

# 2013 Annual Report



North Central Florida  
Regional Planning Council



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# Letter To Our Citizens

**D**uring 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

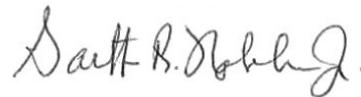
achieving excellence as they continue to pursue ways to improve our region.

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,



Garth R. Nobles, Jr.  
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 2013 was 500,745, an increase of 41,295 persons over the 2003 population of 459,450 representing a nine percent increase over the past ten years.

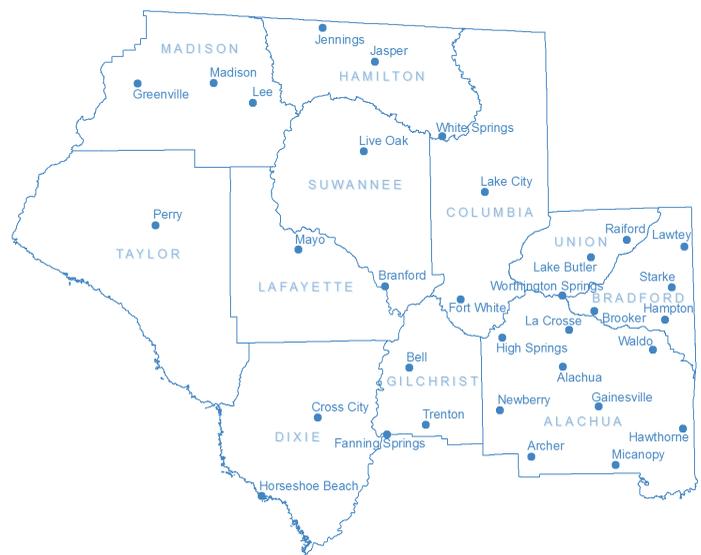


North Central Florida Region

**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 49.5 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
- Mike Byerly
- Charles Chestnut IV
- Robert Hutchinson
- \* Vacant

## Alachua

Robert Wilford

## Archer

Frank Ogborn

## Gainesville

Susan Bottcher  
Ed Braddy  
Thomas Hawkins  
Lauren Poe  
Randy Wells

## Hawthorne

DeLoris Roberts

## High Springs

Bob Barnas

## Newberry

Timothy Marden

## 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

- Wayne Smith
- \* 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

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\* Gubernatorial Appointee

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Garth Nobles, Jr., Chair  
Carolyn Spooner Vice-Chair  
Daniel Riddick, 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

### Water Resources and Water Conservation

During 2013, water resources and water conservation was brought to the forefront. The North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan contains goals and policies to assist in the preservation of the regional water supply. To this end, the Council has attended meetings by groups involved in long-range regional water supply planning, including the North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership Stakeholders Advisory Committee, Florida Leaders Organized for Water, as well as the Santa Fe River Springs Working Group. Additionally, the Council monitored the establishment of minimum flows and levels for the Lower Santa Fe River Basin as proposed by the Suwannee River Water Management District.

**“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 2013, the Council reviewed 81 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 \$29,784,563
- 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



The Council reviewed a proposed expansion of the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge in Dixie County.

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 81 review items in 2013, the Council reviewed 41 amendments to local government comprehensive plans. The Council forwarded its findings on local government comprehensive plans to local governments under the expedited

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

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, 14 U.S. Federal Transit Administration grant applications for either capital assistance or operating assistance, six U.S. Department of Agriculture grant/loan applications and nine 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.



Hart Springs in Gilchrist County is recognized as a Natural Resource of Regional Significance in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

# Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

**D**uring 2013, 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 2013.

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

During 2013, the Local Emergency Planning Committee conducted a series of Improving Chemical Safety seminars for facilities which use or store chemicals. These seminars were held in Gainesville, Lake City, Bell and Live Oak. The Local Emergency Planning Committee participated in an Ammonia Safety Day held at the Florida State Fire College and an on-site safety visit to a fertilizer blending facility located in the Town of Lee.

After the ammonium nitrate explosion in West Texas which killed 15 people, the President issued Executive Order 13650 on Improving Chemical Facility Safety and Security. The Local Emergency Planning Committee developed a list of recommendations and Council staff presented them at the December 11, 2013 Public Listening Session held in Florida.

A primary recommendation was that the Florida model of regional Local Emergency Planning Committees staffed by regional planning councils and supported by a state fee system has greatly facilitated the creation of a successful statewide hazardous materials emergency preparedness program.

## Emergency Management

In 2013, the Council updated the demographic data used for modeling evacuation times in the North Central Florida

Regional Evacuation Study. The updated data was based on the 2010 Census.

