Hundreds of new residents come to north central Florida each year, joining the quarter of a million people already enjoying the region's 7,000 square miles of rolling meadows, woodlands, spring-fed streams, marshy Gulf shore and busy communities.

Preserving the area's natural advantages while meeting all the needs of a growing population for jobs, homes and services is a major concern of the local governments working together in the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

The Council's planning and program activities in 1977 are outlined in this Annual Report.
council is representative of region's population

Gainesville
B. Harold Farmer
* Aaron Green
William Howard
Gary Junior
Sidney Knight
*Bobbie Lisle
* Joseph Little
Gary McClain

Starke
*Harold Epps

COLUMBIA COUNTY
Wayne Nettles
*James Montgomery

Lake City
Elizina Jenkins
*Paul Roy

HAMILTON COUNTY
*L. A. Edenhild

LAFAYETTE COUNTY
*Paul Trawick

MADISON COUNTY
Albert Kelley

Madison
*Frank Merritt

SUVANNEE COUNTY
*Jerry Scarborough

Live Oak
Rev. Ellis Fann
*S. T. McDowell

TAYLOR COUNTY
Snirley Curry
*Samuel Osteen

Perry
T. Andy Bowdoin

UNION COUNTY
*Paul Riherd

BRADFORD COUNTY
Alachua

*E. W. Hodges
*Robert L. Scott

ALACHUA COUNTY
*Thomas Coward
*Jack Durrance
Perry McGriff, Jr.
Wilson Robinson
Edwin B. Turlington
*Jonathan F. Wershow

High Springs
Cleve A. Blanton

Micanopy
William Proctor

Madison

*Glenn DuBois

**Executive Committeeman

Executive Committeeman

** Secretary-Treasurer

** Chairmen

** Vice Chairmen

** Board of Directors
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A recommendation urging local governments to discourage the development of new communities is part of the regional land use plan drafted by the Council in 1977.

Coordinated with a natural resources study and a survey of significant natural areas, the plan suggests policies for accommodating expected growth in and around existing urban areas while still maintaining the integrity of the region's natural systems and prime agricultural lands.

Housing Blueprint

Three-year and ten-year numerical goals for subsidized housing units in each county have been set in a regional housing plan also drafted in 1977.

Projections are based on a housing market analysis for each county which compared the income of families seeking homes with the cost of available shelter. The plan can be used to determine each county's fair share of housing assistance in the future.

More Local Authority Asked

At the state's request, the Council has reviewed all 16 proposed elements of the state comprehensive plan during the past two years. In commenting on two of the final six elements reviewed in 1977, the Council asked the state to give local governments a more active role in employment/manpower and water planning.
region in line for more jobs, more money

More than a year's effort by the Council has made it easier for local governments in the region to receive millions of dollars from the federal Economic Development Administration.

To bring about designation of the region as an Economic Development District (EDD) and thus give area counties and cities an advantage in receiving economic development grants, the Council:

- added seven new minority members from four counties and three cities to give more equitable representation to the region's black population;
- prepared an Overall Economic Development Program assessing the region's problems and opportunities and identifying specific programs the counties and cities would like to undertake.

The first monetary result of the long effort was a $45,000 planning grant awarded to the Council to provide technical assistance to local governments seeking economic development funds.

Public Works

In a separate program unrelated to EDD designation, 19 projects in 11 counties and cities were funded in 1977 in two Public Works Act allocations totalling $9,275,000. The money financed projects in Alachua, Columbia, Dixie and Suwannee Counties and in the Cities of Alachua, Gainesville, Hawthorne, High Springs, Lake City, Live Oak and Micanopy.
Protection of the region's natural resources and systems from destructive alteration by uncontrolled development is one of the Council's continuing concerns.

Major results of environmental work during 1977 were a natural resources study and a survey of significant natural areas in the region. The documents will serve as guides to local officials and citizens making decisions about land use and growth.

The study points out that environment should be a primary, not an incidental, concern in all land use planning because human well-being and a high standard of living depend heavily on the wise use of resources.

The natural areas survey recommends the preservation and protection of nine major areas of regional significance and seven of county importance including several rivers, swamps, sinks, springs and marshes.

Water Protection

A number of efforts in 1977 focused specifically on protection of the water supply:

- Officials from local governments along the Suwannee are working to form a committee within the Council to develop a river management program emphasizing local control of development;
- A regional water supply authority was proposed as a means of giving local officials control over removal of water from the region for transport to other areas of the state;
- Responsibility for water quality planning in the...
region was retained by the state Department of Environmental Regulation when lack of federal funds led the Governor to take no action on a Council petition for designation as water quality planning agency.

Solid Waste Management

State action on designation of the Council as a solid waste management agency is apparently awaiting spring publication of federal guidelines. Meanwhile, a change in state law has removed the responsibility from most cities and counties to develop solid waste plans of their own. Only Alachua County in this region must still adopt such a plan by mid-1979.

