



# **Discussing the Future of Fernandina Beach**

**With the Comp Plan/LDC Working Group**

**July 25, 2021**

**Story & Song Bookstore Bistro**

**Working Group Panel: Beth Foster, Lauree Hemke, Betsie  
Huben, Margaret Kirkland, Alexandra Lajoux**





# Last Sunday:

- Intro
- Coastal Management
- Public Trust

# Today:

- Economic development—Beth Foster
  - Housing—Betsie Huben
  - Mobility (transportation)—Lauree Hemke
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# Economic Development





# Quick Overview



- ▶ **Florida Statute 163.3177.(7(j)).** An economic element setting forth principles and guidelines for the commercial and the industrial development, if any, and the employment and industrial development sought, correlated to the present and projected employment needs of the area and to other elements of the plans, and may set forth methods by which a balanced and stable economic base will be pursued.
- ▶ Not all Florida cities have an Economic Development element in their Comprehensive Plan. The City of Fernandina Beach does have this element in the prior plan for 2030.
- ▶ Since the Comprehensive Plan is a legally guiding document, if an element is in the Plan, it should be implemented and have measures for assessing success that the community agrees on.

# Current City Economic Development Element for 2030

- ▶ City of Fernandina Beach Comprehensive Plan 2030
- ▶ Current Goal 12
- ▶ <https://www.fbfl.us/81/Comprehensive-Plan>



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The Economic Development Element is intended to establish a link with virtually all aspects of community life, and recognize that economic development is an essential component of a sustainable community. It seeks to support new growth and redevelopment opportunities within the community while balancing the needs of its citizens, its unique character, and its cultural, historical, and environmental resources. This element provides for an articulated and shared vision of where the City wants to go and what things residents and businesses value. It is about working together for a strong economy by creating and retaining desirable jobs, which provide a good standard of living for individuals. To be successful, economic development must function as part of the whole socio-economic environment which is constantly changing and evolving.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT HIGHLIGHTS**

1. Establishes a coordinated intergovernmental and public/ private partnership approach to lead economic development strategies;
2. Develops strategies to attract targeted industries and businesses;

# CP/LDC Working Group Draft - New Goal 9 Economic Development

- Draft Recommendation for Comprehensive Plan 2045
- Goal 9
- [www.aiwg.org/](http://www.aiwg.org/)



City of Fernandina Beach Comprehensive Plan 2045 Draft  
**Goal 9 (Goal 12 in Current 2030 Comprehensive Plan)**

## **GOAL 9: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (2030 GOAL 12)**

### **BACKGROUND, DATA, AND ANALYSIS**

To set the stage of how we approached Goal 9 revision, it makes sense to include some background on our vision as a working group as well as the world's evolving understanding of the meaning and application of sustainability and how it fits in with economic development in our technological times. First, our observations revealed, and research supports, a clear distinction from the old "environmentalism" of past decades to a growing grassroots consumer citizen desire to integrate "applied sustainability" within a broad context of related domains, many of which we wrestled with while reviewing the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. We are now witnessing this sustainable "systems" integration approach picking up steam and prevailing around the world in all areas, including economic development.

Second, we noticed a critical need to recognize the changing beliefs and challenged



# What is Economic Development?

## **Balancing Diverse Perspectives on a Small Barrier Island**

Local government officials who prepare budget/revenue planning (property tax),

Local and visiting consumers,

Local and commuting employees/job seekers/local students,

Locally-owned and existing business owners,

Tourist Development Council and hospitality businesses,

Housing and Commercial developers,

Tax paying property owners with Quality of Life /Level of Service concerns.

Per Florida Statute: “**balanced** and stable economic base will be pursued...”

