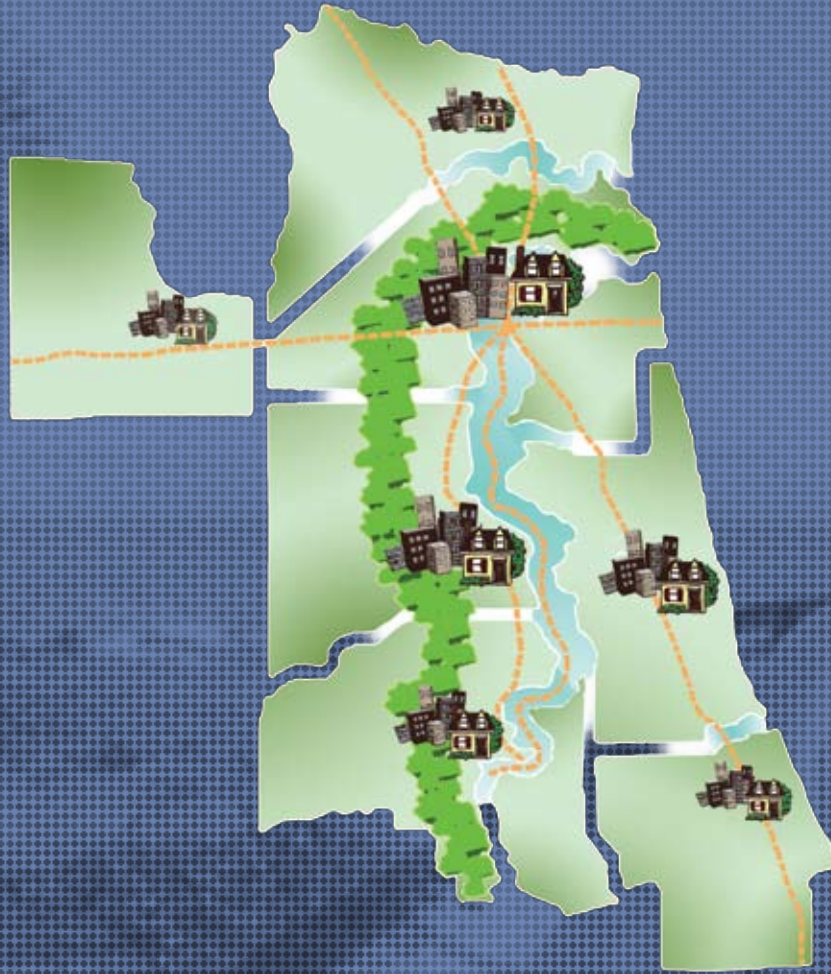


First Coast Vision

is incorporated herein

pursuant to

27E-5.004(2) F.A.C.



First Coast Vision



October 2011

THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTE OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA, INC.

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A call to action

Northeast Floridians live and compete in a global economy. In this economy, regions will provide the reservoir of resources needed to be competitive. Regions are large enough to provide the resources needed by successful businesses; small enough to allow public and private sectors to develop solid working relationships on a shared identity built on common concerns and opportunities. Almost all of Florida's quality of life challenges, including transportation, land use, conservation and human health, are regional in scale. The issues are too large and complex to be resolved by localities acting on their own.

Northeast Florida's successful Reality Check program poured the foundation for over 300 regional leaders to develop a consensus for greater regional thinking, cooperation, and problem solving.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council asked the Regional Community Institute to build on Reality Check and develop a vision that would provide an aspiration guidepost for growth, economic development, and human health for our region spanning the next 50 years.

The Regional Community Institute is proud and pleased to present First Coast Vision to the Northeast Florida community and to the Regional Council for consideration as it reviews and revises its Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

A vision is not a plan. A vision is a collection of goals and objectives that reflect the choices and values of citizens as to how they want to live. Implementation of the vision ultimately is the job of elected officials, regional organizations, non-profits, and businesses spurred by regional champions.

First Coast Vision is the product of numerous community meetings, workshops and brainstorming sessions, and reflects the thoughts of thousands of First Coast residents. The Regional Community Institute Board merits special recognition. A very special thank you goes to Margo Moehring, the Institute's Executive Director, and to Brian Teeple, the Regional Council's CEO.

On behalf of RCI, we invite you to join us as we begin to implement the vision and continue to refine our collective goals for the future of Northeast Florida. We invite you to become a regional champion.

Sincerely,



Bob Rhodes

October 1, 2011

Why First Coast Vision?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines vision, in part, as

- Unusual competence in discernment or perception, intelligent foresight
- The manner in which one sees or conceives of something

The First Coast in Northeast Florida, like all of Florida, is at a crossroads. We can grow as we have been growing, and address the consequences of growth after the fact. Congested roads, urban sprawl, infrastructure needs, and environmental concerns are all issues that will need to be addressed if this path is taken. Alternatively, we can develop a vision for the region that will consider current

trends and alternative scenarios for future growth, allowing us to choose the path of the region's growth. This kind of intelligent foresight will permit us to conceive of our own future and give us the steps we may take to make it happen - rather than let the future happen to us.

Visions are not regulatory, but outline a future we can aspire to, and help us to measure our success.

What is First Coast Vision?



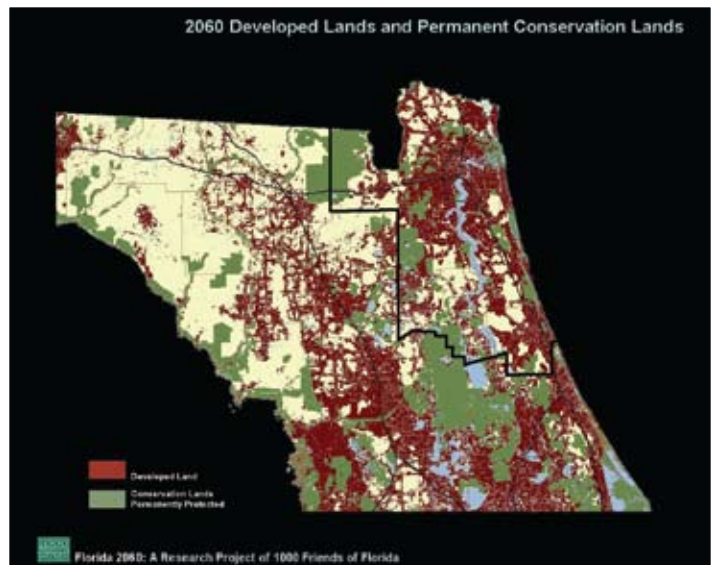
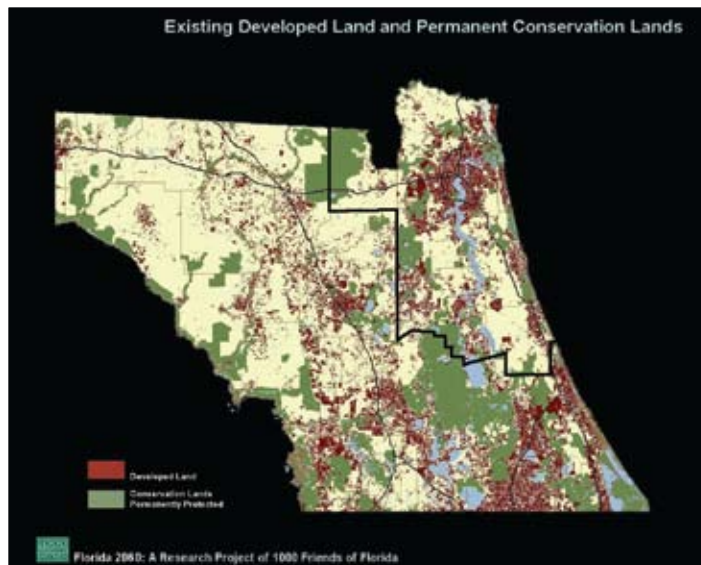
Regional leaders in the First Coast recognized that visioning was needed in the region, and First Coast Vision was born. The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) created the not-for-

profit Regional Community Institute of Northeast Florida, Inc. (RCI) for the purpose of determining the current State of the Region and establishing a vision for growth and development in the seven county region for the next fifty years. RCI began efforts with the assumption that the region would grow by 1.6 million people (more than double

the 2005 population) and at least 650,000 jobs. We used data from a May 2007 study created by a partnership of 1000 Friends of Florida, the University of Florida, the University of Central Florida, and the University of Pennsylvania called "An Alternative Future, Florida in the 21st Century 2020 2040 2060" to establish the current trend. While our visioning efforts make clear that the assumptions used in "An Alternative Future" and those used to estimate population growth in First Coast Vision are simply estimates and should not be used to make infrastructure decisions, they are helpful in visualizing what our region might look like if our population doubles.

Why First Coast Vision?

The images from “An Alternative Future” speak for themselves.



The 2060 trend image on the right highlights three of the components of visioning that cross local government boundaries and are intrinsically regional: conservation, land use, and transportation. These issues are inherently regional and can best be addressed by meaningful state, regional and local cooperation and coordination. Our region is worth the effort to choose its future.

Ever since the world became connected and mobile enough that people and businesses no longer decide to move to a town or city, but to a region, regional visioning has become more prevalent. In fact, regions that began visioning years ago, often precipitated by a perception of risk of loss of competitiveness or quality of life, are starting to see the benefits of their intelligent foresight. You only need to look to regions such as Central Texas or the Research Triangle in North Carolina, or States like Utah, to see that choosing the future can focus a region on economic growth. Jim Sellen, a planner who has been heavily involved in regional visioning efforts throughout the state of Florida, told a First Coast Vision Town Hall meeting audience that visions can become self-fulfilling prophecies. If they make the connection to economic development and excite the larger community into sharing the

vision, citizens will own the vision and make it happen.

A vision is an opportunity to stand back and think about how a region could be in the future. It is an opportunity to think about how we want to live, and how we want our children to live. It includes measures, to help us assess our progress at achieving our vision. It does not have to be constrained by today's funding or regulatory realities, because it is a vision. Those who believe in visioning believe we have the power to change those things that could keep our region from becoming what we want it to be.

A vision is not a document that requires change, it can only inspire it. It provides a vision for how our region might function in the future, and we hope there will be much consensus in the region around the need to change and the principles that should guide this change. If we have found the right vision for our future for the next 50 years, it will become the self-fulfilling prophecy that Mr. Sellen describes. It will require us to measure our success and when our results indicate a change in direction is needed, we must have the courage and intelligent foresight to adapt.

First Coast Vision: How did we get here?

The Regional Community Institute (RCI)

Our organization is made up of members of the NEFRC Board and over 100 leaders who have graduated since 2005 from the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Academy. RCI undertakes policy initiatives at the request of the NEFRC. To coordinate regional visioning, one of the first steps we took was

to partner with NEFRC, the Urban Land Institute, the St. Johns Water Management District, the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization, the Cornerstone Regional Development Partnership, the St. Johns River Alliance, and the University of North Florida.

Reality Check First Coast and Region First 2060

Regional visioning efforts kicked off with Reality Check First Coast in May 2009. 300 leaders came together at that exercise and rejected the status quo. They created six Guiding Principles, recommended to guide how we develop and grow for the next 50 years, and four Growth Patterns, that could describe the way that we grow. Since Reality Check, the Lego® brick and yarn visioning exercise has been repeated in each of the seven

counties of the region (County Checks), as well as in two youth-only forums (Generation Check and Generation Check 2011).

Region First 2060, the partnership that put on Reality Check First Coast, is committed to implementing the Guiding Principles, while RCI has been committed to creating First Coast Vision. These are complementary efforts.

First Coast Vision

Our mission is the creation of First Coast Vision, a vision for growth and development in the seven county region for the next fifty years, and measuring success once the vision is complete. Using data from Reality Check First Coast and other sources, RCI committees worked during 2010 on recommending what to

measure and the goals and objectives for a 2060 vision. These goals, objectives and measures are important work products of the visioning process, and are included in the resource library at www.firstcoastvision.com.

The Importance of Public Input

Getting the input of as many residents of the region as possible is important to us and to creating a First Coast Vision that we all can believe in. RCI has been surveying the public on their opinions about regional issues and visioning since 2009. The draft goals and objectives for the vision were released for public input in late

January, 2011. First Coast Vision Town Hall meetings were held during February and March, 2011 in each of the seven counties in the region to gather public input on the goals and objectives and to poll the public on their preferred growth pattern.

Preferred Growth Pattern

Four regional growth patterns (Multiple Growth Centers, Urban Compact, Corridor, Dispersed) were created at Reality Check First Coast, the seven County Checks, and the two Generation Check exercises. These growth patterns were the subject of a public growth pattern preference survey, taken by over 1,300 participants in 2010 and 2011 at public presentations or on-line. 96% of respondents rejected the 2060 trend growth pattern depicted on page 5. 40% preferred the Multiple Growth Center pattern, 24% preferred the Urban Compact pattern and 23%

preferred the Corridor pattern. These preferences were used to create the First Coast Vision images. The images of the preferred growth pattern shown on the cover and page 7 depict a region in 2060 that has located new jobs and housing in existing centers, grown along transportation corridors, added jobs to all counties, and preserved an extensive network of open spaces, all with an emphasis on connecting these assets to minimize public investment and maximize the choices our region provides to its residents and businesses.

What could the First Coast look like?

We sponsored a design competition to create an image to illustrate First Coast Vision. The image was formed by the preferred growth pattern, the goals and objectives of First Coast Vision, the results of public input, and the creative minds of the

designers. One version of the image adorns the cover of First Coast Vision, the other appears below. First Coast Vision offers these images as a way to picture the First Coast in 2060, but local governments will ultimately decide where growth will go.

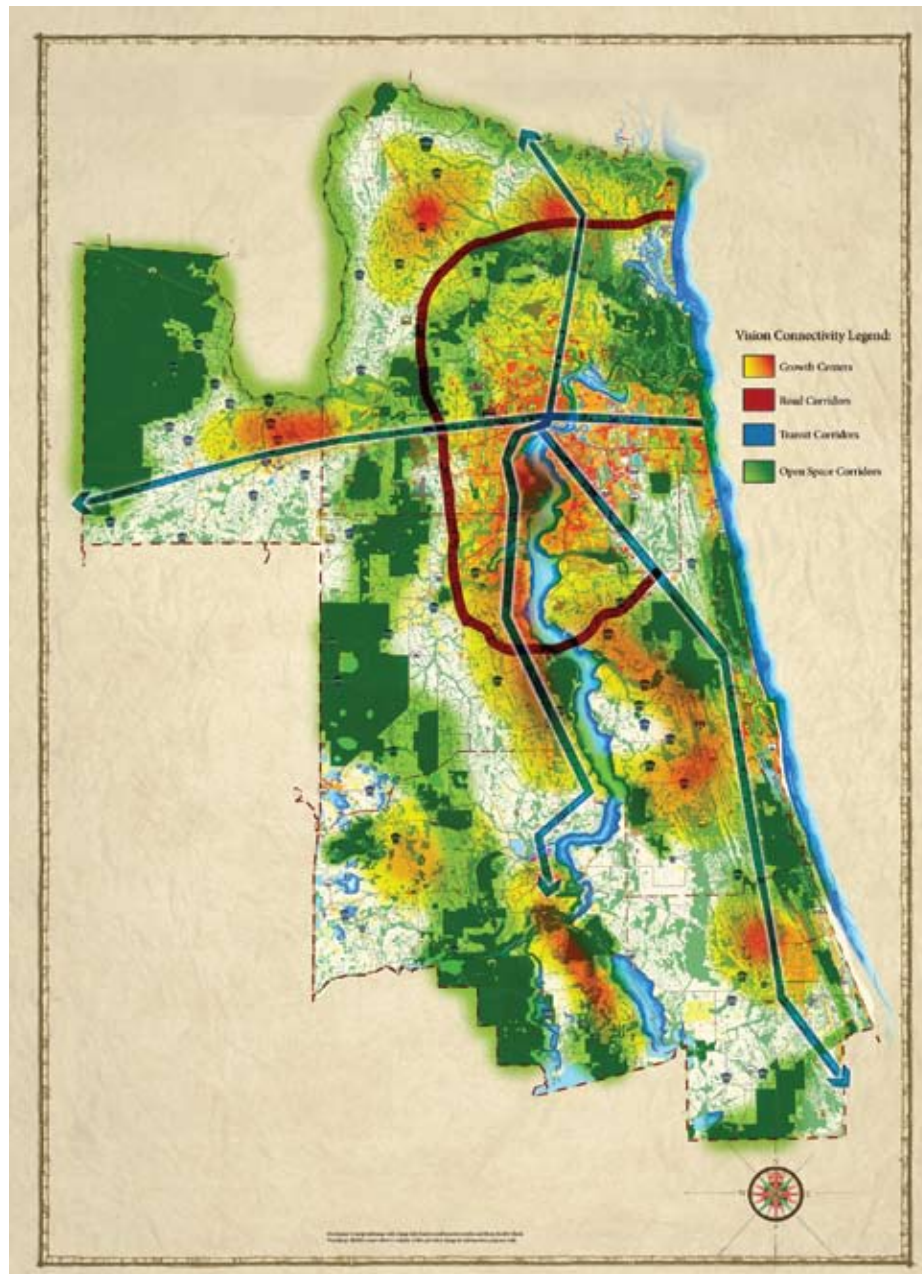


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IMPROVING YOUR WORLD

How will we know if we are successful?

Our measures will help us track how our region is doing at accomplishing our goals.

What could the First Coast be like?

Our Vision for Prosperity

Northeast Florida has assets that many regions would envy, including deep water ports, intersecting interstate highways, viable agriculture, and a breathtaking natural environment. We reject the traditional mindset that keeping these assets to ourselves will preserve our quality of life. Instead, we celebrate our assets, invest in and capitalize on them, and preserve our natural environment because we recognize its value.

Northeast Florida capitalizes on its deep water ports, airports and rail/roadway connections to the nation through the continued improvement and expansion of infrastructure, including centralized systems for water, sewer, fiber optics (high speed internet), electric and natural gas distribution, and alternative and renewable energy.

Job centers are dispersed throughout the region, ensuring that each person has an opportunity for employment within proximity to where they live. Through its multi-modal transportation framework, the region recognizes and encourages the link between transportation, access to employment, and economic development.

Agriculture and working waterfront are two of the clear assets of the region and part of its identity, and we protect and nurture them, recognizing that loss of their viability would be a loss for the entire region.

The health care sector is a key component of Northeast Florida's economic base. In addition to hospitals, clinics, doctor's offices and other health sector facilities that serve Northeast Florida residents, the region has attracted and retained nationally recognized research and learning hospitals and medical technology industries as a result of its first-tier colleges and universities and positive business climate.

Leadership and public policy enable a vibrant, diverse and competitive environment to flourish. This environment is safe and predictable, both as a place to live and as a business investment.

Our region nurtures small business, is home to many large businesses, and is one of the most attractive regions for Fortune 500 company headquarters.

Partnerships extend beyond our region to make us competitive on both a national and international level.

If technology can help us to improve quality of life in the region, we embrace it.



Princess Place Preserve

What could the First Coast be like?

Our Vision for Community

Our region will grow and develop in a pattern that allows for agricultural, rural, suburban, and urban lifestyles. New and existing growth centers will cluster in areas supported by local governments and will include jobs, amenities and housing close to each other, and provide transportation options to connect people to centers and centers to each other. New and improved communities will be designed to meet the needs of people at all stages of life and to encourage health and access to the resources of the region. Our region is healthy, because our people have a healthy lifestyle and have access to quality health services.

Our communities are designed, and our older communities are retrofitted as they evolve, to be walkable, to include a mix of uses, and to provide mobility options, so that residents can easily choose safe and healthy ways to get around.

to work and to play, and to age in happiness and health. We recognize the importance of large developments to help us to achieve our vision. We partner with those who create such developments so that their dreams are incorporated into the region's fabric as they are planned, built, occupied, and become part of our community.



Green Cove Springs

A range of housing choices is available, affordable and works for all our residents.

Communities are built with the needs of a lifetime in mind, so that the First Coast is a desirable region to grow up, to learn,

are located within walking distance of most of our residents, and we consider this goal as we locate new parks and new residential development.

Northeast Florida leadership recognizes that transportation efficiency and costs are an important element in housing affordability. A regional transit system provides affordable transportation options for the region's residents, while an emphasis on mixed-use communities with a balance of housing and job-generating land uses reduces the need for long commutes and provides for neighborhood supporting services.

Well designed communities promote active lifestyles and physical activity, which in turn reduce chronic disease and poor health outcomes. Parks

What could the First Coast be like?

Our Vision for Resiliency

Planning for the safety and health of our residents is a first consideration. This includes ensuring that our residents are safe in their daily lives and that they can withstand emergencies, including those where evacuation and sheltering are required. It also includes establishing resiliency in the built environment, so that buildings and infrastructure can weather storms and emergencies. We are committed to determining the impact of climate change in the region, mitigating for impacts if we project them, and adapting if required.



Our region will be one where our citizens feel safe in their neighborhoods. This perception of safety translates into vibrant communities with residents who interact with each other and spend time outdoors engaged in a

variety of recreational pursuits.

Our communities and buildings are resilient, safe, and free from environmental hazards that can be detrimental to health.

A safe transportation network gives pedestrians and bicyclists equal priority with motor vehicles. Roadways are designed to minimize conflicts between motor vehicles and bicycles or pedestrians, therefore resulting in safe travels regardless of transportation mode.

Our region is prepared to respond to and recover from the impacts of all hazards.

Our population is educated about their vulnerability to emergencies and their best options in the event of an emergency, with communication methods that are efficient and effective.

Once we have determined the impact of climate change on Northeast Florida, we will determine which of our assets (people and built environment) are vulnerable, establish

a plan so that we know what actions to take to address the impacts of climate change, if any, and mitigate the impacts whenever we can. If we identify impacts, we will take climate change adaptation into account in all planning, design, and infrastructure investment decisions made in the region.

Our region has reached a balance by mitigating for the effects of climate change on sea level rise that have been observed as well as planning for adaptation to future effects.

Our region does its full part to maintain a familiar climate.



American Beach

What could the First Coast be like?

Our Vision for People

We seek to eliminate achievement gaps and provide equity of opportunity, so all of the people in Northeast Florida have access to jobs and can build wealth as the region prospers. We recognize that transportation and housing costs must be considered when families pursue prosperity, and we consider how our residents will efficiently and affordably get to jobs when we locate job growth. We pursue diversity and inclusion as we locate housing and create and strengthen neighborhoods, so that all residents have multiple options on where to live and what lifestyle to choose.



Ravine State Gardens

A robust economy serves the needs of residents with jobs that pay well and provide a full range of benefits. This economic well-being translates into a population with positive emotional and physical outcomes that result in increased productivity.

There is access in all neighborhoods to physical activity, which is a key component for reduction of chronic disease and poor health outcomes.

The region provides good access to quality health care and health-supportive services, including mental health services, regardless of location or socioeconomic status. A regional

multi-modal transportation network ensures physical access to services, while a robust network of social services ensures meaningful access.

Our region provides viable lifestyle choices to all, including agricultural, rural, suburban and urban.

All of our residents have access to a first-tier education system at all levels throughout the region with curriculum that is oriented towards both current and future business and industry needs and lifelong learning.

A regional transportation network provides opportunities for residents without a car to travel to a wide range of employment.

Mixed-use communities integrate residential and employment-generating land uses to reduce the need to travel great distances for work.

A diversity of residents live in centers which offer a diversity of jobs, schools, homes, civic, cultural and faith-based uses, recreation, services and amenities.

Our communities provide housing choices for residents at all income levels, and do not force concentrations of poverty.

What could the First Coast be like?

Our Vision for Nature

Nowhere are our assets more obvious than in our natural environment and we embrace the challenge of ensuring that they are protected for the long term.

We maximize water conservation by domestic, agricultural, industrial, and commercial users. We will eliminate the use of potable water as an irrigation source and encourage the widespread use of “Florida Friendly” landscaping requirements, so that demand on the Floridan aquifer and nutrient pollution in waterways are both reduced.

Leaders and residents of the region understand the concept of green infrastructure, an inter-connected system of natural lands and built infrastructure, undeveloped lands, natural resource areas, recreational lands, and working lands, and value it. They recognize that the integrity of eco-systems is as valuable to the region as economic growth, and they insist that best practices, technologies, and tools to balance these priorities are used by all communities in the region.

All water bodies meet water quality standards. The St. Johns River is considered in every land use decision made in the region. As a highly visible resource that helps to define the region, our local governments and government agencies ensure that decision makers are provided with sufficient data to determine whether the river will be impacted: positively, negatively, or not at all by their actions.

A permanent, extensive, and connected system of publicly accessible natural lands includes

greenways and trails and other recreational opportunities that promote physical activity. Exercise is routine in the region, and its impact is felt in the trend towards improving health of our residents, including reducing rates of chronic diseases.

Our region maintains good air quality by keeping carbon emissions low as a result of improvements to the transportation network and more efficient energy use by consumers of energy. A regional transit system, transit-oriented development and more compact development patterns, including redevelopment along transit corridors, results in reduced vehicle miles traveled and reduced regional carbon footprint.



John M. Bethea State Forest in Baker County

What could the First Coast be like?

Our Vision for Mobility

We link land use with resources and mobility. We provide mobility choices to our residents and businesses. We fund mobility and maintain capacity. We provide medical and general mobility to all our residents, including the transportation disadvantaged.

The region has an efficient regional transportation network and incorporates coordination of land uses and transportation efforts to support the higher density areas of the region which are oriented towards transit.

Land use and transportation policies incentivize development types that allow for mobility choices.

High per capita transit ridership steadily reduces car and fossil fuel dependency.

Centers of population and jobs are well-connected to limit commute times for most residents and provide opportunities for all residents of the region to work if they choose.

Local governments and stakeholders of the region coordinate funding efforts to maximize efficiencies that allow for mobility choices for residents of the region. This includes collaboration on maintenance and operation of a regional transportation system that serves the suburban and urban parts of the region, with ways for rural residents to connect.

Transportation funding in the region is reliable, equitable, efficient and affordable.

A safe, efficient, well funded, and well maintained regional road network meets the requirements of population and economic growth and meets the challenges of transition away from fossil fuels to alternative energy. The road network is designed and maintained to be complementary to the regional transit network, and to all modes of transport and travel, including safe walking and biking.

Affordable mobility options other than the private car are available for all of our residents that do not own a car. Transit is affordable and provides service that is safe, reliable, and convenient to all people at all stages of life.



Dames Point Bridge

Where do we go from here?

The Regional Community Institute is providing First Coast Vision to the Northeast Florida Regional Council to inform dialogue on the future of Northeast Florida and the update to the Strategic Regional Policy Plan. We are including a set of metrics to establish a baseline and to measure our success, and the detailed goals and objectives drafted by our experts and vetted by the public. We stand ready to participate in the following action items at the request of the Regional Council, and we welcome a future where we are all part of a movement to achieve our vision.

Action Items

Gather data from across the region and assemble a Regional Atlas. This will be a series of images, lists and maps that identify environmentally sensitive lands, built and planned major roadways, commercial and industrial lands, military bases, residential lands, and other land uses. The vulnerability maps and green infrastructure maps noted below will be part of the Atlas. Local governments can use the Regional Atlas as a guide to coordinate planning efforts, prioritize public expenditures and facilitate economic development.

Create a set of vulnerability maps for the region. Bring together leadership and experts from the region to determine climate change impact, and, if indicated, mitigation and adaptation plans.

Convene leadership and experts in the region to develop the Regional Green Infrastructure, an interconnected system of natural and built infrastructure, undeveloped lands, natural resource areas, recreational lands, and working lands.

Assemble leadership and experts in the region to study and review the feasibility of a Regional Housing Assistance Mechanism to transition the region to an all voucher system, and away from government-owned or subsidized public housing. This will not apply to senior or special needs housing. This group will also propose a housing review methodology for significant developments to NEFRC.

Foster the relationships developed through the visioning process with partners who support the health of our region. This includes measuring outcomes related to growth management planning by including health metrics, ensuring that organizations



Bridge of Lions

that support a healthy region are always at the table when vision implementation is discussed, and considering the impact of decisions impacting the future of our region on the health of those who live and work in Northeast Florida.

Work with the Regional Transportation Study Commission to create and implement an efficient Multi-modal Transportation Framework to move people and goods, and support the infrastructure investments needed to make it work.

Participate in initiatives that convene regional leadership and build on the relationships that have been developed during the visioning process. Our local governments must decide how First Coast Vision can be incorporated into their communities. Provide education, support and encouragement to help them as they consider their futures.

Who is responsible?

We all have a role in the future of the First Coast. The Northeast Florida Regional Council will choose and coordinate the action steps. They will pursue funding to address the action steps and to use the policy work accomplished by First Coast Vision to create a Strategic Regional Policy Plan that is accepted by the region as the guideline to achieve our vision for the future. They will ask RCI to undertake policy initiatives as needed. If funding is not obtained, NEFRC will use the same approach that

RCI has used since its inception: good ideas come from our residents, and our residents are best able to see them achieved. The volunteer network established during Reality Check First Coast and continued through First Coast Vision has never been stronger, and as we change our focus to include education, can only get larger.

As the band Timbuk3 sang in 1986, "The future's so bright, we've got to wear shades!"

Who are we?

RCI Board Members:

As of September, 2011, the following regional leaders serve on the RCI Board:

- Mr. Bob Rhodes, Foley & Lardner LLP, Chair
- Mr. Michael Boyle, Vice Chair
- Ms. Linda Myers, CPA, Partner, Myers Resources, LLC, Secretary/Treasurer
- Ms. Carol Brady, Executive Director, NE Florida Healthy Start Coalition, Inc.
- Ms. Elaine Brown, Government Affairs Director, Killashee Investments
- Hon. Doug Conkey, Clay County Board of County Commissioners
- Ms. Shannon Eller, Government and Public Relations Officer, JTA
- Dr. Dawn Emerick, Executive Director, Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida, Inc.
- Hon. Art Graham, Florida Public Service Commission
- Mr. Wilfredo J. Gonzalez, District Director, US Small Business Administration
- Ms. Kellie Jo Kilberg, IOM, CCE, President, Kilberg and Associates
- Hon. Jon Netts, Mayor, City of Palm Coast
- Hon. Bob Page, Mayor, City of Green Cove Springs
- Ms. Mary Alice Phelan, Director/Community Relations, St. Vincent's HealthCare
- Mr. David Reed, Conservation Coordinator, JEA
- Mr. Harold Rutledge, President/CEO, The Rutledge Group
- Dr. Quinton White, Executive Director, Marine Science Research Institute, Jacksonville University

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Affordable Housing

Mr. Sid Ansbacher
Ms. Corie Baker
Mr. Tom Crawford
Ms. Wight Greger
Mr. Carlton Jones
Mr. G. Hollea Rachal
Ms. Denise Wallace
Ms. Carol Worsham

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Mr. Chuck Tamblyn
Mr. Brad Thoburn

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Mr. Wally Conway
Ms. Claire Goforth
Dr. J. David Lambert
Mr. Allen Tilley

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Mr. Paul Martinez, Martinez Advertising Group

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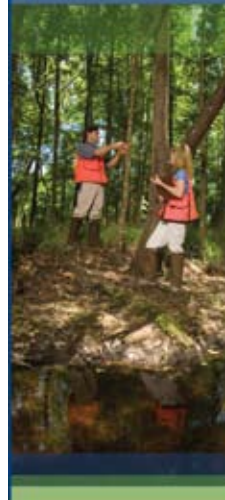
Our Roots Run Deep

Rayonier has been part of Florida's First Coast for more than 70 years.

Our **U.S. Forest Resources** group, headquartered in Fernandina Beach, sustainably manages more than 2 million acres in nine states.

TerraPointe Services, our real estate subsidiary, works with communities to help plan responsibly for the future and offers a mixture of development, conservation and recreation properties.

With our Corporate Headquarters in Jacksonville, we're proud of our long history in Northeast Florida.



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We are honored to support the vision for growth and development in Northeast Florida.

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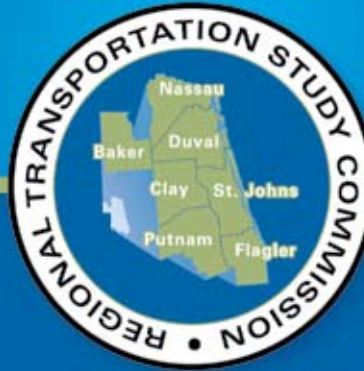
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First Coast Vision

For more information or to learn how you can get involved, go to www.firstcoastvision.com.



