

2018 Annual Report



North Central Florida
Regional Planning Council



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Letter To Our Citizens

During 2018, the Council continued to be a very successful public agency that provided valuable services in fulfilling our mission to improve the quality of life of the region's citizens by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments. The following pages summarize these accomplishments.

The Council, in partnership with economic development organizations and local governments, promoted regional strategies, partnerships and solutions to strengthen the economic competitiveness and quality of life of the 12 counties and 40 incorporated municipalities in the north central Florida region. The Council, whose members are local elected officials and gubernatorial appointees, continued to administer a variety of state and federal programs for the north central Florida region, including Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor and Union Counties.

"The Council promoted regional strategies, partnerships and solutions."

Programs included the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Strategic Regional Policy Plan, technical assistance to local governments in development of comprehensive plans, land development regulations and grant management, and administration of hazardous materials and economic development programs. In addition, the Council provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, the North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee, the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team and *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*.

Our successes in these activities have been realized through the dedicated work of the Council staff under the guidance provided by our members and by the leaders of our affiliated organizations, including the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, the North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee, the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Team and *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*. All of these groups continued to remain committed to achieving excellence as they continued to pursue ways to improve the north central Florida region.

Of particular note are the extremely important and beneficial services the Council continued to provide to rural local governments in the areas of comprehensive planning, community development, grant procurement and grant administration. By combining their limited financial resources, small rural jurisdictions were able to have access to these services of the Council that they would have been unable to afford on an individual basis. Working together as partners, the Council, rural counties and small cities have been able to improve the quality of life in rural north central Florida.

We hope that you find the discussion of our programs in this report to be informative. Also provided is a summary of our financial status and a brief look at the year ahead.

The Council members and staff are most appreciative of the support received from our member local governments and the citizens of the north central Florida region. We look forward to working together with you in the future for the betterment of the north central Florida region.

Sincerely,



Louie Davis
Chair



Louie Davis Chair
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

The Region

The north central Florida region includes 12 counties and 40 incorporated municipalities in the north central portion of Florida. With over 8,000 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 and a large number of clear turquoise springs.

According to the University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, the population of the north central Florida region in the year 2018 was 561,660, an increase of 16,738 persons over the 2008 population of 544,922, representing a 3.1 percent increase over the past ten years.

"The Council is dedicated to improving the quality of life of the region's citizens, by enhancing public safety, protecting regional resources, promoting economic development and providing technical services to local governments."

The economic base of the north central Florida region 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 retail center and together with Alachua County accounts for 46.9 percent of the total population of the north central Florida region.



North Central Florida Region



North Central Florida Region
Counties and Municipalities

The Council

The Council is an association of 25 general purpose local governments. Membership includes 12 counties and 13 of the municipalities in the north central Florida region. One-third of the representatives are appointed by the Governor with the remaining two-thirds of the representatives being local elected officials.

Each year, the Council adopts an annual work program and budget. Also each year, the Council elects officers for the organization: Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer from among its ranks.

Council members serve on several committees appointed by the Chair. The purpose of these committees is to advise the Council on administrative and programmatic matters. The Council serves as a forum for the coordination and review of federal/state/local government community planning and community development programs and activities affecting the north central Florida region.

**"The Council serves
as a forum for
coordination and review."**

In addition to the regional planning and review activities, the Council provides a variety of services to benefit its local governments. These services include: community planning assistance, grant application and administration services, transportation planning assistance, hazardous waste monitoring, emergency response planning assistance and economic development activities.

ALACHUA COUNTY

Ken Cornell
Charles Chestnut IV
Marihelen Wheeler
* Vacant
* Vacant
* Vacant
* Vacant

Alachua

Robert Wilford

Archer

Fletcher Hope

Gainesville

David Arreola
Gigi Simmons
Helen Warren

Hawthorne

Patricia Bouie

High Springs

Linda Jones

Newberry

Matt Hersom

Waldo

Louie Davis

BRADFORD COUNTY

Daniel Riddick
* Vacant

Starke

Janice Mortimer

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Tim Murphy
* James Montgomery

