

The Comp Plan/LDC Working group is supportive of the work done by the Planning Advisory Board on the Vision 2045 Plan and of the themes selected for the plan. We continue to stand behind our previous comments on the Vision Plan, which we are attaching because our webmaster has not yet had an opportunity to post them to our site. In this document, we will stress those points we feel are most critically important to consider at this point.

General Fiscal Management

- The principle of delaying expenses and saving money now that we have heard so much in recent years simply results in an overwhelming load of exorbitant expenses in the future and a lack of appropriate preparation for that future. This has been demonstrated in other communities over the past century and should be abundantly clear to everyone here at this point. It is the responsibility of elected officials and City staff to manage future needs and expenditures responsibly.
- Long-term planning must be retained in the Comprehensive Plan and expanded from 20 years to **at least** 40-45 years. The City cannot develop an effective plan for the future without effective long-term planning that addresses specifics like product/structure life cycles and contemporary dollars.
- The City needs to collaborate with the County on a more in-depth analysis of our macro- and micro-economics. With changes in technology, the pandemic and several decades of downward pressure on the American workforce, patterns and realities have changed and are changing. We need to have the most thorough understanding of these dynamics possible in order not to be pursuing counterproductive initiatives.
- From the young people who settle here to the tourists who visit, we can see a craving for a safe, small-town community and an aesthetically pleasing natural context that demonstrates living with and in support of our natural environment. This has been a topic of discussion in publications, both popular and academic, across the country. As a result, we perceive a need for great care in relation to planning density and development because of the real threat it poses to our economic future.
- See also the comment below under Theme 3: Livability.

Theme 1: Environmental Sustainability & Resiliency

- Mature native trees and native understory plants must be retained.
- “Establish a long-term sustainable funding strategy for purchase of conservation lands” must be moved from “1-5 years” to “urgent.”
- The reduction of septic systems in the “Vision Plan” is far too slow and too limited for our context on a barrier island.
- The Chief Resiliency Officer individual/team should be established within the year.

- Incorporation and full implementation of standards, enforcement and monitoring (both a city/county periodic regimen and a requirement for building) are needed for timely preparation for and response to sea level rise, storm surge and climate change:
 - Monitoring for salt water intrusion and development of standards for avoiding it
 - Monitoring ground water (salt, chemicals, elevation, etc.)
 - Clear standards for pre-, mid- & post-construction inspections
 - Water quality in our retention ponds; monitoring & cleaning dry ponds & swales
 - Standards & monitoring of outdoor air quality
- A volunteer Sustainability & Resiliency Commission should be established.

Theme 2: Preservation of Character

- The notion of preserving the character of the City must include its mature canopy and understory. Otherwise, the character of the City will be destroyed, as is currently in process. (immediate)
- Move “resource bank of design professionals” from “16-25 years” to “1-5 years.”

Theme 3: Livability

- We need to think of livability as one of the prime economic engines of our community, if not the prime economic engine. Everything that supports livability (e.g., the character of the community and our environment) is a significant factor in our economy and determines the future path of that economy, just as factors that detract from livability (e.g., traffic, overcrowding, lack of aesthetic appeal) determine our economic path.

Theme 4: Future Ready Infrastructure, Utilities & Public Facilities

- Ensure that broadband and a smart grid are available to all residents at an affordable cost. The leverage of the City is critical to ensure that this happens.

Theme 5: Mobility & Accessibility

- An in-depth, multi-faceted analysis of the elements entailed in mobility/transportation on Amelia Island, must be conducted in collaboration with Nassau County and be followed by a collaborative, phased-in implementation of the top recommendations. Resident approval is mandatory.
- Implementation of any aspect of complete streets requires adaptation to fit the physical design, environment and cultural character of Fernandina Beach.
- In reality, Amelia Island is a dangerous place to ride a bicycle. We need to solve this problem, as so many communities across the country have.

Those of us on the Comp Plan/LDC Working Group greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Vision Plan. Please feel free to contact us if there is need for clarification or discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendelle Burdick, Patricia Bux, Richard Doster, Beth Foster, Lauree Hemke, Terry Grady, Frank Hopf, Betsie Huben, Carlton Jones, Cynthia Jones-Jackson, Margaret Kirkland, Tammi Kosack, Alexandra Lajoux, Roger Nordlinger, Robert Prager, Faith Ross, Ron Sapp, Elise Pearlstine, Leonard Pearlstine, Richard Polk and Joyce Tuten

Comp Plan/LDC Working Group
aiwg.org