistance workshops are scheduled.

Energy Resiliency and Assurance

The Council will help complete the statewide studies to increase the reliability and affordability of energy for the north central Florida region.

Economic Development

The Council 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 assess progress toward implementing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

“The Council will continue existing programs and initiate new activities next year.”

The Original Florida Tourism Task Force

The Council will continue to staff Visit Natural North Florida (*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 Community Planning Act requirements.

Transportation

Fiscal Years 2014 to 2018

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.

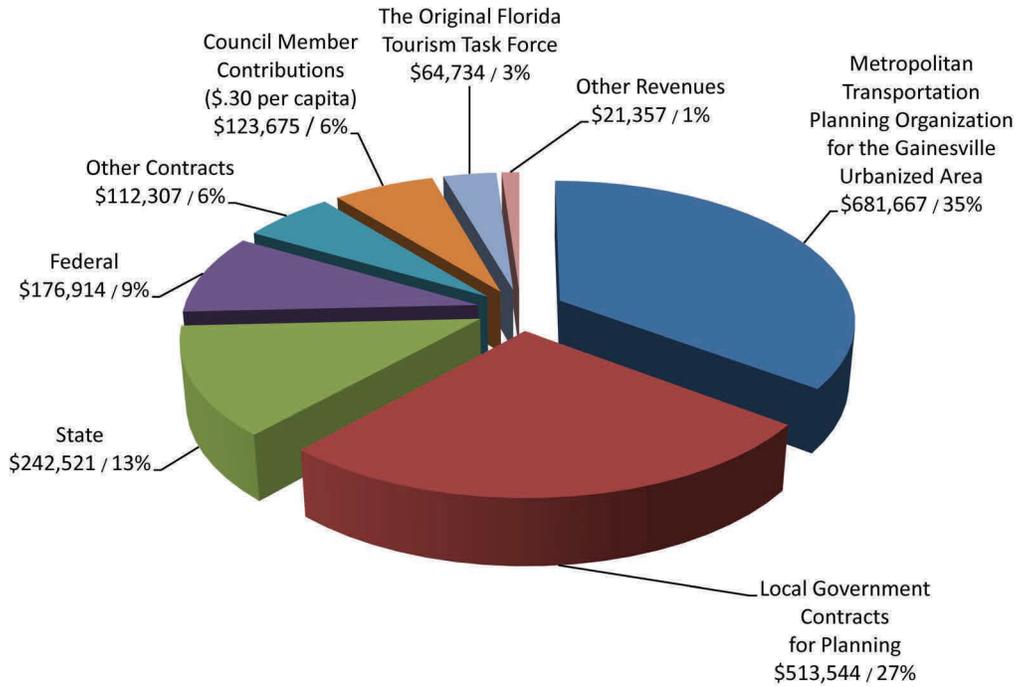
Transportation Disadvantaged

In 2013, the Council will issue a request for proposals for the Alachua, Bradford, Lafayette and Union County Community Transportation Coordinator designations.

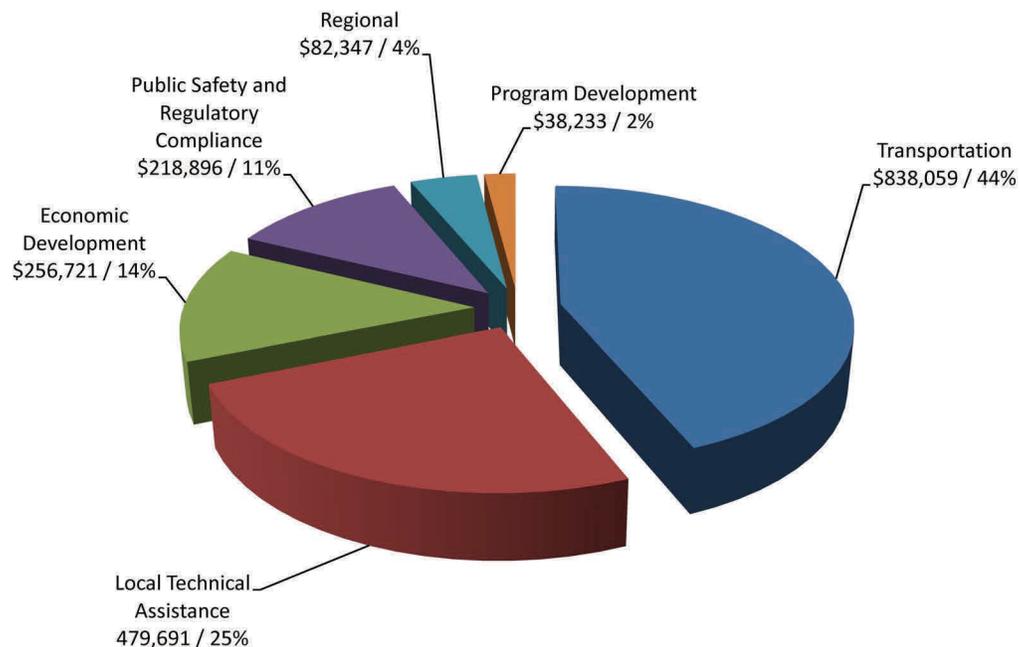


Financial Report

2011-12 Revenues \$1,936,719



2011-12 Expenditures \$1,913,947



North Central Florida Regional Planning Council
2009 NW 67th Place
Gainesville, FL 32653-1603
352.955.2200; Fax 352.955.2209
www.ncfrpc.org

Staff	Telephone Extension
Scott R. Koons , AICP, Executive Director	101
Marlie J. Sanderson , AICP, Assistant Executive Director & Director of Transportation Planning	103
Tony R. Marshall , Finance Director	107
Dwayne L. Mundy , Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance Program Director	108
Kevin D. Parrish , Information Technology and Property Management Director	133
Bryan S. Thomas , Economic Development Program Director	106
Janice Carpenter , Senior Accounting Clerk	116
Michael DePalma , Associate Planner, Geographic Information Systems	113
Steven Dopp , Senior Planner, Regional Planning	109
Michael Escalante , AICP, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning	114
Carmelita Franco , Planning Administrative Assistant, Local Government Comprehensive Planning	125
Lynn Franson-Godfrey , AICP, Senior Planner, Transportation Disadvantaged	110
Sandra Joseph , Senior Planner, Local Government Comprehensive Planning	111
Carol Laine , Executive Assistant to the Executive Director	134
Martha Orthofer , AICP, Senior Planner, Community Development Block Grants	112
Jean Strong , Secretary II	100

Email Addresses

Email addresses for each staff member is the last name@ncfrpc.org, e.g., **koons@ncfrpc.org**.

*North Central Florida
Regional Planning Council
2009 NW 67th Place
Gainesville, FL 32653-1603*

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Chair
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