The Council participated in a variety of different types of disaster exercises. Council staff assistance included assisting the Northeast Florida Regional Council with Pandemic Flu Points of Dispensing exercises in Clay and Putnam Counties. Staff also assisted with an Active Shooter workshop designed to help law enforcement agencies update their plans and procedures.

## First Responder Training

During 2013, the Council coordinated hazardous materials emergency response training classes. Council staff conducted 17 classes for the Local Emergency Planning Committee. A total of 297 emergency responders completed 1,936 hours of training. The Council continued to distribute 2012 Emergency Response Guidebooks to assist emergency responders recognize hazardous materials spills and know how far to stay back from hazardous spills.

In 2013, the Council 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.



Council officials received, on behalf of the Council, an Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations for the Operations TRUCKS Full Scale Hazardous Materials Exercise. Left to right, Lorene Thomas, Immediate Past Chair, Scott Koons, Executive Director, John Leonard, President of the National Association of Development Organizations and Daniel Riddick, Secretary-Treasurer.

# 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 Comply with Used Oil Storage and Hazardous Waste Regulations” seminars were conducted. Council staff won a Bronze Medal during the 2013 Statewide Hazardous Waste Olympics which were held in Daytona Beach.

## Interoperable Communications

The Council 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.

The Council assisted with a class on the Florida Interoperability Network held in Cross City and assisted with the Statewide 2013 Interoperability Summit held in Daytona Beach.

## Energy Resiliency and Assurance

In 2013, the Council partnered with regional planning councils across the state to develop an Energy Resiliency Report. This effort was in response to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill that led to the discharge of an estimated 206 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico.

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.

Also during the past year, the Florida Office of Energy engaged the Council along with regional planning councils

across the state to address energy assurance issues in its ongoing resiliency efforts. The focus of the study was to conduct economic impact analyses, research case studies, and develop strategies related to energy assurance for use by those engaged in energy assurance planning.

## 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 2013, hazardous materials technician refresher training was conducted in Bell, Lake City and Live Oak. In addition, a table top exercise involving a train wreck was held in Live Oak.

## Hazards Analysis

Hazardous materials emergency response planning requires an understanding of the chemical hazards and potential threats to nearby communities. The most common chemicals for which hazards analyses are conducted are ammonia, chlorine and sulfuric acid. Ammonia is used in refrigerated warehouses and as a fertilizer, chlorine to purify water and bleach wood pulp, and sulfuric acid in back-up batteries and chemical processing.



The Council conducts Hazards Analysis visits to increase preparedness in the case of toxic chemical releases. One common extremely hazardous substance is Chlorine used to purify drinking water in municipalities throughout the region.

# 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's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy uses 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 2013 by providing technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in order to promote the economic growth of the region.

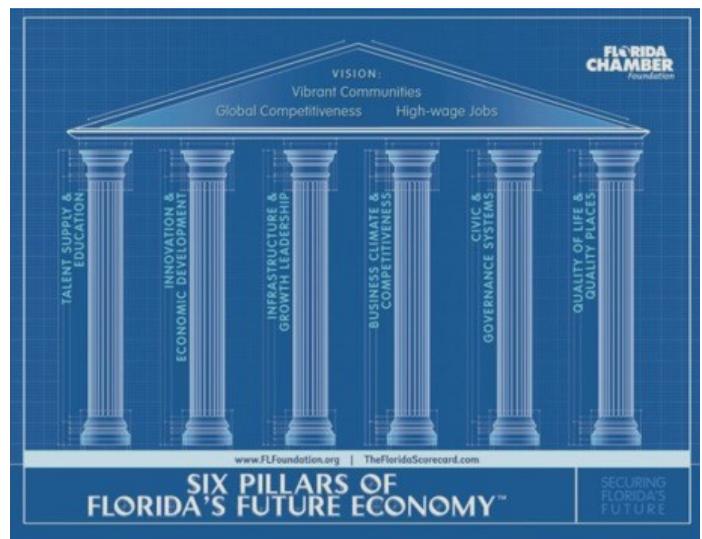
## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

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 2012. 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.

The five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the 2013 to 2017 period utilizes the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars of Florida's Economic Future principles as the underlying Strategy framework. The Goals and Objectives of the Strategy are 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<sup>+</sup> 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.



The Council's five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the period 2013 to 2017 utilizes the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars of Florida's Economic Future principles as the underlying Strategy framework.

# 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.



The Grace Manor Bed and Breakfast in Madison County is one of many tourist-oriented businesses which benefit from the efforts of *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*.