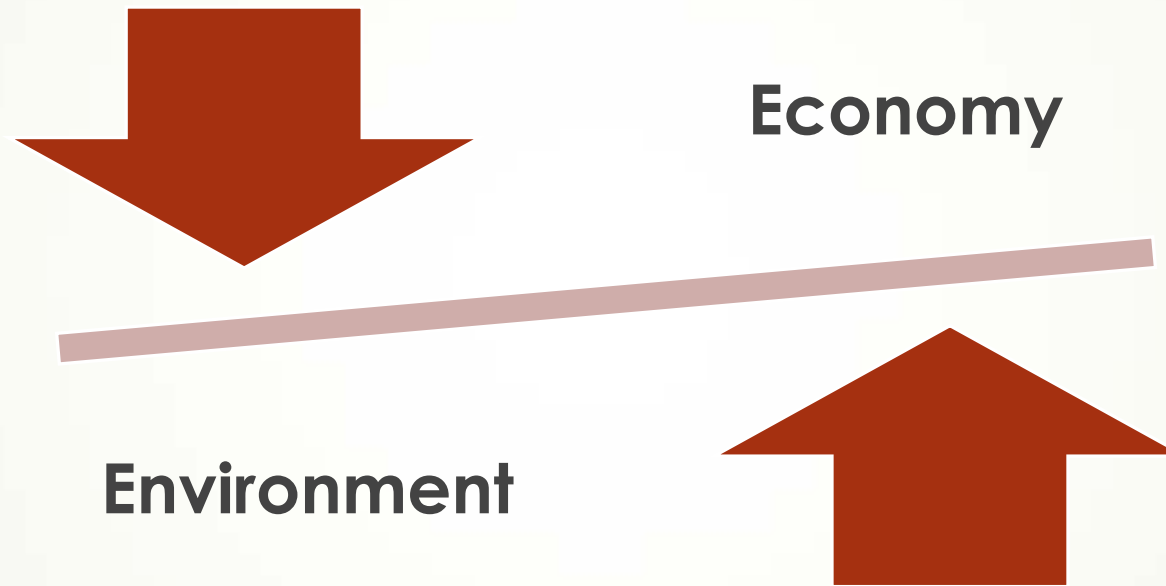


## CP/LDC Working Group - Initial Impression of 2030 City Economic Development Goal

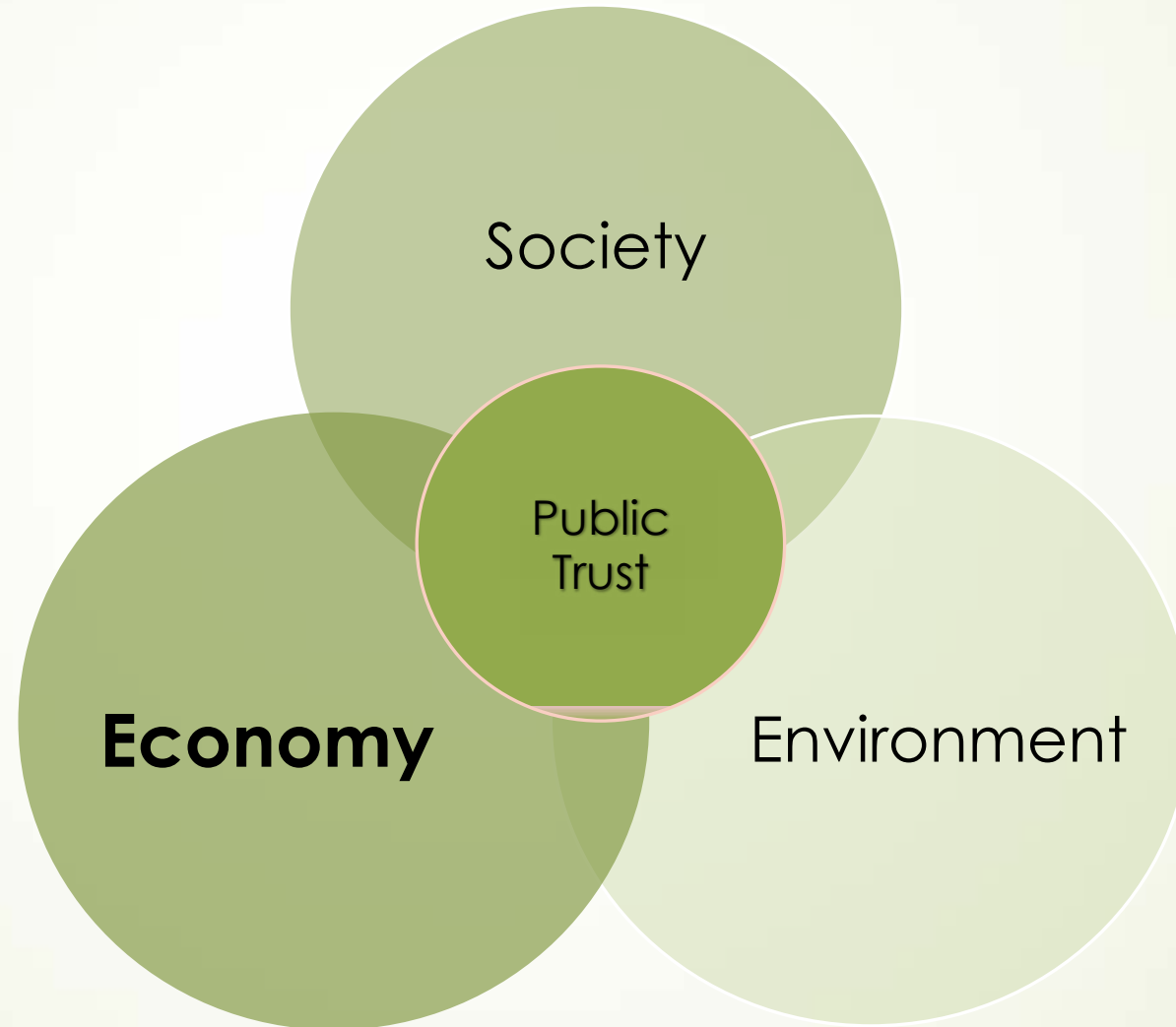
- ▶ Seems to be written from legacy County goals,
- ▶ Tourist industry focus (only industry that has its own City objective),
- ▶ Lack of local wealth development/retention through entrepreneurship,
- ▶ Lack of recognition and valuation of existing organic economy - priority to newer/bigger promises by outside businesses vs. existing business preservation.
- ▶ Dated economic view: “smokestack chasing” or Amazon-chasing vs. shift to virtualization of high wage jobs. (amplification of pandemic effect)
- ▶ Missing diverse perspectives of community, no broad engagement.
- ▶ No SMART goals or mechanism for routine assessment,
- ▶ No City position designated as accountable for economic development.
- ▶ Minimal policy recognizing the engine of the economy IS THE ENVIRONMENT.



# How Do We Get Past This Thinking?



# To This Thinking: Best Practice Model





## A New View - Integrating the Comprehensive Plan Goals

- ▶ Shift from isolated view to integrated sustainability in all domains.
- ▶ Investigate the relationships between all Comprehensive Plan objectives and policies.
- ▶ Align goals broadly to increase alignment with strategy of the Comprehensive Plan and the daily implementation between City functions.
- ▶ Find opportunities to maximize efficiencies, mitigate risk and increase creativity over costs.



## Example: Investigating Relationship of Economic Development to other Comprehensive Plan Elements

- Public Trust (recommended NEW CP Element)
- Coastal Management and Conservation
- Recreation & Open Space
- Historic Preservation
- Housing
- Mobility
- Public Facilities
- Capital Improvements of the City
- Future Land Use