Lake City

Stephen Witt

DIXIE COUNTY

Gene Higginbotham
* Lorene Thomas

GILCHRIST COUNTY

Kenrick Thomas
* Vacant

HAMILTON COUNTY

Robert Brown
* Vacant

Jasper

LaBarfield Bryant

LAFAYETTE COUNTY

Anthony Adams
* Vacant

LEVY COUNTY

John Meeks
* Vacant

MADISON COUNTY

Rick Davis
* Vacant

City of Madison

Jim Catron

SUWANNEE COUNTY

Don Hale
* Vacant

Live Oak

Frank Davis

TAYLOR COUNTY

Thomas Demps
* Vacant

Perry

Shirlie Hampton

UNION COUNTY

James Tallman
* Vacant

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Vacant, Florida Department of
Economic Opportunity
Vacant, Florida Department of
Environmental Protection
Vacant, Florida Department of
Transportation
Vacant, Southwest Florida Water
Management District
Vacant, Suwannee River Water
Management District
Vacant, St. Johns River Water
Management District

* Gubernatorial Appointee

Louie Davis, Chair
Robert Wilford, Vice-Chair
Charles Chestnut IV, Secretary-Treasurer



Regional

During 2018, the Council completed work on updating the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan and continued to provide comments concerning its review responsibilities.

Regional Planning

The North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan is a long-range guide for the physical, economic and social development of the north central Florida region. The regional plan contains regional goals and policies designed to promote a coordinated program of regional actions directed at resolving problems identified in the trends and conditions statements contained within each of the strategic regional subject areas: Affordable Housing; Economic Development; Emergency Preparedness; Natural Resources of Regional Significance; and Regional Transportation. The regional plan is the primary policy document of the Council and is the basis for Council comments concerning its review responsibilities.

"The Council's regional plan is its primary policy document and is the basis for Council comments concerning its review responsibilities."

In 2018, the Council adopted Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based amendments to the regional plan. The amendments added natural resources of regional significance and regional facilities located in Levy County to the regional plan.

Review Activities

One of the ways that the Council implemented the regional plan was through its review responsibilities. Since 1969, the Council has served as the area-wide clearinghouse for all federally-funded projects that affect the physical environment of the north central Florida region. In addition, the Council conducts other review activities undertaken as a result of state legislation.

Reviews included the following types.

- Applications for federal assistance totaling \$13,985,964;
- Local comprehensive plan amendments; and
- Environmental impact statements and assessments.



Coastal resources in the north central Florida region, such as the Big Bend Salt Marsh and Big Bend Sea Grass Beds, are recognized as Natural Resources of Regional Significance in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

The Council reviewed these projects in order to:

- Avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts to regionally significant natural resources, regionally significant facilities or neighboring communities or counties;
- Ensure coordination with local government plans; and
- Avoid duplication or conflict with other local or area plans and programs.

Regional

The Council provided comments on 74 review items, including 48 amendments to local government comprehensive plans. The Council forwarded its comments on local government comprehensive plans to local governments under the expedited review process and to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for their consideration in determining the consistency of local government comprehensive plans with the State Comprehensive Plan and the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan under the coordinated review process.

The Council also reviewed 23 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant applications or environmental assessments, and three U.S. Federal Transit Administration grant applications for either capital assistance or operating assistance. The Council provided comments on applications for federal assistance to the Florida State Clearinghouse, which is housed in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The Florida State Clearinghouse administers the intergovernmental coordination

“The Council provided comments on applications for federal assistance ensuring that federal grants were consistent with regional and local plans and programs throughout the region.”

and review process of certain state and federal activities within the State of Florida which involve federal financial assistance and/or direct federal activities that affect the physical environment.



Freshwater resources in the north central Florida region, such as the Suwannee River, are recognized as a Natural Resource of Regional Significance in the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

During 2018, the Council continued to work on ongoing public safety and regulatory compliance activities and also started several new projects.

Local Emergency Planning Committee

The North Central Florida Local Emergency Planning Committee continued its mission of increasing chemical safety in our communities. Since 1989, the Council has provided staff support to the Committee.

The tools used by the Committee included planning, training, reviewing, exercising, offering How-to-Comply assistance to business and industry and educating the public. An updated emergency response plan for the north central Florida region was completed by the Committee.

“The Council provided staff support to the Local Emergency Planning Committee for Sheltering In-Place seminars to increase public preparedness in case of a chemical release.”

Sheltering In-Place seminars were held to assist public and emergency response agencies with increasing public preparedness in the case of a chemical release. Many releases are short in duration and it may be safer to stay inside and not be exposed to the full strength of a chemical plume by trying to evacuate through it. A webpage continued to be available to support local and emergency responder public outreach efforts.