Visit Natural North Florida hosts press familiarization tours throughout the region for groups of travel writers that publish in the drive market area of the southeastern United States. These themed tours highlight a collection of unique, yet similar, amenities in the region. Most recently, the tours focused on the extensive array of fishing opportunities available in the Visit Natural North Florida region, and writers from several print and online publications were in attendance. These tours provide journalists with a personal experience about which to write, report, publish or post. This media coverage increases exposure of the area, generates excitement for the traveling public, converts travel into overnight stays and helps support the expansion of local economies.

Visit Natural North Florida participates in several consumer travel shows, where members and staff actively engage hundreds of potential visitors and provide collateral marketing materials to thousands more. Visit Natural North Florida reg-

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

ularly staffs show booths at the Villages Travel Expo, the Tampa Tribune Outdoors Expo and Boat Show, the Georgia Wildlife Federation Outdoor Expo, VISIT FLORIDA Welcome Center Festivals and other travel shows, all with the goal of attracting overnight visitors.

One of the most successful means by which Visit Natural North Florida promotes the region is through its websites, VisitNaturalNorthFlorida.com and fnnf.com (Fish Natural North Florida). Both websites offer visitors a wealth of information about the region that tourists can use to plan their trip itineraries. Information about attractions and accommodations can be accessed by specific activity or location and the websites provide links to contact information and websites of businesses throughout the region. These extensive websites are maintained by Visit Natural North Florida and are constantly evolving means of communication with current and future vacationers.

Visit Natural North Florida also promotes the region by placing advertisements in targeted publications that have proven to yield positive results. A sampling of these publications includes: Southern Living; Coastal Living; AAA Going Places North and South; Canoe and Kayak; and the Villages Sun Newspaper Travel Section. In addition Visit Natural North Florida also advertises on select travel websites, such as the VISIT FLORIDA Outdoor Expert section.

Visit Natural North Florida maintains several different forms of printed media, including fold-out map brochures and rack cards that are distributed at the VISIT FLORIDA Welcome Centers, state-wide AAA offices and at hundreds of private business locations along the major highways in Florida and I-75 in South Georgia. In addition, diner-style placemats are distributed to restaurants throughout the region to generate interest from travelers as they stop to eat. The printed media include QR codes to take advantage of smart phone technology to provide instant access to the Visit Natural North Florida websites.

# Local Government Assistance

**D**uring 2013, 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 2013, 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 73 development-related applications. This assistance included the review and adoption of 18 comprehensive plan map and text amendments. The Council also assisted these local governments with 35 land development regulation map and text amendments, nine 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 five 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 Taylor 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



Council staff provided Community Development Block Grant economic development administrative assistance to Suwannee County during 2013.



Community Development Block Grant funds were used by the City of Madison to repair or replace low- to moderate-income owner-occupied homes during 2013.

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.

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.

Council staff continued to provide administrative assistance for two projects in Columbia County, one project in Bradford County, one project in Suwannee County and a project in the City of Madison. Council staff initiated administrative assistance on a new project in Union County. Council staff also assisted communities with preliminary work for potential economic development projects as well.

# Transportation

**T**hrough 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 2013, a number of transportation planning activities were conducted, which included the following.

### Year 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

In 2013, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area selected a transportation planning consultant to assist in updating the Year 2013 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area. This planning effort will take all of the calendar years 2014 and 2015 to complete and will result in updated transportation project priorities through the Year 2040.



The update of the long-range transportation plan addresses highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs.

### Interstate 75 Paynes Prairie Safety Project

The Florida Department of Transportation has funded an intelligent transportation system on Interstate 75 and U.S. 441 through Paynes Prairie in Alachua County, a system designed to alert motorists of hazardous travel conditions. The main goal of this project is to provide advanced warning to motorists when traffic congestion or low visibility is present and alert motorists to use caution or to use an alternate route. This project consists of dynamic message signs, closed-circuit television cameras, vehicle detection devices, visibility sensors and thermal cameras.



Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Ananth Prasad, along with Florida Department of Transportation District 2 Secretary Greg Evans and Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell (seated left to right), addressed the crowd at the Interstate 75 Paynes Prairie Safety Project kick-off ceremony.

# Transportation

## State Road 26/University Avenue Multimodal Emphasis Corridor Study

A high priority in the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area's adopted Year 2035 Cost Feasible Plan is the State Road 26/University Avenue Multimodal Emphasis Corridor (from Gale Lemerand Drive east to Waldo Road). The purpose of this Study is to identify specific multimodal projects within this portion of State Road 26 that can be programmed for implementation by the Florida Department of Transportation in its Five-Year Work Program. Part of this project is to document existing conditions within the corridor and data collection for bicycle, pedestrian and transit users.



