Primarily as a result of the difficulties involved in implementing an effective growth management program, compounded by a troubled economy, regional planning councils have been severely criticized by a small segment of our population as being a bureaucratic layer of government that should be eliminated to conserve resources. In the following pages is a report of the successes of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council during the past year which, I believe, will clearly demonstrate that such a proposal is unjustified.

The principal role of our Council is to provide a forum for city and county elected officials and gubernatorial appointees to participate in making decisions about issues that have impacts which transcend local government boundaries, and to also make available needed technical services to our members. However, we also recognize the tremendous need to help improve our economy as a means of providing jobs for our citizens and expanding the local tax base.

In meeting our responsibilities for regional decision-making and providing services, the Council has continued to aggressively implement its Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan and to make available the highest quality local technical assistance. Furthermore, we carry on a number of regional service-oriented programs which help improve the quality of life in the area, including such programs as job training, hazardous material planning and monitoring, local emergency planning, and services for the transportation disadvantaged.

With respect to improving the economy, while the Council has been involved in related programs for years, during the past few months, decisions have been made to significantly expand our efforts in this much-needed area of activity. In particular, in addition to carrying on our general overall economic development program, we have instituted a program to help improve tourism within the region, and we have instructed staff to undertake a much more aggressive loan-packaging program to assist private businesses to secure funds for expansion.

In the following pages, these and other activities of the Council are more thoroughly described. Also provided is a summary of the organization's financial status and a brief look at the year ahead.

I believe that in reviewing this report, you will conclude that this agency offers valuable services, and that it provides an opportunity to keep regional decision making close to the local level. With your continued support, these advantages can be maintained for the region.

Sincerely,

T. Gerald Witt
Chairman
The North Central Florida Region includes 11 counties and 33 incorporated municipalities in the north central portion of Florida. Containing nearly 7,000 square miles of area, the region is characterized by its abundant natural resources, which include the world-famous Suwannee River, the marshes of the Gulf Coast, cypress swamps, upland forests, a large number of clear turquoise springs, and many other beautiful physical features.

Much of the region is currently sparsely populated although this is beginning to change as people from other parts of the world, nation and Florida are discovering the amenities of north Florida living. According to estimates by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Florida, the population of the region in 1991 was 359,098, an increase of 4,902 people over the 1990 Census count.

The region's economic base relies heavily on the government and services sectors, with the University of Florida in Gainesville accounting for a major portion of the government employment. The City of Gainesville is the regional marketing center and, together with Alachua County, accounts for 51.2 percent of the region's total population.
The Council is an association of 24 units of general purpose local government. Membership includes each of the 11 counties and 12 of the region's larger municipalities. One-third of the total representatives is appointed by the Governor, with the remainder appointed by member local governments. Two-thirds of the representatives must be local elected officials.

All Council representatives sit collectively as the full Council which meets monthly. At its May meeting, this group adopts the annual budget and adopts a work program. Also at this meeting, the Council elects the organization's officers: Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer from among its ranks.

Council members serve on several standing and ad hoc committees appointed by the Chairman. One of the purposes of these various committees is to advise the Council on planning and development activities which come before the Council for review and comment. The Council serves as a forum for the coordination and review of federal/state/local government, and private sector planning and development programs and activities affecting the region.

In addition to the regional planning and review activities, the Council provides a large variety of services to benefit its local governments. These services, carried out by staff, include: technical planning assistance, grant and loan planning assistance including grant administration services, transportation planning assistance, personnel and management assistance, and economic development activities.

ALACHUA COUNTY
Leveda Brown
Thomas Coward
George Dekle
* Richard Gutekunst

ALACHUA
Cleather Hathcock
# Saint Elmo Cherry-Clark
# Gussie Mae Lee
# Cole Saxon

ARCHER
Eddie Memory

GAINESVILLE
Courtland Collier
Rodney Long
Tom McKnew
Jim Painter

HAWTHORNE
Eddie Lee Martin

HIGH SPRINGS
Freddie Hickmon

MICANOPY
Donald Tyson

WALDO
Louie Davis

BRADFORD COUNTY
* Anne T. Brown
Arthur Gaskins
# Jay B. Edwards

STARKE

COLUMBIA COUNTY
James Montgomery
Tom Sawyer

LAKE CITY
T. Gerald Witt

DIXIE COUNTY
Jerry Hill

GILCHRIST COUNTY
Emory Philman
* Howell Lancaster

HAMILTON COUNTY
Lewis Vaughn

LAFAYETTE COUNTY
Ricky Lyons
* M.N. "Pete" Sullivan

MADISON COUNTY
Bert Thigpen

MADISON, CITY OF
Clarence Ganzy

SUWANNEE COUNTY
Charles Williams

LIVE OAK
* William W. Howard

TAYLOR COUNTY
Lillie Greene
* Charles T. Maultsby

PERRY
Thomas Demps

UNION COUNTY
Ray Thomas
# Kenneth L. Parrish, Sr.

