

NEFRC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

August 2009

Council Continues Work on a "Regional Vision"

As a follow up to Reality Check First Coast (RCFC) three expert panels convened to review the results of the exercise. The three co-chairs of (RCFC) moderated the panels: Brian Teeple moderated the Natural Resources Panel, Brenna Durden moderated the Land Use Panel and Robert Palmer moderated the Mobility Panel. Each panel was assembled to include experts from the stakeholder perspectives that are most important to the successful use of the exercise to launch a Regional vision. They were given essentially the same questions to discuss, each from their own perspective.



Reality Check First Coast Co-Chair Brenna Durden, moderates on Expert Panels.

The natural resources panel included experts from the public, private, planning and advocacy sectors. The land use panel included large landowners, developers, planners, analysts, attorneys, academics, surveyors and managers. The mobility panel included private and public sector planners and transportation professionals. Each panel gave its input on the best use of RCFC data and discussed priorities for next steps in the visioning process.

A joint Expert Panel meeting will include all three expert panels and is scheduled for September 10, 2009. Please contact Margo Moehring, Director of Planning and Strategic Initiatives, for more information at 904-279-0885 x161.

Interlachen Visioning

On August 25th, the Northeast Florida Regional Council facilitated a second Visioning Workshop for the Town of Interlachen. The first Visioning Workshop, which was held on April 28th and was also facilitated by the Regional Council, focused on identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, or S.W.O.T., of Interlachen. The August 25th Visioning Workshop focused on identifying the Town's priorities in the following areas: economic develop-

ment, environmental and recreational resources, transportation and infrastructure, housing, and quality of life.

Participants in the Visioning Workshop included Town Council and Town Planning Commission members, as well as the general citizenry. To maximize participation, those in attendance were separated into groups of eight to ten people. Each group was assigned a Regional Council staff member to facilitate the discussions, and to act as scribe, writing down the priorities as they were identified. Ultimately, each group identified their collective top three priorities for each subject area.

The information garnered from each of the two Visioning Workshops will serve as the basis for identifying the Local Major Issues within the upcoming comprehensive plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report. Please contact Guy Parola, Planning and Strategic Initiatives Staff Contact, for more information at 904-279-0885 x135.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

In 2008, the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) received confirmation from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) that it was eligible to pursue certification as an Economic Development District. As a certified Economic Development District that has a regional economic development plan, Northeast Florida would become eligible to receive federal funding through EDA. Essentially, this designation as a certified Economic Development District adds another tool in the economic development toolbox.

A fundamental requirement for becoming a certified Economic Development District is the adoption of a region-wide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, or "CEDS." The CEDS will function as the economic development roadmap for Northeast Florida, and is required to both be approved by the CEDS Committee and adopted by the NEFRC Board. On August 21, 2009, the CEDS was approved by the CEDS Committee and submitted for adoption by NEFRC.



Adoption by the NEFRC Board will be the final step in a seven month coordinated effort between the Regional Council, the seven counties that comprise the region, and economic development practitioners and stakeholders. Each member of the CEDS Committee, which included Regional Council Board members, generously gave their time and energy. The result of this effort is a CEDS that reflects the economic development goals of the region, and provides a plan of action to achieve these goals. The CEDS may be updated as needed to reflect regional changes. Please contact Guy Parola, Planning and Strategic Initiatives Staff Contact, for more information at 904-279-0885 x135.

International Visitor Leadership Program

The International Visitors Corps of Jacksonville, Inc. partnered with the Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program to bring eight young leaders from Southeast Asia to Northeast Florida. On August 10, they visited NEFRC, after expressing an interest in how regional governance and programs function in our area. Mario Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, gave them an overview of how regions work with state and local governments. Margo Moehring, Director of Planning and Strategic Initiatives, discussed regional visioning with them, including the results of Reality Check First Coast. The group had many questions and the discussion was lively. Mr. Taylor was invited to the Philippines to keep the dialogue going. While the trip may not happen soon, contact information was exchanged so that ideas can continue to be exchanged. Please contact Margo Moehring, Director of Planning and Strategic Initiatives, for more information at 904-279-0885 x161.



Leadership Networking for Young Activists from Singapore, Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam to Northeast Florida

'TD 101' Presented at Quarterly Local Coordinating Board Meetings

Quarterly Local Coordinating Board (LCB) meetings for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program (TD) were held in several of our counties in late August and early September. In addition to the meeting, the Boards were provided the opportunity to participate in a "TD 101" workshop. The TD 101 presentation provides the LCB members with information on the roles and responsibilities of the LCB and how they relate to the other TD agencies. This workshop is especially important to new LCB members. Please contact Ed Lehman, Director of Transportation & Community Development for more information at 904-279-0885 x130.

HazMat IQ™ Provides Some Smart Training

Recently, the LEPC sponsored a training course provided by HazMat IQ™. Their Instructors delivered an "Above the Line/Below the Line" HazMat Risk Assessment Course designed to teach critical knowledge for first responders who need to be able to make a quick decisions during a HazMat incident. By understanding the chemistry involved, as well as taking into account various environmental hazards, these first responders can make their risk assessment as quickly as possible. Armed with this knowledge, the risk assessment determines what equipment is needed, the appropriate level of Personal Protective Equipment, the size of the hot zone, and decide if conditions are appropriate for a firefighter to effectuate a rescue.

In addition, the streamlined size-up process enables responders to maximize their response efficiency and effectiveness. Thirty students each received eight hours of instruction for a total of 240 training hours. Capt. Hank Epperson of St. Johns County Fire Rescue spoke about the HazMatIQ training at the recent LEPC meeting on August 12th, 2009, stating that, "The course is specifically designed for the HazMat Tech to determine if rescue can take place through utilizing a five minute risk assessment. And the continuing education component provides students with a newsletter and a 'chemical of the month' to keep them informed and engaged in the processes they learned." Capt. Epperson highly recommended this training course for other first responders. The course was well subscribed with more first responders wanting to take the course than there were seats available. At this time, the LEPC is looking at hosting another day of training by HazMat IQ™ in late September. Please contact Jason Taylor, LEPC Staff Contact, for more information at 904-279-0885 x136.