# Broader Economic Trends

## **JUST A FEW:**

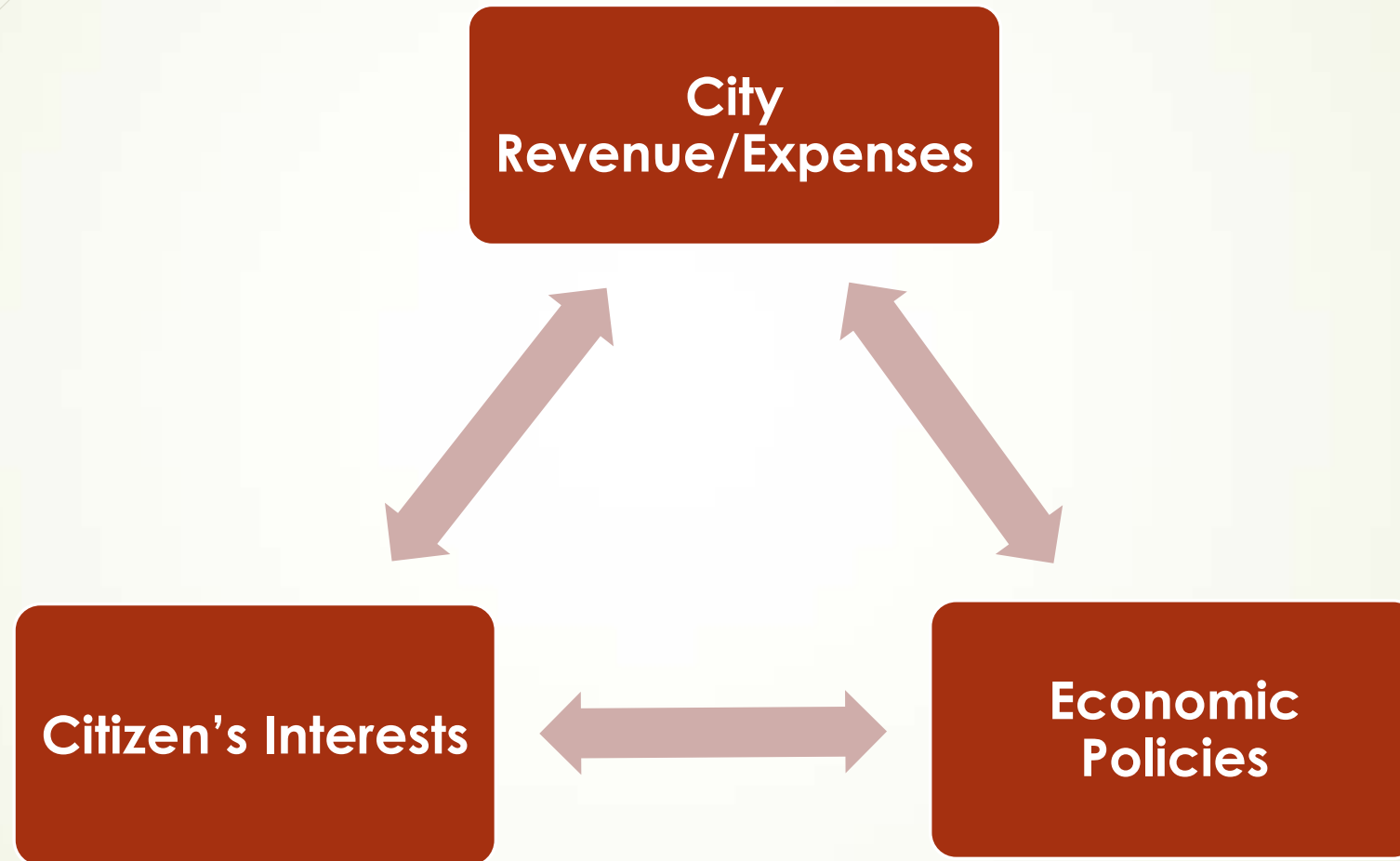
- ▶ Growing Sustainable Values Across All Demographics – very educated “sustainable consumers”
- ▶ Growing Digital Economy – Love Where You Live
- ▶ Entrepreneurship – shift away from “big business” employment models to remote or self-employed
- ▶ Boom Cycle Investment Euphoria

