Cover and inside back cover photo: Florida Photographer Jeffrey Lotz explores North Central Florida and its environment by combining multiple images.

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LETTER TO OUR CITIZENS

It is my pleasure to present the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council's 1985 Annual Report. New projects and responsibilities accounted for much of the effort expended by the Council during the past year, but ongoing programs continued to be among the most important to our member local governments.

In 1985, the Council stepped-up its already active role in the statewide effort to address growth management by beginning the development of a regional plan. Each regional planning council must adopt a Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan to present to the Governor's Office in December, 1986, and subsequently to the Legislature for the 1987 session.

Presently, the Council is at about the mid-point in the production of the plan for North Central Florida.

With respect to our more traditional activities, the Council continued to be dedicated to the improvement and protection of the Region's environment and lifestyle by providing valuable technical assistance to local governments, businesses, and citizens. Of particular importance has been our work in economic development, job training, and planning for hurricane evacuation and the handling of hazardous waste in the Region. These along with other programs and projects in which the Council was actively involved are described on the following pages.

On behalf of the Council, I want to thank member local governments, representatives, citizens, and staff for their continued cooperation and support. Your interest and participation are the keys to our meeting the challenges of the future.

Sincerely,

Bob Milner
Chairman
The North Central Florida Planning Region covers eleven counties in north Florida and 7,000 square miles. Within this area, there are 33 incorporated municipalities and 335,121 people. In 1985, the communities ranged in size from 162 to more than 82,000 residents. The Region is unique in its abundant natural resources, including the world famous Suwannee River, the marshes of the Gulf Coast, cypress swamps, oak and pine forests, and clear turquoise springs.

Two scenes, the coastal marsh and canoeing on the Santa Fe River, are representative of the Region's natural beauty.
The Council is a voluntary association of 24 local governments including all eleven of the Region's counties and thirteen of the most populous municipalities. Florida's Governor appoints one-third of the 54 representatives with the local government members appointing the remaining representatives. Two-thirds of the representatives must be elected local officials.

The Council representatives, actively participating through a Board of Directors and numerous committees, guide, develop, and implement areawide policies and programs. The Council also serves as a forum for coordination and review of Federal, State, local, private planning and development programs and activities affecting the Region.

In addition to being designated as the Comprehensive Planning Agency for the Region and accepting responsibility for certain Federal and State-mandated coordination and review activities, the Council provides services directly benefiting local governments. These services include: technical planning assistance, grant and loan planning assistance, transportation planning, personnel and management assistance, and economic development activities.
Planning on a regional basis has become crucial to Florida as the State continues to sustain a high rate of growth. This growth frequently impacts more than one local governmental jurisdiction, requiring regional cooperation and planning. Being situated between State and local governments, the Council is in a unique position to coordinate the development and implementation of strategies to solve the growth dilemma.

Growth Management

During 1985, growth management continued to be an issue of statewide concern. In response to the tremendous growth rate in Florida and diminishing natural resources, the State Legislature designated growth management as the most critical problem facing Florida over the next few decades. The goal is to manage growth rationally, with well-planned development while protecting our State's natural resources.

1985 Growth Management

The 1985 Legislature passed House Bill 287 which amended most of the growth management legislation enacted during the 1970's, including the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act and the Developments of Regional Impact Legislation. Part of this bill also established the Coastal Zone Protection Act which establishes minimum requirements for construction within coastal areas of the State.

These actions were taken to eliminate loopholes and to generally correct deficiencies found in the earlier acts. Some of the more significant changes include a requirement that local governments adopt regulations to implement their adopted plans, the granting of State approval authority over local plans with a requirement that local plans be consistent with both State and Regional Plans, and expanding the ability of citizens and affected local governments to become involved in the local planning process.