*Gubernatorial Appointees
#Non-Voting Participant
The eleven counties comprising the North Central Florida Region, whose number of residents has increased dramatically during the 1980's, are becoming increasingly aware of the opportunities and problems that population growth can create for local governments. Often, dealing with issues of growth opens up opportunities for regional cooperation and planning.

Being an association of local governments with strong ties to state and federal agencies, the Council is in a unique position to coordinate the development and implementation of strategies designed to address the problems and opportunities created by growth.

**Growth Management**

A large amount of planning activity was initiated with the passage of the growth management legislation during the 1984 and 1985 legislative sessions. The intent of the legislation is to aggressively address the issues created by the state's rapid growth in population. The legislation establishes a hierarchy of plans (state, regional, local). These plans are to be consistent with each other so that limited public and private resources can be used more effectively and efficiently in trying to cope with the influx of Florida's new population.

In this regard, a state comprehensive plan was adopted by the 1985 Legislature, followed by the development of state agency functional plans in 1986. These plans have gone through at least one update since their initial adoption.

Regional plans, prepared and adopted by each of the eleven regional planning councils in 1987, received their first three-year evaluations during 1990. Most, including the North Central Florida Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan, were updated in 1991 as a result of this effort. Nearly all of the local plans in the region were completed and adopted by the end of 1991.
The Council adopted its comprehensive regional policy plan for the North Central Florida Region as mandated by the legislation on June 18, 1987. Emphasis since that time has been on plan implementation and monitoring of land development within the region.

Plan implementation efforts on the part of the Council in 1991 continued to focus on assisting the Suwannee Valley Solid Waste Management Administration in the development of a four-county regional landfill in Madison County. Other implementation efforts were related to the Council's economic development program, technical assistance programs and review activities discussed elsewhere in this report.

Monitoring efforts this past year have primarily been evaluating changes in land use throughout the region through use of a computer program which manipulates Department of Revenue (DOR) tax tape information. This program was extensively used in the three-year evaluation of the regional plan which occurred in 1990.

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Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan 1991 Update

The Council completed an update to the Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan originally adopted in 1987. The update included most of the revisions recommended by the 3-year evaluation completed in 1990.

Both the 1990 evaluation and the 1991 update were prepared by the Regional Planning Committee, an 11-member committee of the Council composed of locally-elected officials, gubernatorial appointees and two non-voting citizens appointed by the Council.

There were few substantive changes made for this first major update. Most of the changes were directed at eliminating the duplication of goals and policies which occurred throughout the plan and paring down the number of "measure" statements to one or two per goal as opposed to one for each policy. These changes have caused a significant reduction in the size of the document. Other changes were primarily directed at clarifying the language of some ambiguously-worded policies.

In accordance with Chapter 186, F.S., the Council will initiate its second 3-year evaluation in 1993.
Regional And Local Emergency Response Plans

The Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), passed by Congress in 1986, is also known as Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA).

These amendments require the preparation of local emergency response plans which, for the State of Florida, have been developed utilizing the eleven regional planning council districts and state-appointed local emergency planning committees (LEPCs). The emergency response plan for the North Central Florida Region was adopted by the Local Emergency Planning Committee on June 9, 1989 and updated on June 7, 1991.

Florida follow-up legislation also requires that the state’s 67 counties each prepare countywide plans to form the basis of the regional plans. Plans for the eleven counties in the region were updated and forwarded to the state in June of 1991.

In March and April, 1991, the LEPC conducted How-to-Comply seminars for businesses and government departments that store or use hazardous materials. These seminars were held at the Suwannee River Water Management District in Live Oak, and the Santa Fe Community College Downtown Center in Gainesville.

In August, 1991, the LEPC sponsored a weekend-long hazardous materials training class held in Live Oak City Hall. The class was conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and was attended by firefighters and law enforcement officers. This class provides the level of training required by federal OSHA regulations for public employees who may encounter a hazardous materials incident in their job.