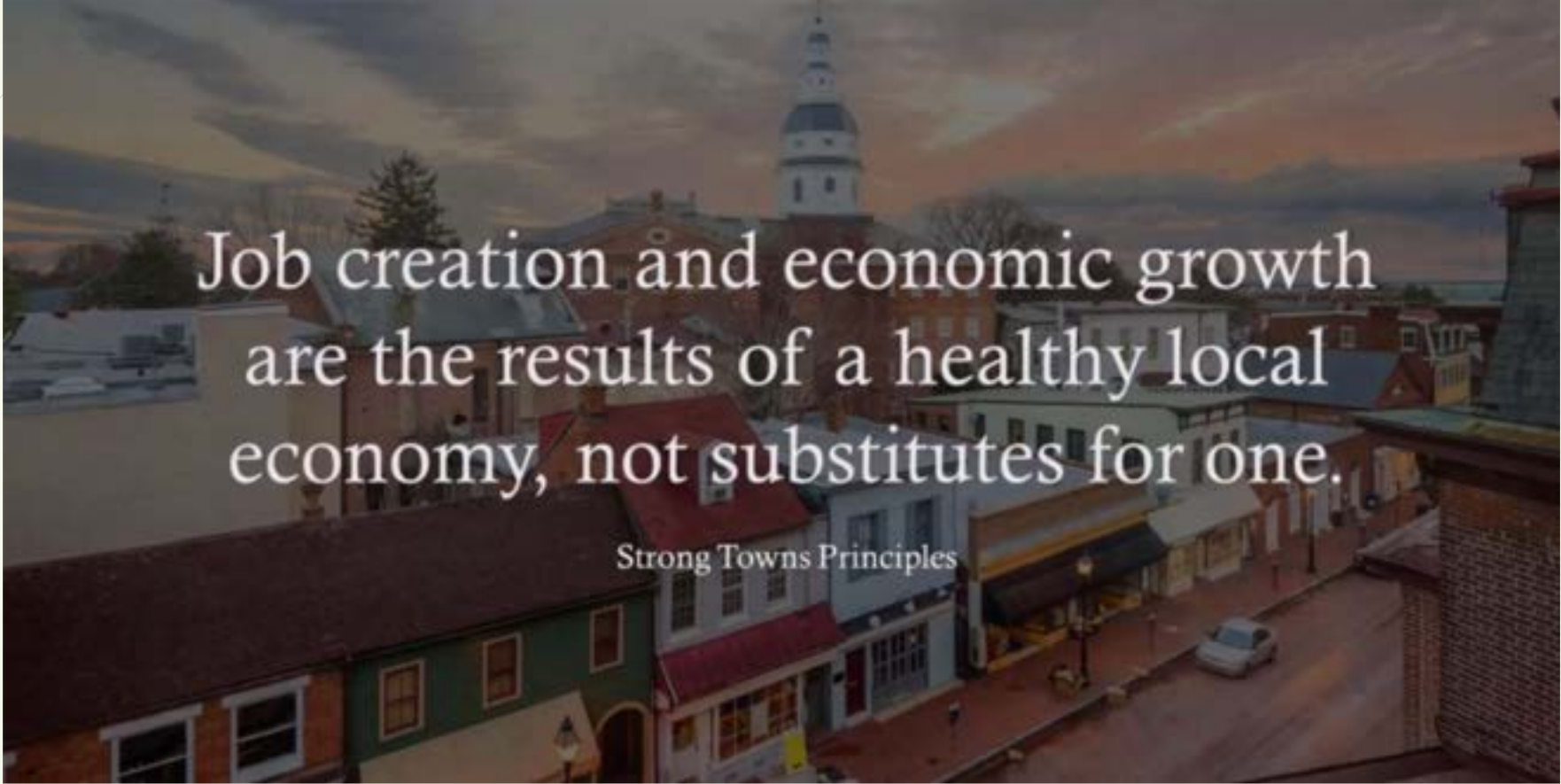


# The City/Island Economy: Questions?

- ▶ What has changed in the local economy since the 2030 Comprehensive Plan?. Do they apply to our coastal city here and now?
- ▶ What are the desired economic outcomes? How do we balance all perspectives? Do certain stakeholder's perspectives get priority? If so, why?
  - ▶ 1. What is a healthy economy? What are the best metrics?
  - ▶ 2. How should the City get involved in influencing Economic Development?
  - ▶ 3. What kind of employment is good for the City? What kind of business is good for area? Do we have a say?
  - ▶ 4. Do we define "good for the City" narrowly - as increase in ad valorem tax? How do we identify ALL economic contributors to a healthy economy?

# A Balanced Approach Driving Economic Development





Job creation and economic growth  
are the results of a healthy local  
economy, not substitutes for one.

