

## **EAR - Major Issue Summary**

The Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) for the City of St. Augustine's Comprehensive Plan provides the framework to update the plan for the next planning horizon of 2025. Current Goals, Objectives and Policies of the comprehensive plan have proved a rational guide for growth and development in the City. However, a periodic review is necessary to address changing conditions in the City.

Through the EAR process, the community has the ability to identify and analyze major issues as they relate the comprehensive plan. Evaluating the comprehensive plan based on a specific set of major issues will help guide the future direction of comprehensive plan. The following list is a summary of major issues that have been identified through community meetings, workshops and public outreach. The list is not in priority order.

### **Major Issues:**

#### **Issue 1**

##### **Subject: Protection of Environmental Resources**

The City of St. Augustine's natural environment and water related ecosystems are valuable resources. To reduce negative impacts on vital environmental resources including waterways, the City will determine if current policies adequately protect the shoreline eco-systems and water quality. Areas of particular concern include dock construction; unlawful boating activities including noise and speed control; discharging of sewage in water; and protection of manatee habitats by increasing specified "zone" restrictions

Explore the development a "Harbor Management Plan" as a mechanism for improving and protecting waterfronts. Determine what environmental conservation techniques (such as dredging) will help protect and encourage the working waterfront initiative. Preserve protected hardwood trees and strengthen landscaping requirements for commercial sites. Determine the feasibility of national park status to protect environmental resources.

#### **Issue 2**

##### **Subject: Transportation**

As St. Johns County continues to grow so does traffic congestion. The impact of this growth and congestion is shared by the City of St. Augustine as State facilities pass through the City. In addition, since the City is a vacation destination a continual stream of vehicular traffic is experienced year round. Aging roads and sidewalks in the "Old City" core do not adequately support increased vehicular traffic. Alternative solutions that limit vehicles are necessary. The City needs to consider multi-modal alternatives including trolley service that may be linked to satellite parking garages. Improve existing sidewalks and increase pedestrian and bicycle paths. Limit hours of service and deliver vehicles in some areas of the "Old City". Work with Flagler College on future parking plans, explore shared parking facilities. Encourage non-profit agencies to provide public services such as shared parking lots.

### **Issue 3**

#### **Subject: Infrastructure**

Water quality continues to be a paramount issue in the region. Determine how successful the City has been in implementing policies that improve its potable water quantity and quality including storm water drainage and protecting the City's water supply. Evaluate if policies have adequately addressed stormwater retention facilities. Pursue a local power provider.

### **Issue 4**

#### **Subject: Historic Preservation**

St. Augustine has a significant number of historic structures, many of which are managed by the State. The City will determine if policies are effective at ensuring cooperation between agencies as related to management of state owned properties in historic districts. The City will also identify any potential barriers that may exist within historic designation requirements and building codes that prohibit historic buildings from complying with current building and FADA codes.

Consider establishing an architectural review committee, consisting of representatives from neighborhood associations, to protect the integrity of the historic district. Identify potential funding sources to repair historic structures.

### **Issue 5**

#### **Subject: Housing/Homeless Population**

The homeless presence in the "Old City" core is highly visible and impacts the perception of the City. Limited housing alternatives and shelters are not sufficient to house the population that seeks housing, and social programs are limited in dealing with health issues associated a percentage of this population. The City will evaluate current housing policies and explore alternative housing solutions for the homeless. Explore incentive-based housing initiatives such as low-cost, day-rate hotels to day laborers

Provide shuttle service to homeless shelters. Identify programs aimed towards transitional and permanent housing and other special needs housing. Work with the St. Johns Housing Partnership and Habitat for Humanity to expand the capacity of non-profit organizations.

### **Issue 6**

#### **Subject: Coastal High Hazard Areas**

The City understands the implications of development in Coastal High Hazard Areas (CHHA). The City aims to maintain appropriate land uses adjacent to CHHA. Evaluate development and land use designation in CHHA.

**Issue 7: Archeology**

Increasing development pressure in the City and County has impacted preservation of archaeological sites and resources. The City will determine if policies clearly direct the appropriate balance between new development and archaeological preservation. Explore methods that ensure all archeological significant properties are surveyed. Consider increasing Archaeological staff and determine if an assessment fee is feasible to underwrite property surveys.

**Issue 8****Subject: Economic Development/Tourism**

The City of St. Augustine may want to consider incorporating an Economic Development Element in the Comprehensive Plan. Cultural arts, eco-tourism and historic preservation play an important role in the economy of the City. Develop policies to protect and expand these economic resources and programs. Implement programs to encourage local artisans and street vendors by providing business licenses. Encourage small business development by providing incentives such as reduced parking requirements. Explore funding resources for arts and cultural community events.

Strengthen the Working Waterfront initiative to protect local fisherman and other water supported local businesses. Promote use of local goods and services to restaurants and other retailers. Explore funding opportunities to improve and protect the Working Waterfront.

Encourage redevelopment of commercial properties where existing infrastructure exists to help deter sprawling development patterns. Provide incentives to build on previous built lands redevelop commercial properties.