Goals Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) should serve as a guidebook on coordinated steps to achieve the goals and objectives for Northeast Florida included in First Coast Vision. It is a reference guide and data source on most facets of life in the Region and its counties. The Plan is organized around strategic subject areas that are in turn related to the priorities of the State of Florida and the mission of NEFRC.

The Plan contains policy guidelines where statute requires them. In other cases, it recommends approaches and supports communities in the strategies they choose to achieve regional goals. It identifies regional goals and the intent of NEFRC to regularly track the progress of the Region in achieving them. It is a tool for communities, Local Government managers and staff, and legislators, but not a mandate. First Coast Vision remains the guiding document for the plan. NEFRC will make our best efforts to assist in sharing best practices and ideas to help with vision and plan implementation.

The process to assess and update Strategic Regional Policy Plans is described in State statute. The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) is proceeding, as required, with the plan update that began with plan assessment in November of 2024. Public input as to what should change in the plan was gathered in 2025. Economic resilience discussions are just beginning and will result in strategies that are believed to assist the entire region to thrive. Once Northeast Florida has determined the approach that will work here to address the short- and long-term changes in the future, it may be appropriate to update the SRPP. In the meantime, the principles of First Coast Vision remain a useful guide. It is anticipated that this updated plan will be a transitional one, succeeded by one that reflects how the world and Northeast Florida have changed and how both continue to evolve.

STRATEGIC REGIONAL GOALS

The Strategic Regional Policy Plan is structured as the statute requires, into strategic regional subject areas. In the case of Northeast Florida, there are seven: Regional Demographics, Communities and Affordable Housing, Economic Development, Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency, Natural Resources of Regional Significance, Regional Transportation, and Cultivation. The goals and policies in this plan are aligned with the mission of the Northeast Florida Regional Council and the Florida State Comprehensive Plan. The State's plan is meant to provide long-range policy guidance for growth and to coordinate policies across different areas, with this plan representing the Northeast Florida area. Together, this ensures that the regional plan furthers the State's priorities and that the priorities and abilities of NEFRC support regional goals.

The following are the high-level regional goals that guide the policies and measures found in each of the strategic regional subject area chapters of the SRPP.

REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Goal: Progress toward achieving our goals should have a positive impact on the ability of all of Counties in the Region to prosper and all of the residents in the Region to achieve their personal goals. We will look for residents of modest means to spend less of their incomes on housing and transportation, and for mobility for all to access jobs and those things that impact quality of life.

COMMUNITIES AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Goal: Each local government is encouraged to take the lessons learned from visioning, the public preference for multiple growth centers, the opportunities and challenges raised by resources of regional significance, and the desires of their residents and determine where new growth should go, ideally in locations allowing it to take advantage of existing infrastructure, be mixed use, compact and connected to other centers. These mixed-use growth and redevelopment centers are supported in all seven Counties and have the potential to increase transit ridership, reduce car dependency, maintain water and air quality and conserve water. Once these locations are chosen, governments should do all they can to support quality development there that will appreciate in value and achieve multiple community and economic goals.

GOAL: A SAFE, SANITARY, EFFICIENT AND RESILIENT HOUSING SUPPLY THAT PROVIDES LIFESTYLE CHOICE (AGRICULTURAL, RURAL, SUBURBAN, AND URBAN) AND AFFORDABLE OPTIONS FOR ALL INCOME, AGE AND ABILITY GROUPS, EQUITABLY PLACED IN VIBRANT, VIABLE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Our region is the top destination for opportunity and investments, making it the highest-performing economy in the nation.

Goal: Northeast Florida's economic development strategies, consistent with Federal guidelines, are set with partners, and NEFRC does not set the new policy. NEFRC's goal is to ensure that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is a five-year strategy that reflects economic development planning on a regional and county level and that the region is always positioned to collaborate to maximize funding opportunities.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY

Goal: A resilient and safe region that is prepared for a coordinated and effective response to all hazards in emergencies and is prepared to adapt to change to remain resilient and safe in the long term.

NATURAL RESOURCES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Goal: Northeast Florida recognizes that some resources have the potential to impact more than one jurisdiction, and their viability is of concern to the Region. NEFRC promotes the protection of these resources, as contained on the Natural Resources of Regional Significance list.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Goal: Create efficient connectivity within the Region, and with state, national, and global economies. Include centers of population and jobs that are well-connected, limit commute times for most residents, and provide opportunities for all residents of the region to work if they choose. Northeast Florida makes the development of regional employment centers and infrastructure a first priority, politically and fiscally.

Goal: To promote a diversified and vibrant regional economy, the Region supports an efficient multi-modal transportation framework to move people and goods. NEFRC and its

partners support the infrastructure investments needed to make it work over time. The framework maintains an environment with mobility options to move goods and people to support business and industry.

REGIONAL CULTIVATION

Goal: Recognize the importance of cultivation in Northeast Florida and be part of the conversation on what approaches are appropriate here and how to successfully implement them.



Regional Demographics

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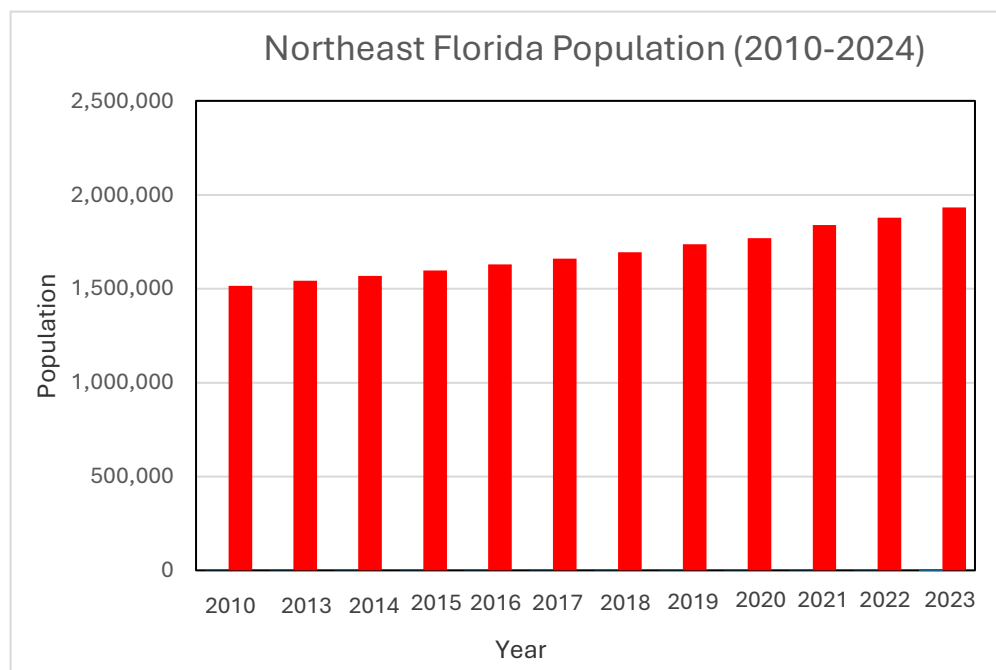
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REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

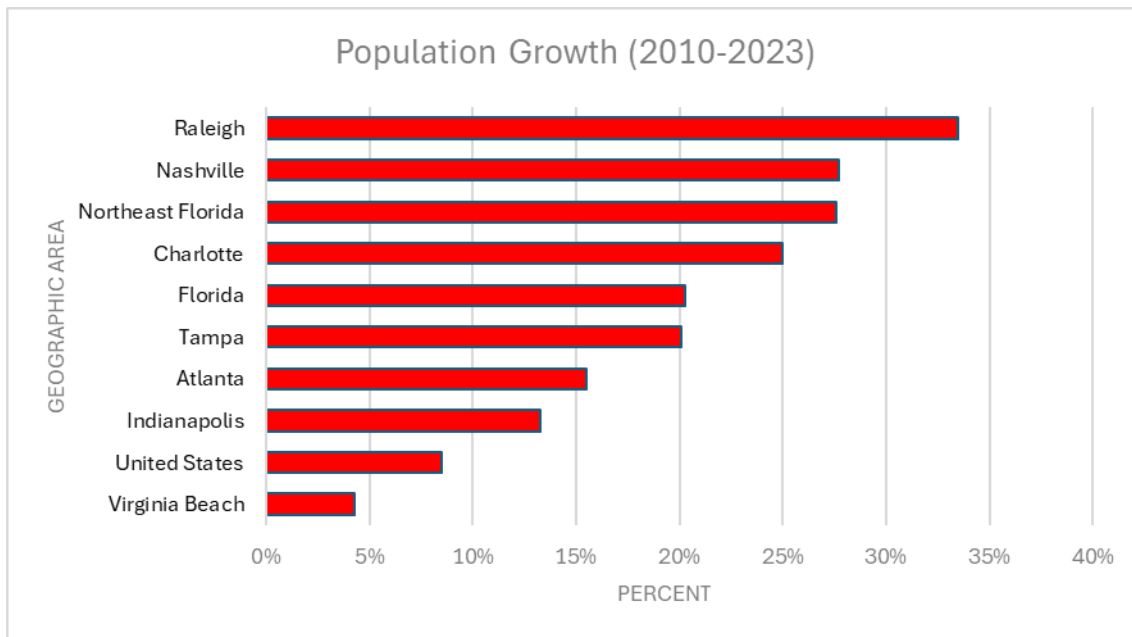
Population Growth

Northeast Florida is home to over 1.9 million residents. Since 2013, the population in counties served by the Northeast Florida Regional Council has grown by more than 390,000 individuals, an increase of 12.5%. During this period, the population of Northeast Florida increased at a faster pace than the national average and several benchmark regions, including Atlanta, Tampa, Indianapolis, and Virginia Beach.

Figure 1: Northeast Florida Population



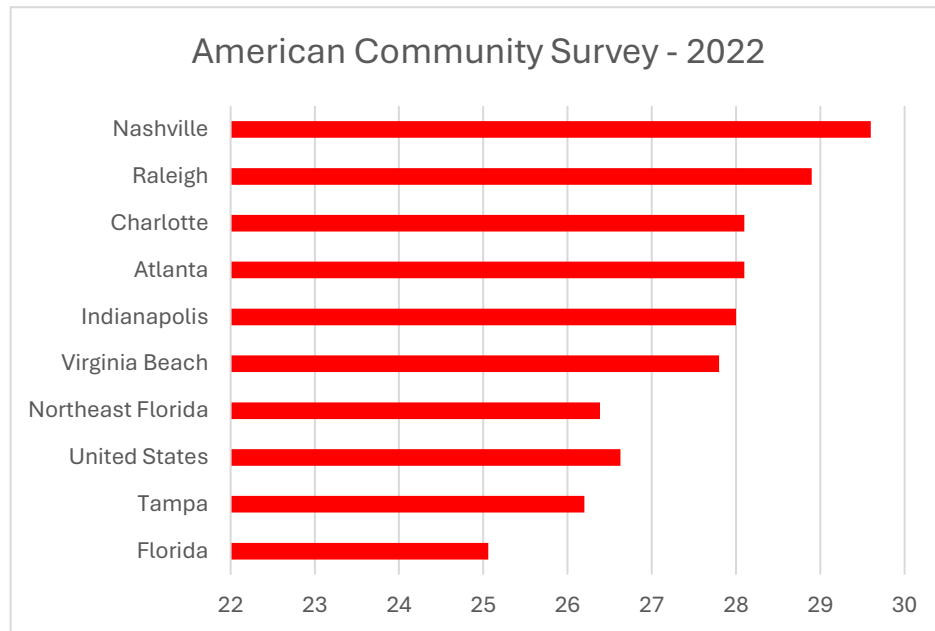
Source: University of Florida (UF) Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR)

Figure 2: Population Growth

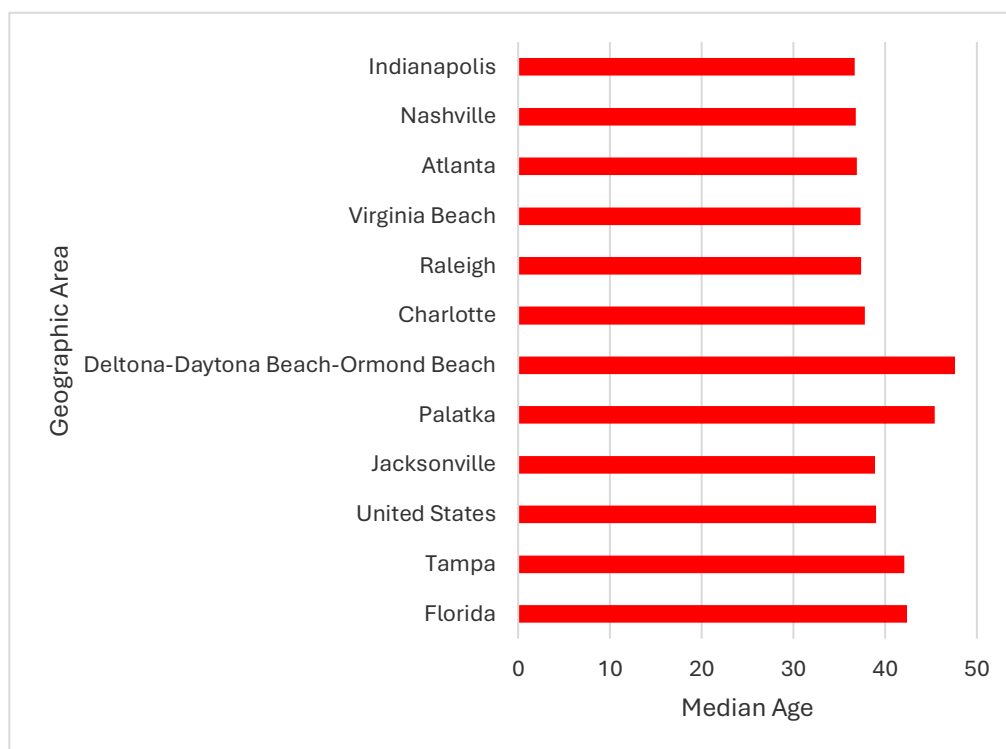
Source: UF BEBR and U.S. Census Bureau

Population Age

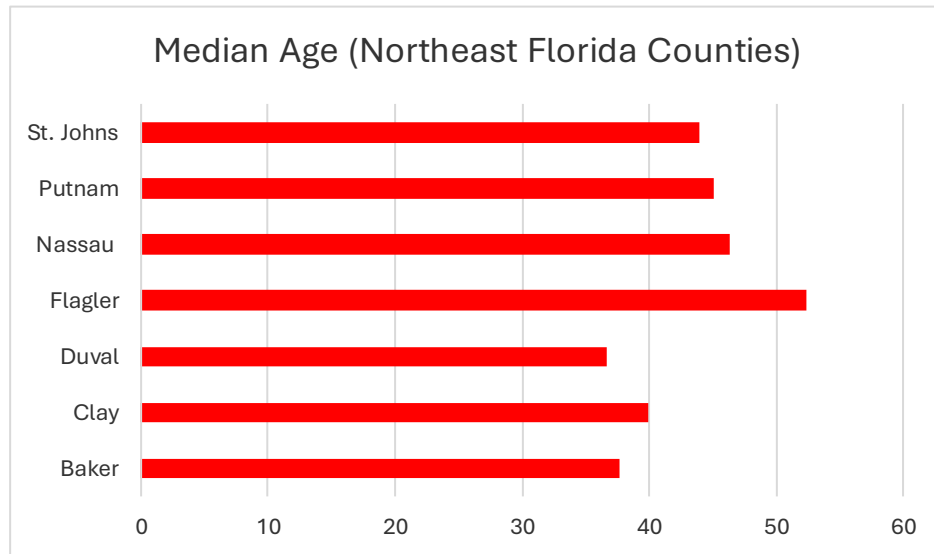
The median age in the Jacksonville Metropolitan Area, which includes five of the seven counties in the Region, is 39. The Palatka Micropolitan Area, which includes all of Putnam County, has a median age of 45, and the Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach Metropolitan Area, which includes Flagler County, has a median age of 48. A subsequent table breaks down the median age by each county. Young professionals (people who are 25-44 years old) represent 26% of Northeast Florida's population.

Figure 3: % Young Professionals (Resident Age 25-44)

Source: American Community Survey, 2018 - 2022.

Figure 4: Median Age

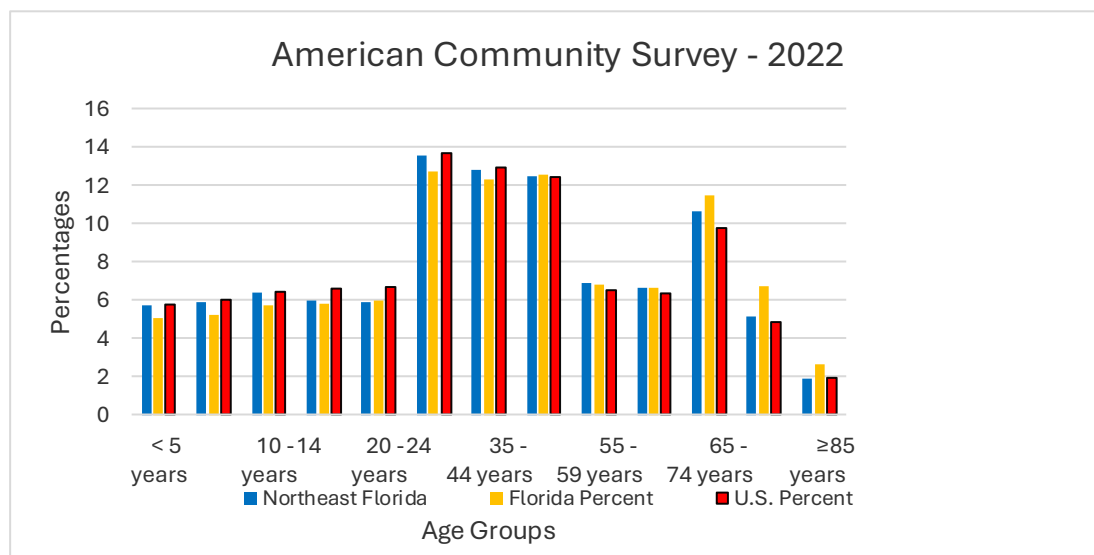
Source: American Community Survey, 2018 - 2022.

Figure 5: Median Age (Northeast Florida Counties)

Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022

Young professionals (residents aged 25 to 44 years old) are a critical workforce for companies seeking to hire people with the latest skills and knowledge. Recruiting and retaining residents in this age cohort helps a region ensure a growing labor force for companies.

The age distribution of a population can help community leaders better understand where to prioritize investments. Age distribution data may highlight strengths in workforce availability, such as the importance of a young professional workforce. Data may also identify populations with distinct needs, such as children and the elderly.

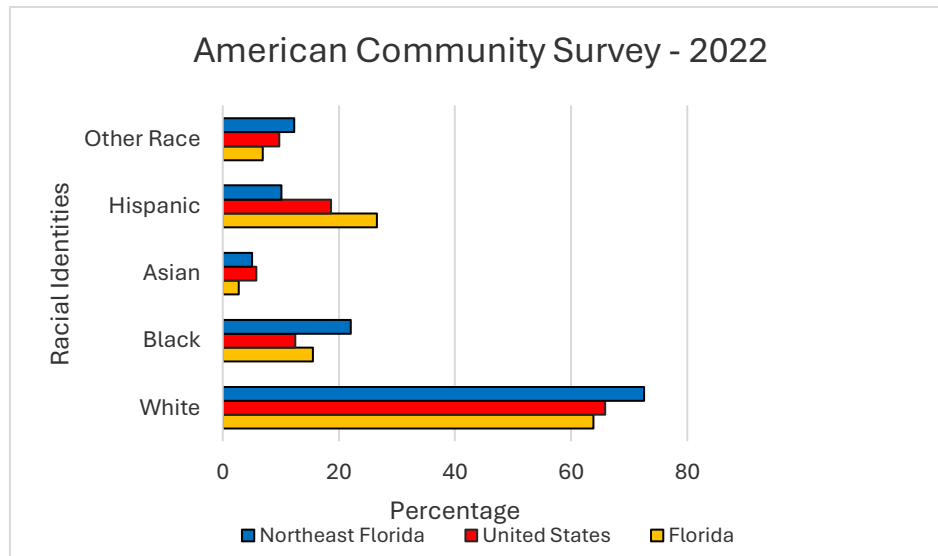
Figure 6: Northeast Florida Share of Population by Age

Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022

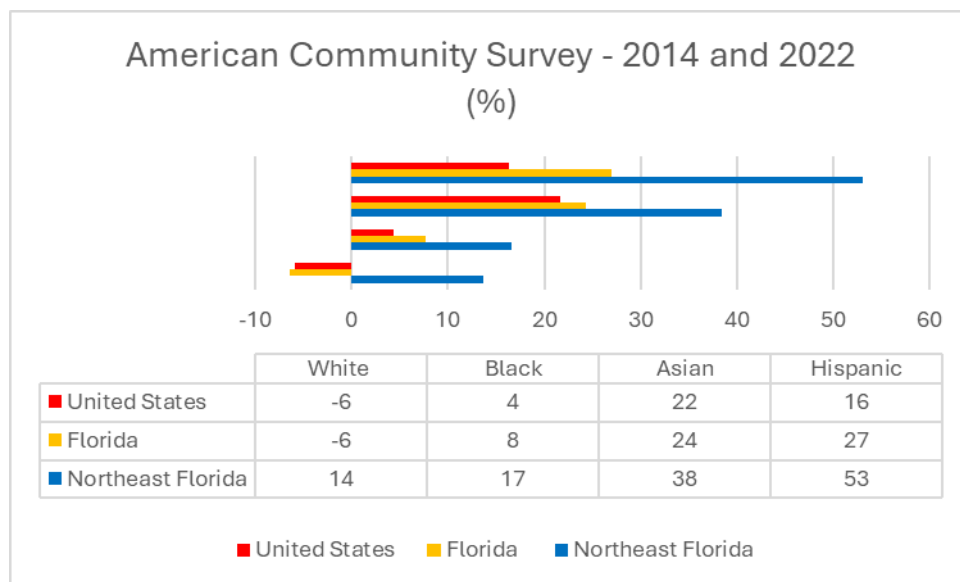
Racial Composition

The racial and ethnic composition of Northeast Florida differs slightly from the national average. White, non-Hispanic individuals represent approximately 73% of Northeast Florida's population, slightly higher than the US as a whole. Black/African-American individuals comprise approximately 22% of Northeast Florida's population (compared to 12% at the national level). Fewer than 11% of Northeast Florida's residents are Hispanic, less than half the US average. During the past ten years, Hispanics were among the fastest growing racial/ethnic groups in Northeast Florida. Since 2014, the region's Hispanic population has increased nearly 53%. In contrast, between 2014 and 2022, Northeast Florida's White and Black/African-American populations increased 14% and 17%, respectively. The self-identified Asian American population has also increased between 2014 and 2022 by nearly 38%.

The racial and ethnic diversity of a community is affected by local geography, history, industry trends, and culture. Research shows that a diverse population and inclusive policies are correlated with a stronger economy.

Figure 7: Northeast Florida Racial & Ethnic Diversity

Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022

Figure 85: Northeast Florida Growth by Race & Ethnicity

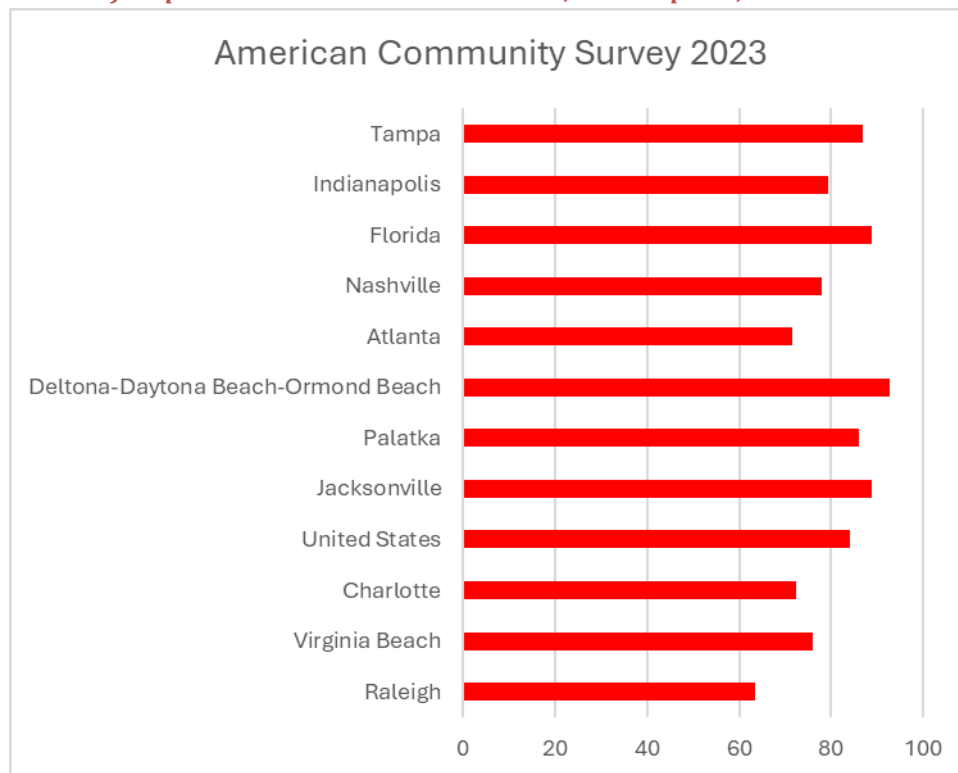
Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022

Median income for Black/African-American households in the five-county Jacksonville metro is approximately 66% of the median household income for White, Non-Hispanic households in the region. Median income for Hispanic households in Jacksonville is more than 89% of the median household income for White, Non-Hispanic households in the

region. In the Palatka Micropolitan Area, which includes Putnam County, the median income for Black/African American households is 91% of the median household income for White, Non-Hispanic households. In the same geographic area, the median income for Hispanic households is approximately 86% of the median household income for White, Non-Hispanic Households. In the Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach Metropolitan Area, which includes Flagler County, the median income for Black/African American Households is 85% of the median household income for White Non-Hispanic Households. In the same geographic area, the median income for Hispanic households is 93% of the median household income for White, Non-Hispanic Households. A table of the individual counties within the Northeast Florida Region with the median household income breakdowns based on racial and ethnic identity is presented in Figure 11.

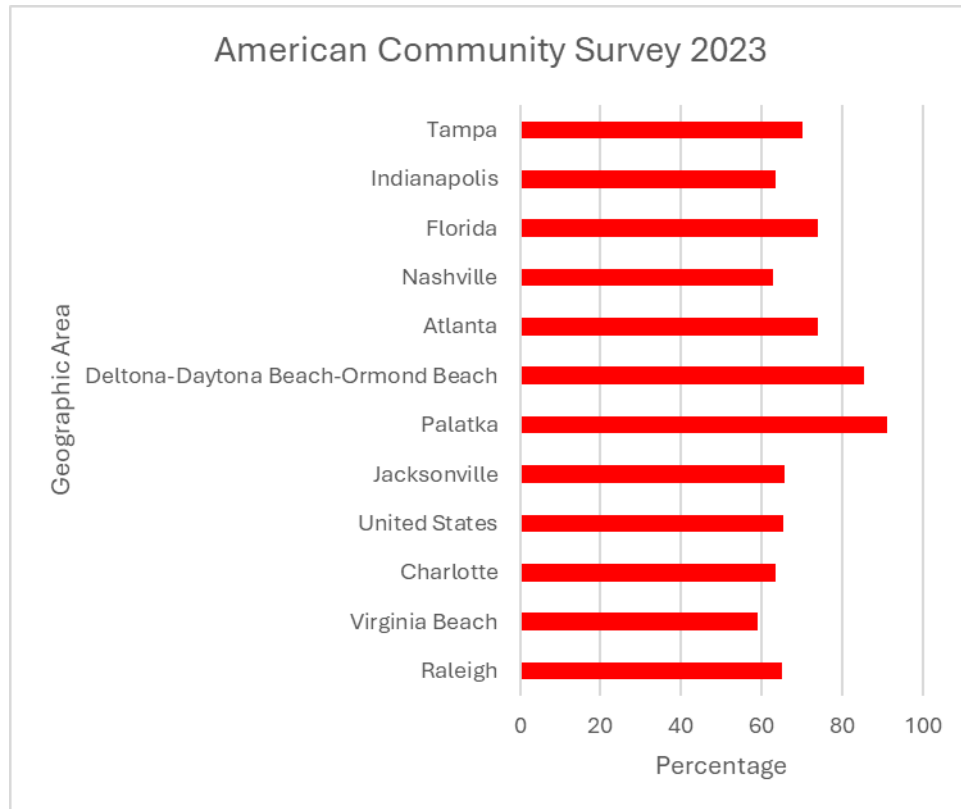
Income gaps among demographic groups in a community are indicators of economic mobility. Regions that have economic mobility also tend to have greater long-term resiliency.

Figure 9: Ratio of Hispanic Household Income to White, Non-Hispanic, Median Household Income



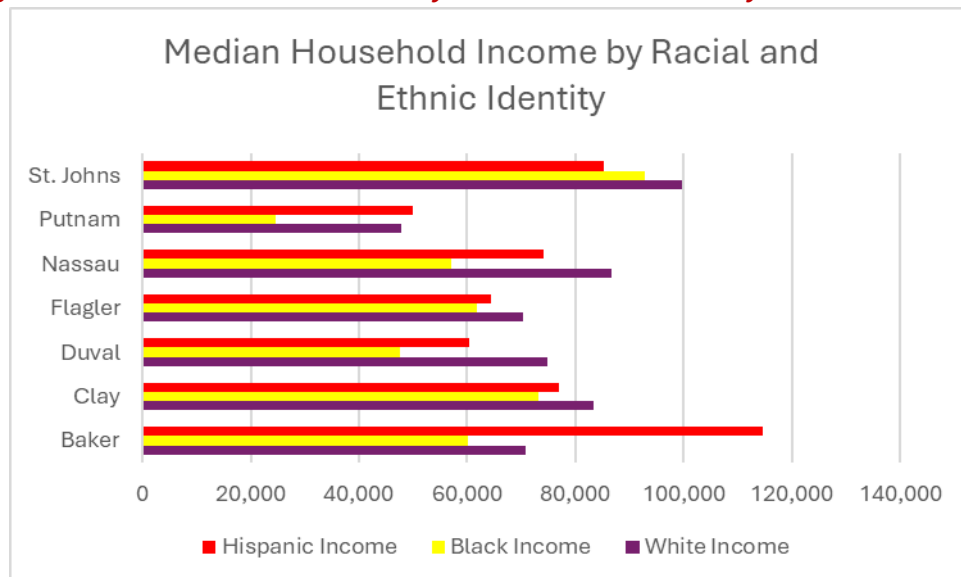
Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate 2023

Figure 10: Ratio of Black/African-American Household Income to White, Non-Hispanic, Median Household Income



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates 2023

Figure 11: Median Household Income by Racial and Ethnic Identity in Northeast Florida



Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimate 2023

Poverty

Poverty in the Jacksonville Metropolitan Area has declined during the last ten years. In 2016, the Jacksonville Metropolitan Area's overall poverty rate dipped below 15% (to 14.8%) for the first time since 2012. Poverty in the Palatka Micropolitan Area, which includes Putnam County, saw a reduction in the poverty rate from 28.7% in 2015 to 22.8% in 2022. Poverty in Flagler County, which is located in the Deltona-Daytona-Beach-Deltona Beach Metropolitan Area, saw a reduction in poverty from 14.8% to 9.8%. That said, poverty levels vary among Northeast Florida's counties. Putnam (22.8%), Baker (13.7%), and Duval (14.3%) Counties exceed the national and state averages, while St. Johns (6.8%), Clay (9.4%), Nassau (9.2%), and Flagler (9.8%) are much lower.

Poverty levels indicate whether residents have incomes and access to jobs that allow them to prosper and support their families. High poverty levels often reflect limited job opportunities or low educational attainment in a community and put heavy demands on social services.