Strong Towns Principles





# Economic Assets of Amelia Island/Fernandina Beach

What would be the financial impact if these were gone?

Environmental resources

The character (sense of place)

*\* A number of cities have developed alternative ways to account for such value or expense when depleted.*



# How can our economy be more sustainable and resilient? What are sustainable and resilient economic development policies?

➤ Discussion/SWOT

# Quick Summary

More cities recognize the dynamics and want to incorporate sustainable/resilient goals in Economic Planning – bottom up/common sense approach.

Smart Towns\* view – use math and work backwards for comprehensive revenue planning and forecasting – “dashboards” for reporting data.

Economic stability over time vs. Boom Bust Cycle reactivity.

Citizen directed vs. economic “prevailing winds”.

Economic Planning that supports and doesn't undermine all Comprehensive Plan Goals

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a solid red arrow pointing to the right, positioned horizontally. Behind the arrow and extending upwards and to the right are several thin, dark, curved lines that resemble stylized grass or reeds. The background of the slide is a light, pale green color with a subtle gradient.

# Housing



# Background, Data and Analysis for Goal 5 - Housing

- 2030 Goal for Housing is like other goals in the plan in that it too is largely “aspirational” in nature seeking to “support” an adequate inventory of safe, sanitary and energy efficient housing at affordable costs which meets the needs of our current **and future residents**.
- Key components were to provide polices that meet demand for housing types, elimination of substandard housing, provide for affordable housing.
- An additional component was to focus on neighborhoods!
- Documents reviewed for this element included the City of Fernandina Beach’s Evaluation and Appraisal Review Report, a Nassau County Fl Housing Affordability Assessment conducted by UF/Schimberg presented to the commissioners in 2019, the 2020 Nassau County Growth Trends Report prepared and presented by county staff, and a Housing Market Analysis for Nassau County conducted by Urbanomics, Inc. presented in fall 2020.



# Background, Data and Analysis for Goal 5 – Housing Continued

- Key take-aways from the recent Urbanomics report indicated that projected growth for our county may be underestimated in other reports by as much as 25,000 citizens. Of the 11,468 workers living in Nassau County, 73.5% work in the service industry.
- Per The poverty rate in our county is 10%, 12% in our city and homelessness does exist here.
- The development of multi-family housing has been less than 10% for the past two decades. At this time, there is only one truly “affordable housing” project underway located in the William Burgess District.
- Citizen input from the 2019 EAR revealed folks remain strongly in favor of the maintenance and protection of affordable housing, the preservation of our city’s historical, cultural and heritage neighborhoods, desire concurrency with public transport and a prioritization of protection of the environment across all housing efforts.

# Fun Facts for Goal 5:

2030 Goal 3

In a member update Wednesday, July 21, 2021, Florida Housing Coalition reports that Florida has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest “housing wage” at \$24.28/hr. That is the full-time hourly wage required to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at the fair market rent of \$1,290 per month. A person must work 115 hours per week at minimum wage (\$8.65/hr) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at fair market rent.



## Care to take a guess?

Average cost of a 3/2 rental home in our city?

Average cost of a 2/2 rental apartment here?

Number of **active** residential listings under \$325k, 1300 sq ft+ in our MLS areas 1-7?

## Now Let's SWOT for Housing!





# The Over-Arching Goal for Housing:

**The city of Fernandina Beach must support the provision and maintenance of an adequate inventory of safe, sanitary and energy efficient housing in suitable neighborhoods at affordable costs that meets the needs of the city's present and future residents.**

**Objectives will be developed via policies addressing:**

1. Housing Preservation
2. Affordable Housing
3. Group Homes and Foster Care Facilities
4. Relocation
5. Homeless
6. Housing Supply and Demand
7. Energy Efficiency, Resilience and Sustainability



# What is recommended for 2045?

- Establish a point person(s) to coordinate and document housing efforts
- Establish a baseline using data sources confirmation of city numbers.
- Assess and report on progress to the City Commissioners every two years.
- Identify historical, heritage and culturally significant neighborhood.
- Establish plans to maintain the existing housing stock in these neighborhoods via grants and other funding sources and begin implementation of same.
- Using the Sanibel Plan and others like it from around the state, adopt and implement a “Below Market Rate Housing Program” to ensure “workforce” and other low-income residents have housing options here in our city.
- The city should adopt incentives for the development of affordable housing to include inclusionary zoning, expedited permitting, lot size adjustments, density bonuses, reductions/waivers for impact fees (except water/sewer), mixed use bonuses and green building certifications.