Also in August, 1991, the First Responders Subcommittee of the LEPC met at the Occidental Chemical Reclamation Center. The Subcommittee started planning for a hazardous materials emergency response exercise to be held in January, 1992. The exercise is designed to test the LEPC regional hazardous materials response plan and the hazardous materials response training of local responders.

Part of the LEPC plan is to conduct training exercises, including both field and table top exercises, such as the one pictured here.
One of the ways the Council implements its regional plan 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 several other review activities are undertaken as a result of state legislation.

The Council's Clearinghouse Committee is responsible for overseeing these review activities. In 1991, the Committee conducted a review of 131 different projects submitted by private developers, units of local government, and state and federal agencies. Reviews included the following types:

- [] applications for federal assistance
- [] developments of regional impact
- [] local comprehensive plans and plan amendments
- [] local emergency management plans
- [] 10-year site plans of major electric utilities
- [] environmental impact statements, assessments, and Army Corps of Engineers permit requests
- [] state agency functional plans, projects and proposed rules

The Clearinghouse Committee reviews these projects to:

1. avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts that may be created by an activity in neighboring communities or counties;

2. insure coordination and consistency with local government and comprehensive regional policy plans; and

3. avoid duplication or conflict with other local or area plans and programs.

The Council comments on a number of activities proposed within the region such as the proposed expansion of Gainesville Regional Airport, scheduled for review in 1992.
During 1991, the Council offered technical assistance to local governments which do not have available staff or expertise for certain activities. These activities ranged from comprehensive planning to community development.

**Comprehensive Planning**

In response to the requirements of the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act, the Council continued to place a significant emphasis on comprehensive planning assistance for local governments.

Local governments are mandated to prepare revised comprehensive plans to comply with statutory language and an administrative rule concerning both substantive content and compatibility with the State Comprehensive Plan and the Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan. In addition, local governments are required to adopt land development regulations to implement their revised comprehensive plans.

The Council assisted one coastal county and two coastal municipalities negotiate Stipulated Settlement Agreements with the Florida Department of Community Affairs concerning provisions of their comprehensive plans found non-compliant by the State. In addition, assistance with the preparation and adoption of comprehensive plan amendments in accordance with these agreements was provided by the Council to these coastal local governments.

The Council also assisted 6 noncoastal counties and 12 noncoastal municipalities with the review and submission of their revised comprehensive plans to the State for compliance review. In addition, assistance with the adoption of revised comprehensive plans was provided by the Council to 7 noncoastal counties and 18 noncoastal municipalities. The Council also assisted two noncoastal counties and three noncoastal municipalities negotiate Stipulated Settlement Agreements with the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

Living conditions for low- and moderate-income persons are improved with the assistance of Community Development Block Grant projects such as this one in Perry.
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

The Council assisted four local governments in preparing applications in 1991, three of which addressed the need for housing rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income occupied dwelling units. The fourth application addressed the need for the commercial revitalization of a community's downtown. Total funding requested for these projects was $2.225 million.

CDBG applications were prepared in 1991 for the following local governments:

* City of Lake City
* City of Live Oak
* City of Madison
* City of Perry

In addition to application assistance, the Council continued to provide administrative assistance with current projects for Taylor County, and the municipalities of Madison and Perry.
During the past year, the Economic Development Program of the Council consisted of economic development planning, Areawide Development Company activities, and job training services.

**Economic Development Planning**

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 and development authorities in order to promote economic growth.

In 1991, the Council completed an annual update of its Overall Economic Development Program, which provides general guidance for economic development planning activities in the region.

**Areawide Development Company**

In cooperation with local 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.

At that time, the Council agreed to provide staff services to the company. However, by a subsequent contract with the Council, the City of Gainesville has agreed to assume a major part of that responsibility.

The company is certified by the Small Business Administration to operate as a "504" Certified Development Company to provide subordinated mortgage financing to eligible small and medium-sized commercial and industrial businesses in the area. The typical financing structure is as follows:

- 50% - local bank
- 40% - Development Company
- 10% - business equity

The construction of this dentist office in Hawthorne was financed by a 504b loan through the Areawide Development Company.
Job Training Partnership Act Program

The Job Training Partnership Act program, administered by the Council throughout the region, continued to assist economically disadvantaged long-term unemployed and laid-off persons in obtaining unsubsidized gainful employment during Program Year 1990 (July 1, 1990 - June 30, 1991).