The 1985 legislation also adopted, for the first time in Florida's history, a State Comprehensive Plan. The plan was prepared as a result of legislation passed by the 1984 Legislature which requires the preparation of a State Comprehensive Plan, State Agency Functional Plans, and Comprehensive Regional Policy Plans by each of the eleven regional planning councils located within the State. All of the State Agency Functional Plans and the Comprehensive Regional Policy Plans must be completed during 1986.
Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan

Responding to the 1984 legislation with financial assistance provided by the State, the Council began preparation of a Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan for the North Central Florida Region.

In accordance with the rules adopted by the Governor's Office in December regarding the format and content of the Regional Plan, Council staff are conducting background research on 75 Policy Clusters/Regional Issues that the Governor's Office identified in the State Comprehensive Plan. The Regional Planning Committee has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing the preparation of the Regional Plan.

The plan will consist of a number of elements including a Regional Description Element, a Goals, Policies, and Standards Element, and an Implementation Element which will include a growth management guide, an intergovernmental coordination section, and an on-going planning component. On completion, the plan will be sent to the Governor's Office for review and comment and then submitted for consideration by the 1987 Legislature.

Coastal Hazard Mitigation and Resource Protection

With financial assistance provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation through the Coastal Zone Management Program, the Council has prepared management plans for areas within the Region that are vulnerable to the hurricane surge and freshwater flooding, and also for natural areas considered to be of regional significance. This rather lengthy study includes a detailed description of over 50 regionally significant areas and includes a brief summary of existing State and local laws which could be applied to insuring the proper development and protection of these resources. The study concludes with an evaluation of the fiscal impact on local governments for those areas recommended for public acquisition.

Hurricane surge, freshwater flooding, and regionally significant natural areas were the focus of the Coastal Hazard Mitigation and Resource Protection Study prepared by the Council in 1985.
Hurricane Evacuation and Inland Shelter Study

The State of Florida is the most hurricane-prone state in the nation. Therefore, in conjunction with a statewide program administered by the Department of Community Affairs, the Council completed a technical data report and individual county guides for the two coastal counties included in the Region, Dixie and Taylor Counties. The purpose of the study and the guides is to coordinate the evacuation and sheltering of threatened residents in the event of a hurricane emergency. Inland shelter studies were prepared for the remaining nine inland counties during 1984. The purpose of this study was to insure the adequate provision of facilities to accommodate residents fleeing the coastal areas in the event of a hurricane.

Regional Hazardous Waste Assessment Program

Started in the fall of 1985, the Council will conclude the regional hazardous waste assessment by the end of 1986. A survey is presently being conducted of all potential generators of hazardous waste within the Region identifying the types and amounts of hazardous waste generated and the management practices used in its disposal.

The results of the study will allow an assessment of the extent of the problem of hazardous waste disposal within the Region and provide the basis for determining the need for the location of hazardous waste transfer or treatment centers within the Region. The Council is conducting local hazardous waste assessments for ten of the eleven counties, with Alachua County having previously completed its assessment utilizing local funds. Also included in this program is the identification of abandoned dump sites, the evaluation of procedures at existing land fills with regard to the handling of hazardous waste, and the designation of local and regional sites for the possible future location of a hazardous waste transfer or treatment facility.
One of the ways the Council implements regional plans is through several review responsibilities. The Governor has designated the Council as the Areawide Clearinghouse for all Federally-funded projects that affect the Region, and the Council undertakes several other review activities as a result of State mandate.

The Council's Clearinghouse Committee is responsible for these review activities. In 1985, the Committee conducted a review of forty different projects submitted by both private developers and units of local governments. These included the following:

- Review of Applications for Federal Assistance (Executive Order 12372)
- Florida Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) Reviews
- Local Comprehensive Plans and Plan Amendments
- Review of Local Emergency Management Plans
- Ten-Year Site Plans of Major Electric Utilities
- Environmental Impact Statements, Environmental Assessments, and Permit Requests to the Army Corps of Engineers
- Review of Other Agency Plans, Projects, and Rules

The Clearinghouse Committee reviews these projects to: (1) insure coordination and consistency with local and regional plans; (2) avoid duplication or conflict with other local or area projects; (3) offer suggestions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these proposed projects with other area programs and projects.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

The Council offers local government assistance services to member governments which do not have available staff or expertise for certain activities. In 1985, the Council assisted local governments to realize more than $3.2 million for community and economic development projects throughout the Region.