Figure 12: Poverty Rate

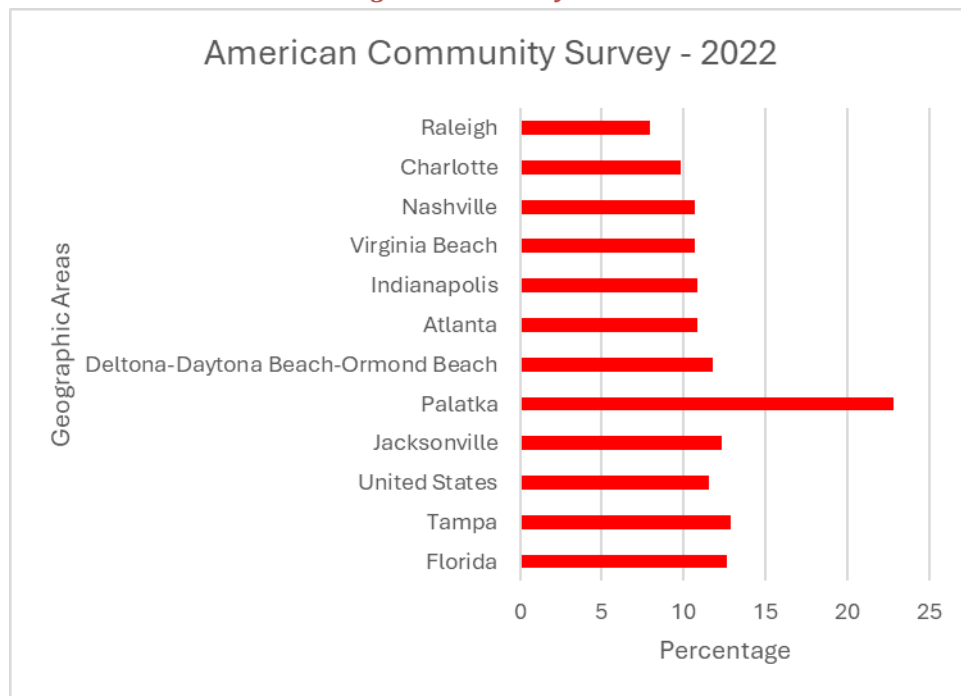
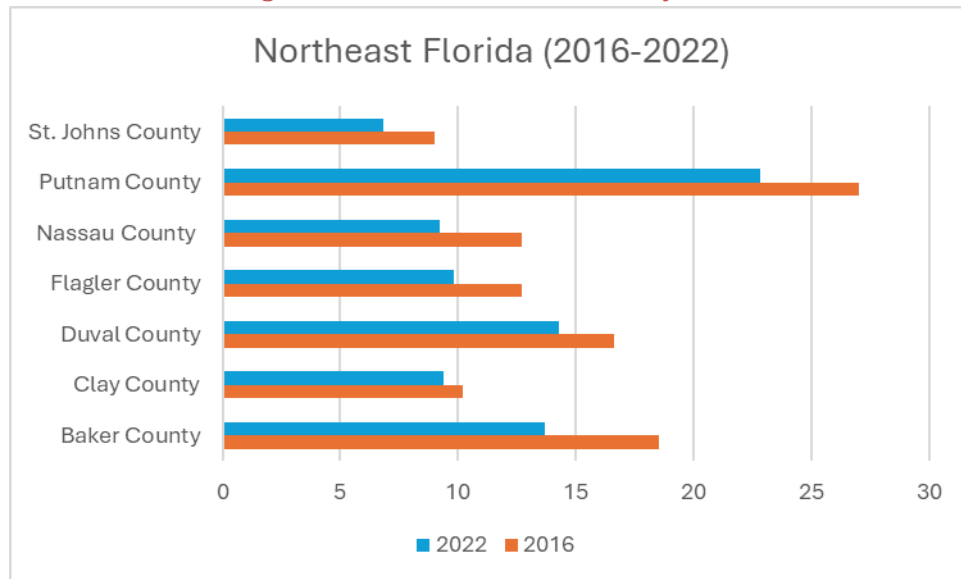


Figure 13: Northeast Florida Poverty Rate

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY DATA: FIRST COAST WELLBEING INDEX (FCWI) The FCWI was released to the public in 2023 and is meant to be a dynamic online tool that continuously evolves as community needs and policy discussions change. The FCWI incorporates a mix of standard metrics on population and mobility alongside other unique data points. It serves as both a benchmark and a guiding framework for the region, ensuring that Northeast Florida remains committed to a collaborative, informed approach to future challenges and opportunities.

The First Coast Wellbeing Index and associated data are available on the agency's website at www.nefrc.org.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal: Progress toward achieving our goals should have a positive impact on the ability of all of Counties in the Region to prosper and all of the residents in the Region to achieve their personal goals. We will look for residents of modest means to spend less of their incomes on housing and transportation, and for mobility for all to access jobs and those things that impact quality of life.

OBJECTIVE: A REGION WHERE ALL PEOPLE CAN THRIVE

Policies

Policy 1: The Region promotes the use of partnerships and non-traditional methods to engage all residents.

Policy 2: The Region will support its local governments and share best practices as they develop ways to gather public input from citizens in all parts of the Region.

Policy 3: The Region will measure its success by evaluating not simply overall measures but will measure the success of all income, age, and racial groups.

Policy 4: Non-compact development patterns and limited mobility options are a barrier to success for all, and have a greater impact on low-income residents, seniors and those with disabilities or health challenges. The Region supports more compact development connected by transportation corridors.



Communities and Affordable Housing

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

It must be noted that the Action Item in First Coast Vision that advocates the transition of the region to an “all voucher” system as the single means to provide affordable housing, other than for special needs or senior populations, is no longer supported and does not guide NEFRC policy.

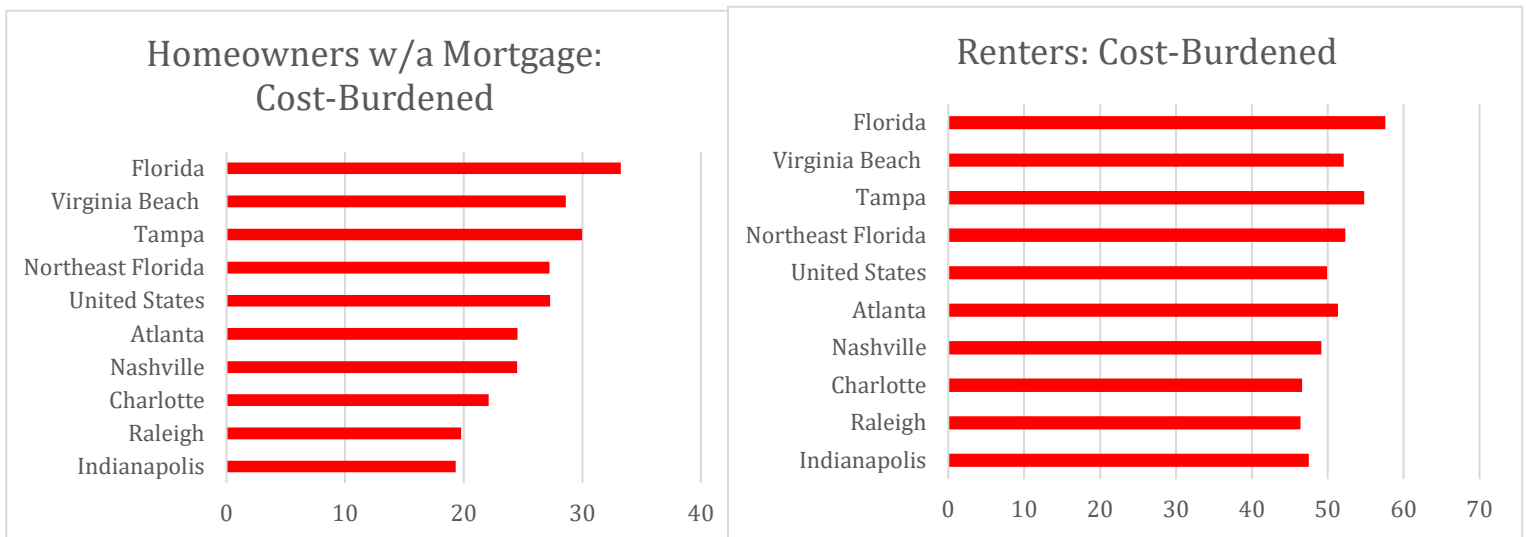
STRATEGIC ISSUE: HOUSING COSTS

Cost Burden of Housing: Households with Rent/Cost to Income Ratio of 30% or more

A household is considered to be “housing cost-burdened” if more than 30% of its gross household income is spent on housing, which is defined as rent or mortgage costs. A household is considered “severely cost-burdened” if more than 50% of gross household income is spent on housing. The number of cost-burdened and severely cost-burdened households is an indicator of the affordable housing supply.

Although the cost of living is a frequently cited regional advantage, some residents feel pressure on their pocketbooks, especially related to housing costs. However, even though the percentage of homeowners with a mortgage being considered cost-burdened is below national and state percentages, the regional percentages of cost-burdened renters are higher than the national average.

Figure 1: Homeowners / Renters Spending More than >30% of Income on Housing Costs



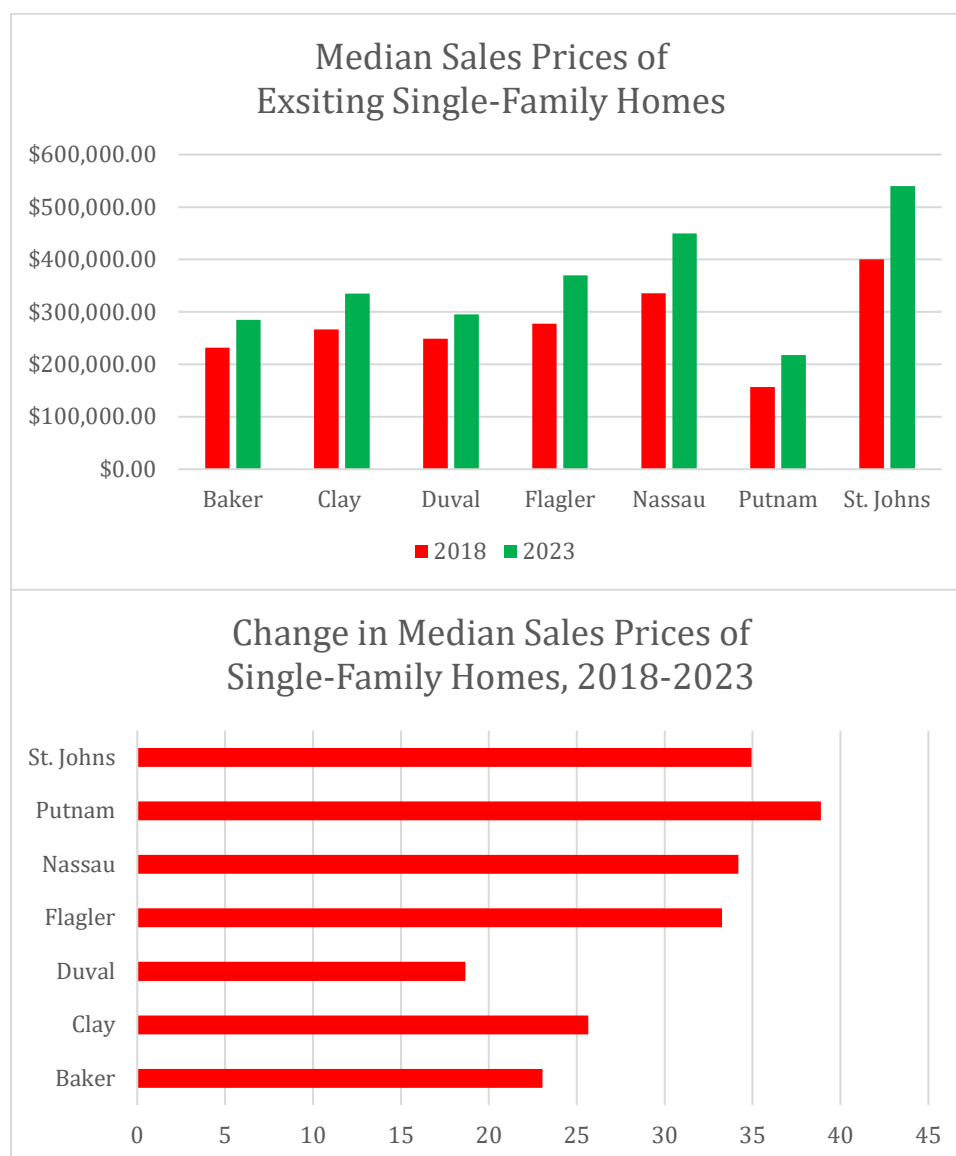
Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022

Median Home Sales Price Northeast Florida

Median home sales are an indicator of housing affordability and economic stability.

In recent years, housing costs in the Region have become significantly more expensive. Between 2008 and 2023, the median sales price of existing single-family homes increased between 19% and 39% within the Region on a non-adjusted basis. The largest increase was in Putnam County, resulting in a median value for a single-family home at \$217,800.

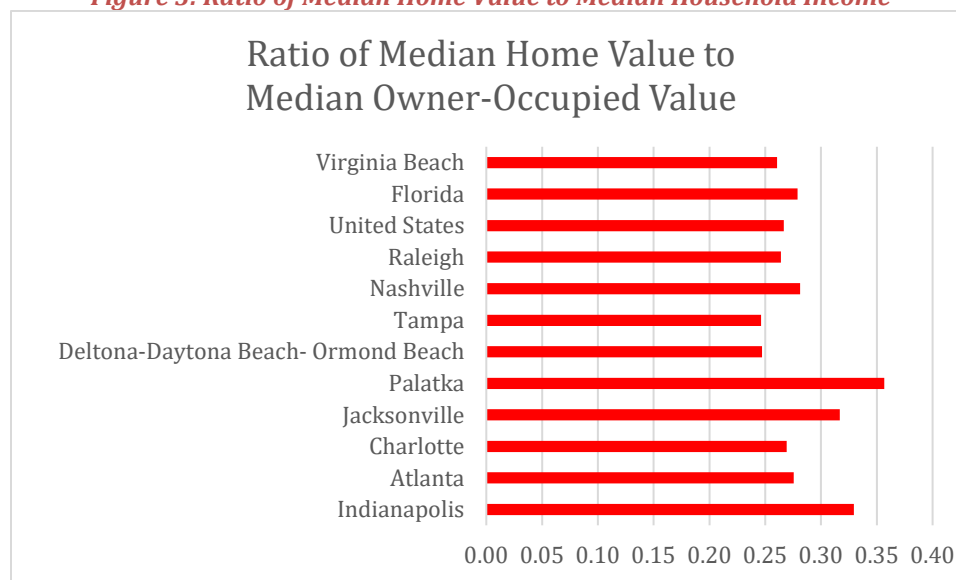
Figure 2: Median/Change in Median Sales Price of Existing Single-Family Homes



Source: University of Florida Shimberg Center

The ratio of Median Home Value to Median Household Income shows that Northeast Florida does an average job compared to benchmark cities in providing affordable housing to families earning the median area income.

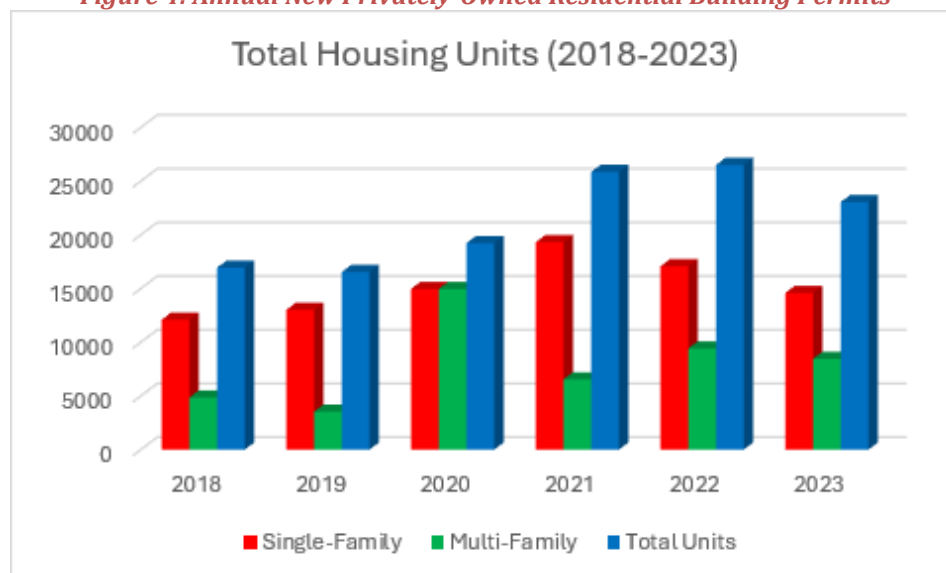
Figure 3: Ratio of Median Home Value to Median Household Income



Source: American Community Survey

As the region's population grows, housing production must keep pace, or affordability issues will worsen. The following chart shows residential building permits issued from 2018 to 2023. Most housing production was in single-family structures, with a significant number of large multi-family structures also being built.

Figure 4: Annual New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits

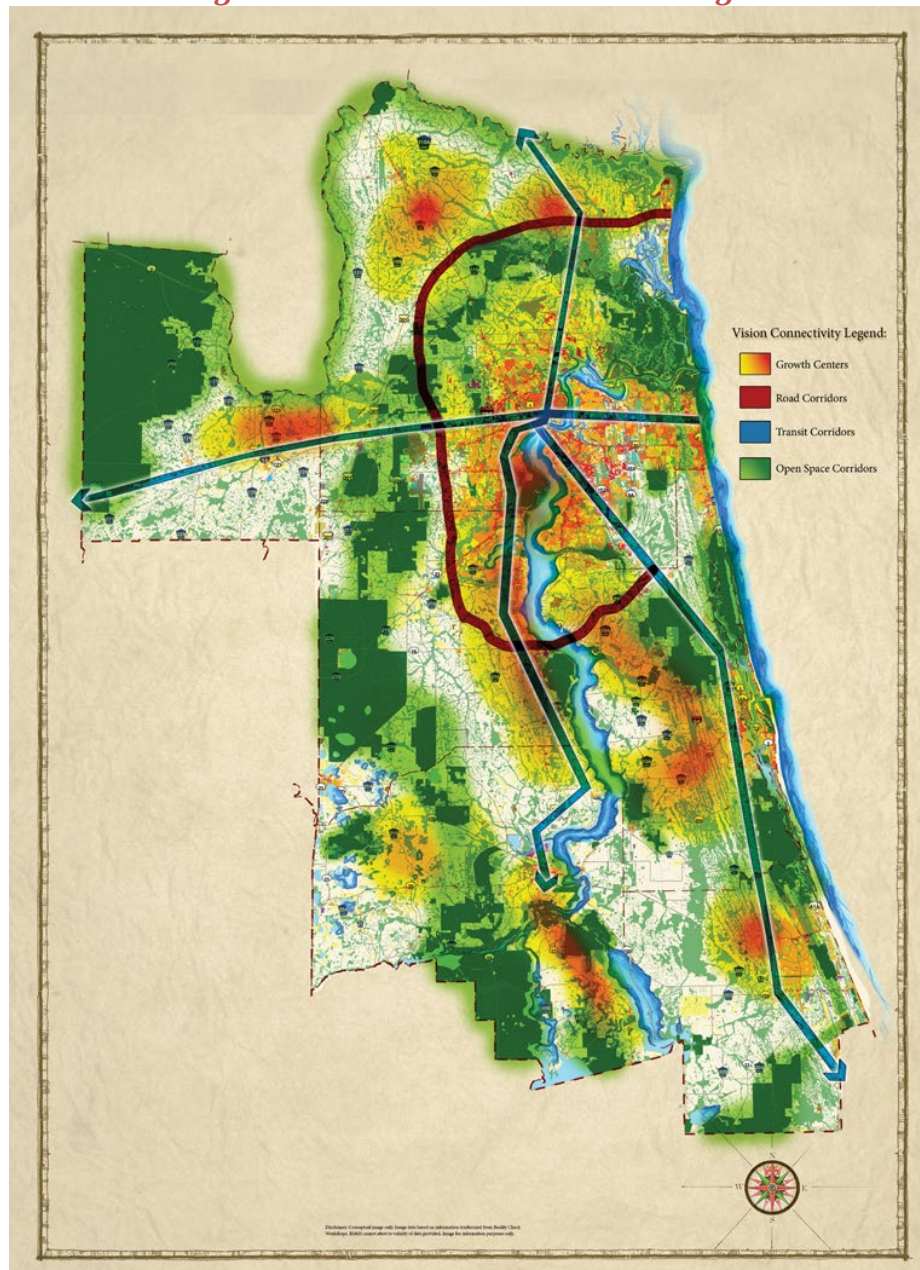


Source: US Census Bureau

Community Conditions

Good urban design can lead to attractive and prosperous communities that sustain natural resources, encourage pleasant human interaction, inspire beautiful buildings and landscapes, reduce premature development pressure on farmland, enhance the quality of life, encourage healthy people and neighborhoods, provide for an efficient transportation system, and increase the amount of affordable housing. Through the community engagement of First Coast Vision, Northeast Florida considered the four growth patterns created at Reality Check First Coast and, based on extensive polling, chose multiple growth centers as the preferred pattern for growth in the region over the next 50 years. This Strategic Regional Policy Plan encourages local governments to consider where they believe growth should go in their jurisdictions, also taking into account the Regional corridors map, Figure 8 in the Transportation Element. By considering corridors, they increase the likelihood that growth centers will be accessible to other centers, thereby providing access to jobs and housing choice for residents. First Coast Vision includes the image below, which provides an example of where growth might be expected to locate in the Region by 2060. Ultimately, communities are encouraged to decide for themselves and then maintain a focus on these centers so that development there increases in value to its owners and the community, and infrastructure investments are directed towards supporting the centers.

Figure 5: First Coast Vision 2060 Image



Source: The firm RS & H created this image in response to the First Coast Vision Design Challenge.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing remains a significant issue at all levels of government. Due to the increasing need for affordable housing in recent years, the State of Florida adopted and enacted the Live Local Act. The Live Local Act is a comprehensive, statewide, attainable housing strategy designed to increase the availability of affordable housing opportunities for Florida's residents who desire to live within the communities they serve. This framework provides historic recurring funding for housing very-low to moderate-income households. In addition to many new programs, incentives, and opportunities, this legislation focuses Florida's housing strategy on ways to make housing more attainable.

Ultimately, the prosperity of residents and businesses in Northeast Florida depends on overcoming challenges at both the local and regional levels; it is only through partnership that we will succeed.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Affordable housing has short and long term benefits that are often overlooked or misunderstood. According to the Planning Commissioners Journal in 2011¹, not only are there short term benefits of building or rehabilitation affordable units as seen in the building construction field, but they estimate 100 affordable units will generate 120 jobs during the construction phase. The misunderstanding comes in with units once they are occupied. Those 100 units generate approximately 30 jobs, which is similar to the job generation of market rate units. According to a Chattanooga, Tennessee example cited in The Urban Land Institute's "Ten Principles for Developing Affordable Housing," affordable housing provides jobs, tax revenues and local business income well beyond a 1.65 multiplier to the affordable housing developer's direct investment². Like market rate units, affordable units generate one-time revenue for local governments, in the form of permit, impact and utility fees. This factor provides an opportunity to support affordable housing without spending local government funds, as waiving of such fees can be an option in the "toolbox" of local governments. Another area of misunderstanding is the effect of affordable housing on nearby property values. Affordable housing that is well designed, built, managed and maintained is most likely to have a neutral or positive impact on nearby property values.

¹ Cohen, Rebecca and Wardrip, Keith, *The Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Affordable Housing*, Planning Commissioner Journal Number 83 Summer 2011

² Bach, Alexa, Prema Katari Gupta, Richard, Haughey, George Kelly, Michael Pawlukiewicz, and Michael Pitchford, *Ten Principles for Developing Affordable Housing*. Washington, D.C.:ULI—the Urban Land Institute, 2007

Affordable development in areas that are “taking off” or “revitalizing” are positive factors that add to and speed up overall success. Another misunderstanding is that affordable housing costs communities more money than market rate housing because lower income families tend to have more children, and this costs money for schools. Overall, the average number of children per household has been falling for many years, and there is only a small difference in the number of children per household when comparing income levels. Affordable and moderate –income purchasers have a lower risk of delinquency and foreclosure than buyers with prime or sub-prime loans. In addition, taking advantage of homes in foreclosure for affordable housing programs saves communities costs in maintenance, and also reduces the risk that nearby homes will experience loss in property value, and local governments in tax revenue, that occur when vacancies exist near occupied homes.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: ECONOMIC AND FISCAL BENEFITS TO THE BUSINESS SECTOR

The cited Planning Commissioners Journal article further notes that in a national survey of 300 companies, 55% of the largest respondents cited an insufficient level of affordable housing in their proximity, and 2/3rds of the same respondents believed that the shortage negatively affected their ability to hold onto qualified employees. From this perspective, the lack of affordable housing becomes a competitive disadvantage for Northeast Florida. Living in affordable housing also increases the residual income that those households have to spend, and this increased buying power allows businesses to gain additional business.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: VALUE COMMUNITY ASSETS

The Region’s local communities are the base and foundation upon which the entire Region stands. Every County in the Region has special attributes that make it special, from historic St. Augustine and Fernandina Beach to the agricultural areas of St. Johns and Putnam Counties to the urban downtown of Jacksonville.

The inventory and preservation of historic resources are essential to the historic heritage of the Region. Preservation and reuse of old buildings often make economic and environmental sense.

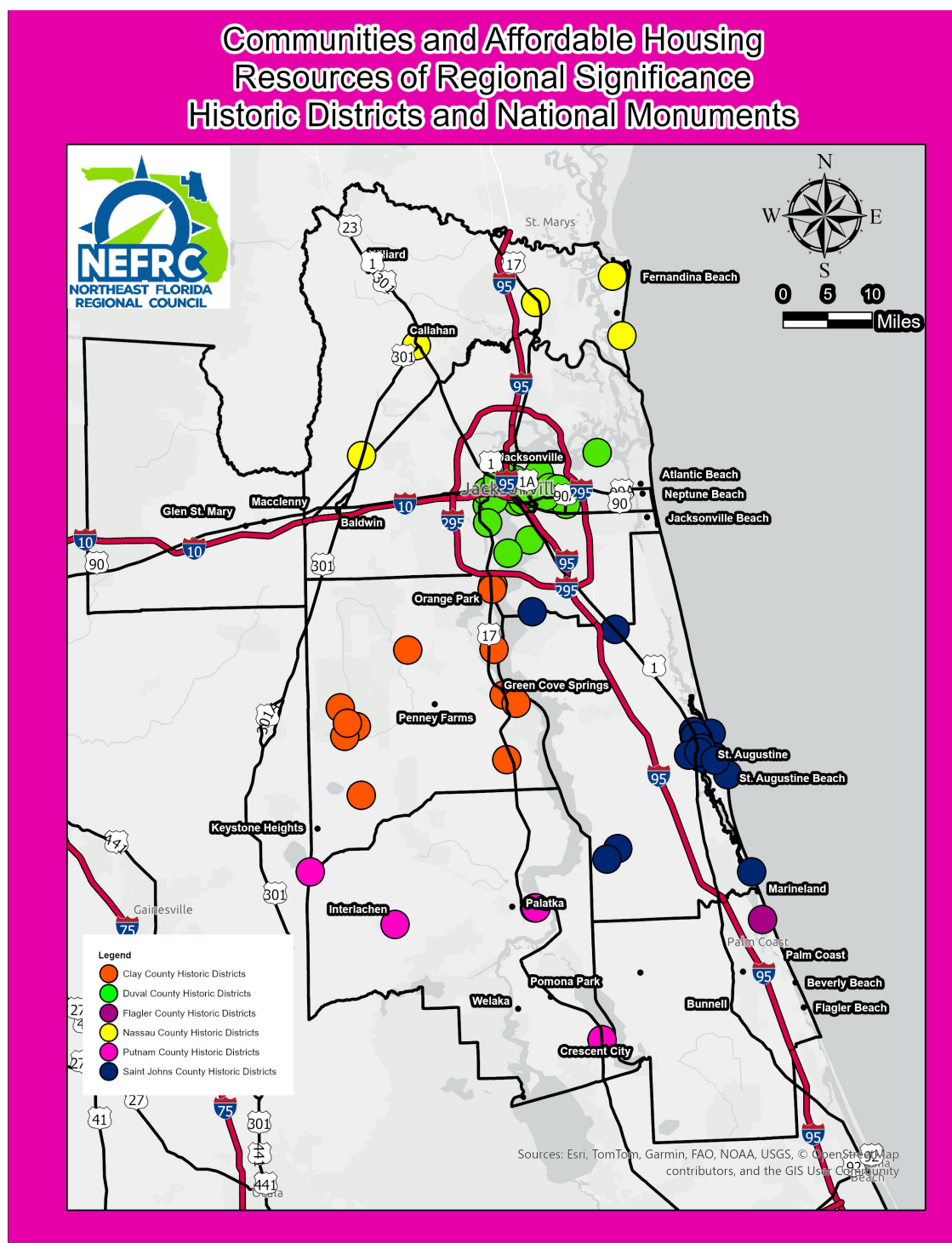
Reuse of land as development and infill sites makes sense, as they make use of existing infrastructure. “Brownfield” sites are abandoned industrial and commercial facilities that are available for redevelopment and are perceived to raise environmental issues. Local governments in the Region are utilizing existing federal and state programs to determine if cleanup is required on these sites, to implement cleanup if necessary, and to put them back into productive use. NEFRC may help local governments in these efforts in the future.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: HOUSING FOR THE LONG-TERM

To create housing for the long-term, homes need to be designed with everyone in mind: young, old, and disabled. A term for this is universal design. Universal design allows accessibility to homes for the widest range of people (able-bodied and physically challenged) operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design. Examples of universal design include wide interior doors and hallways, ground-level entrances with no stairs, and handles for doors and drawers that require no gripping or twisting to operate. Resiliency is also a feature that should also be considered in the construction and retrofit of homes.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

Northeast Florida's historic communities are significant resources for tourism, economic development, and quality of life. The Figure below shows the Florida Department of State Division of Historic Resources-designated historic districts in the Region. The map is just an illustration and may not include all such resources or facilities.

Resources of Regional Significance: Communities and Affordable Housing

Source: Florida Division of Historic Resources (Mapped by the UF Geoplan Center), 2024

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: Each local government is encouraged to take the lessons learned from visioning, the public preference for multiple growth centers, the opportunities and challenges raised by resources of regional significance, and the desires of their residents and determine where new growth should go, ideally in locations allowing it to take advantage of existing infrastructure, be mixed-use, compact and connected to other centers. These mixed-use growth and redevelopment centers are supported in all seven Counties and have the potential to increase transit ridership, reduce car dependency, maintain water and air quality, and conserve water. Once these locations are chosen, governments should do all they can to support quality development there that will appreciate in value and achieve multiple community and economic goals.

Goal: A safe, sanitary, efficient and resilient housing supply that provides lifestyle choice (agricultural, rural, suburban, and urban) and affordable options for all income, age and ability groups, equitably placed in vibrant, viable and accessible communities throughout the region.

OBJECTIVE: IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PROVIDE QUALITY PLACES IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA

Policy 1: NEFRC gathers best practices and connects communities with strategies and practitioners that can help address their issues within the context of the aspirational goals of First Coast Vision. Convening to share experiences and discuss solutions is an important part of this approach.

SCP: 187.201(4)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: CONSISTENCY WITH THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

Policy 2: NEFRC considers impacts to resources of regional significance and extra-jurisdictional impacts as it reviews consistency with the SRPP. Local governments and proposers of projects should include best available data gathered using professionally acceptable methodology in support of their proposals, sufficient to determine impacts. Where mitigation is proposed, using strategies outlined in local government policies or plans, the SRPP, or a combination, is encouraged.

SCP: 187.201(15)(a)

COMMUNITIES AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING MEASURES

ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. It is the approach taken by United Way to address households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but less than the basic cost of living. It has been embraced in Northeast Florida as a more useful measure than the traditional measures of poverty.