The program continued to be based upon a partnership between private business and the public sector in training individuals for permanent positions. This balance is evident in the structure of the program, which includes two organizations that are responsible for developing policy by which it is operated. These two entities are the Florida's Suwannee Valley Private Industry Council (PIC), consisting of representatives from the region's businesses, governmental social service agencies, public education, organized labor and economic development organizations, and Florida's Suwannee Valley Job Training Consortium of County Commission Chairmen from the region.

The Council subcontracted with the Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc., the School Board of Alachua County, the Lake City Community College, Santa Fe Community College, Columbia County Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc., and the Columbia County School Board to carry out the job training activities.

The job training services provided include classroom training and on-the-job training. During the program year a total of 1,576 participants in the region were served by the program. Of those, 505 obtained unsubsidized employment and 365 individuals received basic education remediation.

Also, the fourth full year of the basic education remediation computer-assisted instruction program was completed. The system was used by high schools, vocational-technical schools and community colleges throughout the region to serve 14-21 year-old participants needing basic educational skills remediation, and employability skills training.

In addition, 607 individuals were served through the 1991 Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. This program provided academically at-risk students with a means of improving educational skills while reducing the school drop-out rate. The program helped produce a better educated youth labor force to meet the employment needs of the region.

Finally, Council staff continued providing assistance to the PIC's Economic Development Committee in its regionwide economic development marketing effort as part of an employment generating activity. Due to state and federal regulatory changes, JTPA funding for this program was terminated during Program Year 1990.
Each year, the Council provides transportation staff services for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Transportation Study (GUATS). GUATS is the continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated urban transportation planning program for the Gainesville Urbanized Area. This program is 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 is a forum for cooperative decision-making by locally-elected officials and is comprised of the five City of Gainesville commissioners and the five Alachua County commissioners. The MTPO is responsible for overall program direction, evaluation, and funding approval.

In 1991, the MTPO conducted a number of transportation planning activities. Several of these activities involved long-range transportation planning.

City of Gainesville Special Transportation Area

During the year, the MTPO and its advisory committees reviewed and approved a "Special Transportation Area" (STA) developed by the City of Gainesville. An STA is a compact area in which some portions of the State Highway System are allowed to operate at a level below the state's minimum level of service standards for growth management reasons.

Adopted Level of Service Standards

Also during 1991, staff assisted the MTPO in updating its adopted level of service standards for the Gainesville Urbanized Area. These standards are used to identify when roadway improvements are needed to address existing or future traffic congestion.

Adopted MTPO standards are consistent with the standards adopted by both the City of Gainesville and Alachua County, as well as the Florida Department of Transportation and the Council. These standards are used as a way to implement state and local goals to discourage urban sprawl and promote infill development and the efficient use of existing roads. This is done by allowing higher intensities and densities of development within the City of Gainesville than in the unincorporated area by allowing more traffic congestion on minor arterials and collectors and on principal arterials within the City's special transportation area.

Roadway Level of Service Estimates

Also in 1991, MTPO staff began to compile information that can be used by local governments and the Florida Department of Transportation to develop a more accurate level of service estimates for roadways in Alachua County. This work is being done using specialized software (ART-PLAN and ART-TAB) developed by the Florida Department of Transportation. It involves maintaining a data base of roadway specific information such as traffic signal timing, percent turns from exclusive lanes and peak-hour factor.

By using this software, a more accurate estimate of traffic congestion and roadway operating conditions can be developed. This information can be used by local governments to implement recently adopted comprehensive plans and develop concurrency management systems. The ability to measure operating conditions on a roadway using accurate level of service procedures is an important component of state growth management legislation and concurrency requirements.

A portion of NW 43rd Street in Gainesville is currently being widened as scheduled in the Gainesville Urbanized Area Transportation Study.
Transportation Planning For Transit Services

As it has done for the last several years, the MTPO continued its program to monitor Regional Transit System (RTS) ridership in the Gainesville Urbanized Area. Information on transit ridership is reported to the MTPO and its advisory committees on a quarterly basis. According to this information, transit ridership decreased from 1985 through 1988, but has steadily increased over the last three years.

Transportation Disadvantaged Program

In 1991, the Council provided staff support to eleven county transportation disadvantaged coordinating boards in the region. The purpose of these boards is to improve the coordination among various agencies and organizations that provide transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged (low-income, elderly and handicapped persons).

Council staff conducted planning studies designed to provide transportation disadvantaged services in a more effective and efficient manner and to identify additional transportation disadvantaged needs in the region.