Coastal Zone Planning

Concerned that local governments and citizen advisory committees would lose control over development policies in the coastal zone, the Council objected to changes proposed in the program by the state. As the year ended, the objectionable changes were still part of the program being prepared for consideration by the Governor and Legislature. However, Councils in all coastal areas were assured that local governments and citizens will still be consulted.

In this region, Dixie and Taylor Counties lie in the coastal zone. Studies by the Council have urged protection of their "generally excellent" environment.
Local governments and others in the region asked for six times more federal money for projects and programs in fiscal 1977 than they did in fiscal 1976: more than $181,000,000 compared with $28,000,000.

The Council's Clearinghouse Committee reviews all applications for federal funds and comments favorably or unfavorably according to several criteria:

- consistency with area plans and programs
- significant duplication or conflict with other projects
- effect on people in the immediate area and adjacent jurisdictions

A total of 286 applications passed through the Clearinghouse, compared with 164 in fiscal 1976.

The largest single group of project reviews resulted from the Public Works Act. Sixty-three applications from cities, counties, school boards, the state and special units of local government requested more than $27,000,000.

Other major categories were applications to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Reviews for the State

The committee also reviewed the final six elements of the state's proposed comprehensive plan, recommending changes in two of them to provide more local involvement.

Under its state mandate to review Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), the committee commented favorably on the University of Florida's application for a mass seating facility. The group also studied an impact assessment handbook prepared for the state Bureau of Coastal Zone Planning with the idea of using some of its methods in DRI reviews.

Local Plans

Completed elements of local comprehensive plans for Alachua County, Hawthorne and Starke also went through Clearinghouse review.
Faced with a 1979 state-imposed deadline for developing comprehensive plans to guide their future growth, cities and counties continue to contract with the Planning Council for most of the work.

Nine contracts for various elements of local plans were completed in 1977 and 15 new ones have been signed with a dollar value more than double the previous total. The larger workload made it necessary to increase the Council's local planning assistance staff.

Some cities and counties can now get a little financial help from the state thanks to the 1977 Legislature's appropriation of some money to pay for comprehensive plan work. Of 24 local governments in this region which applied, six were awarded grants totalling $56,189 for 1978 contract work.

Block Grants

Seven of twelve local governments invited to submit final applications for federal community development block grants in 1977 asked for Council assistance. The combined total of the 12 applications came to $3,063,000 in federal funds.

Special Assistance

In addition to contract and block grant work, the Council local planning staff also provided technical advice and assistance on a variety of matters to the Columbia County Planning Board in 1977. General advice and help on state and federal grants was given through the year to most cities and counties in the region.
The first update has begun on the long-range Gainesville Urban Area Transportation Study (GUATS) plan which was adopted in 1976 and amended in 1977 to reflect the concerns of local citizens.

Target year for the update is 2005.

Work toward formation of a Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO) continues. City and county commissioners will sit as the only voting members of the MTPO, replacing the existing GUATS Policy Committee in which planners and state transportation officials also have votes.

Urban Transit

Results of a study of alternatives for future Alachua County transit operations and of a minibus system analysis will be included in a five-year transit development plan.

Rural Service

A study now underway will help qualify the region for federal funds to buy special busses for transporting the rural elderly and handicapped. It will also recommend routes and equipment needed to serve all rural residents. The study is expected to become the first element in a regional transportation plan.

The Rural Transit Needs Committee, composed of five elected officials, adopted goals and objectives to be included in the study. They considered information provided by the technical experts and private citizens of the Rural Transit Advisory Committee.
Change and uncertainty marked criminal justice efforts in 1977 as the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), which finances criminal justice activity, faced possible reorganization.

The region's planning and block grant funds were cut and a guaranteed annual allocation for Alachua County also stopped when the county was taken off the list of High Crime Incidence (HCI) areas. Officials hailed the lower crime rate but also pointed out that population requirements for HCI designation were raised.

The regional criminal justice plan for 1978 was revised when LEAA funds for the coming year were cut 16 per cent.

More money was allocated, however, for juvenile justice projects. Two major ones in this region are Quiet Thunder Day Camp in Bradford County and Big Brothers-Big Sisters in Alachua County.

Another major project, to be financed by a three-year LEAA grant, is construction of permanent facilities for the Regional Police Training Program at Santa Fe Community College.

Police communications improvements received a boost in 1977 with the release of $60,000 in residual funds for projects in Alachua, Dixie, Madison and Taylor Counties.

Priorities for spending LEAA money are recommended to the Council by the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, which expanded during 1977 from 19 to 25 members. Representatives from the courts, police, corrections and the public serve on the committee.
While the general public is always welcome at all Planning Council meetings and announced public hearings, members of the Council depend for regular, continuing advice on a special group of informed citizens.

The fifteen members of the Citizen Participation Committee (CPC), representing the people of the region, study all the Council's plans and programs, meeting quarterly to make comments and recommendations.

In the past year, the CPC conducted in-depth reviews of the four new regional reports drafted by the Council on land use, housing, natural resources and areas of natural significance. Their suggestions, representing the interests and opinions of private citizens, were incorporated in the final reports.