County	Households in Poverty	ALICE Households	Percent of Households Struggling
Baker	13%	27%	40%
Clay	8%	27%	36%
Duval	13%	29%	42%
Flagler	9%	32%	41%
Nassau	6%	24%	31%
Putnam	22%	35%	58%
St. Johns	6%	27%	33%

Source: ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Florida, Live United/United Way, 2024

Additional Community Data: First Coast Wellbeing Index (FCWI)

The FCWI was released to the public in 2023 and is meant to be a dynamic online tool that continuously evolves as community needs and policy discussions change. The FCWI incorporates a mix of standard metrics on population and mobility alongside other unique data points. It serves as a benchmark and a guiding framework for the region, ensuring that Northeast Florida remains committed to a collaborative, informed approach to future challenges and opportunities.

The First Coast Wellbeing Index and associated data are on the agency's website at www.nefrc.org.



Economic Development

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

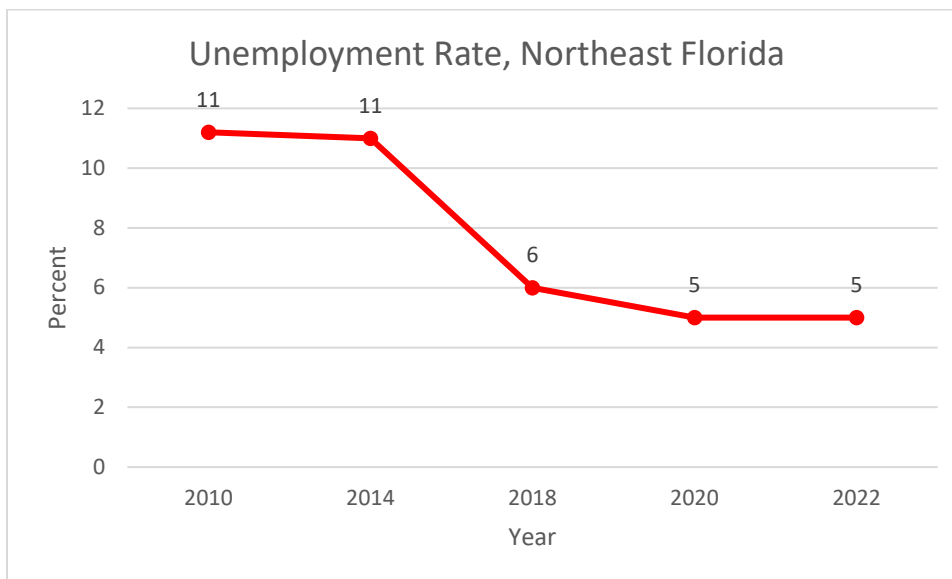
EMPLOYMENT

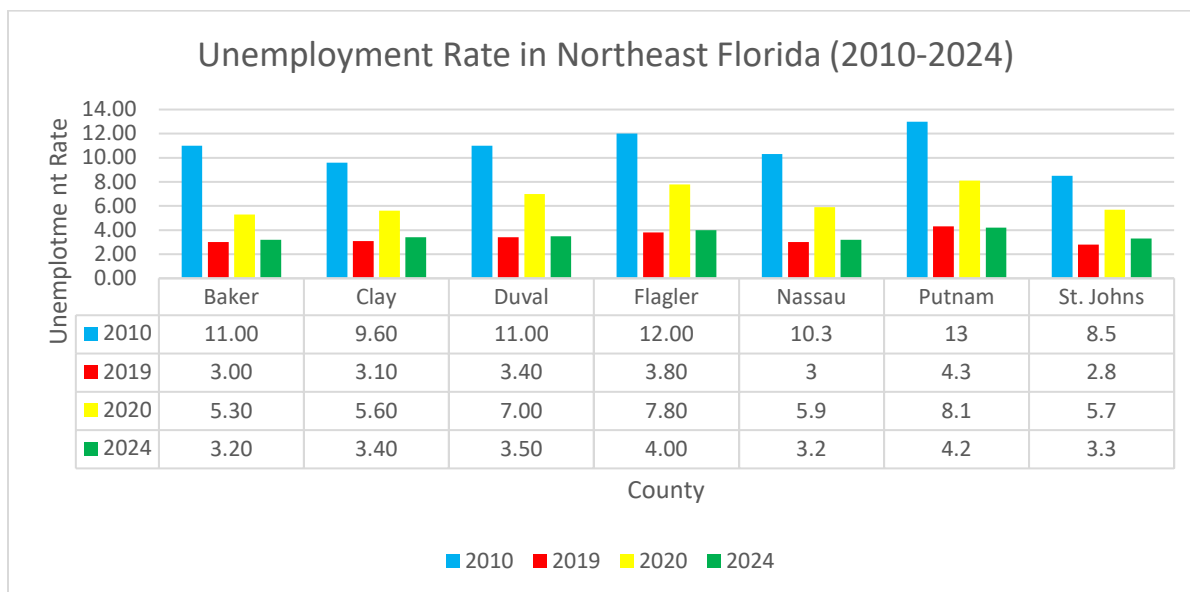
Northeast Florida has experienced a strong wave of growth in recent years. The seven-county region has increased employment 6% since 2014 and added 165,404 new jobs in the past eight years. Since 2010 – the lowest point in the recession – Northeast Florida has enjoyed nearly uninterrupted growth across almost all of its industries. Job creation has occurred at a pace that is more than 50% higher than the US average. The pace of regional job growth is accelerating. Between 2014 and 2018, employment in Northeast Florida rose 5%.

Job gains have also contributed to record unemployment levels. Unemployment in Northeast Florida is at a 10-year low, which is positive news for residents but more challenging news for businesses. In focus groups and interviews conducted for this report, some employers expressed concerns about their ability to fill job openings with skilled talent, a situation that aligns with the concerns of national employers.

Northeast Florida's strong job growth, affordability, and quality of life have helped attract college-educated talent into the region. The influx of talent into Northeast Florida is helping the region close educational attainment gaps, and quickly.

Figure 1: Northeast Florida Unemployment Rate



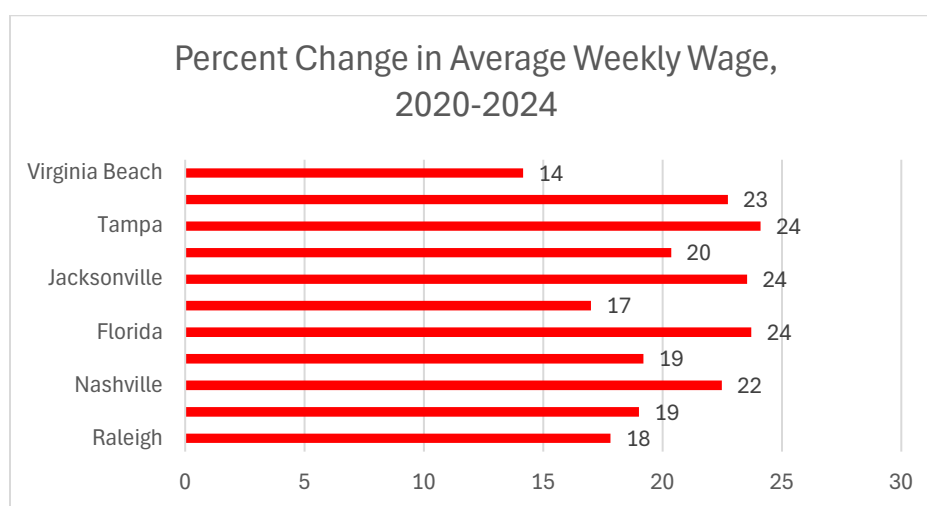


Source: Annual Average Unemployment Rate (2010, 2019, 2020, and 2024). Florida Commerce

WAGES

Strong employment and population growth have translated into significant household income growth. During the past four years, incomes in the region have increased at a faster rate pace than the national average and in parallel to the state average. In addition, income levels vary greatly by demographic segment. On average, Black/African-American residents' household incomes are 60% the level of White Non-Hispanic household incomes.

Figure 2: Change in Average Weekly Wage (Inflation Adjusted)

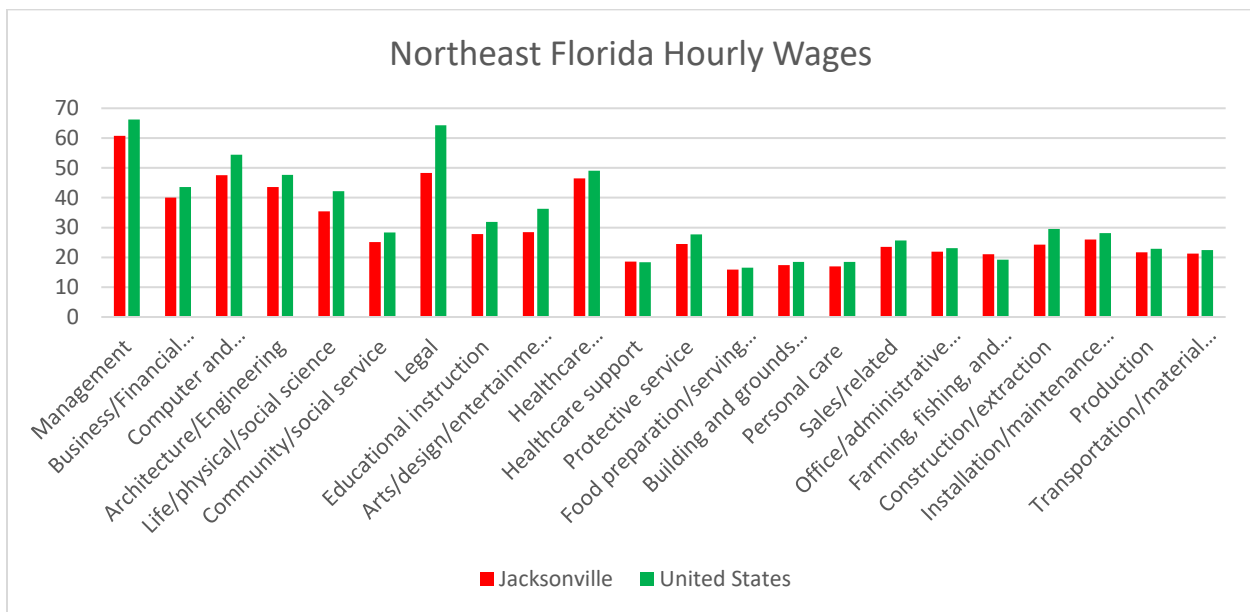


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020-2024

Helping residents increase their incomes and afford quality housing not only depends on growing higher-wage jobs in the region, but also on connecting residents with viable career pathways.

Average salaries vary widely by industry, and Northeast Florida is no exception. The highest average hourly wages within the Jacksonville Metropolitan Area ranged across management, legal, computer and mathematics, and healthcare practitioners' occupational groups. Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average wage for healthcare support and in forestry, farming, and fishing was slightly higher than the national average.

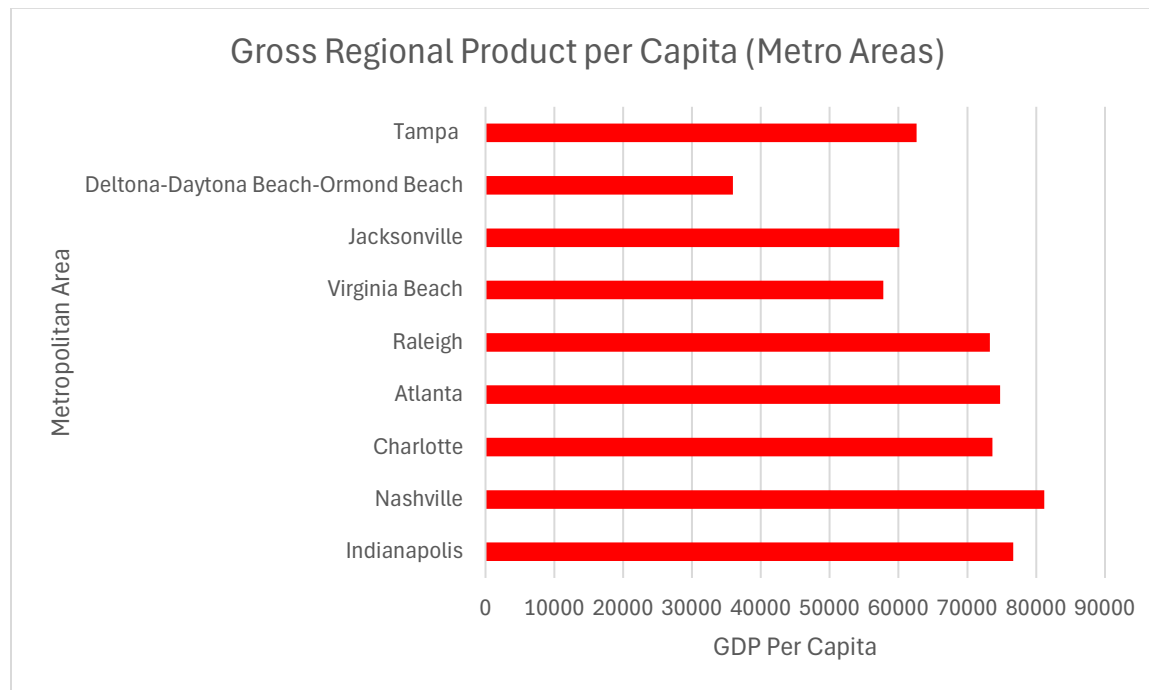
Figure 3: Northeast Florida Hourly Wage by Industry



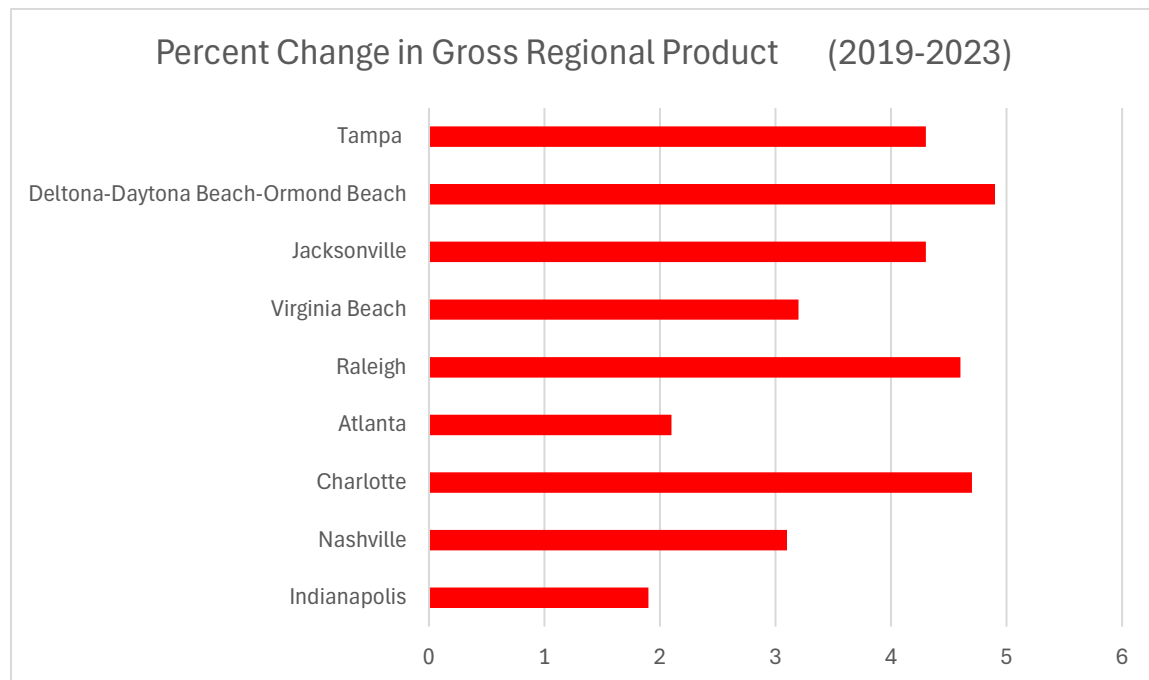
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023.

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT

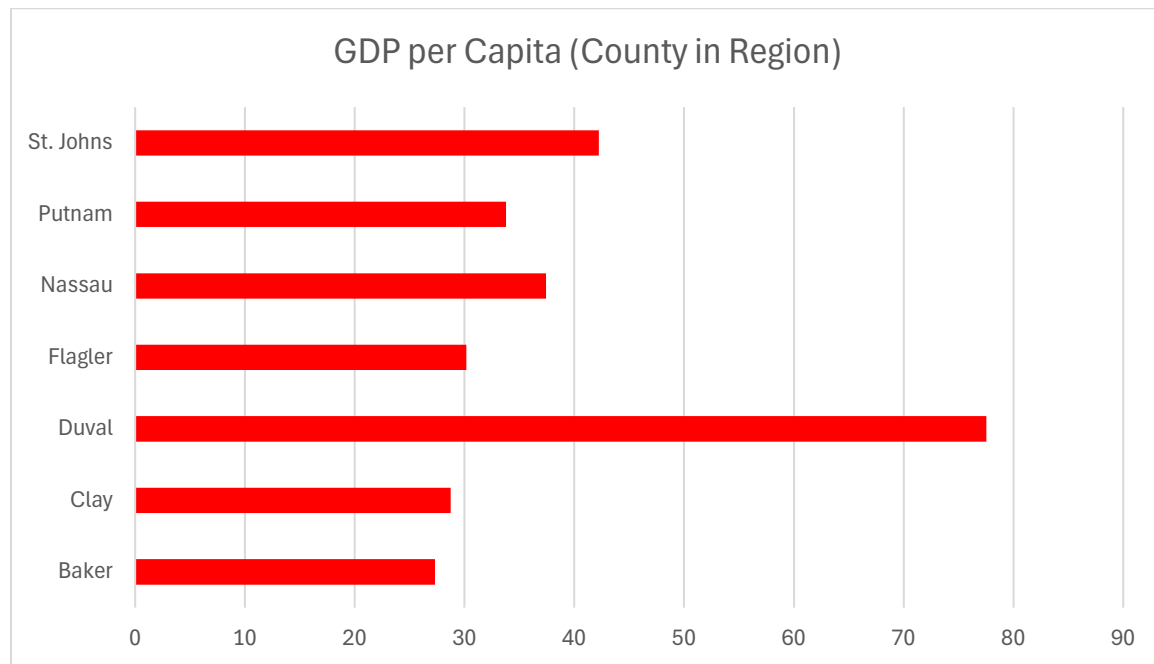
Per capita gross regional product is the primary measure of a region's overall economic productivity. In turn, higher productivity ultimately supports higher wages. At slightly more than \$60,000, the real per capita gross regional product in the five-county Jacksonville metro area. Between 2019 and 2023, per capita gross regional product in Jacksonville rose 4% on an inflation-adjusted basis. (Note, GRP data is only available for the five-county MSA – labeled “Jacksonville” in the charts below – not the seven-county Northeast Florida study area.)

Figure 4: Gross/Change Regional Product Per Capita

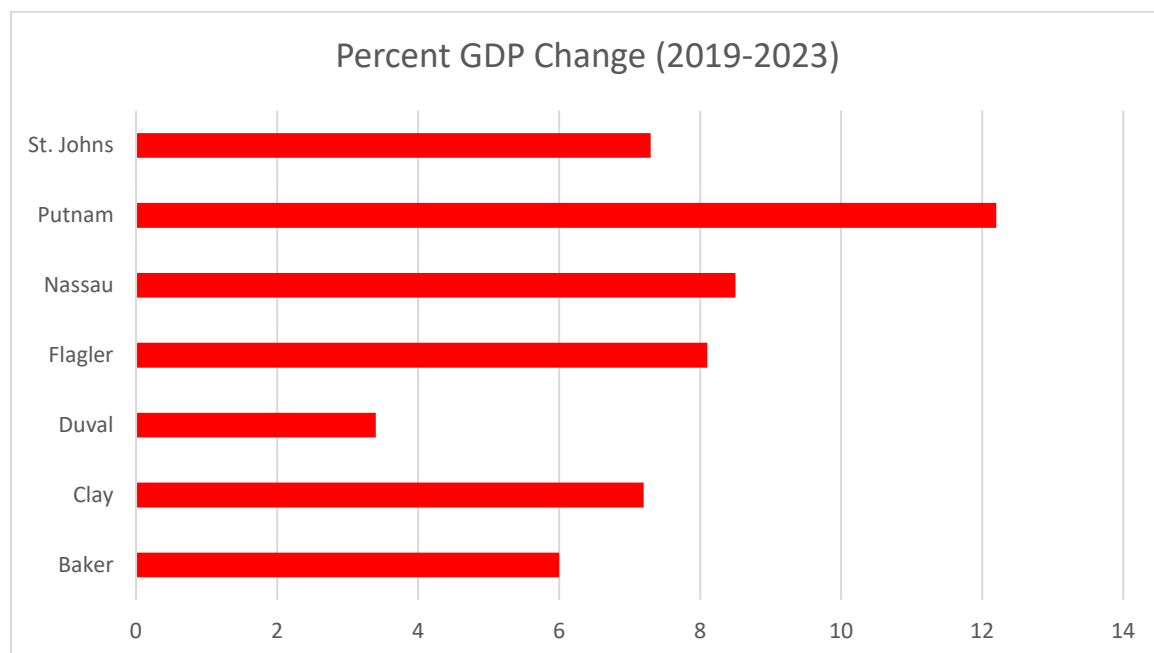
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023

Figure 5: Northeast Florida County Gross/Change Domestic Product

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023

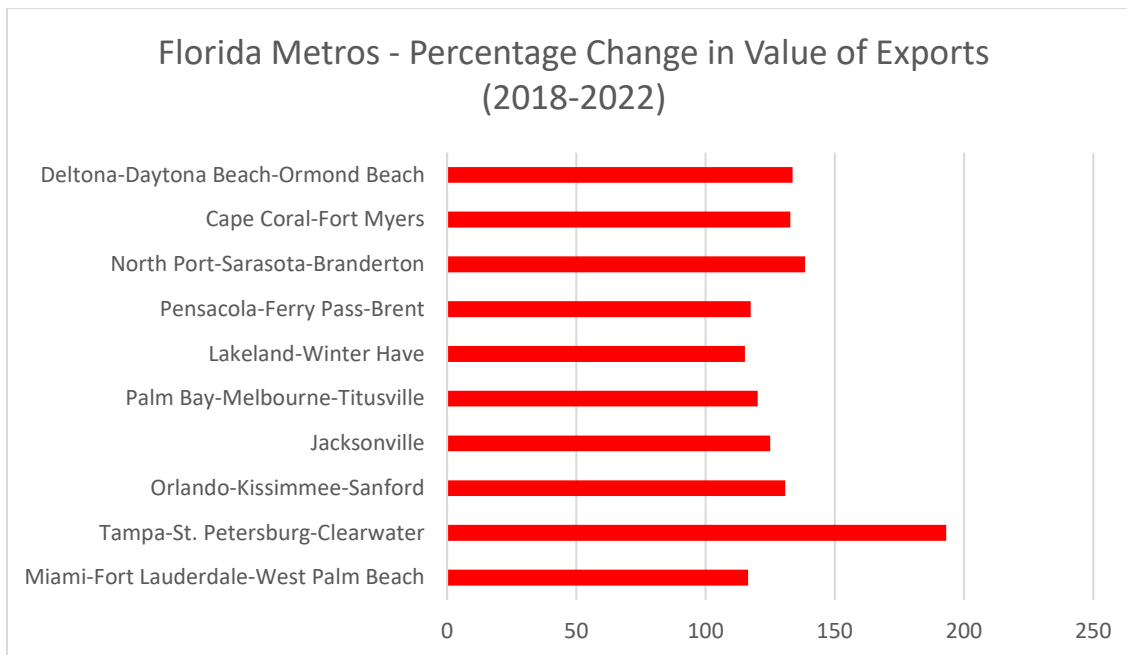


Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2023

EXPORTS

On a per-job basis, the five-county Jacksonville metro's export activity is relatively modest. Exports from the metro have also remained steady during the past several years. In 2018, the region generated approximately \$7,100 in exports for every worker. In 2016, total export activity in the Jacksonville metro reached \$4.5 billion, a slight decline compared to 2015 levels, but virtually identical to 2014 activity. Additionally, the Jacksonville MSA reported a 125% increase in the value of its exports from 2018 to 2022. (Note, export data is only available for the five-county MSA – labeled “Jacksonville” in the charts below – not the seven-county Northeast Florida study area.)

Figure 5: Value of Exports



Source: Select Florida, 2024

TOURISM

Duval County welcomed more than 6.2 million overnight visitors in 2017. Since 2013, the number of overnight visitors to Duval County has risen approximately 17%. During this same period, tourist visits to Florida increased by more than 18%. In a recent survey of planning meeting professionals prepared for Visit Jacksonville, the region ranked highly on logistical factors such as the “willingness to provide concessions” and “moderate lodging costs.” Jacksonville’s weather was also highly rated.

Florida's Northeast Tourism region consists of Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties. In addition to the Northeast region, there are seven other Vacation Regions as defined by VISIT FLORIDA. In 2016, Business visitors represented 15% of travelers to Northeast Florida. No other region in Florida has a higher proportion of Business visitors. The leading activities for visitors to Northeast Florida include the Beach/Waterfront (44% of visitors), Visiting Friends & Relatives (30%), and Enjoying Culinary/Dining Experiences (28%).

Figure 6: Tourist Development Tax Revenues, 2011-2015

Code 39 Accommodation Taxes	Baker	Clay	Duval	Flagler	Nassau	Putnam	St. Johns
2011	\$17,225.00	\$436,413.00	\$9,683,710.00	\$1,360,177.00	\$2,977,004.00	\$216,218.00	\$6,552,707.00
2012	\$29,999.00	\$470,110.00	\$10,431,448.00	\$1,564,177.00	\$3,121,533.00	\$266,655.00	\$7,117,175.00
2013	\$31,758.00	\$503,258.00	\$10,995,297.00	\$1,685,503.00	\$3,865,593.00	\$264,862.00	\$7,662,836.00
2014	\$29,922.00	\$539,405.00	\$12,384,838.00	\$1,886,962.00	\$4,546,081.00	\$285,329.00	\$8,415,768.00
2015	\$34,719.00	\$599,159.00	\$13,482,136.00	\$2,066,777.00	\$5,073,204.00	\$316,462.00	\$9,577,805.00

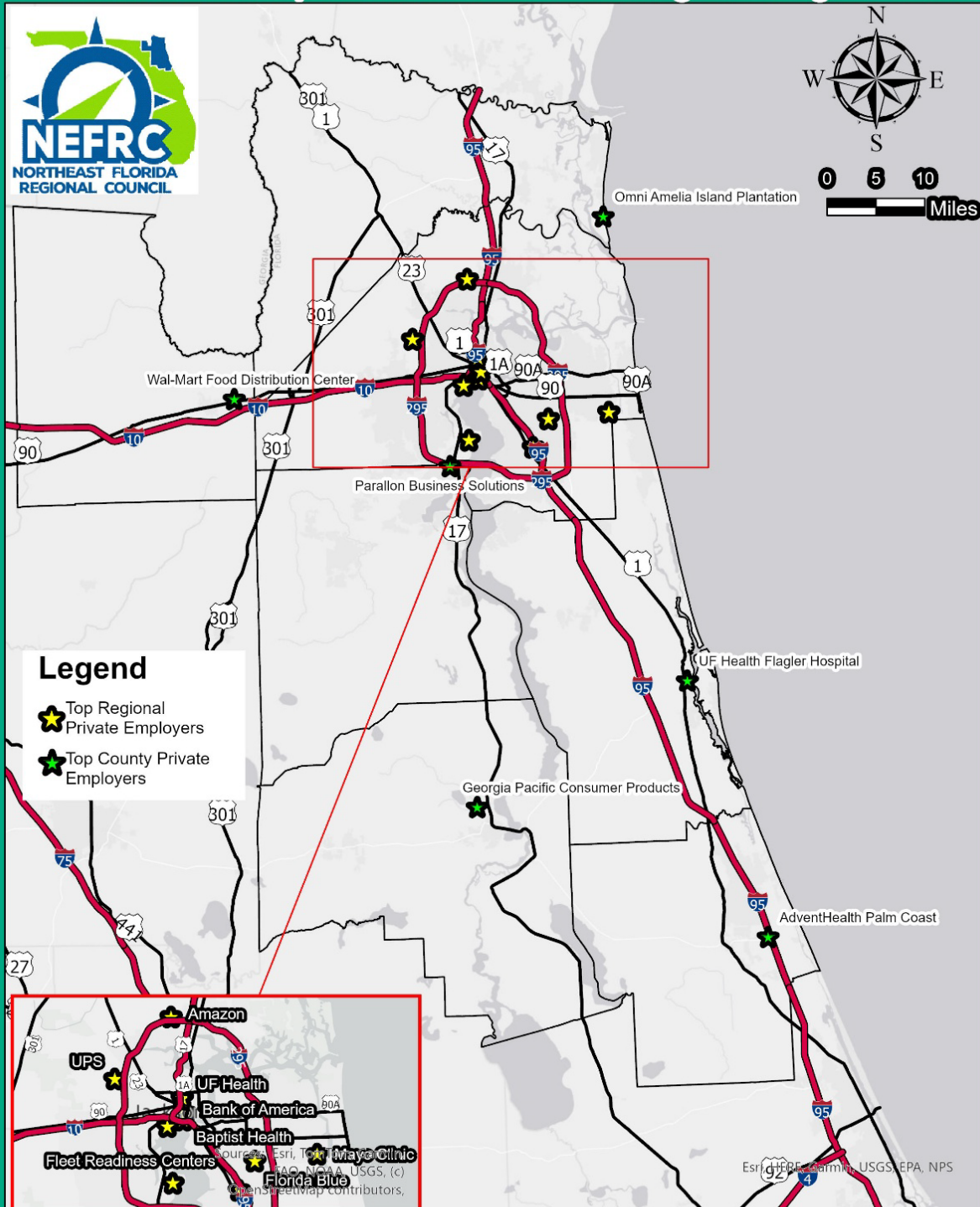
Sources: Visit Florida, Florida Visitor Study 2012, Florida Visitor Study 2014, Florida Visitor Study 2015, Florida Visitor Study 2016

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

The facilities depicted on the following map are of regional significance from an economic development perspective. The map is just an illustration and may not include all such resources or facilities. It includes each County's top employer as well as the five largest employers in the Region.

Resources of Regional Significance: Economic Development

Economic Development Resources of Regional Significance



SOURCE: JAXUSA PARTNERSHIP, LARGE EMPLOYERS, 2024

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

In spring 2022, JAXUSA Partnership launched its most ambitious regional economic development planning process to date. Leadership from across Northeast Florida's seven counties (Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns) recognized that for economic development to be successful, it needed to represent the region as a whole. The result of this planning effort was a regional, people-centric economic development strategy.

The Northeast Florida Regional Council maintains the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and will serve as a guide for policies, programs, and investments that ensure the region's continued economic dynamism.

According to the US Economic Development Administration, "a CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development" that "serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration." All of the Economic Development policies in the Strategic Regional Policy Plan are consistent with the Economic Goal of the State Comprehensive Plan:

Florida shall promote an economic climate which provides economic stability, maximizes job opportunities, and increases per capita income for its residents.

SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.

The region's vision is to have the highest-performing economy in the country. This future is attainable. In 2017, the Jacksonville metro had the third-highest rate of job growth of all large metros in the US. Intentional investments to support industry growth and advance the region's workforce could improve the region's ranking even more in the future.

Being resilient is critical to achieving the region's vision. While the past five years have seen remarkable economic growth, remaining steady when the economy slows is a matter of resiliency. Resiliency can be achieved through a focus on the four objectives of this strategy: advancing the region's workforce, deepening and diversifying industry, strengthening the region's brand, and becoming a leading smart region that embraces innovation in all that it does.

Goal: Our region is the top destination for opportunity and investments, making it the highest-performing economy in the nation.

Goal: Northeast Florida's economic development strategies, consistent with Federal guidelines, are set with partners, and NEFRC does not set the new policy. NEFRC's goal is to ensure that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is a five-year strategy that

reflects economic development planning on a regional and county level and that the region is always positioned to collaborate to maximize funding opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: EMPOWER PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE.

Building a workforce pipeline through systemic change is among the most important aspects of growing a healthy economy today. Doing so requires a multi-faceted approach that includes aligning education programming with business needs, attracting and retaining skilled talent, assisting residents with completing credentials, and re-engaging people who have dropped out of the workforce. Advancing education and the workforce is a top priority.