First Responder Training

The Council coordinated hazardous materials emergency response training classes. A total of 18 classes were held, training 242 first responders for a total of 5,714 hours. Many classes were offered in a shift-friendly format where the same one-day class was repeated three consecutive days. This approach provided an opportunity for all three shifts at a fire rescue department to attend the class.

The use of on-line training as part of the 160-hour hazardous materials technician class was expanded this past year. With the first 80 hours available online, it was more convenient for firefighters to attend advanced hazardous materials training. The additional 80 hours of hands-on training were conducted locally.

Hazardous Materials Regional Response Team

Since 2000, the Council has provided staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. Member jurisdictions of the Team include Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Suwannee and Union Counties as well as the following cities: Gainesville, Lake City, Madison and Starke.



Council officials received, on behalf of the Council, an Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations for the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team. Left to right, Lorene Thomas, Immediate Past Chair of the Council, Louie Davis, Chair of the Council, Scott Koons, Executive Director of the Council, Doug Elliott, President of the National Association of Development Organizations, Robert Wilford, Vice-Chair of the Council, and Charles Chestnut IV, Secretary-Treasurer of the Council.

Natural Gas Pipeline Safety

The North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team continued work pursuant to a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The grant project consisted of purchasing equipment, public outreach and exercise components.

Both the Florida Natural Gas Transmission Line and the recently completed Sabal Trail Natural Gas Transmission line traverse the north central Florida region. The grant has enabled the Team to provide training for first responders to address potential incidents related to these natural gas transmission lines.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

Florida Hazardous Materials Symposium

Advance training continued to be a priority for North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Response Team members. The Council provided scholarships for 14 firefighters to attend the Florida Hazardous Materials Symposium held in Daytona Beach. The Symposium offered a combination of both classroom and hands-on training for hazardous materials technicians.



Firefighters from the north central Florida region attended the Florida Hazardous Materials Symposium and received both classroom and hands-on training.

Air Quality Monitoring Equipment

The North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Response Team distributed air quality monitors capable of detecting four different gases to 11 jurisdictions in the north central Florida region. Team member jurisdictions with enhanced air monitoring capabilities include Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee, and Taylor Counties, and the Cities of Gainesville and Madison.

Hazards Analyses

Hazardous materials emergency response planning continued to require an understanding of the chemical hazards and potential threats to nearby communities. Facilities reported the amounts of extremely hazardous substances which are stored in the north central Florida region. In addition, the Council continued to provide hazards analyses site visit assistance to counties throughout the north central Florida region.

Council staff concluded their term as Chair of the State Emergency Response Commission Hazards Analysis Working Group. The working group made progress in improving the overall process to ensure that emergency managers and first responders have access to critical emergency information.

"The Council assisted counties with conducting hazards analyses and hazardous waste site visits."

Hazardous Waste

All counties in Florida are required by law to conduct annual site visits to verify the small quantity hazardous waste management practices of 20 percent of the businesses and government agencies in a county.

The Council continued to provide compliance assistance to mainly small businesses during the required verification site visits. The assistance helped facilities properly manage waste disposal in a cost efficient manner. The overall goal was to keep hazardous waste out of landfills and groundwater.



The Council provided assistance to Columbia County and other counties throughout the north central Florida region with small quantity hazardous waste monitoring.

Economic Development

During 2018, the Council continued to promote long-term economic prosperity in the north central Florida region by conducting comprehensive economic development planning, assisting local governments and economic development organizations with implementation activities and by promoting tourism opportunities of the north central Florida region as an economic development strategy.

"The Council's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy uses the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars for Securing Florida's Future as the organizing framework."

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

In 1978, the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration designated the north central Florida region as the first economic development district in Florida. Since then, the Council has served as the primary regional economic development planning organization for the north central Florida region. The Council continued to provide technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in order to promote the economic growth of the north central Florida region.

Council staff continued to promote initiatives that support the five regional priorities identified in the five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the North Central Florida Economic Development District. The five priorities are: support the two Rural Economic Development Initiative Catalyst Sites in the North Central Florida Rural Area of Opportunity; promote regional tourism through *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*; create strategies to increase the labor force in the healthcare and life science industries; seek opportunities to improve multimodal infrastructure of the north central Florida region; and expand and support regional business incubators and research parks.