The State Road 26/University Avenue Multimodal Emphasis Corridor addresses bicycle, pedestrian and transit needs along this corridor.

## 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 2013, the Transportation Disadvantaged Program coordinated over 322,000 trips in the north central Florida region. Approximately, 57 percent of these trips were provided for medical purposes. The Community Transportation Coordinators in the region provided trips for individuals who have no other means of transportation and are unable to purchase transportation.

In 2013, Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties were designated a combined designated service area by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

**“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.”**

under Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program. The Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Boards were combined to establish a multi-county Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties.



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.

# Communications

In addition to the planning and other technical studies prepared under contract with local governments throughout the region, the Council prepared or maintained the following materials in the year 2013.

## 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 2014-2018 Transportation Improvement Program
- Fiscal Years 2015-2019 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 2013, the Council prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, transportation and general program activities.

# Upcoming Activities

In 2014, the Council will continue programs started in 2013 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.

## 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.

## Visit Natural North Florida

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

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

## 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 2015 to 2019 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

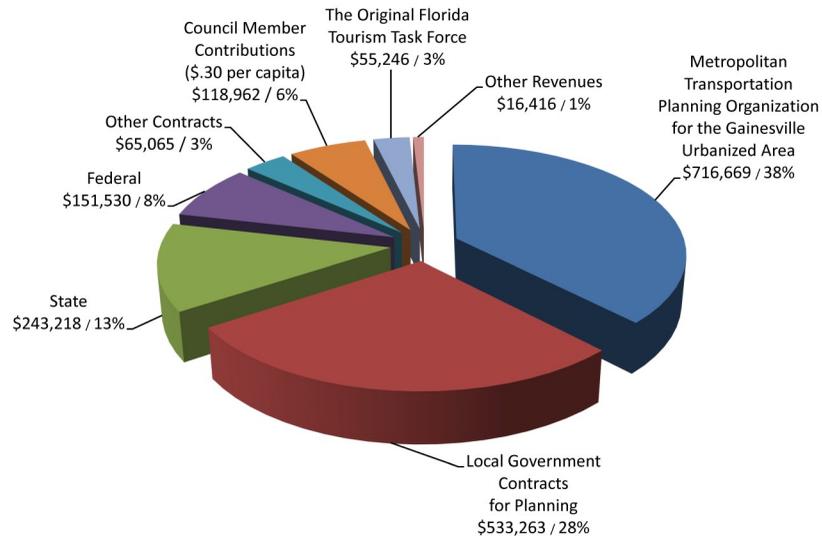
Council staff will update level of service information concerning the amount of traffic congestion on arterial and collector roads in the Gainesville metropolitan area.

### Transportation Disadvantaged

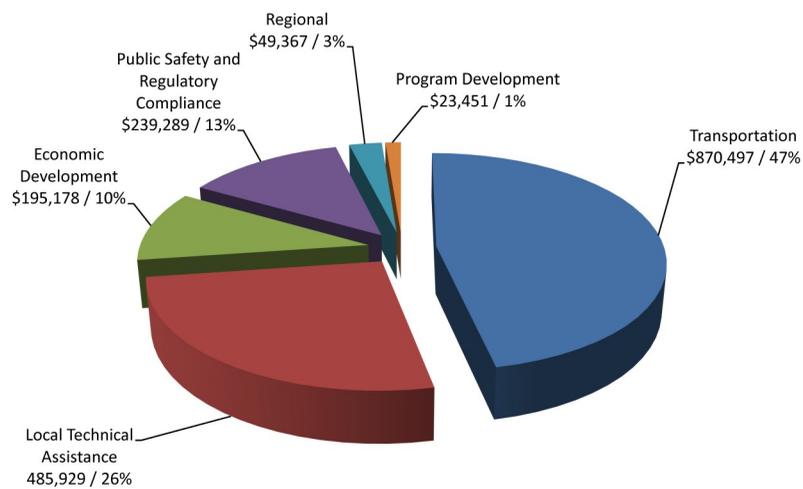
Council staff will work with state and local transportation partners to implement Statewide Medicaid Reform in the region to continue coordinating Medicaid non-emergency transportation services.

# Financial Report

## 2012-13 Revenues \$1,900,369



## 2012-13 Expenditures \$1,863,711



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<b>Kevin D. Parrish</b> , Information Technology and Property Management Director	133
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**Carolyn Spooner**

*Secretary-Treasurer*  
**Daniel Riddick**

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**Scott R. Koons, AICP**



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