Policies

Policy 1: Increase consistent and coordinated employer engagement,
SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.

Policy 2: Improve awareness of and participation in career pathways in the region,
SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.

Policy 3: Strengthen efforts to engage youth and adults in completing their postsecondary credentials of economic value, **SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.**

OBJECTIVE: AMPLIFY OUR LEADERSHIP AS A PREEMINENT SMART REGION

Implementing new smart technologies, starting with downtown JAX and then extending into the greater region will not only make the downtown a much more vibrant place but also connect the region in a way that establishes a global model for what smart region development looks like.

Policy 4: Coordinate investment and partnerships to develop and grow smart infrastructure projects like the Bay Street Innovation Corridor, **SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.**

Policy 5: Activate and accelerate smart region investments, **SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.**

Policy 6: Improve the connectivity and efficiency of regional mobility /transit options,
SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: DEEPEN OUR INDUSTRY CLUSTERS AND INTENSIFY SUPPORT.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting the growth of an industry cluster. Industry clusters are groups of similar firms in a geographic area that share certain assets, such as suppliers, networks, workers, infrastructure, and support services. As regions invest

in those assets, they improve the likelihood their clusters will deepen with more firms and more commerce.

In 2013, JAX Chamber completed an Export Plan as part of its participation in Brookings' Global Cities Initiative. Results of the study showed that the region is under-performing on exports and knowledge of foreign markets, with export know-how being a barrier to business growth. The Plan focused on encouraging small- to medium-sized businesses in the seven-county region to consider export opportunities as a pathway to growth. The goal of doubling export activity, as measured by Brookings' Regional Export Index, was established for the five years following the study.

Policy 7: Invest in assets that encourage the growth of the region's target industries, **SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.**

Policy 8: Create a more vibrant regional entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem, **SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.**

Policy 9: Strengthen the region's international connectivity, **SCP: 187.201(21)(a)F.S.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MEASURES***Northeast Florida Unemployment Rate, 2023***

Unemployment Rate	Please See Figure 1 for County Unemployment Data
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Source: Florida Commerce Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2024***Northeast Florida Average Wage, 2024***

Average Hourly Wages by Industry	See chart
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Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics***Change in Average Wage (Inflation Adjusted), 2020-2024***

Change in Average Weekly Wage	See chart
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Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics***Gross Regional Product Per Capita, 2023***

GDP Per Capita (Jacksonville MSA)	\$60,000
GDP Per Capita (Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach MSA)	\$36,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis***Change in Gross Regional Product Per Capita, 2019-2022***

Change in GDP Per Capita (Jacksonville MSA)	4.0%
Change in GDP Per Capita (Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach MSA)	5.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) provides emergency management support to each of the seven counties while also leading Region-wide emergency management efforts through various programs, projects, and initiatives. Through the Council's efforts, studies and plans are developed to better understand existing vulnerabilities and to promote the safety of all residents of Northeast Florida. Post-disaster redevelopment and mitigation planning is focused on resiliency of the Region and to promote more sustainable community redevelopment.

In all plans, an 'all-hazards' approach is taken to ensure the adaptability of the Region to all threats. Inland flooding, tornadoes, wildfires, hurricanes, and disease outbreaks are all major disasters the Region may face. Hazardous material spills and domestic security incidents are also threats for which the Region must be prepared. Training and exercises are key components of preparedness. The NEFRC supports these efforts with emergency management expertise. The Council will plan and facilitate exercises each year for the counties, the Northeast Florida Region, and on a larger scale.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: HAZARD MITIGATION

Hazard mitigation has gained increased attention over the past few years due to the large number of disasters that have occurred in the U.S., as well as the world, and the rapid rise in the costs associated with post-disaster recovery. Money spent prior to a hazardous event to reduce the impacts of a disaster can result in substantial savings in life and property following the event. The cost/benefit ratios are extremely advantageous. As a result, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Florida have developed, respectively, National and State Mitigation Strategies. Funding has become increasingly more available at the state and local levels to help support hazard mitigation efforts. To support this vision, FEMA funds three Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs.

They are:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDM)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant Program (FMA)

HMGP funds are made available to the State of Florida following a Presidential major disaster declaration. The PDM Grant, which FEMA named the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) fund, is designed to assist states, territories, federally recognized tribes, and local communities in implementing a sustained pre-

disaster natural hazard mitigation program. The FMA Grant Program provides funds for planning and projects to reduce or eliminate the risk of flood damage to buildings that are insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) on an annual basis.

Additionally, communities may participate in the Community Rating System, a voluntary incentive program that encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum requirements. Communities can substantially reduce insurance premiums based upon their designated CRS Class Rating. Figure 1 highlights the premium reductions based on CRS Class Rating. Figure 2 highlights the CRS rating for participating counties and municipalities in the region.

Figure 1: CRS Class and Associated Premium Reduction %

CRS Class	Premium Reduction
1	45%
2	40%
3	35%
4	30%
5	25%
6	20%
7	15%
8	10%
9	5%
10	None

Source: FEMA

Figure 2: County Participation in Community Rating System

CRS Class Counties	CRS Class
Baker	N/A
Clay	6
Duval	6
Flagler	6
Nassau	7
Putnam	8
St. Johns	5

Figure 3: Municipal Participation in Community Rating System

County	CRS Class Municipalities	CRS Class
Duval	Atlantic Beach	6
	Jacksonville	6
	Jacksonville Beach	6
	Neptune Beach	7
Flagler	Flagler Beach	6
	Palm Coast	4
Nassau	Fernandina Beach	6
St. Johns	St. Augustine	5
	St. Augustine Beach	8

Source: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/mitigation/floodplain/crs/>

In the spring of 1998, the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) initiated the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) program to assist local governments in developing plans to reduce or eliminate risks to people and property from natural and manmade hazards.

The LMS program has many advantages, including:

- guidance for developing pre and post-mitigation plans;
- identifying priority projects and programs for funding; and
- increasing the likelihood of state and federal funding for pre- and post-hazard mitigation projects.

The purpose of the LMS is to explicitly identify and list the natural hazards and vulnerabilities associated with a County and its jurisdictions and to support possible solutions to prevent and lessen the effects in a community-driven, living document that reflects the goal of hazard mitigation. County governments are also required to maintain an LMS project list. This list is designed to rank and prioritize mitigation-related projects for the purpose of applying for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds when they are made available.

Additionally, in 2018 and recently updated in 2023, the State of Florida adopted the Florida Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP). The SHMP is designed to reduce death, injuries, and property losses caused by natural hazards in Florida. The plan identifies hazards based on the history of disasters within the state and lists goals, objectives, strategies, and actions for reducing future losses.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In 2004 and 2005, Florida experienced an unprecedented level of tropical storm activity. In 2004, Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne impacted our State. Hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma came ashore in Florida in 2005.

In response to these devastating hurricane seasons, the State of Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) obtained grant money through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to conduct regional evacuation studies across the State.

Florida's Regional Planning Councils carried out the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program (SRESP), in close collaboration with county emergency management agencies. The Regional Planning Councils facilitated consistent and integrated mapping and analysis of "all-hazards" evacuation across Florida. In Northeast Florida, this multi-year project resulted in a comprehensive regional evacuation study that encompasses the seven-county

region. Inter-agency cooperation and data sharing were a vital part of ensuring the success of this regional and state initiative.

Although hurricanes are a prominent concern in the studies, the framework was established for an “all-hazards” analysis to support planning efforts to prepare for other types of evacuations, such as inland flooding or wildfires.

Across the State, the Evacuation Study in each Region contains the Sea Lake Overland Surge from Hurricane (SLOSH) Storm Surge data that defines both the *Coastal High Hazard Area* and the Hurricane Vulnerability Zones for growth management purposes. These designations are used statewide in development review and by local counties in growth management decision-making policies and procedures. It is suggested that growth and development be located away from these identified vulnerable areas. This Study, in conjunction with local Comprehensive Plans, ensures appropriate mitigation occurs in these areas, if required.

Out of County Clearance Time

“Out of County Clearance Time” is the time necessary to safely evacuate vulnerable residents and visitors to a “point of safety” within the county based on a specific hazard, behavioral assumptions, and evacuation scenario. It is calculated from the point an evacuation order is given to the point in time when the last vehicle assigned an external destination exits the county. Key points for out-of-county clearance time are:

- The roadway network within the county is clear;
- All out-of-county trips exit the county, including out-of-county pass-through trips from adjacent counties; and,
- All in-county trips reach their destination.

Clearance times are another product of the Evacuation Study, which has many applications across growth management and emergency management. Operationally, clearance times provide a County with an understanding of how long it may take for their County to clear evacuation traffic and for citizens to travel to a safe place in advance of a storm. From a planning perspective, clearance times establish a baseline and serve as a tool to measure future residential development and its potential impacts. The vulnerable population is also determined and shows how many citizens may be evacuating from a County.

A new tool was developed as a part of the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program called the Transportation Interface for Modeling Evacuations (TIME). TIME gives users a chance to modify an evacuation scenario with additional information and understand the impact of those changes on clearance times, shelter demand, and the vulnerable

population. It has applications in emergency management, growth management and the transportation field.

As part of the Study, an analysis of available shelters and their capacity was completed. General-population shelters, pet-friendly shelters, and special-needs shelters were identified throughout the Region. Using the Evacuation Transportation Model, the shelter demand for each County by category of hurricane was derived. Each of these datasets allows a County to better understand their risk and the protective actions necessary to ensure the safety of the citizens.

Because the Evacuation Study methodology is geared toward an “all-hazards” model, the categories have been realigned from the standard Hurricane Categories to an alphabetic categorization.

The 2020 Statewide Regional Evacuation Study is the most current and accurate study to date. Florida has experienced recent hurricane impacts in 2016 with Hurricanes Hermine and Matthew; 2017 with Hurricane Irma; 2018 with Hurricane Michael; 2019 with Hurricane Dorian; 2022 with Hurricanes Ian and Nicole; 2023 with Hurricane Idalia; and 2024 with Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton.

As a result of these recent hurricanes, changing demographics, and better data, the State of Florida is preparing to update the Statewide Regional Evacuation Study.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: NATIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY FRAMEWORK (NDRF)

The National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) establishes a common platform and forum for how the whole community builds, sustains, and coordinates the delivery of recovery capabilities. Resilient and sustainable recovery encompasses more than restoring a community’s physical structures to pre-disaster conditions. Through effective coordination of partners and resources, we can ensure the continuity of services and support to meet the needs of affected community members who have experienced the hardships of financial, emotional, and/or physical impacts of devastating disasters.

The primary value of the NDRF is its emphasis on preparing for recovery before a disaster. The ability of a community to accelerate the recovery process begins with its efforts in pre-disaster preparedness, including coordinating with whole community partners, mitigating risks, incorporating continuity planning, identifying resources, and developing capacity to effectively manage the recovery process, and through collaborative and inclusive planning processes. Collaboration across the whole community provides an opportunity to integrate

mitigation, resilience, and sustainability into the community's short- and long-term recovery goals.

Key elements of the NDRF since it was first published in 2011 that are significant for all readers are the guiding principles and the Recovery core capabilities. The NDRF is guided by eight principles that when put into practice, maximize the opportunity for achieving recovery success. The guiding principles remind us of the importance of how we work together to support survivor needs and build resilience:

- Individual and Family Empowerment;
- Leadership and Local Primacy;
- Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning;
- Engaged Partnerships and Inclusiveness;
- Unity of Effort;
- Timeliness and Flexibility;
- Resilience and Sustainability; and
- Psychological and Emotional Recovery.

The NDRF focuses on ensuring that the Nation will be able to achieve recovery following any incident, regardless of size or scale, and considers the full spectrum of threats and hazards, including natural, technological/accidental, and adversarial/human-caused. The NDRF helps ensure that all communities can coordinate recovery efforts to address their unique needs, capabilities, demographics, and governing structures. It encourages an inclusive recovery process, engaging traditional and nontraditional whole community partners, and provides a strategic and national approach to lead, manage, and coordinate recovery efforts while increasing the resilience of our communities.

There are also programs from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) available to help communities recover from a major disaster or emergencies declared by the President. These programs are the Individual Assistance Program (IA) and the Public Assistance Grant Program (PA). The IA program is designed to coordinate assistance provided to individuals, households, and businesses recovering from disaster or emergency impacts, and the objective of the PA program is to aid state, tribal, local governments, and certain types of private non-profit organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: REGIONAL DOMESTIC SECURITY

The State's Domestic Security Strategic Plan drives the Northeast Florida regional domestic security initiatives.

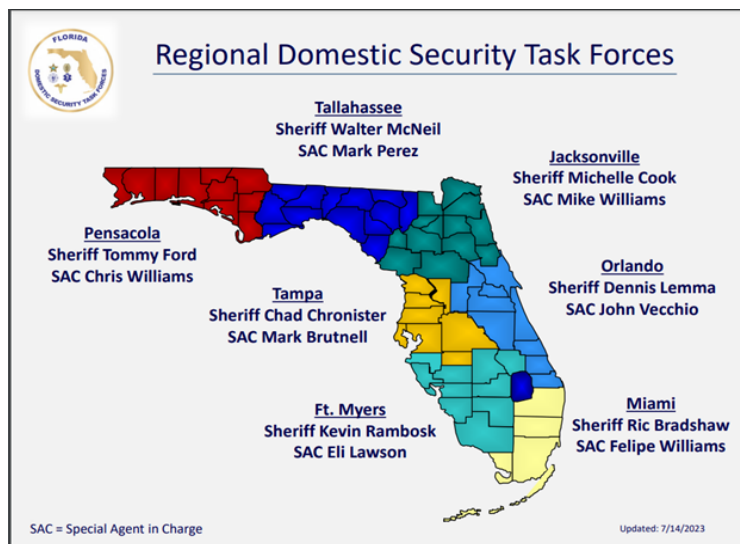
The State plan's vision statement, "a safe, secure, and resilient Florida" and its mission statement, "partnering to strengthen Florida's capability to prepare, prevent, protect, mitigate, respond, and recover from domestic security incidents."

There are seven Regional Domestic Security Task Forces (RDSTFs) within the State of Florida. Each RDSTF consists of local representatives from disciplines involved in prevention and response, including law enforcement, fire/rescue, emergency medical services, emergency management, hospitals, public health, schools, and businesses. The RDSTFs work together to prepare for, prevent, and respond to terrorist events.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its lead agency for disaster readiness and response, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have implemented new program initiatives with a holistic approach to disaster readiness and response and combating terrorism. This approach is supportive of the national concept of "All Hazards Resilience" and the three closely related factors that necessitate development of a holistic, regional approach to all-hazards resilience to engage the broader stakeholder community:

Infrastructure interdependencies, information sharing, and public-private partnering— together these factors aid in the focus and direction of the RDSTFs.

Figure 4: Regional Domestic Security Task Force Regions



Source: <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Domestic-Security/Organization>

STRATEGIC ISSUE: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Growing concerns related to chemical safety led the U.S. Congress to enact Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) on October 17, 1986. This Act is commonly referred to as the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA).

The purpose of this act is to promote and maintain emergency planning efforts at the local level. This is done through the collection and dissemination of information concerning potential chemical hazards within local communities, including tracking of hazardous material incident reports in the Region. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) acts as a local forum for interested parties from the private, public, not-for-profit and other public interest organizations to discuss response to potential chemical accidents and to provide information about possible chemical hazards. Through its efforts, the LEPC works to protect the public and the environment and bring awareness to hazardous materials across the Region.

Figure 5: Florida Hazardous Materials Release Report (Historical)

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
January	128	141	125	169	146	178	126	176	212	218	190
February	131	145	144	144	157	170	128	169	167	165	199
March	167	178	130	176	166	138	165	187	204	218	197
April	175	171	129	161	147	141	143	192	187	185	181
May	146	186	152	181	180	180	152	202	191	248	226
June	146	182	196	190	192	182	171	208	225	210	120
July	183	174	186	225	189	206	204	208	233	197	173
August	167	163	198	196	239	194	218	244	221	228	138
September	161	150	257	156	138	176	190	273	213	225	
October	129	159	201	204	207	171	180	288	236	277	
November	134	127	168	143	128	111	153	199	193	167	
December	130	139	177	137	163	140	167	192	201	167	
Totals	1779	1915	2066	2082	2049	1847	1997	2538	2483	2505	1424

Source: Division of Emergency Management, Technological Hazards Section. Reference SERC Agenda Packet Archive. (<https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/response/technological-hazards/serc/>) under the topic of "Hazardous Materials Incident Reports."

The Northeast Florida LEPC (District 4) is comprised of a diverse group of local stakeholders from Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties. Representatives include those from occupational areas associated with state and local

elected officials, emergency management, firefighting, first aid, health, law enforcement, the environment, hospitals, transportation, broadcast and print media, community groups, facility owners and operators, non-elected local officials, and interested citizens. This group meets on a quarterly basis.

The LEPC has a Training Task Force subcommittee specifically tasked with identifying and providing chemical-related training opportunities for local first responders. These opportunities are funded by a Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation. These grant funds are renewed, and funding amounts vary on an annual basis.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: RESILIENCE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This issue includes two areas of focus for Northeast Florida. First, the number of substandard housing units identified in the Community and Affordable Housing Chapter is of concern both from the perspective of provision of safe housing of an acceptable standard and because such units may not be resilient in a severe weather event.

The other issue is related to the vulnerability of Northeast Florida to climate change and the potential for increased weather events and sea level rise that it may bring. NEFRC, through the Regional Community Institute, is currently championing activities to promote resilience for the region.

Through funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the NEFRC launched the Regional Resilience Exposure Tool (R2ET) in 2019 with the goal of educating stakeholders about regional environmental vulnerabilities. The types of data layers presented in the online map resource are FEMA flood hazard zones, storm surge, depth of flood at defined storm occurrence intervals, and sea level rise at defined water levels. The layers can be overlaid on a variety of data to graphically analyze where specific vulnerabilities occur. These data layers include critical facilities, population densities of different demographics, historical resources, as well as “Resilience Hubs” identified by a NFWF and NatureServe in a Coastal Resilience Assessment of the Jacksonville and Lower St. Johns River Watersheds.

In addition to the tool, the NEFRC has developed a community outreach curriculum focused on educating local community stakeholders about a broad range of topics related to resilience. The curriculum covers concepts ranging from business continuity planning and economic resilience, to infrastructure solutions for sea level rise and adaptation strategies for coastal communities. In promoting the utility of the exposure tool resource, each educational presentation includes image captures that highlight the exposure and

vulnerability of different assets located throughout the region – ranging from medical facilities and fire stations to military installations and natural habitats.

In 2020, with support and guidance from the NEFRC Board of Directors, efforts to develop a regional resiliency collaborative began. This has resulted in the development of Resilient First Coast (RFC). Resilient First Coast (RFC) is the regional resiliency collaborative for Northeast Florida, which includes Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties.

RFC is a formal partnership to work together to improve the region's resilience. It is comprised of local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, academia, and federal/ state agencies. The collaborative provides a method to increase capacity and share resources among participants to improve outcomes, share best practices, maximize the value of ongoing work, provide a cohesive and unified voice, and help assemble regional funding opportunities.

Much of the work and mission of the RFC has been driven by the development of the Resilient Florida Program and changes to state statute. These changes have required local governments to study the potential risks and impacts of six defined hazards, known as a Vulnerability Assessment.

Additionally, the RFC has been working on a state-funded Regional Resiliency Action Plan (RRAP), which is expected to be completed in 2026. The RRAP is designed to protect our region's people and assets from the current and anticipated impacts of climate change and other hazards. This voluntary, coordinated framework provides a comprehensive roadmap for implementing strategic solutions to address issues such as flooding, heat, and hurricanes. The RRAP describes actions that NEFRC and RFC can take to improve regional resilience.

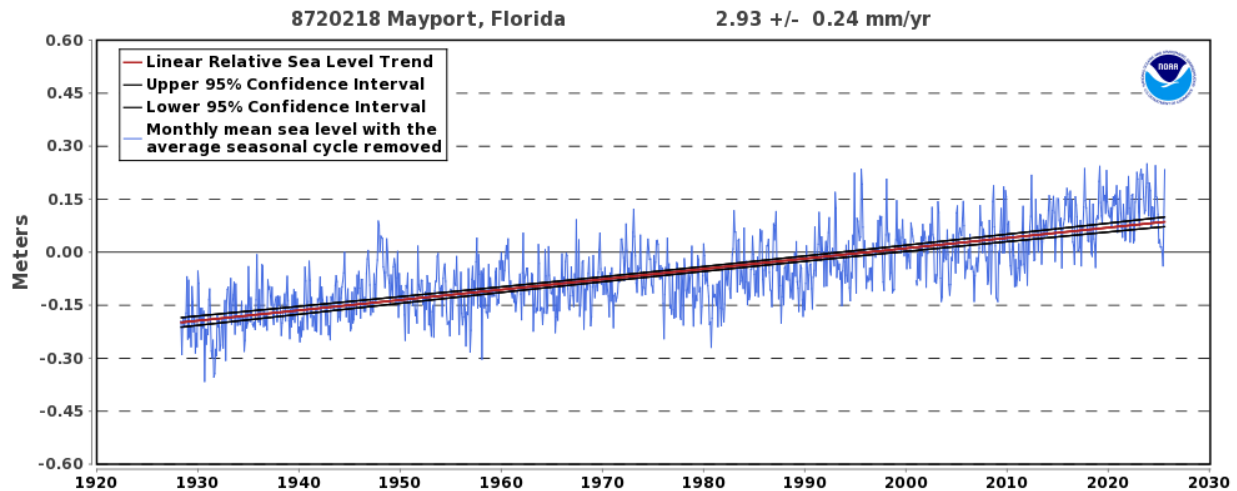
Sea Level Rise

The plots in Figure 5 show the monthly mean sea level as read from tidal gauges in the Region without the regular seasonal fluctuations due to coastal ocean temperatures, salinities, winds, atmospheric pressures, and ocean currents. Results from the Mayport/Bar Pilots Dock location show a steady rise in mean sea level since 1928. The mean sea level trend is 2.40 millimeters/year, which is equivalent to a change of 0.79 feet in 100 years.

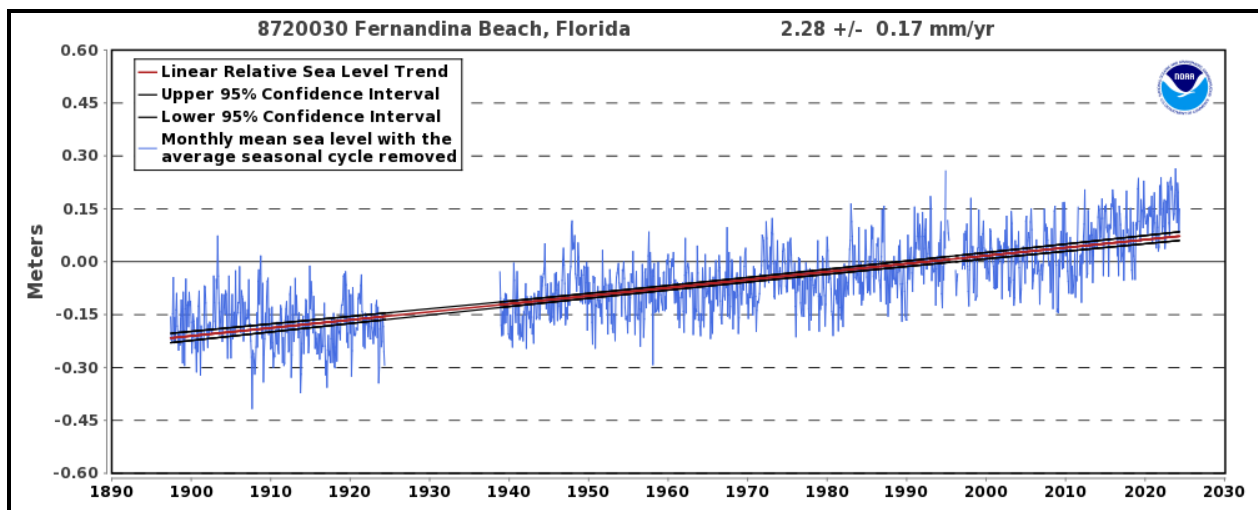
The level has been measured in Mayport since the early 1930s. The mean sea level trend there is 2.62 millimeters per year, which is equivalent to a change of 0.86 feet in 100 years.

The level has been measured in Fernandina Beach since the early 1900s, although not every year. The mean sea level trend there is 2.11 millimeters per year, which is equivalent to a change of 0.6 feet in 100 years.

Figure 6: Tidal Gauge Tracking



Source: NOAA 2023,
https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?id=8720218



Source: NOAA 2023
https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?id=8720030

STRATEGIC ISSUE: HEALTHCARE PREPAREDNESS (HEALTHCARE COALITIONS)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) lead the country in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the adverse health effects of emergencies and disasters. This is accomplished by supporting the nation's ability to withstand adversity, strengthening health and emergency response systems, and enhancing national health security. ASPR's Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) enables the health care delivery system to save lives during emergencies and disasters that exceed the day-to-day capacity and capabilities of existing health and emergency response systems. HPP is the only source of federal funding for health care delivery system readiness, intended to improve patient outcomes, minimize the need for federal and supplemental state resources during emergencies, and enable rapid recovery. HPP prepares the health care delivery system to save lives through the development of health care coalitions (HCCs) that incentivize diverse and often competitive health care organizations with differing priorities and objectives to work together.

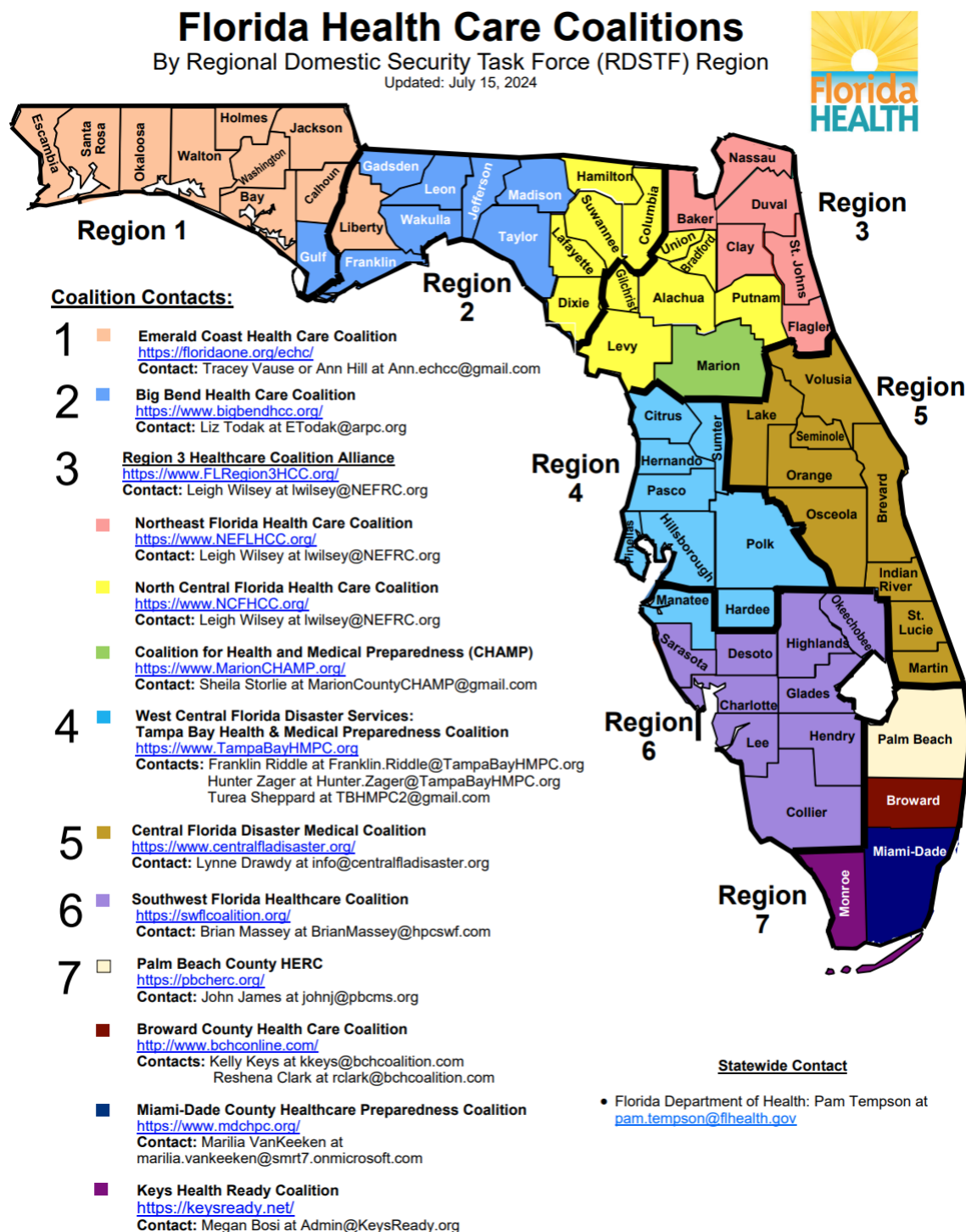
A healthcare coalition (HCC), as defined in the HHS ASPR 2017-2022 Health Care Preparedness and Response Capabilities for Healthcare Coalitions, is a group of individual healthcare and response organizations (e.g., hospitals, emergency medical services [EMS], emergency management organizations, and public health agencies) in a defined geographic location that play a critical role in developing healthcare system preparedness and response capabilities.

A Healthcare Coalition (HCC) is a collaborative network of healthcare organizations and their respective public and private sector response partners. Together, they serve as a multi-agency coordination group to assist Emergency Management, through ESF-8, with preparedness, response and recovery activities related to health and medical disaster operations. Healthcare Coalitions help improve medical surge capacity and capability, further enhancing a community's health system preparedness for disasters and public health emergencies. A Healthcare Coalition also augments local operational readiness to meet the health and medical challenges posed by a catastrophic incident or event. This is achieved by engaging and empowering all parts of the healthcare community, and by strengthening the existing relationships to understand and meet the actual health and medical needs of the whole community.

Florida Health Care Coalitions have different geographical boundaries than other regional organizations. Counties in Northeast Florida are served by two healthcare coalitions. They are:

- North Central Florida HealthCare Coalition
- Northeast Florida Healthcare Coalition

Figure 7: Florida Health Care Coalitions

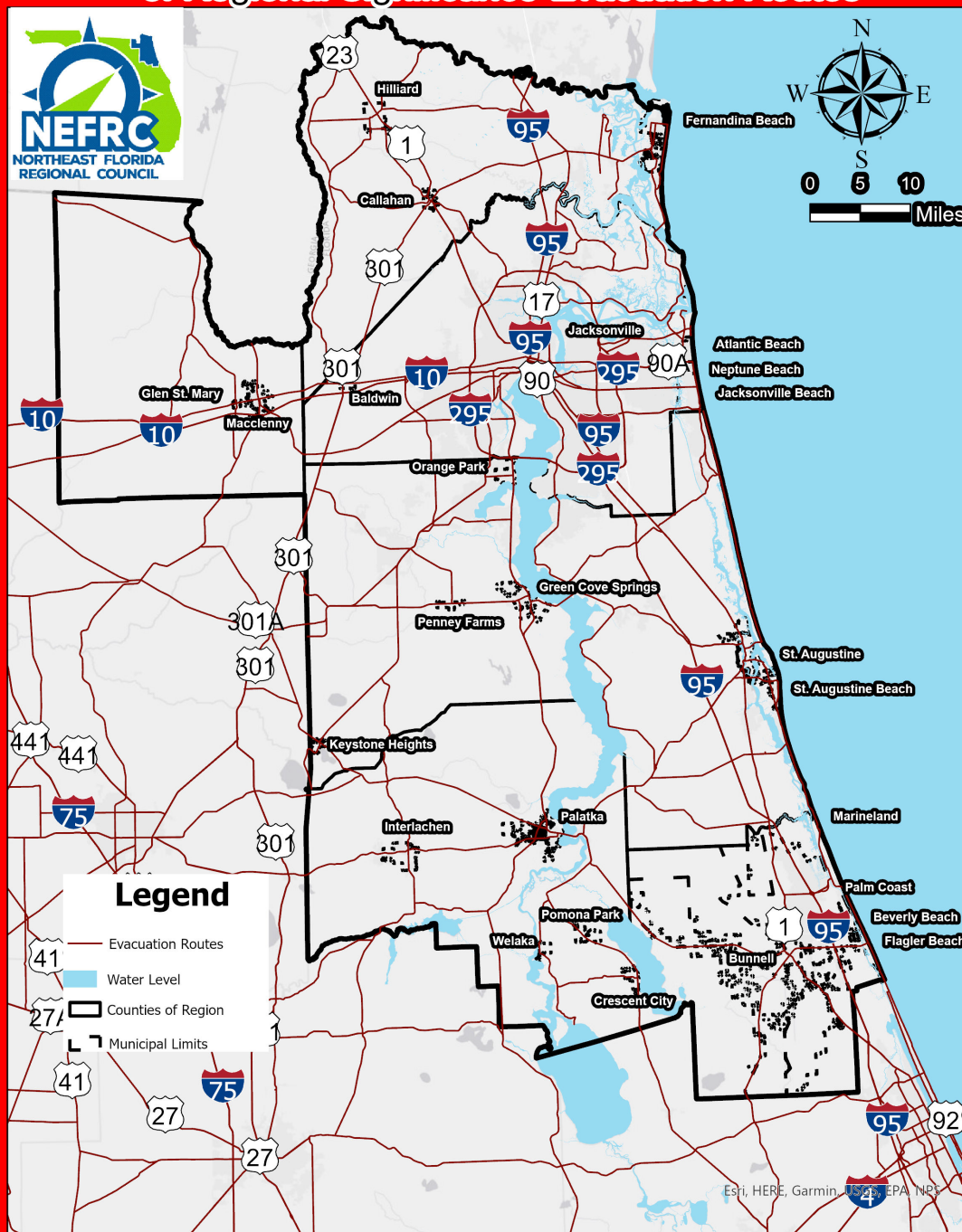


REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

Evacuation routes and primary shelters, as determined by the Counties, are regionally significant. The map is just an illustration and may not include all such resources or facilities. As state law requires, projected impacts on evacuation routes and shelter capacity and functionality will be assessed by NEFRC. Mitigation may be required.