The five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018 to 2022 utilizes the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars for Securing Florida's Future principles as the organizing framework. The goals and objectives of the Strategy are also coordinated with the Florida Strategic Plan for Economic Development as developed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.

Council staff continued to support local economic development organizations throughout the north central Florida region by providing technical assistance in the form of economic impact analysis for potential economic development projects. Utilizing Regional Economic Modeling, Inc. Policy Insite⁺® software, Council staff provided estimated impacts to population, total employment, personal income and ad valorem revenues, based on the industry sector, employment and average employee wages of the proposed project. These estimates are a valuable tool to local governments as they evaluate possible incentives to attract new and retain existing businesses in their communities.

North Central Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2018-2022



North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

September 2017



The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018 to 2022 for the north central Florida region uses the Florida Chamber Foundation's Six Pillars for Securing Florida's Future principles as the organizing framework.

Economic Development

Visit Natural North Florida (*The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*)

In many rural communities, tourism is often the primary source of economic development activity. Visit Natural North Florida (*The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*) marketed the 14-county Natural North Florida region by promoting the development of nature-based, culture-based and heritage-based tourism. Since 1993, the Council has provided staff support to The Original Florida Tourism Task Force to assist in implementing its annual marketing plan.



The Original Florida Tourism Task Force promoted the Natural North Florida region for nature-based, culture-based and heritage-based tourism activities such as kayaking opportunities.

Visit Natural North Florida is comprised of representatives from each of the participating counties, appointed by their respective board of county commissioners, to support and direct the regional tourism development effort. The Council continued to provide staff services to the Task Force in maintaining the VisitNaturalNorthFlorida.com website, coordinating consumer travel show participation and producing collateral materials to meet the goals of the regional marketing plan.

Visit Natural North Florida participated in both domestic and international consumer travel shows. Members actively engaged and provided collateral marketing material to thousands of show attendees.

Each county in the Natural North Florida region received exposure on the Visit Natural North Florida tourism website, www.VisitNaturalNorthFlorida.com. Potential visitors could find events and festivals, attractions, accommodations and trails. In addition, each member county received exposure in digital as well as print media advertising campaigns. These advertisements were viewed by millions of potential visitors.

"The Council provided staff services to *The Original Florida Tourism Task Force* to promote the region for nature-based, culture-based and heritage-based tourism."

Visit Natural North Florida members received scholarships to attend the Southeast Tourism Society Marketing College. Attendees were taught marketing techniques in all facets of the tourism industry and learned about the latest trends in tourism promotion.

Visit Natural North Florida maintained several different forms of print media, including fold-out map brochures that are distributed at the VISIT FLORIDA Welcome Centers, state-wide at American Automobile Association offices and at hundreds of private business locations along major highways in Florida and I-75 in Georgia.



The Original Florida Tourism Task Force promoted the Natural North Florida region for nature-based, culture-based and heritage-based tourism activities such as bicycling opportunities.

Local Government Assistance

During 2018, the Council continued to offer technical assistance to local governments which did not have available staff or expertise for these activities ranging from community planning to community development.

Community Planning

Since 1975, in response to the requirements of Florida community planning legislation, the Council has placed an emphasis on community planning assistance to local governments. The Council continued to assist counties and cities throughout the north central Florida region in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act.

“The Council assisted counties and cities throughout the region in complying with the requirements of the Community Planning Act.”

The Act requires counties and cities to prepare, adopt, update and implement a comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development in their communities. The comprehensive plan must address future land use, transportation, housing, public facilities, including potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste and storm water drainage, conservation of natural resources, recreation and open space, intergovernmental coordination, public school facilities and capital improvements. In addition, the comprehensive plan may include optional elements such as economic development and public buildings and facilities.

The comprehensive plan must be implemented through the adoption of land development regulations governing the subdivision of land, use of land, protection of potable water well fields, regulation of areas subject to flooding, protection of environmentally sensitive lands, signage, public facility concurrency and onsite traffic flow and parking. The Act also requires local governments to evaluate their comprehensive plan every seven years to determine whether it complies with all statutory and administrative rule requirements. Such evaluations may result in recommended amendments to the comprehensive plan.