Community Development Block Grants

In 1983, the State of Florida assumed the responsibility of administering the Community Development Block Grant Program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The State agency responsible for this program is the Department of Community Affairs.

The Council assisted local governments in submitting 8 applications in 1985, of which 6 addressed the need for improvements of public facilities, such as roads, water, sewer, and drainage facilities in low- and moderate-income areas. Of the two remaining applications, one involved housing rehabilitation activities and one was submitted for the purpose of promoting economic development. Total funding granted for these projects was $2.84 million with an additional $1.15 million presently under appeal to the Department of Community Affairs.

Applications were prepared in 1985 for the following communities:

- Columbia County
- City of High Springs
- City of Lake City
- City of Live Oak
- City of Madison
- City of Perry
- City of Waldo

In addition to application assistance, the Council initiated administrative work on previously funded grants for Suwannee County and the municipalities of Cross City, Live Oak and Perry and provided community development assistance to several other communities.
The Cities of Perry and Live Oak are presently using Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program money to construct facilities much like the recently completed Lake City project.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Program

In 1985, the Council submitted Land and Water Conservation Fund applications amounting to more than $266,000 to the Florida Department of Natural Resources to finance the construction of municipal swimming pools for the Cities of Live Oak and Perry. In addition, assistance was also provided to the City of Alachua in the preparation of an application for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to purchase an improved recreation site.

Florida Community Services Trust Fund Program

In July 1985, the Council submitted a Florida Community Services Trust Fund application for the City of High Springs. Funds were granted to continue renovation of its community service center, enabling the City to utilize the building for office space for social service organizations.

Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program

This year the Council also submitted Florida Recreation Development Assistance applications totaling more than $106,000 to the Florida Department of Natural Resources for Gilchrist County and the City of Madison. The purpose of these applications was to develop resource-based park facilities for community use.
Since the Federal Economic Development Administration designated the Region as an Economic Development District in 1978, the Council has continued to maintain a high level of involvement in providing technical assistance to local governments, businesses, industries, and citizens in order to promote rational economic growth.

The Council annually updates an Overall Economic Development Program, which provides general guidance for economic development planning activities in the Region.

Two programs, the North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc., and the Job Training Partnership Act Program, facilitate the improvement of the Region's economic environment.

Areawide Development Company

In cooperation with regional businesses, financial institutions, and community organizations, the Council was instrumental in creating the North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc. in 1983 as a non-profit corporation.

The Areawide Development Company is certified by the Small Business Administration to operate as a "503" Certified Development Company to provide subordinated mortgage financing to eligible small commercial and industrial businesses in the area. The typical financing structure is as follows:

- 50% - Local financial institution (1st mortgage)
- 40% - Areawide Development Company, loan guaranteed by SBA (2nd mortgage)
- 10% - Small business' cash contribution

The major purpose of the 503 program is to assist communities to create jobs and expand local tax bases by stimulating small business investment in physical plant improvements and expansions. To verify the project will make a substantial economic development impact on the community, the program generally requires that one job be created or retained for every $15,000 of guaranteed loan money.

Combining the incentives of long-term (15-20 years), low down payment (10%), and reasonable interest rates (near long-term Treasury bond rates), the 503 program is one of the most attractive and effective economic development tools available today.
The Job Training Program continues to provide area citizens with the skills needed to compete in today’s job market.

Job Training Partnership Act Program

In 1985, the Job Training Partnership Act program, administered by the Council throughout the Region, continued to assist economically disadvantaged persons in obtaining unsubsidized gainful employment, stressing a partnership between private business and public sectors in training individuals for permanent positions. These two entities are the Private Industry Council, consisting of representatives from the Region’s businesses, and the Consortium of County Commission Chairmen from the Region.