Taking Initiative

The CPC also investigates certain problems on its own. During the drought in 1977, the committee learned that farmers seeking aid were getting a slow response from the federal government. Hoping to speed up the process and ease the farmer's plight, the CPC asked the Council chairman to seek action from the area's Congressional delegation.

Specialized Interests

In addition to the CPC, which concerns itself with all Council work, five other committees make recommendations and review programs in specific areas.

These are the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee, the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Gainesville Urban Area Transportation Study, the Rural Transit Advisory Committee and Coastal Zone Advisory Committees in Taylor and Dixie Counties.
council publication

wins national award

A special newsletter explaining the relationship of the Council with local and state governments won a first place award in May from the National Association of Regional Councils.

Entered in the special publications category, the report entitled "Planning Councils Help" was judged best among all those submitted by Councils throughout the country.

Other publications during the past year included four regular newsletters, a special report "To Improve Our Quality Of Living" explaining goals and objectives of a regional comprehensive plan, and the annual report of the Gainesville Urban Area Transportation Study.

Face-to-Face

The Council staff was available throughout the year to speak on plans and programs before interested civic and advisory groups, amplifying their talks with slide shows, maps and charts.
what 1978 holds for the council

Rural Development

A proposed new Council program in Rural Development would include three related tasks for areas with populations under 10,000:

1. Working with local governments in the Suwannee and Santa Fe River basins to develop consistent zoning and subdivision regulations and other policies to protect the river resources.

2. Coordinating the needs and priorities of rural local governments with existing programs through which they might be financed.

3. Providing technical assistance with grant applications.

To date, the federally-funded programs of the Council have been concerned mostly with planning. The Rural Development effort would help put plans into effect.

Capital Improvement

A short-range inventory of all regionally significant projects proposed in every north central Florida city and county will be the first step in the Council's Capital Improvements Program.

Priorities will then be assigned to each project according to its importance to the region as determined from the regional comprehensive plan.

The program will show local governments exactly what they and their neighbors will be doing in the near future in the way of capital improvements and how the projects of other jurisdictions will affect their own.
Comprehensive Plan

The Regional Comprehensive Plan, a guide for the overall development of north central Florida, will be completed in the coming year.

It will include all Council goals and objectives for the region as well as policies by which these can be achieved.

As a way of monitoring progress or spotting new problems as they arise, the plan will include indicators of the quality of life in the region. Changes in these indicators, both environmental and social, will show over a period of time exactly what’s happening as a result of plans and policies being put into effect.

The ultimate goal of regional planning is to achieve an excellent quality of life for all residents.

Energy

Since federal money has now become available for energy programs, the Council expects to begin assisting the Regional Energy Action Committee with its work.

Serving as a data bank on energy, the Council will try to keep the public informed on conservation and other energy-related topics.

Personnel Policy

A number of local governments have already shown interest in a Personnel Policy Program the Council expects to begin in April.

Concerned mainly with plans for equal employment and affirmative action, the program will provide cities and counties with technical assistance from the Council in reviewing their present personnel regulations with an eye toward improvement.
council receives broad-based support

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<tr>
<th>1976-77</th>
<th>REVENUES</th>
<th>($ 460,355)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal (HUD and DOT)</td>
<td>$ 87,227 (19.0 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (including federal pass-through)</td>
<td>169,158 (36.7 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members’ 25 cents per capita contributions</td>
<td>60,080 (13.0 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contracts for Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alachua County</td>
<td>17,122 ( 3.7 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bradford County</td>
<td>8,190 ( 1.8 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbia County</td>
<td>8,054 ( 1.7 %)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton County</td>
<td>11,589 ( 2.5 %)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette County</td>
<td>9,285 ( 2.0 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison County</td>
<td>1,836 ( 0.4 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor County</td>
<td>5,341 ( 1.2 %)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Cross City</td>
<td>1,801 ( 0.4 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Gainesville</td>
<td>6,000 ( 1.3 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Hawthorne</td>
<td>23,927 ( 5.2 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of High Springs</td>
<td>5,500 ( 1.2 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town of Jennings</td>
<td>1,500 ( 0.3 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Madison</td>
<td>5,286 ( 1.1 %)</td>
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<td>Town of Micanopy</td>
<td>3,500 ( 0.8 %)</td>
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<td>City of Starke</td>
<td>5,135 ( 1.1 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCF Health Planning Council, Inc.</td>
<td>24,293 ( 5.3 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,531 ( 1.2 %)</td>
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<tr>
<th>1976-77</th>
<th>ACTUAL EXPENDITURES</th>
<th>($ 453,671)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Planning and Reviews</td>
<td>$172,028 (37.9 %)</td>
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<td>Local Planning Assistance</td>
<td>107,519 (23.7 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GUATS (Transportation Study)</td>
<td>53,981 (11.9 %)</td>
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<td>Other Transportation</td>
<td>38,675 ( 8.5 %)</td>
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<td>Criminal Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services to Health Planning Council</td>
<td>24,293 ( 5.4 %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12,096 ( 2.7 %)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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FINANCIAL REPORT
north central florida regional planning council
2002 n.w. thirteenth street, suite 202
gainesville, florida 32601