The Council provided ongoing community planning assistance to local governments to assist with interpretations of comprehensive plans and land development regulations, preparation of comprehensive plan and land development regulation amendments, codification of comprehensive plans and land development regulations, and concurrency assessments of plats and site and development plans.

In particular, the Council assisted six counties and 13 municipalities process 129 development-related applications. This assistance included the review and adoption of 40 comprehensive plan map and text amendments. The Council also assisted these local governments with 70 land development regulation map and text amendments, 13 land development regulation special exceptions and conditional use permits, four variances and two site and development plans.

The Council assisted two counties prepare evaluations of their local government comprehensive plans pursuant to the Community Planning Act. These evaluations examined the success of the plans and included recommendations for amendments to update the comprehensive plans.

The Council also assisted counties and municipalities to prepare concurrency assessments to evaluate the impacts of development on the level of service for roads, water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, storm water drainage and recreation facilities.



The Council provided assistance to Taylor County and other local governments throughout the north central Florida region with comprehensive planning and land development regulation.

Local Government Assistance

Community Development

Since 1976, the Council has assisted local governments in the north central Florida region with filing applications and administering projects under the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program. The Program is a federal program, which is part of the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and is administered by the State of Florida. Eligible small cities and rural counties apply to the State for funding through a competitive process.



The Council initiated Community Development Block Grant administrative assistance services in Bradford County for a housing rehabilitation project to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners with renovations to single-family dwelling units to meet code requirements.

The purpose of the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program is to help reduce and reverse community decline and restore community vitality. This is done by addressing housing stock, improving infrastructure and assisting private businesses with infrastructure needs so they can increase employment opportunities.

Though the program ultimately benefits local governments by providing grants to meet community development needs, the beneficiaries of this program are primarily residents whose incomes are within the low- to moderate-income range for their community. The Program has several categories which assist local governments with improving infrastructure in neighborhoods and downtowns, renovating housing, and creating jobs for low- to moderate-income residents.

The categories are Housing, Neighborhood Revitalization, Commercial Revitalization and Economic Development. Housing is a direct benefit program, in which funds are used to rehabilitate or replace homes of low- to moderate-income families. This activity helps the individual family, but also helps the community by improving the local housing stock. Neighborhood Revitalization is both a direct benefit program and community-wide benefit program, in which funds are

"The Council assisted counties and cities identify community development needs, prepare grant applications and administer projects."

used to rehabilitate or provide new infrastructure to primarily low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, such as paving streets, replacing or providing new potable water lines or sanitary sewer lines and providing connections to the lines.

Commercial Revitalization is also both a direct benefit program and a community-wide benefit program, in which funds are used to improve the public right-of-way through improving sidewalks and lighting as well as building facades of downtown areas or other commercial revitalization areas. This activity makes areas more attractive and safer, thereby making it more likely that private businesses will locate in the revitalized areas and hire local residents. Economic Development funds are used to provide necessary infrastructure for a private business to locate or remain open. Private businesses that directly benefit from economic development funds agree that a majority of new employees hired will be low- to moderate-income residents.

Council staff continued to provide administrative assistance for a project in the Town of Mayo and initiated administrative assistance for projects in Bradford County and the City of Madison.



The Council initiated Community Development Block Grant administrative assistance services in the City of Madison for a neighborhood revitalization project to replace sanitary sewer lines and upgrade a sanitary sewer lift station that serves low- to moderate-income neighborhoods.

Transportation

During 2018, the Council conducted a number of transportation planning activities throughout the north central Florida region.

Metropolitan Transportation Planning

Since 1978, the Council has provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area to assist in developing transportation plans and programs.

Long-Range Transportation Plan

In 2018, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area administratively modified its Transportation Improvement Program and List of Priority Projects to address Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act requirements. Several projects in the adopted multimodal Year 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan were at various stages of development in 2018.

"The Council provided staff services to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area to assist in developing transportation plans and programs."

These projects included:

- SW 62nd Boulevard Connector Project - initiation of right-of-way acquisition;
- State Road 24 (Archer Road) Four-Lane Project from the City of Bronson to SW 75th Street (Tower Road) - continuation of the project development and environment study;
- State Roads 26/26A at State Road 121 Safety Project - preliminary engineering; and
- Federal Safety-Funded State Road 121 (NW 34th Street) Left Turn Lane Project from NW 16th Avenue to U.S. Highway 441 - preliminary engineering.