In addition, Council staff assisted community transportation coordinators in applying for and receiving funds from the State Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. These funds can be used to purchase capital equipment and to pay for rides for transportation disadvantaged persons whose trips would not be paid for by a social service agency. In 1991, the trip/equipment grants for all eleven counties in the region totaled over $950,000.

Other Transportation Planning Activities

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

Each year the MTPO approves the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP includes highway, bicycle, mass transit, and airport improvement projects programmed for the next five years. The MTPO must approve federal and state transportation projects contained in the TIP in order for these projects to be funded in the Gainesville Urbanized Area.

In addition, the TIP also contains a section that lists projects which the MTPO identifies as having a high priority, but are not currently funded in the FDOT's five-year work program. FDOT staff use this information to assist in developing their work program for the coming year. This document serves as a short-range implementation program for the GUATS long-range (Year 2005) transportation plan.

The transportation planning activities described in this section are part of a continuous, ongoing transportation planning program. Through this process, the GUATS program attempts to ensure that adequate transportation facilities are provided to meet future needs.
From time to time, a newsletter is published to inform Council members, other levels of government, the private sector, and the general public about new programs and other various activities in which the Council is involved. Brochures and informational briefs are also published for special programs, studies and projects.

In addition to the numerous planning and other technical studies prepared under contract with local governments throughout the region, the Council prepared the following materials in 1991.

Regional Planning

[] North Central Florida Comprehensive Regional Policy Plan 1991 Update


Economic Development

[] Annual Overall Economic Development Program Update 1990

Transportation

[] Fiscal Years 1992-1997 Transportation Improvement Program

[] Fiscal Year 1993 Unified Planning Work Program

[] Transit Monitoring Program Quarterly Report For The Regional Transit System

[] 1991 Bicycle Usage Trends Program

[] Transportation Disadvantaged Transportation Development Plan (TD-TDP)

[] Transportation Disadvantaged Transportation Improvement Program (TD-TIP)

[] Transportation Disadvantaged County Coordinating Board Annual Reports

General

[] 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.

[] Existing and Future Land Use Maps
[] Topographic Maps
[] Floodplain Maps
[] 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 and the various Council 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 1992, the Council will continue a number of programs started in 1991 and initiate a number of new projects and activities as follows.

**Regional Activities**

**Growth Management**

The Council will conclude its study of land development trends in the rural areas of the region.

**Regional and Local Emergency Response Plans**

Due to the constantly changing situation facing emergency service personnel, the regional emergency response plan will be updated to incorporate the most recent information on the location of hazardous materials. The Local Emergency Planning Committee will continue its efforts to ensure that emergency personnel are properly trained and the general public informed of potential dangers facing their communities.

**Transportation**

**Year 2015 Transportation Plan Update**

Long-range transportation plans for the Gainesville Urbanized Area are currently being updated through the year 2015.

**Transit Planning Program**

The transit planning program will be continued for the Regional Transit System with activities to include:

- The acquisition and processing of 1990 Bureau of the Census data to improve travel demand analysis and forecasting; and
- Short-range transit planning to include monitoring system ridership trends.

**Bicycle Planning**

Bicycle counts will be taken at 12 intersections in the Gainesville Urbanized Area to monitor bicycle ridership trends.

**Transportation Disadvantaged Program**

Council staff will continue to provide staff support to the eleven county coordinating boards with respect to the transportation disadvantaged program.

**Economic Development**

**Economic Development Assistance**

The Council will continue to provide assistance to local governments and area development authorities in securing federal funds and assistance from other sources to accommodate additional industrial growth.

The Council will also conduct a study of the region's potential for tourism development utilizing its many natural resources.

**Job Training Partnership Act**

The Council will continue to serve as administrator for the Job Training Program.

**Local Government Assistance**

**Community Development Block Grants**

Applications will be prepared for local governments in the region. Other community development assistance, including administrative services, will be provided as requested.

**UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**

**Local Planning Assistance**

The Council will continue to assist the region's counties and cities in complying with the revised requirements of the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Act. In particular, assistance with the preparation and adoption of land development regulations will be provided to local governments.
### 1990-91 Revenues

#### Sources

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### 1990-91 Expenditures

#### Programs

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NORTHERN CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
235 S. Main St., Suite 205
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Chairman
T. Gerald Witt

Vice Chairman
Eddie Lee Martin

Secretary-Treasurer
Charles Williams

Executive Director
Charles F. Justice