Regionally Significant Resources and Facilities

Emergency Preparedness Resources of Regional Significance-Evacuation Routes



Source: Florida Division of Emergency Management, 2023

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: A resilient and safe region that is prepared for a coordinated and effective response to all hazards in emergencies and is prepared to adapt to change to remain resilient and safe in the long term.

OBJECTIVE: PUBLIC SAFETY

Policies

Policy 1: NEFRC will be a clearinghouse for data and a resource for the coordination, cooperation, and communication between entities in the Region that share this objective.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)F.S.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

Policy 2: Shelter capacity, as both a local and regional asset, should be considered.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

Policy 3: The Region encourages the healthcare community to plan, train, and exercise together to increase the capacity and capability of the healthcare system.

Policy 4: In assessing impacts and mitigation pursuant to 73C-40.0256 F.A.C, NEFRC will always use the most current available FDEM accepted Evacuation Study.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

OBJECTIVE: PREPARATION FOR ALL HAZARDS

Policy 5: The Region supports “all hazards” as the complete list of hazards as identified in all Local Mitigation Strategies in the Region.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S , 187.201(12)(a)F.S.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

Policy 6: Support the preparation and implementation of hazardous materials programs, including the *Local Emergency Planning Committee*, that are protective of public safety, public health, and the environment.

SCP: 187.201(12)(a)F.S.

Policy 7: Support the Regional Domestic Security Task Force and its objectives to increase safety, coordinate response, and provide seamless communication in the Region.

SCP: 187.201(6)(a)F.S.

Policy 8: Evacuation plans in the Region are considered in a regional context to ensure they are feasible and coordinated, and to identify recommendations that could improve their coordination.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

Policy 9: NEFRC staff will support the activities of emergency management and the healthcare community in the Region or outside before, during, and after a disaster.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

OBJECTIVE: A RESILIENT REGION

Policy 10: The Region supports assessment of the ability of existing structures to withstand emergencies, including wind events, flooding, and fire, and encourages local governments to address deficiencies by creating building codes to increase disaster survivability in new construction and renovation. The Region supports programs to assist owners of structures that were built to less rigorous standards to update them for safety.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S, 87.201(8)(a)F.S.

Policy 11: The NEFRC, through its licensed Regional Resilience Exposure Tool, will maintain access to data layers that illustrate the Region's vulnerabilities to certain environmental hazards. This resource will remain available to the public and will include best available data for the Region including layers that depict:

- locations of FEMA flood hazard zones
- storm surge potential based on storm strength
- depth of flooding at defined storm occurrence intervals
- potential increases in sea level rise from 1-6 feet
- locations of critical facilities and valued community assets
- densities of low-income, minority, and elderly populations
- locations of historical resources
- locations of "Resilience Hub" areas identified by *NFWF* and *NatureServe*
- any other data that can assist with planning for the safety of local communities

SCP 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S, 187.201(8)(a)F.S.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S, 87.201(8)(a)F.S.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S, 187.201(8)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: DETERMINE AND ADDRESS THE VULNERABILITY OF THE REGION

Policy 12: The Region will make its best efforts to determine the impact of climate change on Northeast Florida. This will be accomplished through local community dialogue on climate change issues, informed by findings from the NEFRC Regional Resilience Exposure Tool mapping resource and recent Resilient Florida Program-funded Vulnerability Assessments.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

Policy 13: The Region will work with communities, leaders, and experts to determine which assets (people and built environment) are vulnerable, establish a plan for the actions to take to address the impacts of climate change, if any, and mitigate those impacts whenever possible.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

Policy 14: If the Region identifies impacts, it will consider climate change adaptation in all planning, design, and infrastructure investment decisions made in the Region.

SCP: 187.201(6)(b)(23)F.S

OBJECTIVE: CONSISTENCY WITH THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

Policy 15: NEFRC considers impacts to resources of regional significance and extra-jurisdictional impacts as it reviews consistency with the SRPP. Local governments and proposers of projects should include best available data gathered using professionally acceptable methodology in support of their proposals, sufficient to determine impacts. Where mitigation is proposed, using strategies outlined in local government policies or plans, the SRPP or a combination is encouraged.

SCP: 187.201(15)(a)

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MEASURES

Regional Shelter Demand

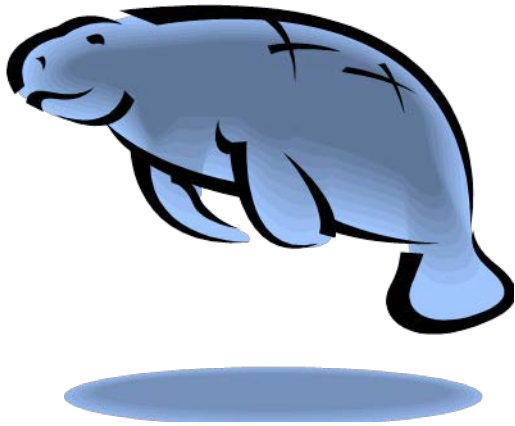
DEMAND					
REGIONAL SHELTER CAPACITY	EVACUATION LEVEL A	EVACUATION LEVEL B	EVACUATION LEVEL C	EVACUATION LEVEL D	EVACUATION LEVEL E
111,685	37,262	44,903	56,933	71,828	84,207

Source: 2021 Northeast Florida Regional Evacuation Study

Regional Clearance Time (hours)

	EVACUATION LEVEL BASE SCENARIO				
REGION	LEVEL A	LEVEL B	LEVEL C	LEVEL D	LEVEL E
Northeast Florida	22.0	24.0	25.5	28.0	31.0

Source: 2021 Northeast Florida Regional Evacuation Study



Natural Resources of Regional Significance

NATURAL RESOURCES TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

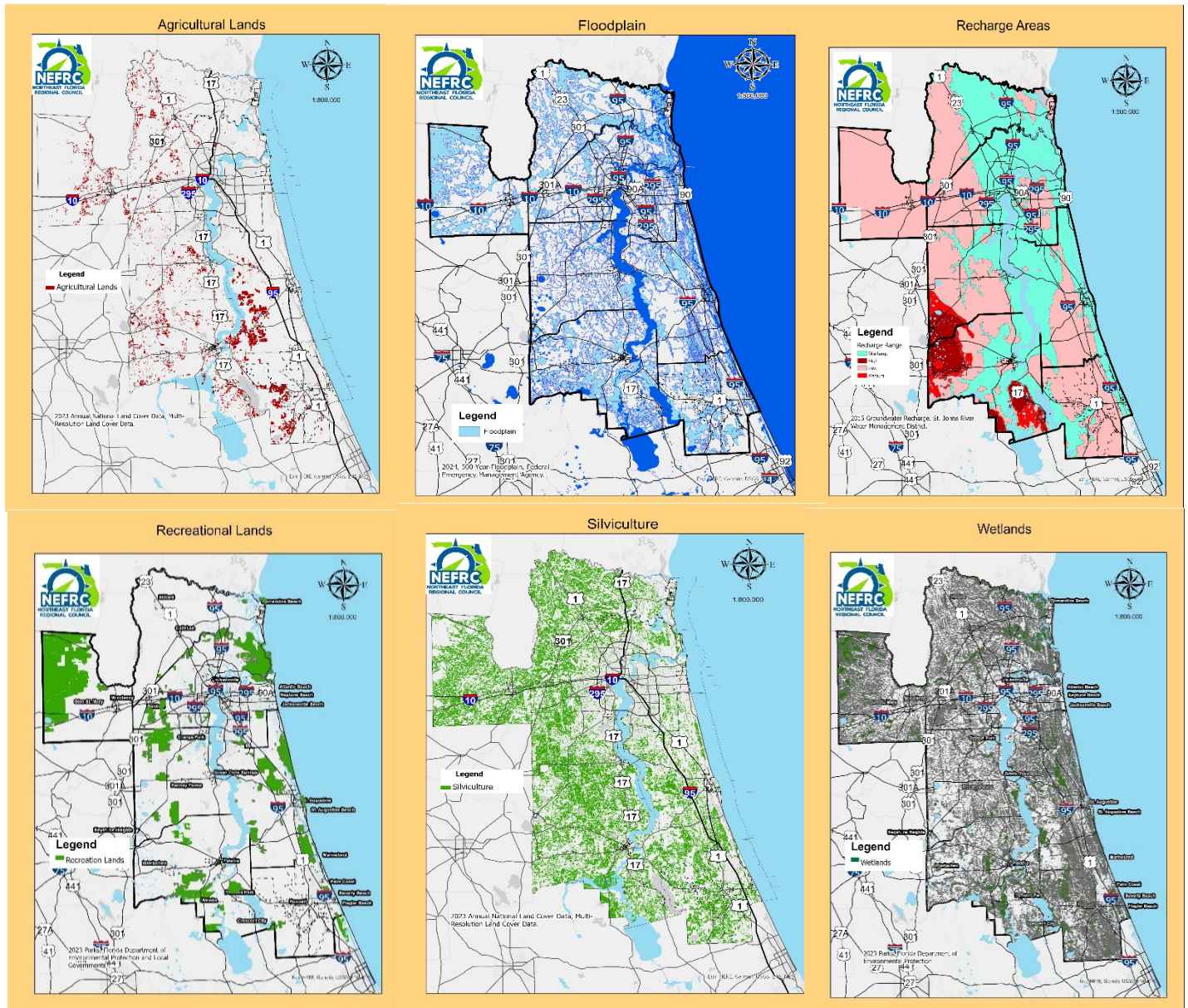
Natural Resource Summary

The St. Johns River flows north through the Region and empties into the Atlantic Ocean in Duval County, offering beauty and economic opportunities to the entire Region. The River and its tributaries offer real economic benefits, such as eco-tourism. The Regional climate features moderate winters, attracting new residents who are also attracted to Georgia and the Carolinas. The Region has an abundance of natural resources and has so far developed in a pattern that allows much of the land area of the Region to remain in managed forests, with a lesser amount of acreage in agriculture.

In the NEFRC Grow Smart Survey that preceded the 2009 Reality Check First Coast visioning exercise, 32% of residents thought preserving the environment should be the first priority when considering development. The same number thought that the economy should be the first consideration. These two opinions point out the close relationship between the environment and the economy.

Florida allows wetlands to be permitted for development, subject to mitigation requirements. Over time, this practice results in the fragmentation of wetland systems and the gradual but continual loss of wetland ecosystem functions and services. The cumulative effect results in Regional impacts. The loss of forested and natural areas means less water recharge from the surface to the aquifer and increased stormwater runoff impacts to water bodies such as the St. Johns River, which often experiences algal blooms in the summer months. The annual State of the River Report provides an overview of conditions in the river and should be carefully monitored by the Region. The number of septic tanks permitted is a metric tracked in this report, as these systems, when they fail, have the potential for negative impacts on the river and groundwater.

The Floridan Aquifer has provided drinking water of excellent quality to the entire Region for many years. The Floridan Aquifer will reach limits for withdrawal at some point and will no longer be available as the sole source of drinking water in the Region. The 2023 North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan concludes that fresh groundwater alone cannot supply the projected increase in demand during the planning horizon (2020-2045) without causing unacceptable impacts to water resources. As such, each jurisdiction must now include a Water Supply Facility Work Plan in its local comprehensive plans, thereby highlighting the importance of water supply. Per capita public supply water use is tracked not to highlight the differences between Counties (and factors such as power plant location, agriculture, and density make usage in Northeast Florida vary widely) but to look for trends of less usage over time.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

STRATEGIC ISSUE: HEALTHY, WELL-FUNCTIONING, SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The State has mandated the identification of Natural Resources of Regional Significance. The maps include those resources, updated to reflect the best available data. They also include those resources suggested by Counties in the Region and parks greater than 20 acres identified as Florida Land Management Areas or in the Florida State Park System. The lists are included for ease of reference. Local governments should consider impacts on these regional resources when they plan, and NEFRC will review such impacts if it is required to review a proposal with the potential for impacts.

Section 403.061(28) of the Florida Statutes grants the Florida Department of Environmental Protection the power to establish rules that provide for a special category of water bodies within the state to be referred to as “Outstanding Florida Waters.” These resources are worthy of special protection because of their natural attributes. Several natural resources of Regional significance are also Outstanding Florida Waters, including Pellicer Creek in Flagler and St. Johns Counties, Upper Black Creek in Clay County, and the Nassau River-St. Johns Marshes in Nassau and Duval Counties. A complete list is included in Section 62-302.700 F.A.C.

The Region has a role in the protection of state and federal listed species, and its support of preservation of appropriate natural areas is just one way that species can benefit. Developments of Regional Impact are required to assess their potential impact on listed species, pursuant to Florida Statutes Section 380.06.

Natural Resources List and Maps

Water Bodies and Wetlands (including associated tributaries)

Amelia River	Georges Lake	Okefenokee Swamp
Ashley Prairie	Goodson Prairie	Oklawaha River
Atlantic Coast and Ocean	Graham Swamp	Ortega River
Big Cypress Swamp	Guana River	Pablo Creek
Big Gum Swamp	Haw Creek	Pellicer Creek
Big Island Swamp	Hull Cypress Swamp	Pinhook Swamp
Black Creek	Impassable Bay	Pottsburg Creek Swamp
Boggy/Mills Creek	Intracoastal Waterway	Putnam Prairie
Brady Branch Swamp	Julington/Durbin Creeks	Rice Creek Swamp
Broward River	Kingsley Lake	Rice/Etonia Creeks
Bulow Creek	Lake Disston	Rodman Reservoir
Cabbage Swamp	Lake Geneva	San Sebastian River
Cedar Swamp	Lake George	Six-Mile Creek
Clapboard Creek	Levy's Prairie	St. Augustine Inlet
Coastal Barrier Resource	Lofton Creek	St. Johns Inlet
System (Comprised of	Long Swamp	St. Johns River
undeveloped coastal	Lower St. Johns River	St. Johns/Nassau Valley
barriers along the Atlantic.	Lowry Lake	Marshes
Source is FEMA, 2012)	Matanzas Inlet	St. Mary's Inlets
Crescent Lake	Matanzas River	St. Marys River
Cunningham Creek	Moccasin Swamp	Thomas Creek
Deep Creek	Moses Creek	Tolomato River
Deep Creek Swamp	Moultrie Creek	Tolomato/Matanzas River
Doctors Lake	Mud Lake Marsh	Marshes
Dunns Creek (Putnam)	Nassau River	Trestle Bay Swamp
Durbin Swamp	Nassau Sound	Trout Creek
Fish Swamp	New River Swamp	Trout River
Florida East Coast Estuary	North River	Twelve-Mile Swamp
Fort George River	Ocean Pond	Yellow Water Creek

Parks and Preserves

9A Mitigation Parcels	Cecil Field Conservation	Guana River Wildlife
Alpine Groves Park	Corridor	Management Area
Amelia Island State Park	Cedar Point	Guana Tolomato Matanzas
Anastasia State Park	Cedar River Sanctuary	National Estuarine
Bayard Conservation Area	Cradle Creek Preserve	Research Reserve
Beach and Peach Preserve	Crescent Lake Conservation	Hagstrom Conservation
Belmore State Forest	Area	Easement
Betty Steflik Memorial	Deep Creek Conservation	Half Moon Island Preserve
Preserve	Area (SJRWMD)	Haw Creek Preserve
Betz Tiger Point Preserve	Deep Creek State Forest	Haw Creek Preserve State
Big Pottsburg Creek	Dunns Creek Conservation	Park
Big Talbot Island State Park	Area	Heart Island Conservation
Black Creek Ravines	Dunns Creek State Park	Area
Conservation Area	Dutton Island Park and	Horseshoe Point
Branan Field Mitigation	Preserve	Conservation Area
Park Wildlife and	E. Dale Joyner Nature	Huguenot Memorial Park
Environmental Area	Preserve at Pelotes	Intracoastal Waterway
Brandy Branch Trail Head	Island	J. A. Ginn Jr. Parcel
Bryant Skinner	Egans Creek Greenway	Jack Wright Island
Conservation Easement	Etoniah Creek State Forest	Conservation Area
Bulls Bay Preserve	Fanning Island Preserve	Jacksonville Naval Air
Bulow Creek State Park	Faver-Dykes State Park	Station
Bulow Plantation Ruins	Ferngully Preserve	Jennings State Forest
Historic State Park	Fort Caroline National	Jim Wingate Park
Camp Blanding Military	Memorial	John M. Bethea State Forest
Reservation	Fort Clinch State Park	Julington-Durbin Preserve
Camp Chowenwaw Park	Fort George Island Cultural	Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park
Camp Milton Historic	State Park	Kings Road Historical
Preserve	Fort Matanzas National	Preserve
Canopy Shores Park	Monument	Kingsley Plantation
Caravelle Ranch	Fort Mose Historic State	Lake George Conservation
Conservation Area	Park	Area
Caravelle Ranch Wildlife	Four Creeks State Forest	Lehigh Greenway
Management Area	Geiger Tract	Little Talbot Island State
Carl Duval Moore State	Goodbys Creek Preserve	Park
Forest and Park	Graham Swamp	Loblolly Mitigation
Cary State Forest	Conservation Area	Preserve
Castaway Island Preserve	GTMNERR - Guana River	Loblolly Park
Castillo de San Marcos	Site	Longbranch Crossing
National Monument		Conservation Easement

Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area	Princess Place Preserve Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park	St. Marys River Ranch Conservation Easement
Matanzas State Forest	Ralph E. Simmons State Forest	St. Marys Shoals Park
Mayport Naval Station	Ravine Gardens State Park	Stokes Landing Conservation Area
McGirts Creek Preserve	Reddie Point Preserve	Stone Mountain Industrial Park
Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park	Relay Tract Conservation Easements	Sylvan West Conservation Easement
Miller Farm	Ribault River Preserve	Theodore Roosevelt Area
Moccasin Slough	Rice Creek Conservation Area	Thomas Creek Conservation Area
Monticello Wildlands	River to Sea Preserve at Marineland	Thomas Creek Preserve
Monticello Wildlands Conservation Easement	Roberts Property	Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve
Moses Creek Conservation Area	Rodman Bomb Target	Turnbull Creek Regional Mitigation Area
Murphy Creek Conservation Area	Sal Taylor Creek Preserve	Twelve Mile Swamp Conservation Area
Ocala National Forest	Sample Swamp	Vaill Point Park
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	San Pablo Creek Conservation Easement	Verdie Forest
Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park	Satsuma Tract	Washington Oaks Gardens State Park
Olustee Experimental Forest	Saturiwa Swamp Conservation Area	Watson Island State Forest
Ordway-Swisher Biological Station	Seven Sisters Islands	Welaka National Fish Hatchery
Osceola National Forest	Shell Bluff	Welaka State Forest
Otis Road Trail Head	Skinner-Smith Parcel	Whitehouse Naval Outlying Field
Pellicer Creek Corridor Conservation Area	Southeast Intracoastal Waterway Park	Yellow Water Branch Trail Head
Peterson Tract	St. Johns County Conservation Area	
	St. Marys River House	

Trails

Amelia Island Trail	Cross Florida Greenway North	Palatka to Lake Butler State Trail
Belle Terra Parkway Trail	Doctors Lake Drive Bike Path	Palatka to St. Augustine State Trail
Black Creek Trail	Etonia Creek Trail	Palm Coast Parkway Bike Path
309C Trail	Jacksonville Baldwin Rail Trail	Rice Creek Trail
Camp Blanding Trail	Lehigh Greenway Rail Trail	S-Line Trail
Colbert Land Bike Path		
Crescent City Trail		
Cross Florida Greenway		

State Road 121 Rail Trail

Blueways

Black Creek
 Bulow Creek
 Bulow River
 Florida Circumnavigational
 Saltwater
 Guana River
 Intracoastal Waterway

Julington-Durbin Creek
 Lofton Creek
 Middle Prong Creek
 Moultrie Creek
 Pellicer Creek
 Pumpkin Hill Creek
 Putnam County Blueway
 System
 San Sebastian

Simpson Creek
 Six Mile Creek
 Spruce Creek
 St. Johns River
 St. Marys River
 Thomas Creek
 Tolomato River
 Trout Creek

Natural Resources by County

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Amelia River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Nassau
Ashley Prairie	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Atlantic Coast and Ocean	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
Big Cypress Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler
Big Gum Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Big Island Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Black Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay
Boggy/Mills Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Nassau
Brady Branch Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Nassau
Broward River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Bulow Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler
Cabbage Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Nassau
Cedar Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Clapboard Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Coastal Barrier Resource	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
Crescent Lake	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler and Putnam
Cunningham Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Deep Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam and St. Johns
Deep Creek Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam and St. Johns
Doctors Lake	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay
Dunns Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Fish Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Florida East Coast Estuary	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
Fort George River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Georges Lake	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Goodson Prairie	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Graham Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler
Guana River	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Haw Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler
Hull Cypress Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler
Impassable Bay	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Intracoastal Waterway	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
Julington/Durbin Creeks	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval and St. Johns
Kingsley Lake	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay
Lake Disston	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler
Lake Geneva	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay
Lake George	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Levy's Prairie	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Lofton Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Nassau
Long Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Lower St. Johns River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns
Lowry Lake	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay
Matanzas Inlet	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Matanzas River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler and St. Johns
Moccasin Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Moses Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Moultrie Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Mud Lake Marsh	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Nassau River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval and Nassau
New River Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
North River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Ocean Pond	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Okefenokee Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Oklawaha River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Ortega River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay and Duval
Pablo Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Pellicer Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Flagler and St. Johns
Pinhook Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker
Pottsburg Creek Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Putnam Prairie	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Rice Creek Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Rice/Etonia Creeks	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
Rodman Reservoir	Waterbody/Wetlands	Putnam
San Sebastian River	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Six-Mile Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
St. Augustine Inlet	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
St. Johns Inlet	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
St. Johns River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Clay, Duval, Putnam and St. Johns
St. Johns/Nassau Valley Marshes	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval and Nassau
St. Marys Inlets	Waterbody/Wetlands	Nassau
St. Marys River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Baker and Nassau
Thomas Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval and Nassau
Tolomato River	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Tolomato/Matanzas River Marshes	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Trestle Bay Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Trout Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Trout River	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
Twelve-Mile Swamp	Waterbody/Wetlands	St. Johns
Yellow Water Creek	Waterbody/Wetlands	Duval
9A Mitigation Parcels	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Alpine Groves Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Amelia Island State Park	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
Anastasia Island State Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Bayard Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Beach and Peach Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Belmore State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Betty Steflik Memorial Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Betz Tiger Point Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Big Pottsburg Creek	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Big Talbot Island State Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Black Creek Ravines Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Branan Field Mitigation Park Wildlife and Environmental Area	Parks/Preserves	Clay and Duval
Brandy Branch Trail Head	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Bryant Skinner Conservation Easement	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Bulls Bay Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Bulow Creek State Park	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic State Park	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Camp Blanding Military Reservation	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Camp Chowenwaw Park	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Camp Milton Historic Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Canopy Shores Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Caravelle Ranch Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Carl Duval Moore State Forest and Park	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Cary State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Duval and Nassau
Castaway Island Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Castillo De San Marcos National Monument	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Cecil Field Conservation Corridor	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Cedar Point	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Cedar River Sanctuary	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Cradle Creek Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Crescent Lake Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Deep Creek Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam and St. Johns
Deep Creek State Forest	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Dunns Creek Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Dunns Creek State Park	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Dutton Island Park and Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
E. Dale Joyner Nature Preserve at Pelotes Island	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Egans Creek Greenway	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
Etoniah Creek State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Fanning Island Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Faver-Dykes State Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Ferngully Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Fort Caroline National Memorial	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Fort Clinch State Park	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
Fort George Island Cultural State Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Fort Matanzas National Monument	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Fort Mose Historic State Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Four Creeks State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
Geiger Tracts	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Goodbys Creek Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Graham Swamp Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTMNERR)	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
GTMNERR-Guana River Site	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Guana River Wildlife Management Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Half Moon Island Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Haw Creek Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Haw Creek Preserve State Park	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Heart Island Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Horseshoe Point Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Huguenot Memorial Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Intracoastal Waterway	Parks/Preserves	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
J.A. Ginn Jr. Parcel	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Jack Wright Island Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Jacksonville Naval Air Station	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Jennings State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Jim Wingate Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
John M. Bethea State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Baker
Julington-Durbin Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval and St. Johns
Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Kings Road Historical Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Kingsley Plantation	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Lake George Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Lehigh Greenway	Parks/Preserves	Flagler

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Little Talbot Island State Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Loblolly Mitigation Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Matanzas State Forest	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Mayport Naval Station	Parks/Preserves	Duval
McGirts Creek Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Mike Rose Gold Head Branch State Park	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Miller Farm	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Moccasin Slough	Parks/Preserves	Clay
Monticello Wildlands Conservation Easement	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Moses Creek Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Murphy Creek Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Osceola National Forest	Parks/Preserves	Baker
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge	Parks/Preserves	Baker
Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park	Parks/Preserves	Baker
Olustee Experimental Forest	Parks/Preserves	Baker
Ordway-Swisher Biological Station	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Ocala National Forest	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Otis Road Trail Head	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Pellicer Creek Corridor Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Peterson Tract	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Princess Place Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Ralph E. Simmons State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
Ravine Gardens State Park	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Reddie Point Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Ribault River Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Rice Creek Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
River to Sea Preserve at Marineland	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Rodman Bomb Target	Parks/Preserves	Putnam

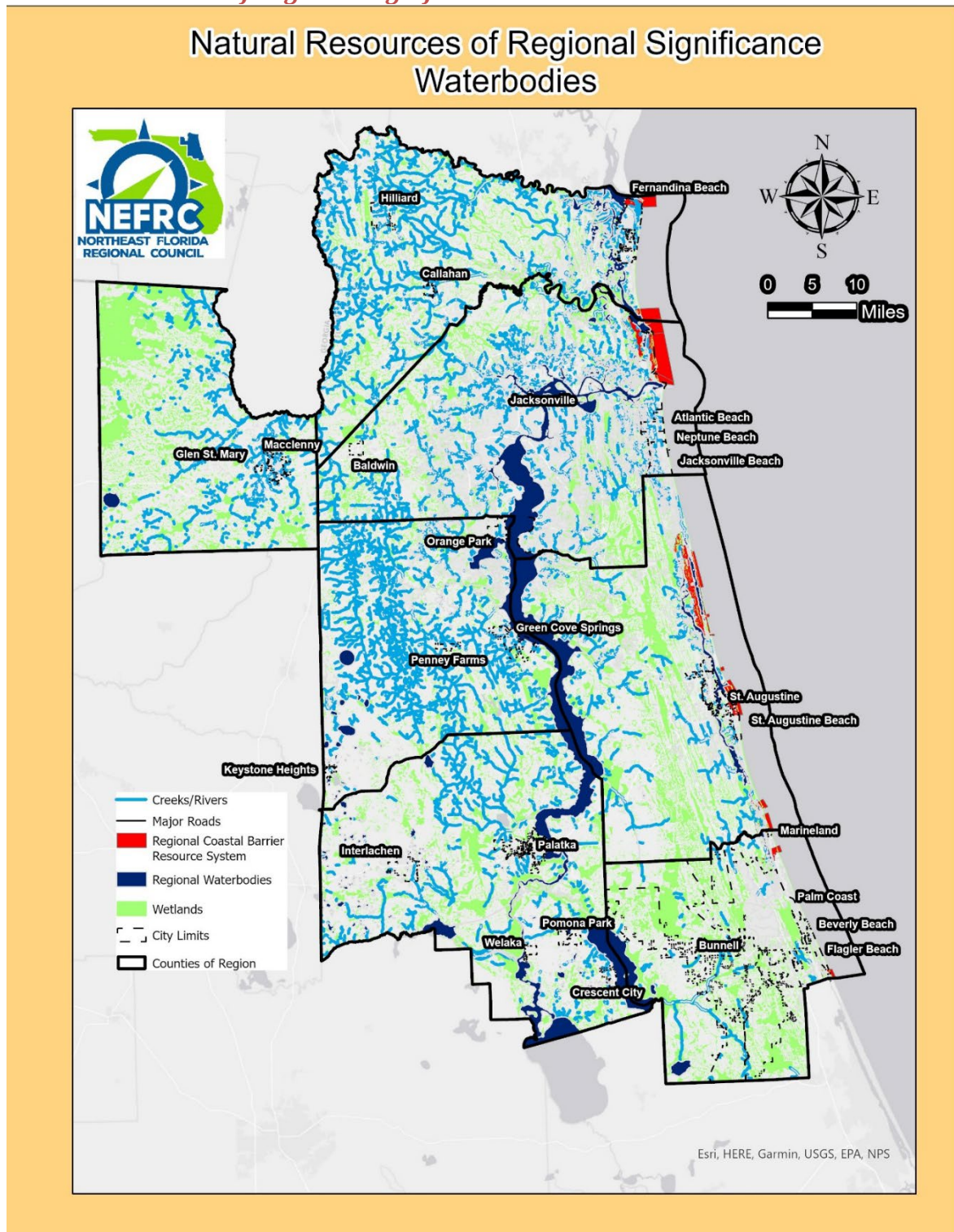
<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Sal Taylor Creek Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Sample Swamp	Parks/Preserves	Duval
San Pablo Creek Conservation Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Satsuma Tract	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Saturiwa Swamp Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Seven Sisters Islands	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Shell Bluff	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Skinner-Smith Parcel	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Southeast Intracoastal Waterway Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
St. Johns County Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
St. Marys River House	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
St. Marys River Ranch Conservation Easement	Parks/Preserves	Nassau
St. Marys Shoals Park	Parks/Preserves	Baker
Stokes Landing Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Augustine
Stone Mountain Industrial Park	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Sylvan West Conservation Easement	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Theodore Roosevelt Area	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Thomas Creek Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	Duval and Nassau
Thomas Creek Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Turnbull Creek Regional Mitigation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Twelve Mile Swamp Conservation Area	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Vaill Point Park	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Washington Oaks Garden State Park	Parks/Preserves	Flagler
Waston Island State Forest	Parks/Preserves	St. Johns
Welaka National Fish Hatchery	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Welaka State Forest	Parks/Preserves	Putnam
Whitehouse Naval Outlying Field	Parks/Preserves	Duval