In 2018, the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area initiated its Year 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan update.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

In 2018, the Federal Highway Administration awarded a grant to the Florida Department of Transportation, City of Gainesville and University of Florida for bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements using the intelligent transportation system.



The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area adopted the 2018-19 to 2022-23 Transportation Improvement Program for highway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Other funded projects within the Gainesville Metropolitan Area included:

- Federal Transportation Alternatives Program funds for the NW 19th Lane Bicycle/Pedestrian Project;
- State Safe Routes to School-funded NE 18th Avenue (Metcalfe Elementary School) Sidewalk Project - preliminary engineering; and
- State Shared-Use Network Trail-funded State Road 24 (Archer Road)/Tower Road Bicycle/Pedestrian Project - preliminary engineering.

Transportation

Transportation Disadvantaged

Since 1982, the Council has served as the official planning agency for counties throughout the north central Florida region. The duties and responsibilities of the Council include providing staff support to local coordinating boards, preparing annual service plans and recommending community transportation coordinators to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.



The Suwannee Valley Transit Authority received the 2018 Rural Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year Award from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged for the provision of public transportation services to persons who were unable to transport themselves because of age, disability or income status.

In 2018, Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program provided state funds for public transportation services to older adults, persons with disabilities and persons with low-income. Transportation services were provided through a statewide network of community transportation coordinators for employment, health care, education and other life sustaining activities. Community transportation coordinators in the north central Florida region used Transportation Disadvantaged Program funds to provide 92,722 trips. Approximately 50 percent of the trips were for medical purposes.

Mobility Enhancement Projects

For the third consecutive year, the Florida Legislature authorized non-recurring funds to be competitively awarded by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged through the Mobility Enhancement Grant Program.

The following Community Transportation Coordinators in the region were awarded funding through this grant program:

- Alachua County - MV Contract Transportation, Inc. received funding to provide monthly reduced fare bus passes to clients residing at the GRACE Marketplace homeless shelter. This project provided approximately 250 reduced fare bus passes each month;

"The Council provided staff support to transportation disadvantaged local coordinating boards to coordinate trips for access to employment, health care, education and other life-sustaining activities for residents of the region."

- Bradford County - Suwannee River Economic Council, Inc. received funding to provide on-demand same day transportation services to designated stops in the City of Starke for medical, pharmaceutical and grocery shopping purposes; and
- Columbia County - Suwannee Valley Transit Authority received funding to provide on-demand same day transportation service to designated stops within the City of Lake City for medical, and pharmaceutical and grocery shopping purposes.

Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged Awards

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged recognized the following individuals and community transportation coordinator at the 2018 Annual Training Workshop and EXPO:

- Edward Griffin, General Manager Gainesville Division, MV Contract Transportation, Inc. was awarded the 2018 William G. and Budd Bell Lifetime Achievement Award;
- James East, Alachua County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board Citizen Advocate Representative was awarded the 2018 Volunteer of the Year Award; and
- Suwannee Valley Transit Authority, Community Transportation Coordinator for Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties, was awarded the 2018 Rural Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year Award.

Communications

During 2018, in addition to the planning and other technical studies prepared under contract with local governments throughout the north central Florida region, the Council prepared or maintained the following materials.

“The Council prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, transportation, and general program activities.”

Regional

- Strategic Regional Policy Plan; and
- Reports on local comprehensive plan amendments and other Council review items.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

- Local Emergency Planning Committee Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan Update;
- Hazards Analysis Updates for Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison and Taylor Counties; and
- Hazardous Waste Management Summary Reports for Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Suwannee and Union Counties.

Economic Development

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022.

Transportation

- Fiscal Years 2019-2023 Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Transportation Improvement Program;
- Fiscal Years 2020-2024 Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area List of Priority Projects;
- Annual Multimodal Level of Service Report for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area;
- Annual Regional Transit System Ridership Report for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area; and
- Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plans.

General

- North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Annual Report;
- North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Overall Program Design; and
- North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Regional Directory.



The Council prepared planning and technical studies concerning regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, transportation, and general program activities throughout the north central Florida region.

The Council also maintained and updated the following maps and information resources.

- Existing and Future Land Use Maps;
- Zoning Maps; and
- Census Information.

Upcoming Activities

In 2019, the Council will continue existing programs and initiate new regional, public safety and regulatory compliance, economic development, local government assistance and transportation projects and activities, as follows.