# What Else is Recommended for 2045?

- The City of Fernandina Beach has a Housing Authority. It is charged with advising the commission on fair housing, and the development or preservation of low-income housing for the city. It is imperative that the “point person” on City Staff initiate and document a dialogue between the Housing Authority and the City Commission. And just as the Commissioners attend various boards, they should hatch a plan to attend Housing Authority meetings so there is coordination of efforts.
- Homelessness exists in every city in the USA and that includes Fernandina Beach. Policies in Objective 3.06 describe how The City of Fernandina Beach can and should partner to support intergovernmental and charitable organizations to begin to meet the needs of our homeless citizens.
- For all efforts on Housing, Policy 3.07 describes the need to continue to enforce existing environmental protections as well as implement new strategies to protect our city and island home from the ravages of sea level rise, ongoing climate change and environmental degradation.

# Mobility

***Can't have economy,  
sustainability and resilience  
without a good mobility system***



# Our work? Systems Integration Approach....

## What are our guiding questions in an integrated approach?

- ▶ **Economy** — Support economic vitality while developing infrastructure in a cost-efficient manner. Costs of infrastructure must be within a society's ability and willingness to pay. User costs, including private costs, need to be within the ability of people and households to pay for success.
- ▶ **Social** — Meet social needs by making transportation accessible, safe, and secure; include provision of mobility choices for all people (including people with economic disadvantages); and develop infrastructure that is an asset to communities.
- ▶ **Environment** — Create solutions that are compatible with - and that can be an enhancement to - the natural environment, reduce emissions and pollution from the transportation system, and reduce the material resources required to support transportation.
- ▶ **Public Trust** – Public input in all levels of decision making; definable and measurable goals



# Mobility System: What is it?

“Move” our thinking beyond trains, planes and automobiles....

Multi-Modal system, which consists

- Roads, bicycle facilities, pedestrian facilities providing access to services, recreation, open spaces, schools, businesses, and transit routes.
- All of which are collectively intended to provide for the movement of people and goods.
- All are connected or interconnected.
- More fair system.



## Applying Sustainability to Transportation Planning

# Sustainability and Transportation

- ▶ allows the basic access needs of individuals and societies to be met safely and in a manner consistent with human and ecosystem health, and with equity within and between generations;
- ▶ is affordable, operates efficiently, offers choice of transport mode, and supports a vibrant economy;
- ▶ limits emissions and waste within the planet's ability to absorb them, minimizes consumption of non-renewable resources to the sustainable yield level, reuses and recycles its components, and minimizes the use of land and the production of noise.

From The University of Plymouth Centre for Sustainable Transport, 2009



## Applying Resiliency to Transportation Planning

# Resiliency and Transportation

- ▶ A critical aspect of our existence.
- ▶ A basic human behavior of everyday life.
- ▶ Allows our different systems to interact and generate and accumulate wealth.
- ▶ Supports businesses and our social infrastructures.

*During climate disasters, cyberattacks, pandemics, and other manmade disasters, maintaining mobility resilience could be a matter of life and death.*


**Resiliency allows us to face the disaster and recover rapidly.**





# Our Fernandina Beach Context

Background, data and analysis



# Our Setting Leads to questions

*Think about: What is our carrying capacity?*

- ▶ Barrier island with finite boundaries.
- ▶ Nearly reached physical limits, leaving only redevelopment possibilities.
- ▶ No opportunities to expand roads due to historic nature and physical limitations.
- ▶ Compact street patterns.
- ▶ Roads connecting to resorts and county to the south; connecting to major interstate system to the North.
- ▶ Roads governed by city, county and state.
- ▶ Airport, port, plants, railroad, waterways, and job-based commerce settings.
- ▶ Population trends and growth-more people, more services.