The Council provides professional staff services for administering and coordinating the Job Training Program in the entire Region. The Region is subdivided into four areas in which the actual applicant screening, training, and job placement is carried out. The Council subcontracts with the Job Service of Florida (Gainesville, Lake City, and Perry Offices), the Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc., and the Alachua County School Board to carry out the job training activities.

The job training services provided by the Job Training Program include the following:

- Classroom Training
- On-the-Job Training
- Work Experience

During Program Year 1984 (July 1, 1984 to June 30, 1985), a total of 644 participants in the Region were served by the Job Training Program with 498 terminating. Of those, 78.3% (390) obtained unsubsidized employment. In addition, 719 individuals were served through the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program.
TRANSPORTATION GOAL:
YEAR 2005
GAINESVILLE URBANIZED AREA

TRANSPORTATION

The Council provides transportation staff services for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Transportation Study (GUATS) - the most populated area of the Region. GUATS is the continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated urban transportation planning program required in order to receive Federal funds for transportation projects.

The GUATS program officially began in 1971 and is administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO). The MTPO, which is a forum for cooperative decision-making by locally elected officials, is composed of the five City of Gainesville Commissioners and the five Alachua County Commissioners and is responsible for overall program direction, evaluation, and funding approval.

Last year, the MTPO conducted a number of transportation planning activities. Several of these activities were concerned with Transportation System Management (TSM) programs which address short-term transportation needs of the Urbanized Area through more efficient use of existing transportation resources.

The purpose of these TSM planning activities is to get the most out of existing transportation facilities without having to channel limited transportation resources into expensive capital projects such as major road widenings. Several of these TSM activities are discussed below.

Intersection Capacity Analysis

The MTPO is interested in having information on the level of congestion on existing highway facilities. In order to estimate existing highway congestion, an intersection capacity analysis was programmed for this Fiscal Year. This analysis involved observing traffic volumes and movements at twenty key intersections within the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

When this analysis is completed, it will identify the existing “level of service” for each of the twenty intersections surveyed. “Level of service” is a qualitative measure describing traffic operating conditions and their perception by motorists.

When completed, this analysis will also project traffic volumes and movements through 1990. Using these projections, it will be possible to estimate future congestion levels at these twenty intersections.
The Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Gainesville Urban Area states that 15% of local trips in the year 2005 will be made by non-auto means.

**Bicycle Planning**

The MTPO encourages the construction of bicycle facilities in conjunction with road construction and resurfacing projects. The MTPO has adopted a goal which states that by the year 2005, ten percent of all Urbanized Area trips will be made by bicycle.

In support of this goal, the MTPO annually conducts a program to monitor progress in reaching this goal and to establish a historical record of bicycle activity within the Urbanized Area. This program is part of an on-going transportation monitoring and surveillance program carried out by the MTPO staff and State and local agencies.

**Mass Transit Planning**

The MTPO also supports mass transit as an alternative means of transportation and has adopted Year 2005 goal that five percent of all Urbanized Area trips will be made by mass transit. During the past year, MTPO staff developed a report which discusses long-term policies and strategies for the mass transit system necessary to achieve this five percent transit modal split goal.

**Other Transportation Planning Activities**

Regular transportation planning activities include staff support for MTPO and advisory committee meetings, overall project administration, and responding to numerous requests by the public regarding GUATS plans and programs.

One important document prepared annually by staff and adopted by the MTPO is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP includes highway, bicycle, mass transit, and airport improvement projects programmed for the next five years. This document serves as a short-range implementation program for the GUATS Long-Range (Year 2005) Transportation Plan.

The transportation planning activities described above are part of a continuous, on-going transportation planning program which is coordinated with the comprehensively planned development of the Urbanized Area. The GUATS program attempts to ensure that adequate transportation facilities are provided to meet future needs.
A newsletter is published three times each year to inform the members, government and planning agencies, and the general public about new programs and other various activities in which the Council is involved.