Regional

The Council will review federal grant and loan applications for consistency with area-wide and local plans.

Public Safety and Regulatory Compliance

Emergency Management

The Council will assist with a tabletop or full-scale exercise to be conducted in the north central Florida region and assist other regional planning councils with exercises as requested. The Council will schedule and teach classes on improving emergency preparedness.

Hazardous Materials

The Local Emergency Planning Committee will continue to promote increasing public safety from chemical releases through planning, training, reviewing, exercising, offering How-to-Comply assistance and educating the public. Hazards analyses will be updated for facilities that handle extremely hazardous substances. The Regional Emergency Response Plan will be updated. The Council will continue to provide staff support to the North Central Florida Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team.

Hazardous Waste

The Council will continue to provide compliance assistance to facilities that generate hazardous waste while inspecting small quantity generators. The Council will notify businesses when hazardous waste collection events and compliance assistance workshops are scheduled.

Economic Development

The Council will continue to provide assistance to local governments and economic development organizations in securing grant funds to accommodate industrial and business growth. Council staff will also prepare economic impact analyses identifying the multiplier effect on employment, income and ad valorem revenue of economic development projects.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Council will assess progress toward implementing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

"The Council will continue existing programs and initiate new activities next year."

Visit Natural North Florida (*The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*)

The Council will continue to provide staff services to Visit Natural North Florida (*The Original Florida Tourism Task Force*) with the implementation of its tourism marketing plan.

Local Government Assistance

Community Planning

The Council will continue assisting counties and cities in complying with the Community Planning Act requirements.

Community Development

Community Development Block Grant applications will be prepared for local governments. Other community development assistance, including administrative services, will be provided as requested.

Transportation

Transportation Improvement Program

Working in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, Council staff will assist the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area with updating the five-year funding program of transportation projects for the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Level of Service

Council staff will update level of service information concerning the amount of traffic congestion on arterial and collector roads in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Transit Ridership

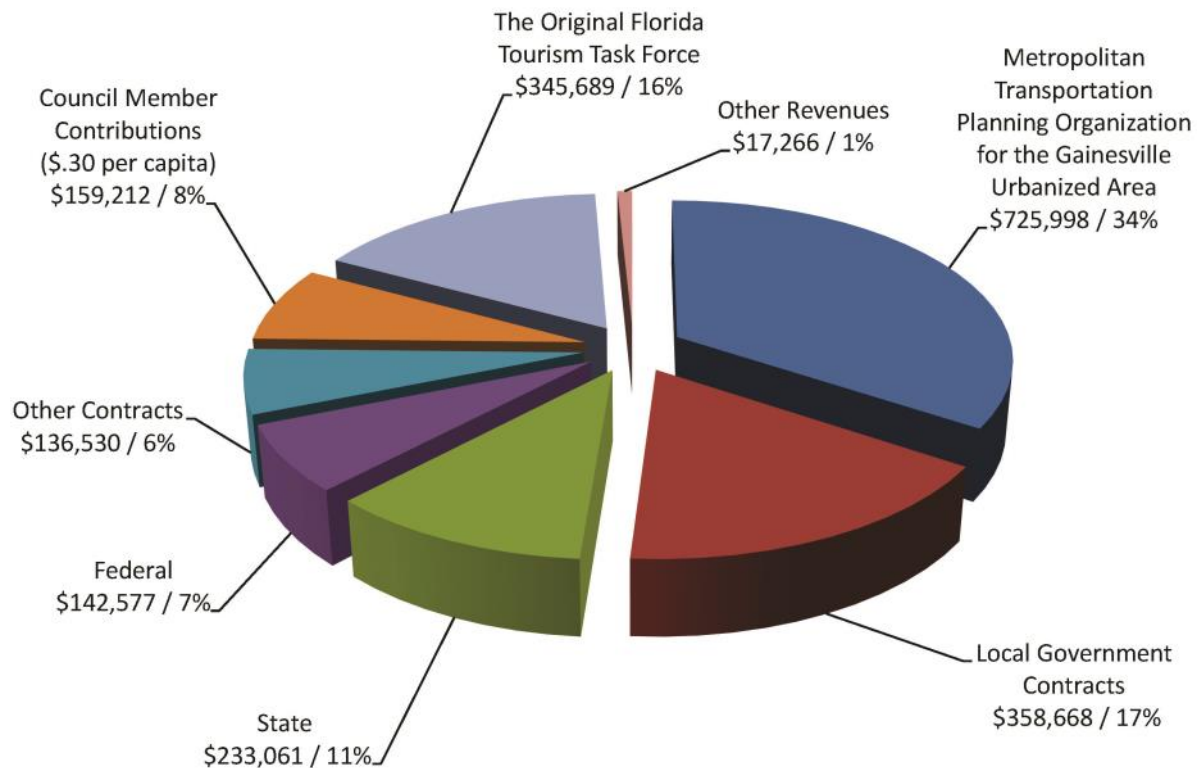
Council staff will update level of transit ridership on the Regional Transit System in the Gainesville Metropolitan Area.