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Yellow Water Branch Trail Head	Parks/Preserves	Duval
Amelia Island Trail	Trails	Nassau
Belle Terra Parkway Trail	Trails	Flagler
Black Creek Trail	Trails	Clay
309C Trail	Trails	Putnam
Camp Blanding Trail	Trails	Clay
Colbert Land Bike Path	Trails	Flagler
Crescent City Trail	Trails	Putnam
Cross Florida Greenway	Trails	Putnam
Cross Florida Greenway North	Trails	Putnam
Doctors Lake Drive Bike Path	Trails	Clay
Etonia Creek Trail	Trails	Clay and Putnam
Jacksonville Baldwin Rail Trail	Trails	Duval
Lehigh Greenway Rail Trail	Trails	Flagler
Palatka to Lake Butler State Trail	Trails	Clay and Putnam
Palatka to St. Augustine State Trail	Trails	Putnam and St. Johns
Palm Coast Parkway Bike Path	Trails	Putnam
Rice Creek Trail	Trails	Putnam
S-Line Trail	Trails	Duval
State Road 121 Rail Trail	Trails	Baker
Black Creek	Blueway	Clay
Bulow Creek	Blueway	Flagler
Bulow River	Blueway	Flagler
Florida Circumnavigational Saltwater	Blueway	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
Guana River	Blueway	St. Johns
Intracoastal Waterways	Blueway	Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns
Julington – Durbin Creek	Blueway	Duval and St. Johns
Lofton Creek	Blueway	Nassau
Middle Prong Creek	Blueway	Baker
Moultrie Creek	Blueway	St. Johns
Pellicer Creek	Blueway	Flagler and St. Johns
Pumpkin Hill Creek	Blueway	Duval

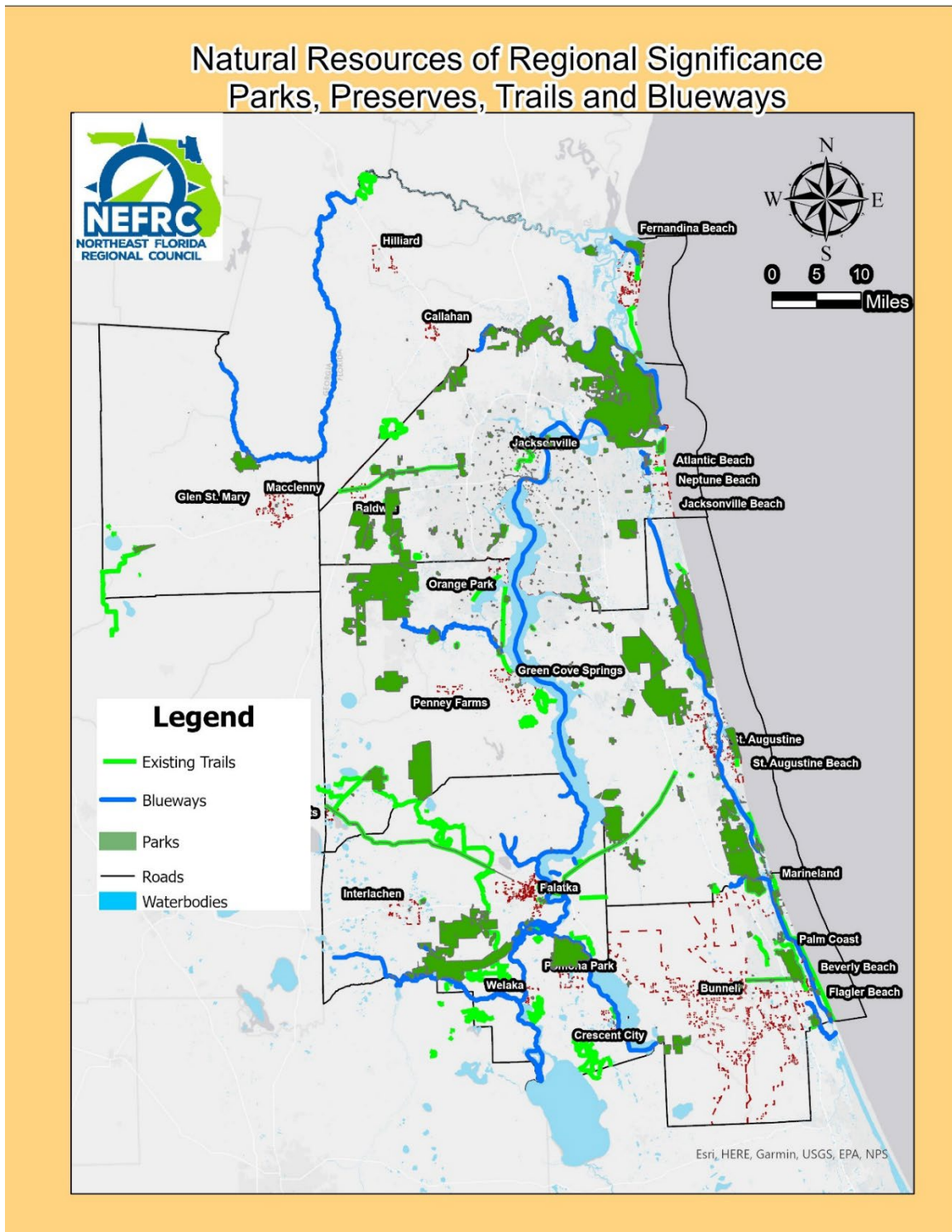
<u>Resource</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>County</u>
Putnam County Blueway System	Blueway	Putnam
San Sebastian River	Blueway	St. Johns
Simpson Creek	Blueway	Duval
Six Mile Creek	Blueway	St. Johns
Spruce Creek	Blueway	Flagler
St. Johns River	Blueway	Clay, Duval, Putnam, and St. Johns
St. Marys River	Blueway	Baker and Nassau
Thomas Creek	Blueway	Duval and Nassau
Tolomato River	Blueway	St. Johns
Trout Creek	Blueway	St. Johns

Floridan Aquifer and Recharge Areas

Features provided on Natural Resources Recharge Areas map (USGS Land Use cover, 2009)

Natural Resources of Regional Significance—Water Bodies

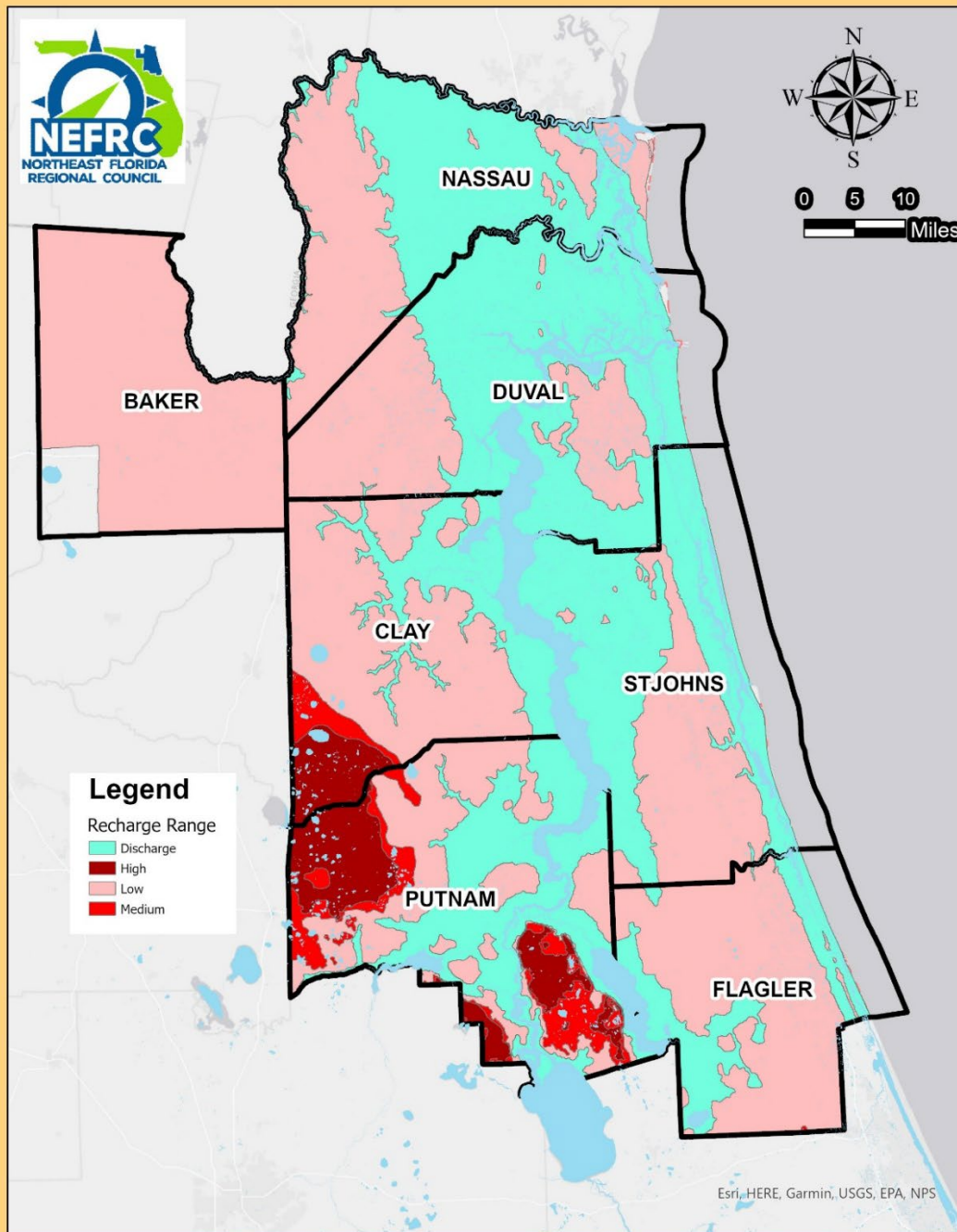
Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2023 and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, 2024.

Natural Resources of Regional Significance—Parks, Preserves, Trails & Blueways

Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2024.

Natural Resources of Regional Significance—Recharge Areas

Natural Resources of Regional Significance: Recharge Areas



Source: St. Johns River Water Management District, 2015.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal: Northeast Florida recognizes that some resources have the potential to impact more than one jurisdiction, and their viability is of concern to the Region. NEFRC promotes the protection of these resources, as contained on the Natural Resources of Regional Significance list.

OBJECTIVE: RESOURCE ADAPTATION

Policies

Policy 1: The Region, as it determines the impact of climate change on Northeast Florida, and if needed, devises plans to mitigate and adapt, will seek to achieve a balance that supports the people, protects the resources and takes advantage of Regional assets.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

Policy 2: The Region supports innovation to lessen the impact on resources, including utilizing alternative energy sources for power generation and transportation.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S

Policy 3: NEFRC gathers best practices and connects communities with strategies and practitioners that can help address their issues within the context of the aspirational goals of First Coast Vision. Convening to share experiences and discuss solutions is an important part of this approach.

SCP: 187.201(4)F.S

Policy 4: The Region supports the preservation of ecosystem services for clean air and water, habitat for wildlife populations, and flood control.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

Policy 5: NEFRC and its partners will endeavor to educate residents about the connection between their homes, the services, forests, wildlife and habitats, and planning practices to enhance sustainability and adaptation to climate change.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: HEALTHY, WELL-FUNCTIONING, AND SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Policy 6: NEFRC promotes the protection of Natural Resources of Regional Significance.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

Policy 7: The NEFRC will consider the long-term health of resources on the Natural Resources of Regional Significance list as it makes decisions and reviews projects that may impact them.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

Policy 8: NEFRC encourages local governments to consider impacts to these resources as they plan.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

Policy 9: Field verification, site surveys, and other detailed analyses may be used to determine the exact boundaries of Natural Resources of Regional Significance. The maps included in this plan generally depict location and connectivity.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

Policy 10: The Region supports protection of the populations of threatened, endangered and listed species, and will comply with the requirements of federal and state law in decision making regarding species, habitats, and natural systems.

SCP: 187.201(9)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCED WATER QUANTITY

Policy 11: The Region seeks to maximize water conservation by domestic, agricultural, industrial, and commercial users.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

Policy 12: The Region supports strategies identified by the Regional Community Institute as they worked on First Coast Vision, including:

- Reduction of gross and residential per capita residential water consumption.
- Development of a uniform comprehensive water consumption per capita tool to clearly and consistently track usage annually.

- Reduction of agricultural runoff by increasing the number of farms that have implemented both water table and nutrient *Best Management Practices*.
- Achieving 100% compliance with *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)* permits.
- Eliminating the use of potable water for lawn irrigation by 2060.
- Maximizing the use of reclaimed water.
- Use of Florida Friendly and similar landscaping techniques to reduce irrigation needs and conserve water consumption.
- Diversifying sources of water.
- Tracking the percentages of water supply from each source.
- Educating the Region on water consumption and conservation.
- Protecting recharge areas.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCED AIR QUALITY

Policy 13: The Region supports strategies identified by the Regional Community Institute as they worked on First Coast Vision, including:

- Reducing vehicle miles traveled in the Region.
- Increasing use of public transit.
- Increasing energy efficiency.
- Efforts to create more carbon sequestration areas.
- Maintenance of air quality standards.

SCP: 187.201(10)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: WATER QUALITY

Policy 14: The Region strives for all water bodies to meet water quality standards.

Policy 15: The Region is committed to considering the integrity of ecosystems to be as valuable to the Region as economic growth, as they are interdependent.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

Policy 16: With its partners and through the *Regional atlas* and data clearinghouse the NEFRC will provide access to information on best practices, technologies, and tools to maintain water quality standards and preserve the integrity of ecosystems.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

Policy 17: The Region supports strategies identified by the Regional Community Institute as they worked on First Coast Vision, including:

- Reduction of discharge of nutrients and pollutants into surface and groundwater.
- Elimination of failing septic tanks.
- Reduction of new septic tank installations.
- Expansion and improvement of data collection and evaluation for water quality through better coordination among agencies.
- Protection of functioning wetlands.
- Maintenance of riparian and wetland buffers.
- Purchase of land and wetlands for water conservation purposes.
- Development of a uniform wetland database to measure loss/gain of wetland function.
- Promotion of Low Impact Development in land planning and engineering design to manage stormwater runoff.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: CONSISTENCY WITH THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

Policy 18: The NEFRC considers impacts on resources of regional significance and extra-jurisdictional impacts as it reviews consistency with the SRPP. Local governments and proposers of projects should include best available data gathered using professionally acceptable methodology in support of their proposals, sufficient to determine impacts. Where mitigation is proposed, using strategies outlined in local government policies or plans, the SRPP or a combination is encouraged.

SCP: 187.201(15)(a)

NATURAL RESOURCES MEASURES

County	Public Supply Per Capita Water Use in Gallons Per Day	Public Supply Residential Per Capita Water Use in Gallons Per Day
Baker	147.66	102
Clay	94.69	71
Duval	136.35	90
Flagler	96.05	54
Nassau	152.22	112
Putnam	113.32	59
St. Johns	126.13	93

Source: 2023 Survey of Annual Water Use for St. Johns River Water Management District

County	Septic Tanks Permitted 2022-2023	Total Septic Tanks Permitted
Baker	124	8,479
Clay	340	33,337
Duval	657	95,966
Flagler	129	6,728
Nassau	295	23,304
Putnam	371	42,271
St. Johns	447	32,220

Source: Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems permitting, Florida Department of Environmental Protection



Regional Transportation

LIST OF FIGURES

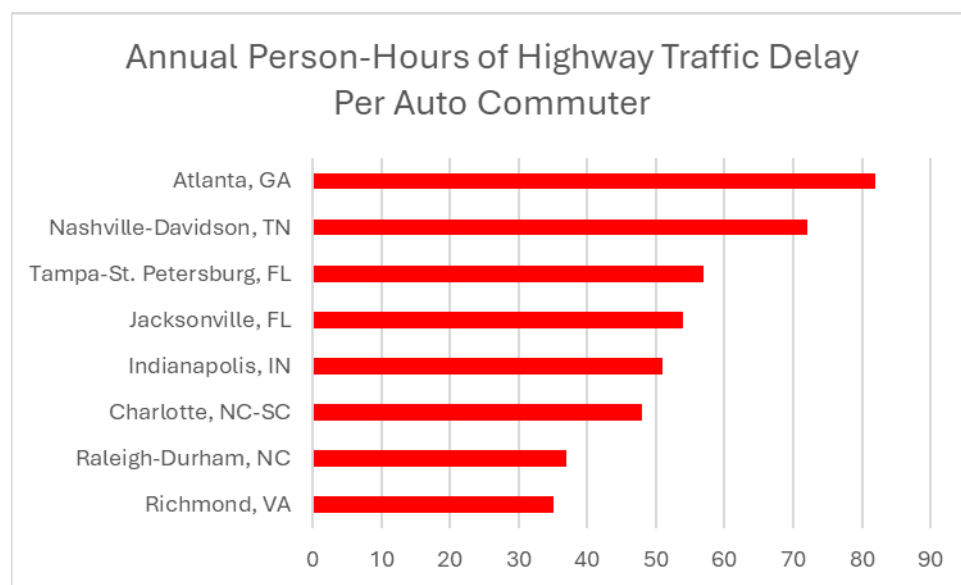
Figure 1: Annual Number of Hours of Delay Due to Traffic Congestion Per Auto Commuter, 2022.....	2
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TRANSPORTATION TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

This element is aligned with the 2022 – 2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

On average, commuters in the region lose 54 hours annually due to traffic congestion. In Atlanta, on the other hand, commuters spend an average of 82 hours a year in traffic. Less congestion translates to lower costs for Jacksonville drivers. (Note, traffic data is only available for the five-county MSA – labeled “Jacksonville” in the chart below – not the seven-county Northeast Florida study area.)

Figure 1: Annual Number of Hours of Delay Due to Traffic Congestion Per Auto Commuter, 2022



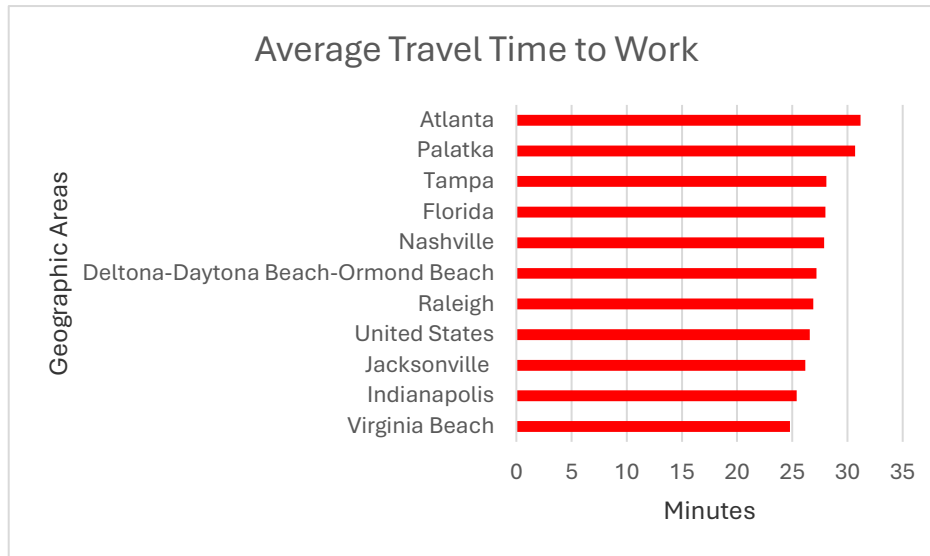
Source: U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2022

Short commute times often indicate that a region’s job centers are close to its residents and also the presence of efficient public transit options. Lowering traffic congestion reduces residents’ out-of-pocket transportation costs and public expenditures on roadway maintenance and expansions. Ultimately, shorter commutes equate to a higher quality of life for workers and their families.

While commuters in the region do not face the same congestion levels as their counterparts in many other parts of the US, they do have long commutes. On average, workers in Northeast Florida spend more than 26 minutes commuting to work. However, this is larger for those in Flagler and Putnam, with commute time in their respective Metropolitan/Micropolitan Areas nearly 27 minutes and slightly over 30

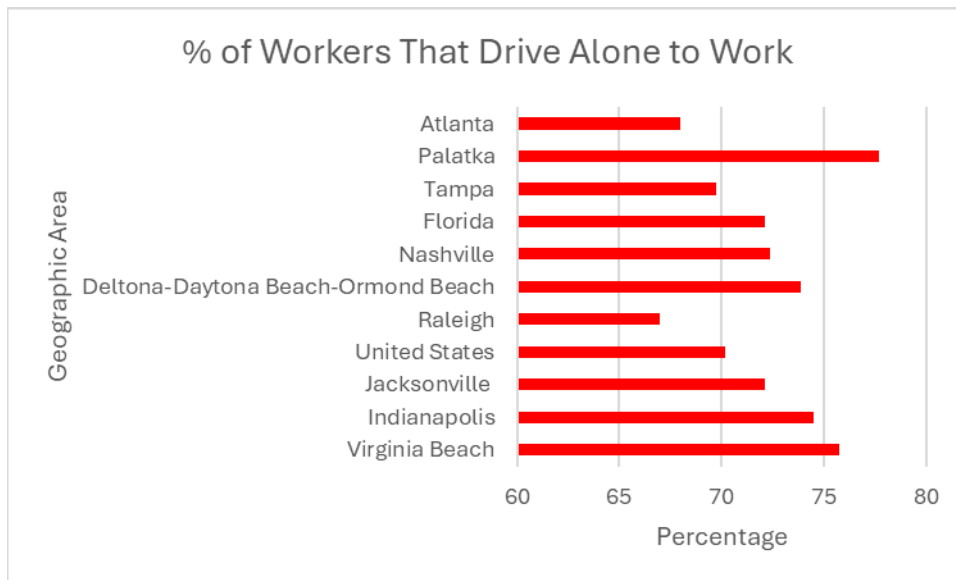
minutes. The figure is higher for workers in specific counties such as Baker, Clay, and Nassau. Congestion is related to urban sprawl.

Figure 2: Average Travel Time to Work



Source: American Community Survey, 2023.

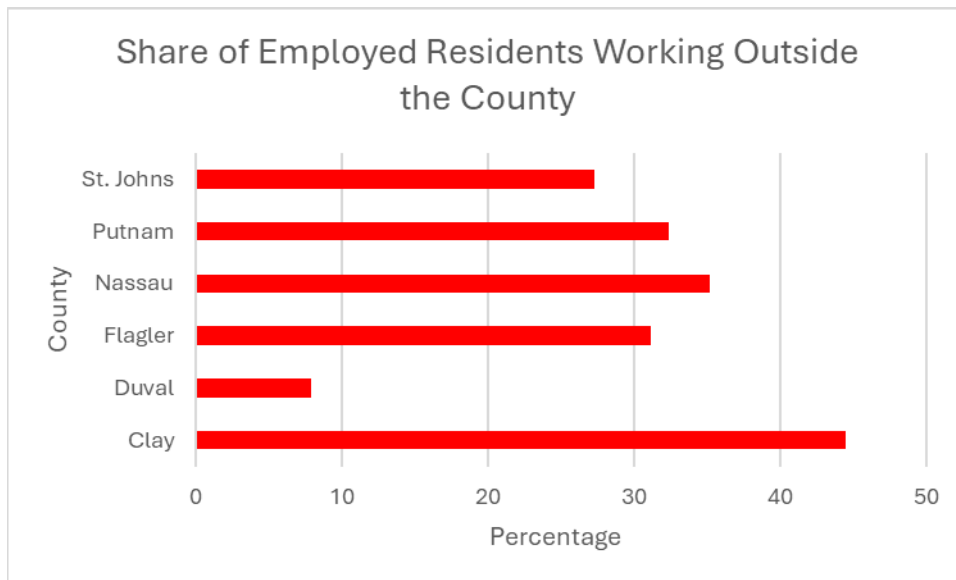
More than 70% of workers in Northeast Florida (representing all three metropolitan/micropolitan areas which comprise the Northeast Florida Region) drive alone to work, nearly proportionate to the US and statewide average, excluding workers in the Palatka Micropolitan Area, with almost 80% of workers driving alone. Approximately 15% of Northeast Florida workers telecommute, a higher percentage than the national average but slightly less than the statewide figure.

Figure 3: % of Workers That Drive Alone to Work

Source: American Community Survey, 2023.

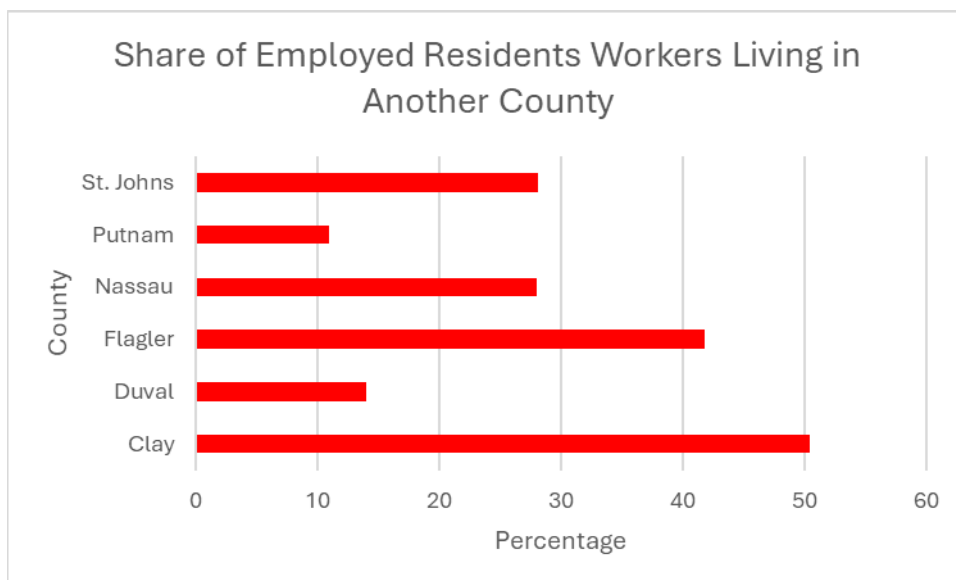
Counties within the Northeast Florida region are deeply intertwined economically. Much of the wealth earned by residents in many counties within the region is dependent on employment opportunities located in Duval County. Conversely, Duval County relies extensively on the talents of residents in neighboring counties. At least 30% of the employed residents in every county other than Duval and St. Johns within Northeast Florida are employed outside their home county. However, fewer than 8% of employed residents within Duval County work elsewhere.

Commuting patterns play several important roles in a region's economy. Regions that can draw outside workers can significantly increase their available workforce. At the same time, long commutes by individuals who live and work in different locales contribute to traffic congestion and its adverse side effects.

Figure 4: Share of Employed Residents Working Outside the County

Source: American Community Survey, 2023.

Duval County relies on imported workers less than other counties in the region. At least one in three workers employed in each of the seven Northeast Florida counties live in another. For some, such as Clay, more of their workforce commutes in than lives locally.

Figure 5: Share of Employed Workers Living in Another County

Source: American Community Survey, 2023.

TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY

Northeast Florida is a transportation hub. Three major Interstates converge in or near the seven County Region. The First Coast Expressway is being built to connect I-10 to I-95 through Clay County. Two deep-water ports exist at Fernandina Beach and Jacksonville. The St. Johns River offers the option of river transport and cruise ships. Every railroad with a presence in Florida has facilities in Northeast Florida. An international airport in Jacksonville, along with several Regional and commercial airports and one of the longest runways in Florida at Cecil Field, offer opportunities and room for expansion of transport by air. The military impacts many aspects of life in the Region. A change to flexible start times for workers commuting to and from some of the military installations in the Region has made a positive impact on the capacity of roads in the vicinity at peak hours.

Maximizing the Region's transportation assets remains a challenge. The Region depends almost exclusively on roads; most of the Region's residents drive, to the exclusion of most other modes of transportation. Bus transit exists in limited parts of the Region or is available to the transportation disadvantaged as para-transit. The Jacksonville Transportation Agency provides fixed route service and is innovating with flexible service to accommodate getting users the "last mile" to their final destinations. The City of Jacksonville has recently approved a pilot program to allow scooters in the downtown area. Transportation Disadvantaged programs are well established in Florida and well-utilized in Northeast Florida. They have a special benefit in rural areas, where no other transit is available.

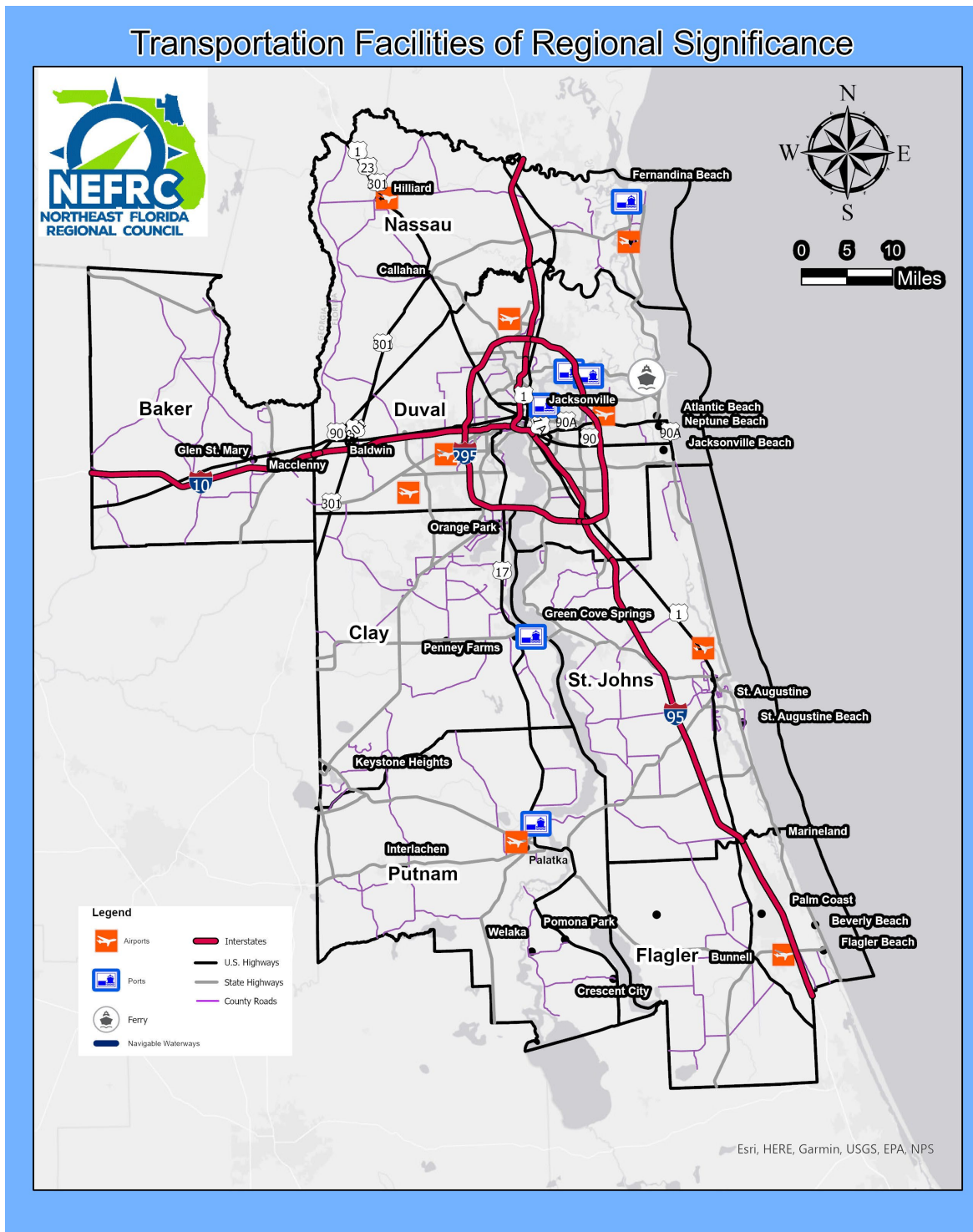
Transportation network companies (TNCs) operate in more urban areas but often not in rural ones. Unpaved roads are a factor in rural areas, impacting the longevity of vehicles owned by residents, businesses, and transit agencies. Low densities and unpaved roads may explain why TNC service is often unavailable in rural areas. TNCs provide convenience but do nothing to limit congestion and, in fact, may add to it. The limited options also limit the possibilities for residents trying to take advantage of opportunities to increase their incomes, as many jobs are out of reach without an automobile. The presence of existing rail lines is an asset, but they are not currently used for commuter rail and are not ideally located to shift freight from the ports. Most freight is trucked from the ports to rail. While higher-speed passenger rail is being used in South Florida and built in Central Florida, it has not yet been extended to Northeast Florida.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

A roadway facility in Northeast Florida will be a Regionally Significant Roadway if it meets one of the following criteria.