# Data and Challenges

- ❑ Out of date & lack of data to address problems/make visionary plans.
- ❑ Intergovernmental and agency cooperation and coordination.
- ❑ Managing traffic between the island and other parts of the county.
- ❑ Seasonal visitors circulation to beaches and events from off-island.
- ❑ Our “constrained” roads.
- ❑ Need for multi-modal transportation routes, including bike/walking paths.
- ❑ Connecting mobility to low paying jobs for workers.
- ❑ Connecting services (medical, food) to underserved neighborhoods.
- ❑ Funding Sources for mobility projects.



# 4 CRITICAL ELEMENTS

# Create and Implement Connectivity

- Connecting vehicle-to-infrastructure, such connectivity to and within Amelia Island and city: (ecotourism, business, services such as schools, medical; special events; parking, access to waterways).
- Reducing service, goods and information deserts.
- Conducting robust public engagement with all neighborhoods.
- Coordinating multi-agency and local, county, state governments.
- Presenting open and ongoing transparent communication and data points.
- Reducing gaps in facilities (pedestrian, bicycling, and roadways).

# Improve Transit Service

- Improving Transit Service that connects all neighborhoods .
- Fully-funding existing capital and operating costs.
- Researching and implementing shuttle service that connects off island to island and within city.
- Improving levels of transit for disabled and senior citizens.
- Establishing and enforcing sustainable, low/no emission services and facilities.
- Enhancing safety, reliability, and accessibility.
- Creating and utilizing premium transit investments.

# Improve Traffic Management System

- Establishing an innovative traffic System Management.
- Improving intersections.
- Increasing traffic flow and reducing bottlenecks.
- Implementing traffic calming and researched safety elements.
- Evaluating utilization of multimodal facilities.
- Enhancing multimodal options.
- Improving safety of multimodal travel options.
- Maintaining safe facilities for walking, bicycling, transit.
- Utilizing innovative technologies for vehicle and pedestrian-scale safety analyses.
- Providing education about pedestrian, motorcycle and bike safety.

# Implement a Variety of Environmental Adaptation Measures

- ❖ Incorporating research-based techniques to mitigate flooding.
- ❖ Implementing infrastructure designs to improve stormwater management and water quality techniques when modifying any transportation right of way or facility.
- ❖ Implementing designs that account for associated damage due to the increase in sea-level rise and pollution from vehicles, plants, ports, trains.
- ❖ Creating and building a framework for transportation alternatives in all future development plans.
- ❖ Ensuring that all roads avoid natural preserves, wildlife habitat and historic districts.
- ❖ Prioritizing maintaining character while protecting environment.
- ❖ Prioritizing in all planning : ***it's a barrier island with finite borders***



# Engage Stakeholders and Decisionmakers

- ❑ Weighing the trade-offs that come with prioritizing options.
- ❑ Listening for innovative solutions from those who are “on the mobility route”.
- ❑ Conducting further research and understanding of traffic calming and use on barrier island (i.e. City Streets).



# Funding Sources

- Identifying funding sources and priorities so that mobility projects must be implemented.
- Prioritizing funding sources to maintain current infrastructure.
- Facilitating quick restoration of infrastructure following disruptions.
- Updating or adding such services as public transportation or shared riding to improve outcomes, including congestion, safety, environmental impact, and job access.



# Traffic Control Techniques

*“Never lose sight of our barrier island w/ its character and history”*

- ❑ Using traffic control techniques that maintain sense of place
- ❑ Developing and implementing intelligent transportation system (ITS) technology:
  - monitor
  - prioritize
  - utilize real time data to enhanced monitoring and notifications systems
- ❑ Implementing safety, efficiency techniques: prioritize pedestrians, transit
- ❑ Developing and instituting ordinances that require any redevelopment/infill to comply with road policies, lighting, parking, reduce green omissions, mobility fees that focus on maintenance



# Questions about Mobility?

Reach out to us at our website dedicated to this work

[www.AIWG.org](http://www.AIWG.org)

We Welcome Your Continued Questions and Comments!