In addition, brochures and informational briefs are published for special programs, studies and projects. This year, the Council published the following materials.

**Regional Planning**
- Coastal Hazard Mitigation and Resource Protection Report for the North Central Florida Region.
- Hurricane Evacuation and Inland Shelter Technical Reports and Individual County Guides for Eleven North Central Florida Counties.

**Economic Development**
- Annual Overall Economic Development Program

**Transportation**
- Regional Transit System Long Term Policies and Strategies
- Gainesville Urban Area Transportation Study - Unified Planning Work Program
- Transportation Improvement Program for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Fiscal Years 1986 to 1990

**General**
- NCFRPC Newsletters
- NCFRPC Annual Report
- NCFRPC Overall Program Design

The Council also provides general planning assistance and referral services to the public along with the following maps and information resources which are available at reproduction cost:

- Topographical Maps
- Floodplain Maps
- Aerials
- Census Information

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Citizens participate in Council programs in a variety of ways. Ongoing citizen participation is accomplished by including non-voting citizen members on the Council, the Board of Directors, and various committees.

This format allows direct citizen input at the policy-making level. Also, Citizen Advisory Committees are created for special projects in which citizen input is desirable or necessary. Finally, the Council maintains extensive lists of interested persons to whom meeting notices and newsletters are sent.
In 1986, the Council will continue and initiate a number of projects and activities as follows:

Regional Activities

Growth Management. The Council will continue to work closely with the State and with units of local government in the development and implementation of growth management policies. The primary focus of the Council activity will be to continue the development of a regional database, and the completion of its Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan.

Coastal Hazard Mitigation and Protection: Implementation Phase. The Council, in conjunction with the Suwannee River Water Management District, has submitted a joint application to the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation for a Coastal Zone Management Grant to continue the work begun by both agencies under separate grants in 1985. During 1985, the Council prepared management plans for areas considered to be vulnerable to the hurricane surge and freshwater flooding as well as for natural areas of regional significance. Also during that period, the District began mapping a number of these same areas. If funded, the 1986 program will allow the District to continue the development of its computerized mapping program for the coastal areas and allow the District and the Council to jointly develop performance standards that can be used by local governments to insure proper development within hazard areas and to insure the protection of regionally significant natural areas.

Review Activities. The Council will continue its numerous ongoing review activities, which include Clearinghouse reviews, DRI reviews, Local Government Comprehensive Plan reviews and other review activities.

Economic Development

North Central Florida Areawide Development Co., Inc. The Council will provide administrative services to the Areawide Development Company, working closely with regional businesses, financial institutions, and community organizations.

Job Training Partnership Act. Professional staff services will be provided by the Council for the administration of this program for the entire Region.

Local Government Assistance

Community Development Block Grants. Applications will be prepared for local governments in the Region. Other community development assistance, including administration services, will be provided as requested.

Local Planning Assistance. The Council will provide professional staff services to the Region's counties to assist them in complying with the revised comprehensive planning requirements of the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Act of 1985.

Other Local Assistance Activities. The Council will assist local governments with other programs in 1986, including recreation and community service projects.

Transportation

Land Use and Socio-economic Indicators. The projection of future population, dwelling units, school enrollment, automobile, and employment information will be prepared for use in the year 2015 Transportation Plan Update.

Right-Of-Way Protection of Regional Corridors. The development of a "standardized" set of regulations will be prepared for the City of Gainesville and Alachua County to use to protect the right-of-way along major transportation corridors.

Transit Planning Program. The Transit Planning Program will be continued with activities to include:

- a Community Attitude Survey
- the completion of the Route Profile Study
- further development of the Micro-computer Monitoring Program for Transit System Performance Indicators
1984-85
Revenues and Appropriated Fund Balance

**Sources**

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**NOTE:** The revenues and expenditures are taken from the Council Audit prepared by Davis, Monk, Farnsworth, and Company, Certified Public Accountants. The Audit is available at the Council for review and copying at cost during regular office hours.