1. **Roadways Providing Direct Access to a Regional Activity Center** — Any roadway which provides direct access to a Regional activity center is designated as Regionally significant because it facilitates travel to and from a center whose service delivery area consists of greater than one County. Regional activity centers are defined as a major facility or development area that regularly attracts use by citizens from more than one County, and includes Regional malls, Regional airports, major universities, professional sports centers, etc.
2. **Designated Hurricane Evacuation Route** — Any roadway which is a hurricane evacuation route is designated as Regionally significant because of its importance in meeting the evacuation needs of the Region. Hurricane evacuation routes are those designated by County emergency management officials that have been identified with standardized statewide directional signs by FDOT, or are identified in the Regional hurricane evacuation study for the movement of persons to safety in the event of a hurricane.
3. **Florida State Highway System** — Any roadway on the state highway system is designated as Regionally significant because of the involvement of local government in land use planning and approvals, and the state for funding and access management decisions.
4. **Arterials Crossing County Lines** — Any arterial which crosses County lines is designated as Regionally significant, because the land use planning and decisions by one local government may affect the operating conditions in the adjacent County, and roadway improvements need to be coordinated to attain and maintain acceptable operating conditions.
5. **Connecting Arterials** — Any arterial which directly connects two roadways that fit into any of the above categories.

The transportation facilities on the following map are of Regional significance. The map is just an illustration and may not include all such resources or facilities.

Resources of Regional Significance: Transportation Facilities

Source: Florida Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2024.

Figure 6: List of Transportation Facilities of Regional Significance

INTERSTATES				
I-10 (SR 8)	I-95 (SR 9)	I-295 (SR 9A)		
US ROADS				
US 1 (SR 15 and SR 5)	US 301 (SR 200)	US 90 (SR 10 and SR 212)	US 17 (SR 15)	
STATE ROADS				
SR 2	SR 23	SR 111	SR 126	SR 208
SR 5	SR 23 (First Coast Outer Beltway)	SR 113	SR 128	SR 211
SR 9B	SR 26	SR 114	SR 129	SR 224
SR 10A	SR 100	SR 115	SR 134	SR 228
SR 11	SR 101	SR 115A	SR 139	SR 228
SR 13	SR 102	SR 116	SR 152	SR 230
SR 16	SR 103	SR 117	SR 202	SR 243
SR 19	SR 104	SR 121	SR 206	SR 312
SR 20	SR 105	SR 122	SR 207	SR A1A
SR 21	SR 109			
COUNTY ROADS				
CR 2	CR 105A	CR 125	CR 213	CR 304
CR 5	CR 105B	CR 127	CR 214	CR 305
CR 5A	CR 106	CR 130	CR 215	CR 305A
CR 13	CR 107	CR 139B	CR 216	CR 308
CR 13A	CR 107A	CR 163	CR 217	CR 308B
CR 13B	CR 108	CR 200A	CR 218	CR 309
CR 15A	CR 109A	CR 201	CR 219	CR 309B
CR 16A	CR 110	CR 203	CR 220	CR 309C
CR 20A	CR 115	CR 204	CR 220A	CR 309D
CR 21	CR 115A	CR 205	CR 220B	CR 310
CR 21A	CR 115C	CR 207A	CR 225	CR 311
CR 21B	CR 116	CR 208	CR 226	CR 312
CR 21D	CR 117	CR 209	CR 228	CR 315
CR 23A	CR 119	CR 209A	CR 229	CR 315C
CR 23C	CR 121	CR 209B	CR 231	CR 318
CR 23D	CR 121A	CR 210	CR 250	CR 352
CR 99	CR 122	CR 210A	CR 250A	CR 739
CR 101A	CR 123	CR 211	CR 302	CR 739B
CR 103	CR 124	CR 212		

(Note: Policy 28 defines such facilities, and this list may not be all-inclusive.)

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goal: Create efficient connectivity within the Region, and with state, national, and global economies. Include centers of population and jobs that are well-connected, limit commute times for most residents and provide opportunities for all residents of the region to work if they choose. Northeast Florida makes development of regional employment centers and infrastructure a first priority, politically and fiscally.

Goal: To promote a diversified and vibrant regional economy, the Region supports an efficient multimodal transportation framework to move people and goods. NEFRC and its partners support the infrastructure investments needed to make it work over time. The framework maintains an environment with mobility options to move goods and people to support business and industry.

OBJECTIVE: MOBILITY – PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM MOBILITY AND ACCESS

Policies

Policy 1: The Region supports strategies identified by the Regional Community Institute as they worked on First Coast Vision, including

- Reduced commute times and automobile dependence, as they provide additional opportunities for residents to engage in physical activity.
- Reduced automobile dependence through community design that encourages walking, scooters, and bicycles as transportation modes.
- Mixed-use communities that integrate residential and employment-generating land uses to reduce the need to travel great distances for work.
- Using park design and community design to ensure that recreation areas are accessible to all residents and providing mobility and programmatic options so that all residents can get to recreation areas without the use of a personal vehicle.
- Increasing the proportion of trips of less than a mile that are accomplished by walking and the proportion of trips of less than 5 miles that are accomplished by biking.

Policy 2: The Region aspires to provide the most reliable, comprehensive, and cost-effective service possible to the transportation disadvantaged. The NEFRC will use partnerships to realize Regional efficiencies, provide access to all necessary services, and increase trips that encourage social interaction.

SCP: 187.201(19)(a)

OBJECTIVE: CONNECTIVITY – MAXIMIZE THE UTILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLANNED AND CONNECTED CENTERS

OBJECTIVE: ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS: A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

OBJECTIVE: INTEGRATED PLANNING: THE LINK BETWEEN LAND USE, RESOURCES AND MOBILITY

Policy 3: NEFRC gathers best practices and connects communities with strategies and practitioners that can help address their issues within the context of the aspirational goals of First Coast Vision. Convening to share experiences and discuss solutions is an important part of this approach.

SCP: 187.201(4)F.S.

Policy 4: The Region supports strategies identified by the Regional Community Institute as they worked on First Coast Vision, including:

- Local governments as they identify areas appropriate for mixed-use development.
- Communication of the benefits of density and mixed-use development, including demonstration of property value increase.
- Emphasis on balance between individual and common spaces and the transition of densities, so that residents of the Region see the benefits, regardless of the lifestyle choices they make.
- Incentives for dense and/or mixed-use development.
- Incentives to private landowners to maintain wise forestry practices and maintain ecosystem services on their lands.
- Maintenance of a diversity of land use in the Region.
- Conservation of natural resources through public land acquisition to preserve ecosystem services.
- Reduction of impervious surfaces in the Region.
- Infill and redevelopment.
- Use of low-impact development practices.
- Balance between land use and parking policies.
- Learning from other communities and Regions.
- Sensitivity to communities in road and mobility infrastructure design.
- Communities that are planned for people first, not cars.

- Giving residents great places to walk safely. Encouraging developers and local governments to promote mixed-use communities that provide alternative forms of transportation, such as sidewalks, bike paths, and transit stops in locations with the highest density.
- Provision of reliable transit options.
- Designation of areas for *Transit Oriented Development* (TOD) and the offering of cost-effective incentives within them for development that is affordable, dense, and/or green.

SCP: 187.201(19)(a)

OBJECTIVE: IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES: FUNDING MOBILITY AND MAINTAINING CAPACITY***OBJECTIVE EDGE – MAKING FULL AND TIMELY USE OF TECHNOLOGY***

Policy 5: Northeast Florida is receptive to technology that improves the transportation system or can otherwise benefit the quality of life in the Region. If technology can help us improve the quality of life in the region, we will embrace it.

SCP: 187.201(19)(a)

OBJECTIVE: CLARITY ON THE DEFINITION OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE.

Policy 6: Regionally significant transportation facilities are those facilities used to provide transportation between municipalities located both within and outside the region and other specially designated facilities. Regional facilities and resources provide an interconnected system for the movement of people, goods, and services between the cities, counties, and states in the Region. The regional road network is comprised of connecting interstate, intrastate and U.S. highways, state and county roads, airports, ports, and train and transit facilities. In addition, regionally significant facilities include any roadway that currently or as proposed and funded provides direct access to a regional facility or resource.

SCP: 187.201(17)(a)

OBJECTIVE: CONSISTENCY WITH THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

Policy 7: NEFRC considers impacts to resources of regional significance and extra jurisdictional impacts as it reviews consistency with the SRPP. Local governments and proposers of projects should include best available data gathered using professionally acceptable methodology in support of their proposals, sufficient to determine impacts. Where mitigation is proposed, using strategies outlined in local government policies or plans, the SRPP or a combination is encouraged.

SCP: 187.201(15)(a)

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MEASURES

Travel Time Reliability in the Peak Hour	Interstate	Expressways/Freeways
North Florida TPO Performance Measure 2021	94%	94%
River to Sea TPO Performance Measure for Flagler County 2023	100%	94.6%



Regional Cultivation

REGIONAL CULTIVATION TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

This chapter is a beginning. Previous Strategic Regional Policy Plans failed to recognize that agriculture, fishing, and silviculture support the region's health, safety, economy and natural environment in a way that merits a free-standing element of the Plan. While there are strong forces supporting cultivation and related innovation in the region, it is important to recognize that the need for support and innovation in this sector is on par with other topics covered in the plan. As this is a beginning, it is not yet possible for this element to embody a vision for cultivation. Rather, it will recognize the importance of cultivation in Northeast Florida and be updated over time to reflect what approaches are appropriate here.

As noted in the analysis "Economic Contributions of Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida in 2016" dated July 31, 2018 and produced by the University of Florida/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program, Florida has approximately 4,300 square miles of croplands, orchards, and grasslands used for agricultural production, and 19,000 square miles of forests that together account for about 54% of the state's land area. That same source provides the following data regarding the employment share and value added by agriculture, natural resources and food industries in 2016.

County	Total County Jobs	Total County Value Added (M\$)	Ag-Food Industry Employment Contribution (Jobs)	Share of County Employment	Ag-Food Industry Value Added Contribution (M\$)	Share of County Value Added
Baker	9,933	537	1,660	16.7%	64	11.9%
Clay	74,260	4,838	17,075	23.0%	712	14.7%
Duval	642,065	60,407	116,057	18.1%	8,529	14.1%
Flagler	38,414	2,112	10,069	26.2%	447	21.1%
Nassau	31,162	2,139	9,848	31.6%	660	30.9%
Putnam	24,068	1,901	7,792	32.4%	740	38.9%
St. Johns	112,120	7,492	25,504	22.7%	1,428	19.1%

That publication identifies the Agriculture, Natural Resources and Food industries as the sector providing the largest percent (14.6%) of total employment in the State of Florida in 2016 and finds that sector to be tied with Health Care and Social Services at 8.8% of Value Added, exceeded only by the Real Estate and Rental industries at 14.8%. This data was included in the Northeast Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy adopted in 2019. In considering ocean jobs, a metric compiled by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management that includes the gathering of living resources and recreation, which include recreational and commercial fishing, in 2015 ocean jobs accounted for from 1 and 1.1% of all jobs in Clay and Putnam Counties, respectively, 4% in Duval County, 13.5% in St. Johns County, 13.7% in Flagler County and 18.2% in Nassau County. The estimated number and value of these jobs is listed below.

County (there are no Ocean Jobs estimates for Baker County)	Estimated Ocean Jobs in County	Estimated Wages Attributable to Ocean Jobs
Clay	463	\$30,000,000
Duval	19,020	\$644,000,000
Flagler	2,910	\$72,000,000
Nassau	3,649	\$99,000,000
Putnam	174	\$6,000,000
St. Johns	9,005	\$202,000,000

REGIONAL CULTIVATION BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Northeast Florida Regional Council held meetings to gather public input and distributed a worksheet specific to cultivation. The following basic principles emerged as key to the success of cultivation in Northeast Florida:

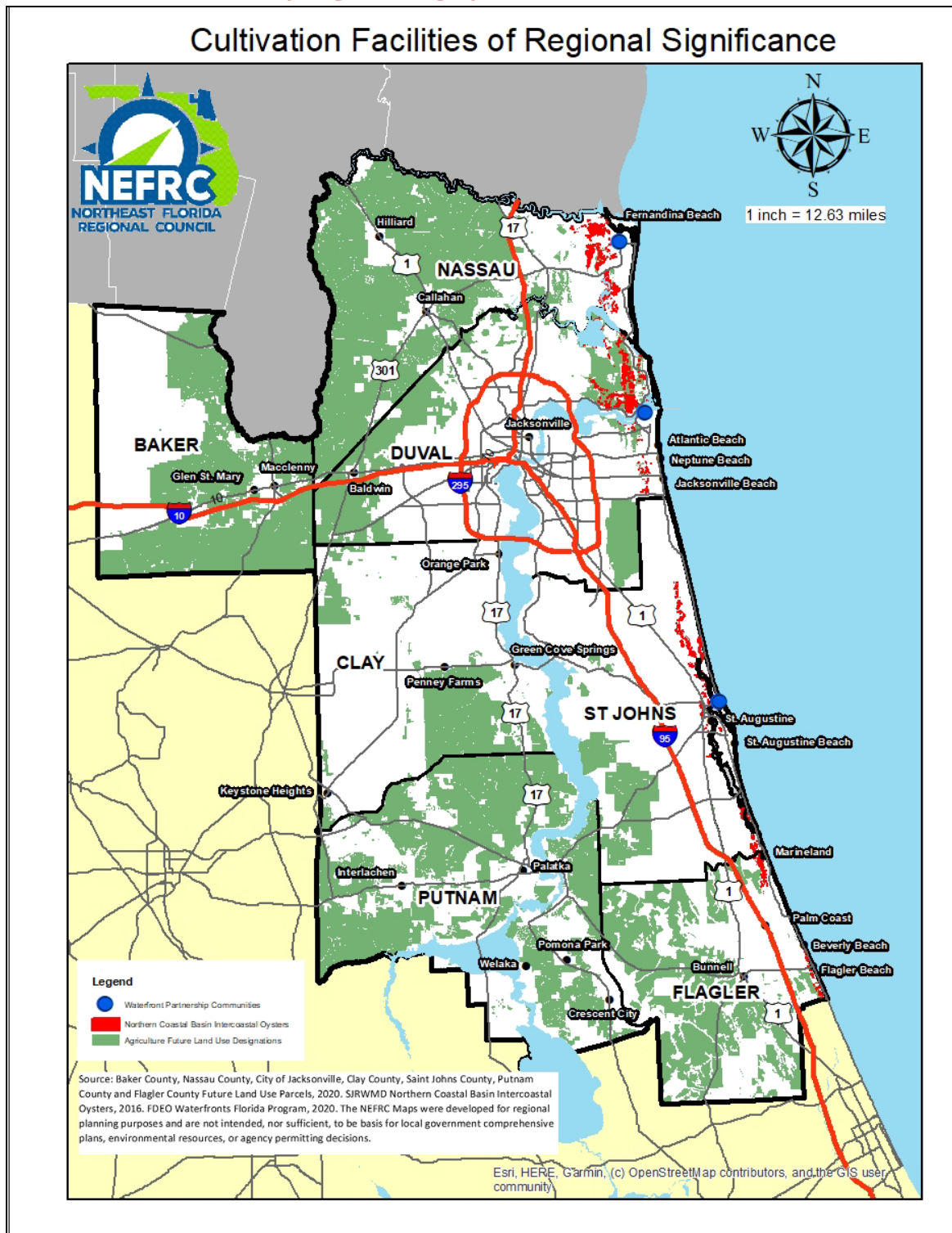
1. **Cultivation is Economic Development.** This relationship has previously been frequently missed. Cultivation must be included in economic development planning, implementation, and measures of success.
2. **Food systems are Critical Infrastructure.** Their resiliency must be considered in all aspects of planning for the region.
3. Market forces can make it difficult to keep land or assets in cultivation. **We can create new or utilize existing programs to make it easier to continue to cultivate.**
4. **Market forces can be used to make it easier to cultivate.**

A question posed while gathering community input was whether silviculture is a part of cultivation or should be addressed in the context of natural resources. As it shares with agriculture and fishing three of the basic principles listed, it was decided to include it in cultivation. It then inspired an additional basic principle:

1. **Cultivation provides ecosystem services.** Silviculture stores carbon, reducing the impact of climate change. Well-considered agriculture and fishing practices have the potential to reduce the impact of climate change while providing food.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

While cultivation may occur in any Future Land Use category, lands designated with an Agriculture Future Land Use category have been intentionally identified for such use in the long term. Waterfront Florida Partnership Program communities as designated by Florida Commerce are similarly identified as appropriate for water-related development and redevelopment. In addition, the uplands adjacent to shellfish beds have the potential to impact the regional resources that are the shellfish beds. Each of these categories of resources is of regional significance and should be considered in the context of their impact on cultivation. The map is just an illustration and may not include all such resources or facilities.

Resources of Regional Significance: Cultivation Facilities

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal: Recognize the importance of cultivation in Northeast Florida and be part of the conversation on what approaches are appropriate here and how to successfully implement them.

OBJECTIVE: CULTIVATION IS INCLUDED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND RECOGNIZED AS A KEY COMPONENT OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA'S ECONOMIC BASE.

Policies

Policy 1: Cultivation will be included in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, including approaches, projects and measures.

SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.

Policy 2: Support the existing base level of facilities and jobs and look for opportunities to increase these sectors and expand existing businesses and services.

SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.

Policy 3: Support our partners in maintaining data for the region and measure our success using this best-available data.

SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.

Policy 4: Maintain a robust cultivation research and development sector.

SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.

Policy 5: Train and retain a workforce of cultivation professionals.

SCP: 187.201(5)(c)(1)F.S.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: FOOD SYSTEMS ARE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVE: CULTIVATION, ESPECIALLY FOOD SYSTEMS, IS CONSIDERED IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, ADAPTATION, MITIGATION AND RECOVERY PLANNING.

Policy 6: NEFRC, in its planning role, shall include food systems as critical infrastructure and the resiliency of such systems as crucial to pre-and post-disaster planning and planning for the impacts of climate change.

SCP: 187.201(5)(b)(1)F.S.

Policy 7: NEFRC gathers best practices and connects communities with strategies and practitioners that can help address their issues within the context of the aspirational goals of First Coast Vision. Convening to share experiences and discuss solutions is an important part of this approach.

SCP: 187.201(4)(a)F.S.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: WE CAN CREATE NEW OR UTILIZE EXISTING PROGRAMS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE***OBJECTIVE: CONSIDER WHAT CULTIVATION-RELATED INCENTIVES ARE APPROPRIATE IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA.***

Policy 8: Explore transfer of development rights, incentivizing of easements supporting existing cultivation uses, payment for ecosystem services, and local tax abatement as ways to support on-going cultivation.

SCP; 187.201(11)(a)(1)F.S.

OBJECTIVE: CONSIDER WHAT CULTIVATION-RELATED REGULATIONS ARE APPROPRIATE IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA.

Policy 9: Explore the inclusion of growth boundaries in Comprehensive Plans.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

Policy 10: Explore local policies that discourage changes to agricultural land use.

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

Policy 11: Explore innovative land uses that encourage cultivation in the long term, such as agrihoods (neighborhoods designed around a related farm use.)

SCP: 187.201(7)(a)F.S.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: MARKET FORCES CAN BE USED TO MAKE IT EASIER TO CULTIVATE***OBJECTIVE: GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS THAT MAKE CULTIVATION MORE VIABLE.***

Policy 12: The Region recognizes Cultivation as a regional priority. It also recognizes the Tri-County Agricultural Area as a special place. This includes referencing both in Comprehensive Plans, supporting related activities by allowing the use of government facilities and assets, adding related messages to marketing efforts, and providing funding where appropriate.

SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.

Policy 13: The Region supports “Buy Local” policies and encourages government, institutions and the Military to adopt such policies.

SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.

Policy 14: Support the efforts of banks and other financial institutions that provide access to capital for cultivation businesses.

SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.

STRATEGIC ISSUE: CULTIVATION PROVIDES ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

OBJECTIVE: ESTABLISHED MEASURES THAT ALLOW THE VALUE OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN A CHANGE FROM A CULTIVATION USE IS CONSIDERED.

Policy 15: Develop metrics to address the value of ecosystem services to allow the comprehensive cost of a change in use from cultivation to another use to be considered.

SCP: 187.201(4)(b)(3)F.S.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE: CONSISTENCY WITH THE STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN.

Policy 16: NEFRC considers impacts to resources of regional significance and extra-jurisdictional impacts as it reviews consistency with the SRPP. Local governments and proposers of projects should include best available data gathered using professionally acceptable methodology in support of their proposals, sufficient to determine impacts. Where mitigation is proposed, using strategies outlined in local government policies or plans, the SRPP or a combination is encouraged.

SCP: 187.201(15)(a)

REGIONAL CULTIVATION MEASURES

Share of Regional Employment

Agricultural/Food Industry Share of Regional Employment	20.17%
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Source: Economic Contributions of Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in Florida in 2016, University of Florida/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program, Florida, 2018

Ocean Jobs

Ocean Jobs Total Wages in 2015 (does not include Baker County)	\$1,053,000,000
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Source: NOAA Office for Coastal Management

COORDINATION OUTLINE

The general scope and application of the Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) is described in 27E-5.001 F.A.C., as a coordinated process where upon collaboration and consensus among local governments, regional entities, state and federal agencies, other appropriate organizations, and the public guide the development of goals and policies to identify and resolve regional issues. To outline this process, 27E-5.004(8) F.A.C. requires an overview of the Council's cross acceptance, dispute resolution, public participation, and related regional planning and coordination activities. Before reviewing the steps taken in updating the SRPP, it may be helpful to review the role and context of Regional Planning Council functions, as included in the appendix to this document, to be reminded of how they coordinate regional activities.

UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Regional Policy Plan (SRPP) Update

The evaluation and appraisal of "Strategic Directions," the Northeast Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan, was conducted through an assessment adopted by the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) on November 7, 2024. The NEFRC based the plan on professionally acceptable data and analysis sources and methodologies, the same used pursuant to Chapter 163.3177 F.S. The NEFRC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Health Planning Council of Northeast Florida and WellFlorida Council as required by Chapter 186.507(10) F.S. Pursuant to Section 27E-5.005(2) F.A.C., and 27E-5.005(3) F.A.C., NEFRC coordinated with local governments to ensure cross-acceptance, and with regional and state agencies in both policy development and draft review of the SRPP. Pursuant to Section 27E-5.005 F.A.C., the NEFRC held one public kickoff workshop and several additional public meetings as listed below.

- **Kickoff Meeting** (October 1, 2025): A public meeting was held at NEFRC offices, along with an overview of the process for the plan update, and the start of gathering of public input. The meeting was advertised on September 18, 2025, in the Florida Administrative Register (FAR). The dates for public meetings to gather input on the draft plan were also shared at that time.
- **On-line Public Input** The public had the ability to comment on-line on plan process at www.nefrc.org, and the same webpage provided the schedule for public meetings, a way to provide input electronically and a form to provide written comments on the current plan.

- **Public Meetings**, as listed below, were held in three of the seven counties in Northeast Florida to gather public input. Meetings were geographically in the northern, central, and southern areas of Northeast Florida. Meetings were advertised pursuant to 27E-5.005(1)(b)F.A.C. and prominently advertised throughout the region in newspapers of general circulation and not placed where legal notices and classified advertisements appear. All jurisdictions and agencies were notified of each meeting pursuant to 27E-5.005(2)F.A.C.

Figure 1 – Schedule of Public Meetings

COUNTY	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	PUBLICATION AND DATE ADVERTISED (ALL MEETINGS)
Duval County Public Meeting	Wednesday, October 3, 2025	11:00 AM	Jessie Ball DuPont Center 40 E. Adams Street, Room 202 Jacksonville, FL 32202	• FAR: ID # 29992902 September 18, 2025 • Baker County Press September 18, 2025 • Clay Today September 18, 2025 • Fernandina Beach News Leader September 19, 2025 • Florida Times Union September 19, 2025 • Flagler/Palm Coast News Tribune September 24, 2025 • Palatka Daily News September 18, 2025 • St. Augustine Record September 19, 2025
St. Johns County Public Meeting	October 7, 2025	11:00 AM	St. Johns County Administration Building 200 San Sebastian View St. Augustine, FL 32084	
Nassau County Public Meeting	October 9, 2025	11:00 AM	Nassau County Board of County Commissioners 96135 Nassau Place Yulee, Florida 32907	

- **NEFRC Board: Discussion** of proposed changes to the Plan, at public meetings on November 7, 2024, January 9, 2025, February 6, 2025, September 4, 2025, November 6, 2025, and February 5, 2026.

- **Incorporation of Input** (December 2024 to November 2025): NEFRC staff reviews and incorporates input from all sources into a draft update to the SRPP.
- **Local Government and Public Review of Draft Update to the SRPP** (November 6, 2025): NEFRC Board approves release of the Draft Update SRPP on November 6, 2025. The draft was posted on www.nefrc.org. All local governments in the Region were provided with a link to the Draft Update plan in November.
- **Proposed SRPP Release to the State** (November 6, 2025): The NEFRC Board authorized release of the Proposed SRPP on November 6, 2025. The Proposed SRPP was sent to all local governments and reviewing agencies (Department of Economic Opportunity, Department of Health, Department of Children and Families, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of State, Department of Transportation, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, adjacent Regional Planning Councils, Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Water Management Districts within the NEFRC's boundary, pursuant to 27E-5.006(1)(a)F.A.C.) on November 14, 2025.
- **Proposed SRPP Review** (November 14, 2025): The NEFRC emailed a copy of the Plan to the Executive Office of the Governor who had 60 days to review from date of receipt. Other state reviewing agencies noted above had 30 days to provide comments to the Office of the Governor. No comments were received from state or regional review agencies. It was understood that the Office of the Governor may issue a "State Findings and Recommendation Report" with suggested revisions consistent with the State Comprehensive Plan. None was received. Concurrent with the submittal to the State, NEFRC submitted a copy of the SRPP to all county and municipal governments within the Region pursuant to 27E-5.006(2)F.A.C. This submission included the cover letter required by 27E-5.006(2)(a) and (b)F.A.C. Local governments had 30 days to provide comments to the Executive Office of the Governor, and 60 days to provide comments to the NEFRC. Comments were received from the City of Jacksonville and St. Johns County. A copy of the SRPP was provided to each Regional Library, pursuant to 27E-5.006(2)(b)F.A.C.
- **Incorporation of Input** (December 2025 and January 2026): NEFRC staff incorporated input into the SRPP as appropriate.
- **Formal Adoption**: Within 90 days of the end of the 60-day comment period, NEFRC Board of Directors noticed and conducted rulemaking to adopt the SRPP pursuant to "Rule Adoption and Procedures" (120-54 F.S.). The NEFRC adopted the Proposed Rule Amendment on February 5, 2026. A Proposed Rule Amendment was filed with the Department of State on April 3, 2026, for rule adoption. The Department of State will determine the effective date.

- **Final SRPP Submission:** Within 30 days of rule adoption, NEFRC re-submitted the amended SRPP to state reviewing agencies and the Governor’s Office. The plan was also submitted to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate.

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Apalachee • Central Florida
East Central Florida • North Central Florida
Northeast Florida • South Florida • Southwest Florida
Tampa Bay • Treasure Coast • West Florida • Withlacoochee

104 West Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301-1713 • 850.224.3427

Regional Planning Council Functions and Programs

March 4, 2011

- **Economic Development Districts:** Regional planning councils are designated as Economic Development Districts by the U. S. Economic Development Administration. From January 2003 to August 2010, the U. S. Economic Development Administration invested \$66 million in 60 projects in the State of Florida to create/retain 13,700 jobs and leverage \$1 billion in private capital investment. Regional planning councils provide technical support to businesses and economic developers to promote regional job creation strategies.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Statewide Regional Evacuation:** Regional planning councils have special expertise in emergency planning and were the first in the nation to prepare a Statewide Regional Evacuation Study using a uniform report format and transportation evacuation modeling program. Regional planning councils have been preparing regional evacuation plans since 1981. Products in addition to evacuation studies include Post Disaster Redevelopment Plans, Hazard Mitigation Plans, Continuity of Operations Plans and Business Disaster Planning Kits.
- **Local Emergency Planning:** Local Emergency Planning Committees are staffed by regional planning councils and provide a direct relationship between the State and local businesses. Regional planning councils provide thousands of hours of training to local first responders annually. Local businesses have developed a trusted working relationship with regional planning council staff.
- **Homeland Security:** Regional planning council staff is a source of low cost, high quality planning and training experts that support counties and State agencies when developing a training course or exercise. Regional planning councils provide cost effective training to first responders, both public and private, in the areas of Hazardous Materials, Hazardous Waste, Incident Command, Disaster Response, Pre- and Post-Disaster Planning, Continuity of Operations and Governance. Several regional planning councils house Regional Domestic Security Task Force planners.
- **Multipurpose Regional Organizations:** Regional planning councils are Florida's only multipurpose regional entities that plan for and coordinate intergovernmental solutions on multi-jurisdictional issues, support regional economic development and provide assistance to local governments.
- **Problem Solving Forum:** Issues of major importance are often the subject of regional planning council-sponsored workshops. Regional planning councils have convened regional summits and workshops on issues such as workforce housing, response to hurricanes, visioning and job creation.
- **Implementation of Community Planning:** Regional planning councils develop and maintain Strategic Regional Policy Plans to guide growth and development focusing on economic development, emergency preparedness, transportation, affordable housing and resources of regional significance. In addition, regional planning councils provide coordination and review of various programs such as Local Government Comprehensive Plans, Developments of Regional Impact and Power Plant Ten-year Siting Plans. Regional planning council reviewers have the local knowledge to conduct reviews efficiently and provide State agencies reliable local insight.

- **Local Government Assistance:** Regional planning councils are also a significant source of cost effective, high quality planning experts for communities, providing technical assistance in areas such as: grant writing, mapping, community planning, plan review, procurement, dispute resolution, economic development, marketing, statistical analysis, and information technology. Several regional planning councils provide staff for transportation planning organizations, natural resource planning and emergency preparedness planning.
- **Return on Investment:** Every dollar invested by the State through annual appropriation in regional planning councils generates 11 dollars in local, federal and private direct investment to meet regional needs.
- **Quality Communities Generate Economic Development:** Businesses and individuals choose locations based on the quality of life they offer. Regional planning councils help regions compete nationally and globally for investment and skilled personnel.
- **Multidisciplinary Viewpoint:** Regional planning councils provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary view of issues and a forum to address regional issues cooperatively. Potential impacts on the community from development activities are vetted to achieve win-win solutions as council members represent business, government and citizen interests.
- **Coordinators and Conveners:** Regional planning councils provide a forum for regional collaboration to solve problems and reduce costly inter-jurisdictional disputes.
- **Federal Consistency Review:** Regional planning councils provide required Federal Consistency Review, ensuring access to hundreds of millions of federal infrastructure and economic development investment dollars annually.
- **Economies of Scale:** Regional planning councils provide a cost-effective source of technical assistance to local governments, small businesses and non-profits.
- **Regional Approach:** Cost savings are realized in transportation, land use and infrastructure when addressed regionally. A regional approach promotes vibrant economies while reducing unproductive competition among local communities.
- **Sustainable Communities:** Federal funding is targeted to regions that can demonstrate they have a strong framework for regional cooperation.
- **Economic Data and Analysis:** Regional planning councils are equipped with state of the art econometric software and have the ability to provide objective economic analysis on policy and investment decisions.
- **Small Quantity Hazardous Waste Generators:** The Small Quantity Generator program ensures the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste generated at the county level. Often smaller counties cannot afford to maintain a program without imposing large fees on local businesses. Many counties have lowered or eliminated fees, because regional planning council programs realize economies of scale, provide businesses a local contact regarding compliance questions and assistance and provide training and information regarding management of hazardous waste.
- **Regional Visioning and Strategic Planning:** Regional planning councils are conveners of regional visions that link economic development, infrastructure, environment, land use and transportation into long term investment plans. Strategic planning for communities and organizations defines actions critical to successful change and resource investments.
- **Geographic Information Systems and Data Clearinghouse:** Regional planning councils are leaders in geographic information systems mapping and data support systems. Many local governments rely on regional planning councils for these services.