Transportation Disadvantaged

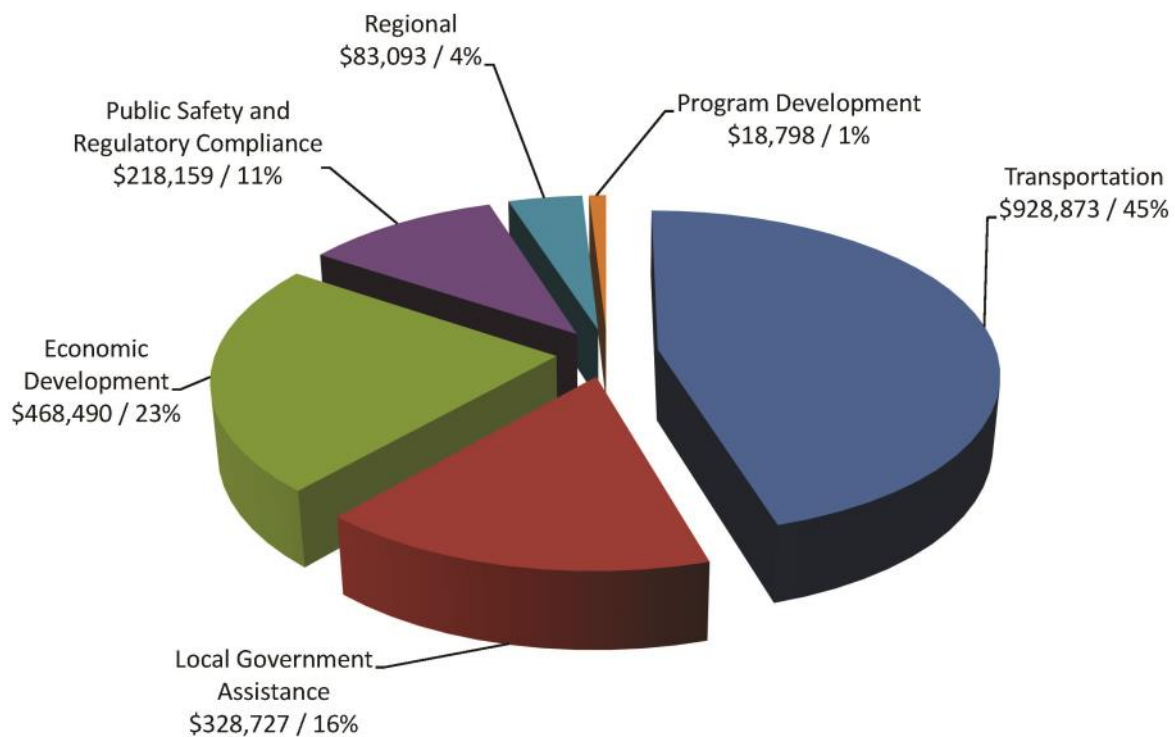
Council staff will prepare and update transportation disadvantaged service plans and continue coordinating transportation services to disadvantaged individuals in conjunction with transportation disadvantaged local coordinating boards.

Financial Report

2017-18 Revenues \$2,119,001



2017-18 Expenditures \$2,046,140



North Central Florida Regional Planning Council

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Carmelita Franco , Planning Administrative Assistant, Local Government Comprehensive Planning	125
Lynn Franson-Godfrey , AICP, Senior Planner, Transportation Disadvantaged	110
Sandra Joseph , Senior Planner, Local Government Comprehensive Planning	111
Tara Tucker , Executive Assistant to the Executive Director	100
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